Economics and the Common(s): From Seed Form to Core Paradigm

A report on an international conference
on the future of the commons

Organized by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Commons Strategies Group,
Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation and Remix the Commons
Berlin, Germany, May 22-24, 2013

Economics *and the*
Commons Conference

ECONOMICS AND THE COMMONS:
FROM SEED FORM TO CORE PARADIGM

A report on an international conference on the future of the commons

Organized by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Commons Strategies Group, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation and Remix the Commons

Berlin, Germany
May 22-24, 2013

One of the most significant impediments to positive social change is the entrenched power of market-fundamentalism as an economic and political paradigm. The prevailing dogma is that only a scheme of individual self-interest, expansive individual property rights, market exchange and globalized free trade can advance human well-being. This view has increasingly been called into question as the predatory dynamics of the market economy became clear and as its threats to the biosphere have become more acute.

In May 2013, more than 200 activists, academics, and project leaders from more than 30 countries converged on the headquarters of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin, Germany, to participate in a conference, "Economics and the Commons: From Seed Form to Core Paradigm." The event sought to open up some new vistas in politics, economics and culture by exploring *the commons* as an alternative worldview and provisioning system. The commons is drawing growing interest because its workings – in managing natural resources, urban spaces, civic life, the Internet, and many other realms – demonstrate that commons can provide stable, equitable and ecologically benign alternatives to conventional markets. The conference was hosted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in cooperation with the Commons Strategies Group, The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation and Remix the Commons.

Because so many rich and complicated ideas emerged over the course of the conference, we have decided to prepare a report that distills the more exciting, significant ones. While no account of a conference can be fully comprehensive, we believe that this report can serve as a useful guide to people interested in the commons as a robust, growing movement. The report provides a general summary of the keynote presentations and outcomes of five conference streams as well as accounts from many self-organized side-events held before and during the conference. This report also points the reader to many valuable resources generated by the conference, most notably the ECC communications platform – http:// commonsandeconomics.org – and a wiki that profiles dozens of economically minded commoners whose work focuses on the themes of the ECC.

The working method of this report is to summarize the general content of each keynote presentation and conference stream, with verbatim excerpts of the more interesting aspects of the proceedings. Here is a brief overview of the report's contents:

Report Contents

Conference Overview …….. 4
Official conference wiki: http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013

I. Keynote Presentations

Stefano Rodotà (Italy)……..…… 6
"Constituting the Commons in the Context of State, Law and Politics"

Maristella Svampa (Argentina) …… 9
"*Commons Beyond Development: The Strategic Value of the Commons as a Paradigm Shift"*

Silke Helfrich (Germany) …….. 12
"Economics and Commons?! Towards a Commons-Creating Peer Economy"

Andreas Weber (Germany) ……. 16
"Life, Meaning and Spirituality in the Commons: Towards a Cultural Paradigm Shift"

II. Conference Streams
Keynotes and Reports

I. "Integrating Theory and Practice in the Management of Natural Commons" …… 20
Saki Bailey (Italy), Stream Coordinator
Keynotes: Josh Farley (USA)……... 20
Ugo Mattei (Italy)……..22
Stream report……...……. 25

II. "Doing Away with Labor: Working and Caring in a World of Commons"..... 29
Heike Löschmann (Germany), Stream Coordinator
Keynote: Daniela Gottschlich (Germany) and Heike Löschmann.. 30
Stream report …… 35

III. "Treating Knowledge, Culture and Science as Commons" …… 41
Mike Linksvayer (USA), Stream Coordinator
Keynote: Carolina Botero (Colombia) ……41
Stream report ……44

IV. "New Infrastructures for Commoning by Design" ……... 48
Miguel Said Vieira (Brazil), Stream Coordinator
Keynote: Miguel Said Vieira ……49
Stream report ……..52

IV. "Money, Markets, Value and the Commons"…… 56
Ludwig Schuster (Germany), Stream Coordinator
Keynote: Jem Bendell (UK)……..... 56
Stream report ……... 59

III. Beyond the Conference

A. Remix the Commons …… 64

B. Francophone Network of Commoners ……. 65

C. Side Events …… 66

D. ECC Wiki ……. 73

E. Some Final Reflections by the Commons Strategies Group …… 74

Acknowledgements ……..... 78

An Overview of the ECC

The Economics and the Commons Conference (ECC) brought researchers, practitioners and advocates from around the world to explore the relationship of conventional economics and the commons. Its goals were to show the breadth and feasibility of commons-based provisioning and to forge a coherent narrative and analysis about it and the next steps for action. Substantive discussion at the conference therefore focused on several key themes:

- The commons as a way to move beyond conventional economics;
- Alternative economic and provisioning models;
- The transformations needed to move to a new type of economy.

The organizers explicitly rejected a "sectoralization" of commons discussion because they see the commons as a coherent "general narrative" that applies (in diverse ways) to a variety of sectors of commoning. It is not resource-specific, but rather a *general social paradigm*. More than fostering an exchange of information, the ECC Streams were also designed to help build new working relationships and personal commitments to commons-oriented work in the future.

Barbara Unmüssig, the President of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, welcomed the commoners to the conference from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and two dozen other countries.

The participants attending included commoners who deal with forests and fisheries, water and farmlands; commoners who deal with software and the Internet, and with social media and open source hardware design; commoners who are trying to reclaim urban life and spaces; commoners who are trying to preserve and extend scientific knowledge and creative works; and commoners who are defending subsistence and indigenous commons.

Unmüssig noted that "this conference, like the last one, the International Commons Conference in 2010,[1] is an experiment. We at the Heinrich Böll Foundation see ourselves as providing an important space for networking, learning and the incubation of new ideas and projects. Our overriding goal is to explore the commons *as a shared* paradigm that embraces ALL of the commons represented here."

Unmüssig continued: "Over the last few years, it has become clear that there is truly a great convergence among commoners. But it is not an easy, automatic or uniform process. A key intention of this conference is to further clarify our understanding of the commons and to make concrete plans for moving forward – both theoretically and practically. Inevitably, our visions and plans will reflect a great diversity of ideas and approaches – but unified by certain fundamental principles and shared commitments."

---

[1] A record of the ICC can be found at http://www.boell.de/en/node/277225.

She proposed that the conference work as "an open space that will allow us to explore the commons freely and honestly – with critical intelligence but also with tolerance and respect for our differences. Perhaps the most important technique of commoning is the capacity to listen, really listen, to each other, even if we disagree."

Conference Program

The conference program featured a series of ten keynote talks on various frontiers of commons work, as well as five intensive conference streams, each of which featured their own keynote talks and breakout discussion sessions. The five streams focused on 1) natural resource usage; 2) work; 3) infrastructure; 4) money and credit; and 5) knowledge and culture.

