

OUR COMMON SOCIAL FUTUR!



SOCIAL COMMONS SOCIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM CHANGE

A PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABILITY



**ASIA-EUROPE PEOPLE'S FORUM
BARCELONA | 8-10 | JUNE 2018**

Preface

Progressive movements from Asia and Europe gathered in Barcelona to discuss the highly topical issue of social commons.

For the Asian movements of the Asian-Europe People's Forum, the discussion was a continuation of a programme on social justice, after a conference in Manila on public services, and before the People's Forum in Ghent and another conference in 2019 on labour.

For Transform! Europe, the conference was a continuation of a long-term project on commons, searching for alternatives to neoliberalism and the outdated statist programmes of parts of the left.

This common search for a future oriented perspective on social justice was very successful and allowed for opening a new horizon for political action and campaigns. The cooperation between scholars and activists was particularly helpful to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this emerging new concept.

Apart from the stated objectives of the conference – clarification of the meaning of social commons, development of a new narrative, etc. -, the most important contribution seems to have been the links that were explained between different sectors, such as social, environmental, macro-economic and gender policies, production and re-production, amongst many others.

Most of all the interdependence of people and the interconnectedness of different issues made clear that no single issue can dominate the agenda. We need to work on all different fronts and at all different levels, simultaneously, from the economy to the labour market, from social protection to climate justice, at the local as well as at the national, regional and global level.

This is indeed a daunting task, but cooperation like the ones established at this conference show that it is perfectly possible.

Different speakers explained the social situation in their country, which, in every case, had several similarities because of the growing inequalities and the persistent poverty.

Contrary to many misplaced beliefs, commons are not a search for harmony, they cannot peacefully exist in a neoliberal capitalist model, they are always a result of social struggle. This is also why they can contribute to social, economic and political change.

In order to achieve this the concept of commons invites us to think differently, to go beyond the current international initiatives for social protection, to think differently on ownership and property, to look differently at self-determination and self-governance.

Finally, the conference heard stimulating stories about how clever and efficient social policies, are helping people to live in dignity, and have been fruitful for progressive parties winning the elections.

To sum up, and as was stated in the final 'Barcelona Declaration' 'by focusing on the collective dimension of our social and economic rights and by directly involving people in shaping public policies, the commons approach can become a strategic tool to resist neoliberalism, privatisation and commodification ... Claiming and controlling social commons means building power together with others. It is a primary task for all progressive forces'.

Many important questions remain to be further examined such as the role of the State and other public institutions, the issue of scale and the transformational potential of commons. There is work to be done, but this work is directly related to the sustainability of life. Worth doing!

This is why the organisers of this conference thought the different presentations might as well be published, to remain a lasting contribution to the debates that will certainly continue and to inspire others to join this great effort.

It took some time, and we have not succeeded in collecting all the contributions, but we are sure that with the content of this booklet, a very important source of inspiration can be found for all those who want to work on solidarity, on social justice and on commons.

We thank more particularly Dr Anuradha Chenoy and Bishnu Singh for the editing work and Dr Francine Mestrum for the organisation and the lay-out. And of course Jen Derillo for the wonderful posters.

We thank all the organising organisations for their precious contribution.

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Asia Europe People's Forum

Social Justice Cluster

Our common social future: Commoning and sharing for society, the environment and the economy. A programme for a democratic, participatory and transformative social protection –

Barcelona – 8-9-10 June 2018

PROGRAMME

Opening session: The Political challenges for Europe and Asia

- Tina Ebro (AEPF)
- Roberto Morea (Transform)
- Charles Santiago, MP (Malaysia)

Session 1: The case for commons and social commons

- Dario Azzellini, Italy
- Francine Mestrum, Belgium
- Anna Coote, United Kingdom
- Dinesh Devkota, Nepal
- Shalmali Guttal, Thailand
- Bru Laín Escandell, Barcelona

Facilitation: Tina Ebro and Koen Detavernier

Session 2: A. The new commons debate: The importance of commons in the process of social transformation

- Chantal Delmas, France
- Peter North, United Kingdom
- Sandeep Chachra, India
- Marco Berlinguer, Barcelona

B. The new commons debate: The importance of commons in the process of political transformation

- Roberto Morea, Italy
- Dong Huy Cuong, Vietnam
- Birgit Daiber, Germany
- Koen Detavernier, Belgium

Facilitation: Ghulam Mustafa Talpur and Elisabetta Cangelosi

Sesion 3: *Conditions for social commons*

- What we already achieved: report on the conference in Manila on public services
 - o Tina Ebro, Philippines

- Macroeconomic policies, development, the changing world of work, gender
 - o Núria Lozano Montoya, Barcelona
 - o Alessandra Mecozzi, Italy
 - o Alex Scrivener, UK

- The environment, inequality, taxes
 - o Lidy Nacpil, Philippines
 - o Ghulam Mustafa Talpur, Pakistan
 - o Ah Maftuchan, Indonesia
 - o Vedran Horvat, Croatia

Facilitation: Lucia Bárcena and Sandeep Chachra

Session 4: *Implementing social commons*

- The centrality of economic and social rights
 - o German Jaraiz Arroyo, Spain

- The centrality of culture for social commons
 - o Julie Ward, MEP United Kingdom

- Practical implications of adopting a commoning approach to social protection – options for activism and policy development
Labour (Dario Azzellini), gender (Elisabetta Cangelosi), Land and food (Sandeep Chachra), health (Enric Feliu), housing (Santi Mas de Xaxás), care (Anna Coote)

- Concluding remarks and adoption of the Declaration of Barcelona
 - o Francine Mestrum and Roberto Morea

Facilitation: Kris Vanslambrouck and Lidy Nacpil

Co-organisers of the Conference

AEPF Social Justice Cluster - Global Social Justice – Transform! Europe – Institute for Political Ecology – Fundació l'alternativa - Barcelona en Comú - Fighting Inequality Alliance – Tax Justice Alliance Asia – Asean Parliamentary network for Human Rights – UGT (Union General de Trabajadores) – CCOO (Comisiones Obreras) – Network for Transformative Social Protection

www.aepf.info / www.transform-network.net

Concept Note

Social justice is at the centre of all our concerns and of all our efforts to work for another world. Democracy is not possible if people do not have the feeling they have equal worth, they can have their voices heard, they can take part in decision-making with the same capacities as all others. It is not just about formal equality but about real equality through social and economic citizenship and just taxes in order to fight inequality. This is even more important since the level of inequality continues to grow.

Social justice strongly remains at the heart of all civil society's concerns and demands. For the Asia-Europe People's Forum it is crucial for a just and fair relationship between Europe and Asia. **All problems are interlinked** and solidarity between peoples is not a matter of diplomacy, it is a matter of justice and of participation, with common concerns and aspirations for more equality, economic security and social protection. For climate justice – one cannot ask people to respect nature if their basic needs and livelihoods are not protected and if we allow extractive corporations to violate human rights. Social justice is also at the heart of fair trade, where the aim is to avoid rules and standards that violate people's rights, that dismantle social services and put competitiveness and economic freedom above social and economic rights. Gender equality is integral to social justice. Finally, peace will never be possible without social justice, as was stated very clearly when the Peace Treaty of Versailles with the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation was adopted in 1919.

There are shared concerns and demands in the European Union and Asia. The level of development is very different from Europe to Asia, but also within Europe and within Asia. Nevertheless, at the level of social justice and more particularly social protection, labour law and social services, the recent developments are very similar and are dictated by the same neoliberal philosophy. While most Asian countries have limited systems of social protection and some European countries have very highly developed collective insurance systems and universal public services, they are both faced with attempts to reform and/or dismantle them. A new social paradigm is being introduced, all over the world, where social protection serves the interests of growth, markets and the economy, and where the principles of collective solidarity and social justice are steadily eroded. Social protection should be about the inalienable rights of all people, everywhere in the world, to have their needs met so that they can flourish. Even if better social protection is good for the economy, this can never be the ultimate goal. The agenda must be broadened and transformed.

Social protection, social rights and reducing inequality are again on the agenda of global development. The Sustainable Development Goals offer leverage to strengthen our advocacies for social protection and our fight against inequality, in favour of human rights and universality. ILO's Social Protection Floors offer comprehensive though limited systems of social protection. We have to remain vigilant not to allow policymakers and corporate interests to hijack the discourse in order to perpetuate failing practices.

Our objective is to put into place social protection as commons, in the first place because it is ours, in the second place because we want to democratize it and reflect on the linkages between social and economic rights – health care, education, pensions, housing, child care ... - on the one hand, with democracy, ecology, trade, culture and gender relations on the other hand.

We want to shift the global debate about social justice and social protection on to a new level, by embracing theory and practice that suit the needs and conditions of today, rather than harking back to the last century. By *social protection* we mean access to social resources that enable every individual to survive, to manage risks they cannot cope with alone, and to flourish. We also want to look at labour law and public services. By *commons*, we mean resources that are life's necessities, to which everyone should therefore have an equal right of access and for which we all share responsibility, for both current and future generations.

The idea of *natural* resources as commons (especially land, but also air, water and energy) has deep roots in history. The idea of *cultural* resources as commons (such as information and digital platforms) features increasingly in current debates. **The aim of this conference is to explore the conceptual and practical implications of claiming social resources as commons and clarify the connection with natural and cultural commons.**

How does this approach differ from conventional social protection systems? This question is central to our agenda. It concerns democracy and participation, self-determination, models of ownership and control; inclusion and solidarity; governance and relationships between public authorities and locally generated initiatives. Ideally, people do not wait for public authorities or private corporations to take initiatives but seize opportunities within their own localities to decide for themselves what they need and take action together to ensure that their needs are met. This approach overrides the market/state dichotomy and carries with it the potential to transform both. Also, in establishing social protection as commons, in promoting cooperation between citizens and public authorities, we not only want to protect people but society as such, against the current overriding individualism.

In Europe as well as in Asia, social protection should be a collective insurance mechanism that contributes to **an equitable distribution of incomes and wealth** and to equal opportunities for all. **Social protection should be universal and transformative, that is, contribute to the political, social, environmental and economic transformation we need.** Universalism does not mean identical systems everywhere. In order to answer the real needs of people, systems can be different at the local, the municipal and the national level. Basic human needs are, however, the same everywhere, across place and time. Rights should therefore be the same. Social protection should be a way to achieve social justice and emancipation. Social commons are a mechanism for broadening social protection, anchoring it within the control of those who need it and ensuring that it contributes to social justice in a transversal way.

The economic and social crisis we are currently living in, is in the first place **a crisis of social re-production**, in a world where employment increasingly fails to support subsistence. The

privatisation of public services is a new enclosure, where the livelihoods of people are taken out of their hands and are turned into profit-making mechanisms. We want to defend our rights, make them concrete and contribute to new rights and policies in which people take back control.

This conference is the second in a series of three, covering the whole range of social protection aiming for social justice. In February 2018, we discussed public services in Manila, The Philippines. In 2019, we will discuss labour rights in Asia. In between, the Asia Europe People's Forum will take place in Ghent, Belgium, from 19 to 21 October 2018.

Chapter 1

The Political Challenges for Europe and Asia

On AEPF

Tina Ebro, Manila

The Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) is an inter-regional network of progressive and dynamic civil society organisations and social movements across Asia and Europe.

It is one of the remaining inter-regional vehicles that facilitates the space for exchanges, reflective thinking, debates, and the articulation of alternatives toward cooperation and common actions and campaigns.

The AEPF was established in Bangkok in 1996 on the eve of the first ASEM Summit.

The imperative for civil society engagement in ASEM was the concern that globalisation is pushing for stronger regional blocs like ASEM --- which promotes mainly the interest of corporate power.

Though its agreements are not binding, ASEM is a strategic body that sets the direction for integrated policies between Europe and Asia.

ASEM has more than 40 Member States, with the major powers (China, India, Europe and Russia) except U.S.

Since 1996, the AEPF has organized People's Forums, prior to the ASEM State Summits, in Bangkok, London, South Korea, Copenhagen, Hanoi, Helsinki, Beijing, Brussels, Vientiane, Milan, Ulaanbaatar and Ghent this year.

The last People's Forum was in Ulan Baatar where more than 700 representatives of regional and national NGOs, and sectoral and campaign movements in Asia and Europe converged.

This year, the People's Forum will be held in October in Ghent, the city of the Commons.

AEPF is not only about holding People's Forums every 2 years, it works also about key movements in Asia and Europe caucusing and working together through Thematic Clusters: on Peace and Security, Food Sovereignty and Resource Justice, Just Trade and Corporate Accountability, Social Justice, Climate and Ecological Justice and Participatory Democracy and Human Rights.

Thematic Clusters hold events such as this to address urgent issues and to identify alternatives and to bring together key movements for collaborative advocacies towards transformative change.

The major concerns of the Clusters are: corporate-driven globalization and FTAs, rising militarism and war, the dismantling or absence of social protection like decent work, public services and social security, corporate control of land and food, the erosion of democratic

space and human rights mechanisms, the rise of authoritarian regimes and far-right movements.

Therefore, the strategic importance of AEPF is its efforts across Asia and Europe to build a world based on peace, participatory democracy, social justice, and sustainability by creating spaces to link current struggles, emerging grassroots resistance movements, alternative visions, by facilitating major civil society networks and movements towards joint reflection and action.

On Transform:

Roberto Morea, Italy

What is happening to-day is that Europe is more and more giving up its ambitions for all the people who live on the continent. What we are facing now is the transformation of our societies. Globalisation has acted as if we all lived in the same country. We do indeed share with the Asian countries a lot of similar problems, because of globalisation. There are rich people that get richer and richer and there are poor people, everywhere.

In that sense we need to have a discussion on what solution there is. We have to ask ourselves if the European Union can be a solution. We have a long history with a unique political space. What is clear now is that the economic and political power also has a possibility to enlarge this space. Europe was in a sense a good example of capitalist expansion.

We built welfare states which served as a model for many countries outside Europe, and now what we are facing is the destroying of this social model. And at the same time companies are entering in spaces that we thought were our spaces, such as health care and other sectors. We now have to fight privatisations because we are losing our public services. They are made into profit sectors.

That is why in this global scenario we are also losing. The way we react in Europe is also showing that we as western Europe, as such, are losing power. We are losing potential for transformation of the system.

My organisation, Transform! Europe, works with 32 organisations and foundations all over Europe, from 21 countries, in order to establish contacts among all the left parties in Europe and connect them into one single party. This is not easy, because we are very different in different countries. I come from a country in the South of Europe, with different systems of public services compared to what exists in Sweden or Denmark. Bringing together people and parties from different countries is a real challenge for us. That is why I think that what we share is that social justice is the core of our mission. I also think that the commons strategy can be a way to unify different perspectives. That is also why we have to open up and share with other countries and other people social justice and commons strategies. This is the way we can put together our different perspectives We have to try to give to the

people the strength to change the rules. I think what we are trying to do at the European level, to unify people, we also have to try and do it on the global level.

I hope this meeting can improve the relations between us: bringing together people.

On Asia:

Charles Santiago, MP, Malaysia

I start with some words on the situation that we face in Asia, especially in S-E Asia, and how we understand the challenges people face. ASEAN consists of ten different countries of the region. We are the fastest growing region in the world. At the same time, we are the most unequal societies in the world. In Vietnam, according to Oxfam, the richest person earns more in one day than the poorest peasant can earn in his life time. (South Asian inequality has similar truths) That tells you something. And this you can see all over the region. In Indonesia the four richest men have more wealth than the 100 million of people in the country. These are the levels of inequality you can find in the rest of the region as well.

Look then, at health care. The trend for privatisation of the last years hurts people's fundamental right to access to health care. Out of pocket expenditures are increasing. More and more people are unable to access health care. We have now special funds for the poor, such as those existing in Cambodia and they are very successful. Other States (also where I come from) are also giving support to people for health care. So, we are under attack, but fortunately there are some innovative initiatives.

The poorest countries such as Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam only spend around 4 % of GDP on education. With the new government we now have in Malaysia we hope that education expenditures will go up to 7 %.

So, many people in the region are excluded. Many countries are still far away from global standards on freedom of association or the right to organise. Unemployment rates are high, the social and economic development lags behind.

Cambodia has a huge accumulation of wealth, but then people are poor and the party that could change the direction of development is made illegal! It will not even be able to contest the elections. This is governance by fear, not by vote.

Why is democracy important? If people's voice is silenced, their interests are not taken into account. People's aspirations are thrown out. With some small exceptions, there is elite control in the whole region, see e.g. the Philippines.

China's control of the region is also very important. China today underwrites Cambodia's example, Indonesia, the expenditures of Thailand. China has an enormous influence, not only on security issues but also on economic and social development.

China undermines the worker's interests in the region. People can be killed in the streets, but China will say, that is ok; on the massacre of the Rohingyas in Myanmar, China will say it is a domestic problem. As long as the situation is stable, they see no problem. China's role is enormous and in fact development of the region is in the hands of China. There is little resistance from other parts of the world, including from trade unions, and NGOs.

So, we see that in the whole region access to health care is problematic, there are high levels of inequality, and the right to education, the right to organise, are challenged.

With this introduction, I focus on my own country and its major development, Malaysia.

For the first time, after 61 years, we have a new government in Malaysia. A miracle! No one really believed it was possible. Because every time there is an election in Malaysia, it is focused on race and religion. Even the poorest people, because of issues of race and religion, have maintained the power of government. This time, something snapped in the country.

I want to share with you one of the major elements that made this happen, more particularly in the state where I come from: the social policies that were put into place these last 8 to 10 years. The cost of living in Malaysia was extremely high, as a result of wage stagnation, there were people unable to put food on the table. Now Malaysia is a very rich country, but many people were not able to eat more than some rice. It was revealed in a UNICEF study, that workers were not able to put nutritious food on the table. This became a major issue, also because a goods and services tax of 6 % had been put into place, so all prices went up.

The state where I come from issued a whole variety of social policies. One concerned health care, poor families receive an amount of money – it will rise this year - for health care. Another element is that we introduced a KISS programme: poor families receive grants for food stuff on a monthly basis; we also provide free water, all households receive it, as well as grants for education; the state also provides money for the poorest schools in order to make sure that children will get the best possible education, above the federal state's funding. We also have specific health care programmes, for instance for cancer therapies.

The point I want to make is this: social programmes are crucial for bringing about change. Social policies are crucial for health, education, food and a better quality of life.

In the state where I come from, this is very clear. People tell me that because the food aid they are given, people can spend on education for their children.

The state's ability to give people access to basic services and to ensure a better quality of life is really crucial. It is one of the major reasons for the political change in my country in the last election. My party won 41 of the 222 seats in parliament, a high majority. On paper, we were not sure about winning, but social policies made the difference.

When people experience real change in their lives, when they can see their children can have better lives, it makes the whole difference.

This was a long way to say social policies are important. The underlying message is that whatever the state earns, it must go back to people and not remain in the pockets of individuals or of politicians. The revenue of the state belongs to the people.

So, my message for this meeting is very simple: social policies can make changes in people's lives, it is doable. Sure, there is an issue of sustainability, some problems remain, they have to be dealt with by the state. But yes, the state can improve the quality of life.

The case for commons and social commons

Commons and Conflict

Dario Azzelini, Italy

Today, everyone is speaking about commons and ‘commoning’, everyone wants to build commons. The World Bank has a group which is supposedly ‘protecting and improving the global commons’ and it reaches out to the private sector to ‘advance common goods’. You can find texts on commons on the website of the European Union, banks organize seminars on the commons. Transnational companies tell us they are building the commons, big magazines declare that Uber is commoning cars, and that the “sharing economy” is a form of commoning.

I think we have to be very clear about what the commons are. Or at least what they are structurally. It does not mean that we can define in every detail what the commons are or what they will be. The commons and the activity of commoning are nowadays brought forward by many social, political and even economic actors. Mainstream research suggests that commons and capitalism can peacefully co-exist. It speaks about the absence of conflict and that the rights of the commoners to decide and manage their own commons are neither questioned nor challenged by external authorities, are at the centre of successful commoning.

But if we look at history it is important to remember one thing: The commons are not a gift. And even if many researchers tend to describe the commons as working best if there is harmony, there is this big desire for harmony in many alternative circles mentioning the commons, this is not the case. Commons are most likely to be achieved and/or to be preserved in time if we organize and are ready for constant conflict because the history of capitalism is a history of enclosure of the commons. The commons preceded private property and capitalism. Capital needs the commons for the ongoing accumulation by dispossession. A capitalist system will therefore always prey on the commons and at the same time destroy the fundamentals for sustainable social practices and ultimately the fundamentals of life itself.

Especially in the global south, where we have much more traditional commons that have survived, or have been preserved over time, people have the experience how capital, transnational companies, etc. grab the commons and incorporate them whenever they need them. Even if there was some kind of official recognition of the commons earlier or if you had some kind of supposed harmony, it does not matter anymore once capital wants to appropriate the commons. And it will at some point, always. Because the law of capitalism is expansion, it has to expand. In a limited world expansion means to take away from others. The history of capitalism shows how it is incorporating, co-opting, what is socially produced by the people. Capital is totally unable to develop anything for humanity. We see all these tales about the free-floating creativity of capital making all the inventions possible. But this is not true. Capitalism is blocking progress, for example with patent rights and things like

that, which make it for example, impossible to develop new cancer medicine because most of the elements are already patented by a different company, so it is not worth anymore for a company to develop a cancer medicine if they have to pay patent rights to other companies.

