



Building the new economy

This booklet asks how we bring about a just transition to a new economy.

Who built today's economic system? What principles make up this system and what impact does this have on our society and the environment? How do we build an economy based on Quaker principles? Why do we need a just transition? Who do we need to work with to get there?

Building the new economy is the seventh and final booklet in QPSW's new economy series. The series builds on the ideas put forward in our *Principles for a new economy* document (<https://tinyurl.com/mfraln9>) and aims to help Quakers and others explore alternatives to our current economic system.

This booklet is not for passive consumption! Full of questions to aid reflection and discussion, it asks you to imagine what a different type of economic system could look like. We hope you will consider and explore these questions – on your own, in groups or with your meeting. We'd love to hear what you think, and invite you to share your feedback, questions and reflections with us at neweconomy@quaker.org.uk or by posting on our Loomio group at www.loomio.org/g/bWLk4ONE/new-economy.



Woman protester during Occupy Dame Street, Dublin. Credit: kulicki

Introduction

The new economy series has invited readers to envisage a new direction of travel: to think about what a 'new economy', compatible with Quaker values, might look like. Our economy, like our world, is forever being remade. But how it is remade is up to us.

"What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, and continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale."

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Inequality, environmental destruction and exploitation are outcomes of an economy that is in contradiction to Quaker values. The 2008 financial crisis encouraged our community to consider what a different kind of economy could look like. This statement made at Yearly Meeting 2011 is as relevant as ever:

"The global economic system is posited on continued expansion and growth, and in its pursuit of growth it is often unjust, violent and destructive... We need to ask the question whether this system is so broken that we must urgently work with others of faith and good will to put in its place a different system in which our testimonies can flourish."

In this booklet we hope to prepare Friends in their journey to transform the current economic system and build a new economy. We call this systems change work. We will use our insights and knowledge from the previous six booklets and find ways to put them into action.

This booklet, the last in the series, is a call to action. It offers a route map to move beyond reflection. It points towards the practical acts we can all do today and in the coming months and years. Systems change work means undertaking our everyday actions with a strategy that shifts power in order to realise our vision. We will explore what we mean by economic systems change, why we need it and work out ways to guide us in the just transition to a new economy.

Reflections

In this series we have introduced concepts of new economic thinking through various themes. If you have been inspired or stimulated by a particular theme, we encourage you to explore it further through the resources and links provided at the end of each booklet.

We have covered a lot in this series and it is worth recognising the breadth of issues that fall under the banner of economic systems change. It is natural to want to have all the answers, but it is worth accepting that in a lot of areas this

work is still unformed. This is the complexity of systems change work. We need to embrace the unknown and be ready to play our part in the long-game.

This booklet aims to provide a framework for grappling with that complexity, so what we know does not limit our ability to take action. As a reminder, the previous booklets looked at:



Booklet 1: *What's the economy for?* We ask what the aims of economic policy should be and look at different ways to measure economic success.



Booklet 2: *Good work in the new economy.* How work might be reimagined in line with Quaker testimony and what businesses could support it.



Booklet 3: *Energy in the new economy.* We take a look at how we could transition to a greener and more fair energy system.



Booklet 4: *Money, banks and finance in the new economy.* We explore how the banking system and creation of money could be fairer.



Booklet 5: *The role of markets in the new economy.* We analyse markets in capitalist economies and how new economies would differ.



Booklet 6: *Ownership in the new economy.* We review the political power of ownership and look at progressive and sustainable models.

Understanding the economy

We can learn a lot about the function of the economy by simply exploring its etymology. 'Eco' comes from the Greek word 'Oikos'¹ and simply means 'home'. In turn, 'eco' helps us establish a holistic understanding of the following terminology:

Eco system (home+system) is not simply thinking about the things

How do you understand the economy? What would you want to use as a measure of economic success for society?

What are your feelings on having a globalised economy?

that exist within a home, but the relationship dynamics that exist between all these things. There is an ecosystem in something as small as a puddle and as big as an entire rainforest.

Eco logy (home+knowledge) – knowing, understanding and the study of home.

Eco nomy (home+management) – how we manage the relationships in our home, ideally in a way that takes care of the place and everything within it. However, ‘home management’ can be done well or badly, depending on how you do it and for what end.

As we have learnt in this series, the economy does not simply refer to money, banks, financial markets or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These are just the tools or instruments of economies. Economies can be measured in many ways – through people’s lived experience, our soil, water or animals. In Booklet 1 we looked at some of the alternative instruments of economies that could replace GDP.

There is a long tradition of this relationship being one of balance. However, some communities have historically mismanaged their home and created ecological consequences. We learnt about this in Booklet 6. A globalised economy will globalise the ecosystem. That means that all of our activities will impact each other, no matter where in the world you are. This conceptual understanding of the economy is useful for us to grasp economic systems change. You can read more about this at www.movementgeneration.org.

Economy structure

Quakers have established through the new economy project that the current economic system is built on a set of principles incompatible with Quaker values. Below is a description of the dominant principles of neoliberal thought²:

Individual freedom

The belief that the economy should function to support individual choices and freedoms.

Free markets

That the most efficient way to distribute goods and services to enable human development is through market mechanisms.

Growth

Human development and well-being are often measured by economic growth. This is based on the assumption that GDP is the best indicator of progress and

that total wealth is distributed to those who engage in economic activities. Growth is seen as essential for a country's image of prosperity, which often means a measure of geo-political influence. Throughout the past century growth was intrinsically linked to fossil fuel extraction and environmental degradation because of the role the earth's resources have played in development.