The goals of the Streams were to foster dialogue, collaboration, creative thinking and follow-up action, and not just provide a platform for "expert" presentations. The Streams were also intended to instigate or energize new discussions on these topics, drawing upon the experiences of ECC participants.

The ECC was also enriched by a number of smaller, self-organized side-events before, during and after the conference. These workshops sought to bring together people with special concerns, such as media communications about the commons, commons education projects, public health and the commons, and international rules affecting European-based commons. For those side-events that produced reports on their proceedings, this report includes summaries of them.

Despite the great diversity of topics discussed at the conference, a number of questions seemed to crop up in the sessions. They included: Can we identify core principles of commoning across different resource domains? What makes a commons so generative and socially constructive (especially in contrast to the market)? In what circumstances can commons-based provisioning models substitute for conventional markets, or interact constructively with markets? How can the protection and re-creation of the commons be made an integrated part of productive processes?

Consider the following summaries of ECC talks and Streams to be a series of thoughtful first answers to these questions. Bear in mind that this report is not an official or comprehensive account of the ECC presentations and discussions. It is an interpretive synthesis by David Bollier of the Commons Strategies Group with inputs from Silke Helfrich and the Stream coordinators Saki Bailey, Heike Löschmann, Mike Linksvayer, Miguel Said Vieira and Ludwig Schuster, which seeks to capture some of the more salient and significant points of the conference.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Stefano Rodotà (Italy)
Professor of Law, Sapienza University of Rome
"Constituting the Commons in the Context of State, Law and Politics"

Professor Stefano Rodotà's talk offered a bracing vision of how the state, law and politics must begin to recognize the commons as a legitimate vehicle of citizenship and as complementary to a human rights approach. He cited the Italian referendum on privatizing municipal water systems in 2011 (with 27 million votes to treat water as a common good)[2], and a new citizens' initiative that asks the European Commission take an initiative to prevent water services from being privatized. Rodotà said that both examples show "how it is possible to have mass mobilizations through the existing institutional channels in the perspective of new rules recognizing some goods as commons." These acts "show that a new exercise in citizenship is emerging, directly connected with fundamental rights and the commons."

The idea of linking commons and citizenship requires a "new rationality," said Rodotà – a topic that is addressed in a 2004 book by the Italian scholar Franco Cassano, *Homo Civicus: The Reasonable Madness of Common Goods.* Cassano's book makes the point that we live in a certain kind of madness caused by "a cultural and political blindness unable to elaborate on the categories giving social evidence, cultural foundations and institutional support to the perspective of the commons."

A new definition of "citizen" is needed, said Rodotà, one that goes beyond "a set of rights and duties allocated in a statist perspective." We need to conceive of citizenship instead, as "a set of powers and opportunities that an individual should be in a position to turn into reality – using them to determine the mechanisms of participation in politics, and generally speaking, public life, which is exactly the life of the city. That is why the words '*homo civicus,"* citizen, have been used. The term highlights this active stance whereby every citizen is turned into the leading character."

This broader notion of citizenship requires that we "revisit and redefine two categories – citizenship and globalization – in the perspective of the 'opposite of property,' the commons, and so challenge two of the foundations of modernity, property and sovereignty." Rodotà said that to take on this challenge, we must give "a direct and clear answer to a crucial question: Are we living a revival of the historical concept and experience of the commons, or are we dealing with a discontinuity?"

---

[2] Editor's note: It is important to note that Professor Rodotà's use of the term "common goods" here differs from "the commons." "Common goods" denote a resource itself that is used in common, as opposed to a commons, which is a social institution and set of social practices.

In trying to make sense of the "immaterial and cross-border dimensions" of so many common goods, including the Internet, in contemporary life, many people look to the enclosure movement in England in the 16th and 17th Centuries for cautionary lessons. "It is suggested that we gaze beyond the market and the state, and conceive of the commons, on one side, as a model that can be built up according to past experiences, and, on the other side, as the only way out of the crisis in which we are living, a revolution radically changing our societies." But in "trying to enter into post-modernity, are we risking a regression to pre-modernity?" asked Rodotà, citing "an emerging, risky trend toward what can be looked at as a kind of nostalgic approach, of a metaphysical foundation of the commons," or "an institutional neo-medievalism."

A crucial question is "How can we identify the commons?" said Rodotà. "The answer cannot be found by searching an inner nature of the commons," but rather by seeing the commons as "a social construction….[Commons] are, first and foremost, a matter of the organization of the society at large, of the position of individuals and groups inside the social environment. According to this analysis, the way the commons are recognized affects the distribution of powers and shows their transformative attitude."

For Rodotà, this analysis "implies that we must go beyond a naturalistic view of the commons." He proposed that "we must concentrate our efforts on the machinery for making the commons perspective effective." Citing a ruling by India's Supreme Court allowing generic drug makers to continue making generic versions of patented drugs, Rodotà said that "this kind of judicial intervention [reflects] the reasonable madness of commons goods penetrating the patent fortress, one of the strongest features of property in the dimension of the immaterial." He continued:

"This model can be generalized, finding strong support in the new constitutionalism of the needs or of material life, made evident in particular by the constitutions and the supreme courts' interventions in Latin America, South Africa and India. New categories are emerging that recognize access, commons (not community-based), commons services and utilities."

Such examples show "the necessity of a state giving open and tangible support to initiatives that contribute to building up commons," Rodotà said. "This approach can and must be generalized, escaping the risks of a self-referential attitude or of an exclusive, bottom-up analysis," he said, stressing the need to explore "the role of supportive institutions, policy regimes and law. An integrated approach is needed, combining social practices and institutional machinery."

Yet an integrated approach does not mean a monolithic approach, said Rodotà. "The right attitude toward the commons is the kaleidoscope, not a forced unitary perspective." But this insight raises "at least two questions: How can we avoid the conflicts of interest among different communities? How can we manage commons that are not community-based [such as the World Wide Web]?" On these questions, he said, "the new medievalism reveals its inadequacy because its attitude is toward separation, but what is needed is a relational approach."

"Commons are reshaping the relationship between the world of persons and the world of goods. Consequently, we cannot separate the analysis of the commons from a general reflection on what is becoming private and public property in the environment that is changed precisely by the

growing commons awareness. The new, enlarged vision of commons defines a third dimension alongside the two traditional ones, and reacts on their relationships."

In particular, said Rodotà, *the commons catalyzes "a new distribution of powers."* They are also "strongly grounded in constitutions, giving evidence to what can be called "the constitutionalization of the person" in the sense that "a comprehensive definition of commons could refer to the goods functionally necessary for making effective a person's fundamental rights and the fulfillment of his or her personality."