We can see that neither are the commons a result of any harmony between the state, the private and the people, nor can they be preserved any better if there is this supposed harmony. The commons, like everything else people have won over the course of the past hundreds of years, are a result of struggles of the people. Moreover, there is an important change over the past decades to take into account. Many got to believe that liberal democracy is granting rights. This is a big misunderstanding. Over a few decades liberal democracy was the frame in which rights could be expanded, always through struggles, there were no rights given for free... they were all won in struggles by huge movements, women's movements, workers' movements etc. They were a result of struggles. But this worked only as long as liberal democracy was the frame for modern industrial capitalism to develop. We have seen over the past 2-3 decades that liberal democracy is not any more the political model corresponding to capital's development today. That is why we experience the authoritarian tendencies all over. That is why in so many struggles we have been barely able to preserve the status quo, but not anymore to achieve any progress. The liberal democratic frame is not any more a frame for expanding rights. It turned into a frame of reducing rights, of making them invisible, of creating structures in which people don't have a say anymore even if people are told that they have. And we can see very well that people are not satisfied. All the "anti-representative" revolts of the past decade were a result of people feeling – in representative democracies as well as in authoritarian regimes felt that the proposed model of representation is not democratic. It does not represent them, they do not have a say, they cannot decide on their future. In an interview during my research on the 15-M movement a few years ago, an interview partner said: "It's like a big storm is coming over you and you don't have any means to influence the situation."

The hope that we will win because we have the better arguments, the better reason, is a lost hope. We have to organize struggles from the bottom up to preserve commons that exist, to achieve commons that do not exist, and to keep us as communities, as people, in a position where we decide, we take the decisions and are constantly involved in decisions that are made, if we do not achieve that, if we leave it to the state to preserve the commons, we will neither preserve them nor achieve them. Because the times the expansion of rights corresponded to the production model are over. The function is not anymore to preserve or to create any rights anymore.

When we are formulating the strategies to achieve commons it is also very important to look at what kind of commons we want to achieve and how we think about them. Because there are also commons that are functional for capitalism. I am, for example, totally in favour of having free internet access for all, but it is also something that is completely functional to capitalism. It is not the case that every commons is automatically an emancipatory idea.

We also have to think about – and it has been part of the past seminars we organized – reproduction. That is very central. The commons cannot be something that is, once again as

other production models and especially Fordism, based on gendered labour and the reproduction of labour by women. The danger is always present, especially when times get more precarious, it is often easier to externalize certain amount of work and make it invisible. To achieve and preserve the commons we have the outer dimension of struggle, which is not based on harmony, and we have also an internal struggle to think and act differently regarding reproduction.

Beg for more?

Francine Mestrum, Belgium

When the Economist puts universal health care on its cover, we should welcome this 'social turn' but we should also reflect very seriously on what is happening and why.

For almost thirty years now, right-wing and neoliberal forces have been dominating and shaping the discourse – and consequently the practice – on social policies. They do not talk about social justice, obviously, since justice is far away from their objectives, but they have been dominating and shaping the new thinking on poverty, social protection, health care and education.

The tragedy in all this is that the left has grossly abandoned its social ambition. For the radical left, social protection is counter-revolutionary and something for dummies and sissies. After the revolution, social justice will fall out of the sky. The moderate left is happy with the existing international initiatives. It means that this once high priority topic for all progressive forces is being neglected. We are now paying the price for this. Social protection has been taken out of our hands.

What I want to explain in this presentation is, one, why we have to reclaim our economic and social rights and go beyond the currently existing international initiatives, such as the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and SPFs (Social Protection Floors), and, secondly, how social commons can be a strategic tool for striving towards social justice.

Beyond SDGs and SPFs

Of course, we have to support the SDGs and SPFs, since, if they were achieved, they would mean tremendous progress for all people in the world. So, saying we should go beyond, does not mean to criticize these important promises of the international community. But we also should know and never forget that poverty was put on the international agenda in 1990, not as a new social policy but as a new label for structural adjustment, that it implied giving up on social security, and that, ten years later, a new social paradigm on social protection – mark the terminological difference – was introduced, aiming ever more at economic growth. The World Bank's approach, in spite of its promises, sticks to a targeted approach for the poor, privatization and deregulation. The pictures I showed demonstrate that corporate forces are now shaping the agenda, creating markets for conquering our bodies and putting people at the service of profits and dividends.

Is it utopian then to think we have to go beyond these initiatives? **We clearly cannot accept social protection and health care in particular to be put at the service of markets.** It is a first reason to try and go beyond the existing international initiatives, since they do not contain anything to stop the neoliberal philosophy. In the best of cases, they will be a correction mechanism for a brutal economic system but cannot do anything to stop or change it.

The objective of social protection

Many voices have been raised these past years in favour of ‘transformative social protection’ and even different meanings are attributed to the concept, it might mean that social protection mechanisms contribute to system change, that it helps to fight climate change as well as transforming the social, political and economic setup of the world.

In whatever way one looks at it, **the objective of social protection should be what it says: to protect people and society.** Against what? Against the vagaries of markets, of the climate and of life. Saying this already indicates the programme should be very extensive. Social protection certainly should not be a ‘productive factor’, a mechanism in favour of growth and of markets. That is what too often one reads in documents of the World Bank. The ILO also states in several preparatory documents to the SPFs, that social protection can favour the economy. While this is certainly true, it can and should never be its major objective.

Essential goods

A second reason for going beyond the existing programmes is that they are rather limited in their scope.

Social Protection Floors are based on the definition of social security as it is mentioned in ILO’s convention of 1952 on the minimum standards of social security. But for each element it adds the qualification of ‘essential’, ‘minimum’ or ‘basic’, in other words, **it promises nothing more than what can be considered to be a minimum.** How far does ‘essential health care’ go? Does it include basic surgery? Does it include cancer or diabetes therapy? And how to ethically put the limits to what is covered and what is not? Also, how far does a basic income security for older, unemployed, or disabled persons reach? Will it be enough for a decent living? Knowing that even wages are often not enough to get out of poverty, this will most probably not be the case in many countries.

The importance of income

Apart from the access to ‘essential health care’ all other elements of the SPFs refer to a ‘basic income security’ in different cases where persons are not or cannot participate in the labour market. Now this is fine, since income is indeed a basic condition for getting out of poverty and live a life in dignity. However, **public services are not mentioned. Health care and education might as well come from private as from public sources. And, as is already the case in many countries today, the ‘basic income guarantee’ might come down to a cash transfer that is just enough to pay for privatised services** which, in the past, were provided by public authorities and then were given to the market and only available for high user fees. In other words, though this was certainly not the objective of the ILO, the basic

income/cash transfer can be an indirect way to subsidize the corporations offering these services. Giving a guaranteed income to poor people is absolutely necessary but it should allow to live a decent life and not replace the necessary universal public services.

Redistribution

Many dramatic data on global income inequality have been published these past years and the moral arguments for the redistribution of income cannot be laughed away anymore.

However, social protection is about so much more than the redistribution of income. First of all, it should be reminded that the **traditional welfare states of Western Europe and some other countries were not about redistribution – that is where tax systems are made for – but about collective insurance and solidarity systems**. This horizontal and structural solidarity is what constituted society, the link of all people to all other people within national borders. This was never about redistribution even if, in some cases, that might have been a consequence. **Redistribution is basically a matter for income taxes**. This focus on redistribution is part of the new paradigm, because insurances are for markets and those who want more than the minimum on offer, can buy what they want or need on the market. And income taxes have to be kept at a minimum.

Universalism

This brings us to the delicate point of universalism. While the SPFs are ambiguous, the World Bank continues to promote targeted interventions in favour of the poor. Both organisations have published in 2015 a joint statement in favour of universal social protection, though it does not seem the World Bank has changed its practices yet, see the attempts to cancel a universal family allowance in Mongolia.

What is clear however is that policies in favour of the poor are not enough. If well implemented they might indeed help people to be lifted out of poverty, but they do not stop the creation of poverty. That, again, is **the big advantage of welfare states with labour rights and public services: they stop the impoverishment processes and prevent poverty**. This is the main argument in favour of universal policies, next to the generally admitted point that policies for the poor rapidly become poor policies.

Social commons and systemic change

What happened these past decades is that at all political levels, from global to local, many reforms were introduced to take into account the changes in societies and the economy in the 21st century, but each time, in every country, the basic protection of people was hollowed out instead of strengthened. **Social protection had to be made compatible with neoliberalism**. It is time now to reclaim what has been taken away, full economic and social rights, universal public services and labour rights. We should not do this while looking at the past, but looking to the future, not in order to reform the welfare states, but to re-create them and make them fit for the citizens and societies of the 21st century.

I would like to propose some elements for a two-way strategy to achieve this. First, considering our social protection as commons, and second, what I would like to call 'obstinate coherence'.

Social commons

Social protection systems, broadly speaking, can be considered to be commons as soon as a local community, or a national organisation or a global movement decides to consider them as such, within a local, national or global regulatory framework. If they organize direct citizens' participation in order to find out what these social protection systems should consist of and how they can be implemented, they can shape them in such a way that they fully respond to people's needs.

Considering economic and social rights as commons basically means to democratize them, to state they belong to the people and to decide on their implementation and on their monitoring. This clearly will involve a social struggle. What happened in the past decades was a kind of 'enclosure', depriving people from their livelihoods. That is why to-day, more and more people reclaim their rights and the services they need. Citizens then do not wait for initiatives to be taken by public authorities but take matters into their own hands and organize themselves.

This does not mean States or other public authorities play no role anymore, on the contrary. We will always need States for redistribution, for guaranteeing human rights, for making security rules, etc. It means States are co-responsible for our interdependence. But the States we are talking of in relation to our economic and social rights or our public services will be different from what States are today. Because we know public authorities are not necessarily democratic. That is why the States and public authorities will be themselves a kind of public service, helping their citizens.

In the same way, markets will be different. If economic and social rights as well as public services are seen as commons, the consequence is not that there is nothing to be paid anymore. People who work in the health sector, for example, obviously will have to be paid. However, prices will not respond to a liberal market logic but to human needs and the use value of what is produced.

So, if we say social commons go beyond States and markets, we do not say they go without States and markets. It is a different logic that applies.

The economic and social crisis we are currently living in, is in the first place a crisis of social re-production, in a world where employment increasingly fails to support subsistence. The livelihoods of people are taken out of their hands and are turned into profit-making mechanisms. **That is why people are now trying to take back control.**

Obstinate coherence

Strategically, it is very important for social movements to go beyond their own weakening fragmentation. It is necessary to better coordinate and organize in order to be able to act collectively.

Many alternatives are readily available right now, there is no need to find a big agreement on one of them, they all can help to get out of the current system destroying nature and humankind.

Social justice can be an ideal entry point to do just that. Many connections can be made, among basic elements of social security, among social protection and other social policies, among social policies, climate justice and more systemic issues, such as macro-economics.

Each time focusing on these connections can help to strengthen demands and bring more compelling arguments. Pointing at the income dimension of poverty is crucial for raising wages and social allowances, at the right to water for health, at the toxicity of pesticides for preventive health, at child care for women's work, at land rights for food production, at ...

What is meant by obstinate coherence is precisely this: to push for changes in sectors that at first sight are not related to the issue one fights for, but in the end are crucial for it. It might be rather easy to organise commons at the local level, but it is far more difficult to achieve something at the national, let alone the global level. I think that with an obstinate and coherent long term approach, we might contribute to change the system. Social policies, as such, will not be enough to counter neoliberalism, but they can be a crucial contribution to it. This is also how the potential for alternatives can be brought to light. What we will need is a serious effort in popular education.

Conclusion

Social justice is central to systemic change, because it allows to broaden the audience and to point to the connection with climate change, taxes, debt, agriculture, land rights, austerity and in the end democracy and human rights. We do not have to do away with capitalism first, we can start the other way round. Social commons and obstinate coherence and consistency means you do not stop in the middle of the road, but you continue till the system is changed in such a way it cannot identify itself anymore. **We should start by reclaiming our social protection, stating it is ours and bring it back to its major objective: to protect people and societies and to promote sustainability. Not begging but claiming.**

Building a New Social Commons

Anna, Coote, United Kingdom

We must build a shared understanding of what commons are. There are many interpretations, but I find these words of Ugo Mattei a useful starting point:

'The commons are not concessions. They are resources that belong to the people as a matter of life necessity. Everybody has a right to an equal share of the commons and must be empowered by law to claim equal and direct access to it. Everybody has equal responsibility to the commons and shares a direct responsibility to transfer its wealth to future generations'.

What is distinctive about our vision of a new social commons?

- *Forwards not backwards.* We aim to reimagine and build on essential elements of the UK welfare system without being purely defensive. The process and content of building a new social commons are geared to the present and future, not the past.
- *People in control.* The idea of the social commons starts with the ambition of putting people in control, claiming what should be theirs by right, rather than simply receiving (or hoping to receive) public services and benefits.
- *Promoting collective action.* Our proposal gives priority to the collective ideal. This was embodied in the post-war settlement but has weakened over time. We aim to strengthen our shared capacity for collective action to help and support each other.
- *A common good, shared by all.* The 'social commons' do not represent a safety net or a conditional privilege, but a common good in which everyone has a stake. The value rests on everyone sharing in the benefits, both directly when they need support, and indirectly because this helps to generate a flourishing society and prosperous economy.
- *Shaped through democratic dialogue.* People themselves will decide the purpose and content of the social commons: what it includes and why, and where resources should come from. They will do this through deliberative dialogue that includes local councillors and MPs, bringing together participatory and representative democracy.
- *With the state, not instead of it.* This is about transforming relations between people and the public realm. Public authorities, at national and local levels, have a crucial role to play in facilitating and supporting the social commons. We want to transform them, not side-step or replace them, so that they guarantee shared ownership and equal access, as well as setting standards and managing resources.
- *Flexible and evolving.* The social commons can embrace multiple forms of shared ownership and draw on a range of resources, from locally based voluntary action to national institutions such as the NHS. We envisage a dynamic process where people decide incrementally what they need, then issue declarations of intent, demonstrate what's possible through practical experiment, identify what rights are required, and work out how best to develop and enforce them.
- *Grounded in whole systems.* This approach recognises that social, environmental and cultural resources are not separate but interdependent: they are – or should be – commongoods, held in common, for the common good. They are subject to similar claims and expectations.

Why is it urgent now?

The case for claiming and building a social commons has never been more urgent. Far too many people feel dispossessed and betrayed by the established political order. That generates anger and desperation for change. Public institutions no longer inspire much

confidence. The collective ideal – which for 60 years has been expressed in terms of public services, funded through taxation, ‘for each according to need’ – is so closely associated with the old order that it is in danger of being swept up in the general opprobrium. If people want to throw out the bathwater of established institutions, we must rescue the baby of shared risks, pooled resources, collective action and mutual aid. And we must make sure that ‘the baby’ can survive and thrive today and in future. This calls for a transformation of the ways in which social resources are defined, controlled, supported and secured.

Beyond this political imperative, there are four main reasons why it is urgent to build a new social commons. First, it is an expression of social solidarity and collective action. Secondly, it can support social justice and help to reduce inequalities. Thirdly, it can underpin the development of a secure and sustainable welfare system, which is capable of meeting the needs of future as well as present generations. Fourthly, it may serve to anchor progressive social policies against the shock of right-wing populism and the growing appetite for radical disruption.

Meeting needs

The central purpose of social protection or welfare systems is not to supply a productive workforce, but to ensure that people’s needs are met. This means everyone must have access to resources that are essential for survival and flourishing, for health, critical autonomy and participation in society. Care and meaningful relationships are just as important as land, water, air and energy.

Welfare states in the rich world are in crisis, people are dependent but distrustful. Austerity programmes have cut services and amenities drastically. Public policies are failing to prevent harm and adapt to change ,which has led to rising demand for costly, curative services, widening inequalities and unmet needs. People feel increasingly powerless to influence decisions and actions that affect their daily lives. Finally, there are new campaigns for ‘basic income’ which threaten to replace collective services with cash hand-outs to individuals.

New politics

The commons are part of a new politics, which is based not on competition, consumerism and choice, but on caring for each other, pooling resources and sharing risks. Our new politics reasserts the collective ideal, seeks to shift control from markets and state towards people at local level, and values unpaid activities on which the formal economy depends. Our goals are best summed up as: social justice, environmental sustainability, more equal distribution of power.

In pursuit of these goals, people should have enforceable rights of access to resources that are essential to meet their basic needs. They should have power to determine how to meet

their needs collectively and to design and deliver ways of meeting them. Paid and unpaid work should be understood and valued as mutually supportive. The role of the state must be to support this process, to ensure equal access, to guarantee standards and distribute resources. This calls for a new dynamic between top-down and bottom-up, between local and national politics.

How can this be achieved?

We can start to build commons by learning from existing practice, for example, from pioneering cities such as Barcelona, Ghent and Bologna, where municipal governments have made a commitment to support collaborative approaches to ownership and work in a variety of fields. Decisions about the nature and scope of the social commons are best shaped through a three-way dialogue: to bring together experimental wisdom, professional expertise and political negotiation. At the national level, we can envisage a declaration with accumulating force, where 'soft' law leads over time to enforceable measures. New models of shared ownership and control will be developed, with new transformative relationships between people, the commons and the public realm.

Unresolved questions

There are still many questions that have not been adequately addressed. For example, we shall have to determine - and reach broad agreement - on the following issues. What is included in the social commons and who decides on this? Who is eligible for access to the commons, citizens or residents? What is the best way to organize a three-way dialogue? How are legally enforceable rights to be made compatible with locally determined initiatives through which people are enabled to meet needs? How can we transform public institutions so that they support the commons? And finally, which sectors, groups and organisations are likely to support the social commons? As the debate continues, more questions and challenges are bound to arise. But at least the debate has begun to find some resonance at a global level.

(This contribution is partially based on Coote, Anna, *The New Social Commons. The People, the Commons and the Public Realm*, New Economics Foundation, 2 May 2017).

A Case for a Consolidated Social Protection in Nepal

Dinesh Devkota, Nepal

Development of Common approaches for transformation of environmental, social and economic justice in the region

Nepal is a country entering into the youngest federal systems of democratic governance. So, it faces multidimensional risks and vulnerabilities in the overall development processes. The country is trying to enforce fundamental civil, political, economic, social, cultural and development rights of the citizens as most of these rights are enshrined in the newly promulgated constitution. In the meantime, it has also embarked crafting policies, plans and programs to materialize 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with goal-wise synchronized efforts. However, there remain many challenges in addressing environmental and climate risks and vulnerabilities, cross-border migration, crime, and trafficking in persons not only within the nation boundary but also in the entire South Asia region.

The Government of Nepal is party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various other international human right instruments (including ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, and CRC), SDG, SAARC Development Goals and other declarations. Directive Principles of the current Constitution of Nepal 2015 as well as different national and sectoral policies and plans have expressed commitments to effective service delivery and expanded the social protection base. Traditionally, the government is financing mainly public sector workers' social security benefits, and some other schemes to cover the most vulnerable sections of society. Since 1990s the government has introduced several measures of social protection targeting most vulnerable segments of the population by extending monthly allowances to elderly, widow, handicapped, people facing severe health problems, etc.

Thus, social protection is increasingly being recognized as an effective alternative approach to address the problems and vulnerability of those who were forced to remain in the margins historically. There is strong realization that benefits of market driven liberal economic growth models do not automatically trickle down to the poorest especially to the most vulnerable sections of the population. In fact, poverty has multiple facets, interacting and mutually reinforcing hunger, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, voicelessness and powerlessness. The systematic forms of exclusion and violence, unemployment and underemployment, and livelihood risks and vulnerabilities have remained at the centre of creating and perpetuating poverty and injustice. Social protection epitomizes the human security approach and tries to offer a broader, practical and effective way to reduce chronic vulnerability, poverty and inequality. Income centric measurement of poverty often does not capture the multiple deprivations and vulnerabilities facing the majority of people.

Even though several programs are being planned and implemented in Nepal in the sector of social protection, these are far from adequate given the breadth of the inequality and dimensions of injustices. Some programs focus on immediate relief to conflict affected people, some programs on poverty reduction; others focus on public works through Food for Work programs, school meals, others on labor market reforms, social care as well as micro-finance and micro insurance initiatives. There has been substantial increase in social security allowance for senior citizens, single women, people with disabilities, endangered communities and many more, however, not enough to address the entire range of the society that are in need of meaningful social protection schemes.

Commons: A Systemic Challenge to Capitalism

Shalmali Guttal, Thailand

Enclosures have appropriately been called a revolution of the rich against the poor. “Commons are not just a “third way” beyond state and market failures; they are a vehicle for claiming ownership in the conditions needed for life and its reproduction.” (Massimo de Angelis)

For generations, rural and urban communities in Southeast and South Asia have been creating and using commons, although they do not use this term. Commons scholarship is of course very important, but at the same time, we need to be mindful that as we seek to understand real, lived experiences of people in diverse contexts, we do not appropriate their realities to fit our analytical frameworks.

The conditions needed for life and its reproduction that De Angelis talks of, have become extremely precarious for the majority of the world’s peoples with the advance of global capitalism. The enclosures that Polanyi referred to, are the theft of these conditions, easing the concentration of all forms of wealth in the hands of a small minority. Enclosures have accelerated and intensified through myriad ways; today, even the concept of the commons is being enclosed to serve market purposes. The increasing dominance of market forces in all aspects of our lives systematically denies people the necessary conditions, capacities, opportunities and agency by which we can live well today, and in the future.

The commons offer us strategies to claim and sustain collective ownership of these conditions. Commons have immense potential to resist global capitalism and market domination, and co-create just, equitable, sustainable, non-extractivist social and economic systems.

What are commons?

In the broadest sense, I see the commons as different kinds of wealth, spaces, resources, values, social relations, systems, processes and activities that “belong to” groups or collectivities, which must be actively claimed, created, restored and protected for collective good and purpose, for present and future generations.