Small governments

The idea that governments hold back innovation and instil bureaucracy. In order to function efficiently, governments need to remain small and allow the market to establish the priorities of economic activity.

The principles of neo-liberalism were designed by Friedrich von Hayek, an Austrian-British academic who won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1974.³ To this day Hayek's principles maintain themselves through institutions that deliver neo-liberal practices, not only in the UK but across the world. Overleaf is a diagram that can help us better understand the outcomes connected with neo-liberalism and may allow us to better understand how we construct a different society based on principles of a new economy.

A great way to grasp the history of neo-liberalism is to listen to this podcast series from the New Economics Foundation: www.soundcloud.com/neoliberalism⁴.



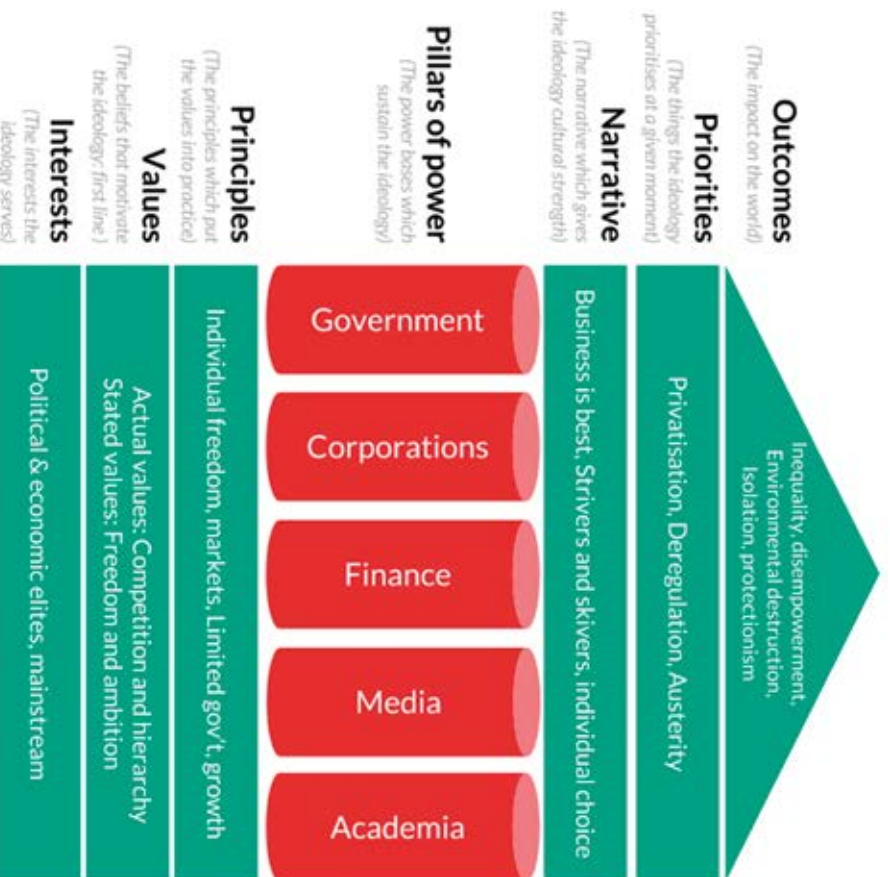
Friedrich August von Hayek, in 1981, on the 50th anniversary of his first lecture at the London School of Economics. Credit: LSE library

Preparing for systems change

Bringing about systems change is lifelong work. The powers that dictate our existing systems laid their foundations in the 1940s and emerged as a dominant political ideology from the 1970s onwards.⁵ The roots of this system had been in place for over five centuries. To undo this and rebuild will take a lot from each of us and will require many people to work together. It is difficult to imagine that things could be different because many of us have never known anything but our existing economy. Imagination is the first step to preparing for systems change.

THE HOUSE THAT HAYEK BUILT

How neoliberalism is organised to sustain its power in the UK.



“Imagination is the most powerful tool that we have for social change. By re-imagining the world around us, we can put it together again in a different way – first in our minds, then in our stories and ultimately in reality. We have to invest in imagination. I describe this as raising the sails for when the wind comes.”

Ed Mayo, Salter Lecture 2013

However, the impact of our ‘sail raising work’ is not always clear. Although we must strive to be as strategic and effective as possible, we also need to hold faith that actions do have an effect, and this can be difficult to know at the time. If we are trying to both break down existing power structures and build something new, we need to accept that this will take generations. For this reason, the means of our actions must be as important as the ends themselves.

“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”

Mahatma Gandhi

A just transition

What kind of systems change do we want? As mentioned earlier, economic systems change means

What words would you use to describe our existing economy?
What words would you use to describe the new economy?

Is this a useful framework for you to think about systems change?
What is missing or does not fit?

What does the diagram say to you about power? Where is it and why?

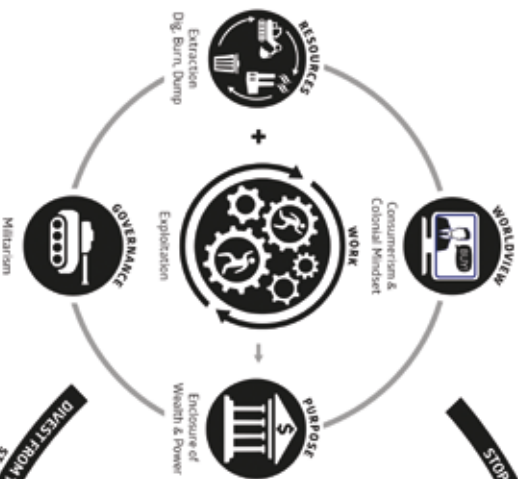
rethinking how we organise our relationships with each other and the earth. Systems change is not just about having a vision for where you are going; it is also about getting there. We refer to this as ‘just transition’, and as a community committed to changing the system we need to consider the principles of our journey as much as the principles of the new economy.

