

Friendly Economics

"Towards economic and financial systems that are 'friendly' to people and the planet"

The economic systems that prevail in much of the world are not sustainable. Those systems, and the attitudes they exemplify, are increasingly destructive for the planet and its people and are deeply implicated in the crises we face now – climate, inequality, violence and others. There is no viable tomorrow on our current trajectory.

Friendly Economics is seeking ways to help to bring about a more just and sustainable alternative.

There is no 'right' system, but there may be principles which would define a truly 'friendly' economy and could serve as a framework for developing and agreeing on solutions. And there may be common spiritual values that would be the basis for a new economic 'story'. What would such an economic system look like? What steps can ordinary people take to help achieve it?

How we see it:

Economics is not just for experts. All of us participate in economic life in one way or another.

Therefore, by learning, exchanging information, and aligning our behaviour and actions, we can influence the system. Not only is it within the reach of all of us; it is our shared responsibility.

There are many levels of action. Efforts can be directed at any level – individual, household, community, national and even global –, wherever we see an opportunity opening for which we have the capacity to act.

There are many types of action. Individuals can do a great deal, living consciously and testing out actions that can serve as examples to others. However, the impacts can be magnified and multiplied when linked together in a larger scale effort.

Values are key. Our religious traditions offer a set of social/economic values very different from those governing the current system. We are convinced that by anchoring action on these spiritual values, and by acting in concert, faith groups may have a chance to stimulate changes that the economic and financial systems have resisted until now.

Who we are; what we do

We are an international group of Friends (Quakers). The Quaker commitment to non-violence and to "eliminate the seeds of war" calls us to act in our own lives and, in collaboration with others, to help transform the prevailing economic structures and practices. *Friendly Economics* provides a forum for:

- **Learning** about the forces that maintain the current financial structure, about 'new economy' models and what influential economic thinkers have to say, and compiling useful materials;
- **Sharing** information about initiatives that have potential for inspiration and replication through a series of online presentations and discussions (called "*Conversations*");
- **Strategizing** – identifying actions that can leverage change in the economic system as a whole and therefore be most effective in transforming the system;
- **Imagining** – crafting a new, shared vision and story of a 'friendly' economic system not dominated by profit maximization, individualism, and an assumption of endless economic growth;
- **Reaching out** – making the connections to enable Quakers and other faith groups to come together in developing, acting upon and amplifying these strategies.

We trust in the Spirit that moves us forward as a community in this work.

F/ friends and those of other faiths who share our concern and ambition please join us!

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