“Belonging” implies ownership, but ownership in this context is not proprietary. Rather, these are relationships that entail shared responsibility and shared beneficiary relationships; some call them stewardship, some call them care-taking, and even management.

Commons are not only the resources/wealth/spaces/terrains themselves. Equally important are the relationships between those involved in the commons. These relationships are expressed as rules, social conventions, norms, customs and customary or vernacular laws, and behavioral patterns.

Commons evolve in practice: Peter Linebaugh, the eminent historian and commons scholar talks about “commoning,” i.e., dynamic processes and actions that allow commons to be created, adapted and strengthened to last over generations and serve varying needs. These could be indigenous peoples’ ancestral lands, women’s health collectives, urban community

gardens, workers' cooperatives, online knowledge platforms, watershed protection areas, etc.

The commons demand conscious, deliberate participation and involve rights as well as responsibilities/obligations. People agree to be part of a commons, to enter into the system of rules (however informal or customary) of a commons. Commons governance entail a delicate balance of rules of access and use, boundaries, limits, inclusions and exclusions, that are developed by commons users, and recognized/respected by broader society.

It makes sense to see the commons as a paradigm that includes: tangible and intangible resources/wealth; people, communities acting collectively; and norms, rules and practices that manifest crucial values of equality, equity, dignity, respect and sustainability.

Agency in commons thinking is collective and autonomous from state and market institutions. At the same time, commons do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are nested within existing social, economic, environmental and political systems, or in the intersection of these systems. Commoners have to negotiate with these systems to create and protect commons. This is important to note when we talk about social protection as commons.

The best-known examples of commons are in nature: air, water, land, forests, biodiversity, eco-systems, climate, territories/domains. But commons are also social (health, education, safety), intellectual and cultural (knowledge, technology, the internet, literature, music) and institutional (self-help groups, mutual support associations). With the resurgence of extreme authoritarianism, intolerance, and criminalization of dissent, we need to bring commons thinking into the political realm as well: human rights, justice, democracy and security.

Despite categories, each commons contains natural, social, economic and political dimensions, whether a traditional irrigation system, urban vegetable garden, food collective, community forest, seed saving-sharing system, online knowledge portal, workers' cooperative or a local savings group.

Public spaces that are accessible to all, the assurance of physical security, and relevant information/knowledge, are all essential for people to be able to gather, build voice, engage in social and political dialogues, participate in policy processes, articulate and defend rights, and build popular democracy. Struggles of rural communities in India, Cambodia or Laos, to protect forests, lands, seeds and water, are connected with the struggles of migrant workers in factories, domestic services or the construction industry.

The notion of the commons does not negate individual agency and responsibility; protecting and managing collective resources requires a collectivity of individual actors working together towards shared goals.

Communities in many rural areas in Asia share labour, produce and income to maintain food reserves. Many villages have community forests, common water sources, and common lands for fishing, grazing, foraging/gathering and farming. In urban gardens, people farm individual plots but manage the garden collectively.

Threats to the Commons

Not surprisingly, the commons are spaces where the fiercest and most enduring resistances to capitalism, neoliberalism, corporate control and economic growth are being waged.

Threats to the commons are threats to all of us, our communities, societies, rights and lives. These include:

- Privatisation and private capture of natural, social, economic and knowledge wealth and resources through private property regimes (enclosures).
- Commodification of land, water, seeds, labour, knowledge, etc.; with carbon markets, offset schemes and the Green Economy, the environment, climate and life itself have been commodified.
- Extractivism: exploitation of natural and social wealth, and expropriation into global value chains to create wealth elsewhere.
- Financialisation: financial markets are penetrating deeper and deeper into the “real economy” of actual production of goods, services, infrastructure; new financial assets and markets are being created to trade these constructed commodities.

Again, if we look at climate change: new commodities and markets are being created from scratch to satisfy the demands by financial markets for new, high-return investments, for e.g. carbon credits, carbon trading rights, and other derivative contracts.

- Free trade and investment agreements.
- Globalisation of production and global value chains: they destroy the abilities of workers to form unions, political communities, undermine their abilities to organize, negotiate, build economies, etc.; no social wages and social protections are possible in such a production system.
- Bio-piracy and theft of knowledge: appropriation of the wealth and knowledge of peoples and societies into proprietary goods to generate monetary profits through intellectual property rights (IPR) rules; these capture seeds, biodiversity, traditional knowledge, medicines, etc.
- Militarisation and “securitization” of territories.
- Repression, criminalization of dissent, authoritarianism, dictatorship

Many governments are complicit and often proactive in enabling these threats through laws, policies and international agreements. In fact, the state can enable or disable commoning through the exercise of its authority. This is especially pertinent to the articulation of public interest.

Public goods and services, i.e., those under the authority of the state, are generally not considered commons. But these goods and services--water systems, food programmes, public procurement, health systems, infrastructure, educational establishments, etc.--are extremely important to ensure equitable access to the conditions necessary for “life and its reproduction” that De Angelis referred to.

Taking the example of water, appropriate laws are needed to protect water in its free state and prevent its commodification and privatization. At the same time, to ensure that all

people in a society have equitable access to water, water needs to be channeled as a public good/service with equity-oriented regulation that states must enforce.

The governance of water—in its free state and as a public good—does not have to fall into a bipolar trap of private or state ownership/management. Water can and should be governed as a commons through community councils, rural and urban water boards, water user committees, etc., with the necessary rules and regulations for inclusion, equity, justice, exclusion and accountability that are recognized and respected by state.

Social protection and social commons are inter-dependent on public goods, services, infrastructure, knowledge and institutions, that have been built with public resources (money, labour, capacities, knowledge, natural resources), many of which have been nurtured through commoning. These are the “assets” that corporations most want.

Enclosures of knowledge and knowledge production through privatization of educational and research centres, patents, copy rights and corporate supported IPR laws, have serious implications for social protection and the public interest. Corporations and private institutions that hold patents and copyrights can dictate what knowledge would be produced and released, and when, as well as suppress research and knowledge critical to public and environmental health and safety.

Conclusion

The commons are not free of contradictions. Commons are non-commodified systems of production, but what is produced in some commons are sold as commodities, for example, grains, livestock and other foods. Commons are about collectivity and non-proprietary “ownership,” but to be sustained, they cannot be open to everyone without rules and exclusions. Commons foster equality and equity, but they are not free from class, caste, race and gender discrimination. Women are critical actors in all commons, but commons themselves have not necessarily been emancipatory spaces for gender identity and equality.

The climate crisis is, in a sense, the ultimate crisis of capitalism: there is no easy exit from this endgame; we have to change how we live, produce, consume; we can no longer try to convert ecological limits to barriers that can be overcome through techno fixes; we cannot use modern science to recreate nature—all that has been tried (at great cost) and has failed.

Commoning practices have been getting increasing visibility over the past decade because they offer creative survival options in difficult times, and allow people to effectively resist extractive development, economic growth and capitalist expansion, while rebuilding their own agency and capabilities. By expanding commons, we expand spaces that capital is unable to occupy.

Because of their creative power and resistance potential, they are also open to ideological capture and co-optation—which has become another terrain of struggle.

The relationships between the commons, state and market are complex, and must be carefully negotiated as we build social commons. Particularly important here are issues of ownership, governance, scale and agency. We cannot allow commons to be used as ways to

subsidize the state and market. We must not forget how the care work of women has been exploited through austerity and privatization programmes. Social commons should not become de facto 'safety nets' for goods, services and infrastructure that must remain in the public realm and be governed democratically.

Building social commons must be supported by policies and laws at multiple levels to enable commoning, for example: collective, non-proprietary "property" rights; de-privatisation; equality and equity across gender, class, caste, race, culture; synergy with public goods regimes; dismantling the threats to the commons; networking different kinds of commons; etc. Experience in how to do this exists among women, workers, social movements, food producers, indigenous peoples, hackers, scholars and rights activists across the world. We need to learn from them, and build communities of learning across gender, class, race, culture and geography.

From Absolute Dominion to Common Property

Bru Laín Escandell, Spain

"The mechanic is under a sort of limited slavery" (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260b).

"The man who possesses no other property than his labour power must be the slave of other men" (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875).

Property as a keystone right:

"Property is the guardian of every other right, and to deprive a people of this, is in fact to deprive them of their liberty" (Arthur Lee, 1774). Dispossession makes you dependent on another's will (unfree): "The mechanic is under a sort of limited slavery" (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260b). "The man who possesses no other property than his labour power must be the slave of other men" (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875).

Modern Liberal Property

Liberalism assumes that property MUST be individual, exclusive, and absolute: W. Blackstone (1765): "the sole and despotic dominium which one man claims and exercises over the external things in the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe".

Napoleonic Code (1804, art. 544): "the right to enjoy and to dispose of things in the most absolute manner".

F. Hayek (1973): "those objects over which only particular individuals are allowed to dispose and from the control of which all others are excluded".

Actual Property Rights

However, “individual and absolute property rights” have never existed: The idea of “individual and absolute exclusiveness” does not reflect most of the current juridical forms of property rights nor their historical development.

Roman Law already included: Res Publicae: things that, by natural/civil law, belong to all without restriction.

Res Nullius: things that belong to nobody, so they can be freely appropriated.

Res Universitatis: things that belong to a particular public-corporation.

Res Communes: things that, by nature, cannot be appropriated by anyone.

Res Communes

Common property is a resource appropriated by a community through some particular mode of self-organization and management (Ostrom, 1990).

Thus, commons resources necessarily entail:

- a) a particular resource (material or immaterial);
 - b) a particular community (limited and exclusive); and
 - c) a particular regime of governance (rights, rules and sanctions).
- Ex.: crop/pasture field, urban equipment/facility, free software...

Commons As A Bundle Of Rights

“Bundle of Rights”: Property rights are fragmented among different agents and their particular uses of a resource. Property rights (particularly of common property) decompose and recombine themselves according to distinct contexts and power relationships.

Bundle of Rights Associated with Positions (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992):

Owner Proprietor Claimant Authorized User

Access and Withdrawal X X X X

Management X X X

Exclusion X X

Alienation X

Commons As Fiduciary

a) The property of land belongs to the people/nation.

b) “Common” or “private property” is nothing but a common or a private appropriation of a resource as a public fideicommissum in a Principal-Agent relationship.

c) The “common” or “private owner” is a trustee of the sovereign/people’s property.

d) The sovereign is the Principal (trustor); the proprietor is the Agent (trustee) in a fiduciary public relationship called “Common”, “Private” or “State’s property rights”.

Common/Private/State’s property is a fiduciary relationship between the Principal (the people -right of alienation) and its Agents (Common or Private owner – right of use).

Common/Private/Public owner is nothing but a trustee/agent of the people’s property.

Owner Proprietor Claimant Authorized User Fiduciary position Principal (the people/nation)

Agents (Private, Common or Governmental)

Public Utility Of Land

Democratic and Republican Constitutionalism: USSR (1917); Weimar (1919); Austria (1919); Spain (1931); Italy (1948); Portugal (1976); Mexico (1910, art. 27):

“The ownership of lands and waters within the limits of the national territory corresponds to the nation, which has the right to transmit ownership of them to private individuals, constituting private property. This cannot be appropriate except for public utility [...]

The acquisition of particular properties [...] is considered of public utility

[...] All contracts and concessions are revisable. Executive declares them null when they involve serious prejudice to public interest”.

Chapter 3

The importance of commons in the process of social transformation

A Few Tracks to Reinvent an Imaginative Common Project

Chantal Delmas, France

The idea of "our Common social future", is decisive because we are forged in our struggles by a neoliberal managerial thought. I would be tempted to say that we are also formatted by Western occidental thought that wanted to be synonymous of freedom in the 18th century. I am referring to the French revolution that shaped our thinking in Europe.

Private life separated from public life

Private life is the domain of the family, of care, and it also means the unpaid activities, as opposed to a public life with an economic sphere and market value, but also a stronger power on the city, resulting in « a general will » supposedly above the individuals, establishing a sovereignty of the people in whose name the state can act. This presupposed sovereignty of the people is represented by the state. The public sphere is also constituted of a state which according to the balance of power between the exploiters and the exploited gives at certain times rights to the exploited peoples.

This was particularly the case in Europe with the compromise after the second world war which gave the people some rights: social security and paid holidays for instance.

At other times this state is the weapon of capital. The state gives a certain legitimacy to neoliberalism to carry out its oppression.

As the state corresponds to national sovereignty in whose name we are entitled to commit violence and use legitimate force on the exploited peoples. This dichotomy between public life and private life has also allowed us to cut society in two, with a social and private life without pecuniary value and an economic life that would give all its value to the human and is in fact under our eyes, right now destroying the human.

It is time to break with this logic through which we are conditioned, which penetrates us

all and to consider that what is in the realm of privacy is as valuable as what is in public sphere. As long as we have these distinctions between these two spheres the value given to work will always be directed by and for the capital which does not give value to everything that is in the private sphere and by extension all that is in the field of care.

It is common to speak about the wealth of the West made on the back of the colonized countries. Can we not also talk about the wealth of capitalism certainly on the backs of colonized countries but also on the backs of women who have taken charge of domestic labour and care work all free or underpaid reproduction work.

In a society where social issues are becoming increasingly important neoliberalism sees the privatization of everything that is part of our social protection as a new source of profit and tries to transform our social protection (health, retirement, old age ...) through privatisations.

The fact of speaking of social commons is a way to break with this dichotomy, it is to consider that the human is a whole person with certain functions of production and reproduction. The fact of separating the two, leads society to take decisions that go against the needs of a society that lives in the interest of all of humanity and its ecological environment.

We need experiences and analysis that will allow us to create a new imaginary of what is possible. I will describe different experiences that I know to trace the tracks of a new imaginary of what is possible, not in abstract but rather in the light of what is already contained in today's international realities.

Before going further I need to say my position is not neutral. For me the goal of the commons process, the project that animates me is not that there is a sector of the commons besides the public services and the private sphere, but that it is the heart of society itself which is governed by the Commons. The commons constitute a social democratic process between people, its main rule is the right of use, as opposed to private capitalist ownership

For these reasons I am also interested in more traditional forms of enterprises which are not in the field of the commons but where the people who work aspire to the Commons. On which experiences to build another imaginary than the neoliberal managerial model? First of all, I want to point out that in the social commons what is constituted as commons does not necessarily claim the common ground.

In the international field of unions and labour

In the case of cooperatives, it is more a question of social appropriation than of commons. But the forms of work cooperatives such as Fralib in France, which is a cooperative of production, have the characteristics of developing a commons. They have the democratic characteristic of one man equals one voice and the deliberation that exists for decisions. Even if at the beginning the recovery of the company takes place on the basis of the preservation of employment, it soon become a global project with ecological social and feminist concerns.

However, a problem is difficult to address in companies when they are threatened with closure: most employees reclaim a boss with objective reluctance on the issue of funding, but also subjective reluctance. How to do without the bosses? A form of mental alienation exists in the same way as it has existed in the phenomena of decolonization (colony-colonizing relationship).

To speak in other words, there is the disappearance of our singular imagination: "the challenge is to reconstruct a common post-neoliberal imagination". In this context, how can capitalist property be deconstructed in a fairly simple way in order to restore hope, confidence in the ability to run a business? This clearly passes by the claim of the right of use and it also involves a real existence of the company that does not have a legal status. Existence can become real by ceasing to put the powers of the company in the hands of the company shareholder.

Another track on the issue of property: the more the economy will be relocated closer to the needs of the population, the lower the ecological costs will be. The question of ownership will be de-complexified or simplified, understood and acceptable to all.

The social and political people's movements have an clear agreement on the need for the relocation of the economy. This consensus is a great point of support to constitute a hegemonic bloc on the question of the commons. If things are simple enough for cooperatives in their affiliation with the Common even if they do not have the name, it is much more complex in the case of bigger companies.

The employees believe that these experiences of cooperatives are only at the margin and therefore they cannot be a fulcrum for it. It seems that the commons can only stay in micro experiments.

It seems to me that in order to go beyond this contradiction we have to identify the immediate demands and see what could pull towards the common. This should be one of our first tasks.

The trade unions are often on the defensive, with their back-to-the-wall position that does not allow them to have a forward-looking view of the future. We often see this when they hurry to sign contracts to give a positive dimension to dismissals, instead of claiming a job for everyone. Yet we are in a situation where the compromises between capital and workers are becoming less and less possible if not impossible.

We may distinguish 3 main axes going in the sense of the common, and of the social re-appropriation of the companies:

All that can reduce the return of capital for the benefit of employment goes in the direction of eliminating the company of capital for the benefit of a common society governed by right of use.

In this context we could say that any claim on the reduction of working time paid at the same salary and a job for all, moves the cursor. A universal social security - covering

employment, health, periods of unemployment, retirement, education - could, among other things, eliminate the line between production and reproduction (unpaid or low-paid reproduction work and leaving women at the bottom of the social ladder).

Democracy in the company: We live in a society where democracy only applies to the rights of the citizens. When a human passes the door of the company she does not depend any more on the democratic rights of her country but is subject to the right of the primacy of capital over the process of work. We should break this dichotomy by asking to be full citizens in our company.

The meaning of work (close to the notion of democracy, but more precise in the discomfort felt by workers today). Many employees no longer understand the interest of their work, the latter being dictated by a financial profitability rather than the usefulness of production as such. Workers want to give meaning to their work. The re-appropriation of the meaning of their work in order to be useful to society is a crucial demand that gives new meaning to the community that constitutes the company that goes beyond the capital society.

This desire to take into account as essential demand the interest of the content of the work is very recent (burn out, suicides ...) The unions begin to take into account this problem, not only in terms of victimization (harassment, burn out), but in terms of the content of the work.

This aspiration to make sense of her work is also very strong among young people who create their own collective interdisciplinary and supportive work.

In the movements claiming the commons such as movements on water, land grabbing, digital commons, energy, health issue, education.

The main issue from which many other misunderstandings in the Commons movement flow is the question I asked at the beginning: are the commons a part of society next to the trading society or is the Common an alternative to neoliberal society?

Depending on the answer to this question, property will not be considered from the same angle. In the first case the question of ownership is not a problem no matter who owns if there is a democratic process. In the second case the question of the predominant right of use in relation to the right of ownership arises in many debates.

The question of a universal social security scheme or the unconditional salary is a strong subject too. Is it possible to agree that the way of financing the system is decisive? Financing by contributions may be considered as commons by workers, financing by pension fund can be another variable of adjustment and put pressure on wages.

As for democratic processes, in the various places of the commons, in the social forums, the international assemblies of the commons but also at the Paris "nuit debout" or the Spanish indignados, decisions are taken by consensus. This consensus satisfies no one because it is the result of fear of making decisions by voting that divides the movement.

The ESF (European Social Forum) was against the war in Iraq, the strong point of

mobilizations in 2003, but unable to make more complex decisions later on including social issues, debt, etc.

The ESF died, there was an attempt to replace it with a European Altersummit with unions and social movement actors. In order to avoid that someone who represents only himself has as much weight as a trade unionist representing his organization, no one is allowed to speak in the name of the summit. This has not allowed more effectiveness and it has not solved the problems of efficiency and decision-making.

Often in these assemblies there are at the end decisions made by agreements between the most influential people. This is a kind of invisible power.

However, decisions by consensus are insufficient, we should be able to have deliberative assemblies. The fact of being outvoted at one time does not mean exclusion and long-term splitting.

A new form of democracy is to be found between the consensual and deliberative way. However, the consensus allows to keep a common place to discuss, so few decisions are taken in the assemblies. They are the breeding ground of many networks, created thanks to the meeting and its climate of confidence.

The clashes of culture for groups coming from different horizons are difficult to manage too from a democratic point of view, the symbolic and cultural codes are often very different. I am thinking in particular about what can be said about including the dialogue to be established between militants of ATTAC, activists of Alternatiba (indignant mode with gestural codes) and activists from working-class neighbourhoods less accustomed to speeches and dialogues.

I would also like to draw the attention to movements of a new type, encouraged by the social forums and also the ecologist movement: the so-called ZAD (Zone to defend.). We had a particularly emblematic fight in France against the construction of a new airport at Notre Dame des Landes. There are many networks « against useless big projects ». These movements bring together very diverse people, apart from their common opposition to the construction of an airport. They have created a counter society on the spot with permaculture, schools, other industry and handicrafts that meet the needs of the people on the spot, with modes of democratic functioning. After years of struggle the French government had to withdraw the project. "In the name of the rule of law" this is the words of Emmanuel Macron our president, demanded the evacuation of places and it was carried out with unprecedented violence. The Zadists (peoples living on the ZAD) resisted.

What is at stake in such a struggle is a Common position against the Rule of Law, which in fact is the state in the hands of the neoliberal managerial society which defends the right of capitalist property.

In France, when there is a social and economic territorial struggle and when the inhabitants have proposals to manage their territory in a way that does not correspond to the one that is imposed on them, one claims the ZAD. This experience of Notre Dame des Landes weighs heavily for the construction of a new imaginary of the Common. This experiment is not

alone. It can be compared to the fight against the TGV railway in Italy or the struggle against a pipeline in Canada.

All these struggles bring together different kinds of movements (farmers, workers, ecologists...). They try to find new democratic ways and invent a new way of life closer to social and environmental human rights.

Public Service and Commons

This problem concerns all the movements, whether or not they belong to the Commons movement. Our discourse on the overtaking of public services by Commons, may not be understood and create useless rigidities. If in the case of the battle over water in Greece the common appeared as the best solution compared to a state that sells all public services, it is not the same as when public services exist, even if they are attacked from all sides. It seems to me that we must demand democratized public services with participation in the decision of the users and the employees which would make it possible to make public services tend towards the Commons.