The term ‘just transition’ was first used in the 1960s by trades unions and the environmental movement,⁷ recognising the interconnectedness of their struggle for justice. It has been adopted by many movements to describe a process of reallocating and reorganise our resources in a way that respects historical events and future generations.

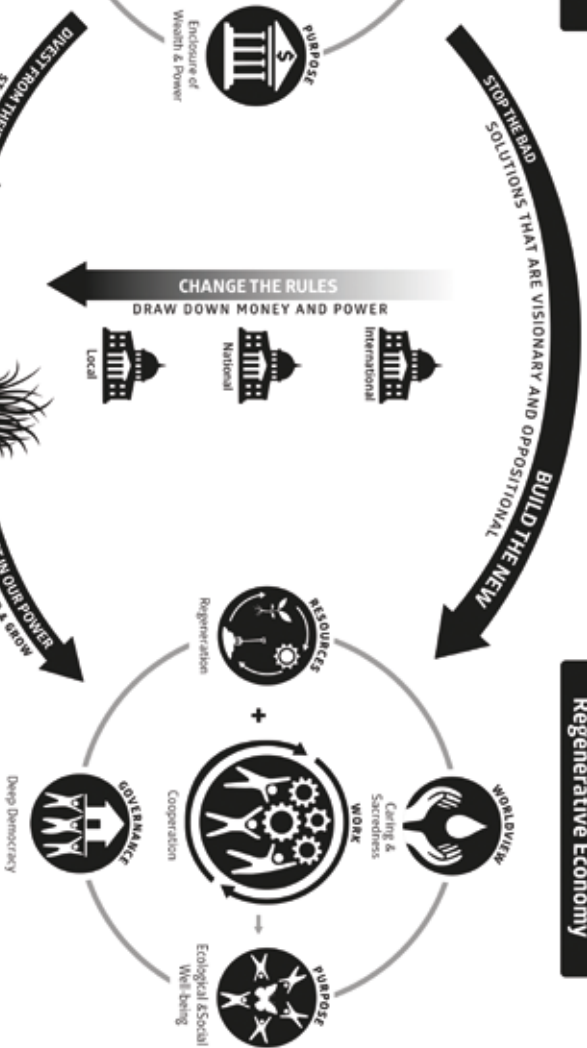
Overleaf is an example of a ‘just transition framework’. This framework was produced by a US organisation called Movement Generation⁸ in consultation with its members. It provides us with a way to envision economic systems change and a framework of how to get there.

A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TRANSITION

Extractive Economy



Regenerative Economy



STOP THE BAD SOLUTIONS THAT ARE VISIONARY AND OPPOSITIONAL

BUILD THE NEW

CHANGE THE RULES
DRAW DOWN MONEY AND POWER



DIVEST FROM THEIR POWER
STARVE & STOP

INVEST IN OUR POWER
FEED & GROW



A JUST TRANSITION MUST:

- Shift economic control to communities
- Democratize wealth and the workplace
- Distribute resources equitably
- Diversify rural production and consumption
- Retain and restore cultures and traditions

Building blocks for change

“Colourful demonstrations and weekend marches are vital but alone are not powerful enough to stop wars. Wars will be stopped only when soldiers refuse to fight, when workers refuse to load weapons onto ships and aircraft, when people boycott the economic outposts of Empire that are strung around the globe.”

Arundhati Roy, Public Power in the Age of Empire

So where should we start to help create the new economy? There is activity to suit all temperaments and capabilities, and changes to make in many different areas of our lives. Here are five (interlinked) ways:

Understanding ourselves – why are we called to this work and how do we understand our role?

As an individual or a meeting, it is often difficult to understand our own role within the movement. Much of this work begins with ourselves – to understand our unique gifts and how they will support our collective vision.

While it often does not feel this way, we all hold power. Within social movements many individuals hold more than others, in ways that uphold existing systems of discrimination. One of our roles is to consider ourselves beyond the practical, material or spiritual gifts we offer the movement. This means recognising the power we hold

and how we can utilise this for the benefit of the movement. Power that is afforded to us by the way society is structured is known as privilege. Privilege shows up in many ways and can be explored together with your community. US Friends have begun doing this work together online and face-to-face, through sharing resources on racism and sexism.⁹ We have also found the ‘Guide to allyship’¹⁰ to be a useful start when thinking about what it means to act in solidarity.

“Working in partnership with others to build a movement can lead us to question our own practices, for only when we are also working on ourselves can we witness and speak beyond Friends. Can we recognise where we need to learn and to change?”

We have heard the call to examine our own diversity, particularly in our committee and organisational structure, locally and nationally. Diversity has several key dimensions and more may emerge in the future. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings, paying particular attention to race and age diversity and to keep Yearly Meeting informed in their annual report.”

Yearly Meeting Gathering Minute 38: ‘Living out our faith in the world: working with others to make a difference’. Friday 4 August 2017

Building the alternative – demonstrating another way of existing

We can use our power and resources to influence or support the aspects of our economy that are most ethical or help practice new principles.

- This might mean moving your money and the money in your meeting to align with our values. For inspiration and ideas visit the ‘Your faith your finance’ website.¹¹
- We can also contribute our time and energy by participating in schemes, organisations and projects that create practice cooperation, collaboration and liberation within the confines of our current system.
- We can extend the gift economy, which uses alternatives to money as exchange¹². Through this we can develop the synergistic relationships and networks that will pre-empt a more just system.