"The goods produced by commons reflect collective interests; are finalized by the fulfillment of collective needs; and make possible the effectiveness of fundamental rights," Rodotà continued. As resources that belong to everyone and to nobody individually, commons "must be managed starting from principles of equality and solidarity, and improving different forms of participation by interested people. Commons reflect the dimension of the future, so that they must be managed in the interest of future generations, too, making effective intergenerational solidarity. In this sense, they are truly a 'heritage of humanity,' and all interested people must be legitimized to intervene in order to make them effective and protect them."

Rodotà warned that "the democracy of the commons' cannot be conceived as a catch-all process. I am very suspicious of the mysticism of the 'commons' as the sole category for progressive social and political action, towards a metaphysical vision irrespective of history and social dynamics. We must escape the temptation to extend the qualification as commons to every good and service….We risk losing the specificity of the commons. If everything is a commons, nothing is a commons."

But Rodotà was hopeful, as well: "A large, diffused, increasing movement is at work everywhere in the world. The first, important result of this collective action is to challenge the obliged separation of persons and goods between public and private spheres. This separation has not disappeared, but we can look at the world free from the obsession of possessive individualism" and the "anthropology of *homo economicus*." Rodotà concluded that "we are working in a meta-state and meta-individual dimension, where we can encounter not an ambiguous post-democracy, but a participatory process of liberation from constraints, giving people the opportunity to exercise a strong citizenship."

Video of Rodotà presentation:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2YGN78ouGE&feature=player_embedded - t=0
Rodotà's presentation slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ECC-Rodota-keynote.pdf

Videos of all keynote talks are posted at http://commonsandeconomics.org and the Heinrich Böll Foundation website, at http://www.boell.de/en/economics-and-commons. Individual videos are also posted with unique URLs at YouTube.com, as noted.

Maristella Svampa (Argentina)
Researcher at the Conicet (National Center for Scientific and Technical Research), Argentina, and Professor at the Universidad Nacional de la Plata
"Commons Beyond Development: The Strategic Value of the Commons as a Paradigm Shift in Latin America"

Professor Maristella Svampa spoke about the surge of "neo-extractivism" in Latin America, and how it is destroying shared resources and communities. She also focused on some of the new vocabularies – "environmental justice," *buen vivir* ("living well") and "the rights of nature" – that communities are devising to resist international forces of enclosure. Svampa concluded by talking about alternative visions being put forward, such as the idea of commons that is closely linked to "territoriality," and the idea of communal ethos. Her talk was delivered in Spanish, so this account is an imperfect English translation.

In Latin America, said Svampa, the term that is mostly used to denote struggles to defend natural resources, biodiversity, water, etc., is *bienes comunes*. This term describes both the spaces and forms of social cooperation for using the usufruct of the production and reproduction of knowledge. *Bienes comunes* always refers to the shared codes of collective social life – something that Gustavo Esteva, a Mexican scholar of the commons based in Cuernavaca, has called "ámbitos de comunalidad," which translates roughly as "ambient spheres of the community," meaning the whole of social relationships of a community. However, *bienes comunes* is the most widely used term in Latin America, and so she uses that term to speak about the commons (and avoids the even less helpful Spanish term "procomún").

Professor Svampa noted that Latin America has been the focus of economic "shock treatments" since the 1970s and 1980s, as described in Naomi Klein's book on the topic. The basic goal of corporations and the state to shrink budgets for public spending and exploit natural resources through mega-"development" projects that end up harming the environment and displacing commoners from their lands.

"During the last decade in Latin America," said Svampa, "we have moved from the 'Washington Consensus' [of neoliberal policy] to the 'Commodities Consensus,' a term that refers to the over-exploitation of finite natural resources. Latin America has passively accepted the role assigned to it in the international division of labor, to provide bulk quantities of raw materials without further processing. Similar processes are happening in Africa and Asia." In Latin America, the most sought-after commodities are maize, soya, fuel, hydrocarbons, minerals and metals. This wave of "neo-extractivism," Svampa argued, "amounts to "a furious and complex process that affects all spheres of life and leads to very profound processes of deprivation and dispossession." She cited in particular Professor David Harvey's analysis of how neo-extractivist policies are fueling

massive land grabs as ways to promote capital accumulation.

The Commodities Consensus amounts to "an ideology of resignation," said Svampa, because it promotes the idea that capitalism is the only reasonable option and that resistance is futile. However, this economic and policy approach also fuels "an explosion of socio-enviornmental conflicts" associated with mining, the building of dams, the exploitation of gas and oil fields and hydrofracking. She noted that in 2013, according to OCMAL (http://www.conflictosmineros.net), there were 120 conflicts related to mining, affecting 150 communities (Perú, 31; Argentina, 25; Chile, 30; Brazil, 21; Colombia, 11; México, 23, Ecuador, 7). Some of the emblematic conflicts include the Conga mega-mining project in Perú, which has led to 25 deaths; the TIPNIS road construction project through indigenous territory in Bolivia; and the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam in Brazil. These conflicts are often about sheer survival of communities and regional ecosystems, Svampa noted, showing a slide of four lakes that would dry out if the "development" project were carried out.

One of the big problems with the Commodity Consensus, said Svampa, is that all Latin American governments now support it, no matter where they stand on the ideological spectrum, from conservative to progressive or mid-left. While the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia have both affirmed the rights of indigenous peoples, and Ecuador has recognized the legal rights of nature in its constitution, the rights of indigenous peoples in general are eroding, she said. "This is clearly driven by a state perspective attached to neo-extractivism, and to the multiplication of extractivist mega-projects attacking common goods," said Svampa.

In response to these trends, various social communities have developed new conceptual vocabularies to challenge the Commodities Consensus. One such approach is the movement for *"environmental justice,"* which is an attempt to "complexify the environmental question as not just a technical issue, but also a social one that is linked to gender relations and racial questions." Another concept is *buen vivir*, the idea of "living well," which is particularly strong in Ecuador and Bolivia. Although this idea is still generic and developing, said Svampa, it points to "a philosophical-political arena and makes visible the relationships among nature, people and society in a different way – in a situation of equilibrium and respect for nature." Yet another concept that has gained currency in recent years is the *"rights of nature,"* a new provision in the Ecuadoran constitution that enshrines the need to go beyond the anthropocentric vision of nature as capital or instrument, to a "bio-socio-centric vision."

