

# A NEW ECONOMY

*We invite you to think with us: what will you do, starting today, to guide us towards a sustainable future?*

A range of symptoms from economic, social and ecological crises shows that society has misunderstood the workings of its own social structures and the more general 'rules of life'. Our current economic system – with its 'success' based on continuous exploitation of natural resources – has appeared a cul-de-sac. Society is in desperate need of a new operating system. Moreover, the more urgent the crises facing society, the greater the need for bold and visionary leadership.

**We - Leaders for Economic Change – after months of teachings, trainings, coaching, reflection and brainstorm sessions, proudly present to you our vision on the new economic principles and an action plan towards the new economic system.**

Our economic and financial system should be in service of society and earth. New economy should be more in line with laws of nature, as nature is the beginning of everything. Books are written about the inventions, inspired by nature, yet we keep on ignoring it when it comes down to our economic system.

Adopting the natural principles to us means that the core of the future economic system should be put the following three principles: diversity, cyclicity and mutualism.

## DIVERSITY

In nature, a diverse community is stronger, more adaptive, and more resilient to adversity than a homogenous one. We must embrace differences in cultures, ideas, languages, background, systems, solutions and beliefs of everyone around us. Simultaneously, we must make a conscious effort to include the excluded.

## CYCLICITY

The most organic systems are cyclic. Human development does not have a beginning, middle, and end! We cannot afford to think of our resources, companies, or colleagues in a linear way. Life is a cycle, so is our new system.

## MUTUALISM

No living organism can survive in total solitude. We need each other to live. Competition, as we know it in our present economic system, encourages rivalry and gains at the expense of others and the environment, while collaboration stimulates communities of inclusion. Mutualistic relationships are always long term investments while competition and rivalry can only be useful as personal quick gains.

The transition towards the economic system that embraces these three natural principles requires action of and collaboration between all stakeholders involved. To lead the way leaders are needed that would adopt these principles as their own values. These leaders must embrace differences in culture, systems, solutions and beliefs of people around them. They must be flexible and adaptive in their thinking and doing, always on the look out for new things. And they should be able to facilitate mutualistic communities.

The transition towards a new system means a systematic change on different levels. Concrete actions can be taken by governments, businesses and by each of us to bring about the change we all want to see.

LEADERS FOR  
ECONOMIC CHANGE



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## GOVERNMENT

**#01** Start redefining economic models to include other kinds of values than the mere monetary one: intrinsic, symbolic, ecological, social, perceived value - all play a role in our economic behavior. Shift the ultimate goal from economic growth to happiness. **#02** Incentivize collective use of goods, i.e.: bicycles and electric cars in big cities as services instead of individual ownership. **#03** Support and stimulate the diversity in solutions, allow and facilitate experiments in this direction. There are more answers to a problem than just one. **#04** Stimulate a functional economy that fosters long term sustainability (such as investments in green energy, green buildings, clean industry) even though they need economic support on the short term. **#05** Promote sectors that produce information goods such as teaching, information technology, and so on. They will serve as the basis for the future economy. **#06** Incorporate sustainability in general education and require Economic programs at universities to incorporate social, anthropological and ecological aspects. If future generation see the world from a more interdisciplinary perspective, they will be better equipped to deal with the complex social and ecological challenges they will have to face. **#07** Create time and incentives for bodily and cognitive care in workplaces. E.g. subsidies for fitness and mindfulness. **#08** Implement a sustainability tax: part of the VAT (5% for example) can be reclaimed by a company if it is invested in sustainability. **#09** Improve legislation and regulation where it is counter-productive to innovative and sustainable initiatives. **#10** \

## BUSINESS

**#01** Look at the shared social and environmental value your business creates. This value is the real impact it is having on the world. **Stop looking at progress solely in financial terms.** **#02** Use this lens to look in a new way to your supply /value chain. How and where is value created, does it harm others, how do we collaborate, who profits from it? **#03** Consider the well-being of your customers as your greatest asset, next to your human and natural resources. Get them involved in the development of your business. **#04** Evaluate social and environmental returns as well when choosing new investments. **#05** Dematerialize: reduce resource and energy use; reduce waste. Create take-back schemes. **#06** Support midcap companies with CSR (being a large part of the economy): more awareness creation and knowledge sharing. **#07** Start integrated reporting. **#08** Create joint ventures with civil sector organizations. **#09** \