The commons movement also criticizes some public service arrangements, for example on the issue of energy, for not being able to assume an equal right to energy in all territories. A pertinent question is about the federation of the commons on these issues of equality of citizens in the territories?

Commons and political left parties

Faced with the lack of an alternative to liberalism, the commons offer a vocabulary used by many peoples from the left.

However, for the moment there is no real elaboration on these questions. Either we only talk about the SSE (social and solidarity economy), that is just involved with cooperative and associations or the question of the project of the commons is just mentioned while speaking of a common society.

The importance of thinking on social justice is to feed a project of the Commons by putting in dialogue actors of social and political movements and researchers. Many meetings are organized to build bridges between the various field of Commons.

Spaces of coordination between the different political levels would be most useful. This is the research that is in front of us in term of theory and experiences. Some speak of a federation of the commons while others want a democratic and self-managed planification.

As at the time of the communist bloc in the 20th century under the influence of the left parties was born a collective breaking with the capitalist common sense and with the dominant imaginary, via cultural and sports associations, popular education, allotment gardens, local press, we now have again to develop a counter-culture with a positive and daily content for the class struggle.

What is taking shape today is the birth of another counter-culture, which is based on the commons. It is more polymorphic than that of the working class but of equal importance in terms of power and continuity. This seminar participates through its exchanges in the construction of this new counter culture.

Towards Social, Solidarity, and Antagonistic Urban Economies

Peter North, United Kingdom

In contrast to a common perception within ... the left in the past two centuries, today it is generally agreed that centralised socialist economies are neither feasible nor desirable as alternative systems to capitalism in the new millennium. ... We know how to make an economic system based on self-interest, but not how to make one based on generosity". Santos and Rodriguez-Garavito (2007)

Capitalocentric thinking

The way we think of 'capitalism' makes it difficult to think of its supersession. We have created a monster while there are other ontologies. The totalising metanarratives of 'capitalism' occlude a diversity of non-capitalist economic relations in market economies. Assuming all market actors have a capitalist ethic is like assuming all women have a maternal ethic. Alternatives are not pre-capitalist hangovers of minority activities in the interstices of the 'real' economy. They are as real as any other economic forms. We need to help grow them.

Eve Sedgwick "asks us to reconsider the "paranoid" critical stance so prevalent among social scientists, which tends to confirm what we already know—that the world is full of devastation and oppression, and that transformation is an unlikely if not hopeless project. She suggests instead an open reparative stance that refuses to know too much, that makes space for hope and expands possibility. Unlike the critical stance, which is often suspicious and dismissive, the reparative stance is receptive and hospitable, animated by care for the world and its inhabitants" (Gibson Graham 2006:6).

Commoning

We can think of Commoning – but how? Who is the actor? What is the strategy for social commoning, beyond land as the commons? We may think of commoning land – and Labour/Enterprise, Money, etc.

We know the (heroic) capitalist entrepreneur – with production for profit, retained by the entrepreneur as a reward for his risk/skill/special abilities. He is different from the social entrepreneur – as above, but for 'good' – or rethinking entrepreneurship as commoning.

The social economy is helping the excluded to join the economy. The Future is then seen as with (good?) jobs. The solidarity or diverse or community economy – starting with how we want to live with dignity, and creating an economy that cultivates commons, recognising Polanyian diversity. The antagonistic economy – fighting back against the pathologies of neoliberal capitalist globalisation: PROACTIVELY commoning.

The antagonistic economy

Is this part of a Gramscian, Polanyian fightback?

Land: Community land trusts, land invasions, guerrilla gardening, squatting...

Labour: Recovered/occupied factories, worker-owned co-operatives. The active strike. SMEs?

Money: Local, community, complementary and alternative currencies.

Racism: The black social economy in the Americas.

All examples of a wider conception of social commoning?

But are we doing it prefiguratively, or well?

“We were aware of a senior Marxist geographer sitting in the back row, listening attentively. Near the end of the question and answer period, after some urging, he made his intervention. Our material was interesting, he said, but it wasn’t compelling. We failed to acknowledge the power of global economic dynamics and the force of political conservatism that could squash alternative economic experiments of the kind we had described. We seemed oblivious to the many historical examples of local endeavours that had ended in disbandment, defeat, and disgrace.” (Gibson-Graham (2002)

“In part (the proletariat) throws itself into doctrinaire experiments, exchange banks and workers associations, hence into a movement in which it renounces the revolutionising of the old world by means of the latter's own great, combined resources, and seeks, rather, to achieve its salvation behind society's back, in private fashion, within its limited conditions of existence, and hence necessarily suffers shipwreck” (Marx 1852/1974). Question: is this still true?

Ordinary people in the 21st century are able to rise above Marxist ‘dwarfish co-operation’: They individually and collectively possess more material goods and have much higher levels of education than in Marx’s time.

Are we still post-industrial utopians?

The political opportunity structure is more conducive to their growth, in good and bad ways. The Precariat/Big Society: They are able to form networks using cheap modern IT. Ideas can be cheap/financed by alternative currencies, crowdfunding/peer lending.

We are the other side of Polanyi’s ‘great transformation’, into ‘accumulation by dispossession’. We are abandoned, not repressed. There is a need for confident, proactive social commoning re-embedding the economy in society, beyond irresponsible unoverseen markets.

In revolutions, people 'take back', or socialise work, money and land. To what extent can we do this without fundamentally attacking private property and a system established to protect it? Non-paranoid, non capitalocentric thinking suggests we can, and this is more than Marx's dwarfish co-operation.

To what extent this (a) self-limiting change that does NOT threaten mainstream institutions but can grow within-and-against the state? (b) we are dealing with Harvey's 'accumulation by dispossession', a long-term capitalist crisis, climate change? Not industrialisation. (c) is this is part of a process of globalised neo-liberalisation?

Given (b) rather than (a) and the need to avoid (c) the issue is "how do we do this better", with more ethical content, and how does the local structure of political opportunities affect/channel that process?

The problem is more: Is there enough of what Buber called a 'co-operative content' in alternative economic practices? Are they good enough? We need to nurture them and avoid/negotiate blocks.

Chapter 4

The new commons debate: The importance of commons in the process of political transformation

The Sun of the Future

Roberto Morea, Italy

The commons are not something that comes from above, falling out of the sky. Commons have to be fought for, they are the result of a social conflict. After the second world war the working-class struggle opened the way for the welfare state, and the rights we have today are the result of this struggle.

However, after the crisis, we are now facing a new phase of the struggle. This is also linked to what we call the defeat of real socialism. With this defeat, the victory of TINA - there is no alternative - is spread all over the world. We are living now in this drama: we have no alternative. But at the end of last century and the beginning of this new millennium, the fight of Cochabamba and the fight for water, the fight against profit on the basis of natural resources and human rights, give us the opportunity to re-think what is the class struggle.

At the same time, we are witnessing the transformation of the capitalist model, there is a crisis of accumulation and we do not have any more the working class as it was. We have to really re-think also the class. In my opinion, the way we define the commons is at the same time a way to re-think class. That is why for me it is a crucial point for the left. With this approach we can rethink how can we join and build an organic view in this process of the commons.

We can use part of the commoning process for transformation but also, as we saw with the example of the open source, for capital accumulation. We have to think then how to redefine the commons strategy in order to build political coherence and to transform the status quo. This means also we have to rethink the public sphere. When we had the referendum on water in Italy, we had a motto that said that after bringing water back in the public sphere, we would have to republicize the public sphere. Because the public sphere as it is, the role of the state is not anymore necessarily positive, the state does not defend and enlarge our rights anymore but is more and more working for the privatisation of what we need for our lives.

It is now the weakness of the state that makes commoning difficult. We had given state too much of what was ours, we therefore now have to redefine ownership.

Finally, the question of the commons is also linked, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and after the defeat of some experiments, to something else. We lost the opportunity to have what we call in Italy '*Il sol dell'avenire*', in a way the commons strategy is a way to rebuild what is our own, our Sun of the Future.

Social Security and the Role of NGOs in Vietnam

Dong Huy Cuong, Vietnam

General information about social security/social services

It is my view that social protection is a set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income. Social protection plays an essential role in developing and expanding social shield first of all for the poor, extending benefits for all of society by fostering inclusive economic growth, reducing inequality, and improving security and political stability. Well-designed and cost-effective social protection programs also boost human capital, and thus, regional competitiveness in a globalized world.

Social security plays an important role in socio-economic development strategy of each country. It aims to realize basic human rights and social justice and equality and contribute to building a harmonious, civilized, democratic, and progressive society towards sustainable development.

Social security policy has a wide comprehension and is always completed in line with the development of awareness and socio-economic development standard of each country and region. It is based on responsibility sharing and social justice enforcement, which is implemented with diversified forms, modes and measures.

According to the United Nations, the social security system includes key pillars as following:

- Social insurance: pension, health insurance, allowance, short-term social insurance
- Social benefits: poverty reduction allowance, support vulnerable groups, natural disaster relief.
- Universal Social Benefits: family support, public healthcare services, allowance for the elderly and disabled people.
- Private Benefit Systems

Basic principles of the social security system:

- *The whole people*, all people are ensured to have social protection and access social security system;
- *Sharing* in the principle of unity, solidarity and mutual support and compensation among individuals and social and state groups;
- *Justice and sustainability*, combining responsibility, rights and contribution to benefits;
- *Enhancing responsibility* of subjects and effort of citizens, families and the community in ensuring social security.

Concept of social security in Vietnam

In Vietnam, building and successfully implementing social security policies must take into account of special factors. As a country which underwent several wars and is constantly affected by natural disasters and climate change and in the process of industrialization and urbanization with impact of market economy, the number of people in need of social support is high, accounting for more than 20% of total population.

Vietnam has 9.2 million old people, 7.2 million disabled people, 1.5 million disadvantaged children, nearly 5% poor families, 1.8 million families which need sudden support due to natural disasters, fire, crop failure, 234,000 HIV carriers, 204,000 drug users, 30,000 victims of domestic violence, not mention to many street women and children who are abused.

From a point of view, the State's stance on social security is to build and implement a series of policies and programs to ensure that all citizens have minimum income and have access to basic social services like education, healthcare, housing, clean water, and information through improving self-social welfare capacity of citizens and State support. Building diversified and comprehensive social security system which gradually expands coverage and shares among the State, society and citizens and among citizen groups in one generation and among generations, it focuses on four main contents:

- *First*, enhance employment opportunities; ensure minimum income and sustainable poverty reduction for vulnerable workers through providing vocational training for individuals and households, production development, credit, job generation and information about labor market.

- *Second*, offer opportunities for laborers to take part in social insurance system, and unemployment insurance to actively deal with when income reduces or loses due to risks, sickness, occupational accidents and elderly.
- *Third*, provide regular support for people with special circumstances and sudden support for those who face unanticipated or uncontrollable risks (crop failure, natural disasters, earthquake, war and poverty) through granting in cash and kind insured by State budget.
- *Fourth*, enhance citizens' access to basic social services like education, health care, housing, clean water, environment sanitation and information.

Social security plays an important role in promoting socio-economic development and political stability of a country. In Vietnam, it contributes to stabilizing workers' lives. It replaces or offsets part of the income when an employee is in disadvantaged situations (becomes ill/incapacitated, loses his job, or dies). Social security also contributes to ensure safety and stability for the whole economy. A good social security system will strengthen the relations between the State, employers and employees. Social security also helps to boost social justice, thus contributing to political stability and social order.

With special conditions, Vietnam has built a social security system based on five pillars: social insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance, social relief and social support and incentives. In fact, five pillars aim to realize three strategic functions of the social security system: preventing, minimizing and dealing with risks. Compared to popular model in the world, the social security system in Vietnam has a special part that is social preferential policy. It aims to realize the goal of rendering those who sacrificed or contributed to the revolutionary cause and the nation and demonstrate the State and social responsibility for caring those who contributed to the revolution and ensure them to have stable life.

How VNGOs participate in social security

In addition to fulfilling their functions and missions as stipulated, VNGOs/people's organizations has been active in the compilation, counter-argument, formulation, instigation and supervision of social security related laws and policies implementation, especially in fields that are relevant to their members' rights and interest. Their functions are clearly stated in the Constitution (Clause 9 and Clause 10) and in legal documents.

In policy-making process: There is no legal documents clearly regulating how VNGOs/people's organizations participate in the law-making process. However, in recent years, they have had influences on the policy-making of Vietnam, including those related to social security. Such influences come from their programs, as well as cooperation with ministries and agencies, which is responsible draft the related law bill.

Some major organizations such as the Vietnam Women's Union and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour has persistently defended its viewpoint in Congress forums, in the National Council, in meetings with the government etc.

In the implementation of social support policy: This is what VNGOs/ people's organizations are doing very well recent years. Social organizations have carried out many programs and projects

like vocation training, generating jobs, providing assistance to vulnerable groups (women, children, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, war victims, victims of natural disasters, violence, human trafficking...)

Their activities have contributed to improving living conditions of people who made contributions to the nation. By the end of 2015, more than 98% of families of social policy beneficiary have living conditions which are equal or higher than average level of the communal residents. With active coordination of people's organizations, social assistance policies have been implemented effectively. The number of people receiving social assistance increased from 2.4 million people in 2012 to nearly 2.7 million in 2015 (accounting for 3% of total population), mainly over 80-year old people, serious disabled people and orphans.

Their prioritized fields are:

- *Poverty reduction*: People's organizations always pay attention to poverty reduction and accompany with the State to pursue the sustainable poverty reduction goal. They mobilize all sources like capital, labor, techniques, and land resources, take part in vocational training, support production and develop fields. They focus on economic restructuring towards active and effective ways to diversify income, develop farm economy, accelerate labor exports, apply preferential credit policy to poor households and offer preferential interest rates to poor households who are ethnic minority people, disabled people when they borrow capital to produce, run business, participate in vocational training courses, and build houses. They also offer preferential loans for students and pupils of poor families and expand capital mobilization networks.
- *Ensuring social security for vulnerable groups*: To carry out social assistance activities for disadvantaged subjects, people's organizations have paid due attention to many voluntary activities for community health and ensuring social security, such as Youth Union with "Tet for the Poor", "relief the sick", "bring music to hospital", and a compassionate journey for public health, helping people overcome the consequences of rainstorm.

Achievements

Over the past 30 years, together with economic achievements, Vietnam has made great effort to invest in policy and mechanism reform to implement social security to constantly improve the living condition of citizens, significantly contributing to sustainable development.

- *First*, social security attaches with social progress and development and economic development in the context of market economy. In recent times, despite domestic and international economic fluctuations and limited sources, the State attach much importance to social security and livelihood development affairs in line with economic development. They invest more in mountainous areas, ethnic minority groups, poor districts, villages and hamlets, especially disadvantaged areas, and island districts.

- *Second*, the legal system is gradually completed to ensure social security for all people. The Constitution 2013 first affirms basic social security rights for people (Article 34: Citizens have the rights to ensure social security; Article 59: The State creates equal opportunities for citizens to enjoy social welfare and develop social security system.

- *Third*, State investment in social security is increasing. Total expenses for social security made up 5.88% of GDP in 2012 and the figure increased to 6.6% in 2015. Despite economic difficulty, the Party and State do not reduce expenses on social security, effectively implement social policy from different sources like ODA, non-refundable aids and sources from enterprises, organizations and citizens.

- *Fourth*, Vietnam fulfilled many MDGs ahead the schedule. Living conditions of citizens, especially the poor, ethnic minority people and vulnerable people have been improved. Most people have jobs. Unemployment rate was low, below 2%. The number of labourers who joined social insurance reached more than 20% and who joined unemployment insurance hit 17%. Most labourers have access health care and the health insurance rate was 71.6%. Around 3% of disadvantaged people get monthly allowance. Universal preschool, primary and junior-high school education has been completed. Housing, clean water, and information are significantly improved.

Challenges

- The State plays both role: state management and service provider. In many localities, an official at the same time decides who are social assistance beneficiaries and pay state subsidies.

- The coverage of social security, especially social insurance, remains low and vulnerable to increasing inflation and disasters. Low-quality services and complicated administrative processes are making social insurance less attractive. In addition, there are still employers who do not pay insurance for employees', limiting the effectiveness of social insurance.

- NGOs and people's organizations are lack of information about State social security policies, programs, and projects.

Let us talk Politics

Birgit Daiber, Germany

After years of commoning in conferences, cooperation projects, networking, discussions on the diversity of experiences and designing strategies for broadening them – I think it is time to discuss how to implement them on a political level: Commons as one dimension of initiatives to reclaim a social, ecological and democratic Europe connected with the reconstruction and democratization of public services.

Different from some of the commons networks in Europe which try to stay outside direct political debates, claiming commons as a fundamental new way of economic and social practice that is not assignable to one or the other political direction, I think commons are potentially an essentially left issue. Why? Very simple: The question of property is basic for all left politics from its (organised) beginning in the 19th century – until today. In his theory of value, Karl Marx revealed the contradiction between exchange value and use value. And this too is still relevant today. Within these two dimensions of left thinking we find the

global movements of the commons. Francois Houtart says in his basic manifesto from 2011 that commons initiatives focus on use value, democratic participation and autonomy, being part of a new post-capitalist paradigm and in a short note from 2014 he is pointing out: “Concretely, it means to transform the four “fundamentals” of any society: relations with nature; production of the material base of all life, physical, cultural, spiritual; collective social and political organization and culture. For the first one, the transformation means to pass from the exploitation of nature as a natural resource merchandize to the respect of nature as the source of life. For the second one: to privilege use value rather than exchange value, with all the consequences with regard to the concept of property. The third one implies the generalization of democratic practices in all social relations and all institutions and finally inter- culturality means to put an end to the hegemony of Western culture in the reading of the reality and the construction of social ethics. Elements of this new paradigm, post-capitalist, are already present all over the world, in many social movements and popular initiatives. Theoretical developments are also produced. So, it is not a “utopian vision” in the pejorative sense of the word. But a clear aim and definition is necessary to organize the convergences of action. It is a long-term process which will demand the adoption of transitions, facing the strength of an economic system ready to destroy the world before disappearing. It means also that the structural concept of class struggle is not antiquated (tax havens and bank secrecy) are some of its instruments). Social protests, resistances, building of new experiences are sources of real hope.”

European elections

We are just in time, as left parties in Europe are preparing their national campaigns and their European performance for the next European elections in 2019. Election-campaigns always give the opportunity to discuss programmes and projects more intensely in public debates, and so the Common Good could become one of the core-issue for the Left. Practical initiatives and debates are already well developed on different levels in some countries – as e.g. Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and France and Belgium and there are hundreds of examples of successful initiatives on municipal, national and international levels. Just to give some few examples:

The municipal level: most of commons initiatives are local activities, in cities as well as in rural areas. Urban Commons are prominent and well documented. Cities as Seoul (KOR), Barcelona (ES), Naples (IT), Ghent (BE) and Frome (GB) show how to realise urban commons and how municipalities can work together with commoners. There are legal competences too supporting commons initiatives. The Berlin Senate for example has the right to confiscate abandoned property (but they don't use it yet and there is no obligation for social use).

National level: The movement for Water as a commons in Italy initiated a referendum with the result that 51% of Italian citizens voted for it. The government must act and the Parliament has to discuss new laws – a still on-going struggle. The water-movement is putting the question of Commons in the context of re-thinking the role of the public in the management of goods and services related to universal human rights.

The “old” left idea, that the State per se would guarantee public services, failed with processes of privatization – and even when the State is still holding the ownership, goods and services are often given to private companies. It is crucial to suspend market activities from public services to ensure that profits in this sector are re-invested for public use. At the same time, public services must be democratized and there has to be public control with the participation of workers and citizens (only?) to guarantee correct functioning of the common good.

On national levels, the laws on social and common use of property and the laws on cooperatives are decisive. An interesting example is the legal structure of SCOPs in France (“Société cooperative et participative” or “société coopérative ouvrière de production”). In 2016 there were 2680 SCOPs with 45 000 active members – and they are still on the rise.

International level: Bolivia and Ecuador included Commons explicitly in their constitutions. In 2010 the UN general assembly adopted the resolution on access to clean water as basic human right. The initiative for a fundamental declaration on the Common Good of Humanity goes beyond this – well aware that a proclamation has no legally binding character but can be an instrument for social and political mobilization, creating a new consciousness and serving as a basis for the convergence of social and political movements at the international level. Clearly it is a long-term task, but it needs to be started. Not only can the coming together of social movements like the World Social Forum and political parties like the Forum of São Paulo contribute by promoting such a Declaration, but individual countries through their representatives in international organizations like Unesco and the United Nations can also push this agenda forward.

European commons

Coming to the European Level: Since some European Parliamentarians from different political groups founded an ‘Intergroup’ on Commons and Public Services in 2014, the ‘European Commons Assembly’ developed with participants from nearly all European countries. ECA initiated conferences and various activities and published a general call: “We call for the provision of resources and the necessary freedom to create, manage and sustain our commons. We call upon governments, local and national, as well as European Union institutions to facilitate the defence and growth of the commons, to eliminate barriers and enclosures, to open up doors for citizen participation and to prioritize the common good in all policies. This requires a shift from traditional structures of top-down governance towards a horizontal participatory process for community decision-making in the design and monitoring of all forms of commons. We call on commoners to support a European movement that will promote solidarity, collaboration, open knowledge and experience sharing as the forces to defend and strengthen the commons. Therefore, we call for and open the invitation to join an on-going participatory, inclusive process across Europe for the building and maintenance of a Commons Assembly. Together we can continue to build a vibrant web of caring, regenerative collective projects that reclaim the European Commons for people and our natural environment” (europeancommonsassembly.eu).