These new languages have evolved as a product of fights and mobilizations against the Commodities Consensus, said Svampa. In the process, new forms of "expertise independent of the market and state" have arisen, along with new forms of vernacular knowledge." "These frameworks of collective action are allowing us to really think about alternatives to the neo-extractivist framework, she said.

What unites the various indigenous and social movements is their shared critique of conventional, linear notions of "development." The standard ideals of development, she said, represent a "very classical, economistic and productivist vision" that is typically supported by corporations and governments. Resistance movements generally reject this "instrumentalist vision" that treats nature as capital and mere resource pool."

One approach proposed by Eduardo Gudynas, director of CLAES (Centro Latinoamericano de Ecologia Social) consists of "top-down" policy-driven approaches. For example, some resistance movements are proposing higher ecological taxes on "development" projects and cancellations of mining projects or moratoriums on them.

However, there are also some "bottom-up" approaches being advanced by social movements in Latin America, often in conjunction with the idea of *bienes comunes*. The first idea is a linkage between *commons and territoriality* ("bienes communes y territorialidad"). Territoriality is *not* the vision of large companies and governments that "territory" consists of natural resources to be exploited and converted into tradable value and capital. Rather, territoriality describes "the need to build different social relationships in which human beings are part of the ecosystem," said Svampa. Territoriality is "something symbolic, a social territory constructed through the social struggles themselves," that allows for the production and reproduction of life in the territories.

A second concept of resistance is the idea of "communal ethos" – the various communal forms and social practices that over Latin American history have generated a different social logic and rationality than that of conventional "development." Svampa cited the works of Bolivar Echeverría of Ecuador for exploring "strategies of survival spontaneously invented and developed by the community."

These strategies focus on use value, not exchange value, and especially the "communal forms of political and social life transmitted by indigenous people." The communal ethos is all about "community spaces and forms of sociability that act as fields of experimentation not usually recognized and valorized by the State, but only by the collective entities that generated them." Women play "an absolutely pivotal role" in sustaining the communal ethos, said Svampa, because they "act in an ethic of care and mutual reciprocity, complementarity and cooperation."

Svampa stressed her focus on a communal ethos, territoriality and commons is not a romanticization of the notion of community. It is a way of talking about genuine innovations in governance, such as "community autonomy and the plurinational state" (as embodied in the constitutions that respect indigenous people's and nature's rights). There are a number of thriving social experiments in Latin America working to secure these new sorts of community spaces – for instance, worker cooperatives that have reclaimed factories (fábricas recuperadas), self-organizing spaces (MST, and Brazil's Landless People's Movement) and the social Solidarity Economy movement. These movements "put the 'economy of life' at the center of their work," and create new relationships among communities to disrupt the prevailing capitalist logic.

Questions for Stefano Rodotà and Maristella Svampa

Professor Svampa was asked for examples of Latin American governments that support visions of development that go beyond extractivist ideology. She was also asked to identify "the weakest link in the chain of law that is constraining our access to the commons."

Svampa replied that Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Venezuela are actively supporting economic policies based on social solidarity. Some progressive governments such as Ecuador have

shown their support for the commons movement through new constitutional provisions recognizing the autonomy of indigenous people and nature's rights. But she warned that some social movements have ambiguous relationships with government. When the state is giving subsidies to alternative economies, or tries to give them direction or control them, these economies "may lose their original wealth and the basis of their solidarity."

As for legal and institutional reform, Svampa said that "there are no easy answers to that question." Although social movements have tried to translate their concerns into the language of institutions, she said that "rights are like wax in the hands of the powerful." So it is necessary to continue to fight, beyond direct action, to secure institutional implementation of basic rights.

A member of the audience asked Stefano Rodotà if the discourse on commons as the "shared/common heritage of mankind," as well as human rights principles, could be linked to the fights of indigenous peoples in the global South. Rodotà replied that words in international treaties can be helpful, but ultimately the commons must be constituted socially, and not by law alone. He noted, for example, that treaties dealing with the Antarctic and a UNESCO declaration about cultural goods pertaining to humanity, such as the human genome, make the symbolic case that these things belong to all of humanity, and must lie beyond the reach of both market and state. "But the fact that some goods are legally considered outside of the market does not immediately mean that they become common goods," he warned.

Video of Svampa presentation (at 30:35):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2YGN78ouGE&feature=player_embedded - t=0
Svampa's presentation slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/OpeningSession_SvampaMaristella_22052013_2.pdf

Silke Helfrich (Germany)
Author, activist, blogger, Commons Strategies Group
"Economics and Commons?! Towards a Commons-Creating Peer Economy

Silke Helfrich, a commons activist, author and partner in the Commons Strategies Group, delivered a keynote talk noting the explosive growth of a wide range of commons internationally. If we are to understand these diverse phenomena, she suggested, we must recognize certain conceptual principles about commons to avoid misunderstandings. And if we are to protect these commons as commons, she added, we must work to implement six basic principles for developing a "commons-creating peer economy." (Helfrich was assisted by David Bollier in the preparation of her talk.)

First, it is helpful to appreciate how astonishingly diverse the commons is. Helfrich cited "a

real eruption of publications, initiatives, projects and ideas" around the world today.

The *Bisse de Saviesse* in the canton of Valais, Switzerland, consist of a sophisticated irrigation system in the Swiss mountains that catches melting water directly from glaciers and brings it into villages and the farms in the valley down below. The Bisse have been managed as a commons since they were built in the first half of the 20th century.

The Protei is a revolutionary open-source sailing drone, now in a prototype phase, designed to help clean up oil spills in the oceans. Based on an idea of Cesar Harada and built by a large international community of collaborators, the boat is the first significant design innovation in the basic shape of boat hulls in millennia.

The Kakula Healers of Bushbuckridge, South Africa, are a collective of over 300 healers from two provinces in South Africa. They routinely pool their knowledge and resources about returning people to good health.

The hackerspace, FabLab and Maker movements are pioneering spaces to develop collaborative innovations in software, customized fabrication, and open hardware design and manufacturing. Examples include the Embassy of the Commons in Poland, the Hack of Good Initiative in Spain, Fabulous St. Pauli in Germany, and Move Commons, a tagging system for commons-based Internet projects.

The Guassa area in Ethiopia, has been managed by the Menz people as commons for grass collection (for thatching) and firewood for over 400 years. Although not designed to conserve wildlife, the system has allowed the co-existence of wildlife with the local community, and reduced poverty by providing the community with natural resources that can be sold and exchanged in the market during times of drought.

The Great Lakes Commons is a cross-border grassroots effort to establish the Great Lakes as a commons and legally protected bioregion. The project, still in its early stages, aspires to build new systems of participation, advocacy and cooperation to remake the policy governance for the endangered Great Lakes.