We may still have to rely on the existing system to make this happen, but this work is part of the reorganisation of resources that is a very effective and immediate use of our power.

Confronting the old – challenging existing systems through action

We can challenge the expansion, normalisation and continuation of

destructive aspects of our system through campaigning, activism and other forms of political engagement. Many Quakers, for example, have been lobbying MPs and joining campaigns around tax evasion, unfair trade deals, unjust or exploitative work practices, or cuts to social services and social security.

“...mass uprisings of people – along the lines of the abolition movement, the civil rights movement or Occupy Wall Street – represent the likeliest source of ‘friction’ to slow down an economic machine that is careening out of control.”

Naomi Klein¹³

“Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God’s purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for the prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.”

Advices & queries 35

Building the movement – supporting the right kind of leadership for this work

To build an effective movement we need to work with others. By taking time to build relationships and to know what others are doing, we can find our own contribution as part of a greater whole. Building a movement is not just about going

Spend some time thinking about each of these building blocks. Which do you feel most connected to and which do you feel unfamiliar with?

What is challenging about these five building blocks? How do we prepare ourselves to engage with them?

on rallies or protests. It does not always culminate in taking action. Movements are built because of the aligned efforts of organisers and activists. Organisers will spend time in their community building trusting relationships with a diversity of groups.¹⁴ They act as the nodes of communication between people, providing information and resources when needed. Activists are escalators. They create moments of high energy that catch the attention of their target audience. Think about all the iconic moments in history in which crowds have gathered together in action. Without the groundwork of community organising, those individuals would leave an action and return to a home without a community.

Our work as Quakers is to invest in that fine line between action and organising – that is how we truly build a movement. We can't always participate in the activities, projects or activism that makes a difference. But we can uphold those who do so,

at home and abroad, through acts of solidarity and support.

Changing the story: who is speaking and what are they saying?

“Changing the story isn’t enough in itself, but it has often been foundational to real changes. Making an injury visible and public is usually the first step in remedying it, and political change often follows culture, as what was long tolerated is seen to be intolerable, or what was overlooked becomes obvious. Which means that every conflict is in part a battle over the story we tell, or who tells and who is heard.”

Rebecca Solnit

Every action we take is an opportunity to communicate a new narrative, counter-arguments or ideas that challenge the status quo and point towards a different path. Even without taking action ourselves, we can challenge the realm of ideas – not accepting prevailing ideas of normal. Just as women objected to ‘he’ as a universal, we can object to ‘growth’ as the promotion of ‘aspiration’ at the expense of common good. We can do this by speaking with our networks (friends, family, and colleagues) about injustice and what we believe, challenging ideas we find unacceptable in daily life or reaching wider audiences through writing,

engaging the media or creating art. We can also do it by thinking carefully about the way that our group or campaign communicates its message.¹⁵ Positive messages are often the most powerful. Some examples of this are in pushing the boundaries of our understanding of equality, peace and sustainability that are outside the norms of society.

“Speaking out in the world is an essential part of our religious and social witness. Friends are encouraged to express their faith and values whenever suitable opportunities arise, and to use the media confidently for public comment on our concerns.”

Quaker faith & practice 3.27
(<http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passages/3-27>)

Ideas for action

Thinking about action in this way can sharpen our understanding of how change happens and illustrates the breadth of approaches available. These building blocks are by no means mutually exclusive. For example, an action to oppose the closure of a local library (confronting the old economy) can also be used to speak in the local press about the importance of public services and public space (change the story). By talking to protesters in the next town about how we coordinated our action, we help another community facing

similar closures (contribute to the movement).

Looking back at the issues and examples explored in the previous six booklets, here are some ways we can challenge and change the current system and work towards the new economy:

Booklet 1: What is the economy for?

Change the story: Challenge GDP as the ultimate aim and measure of success by:

- talking about this with your MP or encouraging your local council or district to adopt other measures
- upholding the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics
- organising events in your community to explore what measure works for you.

You can learn more about alternative measures to GDP at www.happyplanetindex.org.

Booklet 2: Good work in the new economy

Change the story: Challenge the narratives that striking workers are selfish, that big business is essential for our economy, that tax avoidance and other unethical practices are inevitable. Promote, publicise and celebrate alternatively structured and more ethical organisations.

Support the movement:

- Join a union (even if you're

not in work, you can join as a community member), support union activity and uphold those taking industrial action.

- Uphold those challenging their employers to recognise workers' rights and unions (e.g. McDonald's worker strikes, Uber drivers and Deliveroo riders caught in the gig-economy).
- Develop affinity groups for these groups, working closely with them to provide emotional, material or spiritual support if needed.

Build the alternative: Where you have the power and influence to do so, make organisations you are

involved in reflect the principles of the new economy. Promote democratic accountability, the Living Wage, job security, sick pay and holiday pay, and other measures that can have positive social and environmental impacts. There are many things we can do beyond wages that can support individuals in the workplace. Take time to talk to those in employment where you work, particularly the lowest paid, and use your power to make it a welcoming and nurturing place for all.

Spend your money and invest in ethical businesses: those who pay their tax, pay the Living Wage, have a stated pay ratio between



A 'Fast Food Rights' demo outside a branch of McDonald's, organised by War on Want (CC BY 2.0).

highest and lowest or median, have democratic structures (like co-operatives), and have a positive social and environmental impact.

Support or join the campaigns for other policy changes that improve work and business, e.g. greater stakeholder representation on the board and a legally mandated living wage.

