

Participatory Exercise

Stepping Stones to Creating a Solidarity Economy (developed by the Center for Popular Economics, 2004)

Goals:

- To give people exposure to a wide range of solidarity economy initiatives. - To provide an opportunity to discuss, critique, elaborate on, add to the wide array of solidarity economy initiatives.

Time: Approx. 1 hour. This is an estimate based on a group of 15 people. As always, this exercise can be adapted to be longer or shorter and used with more or less people.

Materials: Stepping stone cards

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome & introductions
- Set the scene by explaining the goals of this exercise.

Step 2: Small group discussion (20 minutes)

Divide into small groups of 3 people and divide the cards up evenly among the groups. Each group should have around six cards. Ask the small groups to read through their cards (they can read them aloud, one at a time, or pass them around and swap so that everyone reads all the cards individually). When they finish they should try to agree on which card is their favorite, second favorite, etc. During this process, there is often discussion in which participants help to provide more detail to the cards, debate its merits or feasibility, raise questions, or provide other examples.

Step 3: Reportbacks & Big group discussion (30 minutes)

Reconvene the big group and have the small groups take turns reading their favorite card. Allow a little time for questions and discussions, but try to keep moving through the small groups. When each group has shared its favorite, move on to the second choice and so forth, depending on how much time you have.

Step 4: Wrap up (5 minutes)

Have people reflect on the take away lessons of this exercise. Here are some questions that you might use: What will you take away from this exercise? Have there been any eye-openers? Do you feel more optimistic? Are there any actions that might be inspired by what you've learned?

Background for the facilitator:

The Solidarity Economy offers an alternative economic framework to that of neoliberal globalization - one that is grounded in **solidarity** and **cooperation**, rather than the pursuit of narrow, individual self-interest.