Commons education projects are proliferating around the world. They include the annual Summer School on the Commons, in Bechstedt/Thüringen, Germany; the School of Commoning in London; the Green Academy Vis, serving people from Croatia and the Balkans; the Free Technology Academy; and the School of Commons, in Barcelona.

LibreOffice is a rare instance of a tech community taking back a software product (OpenOffice) owned by a company (Oracle), and turning it into a new commons-based software project.

Helfrich cited a number of other projects, such as Naples Bene Comune; the Wikispeed open source race car; the Potato Park managed by Indigenous peoples in Perú to grow, steward and develop some 900 varieties of potatoes; the occupied Teatro Valle in Rome, which was reconstituted as a civic commons after budget cutbacks. Our challenge as commoners, said Helfrich, is to make

sense of this enormous diversity. All of these examples point toward an alternative vision of production and governance for meeting people's basic needs – a vision that is simply absent among conventional political parties and political movements.

Most conventional politics is based on "market fundamentalism," she said, "which itself is a symptom of fear and a lack of imagination." The only question that anyone seems to ask is, "how can we make money off it?" This mentality and language becomes a strait-jacket for our minds," she said. "Remember, language is performative. It makes reality and shapes the way we think. Let's name it for what it is – a colonization of our minds."

The good news is that market fundamentalism is "just an idea," said Helfrich. "It is a mindset that can be challenged with other ideas and mindsets. We can bypass the idea of the market/state duopoly with a coherent concept of the commons, which can allow us to de-marketize our vocabulary and 'commonify' our minds."

To help in this task, Helfrich offered four conceptual points to help us identify the commons and to prevent misunderstandings.

1. *The commons is not a resource, but a process.* She noted that the statement, "water is a commons," is a bit strange because a commons is not intrinsic to a resource. It's all about *our relationships* to goods that we manage as commons. We need to recognize that "every commons is a social commons," no matter what the resource that it may be managing. The focus should be on the process of commoning, not the resource itself.

2. *Our categorization of commons needs an upgrade.* This principle is related to #1: We should not be classifying "material commons" on one side and "cultural and digital commons" on other. This distinction is useful in understanding how to define access and usage rules for a given resource, because material resources tend to get used up and digital resources can be copied again and again, at virtually no cost, without depleting them. But this distinction is misleading in that it encourages to ignore the social practices and knowledge that are required in *all* commons. It also encourages to ignore that even "immaterial" digital commons require energy for the computer systems and food for the hackers. The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is a collection of seeds that may be needed in the event of environmental catastrophe. But this resource cannot really be used and developed without the practical social knowledge for cultivating the seeds as commons.

3. *Going beyond openness.* The political left and the open access movements like to stress the importance of "openness" in digital systems as a way to ensure widespread access and use. But openness does not guarantee that a commons will remain a commons, said Helfrich, citing the cautionary tales of LibreOffice and Google books. Corporate owners can take over or eclipse a commons based on an open platform. This suggests that we need to invest new mechanisms and institutions to protect free knowledge as a commons, so that the free knowledge cannot be enclosed or taken private for market purposes. And that there is an urgent need to develop commons based infrastructures.

4. *Scaling up the commons?* Helfrich took issue with the aspiration of "scaling up" the commons. She said that we must recognize that commons do not scale up; they slowly crystallize

like atoms in a crystal latticework. New commons can arise and affiliate with existing commons from all sides, without the help of hierarchies or centralized systems. The point to remember is that commons "are not built from bottom up or top down; they are peer to peer, meaning they expand horizontally in dense interconnections with each other." This mode of open interaction and formation "inevitably leads to the emergence of new system features which cannot be anticipated in advance, said Helfrich. She urged commoners not to be obsessed with scaling up, but rather to focus on the integrity of what we have and how to help expand it.

Finally, Helfrich urged the conference to move beyond the idea of "commons-based peer production" to the "commons-creating peer economy." This recommendation is based on the same criticism of openness as necessary but not sufficient. It is important to identify that principles that *protect* commons and enable them to *continuously reproduce*. Commons-based peer production is often simply a new way of making the capitalist machine work better. But a *commons-creating peer economy* is focused on how to produce and reproduce an economy that is commons-based, and encourages people to relate to each other in non-exclusive terms.

To promote this vision, Helfrich recommended six key principles:

1. *Use value trumps exchange value.* The needs of one's family and household for basic subsistence take precedence over sales and profit from market activity.

2. *He or she who takes from the commons must contribute to the commons.* This contribution must be de-linked both in time and quantity – an *indirect* reciprocity, not a direct *quid pro quo*.

3. *Self-organization and self-healing.* A commons arises to meet specific collective concerns, often by assigning distributed responsibilities and structured interdependencies. Centralization interferes with this process of self-organizing and -healing.

4. *Share what you can.* A basic principle of the commons is to share what you can so that others can improve upon existing models and designs, and continue the cycle of improvement and sharing.

5. *Beating the bounds.* A custom in medieval English commons was to "beat the bounds" – a community walk around the perimeter of the commons to identify any enclosures, and remove them. We need modern-day practices for beating the bounds in order to protect commons.

6. *Iteration.* The process for innovation and commons protection requires trial-and-error, a tolerance for mistakes and ongoing reflection.

Text of Helfrich's talk:
http://commonsandeconomics.org/2013/06/09/silke-helfrichs-opening-keynote-towards-a-commons-creating-peer-economy
Video of Helfrich's talk:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLAK_M-ayfo
Helfrich's presentation slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ECC-Opening2.pdf

Andreas Weber (Germany)
Philosopher, biologist and author
Life, Meaning and Spirituality in the Commons: Towards a Cultural Paradigm Shift"

Andreas Weber, a theoretical biologist, philosopher and independent scholar based in Berlin, Germany, offered a provocative keynote talk about the grand narrative of "bioeconomics" based on the default worldview for contemporary economic thought, public policy and politics. "Evolutionary biology and neoliberal economics are intertwined, coherent patterns of our official and unconscious understanding of reality," Weber said. But this blend of Darwinian science and free market economics, he argued, is highly misleading because it seriously misstates the empirical realities of biological and evolutionary sciences, and is used to advance a regressive political and policy agenda.

A great deal has been learned in the past twenty years that invalidates the standard Darwinian/free market story that life is all about machine-like egoistical agents, competition, efficiency and growth. Weber argues that these basic assumptions are terribly overstated if not flat-out wrong; they reflect the values of Victorian society (struggle, scarcity, non-cooperation), not the empirical evidence.