Support the Living Wage Campaign in your area, which challenges the low-wage economy and builds the alternative at the same time. Talk about what we can do to improve work practices beyond the Living Wage and what this would mean in the new economy.

Booklet 3: Energy in the new economy

Build the alternative: Switch the energy supplier of your home and any institutions that you are part of (e.g. your meeting) to one that uses renewable energy, e.g. Good Energy or a local energy co-operative.

Divest your investments and the investments of any institutions that you are part of (and have influence in) from fossil fuels.

Help set up a local energy co-op or invest financially in a co-op in your area. Learn about issues of energy access and democracy from local campaigns such as Switched On London.¹⁶

Block the destructive economy:
Encourage other organisations

to switch their energy supplier, divest from fossil fuels or end their association with fossil fuel companies, e.g. other local churches, the British Museum. Go to www.earthquakeractionuk.wordpress.com to see actions taken by Quakers against BP's sponsorship of museums.

Challenge fracking and other fossil-fuel extraction in your area, and uphold or support those challenging fracking elsewhere in the country.

Support the movement: Stand in solidarity and send funds to those communities on the forefront of the struggle to 'keep it in the ground' elsewhere, e.g. indigenous communities challenging the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. These struggles are not only vital for the communities involved, but symbolically important for the global movement.¹⁷

Change the story: What does energy justice mean for those working in the oil and gas industry? A just transition means recognising and supporting the right of all people to work to their skills. In the new economy, what would work look like in the energy industry? How can we support workers to be centred in this transition? See www.campaigncc.org/climatejobs for the Million Climate Jobs campaign that Friends have supported as well as work by international trade unions on a just transition for workers.

Booklet 4: Money, banks and finance in the new economy

Build the alternative: Change your bank account, savings, investments and the bank account of institutions you are part of (including your meeting) to ethical banking. This means using www.yourfaithyourfinance.org as a guide, or consider supporting a credit union. Pensions are more complicated, but creating your own pension fund is an option.¹⁸

Participate in local time-banks or alternative currencies and challenge yourselves to better understand who is benefiting from these projects and who is being left out. Work out ways in which such schemes could better benefit communities who are historically disadvantaged by the finance system.

Booklet 5: The role of markets in the new economy

Build the alternative: Invest in ethical enterprises that pay their taxes. Create alternative spaces or occupy a venue that is at risk of closure. Take inspiration from action by www.sistersuncut.org at Holloway Prison.

Block the destructive economy: Call for greater checks to corporate power, including by growing the power of unions. Engage your MP: you are a tax-payer with a right to voice your concerns.

Campaign against cuts, closures, privatisation, outsourcing and sell-offs of local public services.

Support campaigns to ensure access to public services and local organisations for migrants, non-binary people, women and people with disabilities.



Stay Grounded airport die in © Reclaim the Power 2016

Booklet 6: Ownership in the new economy

Change the story: Understand and talk about the deeper history behind the economy, including the systems that helped establish capitalism. Recognise that these dynamics exist in today's economic structures and systems of control over land and resources. Create and support a positive narrative about justice and responsibility in the sharing of resources today. See groups such as Wretched of the Earth and Friends of the Earth Europe.

Block the destructive economy: Participate or support those who are physically blocking the activities of corporations or governments that challenge the commitments made by the government in Paris, e.g. fracking or airport expansion.

"In October I found myself surrounded by over 300 other climate justice activists, some of whom were fellow Quakers, at Heathrow Airport. On the day we held a 'flash-mob' die-in and a critical mass bike ride. We were there to oppose any kind of airport expansion and the increase in carbon emissions, air pollution and noise that it would bring, and to highlight the social injustice of who is paying the real price."

Ian Bray, Huddersfield Meeting (see 'Our stories' at quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories)

Build the alternative: Collective efforts that demonstrate equitable and sustainable use of resources are the best way to build new economic alternatives. In Booklet 6 we provided a detailed case study of Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi, US. Use examples from this group to explore what collective action you could take with those excluded by the system.

Our role in the movement for a new economy

Finding our role in social change campaigns and movements is key. We can't do everything, but we can contribute effectively by being part of a greater whole. The questions below might help you decide what you can do:

How do I see change happening?

We usually work best on something close to our heart – something that affects us directly or that we're passionate about for other reasons. Maintaining motivation is key if you are to be involved in an issue in the medium or long term, and this is more likely if it speaks to you on an emotional as well as an intellectual level.

What am I inspired by?

Do you like public speaking, working with others, being alone? Does the thought of a protest or direct action leave you energised or anxious? Would you enjoy working on a long-term community project, or are you impatient to make an impact

now? There are many different ways to make change suit different dispositions. If you pick something that suits you, it is more likely to bring out the best in you and you're more likely to stick with it.

"...the atmosphere was amazing. Activists from around the world, all wearing red to line the street, singing, chanting and holding their banners (some of which were almost one km long!).

The highlight of the day for me was deciding to walk together to the Eiffel Tower, blocking the traffic and bringing our messages to the city. We ended up sitting next to the Eiffel Tower surrounded by police, but the atmosphere was calm and celebratory.

It felt right to be there and I'm really glad I was part of it. I hope it has an impact, but I know the struggle continues. Energised by being in Paris, I want to continue taking action next year."

Owen Everett on being part of a symbolic 'red lines' action at the international climate negotiations (COP 21) in Paris in 2015.

What resources do I have?

It is good to be realistic about this in order to avoid guilt, over-committing oneself and burning out (see below). Some people have lots of money but no time, others are only able to contribute at certain times of the week. Think about what resources

are available to you and your meeting.

What am I well placed to contribute to? What are my skills, knowledge, networks and capabilities?