## YOU: CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

**#01** Be aware that you and all mankind are part of nature, not above it, not separate from it. Harm nature or others, and you harm yourself. **#02** **Accept that you too are responsible for what happens in the economy.** You too can change it. In fact, there is only us to change things. **#03** Change starts with a spark, and you can be the spark: **a.** Be aware that you can make a difference. **b.** Think about what your talents are and what you want to do with them. **#04** Use the power of connecting with others. **#05** You don't know everything. Open up to different viewpoints **a.** Be open to new experiences and ideas. **b.** Value the opinion of people from a different background; they know something you don't know. **c.** Put yourself in situations where you will be re-inspired on subjects you have become cynical about. **d.** Value interdisciplinary work. There's a lot to be learnt by everyone. **e.** Be ready to step out of your comfort zone. **f. Learning to listen is as powerful as a change tool as learning to speak in public.** **#06** Material goods provide a temporary satisfaction, but have a long term ecological impact: **a. Stop using goods as symbols of social status and symbols of prestige.** **b.** Redefine the value of goods from monetary to social, symbolic and ecological. **c. Try to make a difference between what you want and what you need.** Realize that both needs and wants are in evolution, and you can shape them if you want to. **#07** Rediscover the beauty in other people and in nature. Be aware that you can make others happy. **#08** Fail gracefully: everybody makes mistakes but we have to keep trying. Use trial and error and prototyping: design, build, go back to the drawing board, improve. **#09** Let your heart speak! **#10** \

## YOU: CHANGE YOUR HABITS

**#01** Connect with others to initiate and fuel change. We can accomplish great things by connecting: **a.** Be a networker. Create a space for a community of support for a common purpose, be this online or a physical meeting group: together we'll achieve more than alone. **b.** Propose to use moments of silence in a group to create connection. **c.** Communicate the changes you are bringing in your lifestyle. **d.** Discuss ideas for a new economy with family, friends and colleagues, with an open mind. Be surprised. Ask if you don't understand or don't agree. **#02** Buy less, consume less. Make incremental steps towards changing behavior: **a.** Repair broken things instead of replacing them. **b.** Set up **collaborative consumption platforms** and ask your friends to join. **c.** Share goods (car, tools, books, clothes, houseware). Borrow what you need from your friends or collaborative consumption platforms. Tell your friends they can borrow your stuff. **d.** Give immaterial things (a walk, a story, a visit, a recipe) as gifts, they can give more happiness than products. Use gifts that are not worth much in money but have a great symbolic value. **e.** Grow food: plant vegetables and herbs in the spring, it is rewarding, relaxing, and it connects you intimately with nature's cycles, as well as other fellow gardeners. **f.** Waste less. Ditch the concept of 'waste'. In your mind substitute it with 'something that needs a new use'. **#03** Buy better. Spend your money in the economy you want to see: **a.** Buy sustainable products and services. They cost more, because they take responsibility for their impacts. **b.** Move your savings to where they can be invested more ethically. These investments can fuel the new economy. **c.** Be curious about your local food growers, they are usually amazing. **#04** Foster change in your workplace: **a.** Promote recycling, waste reduction, energy efficiency. **b.** Ask your employer about the social and environmental returns of their investments. **e.** Create **d.** Talk about the new economy you want to see and about our role in this transition with your colleagues. **c.** Create 'shared space for nothingness' to allow the truth from within to find its way out, to support strong personal actions, to allow the wisdom of the crowd to emerge. To stay genuine in tune with the purpose. **e.** Tell your employer you value working for a company that works on sustainable principles. **#05** **Competition is not always bad.** If you like competition, make a **shift from competing with others towards competing with yourself.** Grow, develop, improve yourself **#06** Seek new experiences. Attend cultural events, workgroups, community meetings. And invite a friend. **a.** Stop using goods as symbols of social status and prestige. **b.** Take the time to participate in volunteering experiences. **c.** Travel, but remember that you don't have to go far to experience new things. **#07** \