As Weber noted: "The biosphere is *not* efficient. Warm-blooded animals consume over 97 percent of their energy only to maintain their metabolism. Photosynthesis achieves a ridiculously low efficiency rate of 7 percent. Fish, amphibians and insects have to lay millions of eggs only to allow for the survival of very few offspring." Weber added that nature does *not* grow in material terms and does *not* create new species through competition. Nature does *not* produce diversity through scarcity, it does *not* exhibit linear progress, and it does *not* recognize anything resembling property rights.

It is important to address these questions of biology and evolution, Weber said, because so much of our worldview, economics and public policy are built on top of erroneous premises and a harmful worldview. Archaic scientific ideas are improperly used to justify an economic system and political policies that bolster a fiercely competitive "dog-eat-dog" world because that is supposedly the natural way of the world.

Weber's complaint about conventional biology is that it refuses to study life itself. It is too committed to Enlightenment categories of the individual, rationality and competition, and it insists upon a reductionist logic that cannot address, let alone provide answers, to what is life itself. Weber argues that organisms are "sentient, more-than-physical creatures that have subjective experiences and produce sense." He notes that current biological sciences do not ask, "What do we live for? What are our inner needs as living creatures? What relationships do we have, or should we have, to the natural order? How do we produce things for our immediate needs or the market? What is life

and what role do we play in it?"

Weber considers bioeconomics the "metaphysics of death" because it sees progress and knowledge as a matter of "reducing everything to algorithms and mechanisms of dead matter," independent of any autonomous life force. It also denies the importance of "deeply creative and expressive processes that bring forth a multitude of relationships" in ecosystems, he said. By so doing, and thereby ignoring fundamental forces that animate living organisms and ecosystems, bioeconomics as a system of thought is contributing to "a crisis in global sense-making."

As an alternative, Weber proposes a new "empirical/subjective" approach to biology that he calls "biopoetics." The topic is introduced at length in an essay, "Enlivenment: Towards a Fundamental Shift in the Concepts of Nature, Culture and Politics," published by the Heinrich Boell Foundation in May 2013.[3] Biopoetics proposes that biology study organisms as "sentient beings" that produce meaning as subjective experience. Biopoetics proposes a different metaphysics for reality, in which "reality is literally alive and subjective experience and feelings are the prerequisites for any rationality." This theory of biology proposes to be "a natural history of freedom, autonomy, agency and value" – issues that reductionist, Enlightenment-based science tends to avoid. In its stead, Weber sees nature as a "gift economy based on sharing and a continuous deepening of felt meaning."

In the emerging new picture of biology, as confirmed by a growing body of empirical research, "organisms are no longer viewed as genetic machines, but basically as materially embodied processes that bring forth themselves," said Weber. "Each single cell is 'a process of creation of an identity.' The simplest organism must be understood as a material system displaying the intention to maintain itself intact, to grow, to unfold, and to make a fuller scope of life for itself."

Life, then, amounts to more than inert physical matter that is animate. It is about "a meaningful self that is producing itself." Life amounts to a subjective/material process to maintain and preserve a specific identity. "A system that intends to keep itself intact automatically develops interests, a set of perspectives, one might say, and therefore a self. It becomes a subject with a body." Life itself is a paradox in conjoining the material and the subjective, but that paradox is central to the essence of life.

This is the radical idea behind "enlivenment" -- subjectivity as a serious force in evolution and living systems. Our inner lives matter. They are not peripheral to the grand epic of evolution; they are essential, driving forces of it.

It is impossible to do justice to Weber's intriguing theory in a brief summary; his full essay is the best source. Suffice it to say Weber's conceptualization of "the biosphere as a commons" amounts to what he calls "natural anticapitalism." He sees "ecological commoning" as consisting of some basic principles:

- general principles with local manifestations;
- "interbeing" – a balance of individuality and the whole;

---

[3] http://www.boell.de/publications/publications-enlivenment-publication-series-ecology-17364.html.

- non-dualism – no separation of "objective" and "subjective"; no commons without commoners;
- growth of diversity and meaning in ecosystems, not maximum material "throughput
- negotiations of competition and cooperation (not just competition)

In this view of the natural world, commons principles are tantamount to life principles. That is just as an ecosystem IS its very inhabitants, so there is no commons without commoners. Just as biology is a (bio)semiotic process (DNA, evolutionary development, metabolisms, meaning, gesture, ethology, metaphor), so every commons is a knowledge commons (and also a material commons at the same time).

Just as living systems have differentiation and compartmentalization (skin, cell walls, integuments, species boundaries, mating behaviors), so every commons needs its specialized forms of protection. Just as biological systems self-organize through autocatalysis and metabiomes, so commons do not scale up but crystallize organically and incrementally.

Weber took Silke Helfrich's arguments for a commons-creating peer economy to a step further, arguing that biological systems naturally tend to create a *commons-creating peer ecology*. At the heart of this system is the feeling of being alive – or what Weber calls "enlivenment." He argues that nature is all about enacting enlivenment – about deepening biodiversity, blending the interests of individuals and the whole, blending meaning and material production and exchange, and enacting freedom within the constraints of existential and ecological necessity.

The practice of "meaningful aliveness" profoundly changes the metaphysics of bioeconomics by dissolving the traditional separations that we take for granted – between theory and practice, between objective and subjective, and between the individual and the collective. Weber calls this new metaphysics "poetic objectivity" – the idea that living beings can be observant of felt life while accepting the material processes of the world. Sense-making, experiences and feelings are not peripheral or trivial aspects of biological reality; they lie at the heart of it, and deeply influence biological and evolutionary systems.

To see the world through this new prism, it is important to ask a different set of questions and think with a different logic, said Weber. The questions to be asked are: "Does it enhance life?" "Does it make life fuller?" Weber sees commoning as a vehicle for developing a new sort of "first-person science" that honors subjectivity while making sense of material reality in scientific ways. So, for example, instead of seeing identities as embedded in things – the habit of traditional science -- first-person science would explore relationships among organisms. Instead of regarding feelings as irrelevant "private" phenomena, first-person science would regard subjectivity as empirically meaningful. Instead of positing a dichotomy of "outside" and "inside" of an organism, first-person science would see the "outside as inside."

This new perspective of enlivenment is a way to transcend the deep limitations of bioeconomics, a worldview and system of thought that have banished our subjectivity and spirituality as vestigial curiosities. Biopoetics asserts that our subjectivity is central to our creativity and freedom as evolving organisms and to the grand march of life itself.