How could the common good be important for European politics? Just to remind one of the prominent battles of the Left (including Greens and Trade Unions) in the years 2000: the

battle against the Bolkenstein-Directive. In the end it was possible to introduce the protection of public services as “services of general social and economic interest (SSIG’s) on European level. This could be a starting point for initiatives for commons to fight for the recognition of commons initiatives in different fields as basic citizens’ rights in Europe.

All these examples show at least the slightly fragmented situation. The political and legal conditions differ widely and there is a need to discuss demands on all levels – and there is the need to discuss them on the European level.

Opportunities for the European Left

The general interest of the European Left is to re-think the role of public for goods and services with relation to universal rights and to prohibit market-logic in public services. The aim is to suspend the market from public goods and services and to democratize public services for the recuperation of public services as Common Good. This is the first dimension. The second is to re-think social and workers rights as common goods. And the third is the recognition of citizens’ initiatives as basic rights and the promotion of commons initiatives.

So, it’s a three-fold battle and it could start from the general statement:

Commons are of general public interest, thus the general demand is the political and legal recognition of citizens’ initiatives whose aim is to create, re-construct and recuperate resources, goods and services in a social, ecological and democratic way. But there are specific demands to add. As there are (just to give some examples):

- 1) Cooperative use of abandoned land and houses. Social use of confiscated property
- 2) Right for workers to recuperate their companies and manage them collectively – before selling them to investors or going bankrupt
- 3) Open access for all citizens to information services that are democratically organised, and free public internet
- 4) Collectively and self-managed funds for citizens’ initiatives and access to public funding
- 5) democratization of digital radio and TV by reserving e.g. 30% of the slots for non-commercial, community etc. stations
- 6) participatory re-communalization/re-municipaliation of energy and water

And I’m sure there are others to add ...

It could be the right moment to start to discuss practical political proposals – not with the illusion to change European politics immediately, but with the intention to bring the debate into the light of a greater public.

Social Protection by all and for all

Koen Detavernier, Belgium

WSM (World Solidarity Movement – ANRSP is a Belgian NGO, embedded in the Christian labour movement. We are facilitating the networking with and amongst our partners at national, continental (ANRSP) and global levels. We promote alliances with like-minded organisations.

We promote a rights-based, universal and comprehensive social protection, with multiple stakeholders and an important role of social movements. The financing will necessarily come from multiple (solidarity based) sources.

The work we are doing is based on the experiences of partners worldwide. These are the Christian labour movement in Belgium and our partners CASC - Amussol in the Dominican Republic, GK in Bangladesh and the mutual health schemes in Africa.

These experiences have old traditions, more particularly in the “Mutual assistance” schemes of the past. From 1800-1830 there were ‘*Private*’ initiatives – mutual assistance funds – mostly organised around crafts and trades (workers and ‘masters’ together – some based on traditional guilds).

They were inspired by the factories – workers only - though in the textiles sector they were often forbidden (first support for workers on strike, facilitating social protest).

The first Health mutuals with a legal framework came about around the 1850’s, the first trade unions around the 1860’s and in 1948 was introduced a compulsory Social Protection.

To-day there is a strong continuous involvement of TU’s and social health mutual for monitoring and implementation and providing services to members. Two thirds of the funds for social security come from contributions and one third from taxes (apart from social assistance, other social policies).

To-day there are serious right-wing attacks on this role, bypassing social dialogue

Some words on our partners:

Gonoshastay Kendra (GK) – Bangladesh: they were created in 1972, mainly linked to the need for medical care during the civil war. Bangladesh has insufficient public health care at best. They work with community health workers, health centres & hospitals, medicines production (generic), solidarity based medical insurance and reach over 1 million people.

Amussol in the Dominican Republic is the “mutual association of solidarity services“. They were set up in 2005 by CASC (largest TU in Dominican Republic). They allow men and women workers in the informal economy to access social protection, which is not guaranteed by law in the country.

Amussol serves as a 'virtual employer' for men and women workers in the informal economy. Their affiliates pay their monthly fee to AMUSSOL, which channels it to the national Social Security Treasury. In this way 60,000 men and women workers of the country are entitled to family health coverage, workplace accident allowances and pension. There are high fees and the government has not set in place a subsidized contributory system. Amussol strengthens the position of TU vs the government.

As for the health mutuals in West Africa, they are mostly in rural areas, the informal economy and for farmers. They based on contributions and have put in place platforms of social health mutual. They have formed networks of multi-stakeholder CSO's, with government involvement, regulation, co-financing for reaching a higher standard and subsidies for the indigent. They are also active with advocacy at the regional level (West-Africa).

Conditions for social commons

What we have already achieved

Tina Ebro, Philippines

Assuring affordable, accessible and quality public services for all

These are the conclusions of the AEPF Social Justice cluster conference on public services, held in Manila in February 2018:

We have to introduce new forms of legislation, to ensure that people's rights to the following public services are institutionalized and insulated from market forces and political patronage, (ie., decent housing, affordable water and power, free and quality health care, free education up to the tertiary level, cheap and reliable transport, among others);

We need to push government to finance public services by building the political will to enforce real progressive taxation and abandoning unjust tax policies which allow the mega-rich to hide their wealth through tax havens and illegal money flows. Abandon the policy of using PPPs to avoid getting public services trapped into private-controlled, profit-oriented and exploitative relationships; and instead use public finance to fund infrastructure and public services;

We need to foster public-poor-partnerships that will enable impoverished communities to participate fully in the planning, implementation and oversight of their own projects;

We have to recognize that public services are a crucial element of social protection, together with decent work, adequate food and access to land, and social security like living pensions for seniors and PWDs which are part of the Commons that are indispensable to life and a life of dignity;

It is necessary to establish public ownership and democratic management models of public services and social protection, including mechanisms for people's participation and oversight.

Our tasks

Disseminate widely our messages and alternative models of public services and developments through social media and mainstream media;

The Asia-Europe Peoples Forum will disseminate the Final Statement, papers, video clips and other advocacy materials to relevant targeted state agencies and institutions at the national, regional and global level;

Pursue our painstaking lobby work to grow more advocates among legislators and policy-makers, and unite all groups reclaiming public services through building broad coalitions at the national, regional and global level.

Bring the fight to reclaim public services to all arenas and battlegrounds from the legislative fronts and legal forums, to the workplace, the communities and the streets;

Specifically, take action through litigation and demanding what are allowed by law thru legal suits; pursue sectoral and national consultations; and launch different forms of civil disobedience from consumer boycotts, protest actions, strikes, pickets and marches.

Promote and build broader and stronger forms of organizations and alliances and the corresponding levels of mobilizations that can create the compelling pressure towards the reclaiming back of public services, social protection and social justice. Change in national and global policies can happen only when we have strong social movements across countries and across continents.

The changing world of work: Decent Work and Gender Equality

Nuria Lozano, Spain

The world of work in our times is defined by a total and absolute vital precariousness, characterized by lower labour costs, loss of rights and unlimited increase in corporate profits.

The work factor is considered just another component of producing goods or providing services, leaving aside completely its deep social dimension.

The recognition of work culture values, as opposed to speculation culture, to easy money, is a key factor in the creation of wealth and social cohesion.

In opposition to those who believe that everything can be bought and sold with money, we must oppose the work force, which is the true creative force in any society; because only workers can build with their own hands and minds this socially fair future we want to turn into reality together.

And in this future, social commons play a basic role as the only tools that can erase the thin line between social exclusion and a life with dignity and equality.

There are no objective reasons to believe that this is a non-reversible situation, because the real problem is not based on the lack of wealth, but on the unequal distribution of the economic surpluses of a system based on the exploitation of people, peoples and territories and their resources.

What is really at stake is the distribution of the profits generated by this increase in productivity, linked to technological progress, which would make possible a sustainable development that contributes to real citizenship and social and economic welfare.

What is at stake is the guarantee of common goods, which constitute indirect and deferred wages for the popular social layers around the world.

Public services and citizen rights are financed by workers in our countries, who see their economic capacity reduced by progressive privatizations and social commons outsourcing, which means that we must pay twice for our public services: with contributions and taxes on labour incomes (discounted from our salaries) and paying for private operators who obtain profits for services previously funded by citizens, with a false argument of economic efficiency.

And in the same way, workers in our countries finance a public pensions system that makes possible to attend with dignity to our most basic needs when we retire; the same pensions system that is systematically dismantled across Europe to let international banking to manage new large businesses: that of private pensions, expensive and risky for its users, who have no guarantee of the future of receiving decent pensions, in a new exercise of privatization of a social common, which has been built with the effort of many generations of workers.

This systematic common goods privatization has another consequence that we should not leave aside, related to the fact that women are those who are mainly in charge of reproductive and care work: an increasingly number of women leaves the labour market, at worse are forced to abandon their productive jobs or, at best marginalized to a ghetto of part-time forced labour that allows them to take responsibility of both family and work life. This means a true double exploitation: at home without remuneration and in the labour market with absolutely unworthy conditions, also as a result of the social devaluation of highly feminized jobs.

Other policies

Other macroeconomic policies would enhance citizenship rights and care services which constitute workers indirect wage, as well as avoid the expulsion of women from the labour market to replace the State in its diminished social dimension, that makes them assume the costs of a social, political and economic "crisis", that is a social reproduction crisis, but above all a massive fraud.

The so-called Towns for Change Network throughout the Spanish State, very prominently Barcelona Municipality that welcomes us today, open a window to hope.

By placing social commons and people at the centre of political action, they are making a fairer and more egalitarian society possible, and in achieving this political objective, a truly social regulation of public contracts has become a first tool order.

Public administrations are the main direct employers in Catalonia, but also indirect ones, through the companies that have been awarded public contracts. Therefore, the regulations of social clauses in public contracts, which guarantee labour rights and decent work conditions for these companies' workers, are fundamental to improve the working conditions of public services' employees and therefore public services of greater quality, at the service of citizen's common goods.

But macroeconomic policies go in the opposite direction. Speculative economy, after dismantling the entire productive system of whole countries, has put its sights on social

commons as a new goal and they will not hesitate to destroy the entire working population with their citizenship rights in order to maximize their profits.

To achieve this goal, the system needs to keep on controlling for free women's reproductive work. Here lies the ruptures' potential of a mobilization such as the March the 8th Women's strike in Spain, in its triple dimension: labour, consume and care; because women demand the distribution of all work, as well as recognition of our contribution with reproductive work and its valuation and quantification to the GDP, in our way to a co-responsible society.

To conclude, without decent work and gender justice there is no future. Without decent work and gender justice there is no social justice. Without decent work and gender justice there are no social commons.

Women and Work

Alessandra Mecozzi, Italy

I want to start with a question: is work a social common?

I don't give an immediate answer, we will see at the end!

I set three points for the framework: when we talk about "work" let's have in mind that we mean productive and reproductive work, mostly women's work; since several years many changes occurred in the economy and in the idea of work itself; last but not least: in the 21st century, class struggle still exists, although fragmented.

Now, more than ever, there are millions of people working for capital and profits in the global economy. Technology is reducing work but not for profit or better life for workers. On the contrary, capital is looking for low cost workers with worsening working conditions and lower salaries.

Within the transnational companies, workers are often obliged to fight each other, in order to defend their jobs. It is financial more than productive investments, that is destroying many workplaces. And here comes the weakness and/or mistakes of labour unions and the left: they often assume an opposition between stable and not non-stable jobs instead of linking the ones to the others in a common struggle to advance the rights of both "categories". Actually, the so called "guaranteed" or stable workers have been more and more reduced. So we have now a Europe where the changes and the impoverishment of workers put power in the hands of right wing forces, out from a false idea of national self-defense.

When we consider work in the **capitalist system**, we can see fragmentation, precarisation, and super exploitation of human beings.

Flexibility has been praised for many years, even by labour unions and some feminists, and considered a positive change for working people, satisfying their need for freedom and self-

organisation. When we look at what the practice of flexibility means, we see it is not an opportunity, neither for men nor for women. Actually, the so-called female way of production (informality, ability in human relations, etc.) has been expropriated by the current work organization and the meaningful part of care and domestic services is totally unrecognised. The flexibility at work has become a trap, meaning that the worker has to be available permanently.

So the neoliberal flexibility, used and controlled by the employers, became precarity: intermittent work, fixed term work, work on demand. This means high exploitation which prevents any expression of individual and collective subjectivity. And this trend has been followed by labour policies, like in Italy the *jobs act* and in France *la loi du travail*.

A new kind of big factory is being established in the 21st century. It requests a different kind of politics and organisation of the labour unions. The big factory is, more and more, what we see in call centres, in communication centres, in big glass and crystal buildings where everyone is isolated with hundreds of calls or practices to be dealt with within a short prefixed time. And I would add the huge mass of deliverers who are paid by piece work (old system), actually for each separate delivery. And worst of all: thousands of migrant workers working in agriculture and payed 2 to 3 euros an hour as it happens in Italy for the harvest of tomatoes, living in terrible conditions and subjected to all kinds of violence (last example: the Malian young unionist Sumaila Sacko, shot during his work).

Combining privatisation of the basic natural commons with that of services and the precarisation and fragmentation of work, the result is that the model of civilization, that served many people during some time, is now coming to an end. On the one hand, the planet is being poisoned and on the other hand the deprivation of the means of subsistence is continuing. It is realistic to say that the progressive devaluation of work is bringing a new enslavement.

Women's work

Women's work is mostly **unrecognised** at the global level: when we talk about social reproduction work like social care, water and food provision, family organization...this is never considered to be work, it is not paid and remains invisible in the accounts, such as GDP.

Their formally recognised work is underpaid, with lower wages, lower positions and lower categories. The so called 'self-employment', praised by employers and media (*become entrepreneur of yourself*) has been a trendy slogan for a long time. It usually means work without social security contributions and basic rights. A different brilliant case is the one of the "self-employed women's association" in India, SEWA. This organization was created in 1972 by a combination of labour, women's and cooperative movements, to organize self-employed women in the informal economy and fight for their collective rights. In about 40 years it has expanded and includes 130 cooperatives, 181 rural producer groups, and many social security organizations within its structure. Given the large network of institutions, including a bank, created and managed by its members, SEWA is now considered not just an

organization, but a “movement” active in 50 districts of 12 states in India, with a membership of over 1.75 million.

So, labor and women's movements' goal should be not only to challenge gender inequalities in the labour market, but also to value care work and to request that the trade union movement take up the argument of ‘investment in care policies, as a tool also to expand democracies’, because it increases the opportunities and possibilities for choice of more than half of the population. The privatization of public services means that home and children care have to be paid in the market; if it is not affordable, what often happens, there are aunts and grandmothers as eternal free care work! Therefore, our goal should be to build up, wherever possible, alternatives based on women's abilities. And some are already in progress...

Alternatives in progress

One is the mutualism. The mutual aid is not new, it has a long history, at least two centuries, as it was at the origin of the labour and women's movements. At the end of 19th century, in the US, feminist socialists (Fourierians, Owenist) made important experiments, in order to break women's isolation in their domestic work. They linked home to neighbourhood, building collective forms of social reproduction for example with collective kitchens.

Silvia Federici worked a lot about this aspect of social commons because – as she says – “the building of more cooperative forms of reproduction is the condition for resisting the advance of capitalist relations and the creation of a society not subordinated to the logic of profit and the market.”

To-day mutualism has been rediscovered as a form of resistance and struggle against capitalism.

The recent economic and social crisis, the attacks on wages, pensions and social spaces pushed to build up new social commons, like time banks, urban gardens, Community Supported Agriculture, licenses for “creative commons”, as crucial tools for survival. A good example is Greece where austerity policies were imposed by European institutions: when wages and pensions were cut by 30% and youth unemployment was around 50 %, many forms of mutuality have been developed: free health care, free distribution of products....

But the idea and the practice of mutual aid is not only a result of the crisis. It is a new way to search for an alternative way of production, social reproduction and life. It has been started by women. In Asia, in Africa and Latin America women started to organize a new social and political way of doing through different forms of subsistence work, as food preparation, exchange of foods, services helping others, take and bring water.

Solidarity and cooperation economies, self-help-aid relationships, non-commercial exchanges, fight against waste and consumption of land, return to land, self-production, self-management of community goods: all these initiatives could be re-imagined as community initiatives and structures, as alternatives to the current economic system, as a different and alternative economy in which a "counter-power" emerges that allows

residents not only to survive but to develop embryonic forms of self-government.

In conclusion, to-day we need two levels (at least) of struggles: for the public protection of workers' rights and for a new social state, on the one hand; for the creation of alternatives, out of the system, on the other hand. Both are needed to achieve social justice. In one case the State has to play an important role; in the other case mutual aid and cooperation are the tools for alternatives. It is also a question of democracy which is currently in a big crisis. Only in this framework we can talk, I think, about work as a social common. And this is the answer to the question I raised at the beginning. But here comes the next one, to all of us, how and who can become the actors of this radical change?

On the need for a new internationalism

Alex Scrivener, United Kingdom

The recent rise of the populist far-right has prompted some on the left to embrace or pander to nationalism and nativism.

These people have imbibed the lie – popularised by the popular right-wing press – that it is impossible to reconcile the commons with internationalism and opposition to anti-migrant policies. The commons are finite, they argue, so we cannot afford it if millions of people from abroad come to our country. You have to choose, they say. Either have open borders and no welfare, or more welfare and commons at the expense of closed borders. The left nationalist argument is that, faced with this choice, we should choose the commons.

But this argument is just that – a lie. Far from being contradictory – the commons is meaningless as a concept if it is not internationalist. Instead of parroting the far-right, we should be arguing for a global communing of wealth itself.

This is because the commons is not an intrinsically progressive concept. A 'commons' based on the exclusion of others is a system of privilege. Indeed, it is perfectly possible to have a racist or fascist commons-based society. The idea of commons limited to people in the rich world is nationalistic and would perpetuate the unjust North-South economic divide. It is not something worth fighting for. Indeed it is something we should fight against.

Even Steve Bannon talks about destroying capitalism and defending the welfare state (for white Americans). So the parts of the left that are flirting with nationalism are straying dangerously close to quasi-fascists like Bannon.

If we want to define the commons as something progressive, then it has to be international and inclusive. The commons become totally meaningless unless they are geared towards broader social and economic equality. We cannot support a commons system at the national level which comes at the expense of the global south, at the expense of the climate, of migrants or of gender equality.

But then there comes the question of how we achieve a commons-based internationalism.

In some areas it is easy. The internet, for example, is more or less a global commons already.

But what about resources that are finite and geographically located?

In a few cases, it might be that access to certain commons has to be limited to members of a community. But this right should not derive from the accident of birth - it should arise from need and one's membership in a community. Contrary to what nativists want, people must be allowed to move and integrate in other communities.

And there will inevitably be different levels of commons. Some resources are common to people living on a street, others to a city or region. And other things – like knowledge and planetary resources – can be truly global commons.

But in general, we need to start perceiving global wealth itself as a resource in need of communing. This sounds very intimidating but we already see redistribution within countries and between regions as perfectly normal and achievable. We need to recast concepts like aid so that it is not charity, or even reparations (although this is also needed) but a step in the direction of the global communing of wealth itself.

This is why it is nonsensical to divorce discussions of the commons from the context of global economic justice. We cannot have one without the other. The nationalist argument only has resonance because we live in a deeply unequal world. That needs to change.

This is an internationalist approach to the commons.

We must reject the left-nationalist siren call. We must not pander to Trumpism, Brexit or other nativist solutions.

We can only win by staying true to the principles of our movement, fighting for North-South justice, fighting globally against climate change and other global problems.

Because a commons for the rich is not a commons at all.

Climate Change is a Game Changer

Lidy Nacpil, The Philippines

Climate change is one of the most urgent crises that humanity is facing today. It is already having devastating impacts globally and multiplying the sufferings of people already burdened by the injustices of hunger, dispossession and violation of human rights.

The material conditions are already here for it to rapidly worsen, not matter what we do today. But we can still stop the breach of tipping points and runaway catastrophic climate

change. We need to act decisively and quickly as the window of time to do that – to keep global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees -- rise is rapidly closing.

Like other global problems and injustice - climate change arises from

- Systems of extraction, production, distribution and consumption that are founded on private and monopoly ownership of the natural commons and denial of the social commons, and driven by the interest to generate even at huge costs to the needs and rights of the many and the well-being of the planet
- Unequal and exploitative economic and social structures that abuse the environment and breed even more inequality across countries, classes, gender and race,
- policies and practices promoted by global corporations, rich, industrialized countries, international

Climate change raises the scale, broadens the requirements and therefore increases the cost of social protection needed, and imbues the need to ensure social protection with even more urgency. It also makes it even clearer that social protection is not enough. Systems change should be the full agenda.

Climate change is a game changer for how social protection, equitable and sustainable development, the fulfilment of human rights can be realized. We need to radically re-imagine and re-conceptualize our visions of another world,

It is not simply enough to socialize ownership of economic resources and ensure equitable enjoyment of economic benefits, democratize political power and ensure inclusion, end inequality and discrimination, ensure the full enjoyment of human rights. In the process we also need to reach global decarbonization (new zero emissions of GHG) on or before 2050 through equitable and ambitious climate actions and a just transition.

And we need to win our fight for systemic transformation much more quickly than we are doing now. Movements cannot be working like “business as usual.” We only have a short, rapidly closing window of time before climate change profoundly changes life on Earth.