If you have knowledge of engineering you could be a real asset to a community energy project. If you're good at hosting and making people feel comfortable, you could contribute to organising meetings and events. If you can take notes in a meeting, then you release others to participate fully and you make a vital contribution to continuity. If you have lots of friends in positions of power, you may be best placed to influence them through conversation and 'insider lobbying', or connect them with others at the forefront of movements. If you can provide a cake you make the meeting go better. Think about your talents, or if you find this difficult ask a friend what they think you're good at. Everyone has a range of skills that can be put to use in different aspects of making change.

Creating impact

Often we invest a lot in our actions, ideas and groups and feel like we are not having an impact. The answer to this is often strategy. A good strategy means using the resources you have to create the power you need to effect the change you want. Each campaign action will need a different strategy,



The COP21 protest in Paris. Credit: Carlos Felipe Pardo (CC BY 2.0)

and sometimes that strategy will need to change to adapt to new information or a context change (i.e. elections, new legislation, better analysis). It is always useful to share ideas of different actions in order to encourage creativity and ambition. And the most successful actions can often be something very simple. Be inspired by stories of witness from Quaker meetings at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories.

Here are some key questions to ask yourself to help you think strategically:

1. What should we be doing to challenge the most powerful institutions upholding our current economic ideology? These might be government, media, educational, legal, financial or religious institutions. How do we confront the power of this ideology to tackle economic inequality? Or how do

we shift/build power in a way that dismantles these structures?

2. How do we work more closely with those affected by the current system? We can work more closely with unions and grassroots worker campaigns. We can ask how we can help the McDonald's strikers or those directly impacted by changes to universal credit.

3. What can we do to build and draw attention to the alternative economy? How do we weaken damaging narratives (such as inequality is natural or inevitable) and create new and alternatives ones (poverty is created¹⁹). Can we inspire hope for change?

4. How do we organise and deliver our projects in a way that aligns with the values we want to strengthen, e.g. dismantles systems that are entrenched in the economy such as

white supremacy, patriarchy, elitism and moves resources and power in the right direction?

5. Can we build our political strategy to campaign on big systemic issues but still choose targets that we can plausibly make progress on? The Living Wage is a good example of a tangible project where we can take immediate action and still have a wider political impact if we share our story and lobby our MPs.

6. What does ambitious look like to us? Are we doing something that allows us to do something tomorrow that we can't do today? How can Quakers contribute – where should we lead and where should we offer and support?

7. How are we building the wider movement for change? Do we know what others are doing so that we can avoid duplication and raise their

voices or support their work? Are we inviting in those who are not typical activists but who share our concerns?

Preparing for action

A key part of engaging in systems change work is ensuring we are ready to participate in the movement. This is a huge part of change making and not to be overlooked. Here are some ideas for how to prepare yourself to act, a large part of which is how to take care of yourself, so you can show up for others.

Embracing complexity

Economics is a vast and sometimes intimidating subject area to learn about. It is unreasonable to assume we need to know absolutely everything to feel concerned about the way the economy is being run.



People protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Credit: Pax Ahimsa Gethen (CC-BY-SA-4.0)

Sometimes it is more useful to have a broader analysis of the problem than to know the intimate details of every financial, monetary or political dynamic that the economy is built on. If, however, your life's work helps to analyse and highlight a certain issue, then this is also an excellent form of leadership. We see this in the work led by Quakers in Scotland such as Annie Miller's *A basic income handbook*²⁰ and Alastair McIntosh's *Soil and soul*.²¹

Build trusting relationships

Whether you are exploring new ideas, challenging your own behaviour or supporting campaigns and action, it is often much easier in a group. Community is the foundation for a new economy, so practising this work in your actions is essential. Working alongside or within a community helps us support one another, be supported, and challenge our own understanding of an issue or of our potential role.

“One of the challenges is to keep motivated and active when there seems so little movement... however, knowing others who share these feelings is helpful.”

Marianne Tissandier, of Totnes Meeting, on lobbying her MP about climate justice.

In many meetings small groups of Quakers are gathering to study and act. You may feel drawn to a local Transition Towns or Equality

Trust group, which will take on many of the changes mentioned here. In order to grow inwards and outwards, we can push ourselves by broadening who we feel comfortable building community with and where.

Maintain hope

Understanding and embracing lessons from past moments in social movements not only improves our strategic understanding of change, but it reminds us of what is possible. Many of the economic concepts and beliefs that society now takes for granted – the weekend, the ban on child labour, the minimum wage – were all once ideas that seemed ridiculous or extreme. As Quakers we have our own rich history of social change and nonviolence that can provide inspiration. These lessons from the past can help us prepare for the long view while we attempt to effect change in the here and now. *Hope in the dark* by Rebecca Solnit²² and *Active hope* by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone²³ both offer strategies for maintaining hope and action in the face of overwhelming environmental and economic problems.

Work sustainably

Organising together takes time, emotion and energy. It may involve attending meetings, writing notes or emails, turning up at protests, and a range of other activities. Often this is done outside our paid work, or

Remember that your energy levels and feelings may change over time. Learn to recognise when your energy is dropping and you are starting to resent your involvement and feel pessimistic.

Social change work can be hard, but it can also be joyful and rewarding. It can bring people together and build friendships. Doing the tasks or being involved in the type of change that best suits you will help you to stay positive (see ‘What resources do I have?’ above). You can also encourage everyone to make meetings and other shared activities enjoyable, e.g. by providing refreshments and celebrating together where you can.

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare.”