This has far-reaching implications for how we conceptualize our economics. Rather than see nature as inert matter that we can manipulate for whatever purposes, we must see that "nature" is not an other, something apart from human beings, but rather as something we are wholly integrated with. Nature amounts to an open-source commons – a realm in which exclusivity or property rights do not exist, or make sense. The dualisms of "individual" and "collective" do not make sense because the two notions are blurred and integrated with each other. Human beings themselves amount to a "super-organism" of smaller organisms aggregated into a whole; humans are not strictly separate from nature but rather deeply embedded in it.

From these ideas, Weber develops the idea of "interbeing," the ecological principle that "everything is hitched to everything else," as naturalist John Muir put it. Material resources do not operate on a separate plane according to external forces beyond our control; they are linked to (immaterial) meaning and sense that living beings are constantly refining.

An "enlivened economy" is one that promotes these sorts of relationships among living, natural processes. "If nature actually is a commons," writes Weber, "it follows that the only possible way to achieve a stable, long-term productive relationship with it is by building an economy of the commons. It can help dissolve the traditional duality of humans and nature, and orient us toward respectful, sustainable models of engaging with the more-than-human aspects of nature."

Weber's account of "enlivenment" is sure to be controversial precisely because it challenges some core assumptions of the modern, scientific worldview. It spans the worlds of science, politics, economics and the commons in a way that certainly raises many questions. His essay is also likely to be misunderstood or its implications resisted, as when one questioner at the conference strenuously objected, "But we are not animals!" Surely we are not "animals" in many significant senses, but it is also true that we have yet to come to terms with our actual biological existence and our embeddedness in a larger, natural order. The standard bioeconomics narrative has little to say about how our identities, consciousness, morality and sense of the world are embodied in living, breathing, material organisms – the human species.

Video of Weber's talk:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqI0qKFWugo - at=30
Powerpoint slides for Weber's talk:
http://boellblog.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/Enlivenment_WeberAndreas_24052013.pdf
A pdf of Weber's "Enlivenment" essay:
http://www.boell.de/publications/publications-enlivenment-publication-series-ecology-17364.html

II. Five Conference Streams

Stream #1: Land and Nature

"Integrating Theory and Practice in the Management of Natural Commons"

Saki Bailey (Italy), Stream Coordinator

Keynote Talks: Joshua Farley and Ugo Mattei

This stream brought together legal scholars, ecological economists and commons advocates to explore new types of commons-based policies and models for governing shared natural resources, especially water and land.

Throughout the world, neoliberal economic policies have had destructive effects, resulting both in the degradation of natural environments and a loss of fair access to shared resources. In large metropolitan areas such as Paris, Berlin and Naples, the aggressive privatization of water systems has resulted in price increases, lower quality water, reduced access to water and less democratic control.

There is a flourishing anti-privatization movement in both Europe and the Global South, but much of this advocacy does not have the analytical and theoretical tools to push for a paradigm shift in the economic organization of our natural resources as commons. This Stream explored the possibilities for a more profound, commons-based shift in governance of natural resources. It featured an American ecological economist, Professor Joshua Farley, and an Italian law scholar, Professor Ugo Mattei, speaking about natural resource commons from different perspectives, and then entering into a dialogue on the theme, "Natural Resource Governance: Between Revolution and Reform" -- a theme that was addressed as well by the previous keynote talk by Professor Maristella Svampa of Argentina.

Joshua Farley (USA)
University of Vermont
"Economics, Nature and the Commons"

Professor Joshua Farley, who studies community development and applied economics at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont, set forth the basic challenges facing human societies in managing natural resources.

In standard economic terms, a society should "maximize utility," i.e., produce a high quality of life for this and future generations. "It should meet physiological needs, healthy communities, fulfilling social relationships and meaningful work, among other things." In practice, however, the laws of physics require that we use energy to produce something; it is impossible to produce something from nothing. Yet we have finite petroleum stocks and even finite solar flows.

The laws of ecology mean that the "conversion of ecosystem structure into economic products and waste emissions degrades and destroys ecosystem services, including basic life support functions. This tension between "economic products and ecosystem services," both of which are essential to civilization, means that we have unavoidable tradeoffs that we must make.

Humans therefore face a "macro-allocation problem" in determining how to allocate the resources of ecosystem structures between ecosystem services and economic products?" The goal should be to achieve "sufficient well-being for humans and other species, now and in the future. Ecological services must meet vital life-support functions, shared by all.

Potential solutions to this macro-allocation problem include reform that "internalizes externalities through markets." For example, "green taxes" can raise prices and in so doing determine the scale of externalities. Or a cap-and-trade system can be imposed by governments and in so doing dictate the scale of externalities, and let the price adjust accordingly. (One problem with this approach is that prices can be susceptible to speculation.) But a more "revolutionary" approach to the macro-allocation problem would be to internalize externalities through common ownership. The scale of externalities is determined by the community, and then the resulting ecosystem services are distributed and allocated.

However, there is also a *micro-allocation problem* that we face in allocating the fruits of available ecosystem structures and information among different economic products. In modern societies, markets typically allocate the benefits of water, land, food and energy. However, when market demand is the tool for such allocations, preferences are weighted by the purchasing power of individuals, which means that resources are directed to those who need them least.

Moreover, some natural resources such as water supply systems are natural monopolies, with high fixed costs and low marginal costs. A competitive market would only increase costs, yet for-profit monopolies for water provisioning are unacceptable. The problem for many finite, essential natural resources such as land, food, petroleum and water is that supply does not necessarily respond to price signals. In addition, small decrease in supply can lead to huge increase in price. A market-based system for these resources can therefore result in speculation, bubbles, busts, instability and misery.

Farley concluded that neither an ecologically sustainable "macro-allocation" of natural resources nor a just distribution of resources can be solved through markets. "When resources are essential or not depleted through use, markets are inefficient." By contrast, collection action and common ownership are more sustainable, just and efficient. We need common "ownership" of ecosystem functions, which means that we need "common ownership of ecosystem structures" in order to ensure that basic needs are met. "If the ecosystem structure produces any surplus, it can be auctioned off for private use, with revenues used to sustain the health and ownership of the commons."

Video of Josh Farley's talk:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&list=PLQoUnPhwq7cylzACRGFLtIsYSGBQBkXjq&v=pJv-YNyTUjM
Farley's Powerpoint slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NatureStream_FarleyJoshua_23052013_1.pdf

Ugo Mattei (Italy)
International University College, University of Turin
and University of California, Hastings College of Law
"Economics, Nature and the Commons"

Professor Ugo Mattei, a law scholar at the University of Turin's International University College, and at the University of California's Hastings College of Law, has long been a commons activist in Italy, especially on water issues. His bold, spirited keynote talk focused on the practical, real-world challenges of converting a privatized municipal water system back into an institution serving the public, and ideally, managed according to commons-based principles. (See Stream discussion below on pp. 24-27 for further details on water as a commons.)