The Problem of Inequality

Ghulam Mustafa Talpur, Pakistan

Figure 1: Number and total wealth of billionaires, 2000–17

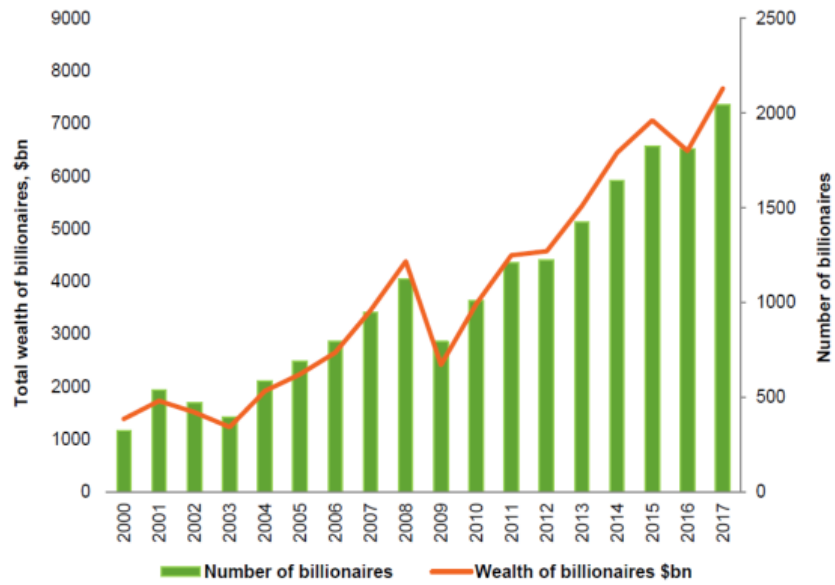
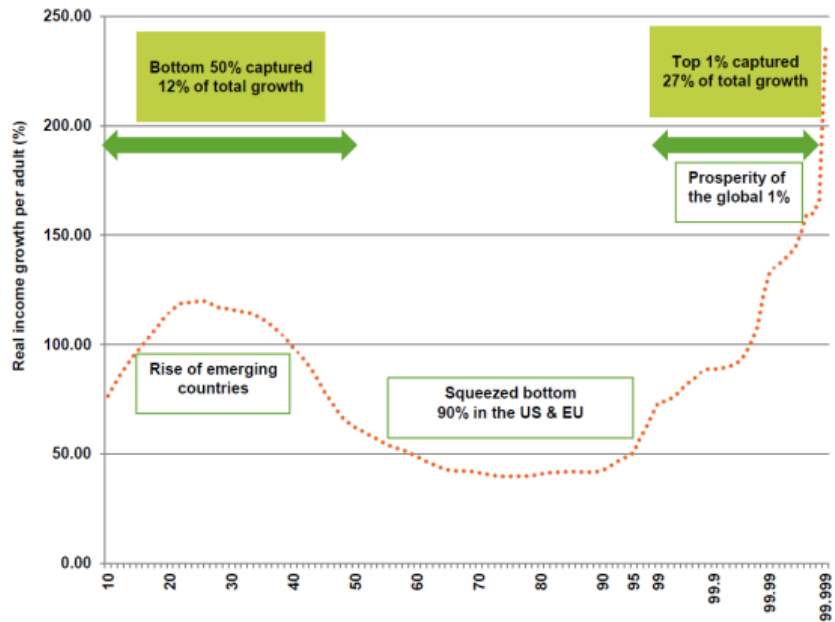


Figure 4: Total income growth by percentile, 1980–2016



Inequality in Asia



It would take one of Asia's **half a billion** people living in poverty **68 MILLION YEARS** to earn as much as the region's richest man with \$31 billion.

That's nearly as long as it's been since dinosaurs walked the Earth.



Inequality in Asia

What is driving this level of inequality?

Workers are losing against corporate elites-mainly women workers

An unjust fiscal system allows rich corporations and individuals to avoid paying taxes and governments are unable to spend on social commons'
 Gender inequality is a persistent structural problem
 Clamping down on democracies and closing civic space is the current practice
 There are monopolies and crony capitalism

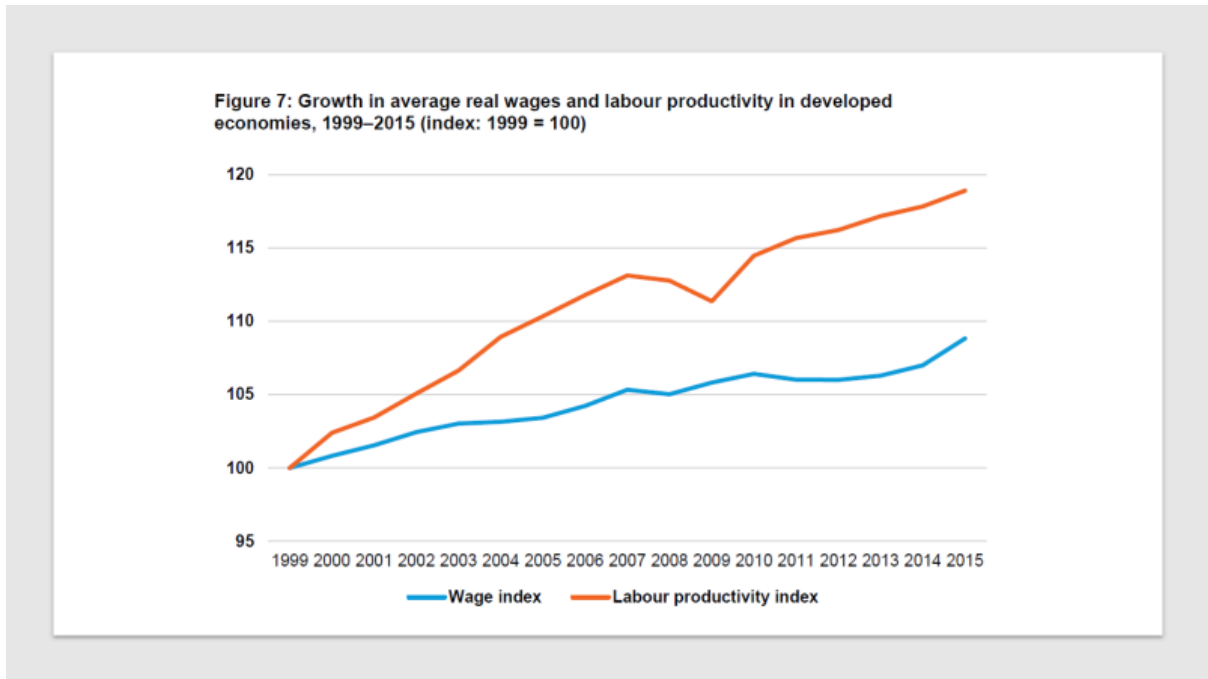


Figure 8: Comparison of minimum wage and living wage in selected garment-producing countries, 2014

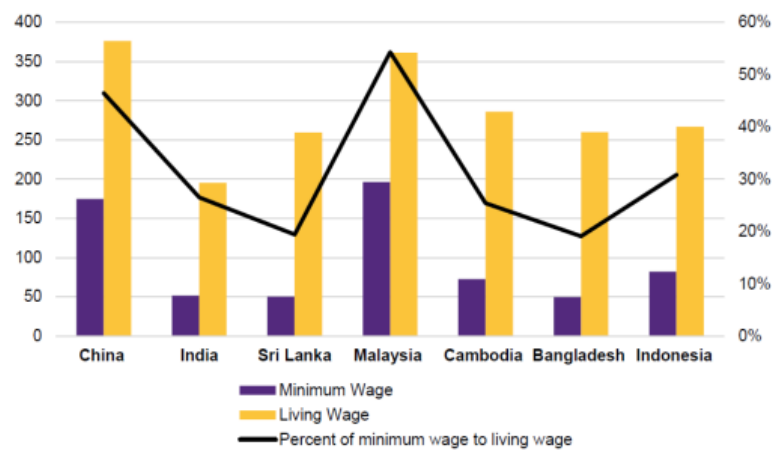


Figure 9: Non-compliance rates with the minimum wage in the garment sector

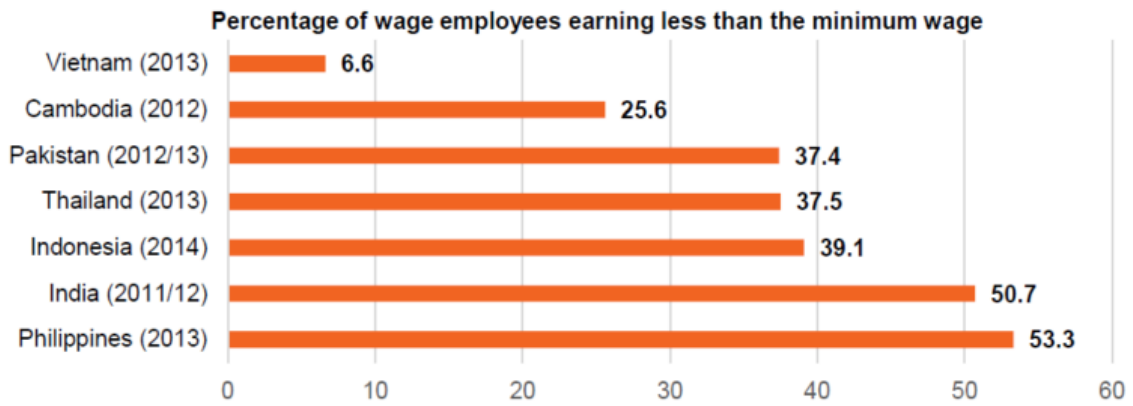
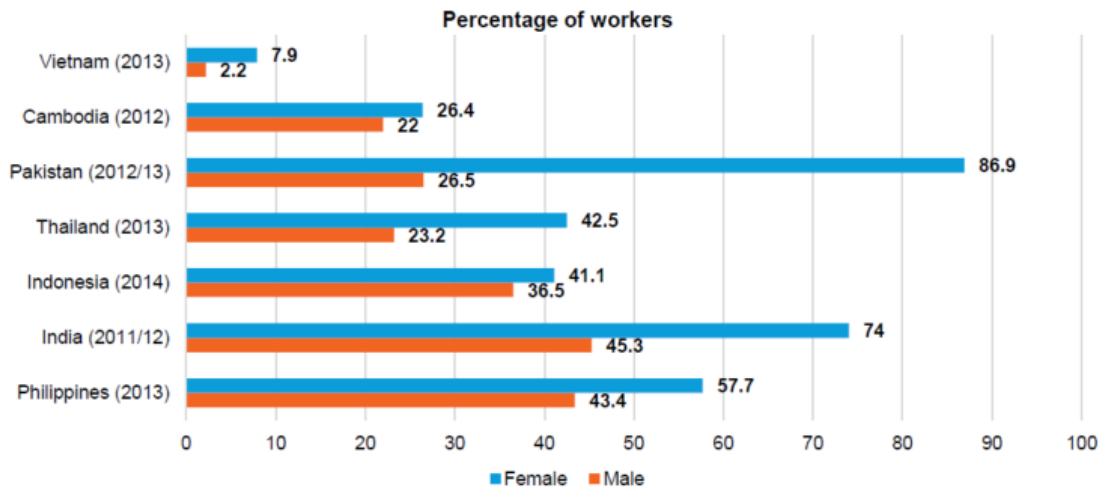
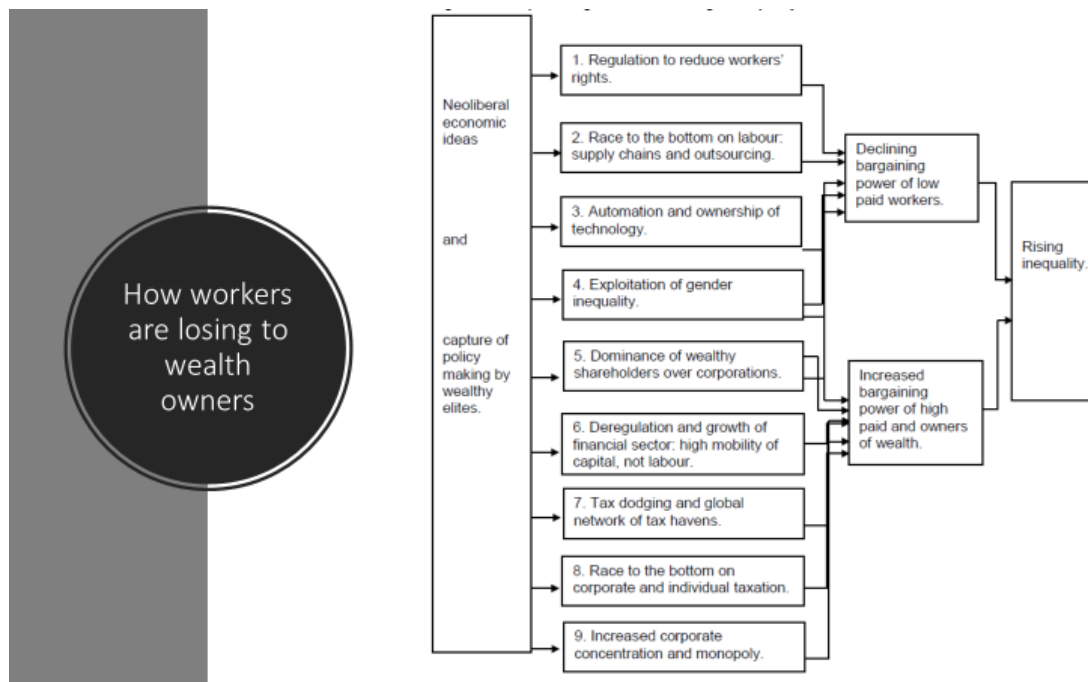


Figure 10: Non-compliance rates with the minimum wage in the garment sector by gender, lower bound estimates





What does it need to build an economy for the 99% :

- Human Economy- 8 principles
- Regulate, restructure and redesign economy and the way business run from the start- reducing market inequalities
- Redistribute for a fairer society and investing in social commons
- Business should play their part in building human economy

Tax Justice

Ah Maftuchan, Indonesia

Tax Justice as Global Commons: Illicit Financial Flows and the DTAs Indonesia-Netherlands Case

Statements:

- Fiscal (tax and state budget) systems represent the current society and the relations between commons people and the market (capital) and the government;
- Tax policy can be used as a corrective of the market and can be used as justification for the distribution of incomes among society (directly or indirectly);
- The current of international fiscal landscape is unjust, old-school and corruptive.

Tax Justice!



The wrong way:

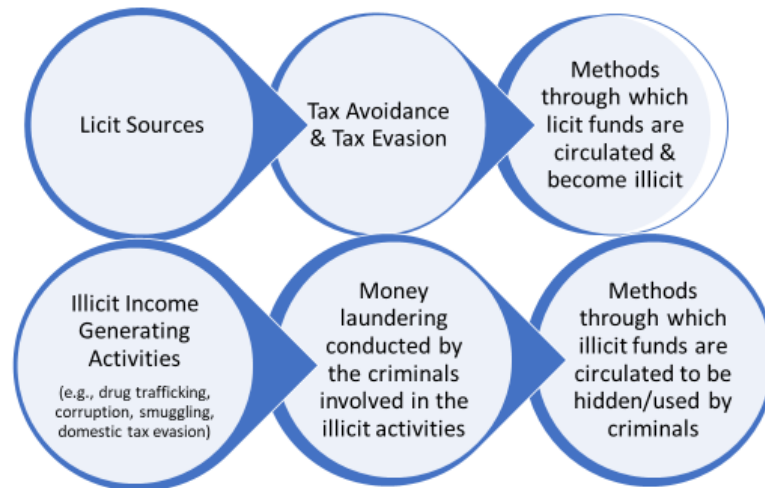
- Ignoring the redistribution aspects
- Heavy to consumption/sales taxes (VAT)
- Less corporate tax contributions → Exemptions/incentives (Tax holiday, Tax amnesty etc)
- Poor extractives taxation models
- Poor performance of other asset (property tax) and income taxes (capital gains)
- Major challenges taxing super-rich people (in South & in North)
- Financial secrecy & proliferation of use of tax havens countries
- Lack taxing on the digital economy
- International corporate tax system '*not fit for purpose*': Double Tax Agreements (DTAs) is problematic
- Illicit financial flows (tax avoidance, tax evasion, transfer pricing, transfer mis-invoicing etc)

Illicit financial flows:

- Illicit financial flows (IFFs) refer to money that is 'illegally earned, transferred, or utilized. If it breaks laws in its origin, movement or use it merits the label' (*Global Financial Integrity / GFI*);
- The money which are moved across borders originate from three major sources: corruption, criminal activity, and cross border tax evasion (*Tax Justice Network, 2011*);
- This money is strategically shifted from developing economies into the global shadow of financial system to facilitate kick-backs, bribery, and other forms of grand corruption, thereby making basic day-to-day services more expensive and less efficient (*ASAP, 2012*);

- Illicit financial flows is dirty business practices, an informal economy with a jurisdiction that facilitate the practices of tax evasion/avoidance, as exemplified by the existence of many countries categorized as tax havens (Fuest & Riedel, 2009).

The most common sources of IFFs and the patterns of circulation of illicit and licit funds

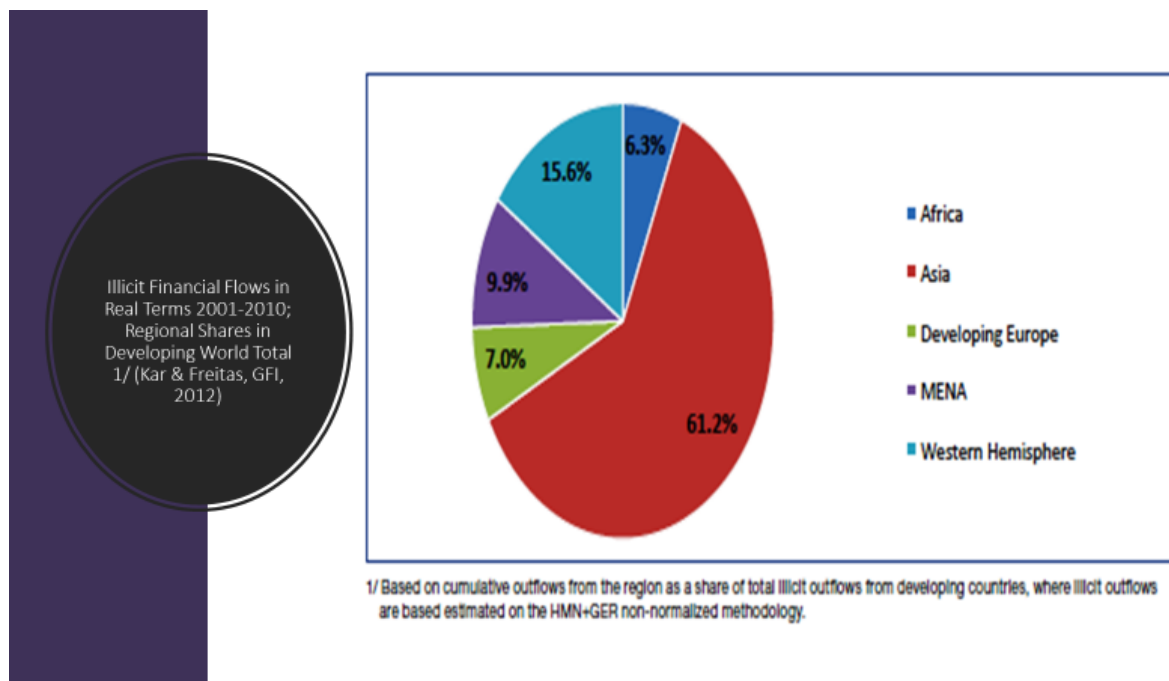
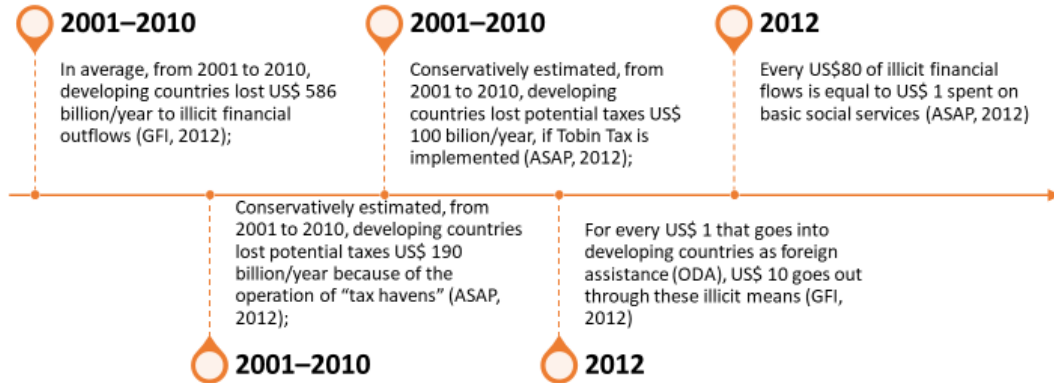


Source (adapted): Fontana & Hansen-Shino, 2012.

Evidence: global # 1

- It is estimated that about 60-70 % of international trades take place within multinational corporations: that is, across national boundaries but within the same corporate group (*Tax Justice Network*, 2012);
- Trade mispricing was found to account for an average of 80,1% and corruption, bribery, criminal activities account for an average of 19,9% of cumulative illicit financial flows from developing countries over the period 2001-2010 (GFI, 2012).
- Conservatively estimated, illicit financial flows have increased in every region of developing countries. From 2001 to 2010, developing countries lost US\$ 5.86 trillion to illicit outflows (GFI, 2012).

Evidence: Global #2



DTA's and unequal global tax systems:

- The idea: DTAs are necessary to avoid double taxation on the same income by two or more tax jurisdictions. Another objective according to eliminate tax avoidance and evasion by taxpayers who earn income in two or more different tax jurisdictions.
- The reality: Academies, activists and international community have been arguing for a one of the fundamental reform for global tax system reform is “the tax treaty system” (Double Tax Agreement – DTAs)

- The reality: a number of case studies and macro-economic analyses have started to quantify the losses incurred by tax treaties, specifically for developing countries (South countries)
- The Reality: Due to the unequal investment relationship between high and low-income countries, developing countries which are typically capital importing states, lose out more through treaty shopping and the loss of taxing rights than their capital exporting counterparts, that are home to Multinational Corporations (MNCs). That is because tax treaties restrict rights of states to tax income at source. Source countries host MNCs who invest and make profits in their countries through local subsidiaries.
- Thuronyi (2010): Developing countries that have very few or no treaties may in fact be doing the right thing.

