

**Building an Economy for the Common Good**  
**Mapping Community Organizations Building an Equitable and Sustainable Future**



**Workshop 2 — DEFINING THE ECONOMY FOR THE COMMON GOOD**

**Purpose:** To define the parameters of the Economy for the Common Good in your community

**Materials:** Problems, Causes and Solutions; Actions to create an Economy for the Common Good

**Paradigm:** Humans are alienated, oppressed and threatened by social, economic, and political problems that our current political and economic systems have not been able to resolve. At the same time these systems have degraded our environmental system causing massive species die-offs and threatening life, as we know it. Only by changing the systemic nature of both our economic and political system will we be able solve these problems. To do that we have to identify the causes of and solutions to those problems and understand what actions have to be taken to build an Economy for the Common Good in our communities.

**Context:** One of the keys to mapping the Economy for the Common Good is to define what the Economy for the Common Good is and what actions make an organization part of the Economy for the Common Good. At a gathering of solidarity economy representatives from all over the world, Emily Kawano, the head of the US Solidarity Economy Network, and one of our advisors on this project, pointed out that the solidarity economy representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America have not agreed on a specific definition of the solidarity economy. In fact, our other advisor, Craig Borowiak, who teaches about the solidarity economy at Haverford College, told us that

none of his students could agree on what qualified an organization to be part of the solidarity economy.

That means it is up to you and the participants in your workshops to decide which problems are the most grievous in your community, what causes those problems, and which local organizations are working to resolve those problems. Of course, you should not expect all the participants to agree on the most grievous problems, but through lively and extended discussion you can all create a vision of what you would like your Economy for the Common Good to be and what kinds of actions organizations may be taking to resolve those problems.

**Activities:** Begin the understanding of what your local Economy for the Common Good will look like with a discussion about the most vexing problems in your community, along with what causes those problems and what actions could resolve them. Make sure someone is taking notes on a flip chart for this discussion. You have to remember that everyone may not agree about which problems and solutions should take priority, but it is important that you include all of the problems that people bring up. Emphasize that in the solidarity economy, all of the participants need to be in solidarity around of the problems and solutions that the solidarity economy is dealing with.

The discussion should be framed around the list of problems, causes and solutions and the modifications you have made to those lists. It is good to have extra copies of these on hand in case some people in the workshop have not seen them. You can either go through each entry one by one or you can let people study the lists for a few minutes and then see what comments, additions or changes they elicit.

Once everybody is in solidarity about the problems, causes and solutions, you can go through the same sort of process around the actions that organizations are taking to resolve the identified problems.

Before the end of the workshop, remind them that the next workshop will be dedicated to identifying organizations that fit into the framework that you have established for your local Economy for the Common Good. Ask people to come to the next workshop with at least three suggestions of organizations that should be on your Economy for the Common Good map. On our map we divided all of the organizations into the following economic sectors.

- Community Services
- Education
- Energy
- Finance
- Food and Farming
- Health
- Manufacturing/Retail
- Natural Commons/ Restoration Forestry
- Politics

You may modify this list as you see fit. When people identify their organizations, they should specify which economic sector they are in, and include an address for that organization if there is one.

If you have extra time at the end of this workshop you can show a video about the Solidarity Economy from our [list of videos](#). A good one for this workshop is the one with David Tygel from the Brazilian Solidarity Economy at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Cy38FrkZII> Watch the part from 37:10 –43.34 minutes

Remember to leave time for people to make relevant announcements at the end of the workshop.

The day after the workshop, email everyone your final lists of problems, causes and solutions as well as the actions list. Also remind them about identifying three organizations to be on the map and include the list of economic sectors listed above.

Then the day before the next workshop, send a reminder email that the workshop is coming up and again attach the problems, causes and solutions list as well as the actions list and to bring the name of three organizations to the next workshop