Audre Lorde

Allow for discomfort

Stepping outside our comfort zone²⁴ is how we learn. Discomfort itself is not a bad thing, but over time we become accustomed to security and knowing what to expect. As one friend said recently during a discussion about race discrimination in the workplace, “As a white, middle-class male, if I am not feeling deeply uncomfortable during a conversation about race, I do not believe I will ever learn to fully equip

myself with the understanding of this deep injustice.” We can push ourselves into our discomfort zones to better connect with others we want to organise with.

There is a balance to strike between living on the edge of your comfort zone and venturing too far into your alarm or panic zone. This is where trusting community and relationships are needed to uphold you through your own learning and self-reflection

Being the change

“For us it is not so important when the perfect world will be achieved or what it will be like. What matters is living our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results. In doing this, the means become part of the end. Hence we lose the sense of helplessness and futility in the face of the world’s crushing problems ... That is the beauty of the way of love; it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold.”

Wolf Mendl, 1974

Quaker faith & practice 24.60

“Suppose you had the revolution you are talking and dreaming about. Suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society that you wanted. How would you live, you personally, in that society? Start living that way now!”

Paul Goodman, American writer



Credit: Orange County Racial Justice Collaborative

Equality, respect and kindness in our groups

How we function as a group or organisation is key to the success of our action and the sustainability of our project or group over time. It also provides “patterns and examples” of the democratic participation, sharing, generosity and cooperation that we would like to see in our economy.

Turning the Tide, which supports Quaker groups taking action for change, can work with your group to plan strategy or improve the way it works together. Resources and ideas for group development are available at www.turningtide.org.uk.

Working with others

When working to overcome an inequality or injustice, how can we start to address this wrong in the way

we take action? Often this means taking our lead from those most affected by an issue. This helps give power and a voice to those whom others have tried to silence and disenfranchise. Those at the ‘front line’ of a particular issue often have a unique insight into its impact, causes and potential solutions – and more resonant stories.

“To become an anti-racist faith community, the key question, for a white/white majority community, is not “how to get people of colour to join our faith community”, it is “how can we make a prolonged, spiritually-rooted, engaged commitment to uprooting white supremacy within our community and take on-going collective action to challenge it in society”.

*Unitarian anti-racism advocate
Chris Crass*

Generous, inclusive movements

In an economy that encourages competition, we can resist by being humble and generous as we strive for change. This means sharing skills and knowledge or collaborating with other like-minded groups. It means letting go of our egos – perhaps playing supporting roles in other people’s campaigns, even if setting up our own would gain us more status. It means putting the practical measures in place to make projects and actions open to those people so often excluded, such as those with young children or disabilities.²⁵

“It is part of our task as revolutionary people, people who want deep-rooted, radical change, to be as whole as it is possible for us to be. This can only be done if we face the reality of what oppression really means in our lives, not as abstract systems subject to analysis, but as an avalanche of traumas leaving a wake of devastation in the lives of real people who nevertheless remain human, unquenchable, complex and full of possibility.”

Aurora Levins Morales, Puerto Rican writer

Beyond ourselves

Quakers are in a unique position among social justice communities in that they have an infrastructure that enables them to be supported

in taking action. We can recognise that while the everyday work of organising is hard, we are privileged by the resources available to us as a faith community. We can collectively utilise this privilege to help strengthen the broader movement for systems change. Here are some suggestions as to how:

Financial resources: Whether you are a meeting or an individual, you can make decisions to support local, national and international actions or groups who are on the frontline of systems change activism. You may already know who this is, and if you don’t then groups such as Edge Fund²⁶ are great at distributing resources to grassroots groups.

Land: Does your meeting house own unused land that you can use collectively with your local community? Think about opening up a community orchard or vegetable garden. You could also use the space for a local workshop to host training opportunities in bicycle mechanics or woodwork. Think about who most would benefit from time outdoors and find ways to engage them in your ideas.

Building(s): Consider offering your space as a centre for new economy activities. What groups could you reach out to? What public meetings on new economy might attract a diversity of local people? Some great work is already happening with



Mulberry Community Gardens, run by Quakers in Tottenham, London

local churches by turning them into a space for community enterprise.²⁷

People: People are our strongest asset, but how much do we know about each other's work for change? As Quakers, we tend to work quietly and modestly. Perhaps an event could be arranged to share what we are doing individually and to encourage each other to make those deeper connections. This could be a place for celebration and affirmation as a group.

Coordination: Coordinated action across the whole of Britain Yearly Meeting sends a strong message that can influence others. This was the case with our divestment from fossil fuels in 2014, which was used by campaigners to inspire other churches and institutions to divest. Likewise, our decision to recognise

same-sex marriage in 2009 gave a boost to the broader movement for marriage equality.

Infrastructure: Quakers have a long history of social change and a culture of witness. We are also known for nurturing and supporting others doing this work:

- QPSW's Sustainability and New Economy Grants support Quaker-backed social change work. See www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/sustainability-economy.
- Meetings can set up informal support groups for individuals and families who live in your local community. Support groups usually comprise two to four people who are on hand to help you through difficulties. They can offer advice and care as well as long-term friendship.

- A meeting for clearness can be held to support you through a difficult choice or dilemma. See Quaker faith & practice chapter 12, specifically passages 12.21–12.27.²⁸
- Threshing meetings can be set up as a space for issues you are particularly passionate about. They are often higher energy than clearness groups and can help you through a contentious issue.²⁹

“I asked Local Business Meeting for support to stand in the name of Lancaster Quakers in the period prior to Christmas calling on major retailers in the city to pay the Living Wage; celebrating local organisations that pay it and giving out information to the public about why a Living Wage should be paid. Meeting also agreed to contribute to Quaker Equality Week and I agreed to co-ordinate activities. Two Friends joined me in planning and our December campaign in the city centre was welcomed by many we spoke with, some telling us their personal stories.”