Case of The Indonesia-Netherlands DTAs: Initial Findings from PRAKARSA & SOMO's study (2018)

- The impact of treaty shopping for Indonesia has focused largely on foreign owned corporations using Dutch letterbox companies
- Weyzig (2013): The losses in national revenues suffered by Indonesia due to treaty abuse by companies established in the Netherlands calculates that from interest payment alone, Dutch SPEs passed EUR 0.6 billion in 2010 from Indonesian firms to holders of debt securities because of zero tax rate in tax treaty, where as according to domestic tax law, the income tax should be 10 to 20 percent.
- SOMO (2013): revealed that Indonesia suffers tax losses of approximately EUR 56 million annually due to tax treaty with the Netherlands.
- Why the Indonesian revenue authority does not put an end to treaty shopping? An analysis of the latest Supreme Court and Indonesian Tax Court decisions show that in cases where Directorate General of Taxation (DGT) demands the payment of withholding tax because it classified a structure as treaty abuse, a majority of both courts' decisions are in favour of the companies. The cases often concern companies based in Indonesia borrowing from Dutch SPVs. As a result, Indonesia must bear tax losses and DGT must pay court fines.

The Global Commons Agenda for financing of development:

- Development financing is one the heated topics in the debate of global development because it involves huge amount of money;
- Sources of development financing: domestic & foreign financing. Domestic financing (tax and non-tax revenues) and foreign financing (assistance/donations, foreign investment, international trade, foreign debt, remittance etc);
- If a poor country cannot finance their own development (because its national revenues is very small), others countries could give assistance/ODA in form of technical assistance or cash;
- ODA cannot be the only source of development financing because it is not sustainable and insignificant (especially for emerging countries). Need to beyond ODA, need to tackling illicit financial flows from the South to the North;

- Therefore, mobilization of domestic resources (revenue from tax and non-tax revenue) is urgent. So, the global tax system need to change fundamentally as a global commons.

Our Commons Agenda Future on Tax Justice!

Consolidating	Strengthening	Widening
<p>Consolidating at the national, regional and global level to address tax-justice as a global commons;</p> <p>Tax justice can be achieved when put in the domain of social justice;</p> <p>People's demand for implementation of tax justice is needed.</p>	<p>Strengthening Asia-Europe People's Forum for developing practical movement & global advocacy on tax-justice: tackling illicit financial flows and review of DTAs among Asian countries and European countries;</p> <p>Critical role for social movement / civil organization in strengthening a public-discourse on tax-social justice.</p>	<p>Widening the global partnership beyond the current movement;</p> <p>Channelling the tax justice and social justice to the citizen's demands for basic services, human rights and economic right into the political contestation;</p> <p>Critical-engagement with tax authority, government and corporate for implementation the social-tax justice value.</p>

Environmental justice in the age of anthropocene - any time to fix the mess?

Vedran Horvat, Croatia

- Political ecology is a research approach that combines the **instruments of ecology and political economy**, in order to explain relations between humans and nature.
- Specific focus is placed on the different **outcomes of social and cultural norms** that determine how different communities **can access Nature (resources and services)**.
- Homegrown - activists, scholars and funders in Croatia joining forces in a collective effort to address variety of issues located in nexus of **ecology and justice – distribution of costs and benefits of environmental change accross the globe (class, race, gender...)**

A political ecology perspective:

- We take commons also as a political power – constituent counter power of people/citizens/workers/movements
- Struggle for the commons (urban, land, public infrastructure) – formative for social movements to generate political power
- Commons as institutional innovation
- Commons as participation mode

- Commonising the State and the public Self governance experience in Yugoslavia - emancipatory potential, high level of participation of workers, high level social protection and welfare (health, housing, education)
- Exposure to privatisation and extractivism and top down economic constitutionalism, trade agreements etc..
- Disruption, trouble making, killjoy for indefinite growth protagonists

Where are we now?

- Permanent deep ecological crisis – planetary boundaries, resource scarcity
- Increasing inequalities
- Increased number of environmental conflicts – manifestation of resistance; counterpower
- Current development path is leading us further toward the future of instability and injustice, whilst existing injustices are already ecologically irrational towards expressed goals of emancipation and development
- Central question/paradox - how can we hope to have the benefits of growth without the downsides of the growth?
- ‘Sustainability imperative’ (a desire to slow or halt the climate catastrophe, for example) would be incompatible with the existing structure of state imperatives, which is functionally dependent on an unsustainable energy system (fixing the airplane in air) – we are stuck with priorities of the unsustainable system planetary constraints start to almost instantaneously undermine all the achievements of that useful knowledge
- Choice - respecting the planetary constraints humans seem to have to give up on the centuries of ‘development’ that allowed them a broader realization of their aspirations, to willingly ‘dumb down’, or face the unjust and calamitous disintegration of the natural systems they overwhelmingly rely on (1st case – confusion, where to start, with which allies and how to decouple from unsustainable models)
- No return point ? Growth undermines whole ecosystem – not able to regenerate and reproduce.
- Lagging behind technological revolution that has hijacked and captured political power.

Are we still in the same bag?

- Critical approach to antropocene narrative - Anthropocene narrative puts all humans in the same bag regardless of the benefits of the Great Acceleration that they did not or do not enjoy.
- When humanity is portrayed as a unified historical and political body, we end up hiding the vast inequalities in wealth and power that characterise the contemporary 7+ billion people on the planet
- Privileges of “West” challenged by non-Western types of capitalism and resource scarcity

Crisis – for how long?

- establishment of a crisis then often leads to invocation of apolitical technocratic strategies that only technical experts trained in the disciplines in which the root of the crisis is identified (economists, hydrologists, climatologists, conservationists, political scientists) can propose and implement (Mitchell 2002; Beck 2010).
- This is crisis sees a malady which calls for a highly specialised surgeon? Is it really so?
- Time – central place in discussion, estimation of urgency and implications

Know your enemy

- Financialisation of nature – converting nature into commodities
- Extractivism - diminishing conditions for social and biological reproduction
- Excessive use of natural resources and pollution
- Corporate capture/state capture
- Privatisations – capitalism pushes its boundaries
- Authoritarianism
- Top down economic constitutionalism – political power subordinated to financial power (also through trade agreements)

Do we have time for strategy?

- Fixing the mess – now?
- strategize the possible futures with a better understanding of human-environment interactions
- Impossible to hijack or hack – such as degrowth
- contradictions – such as urgency, too late ? Not a mobilising factor
- heading toward ecological collapse – fatalism
- framing a narrative of hope (not necessarily the optimism)

Rooting the alternatives:

- Social constituent counter power of alternatives – in relation to disproportional economic power; main ingredients people, trust and solidarity
 - Identify obstacles and political and economic powers that prevent us to re-organize our life around sufficiency as one of the core principles
 - Buen vivir, degrowth movement, eco-sufficiency, remunicipalisation, commoning, decentralisation of food and energy systems – moving beyond fractions
- Decreasing the pool of losers

Implementing social commons

The centrality of economic and social rights

German Jaraiz Arroyo, Spain

Presentation

The organization of this seminar asked me to speak on social rights and their link to the debate on common goods. I will try to go deeper into this issue now, but first I have to make it clear that my vision and experience, both in terms of intervention and research, is restricted to the state and local level. A large part of my contribution is the result of the Research Project on the impact of inclusion policies in Spain, carried out by a team of researchers from the universities of Barcelona, Navarra, Valladolid, La Rioja, Murcia and the Pablo de Olavide University of Seville, to which I belong.

I am going to organise my speech around three main ideas or blocks. The first of these has to do with the scenario of change we are witnessing. Secondly, I will try to define some trends in public policy aimed at reformulating social rights, especially those relating to income security. Finally, I will try to outline some criteria that, in my personal opinion, would mark what I will call from now on a new social agenda.

Concerning labour markets

Old answers to new questions. Old methods to new challenges.

It is obvious, I do not discover anything new, that the main challenge facing our institutions in terms of guaranteeing economic rights has to do with the changes in the economic model and, most especially, with the scenario of increasing job destruction on a global scale.

If, at first, the phenomenon of productive relocation has meant a shift of employment, at least of employment linked to the industrial sector, from Western countries to Asia, with the consequent effect of the emergence of new emerging middle classes in these places (as suggested by works such as Branko Milanovic). Also, the displacement of a large part of the productive capacities of the primary sector to Latin America and North Africa.

The current incident factor is the impact of robotization on the labour markets, which will be transversal and which, sooner or later, will affect all regions. The less pessimistic forecasts announce an impact of 40% of the activity is laborised.

However, this decrease in employment does not mean a reduction in productivity; on the contrary, after the crisis stage, the post-crisis scenario is one of economies that are recovering their productivity levels but which, paradoxically, persist in the block of wealth transfer mechanisms, causing a greater effect of inequality. Spain is a clear example of this trend.

But lower employment does not mean lower productivity, on the contrary, productivity is increasing. The result of this spiral is manifested in greater inequality in the distribution of wealth in the form of income.

How do hegemonic actors position themselves before this? I am referring to the three great agents who have organised economic and political life so far: the states, the market and the trade unions.

I think this is one of the great problems, the hegemonic actors are still anchored in Fordist solutions to a phenomenon that is not the same. The responses are Guided on the way to employment recovery. The idea prevails that, although different employment (more dualised, more precarious, more mobile...), policy action should concentrate on 'producing employment'.

This is even the position of a large part of the trade union movement, which is often involved in maintaining certain niches of work activity that sooner or later cannot be sustained. I do not doubt the importance of this struggle in tactical terms, but I think that this urgency to slow down the fall makes the strategic difficult.

Public policy trends

Public policies are largely marked by this hegemonic position. Without being able to overcome the classical dialectic. It is true, however, that not all rights guarantee policies follow the same path.

The European Union is opening the debate on the European Social Rights Pillar in 2015, a debate which involved a large number of social partners and which ended with the adoption of the Pillar at the Gothenburg Summit in November last year.

However, the end result is a bill of rights, which follows the path of linking labour market and welfare states. It is enough to recall the content of the three blocks of the programme: equal opportunities and access to the labour market. A dynamic labour market and fair working conditions. Public assistance, social protection and social inclusion.

On the limits of EPSR

Beyond this, the text is marked by five aspects that make it difficult to overcome the classic dynamic:

- 1) The guidelines are generic and not very specific,
- 2) It is a non-binding text and is not provided for if it is included in the EU Treaties.
- 3) Does not include a budget line for the European Commission.
- 4) The measures to be implemented are subject to the principle of subsidiarity and fall within the competence of each of the States.
- 5) Finally, the E.U. itself makes all social measures conditional on the control of public deficit, establishing sanctions in the event of deviations from it.

Perhaps the most notable contribution is the implementation of the so-called "Social Scorecard", which represents an advance on the Open Method of Coordination by

presenting a set of social indicators for measuring the impact on social cohesion in the States. This CMS is also included in the EU's six-monthly reports.

However, the paradox persists in the rules of the game imposed by austerity policies, the EU. On the one hand, it denounces the weakness of the social cohesion policies of certain States and at the same time blocks their implementation, making them conditional on the control of the deficit.

In the local European context, the political position of the States and regions has also been marked by their economic position. In the southern regions, which have traditionally had more fragile public protection systems, compensated by dynamics of familiarity and primary solidarity (Ferrera, Moreno), there has been an intense decline in assistance with the crisis, a loss of rights that has not yet been reversed.

However, in other states and regions, if a certain reaction has been possible, at least in terms of regulations, this reaction has concentrated on promoting measures of different magnitudes, supported above all by income guarantee policies. In the case of Spain, it was mainly the northern and Mediterranean regions that undertook far-reaching reforms in income guarantee policies (Basque Country, Navarre, La Rioja, Aragon, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Community of Valencia), although these measures did not abandon the minimum income models for integration, they represented a significant and more ambitious step forward.

Important advances have been made, such as the consideration of subjective rights, or the incorporation of double entitlement criteria (right to income and right to inclusion), as well as the compatibility of income guarantee benefits with certain employment conditions.

Beyond this and apart from the well-known Finnish initiative, different local initiatives have been developed in cities in countries such as Canada, Holland, Scotland, one of these experiences is the B-Mincome Project. These are initiatives that go in line with the aim of provoking a transition from models of minimum insertion incomes to models of universal basic income. Prioritising households as the object of intervention and combining a response of economic guarantee, insertion, housing and community capitalisation.

Four conditions for a new social agenda

The central question in the new debates is what should be the premises that shape the social contract of the future. To this end, it is necessary, as a precondition, that the new civil society be capable of consolidating a scheme of minimums that allows for the sharing of a culture of collective construction. I think that this question of minimums, as far as economic rights are concerned, needs to cover at least four issues.

It is necessary, first of all, to understand that the main common good is the Social State. The theory of the commons has often been used as an alternative to the social state and this can lead to some confusion. In a liquid context, a facilitating actor is necessary, we can call it the State or in any other way, but contexts of common good require, in my opinion, broadening the weight of the role of the public actor.

The second premise is the need for new income guarantee mechanisms and, in particular, the online proposals for universal basic income. This is a central element of the social

contract, but on it we have to build everything else, protected environments (economically), proactive (vital), with a capacity for care and anchored in the community.

A third basis of the new contract obliges us to generate new dialogues around employment, especially the linking to employment mechanisms of a large part of unmet needs or of needs met by other spheres, which can be converted into employment. We are talking about a transition from an industrial model to one based on care. In this dialogue, the idea of care (of people, of the environment, of communities) is essential as the focus of new modes of action linked to the expansion of the coverage of needs linked to the quality of life.

Finally, public actors also have an essential role to play in the conversion of classical forms of commercial activity into forms of activity based on the common good. In this sense, initiatives such as that of the Madrid City Council, which has managed to leave aside the large electricity companies for providing insufficient technical solvency for the supply of green energy, mark a suggestive path and show how it is possible to go beyond the classic social clauses in public administration contracts.

Gender and commons: time for a debate!

Elisabeta Cangelosi, Italy

This presentation is a work in progress, which, at this stage, simply aims at putting the topic of gender and commons on the table. Hence, it does not provide bibliographic references. However other papers on this same topic are (or will soon be) available.

Both in academia and among activists and practitioners, the analysis of gender dynamics in the framework of commoning processes and the of the impact of commoning on gender roles tends to be neglected. There are a few exceptions, such as the work of Silvia Federici, but the topic is still very marginal. And it should not!

It should not be marginal because any action, including political action, has an impact on society and, hence, on gender dynamics. And it should not be marginal because women play (or might play) a significant role in commoning processes. Indeed, this analysis follows two main axes: the role played by women in commoning process and the impact of commons on women's rights claims.

The most interesting aspect is that "gender as cross-cutting issue" is particularly pertinent to the debate about the commons, despite the different shapes that it takes depending on the context.

The gender dimension applies to a variety of issues where commoning is presented as a significant alternative to the standard social and economic models. In particular, it is relevant in the areas of migration, gentrification and rights to housing, right to land and natural resources, labour rights.

Understanding gender dynamics and gender dimension of the commons is influenced by the definition of the commons. However, as we know, there is not yet any commonly and

globally agreed definition. For the purpose of this analysis the key features that deserves attention are : reciprocity, inclusion, change (towards social and economic justice) and active process. In particular the idea of reciprocity could be lined to the etymology of commons, *communis*, which implies existence of rights and duties (more on this topic in previous publications).

It is also important to take into account the key elements of the analysis on gender justice and feminist issues: in particular power dynamics and the topic of productive and reproductive rights.

These two elements, combined with the features of commoning process, are crucial for the understanding of the examples that follow.

With regard to **land and natural resources** the key issue from a gender perspective is a direct consequence of the structure of collectively owned and managed land. In this specific case we face two possibly competing claims: the one for the recognition of collective land (as a form of resistance against expropriation and grabbing) and the right to land for women within the community (which often relies upon titling processes).

In addition, as collective owned land is almost always managed following customary norms, women tend to be excluded from decision making process because of the traditional structures in place. Claiming women's rights often means challenging these customary and patriarchal structure; defending community land rights, on the contrary, rather promotes these mechanisms. Furthermore, individual land titling is often represented as a way to secure women's rights to land, but it seems clearly in contrast with the collective approach.

However, convergence between these two claims exists and is testified by a few, but significant cases. Such convergence builds upon two crucial elements. First of all, it is necessary to overcome the idea of titling as a universal and sufficient option to ensure women's rights: even though it might work in certain context and contribute to ensure women's rights, it can also produce more inequality and increment the impact of corruption.

The second, and even more important element, is the role played by women as actor of change and struggles: while defending community land rights is certainly a form of resistance against land grabbing, in order to have a positive impact on women's lives within these same communities, they have to become vocal and active. This is particularly clear in the case of indigenous communities: indigenous women are extremely active in protecting their communities' rights, and in doing so they manage also to challenge internal, patriarchal structures and impact power dynamics. Such a role played by women emerges in different parts of the world. In Asia, relevant examples come from Rajasthan, in India and from the Cordillera region, in the Philippines.

The debate about land as a commons, however, is also present in Europe, as demonstrated by specific experiences from Spain and Italy. In particular an experience from Italy, Mondeggi Bene Comune (a common farm in Tuscany) offers interesting insights from a gender perspective. The commoning project focuses on the idea of custody and protection

and involves a high number of women who play an active role. Such a role concerns both the management of the land and farm itself and the creation of new bonds and challenge of power dynamics.

The experience of Mondeggi Bene Comune is consistent with other commoning experiences in Italy, mostly related to cultural and social spaces in the city (such as the Cinema Palazzo and Teatro Valle) where role of women is equally relevant.

With regard to **urban commons**, however, the most significant examples of the double component of approaching the commons from a gender perspective concern urban gardens and right to housing. And it is often intertwined with another crucial topic such as **migrants' rights**.

In a significant amount of cases (such as the Jardin Levat in Marseille or the Jardin Collectif Velt Koekelberg in Bruxelles) the commoners include people from different background (including migrants) and several women. Often migrant women take advantage of commoning experience to establish a connection with other members of the communities and find their space. Which can also mean gaining self-confidence and ensure their voices are heard and have an impact.

Supporting these women is not part of the original purposes of the commoning experience, but the practice of commoning enable women to challenge power dynamics (including within their own family). At the same time, as active members of the community of commoners, they bring their contribution to both political and practical aspects of commoning.

Something very similar happens in the case of housing. As women are often the most affected by poverty and exclusion (as well as by gentrification), they become active players in the resistance against such exclusion, privatization and gentrification processes (which can be compared, to a certain extent, with land grabbing) and take advantage of commoning experiences in order to claim their right to housing. A relevant example of this kind of experiences comes from Barcelona and its platform against evictions.

These processes of empowerment, agency and claim also occur in the framework of alternative models of **access to health and labour rights**. While it remains clear that several of these rights are claimed as a consequence of a political and economic model that deprives people from their rights, it definitely emerges that women are both actors and beneficiaries of the commoning process.

Even if the gender dimension of commoning is still underexplored, these few examples, from different political, social and geographical areas, demonstrate that it is worth focusing on this aspect and identifying the implication of commoning for women's rights claims, for challenging existing power dynamics, for struggling against patriarchy and eventually ensure social, economic, and gender justice.

Asia Europe People's Forum

Social Justice Cluster

Our common social future: Commoning and sharing for society, the environment and the economy. A programme for a democratic, participatory and transformative social protection

BARCELONA DECLARATION

Social justice is at the center of all our concerns and of all our efforts to work for a better world. These are shared concerns in Europe and Asia. Levels of development differ widely between these global regions, but also within them. The super-rich in Asia have now overtaken their counterparts in Europe. However, at the level of social justice and more particularly social protection, labour law and social services, developments in Europe and Asia are similar and are dictated by the same neoliberal philosophy, strengthened by conservative forces.

Today, social protection is high on the international development agenda, for example through the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the ILO's Social Protection Floors and the European Union's Pillar of Social Rights. While these initiatives are interesting and important, daily political practice continues to widen inequalities, to make employment more precarious, and to roll out the privatisation of public services such as water and health care.

Benefits of market-driven economic growth do not trickle down to the poor. That is why there is now a broad movement, all over the world, to reclaim rights, health care, water, pensions, land and schools: because people are being robbed of their livelihoods, including jobs and wages.

Governments and international institutions often make socially viable solutions impossible. As a result, trust in public authorities is dwindling, sometimes deservedly but often as a result of political manipulation. More and more people are responding by taking initiatives to help themselves, creating small scale farms, providing care for the elderly or the very young, and organizing to produce clean energy, local currencies and cooperatives.

The commons are life's necessities, we need them to meet basic human needs. Social commons are activities and relations co-designed and co-produced by people, with shared ownership and control, forging new relations between people and the public realm. Commons go *beyond* markets and states, but not *without* markets and states: both will have to adopt a different logic. Commons change the ways in which we understand and practice democracy, participation and governance.

This conference further reflected on progressive definitions of social commons in the context of the self-organisation of people. It has explored the conceptual and practical implications of claiming social resources as commons. It contributed to clarifying the concept and begun to explore links with other sectors, such as the environment and culture, macro-economics and fiscal policies. It examined the potential of the social and solidarity economy.

Climate change broadens the requirements for social protection and social justice. Both will have to be re-defined and scaled up with even more urgency. Climate change is a game changer for how social protection, equitable and sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights can be realized.

Feminists put the emphasis on social re-production, helpful for thinking about the interdependence of human activities. Many of the commons initiatives are started by women because the expansion of commodification and privatisation in patriarchal and capitalist societies increases the workload for women by integrating them into global commodity chains while at the same time expanding their unpaid social re-production work. It is important that commons do not become women's responsibilities in a new gendered division of labour.

This pursuit of social commons must be seen in the context of our ambition to shape a better world. This calls for a transformation of social, economic and political systems, and for resistance to the dismantling of economic and social rights, which are in effect a new form of enclosure. We are not searching for harmony through adaptation of the status quo. On the contrary, it should be clear that commons and neoliberal capitalism cannot peacefully co-exist. Commons can only endure in the long term through struggle and conflict aimed at building a new political economy to support people's control of essential resources. Therefore, the social protection we envisage will go beyond the currently existing initiatives; it will not be a corrective mechanism but will contribute to the radical changes we need.

By focusing on the collective dimension of our social and economic rights and by directly involving people in shaping public policies, the commons approach can become a strategic tool to resist neoliberalism, privatization and commodification. It can help to build a new narrative to strengthen and broaden people's movements as well as for political and legal action against the exploitative use of our resources. Commons are about power. Claiming and controlling social commons means building power together with others. It is a primary task of all progressive forces, at all political levels, from local communities to global institutions. Facing the challenges of all important recent changes, it is clear the labour movement has to play an important role, countering the fragmentation and precarisation of work, taking into account the role of women and creating alternatives based on their abilities and skills.

Social protection alone will not be enough to achieve system change. But social justice can become an entry point for policies of social, economic and political transformation. Emphasizing our interdependence and the necessary collective dimension of all our efforts can be a vital step towards strengthening social movements and building citizens' power.

Many important questions remain to be further examined, such as the issues of scale, of class, the role of public institutions, ownership and the transformational potential of commons.

What we are working for is the sustainability of life, for people and the planet. Our social protection, our economic and social rights are ours, so we decide on them. This is a call to join our efforts and fight for social justice in a comprehensive way and to create a message of hope for the future.

This Declaration has been adopted by the conference on social commons, held in Barcelona from 8 to 10 June 2018, co-organised by the social justice cluster of the Asia-Europe People's Forum and Transform! Europe. More information can be found at: www.aepf.info – www.transform-network.net and www.socialcommons.eu

Asia Europe People's Forum

Social Justice Cluster

Our common social future: Commoning and sharing for society, the environment and the economy. A programme for a democratic, participatory and transformative social protection –

Barcelona – 8-9-10 June 2018

Brief notes on speakers and facilitators

Dario Azzellini, Italy

Montclair State University, USA, PhD in political science and in sociology. His work focuses on democracy, workers' and local self-management and social movements. He co-authored *They Can't Represent Us. Reinventing Democracy From Greece to Occupy* (Verso 2014). He is co-editor of *The Class Strikes Back. Self-Organised Workers' Struggles in the Twenty-First Century* (Brill 2018) and *Ours to Master and to Own: Worker Control from the Commune to the Present* (Haymarket 2011), and the editor of *An Alternative Labour History: Worker Control and Workplace Democracy* (Zed Books 2015). Founding member of workerscontrol.net. Together with Oliver Ressler he is producing *Occupy, Resist, Produce*, a series of documentaries on recuperated factories under workers control in Europe.

Lucía Bárcena Menendez, Barcelona

Master's Degree in International Cooperation for Development and a degree in Participatory Methodologies for Local Development. Since 2015 she coordinates the campaign on trade and investment policies for the NGO Ecologistas en Acción based in Madrid. She is responsible to facilitate the network, for strategic planning and implementation of the campaign activities. Besides this, she has work experience with UN agencies developing evaluation reports and studies which include UNICEF, UNFPA and the ECLAC. Also, she has worked monitoring and evaluating European Commission projects in Palestine, under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights initiative (EIDHR).

Elisabetta Cangelosi, Italy

Feminist and alterglobalist, researcher and activist, born and raised in Italy and currently based in Bruxelles. She holds an MA in Anthropology of Ancient Worlds, a Ph.D in Social Sciences and (almost) an LLM in Human Rights Law.

Since ten years, working on the commons with extensive publications and participation in conferences and workshops on the topic, both from an activist and academic perspective. Collaboration with Universities in Italy and currently teaching in France. Also work as a consultant on access to resources, gender justice, social movements and water issues.

Since 2012 participating in the creation of the European Water Movement. Collaboration with Transform Italia and Transform Europe since 2014, taking part in the working group on the commons.

Her social and political engagement dates back to 2002 with the Rete di Lilliput, and continued over several campaigns in Italy and Belgium, including the participation in several World Social Fora and Alternative World Water Fora.

Sandeep Chachra, India

Social anthropologist by training and a development professional with over two and half decades of experience in human development. He leads one of the largest social organisations in India, ActionAid India, as its Executive Director. Prior to this, he led ActionAid International's, global work on Just and Democratic Governance and Economic Justice.

Over the last two decades and a half, he has also worked in several capacities and geographies with ActionAid, Commonwealth Youth Programme and other development organisations and networks. He has steered development of a Global Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability platform, and the South South Peoples Solidarity Forum, with presence in over 20 countries. He was also key part of setting up the platform Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP) in Asia which contributed to advancing a civil society campaign on MDGs.

Sandeep has been involved with the work of peasant movements in Asia and Africa and has been a keen supporter of developing peasant movement Platforms. Currently, he is the Managing Editor of a leading global political economy journal on the Agrarian and work questions, called Agrarian South (<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ags>).

Over the last years, Sandeep has been part of policy efforts to develop the New Urban Agenda through two policy groups of UN-HABITAT on the Right to the City and another one on Informal Economy. He is the current Co-Chair of World Urban Campaign of UN-HABITAT (<http://www.worldurbancampaign.org> <<http://www.worldurbancampaign.org/>>)

Anna Coote, United Kingdom

Principal Fellow at the New Economics Foundation (NEF). A leading analyst, writer and advocate in the field of social policy, she has written widely on social justice, sustainable development, working time, public health policy, public involvement and democratic dialogue, gender and equality. She was Commissioner for Health with the UK Sustainable Development Commission (2000-9). Her recent publications for NEF include *Building a New*

Social Commons, (2017) *Local Early Action: how to make it happen* (2015), *People, Planet Power: Towards a New Social Settlement* (2015) and *Time on our Side: why we all need a shorter working week* (2013).

Birgit Daiber, Germany

Since the early sixties involved at various levels with building transnational social movements; active in various socio-ecological and feminist initiatives in European policy: as coordinator of transatlantic and international projects, as an expert for social urban development, as a Member of European Parliament, and as director of the Brussels Office of Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. She initiated and accompanied many transcontinental discussions. Her current particular interest is the development of the Common Good of Humanity.

Chantal Delmas, France

Co- organizer of the permanent seminar about commons in Transform! Europe and Coordinator of a seminar in Espaces Marx about economic democracy, social re-appropriation and commons. Active participant in the World Social Forum, organising seminars and assemblies of convergences about commons.

Koen Detavernier, Belgium

Master in Philosophy, formerly working at the Belgian Coalition of development NGO's (11.11.11), with work on development cooperation and coordination of the advocacy for the joint Belgian Campaign "Social Protection For All" (2013-2016). Since March 2017 at World Solidarity as an advocacy officer, specializing in social protection and offering policy support to the multi-stakeholder "Asia Network on the Right to Social Protection."
<http://rightspasia.blogspot.be/>

World Solidarity is the Non-Governmental Organization of the Christian Workers Movement in Belgium. Therefore, World Solidarity works mainly with social movements that pursue decent work, social protection and job creation for all workers. www.wsm.be

Dinesh Devkota, Nepal

Visiting Professor, Centre Department of Environmental Science (CDES), Tribhuvan University (TU), Nepal. Major area of specialization: Sustainable Development, Policy Development, Climate Change, and others. Chairman, of Centre for Green Economy Development – Nepal (CGED- NEPAL) and also involved in many institutions in an advisory capacity.

Former Hon. Vice Chairman and former Member (Jan 2009-Sept 2011) of the National Planning Commission (NPC), Government of Nepal. Contributed in development planning, provided leadership on policy planning, programme development and monitoring of

development tasks. Contributed in high level policy formulation mainly in the fields of *social protection frameworks*, infrastructure planning, technical education, livelihood promotion, entrepreneurship development, climate change policy (adaptation and mitigation), green economy planning, low carbon growth path, public-private partnerships and many more.

Prior joining to NPC, more than 25 years of experience in development field mainly in infrastructure sector and technical education of Nepal. Contributed in many national and international Seminar/Conferences as Key Note Speaker and in respectable senior roles. Achievements have been published, papers in many reputable national and international journals.

Dong Huy Cuong, Vietnam

Bachelor of Art in English, National University, Hanoi and Master of Art in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.

Now Secretary General of the Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation and Secretary General of the Vietnam Peace Committee, after having been Deputy Secretary General. Has been Vice Head, English section of VOV online Newspaper, Radio the Voice of Vietnam, Reporter, VOV online Newspaper, Radio the Voice of Vietnam and Assistant to Director, Vietnamese American Training College, Hanoi branch/ English teacher, Hanoi University of Agriculture.

Cristine "Tina" Ebro, The Philippines

Coordinator of the Focal Point of the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) in Asia. For many years, seconded by Bread for the World to the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD) in Manila as adviser for regional projects in the ASEAN. Actively supporting the IPD advocacy on "securing decent housing and services for all" with the National Movement of the Poor, and the Freedom from Debt Coalition's campaign to reclaim public services in the Philippines.

During the Marcos dictatorship, she helped establish human rights and democratisation platforms and was founding Coordinator of the following civil society networks: Citizen's Alliance for Consumer Protection, Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition, Labour Education and Assistance for Development, and a University of the Philippines student immersion program, "Learning from the People Drive".

In Europe, in the nineties, she was executive director of an ecumenical center for the promotion of humane asylum policies, Participating Refugees in Europe. A former university lecturer, she graduated from the University of the Philippines and earned her Masters from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University with a World Council of Churches Scholarship.

Federica Giardini, Italy

Federica Giardini, professor in Political Philosophy at Roma Tre University and activist at the former occupation of Teatro Valle Occupato. Former publications available on line on the issue of Commons: - Spatial Struggles. Teatro Valle and the Right to the City, https://www.academia.edu/11302808/Spatial_struggles_Teatro_Valle_Occupato_and_the_right_to_the_city; - Statica e dinamica. Appunti filosofici sui beni comuni, https://www.academia.edu/1362184/Statica_e_dinamica._Appunti_filosofici_sui_beni_comuni; - Reproduction as a Paradigm. Elements for a Feminist Political Economy, https://www.academia.edu/17787179/Reproduction_as_Paradigm_Elements_for_a_Feminist_Political_Economy

Shalmali Guttal, Thailand

Executive Director of Focus on the Global South (Focus). She lives in Bangkok, Thailand, where Focus' head office is located. She has been researching and writing about economic development, trade-investment, food, land, ecological and social justice issues in Asia – especially the Mekong region and India – for over 25 years, with emphasis on community rights to resources, women's rights, and innovative forms of resource governance. An equally important aspect of her work is popular education, training and capacity building on issues related to the commons, trade, investment, finance, and human rights based governance of land and territory. She works with several grassroots movements on the creation and governance of natural, social and knowledge commons.

Focus is a regional policy research organization headquartered in the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute in Bangkok, Thailand. Focus has country offices in Bangkok, India, Cambodia and the Philippines. Focus combines policy research, advocacy, activism and grassroots capacity building in order to generate critical analyses and debates among social movements, civil society organisations, elected officials, government functionaries and the general public on national and international policies related to globalisation, social and environmental justice, peace and democracy.

Vedran Horvat, Croatia

Head of Zagreb based Institute for Political Ecology (IPE). From 2005 to 2015 he acted as director of Zagreb office of Heinrich Böll Stiftung, a German green political foundation. Apart from many other engagements, from 2012 to 2017 he was the managing board member of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in Croatia. From 1998 to 2004 he worked as a journalist and web-editor in the daily political newspaper Vjesnik and contributor for domestic and international media. He is a sociologist specialized in human rights, regularly publishing on European politics, civil society development, environmental issues, migration. Recently he co-authored a publication on the Commons in South Eastern Europe which was published by IPE.

German Jaraiz Arroyo, Spain

Professor of Social Policy at the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville. Member of the Executive Committee of ESPA-net España and of the Scientific Committee of the FOESSA

Foundation. Participation in different processes of implementation of inclusion policies in Spain and Latin America. He has also been General Secretary of Caritas Regional of Andalusia. His main lines of research are: social inclusion, social services and the third sector.

Bru Laín Escandell, Barcelona

Bru Laín holds a Degree in Sociology, a Master in Political Sciences, and a Postgraduate in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He has been researcher at the Karl Polanyi Institute of Political Economy at the Concordia University (Canada), at the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics at the University of Brighton (UK), and at the Chair Hoover d'éthique économique et sociale of the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgique). He obtained his PhD on the American and the French Republican conception of property rights. He works on political economy, political philosophy, republicanism and on the historical, normative and institutional dimensions of property rights and of the commons, while teaching Sociology and Economics. He is member of the Observatori Metropolità of Barcelona conducting both applied and theoretical analysis of different equipment in Barcelona identified as urban common goods (www.bcncomuns.net). He is associate fellow of the Research group in Economic and Social Ethics and Epistemology of Social Sciences (UB). He is also the Secretary of the Basic Income Spanish Network.

Nuria Lozano Montoya, Barcelona

Born in Barcelona, 1967, currently living in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. Working in the automotive sector, lawyer and professor in legal matters, auditor in prevention of labour accidents. Author of various studies and manuals on public labour contracts, discrimination at work, relationship between work and homophobia, health and security at work, amongst others. In the 1980s she participates in the leftwing student movement at university, and later as trade unionist and political activist on issues related to work, economy and health at work, from a national and European perspective, with different responsibilities at CCOO (trade union) and Esquerra Unida i Alternativa. She is now member of its national council, responsible for the world of work. She is a member of the Social Political Assembly of Izquierda Unida and responsible for the Federal and Plurinational Model.

She is a member of the Executive commission of Catalunya en Comú. She is, since its start, a member of the promotional group of popular legislative initiative for a guaranteed income of citizenship and actively participates with Marea Pensionista, March for Dignity, Marea Basica and Platform against free trade agreements, amongst others. She participates in European trade unionist networks, such as TUNE and is a founding member of the trade union network of the European Left Party.

Ah Maftuchan, Indonesia

Executive director of Perkumpulan PRAKARSA, the NGO-based think tank in Jakarta - Indonesia. PRAKARSA works with global, national and local actors to nurture and enhance

welfare ideas and initiatives through research and actors to create fiscal justice, social justice and prosperous society. Maftuchan is also the co-founder and coordinator of the Indonesian Tax Justice Forum and co-founder of the Indonesian Responsible-Bank Coalition and the commissioner of the Independent Commission of State Budget. With Ms. Hoang Phuong Thao (Country Director of ActionAid Vietnam), Maftuchan also co-chair of TAFJA (Tax and Fiscal Justice Asia) South-east Asia Sub-region.

Alessandra Mecozzi, Italy

Trade unionist in Fiom-Cgil (metalworkers federation) since 1971 for 41 years, organisation, education and negotiation sectors (in Torino 15 years); since 1996 in the international relations sector. Since 1975 active also in "trade union feminism", founding with others "Sindacato Donna", an association within CGIL committed to struggling for women's rights. Since 2001 promoting Fiom metalworkers attendance and participation in the Social Forum (Genoa 2001, European and World Social Forum). Now retired, but volunteering in feminist and migrants associations, president of "Cultura è Libertà, a campaign for Palestina.

Francine Mestrum, Belgium

PhD in social sciences and work at the European institutions and several Belgian universities. Research concerns the social dimension of globalisation, poverty, inequality, social protection, public services and gender. Active member of the International Council of the World Social Forum and helping in the organisation of the Asia Europe People's Forum events. She is the author of several books (in Dutch, French and English) on development, poverty, inequality and social commons. She is the founder of the global network of Global Social Justice and currently works on a project for social commons. www.socialcommons.eu

Roberto Morea, Italy

Activist and president of Transform! Italy, Italian node of the network transform! europa, of which he is a member of the board. Facilitator of its common goods working group.

He was a councillor for social services in the 1st municipality of Rome, promoter and part of the City of the other economy in Rome.

Lidy Nacpil, The Philippines

An activist for nearly 40 years, starting when she was a student at the university fighting the Marcos dictatorship. She has been a national, regional and international campaigner on human rights, economic and social justice, women and gender, environment and climate issues for all these years, working as part of various movements and networks. For the last several years until the present she is the Coordinator of the Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development, Co-Coordinator of Tax and Fiscal Justice Asia, and Co-Coordinator of the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice. She is also a Vice President of the Freedom from Debt Coalition of the Philippines, one of the founders of the Philippine

Movement for Climate Justice, the Chairperson of Oriang, a women's organization, and serves on the Board of 350.org and Oxfam Great Britain. She represents APMDD in the International Organizing Committee of AEPF.

Peter North, United Kingdom

Reader in Alternative Economies at the University of Liverpool, UK. He gained his BA in History and Politics in 1984. After a few years working for the Departments of Employment, Trade and Industry, and Environment, he gained his MA in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford (1993) and his PhD from the School for Advanced Urban Studies at the University of Bristol (1997). He was a post-doctoral Research Associate on a project on Local Business Representation in Local Economic Development at the University of Sheffield (1996-7).

Between 1997 and 2002 he was Senior Research Fellow at the Local Economy Policy Unit at South Bank University. He joined the University of Liverpool in 2002. His research focuses on: (1) Low carbon transitions at the city and community level, especially processes of policy formation and partnership working between the public, private and community sectors around strategies for local economic development within an overall framework of resource constraint, climate change and economic crisis; (2) the politics of climate change and ecologically-focused social movements engaged in struggles about the implications of anthropogenic climate change and resource constraints for both humans and the wider ecosystems upon which we depend; and, (3) using micropolitical and 'economic alterity' frameworks, the social and solidarity economies as tools for constructing and rethinking alternative geographies of money, entrepreneurship, and livelihoods.

Pablo Sanchez Centellas, Barcelona

Born in Barcelona in 1978, studied Political Science at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the Sussex University and the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Living in Brussels since 2008. From August 2010 until September 2015 has been responsible for campaigns of the European Federation of Public Service Unions and was jointly responsible for the first successful European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) on the human right to water (www.right2water.eu). In September 2015 he was appointed Director of International Relations of the City Council in Barcelona until he returned to Brussels in 2017. He has been one of the founding member of the European Parliament working group on commons.

Mari Jeanie D. Santos, The Philippines

Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast communication, Master in Mass Communication, Master in Media Culture, Advance Master in Cultural and Development Anthropology. Most recent experience is working full-time for NGO Forum on ADB as its Communications Coordinator. With Freelance work for Bank Information Center - Europe, Zero Waste Europe, CEE Bankwatch, Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) and KU Leuven Film Institute, Belgium.

Ghulam Mustafa Talpur, Pakistan

Currently working as an Asia regional leader of the inequality campaign with Oxfam international. Degree in international development from USA. Previously, work with Wateraid, Actionaid, WWF and International Water Management Institute for the past 20 years in Pakistan and Asia, leading many campaigns on the environment and human rights. Expertise including research, policy advocacy, campaigning with strong thematic focus on inequality, water resources and land governance, livelihood and food security, and water and sanitation.

Since the last three years leading Oxfam's inequality campaign in the Asia region. This Campaign is aimed at addressing the widening gap between the rich and the rest through shifting the terms of debate on income and wealth inequalities, suggesting alternate policy and practice options which include tax justice, labour rights, living wages and social protection and access to essential public services.

He is instrumental in building national and regional alliances to engage the public in the campaign for a just and fairer Asia.

Kris Vanslambrouck, Belgium

Asia Program Officer of 11.11.11, the coalition of NGOs, unions, movements and various solidarity groups in Flanders, Belgium. The 11.11.11-program in Southeast-Asia focusses on lobby and advocacy on strategic issues such as, Resources Justice, Ecological Justice and Trade Justice. It runs campaigns in Belgium, and are networking with and often supportive of strategic allies in Europe, Asia, Latin-America and Africa. Kris represents 11.11.11 (Triple11) at the IOC of the AEPF, and T11 is currently the Project Holder of the AEPF-Program. Kris is an expert on the political context in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia and Philippines.

Julie Ward, United Kingdom

Julie is a Labour and Co-operative Party Member of the European Parliament for the North West of England, covering Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester. As such she is a member of the European Parliamentary Labour Party and, in turn, part of the second largest group in the European Parliament, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

Julie serves on the Parliament's Culture & Education Committee, the Regional Development Committee and the Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Rights. She is also a member of the the Labour Party's Policy Commission on Education and Children.

First elected in May 2014, Julie previously had a long career in the cultural sector, working with marginalised communities using arts as a tool for wellbeing, empowerment and social change. Prior to being elected as an MEP, Julie had been working with partners in the EU and beyond for more than a decade. For instance, she was involved in an international

delegation to Belfast to participate in an all-party discussion about the role of the arts in peace-building processes.

Julie decided to go to university for the first time in 2009 and enrolled on a Masters' course at Newcastle, studying Education and International Development. This meant learning about economics, human rights and poverty. She graduated in 2012 determined to use her new-found knowledge for the greater good.

Julie has extensive experience of front-line grassroots work, engaging with people from all walks of life as they try to do their best for their families and their communities often in very challenging circumstances.