Anne Morgan, Quaker Living Wage Campaign at Lancaster Meeting

Spiritual activism: Quakers can bring a values-led and spiritual narrative to social change. Nonviolence and dignified peaceful conduct has

a moral authority that can make a powerful contribution to wider movements. In contemporary movements we have seen a re-emergence of spiritual activism take seed. Grassroots groups, particularly those involved in frontline activism, have begun to enact spiritual practices to build strength and solidarity within their affinity groups. Quaker activism is rooted in a spiritual practice that can uphold those engaged in frontline activism.

“The decision to join the silent march at Grenfell Tower was a spiritual act. We united with hundreds in bearing witness to the multiple injustices that led to the fire. Our gathered stillness was a voice of righteous anger. Our presence in a small way was physical solidarity with the community still affected.”

A London Quaker present at the meeting for worship at March for Grenfell, September 2017

You may also enjoy hearing how others have been upheld in their work in QPSW’s podcast on ‘Spiritual activism’.³⁰

All of us, together

As we wrap up this series of booklets in anticipation of what is next in the new economy project, let us remind ourselves of some of the moments in history when Quakers were part of courageous and often revolutionary movements.



Credit: Garry Knight (CC0 1.0)

The Quaker movement grew directly out of movements for radical equality. In turn, these early Friends took inspiration from the egalitarian example of the early church, in which “No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had” (The Bible, Acts 4:32). Fast-forward a few decades and many of the 17th-century revolutionaries who had campaigned with the Diggers, the Levellers and others later became Quakers. In doing so they built the systems and structure that would help continue the radical spirit of that time to the present day. Early Friends were accused of being “sowers of sedition” and “turners of the world upside down”.

In 2015, in the wake of the first effects of the global economic crisis, Britain Yearly Meeting called on all Friends “to turn the world the

right way up again”. The minute continued:

“As a yearly meeting we are restless to take corporate action to change the unequal, unjust world in which we live. We are also called to be a community of Friends as a Yearly Meeting, pushed towards the important things we can only do together. We have a body of experience we can draw on and maintain. We are in this for the long haul.”

365 years on from our radical foundations, that is certainly true. In these booklets we have made the intellectual arguments for a new economy. Our role now is to take responsibility for bringing it about. We give the last words to the 17th-century Digger and Quaker, Gerrard Winstanley: “...and now I must wait to see the Spirit do his own work in the hearts of others.”

1. *The Huffington Post* – ‘Oikos: the origins of economic thought’: www.tinyurl.com/yd2dqb4a
2. Global Issues – ‘A primer on neoliberalism’: www.globalissues.org/article/39/a-primer-on-neoliberalism
3. BBC – ‘Masters of money: Friedrich Hayek’: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19706272
4. History of neoliberalism podcast: www.soundcloud.com/neoliberalism
5. *The Guardian* – ‘Neoliberalism: the idea that swallowed the world’: www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/18/neoliberalism-the-idea-that-changed-the-world
6. House of Hayek – New Economy Organisers Network training resource, 2016
7. PCS – ‘Just transition and energy democracy’: www.pcs.org.uk/resources/green-workplaces/new-pamphlet-just-transition-and-energy-democracy-a-civil-service-trade
8. Strategy for a just transition: www.movementgeneration.org
9. www.facebook.com/QuakersGotPrivilege
10. www.guidetoallyship.com
11. www.yourfaithyourfinance.org
12. Sacred Economics – transition to gift economy: www.sacred-economics.com/sacred-economics-chapter-16-transition-to-gift-economy
13. www.newstatesman.com/2013/10/science-says-revolt
14. Movement training and theory: www.momentumcommunity.org
15. See PIRC’s work on framing projects: www.publicinterest.org.uk
16. www.switchedonlondon.org.uk
17. See 350.org for details.
18. See www.shareaction.org
19. www.therules.org
20. www.basicincome.org/topic/annie-miller
21. www.alastairmcintosh.com/soilandsoul.htm
22. *Hope in the dark* review: www.theguardian.com/books/2005/jul/02/highereducation.globalisation
23. www.activehope.info
24. www.wagingnonviolence.org/feature/opening-ourselves-to-the-realities-of-class
25. www.organizingforpower.org/anti-oppression-resources-exercises
26. www.edgefund.org.uk
27. See www.stirtoaction.com/blog/q-a-churches-and-community-enterprise
28. Guidance for clearness: <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/12>
29. Threshing meetings: <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passages/12-26>
30. ‘Q:Witness’ podcasts: www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/podcast

Further resources

1. NEON group resources: www.neweconomyorganisers.org/resources
2. Practical examples of new economy projects: <https://goodlocaleconomies.cles.org.uk>
3. New economy-related magazine: www.stirtoaction.com

The Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) new economy project responds to minutes made by Britain Yearly Meeting between 2011 and 2015. These present a strong critique of our current economic system and commit Friends to working towards building a different type of economic system – “an economic system in which Quaker testimony can flourish”. Throughout these booklets we refer to this as the ‘new economy’.

QPSW believes that while Friends are, for the most part, in unity about what’s wrong with the current system, we are still corporately discerning both what a better economic system might look like and how we might get there. The new economy project exists to support that discernment.

The new economy series is intended to stimulate debate and reflection. The ideas here do not necessarily reflect the policy or positions of Quaker Peace & Social Witness or Britain Yearly Meeting. Find out more at www.quaker.org.uk/neweconomy.

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