As a preface to his remarks, Mattei warned that while the relationships between "commons and economics" must be discussed, there is a danger that economics will overpower the law, much as it did when the field of "law and economics" was developed a generation ago. Mattei also warned that the choice between "revolution" and "reform" – the theme of this session – is not quite right because the idea of "reform" has been debased.

"Reform used to mean achieving gradually the result the revolution achieves fast," said Mattei. "But today when we talk about reform, in the neoliberal order, we mean the exact opposite. Reform does not mean a process of gradual inclusion and the construction of a more equal society; it means transferring as many public resources as possible to the private domain. It means privatizing the structures that make government stable and enable public decisionmaking and making everything more market-friendly and enhancing flexibility in labor markets. Reform today is basically a process of privatization of the public sector."

To investigate how to move the commons paradigm forward so that it could have a more influential mainstream role in public life and policy, Mattei spoke about the difficult challenge he has personally faced in trying to "re-publicize" the municipal water system in Naples, which had been previously privatized. If we are going to combat the prevailing trends of "reform," which allow corporations "to get stronger and to conquer more spaces that used to be public," then we must figure out "how we are going to deal with the corporation" as an institutional form.

In Italy, a voter referendum in 2011 rejected a proposal to privatize local water systems by a remarkable 95.4 percent, or 26 million votes. Emboldened by this strong show of public support, the City of Naples began an attempt to bring the private corporation controlling the city's water back under public management. Mattei said that this process has demonstrated how exceedingly difficult it is to convert private assets into commons-based governance systems. "Re-publicizing" a formerly privatized asset (let alone converting into a commons-based form) demonstrates the very deep biases of neoliberal law and the challenges of a commons transition.

He noted: "First, you are not going to transform a private corporation into something public via commoning. You need a lot of 'non-commoning' authority to make the transformation. That's what I've learned in the past couple of years. You have to get in the bottom room, struggle for power, and create and transform the bylaws of the corporation so that the corporation will stop *acting* as a corporation. And you need to introduce controls so that this change can happen and last."

A transformation to a commons-based system is so difficult because "there are lots of vested interests" associated with corporations, most notably shareholders and politicians, and because the performance standard for a corporation is quite simple: profit. "Everyone who owns shares, whether from the public or private sector, is only interested in the return on investment," said Mattei. "Even politicians in the public sector act as much like sharks as privately owned corporations because they need the return from those shares at the end of the year in order to carry on the business of the municipality."

Mattei's blunt conclusion is that "reform" within the existing system of law and politics is not going to bring about commons-based institutions: "The given legal order is hierarchical and has great concentration of power. You have to play by those rules." Mattei believes that the only way to bring about commons institutions and commoning practices is by "breaking the law. Some things are compatible with the given legal order, and some are not. You can occupy a place, and then you may be able to do things the way you want – if you have enough force or politicians are too scared to evict you. But if you play by the rules, you need a concentration of power for a while."

The basic problem is that the neoliberal political order – and particularly the system of law – favors private property rights and the corporate sector. "No matter whether you are a revolutionary or reformist, the neoliberal order is biased toward the private. The law makes it extremely easy to privatize resources. If you are a municipality and want to sell your water company, you will find it very easy from a legal point of view. But there are no laws in the Italian legal order that shows you how to go the other way around," he said.

"What happens if a municipality changes its mind after it has privatized a local public service? Or decide it was a mistake? Can you do it?" asked Mattei. "The answer is simply no. You have to force the legal system to permit it through a re-interpretation of the law." The law itself provides no clear, convenient ways to restore a private asset to public control, he said: "It took us a year and half of hard work and research to reinterpret the Italian legal code in such-and-such a way that we could make a legal argument for the transformation of a private resource to public control. You need a good argument to get around the logic of neoliberal law and make the case that it is not serving the collective good."

Mattei said that his challenge was, "Can you convince a judge that your interpretation is a good one, especially when it is clearly outside of the law? Let's face it. The transformation of the Naples [water management] corporation into a public entity was, technically speaking, illegal. It depended on a very expansive interpretation of the law." That was possible only because the court was willing to regard the referendum results as compelling evidence of the public will, and thus to approve the re-publicization of the Naples water system.

The legal impediments were only one part of the struggle, said Mattei. There were also enormous fiscal, tax law and labor law issues. "It is not so easy to change the DNA of a corporation," said Mattei, "so that it will exist not to make a profit, but to run the water system in an ecological, sustainable, long-term way so that it takes into consideration the needs of the one million people it is serving." This task also required considerable investment money and sophisticated managerial skills.

Once an institution moves beyond the simple-minded metric of profit, Mattei continued, you have to develop new ways to ensure that the ecological and commons-based purposes of the enterprise are being honored. The performance-measurement system must show that any money that you are losing is being recovered in other ways, such as a more benign environmental impact and greater public participation. "For a corporation, the market is theoretically the agency of control. Once you get to a commons, there is no formal agency of control – so you need to create one. This is where we are now."

Video of Ugo Mattei's talk (at 19:10):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&list=PLQoUnPhwq7cylzACRGFLtIsYSGBQBkXjq&v=pJv-YNyTUjMh
Website of ABC [Acqua Bene Comune]:
http://www.acquabenecomune.org/raccoltafirme/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1115:napoli-lacqua-e-un-Bene

An Account of the Land and Nature Stream's Deliberations

At the ECC, the Natural Resources Stream held a series of breakout sessions at which self-selected participants focused on the challenges of managing water as a commons. Below is a minor adaptation of the document that the Stream participants collectively prepared.

Worldwide there are many struggles by commoners to protect affordable access and usage to flows of water, even as large multinational water companies seek to gain proprietary control over water as a source of private profit. The group stated the problem succinctly:

> "Neoliberal policy is leading to the enclosure of water commons and subjecting them to the logic of the market where the value of water is measured solely by its price on the global water market. This is creating conflicts or 'water wars' of local people against the state and multinationals."

While solutions to this conflict will of course vary from one region to another, the Stream agreed that *commoning water* is the best generic solution. This means that water must be treated not as a resource, but as something both sacred and a biological source of life. When the quality of water is degraded, so is the quality of human life and the environment. So we must recognize water not just as a thing to consume, but as a set of social relationships. It is the site of power and a source of community development, autonomy and empowerment. Therefore, power in decisionmaking about water should be diffused, inclusive and transparent. This requires the creation of channels of commoning.

What, then, is "commoning"? Tommaso Fattori, a member of the Italian Water Forum, put it well in *Commoning Public Utilities:* "Commoning is the evolution of commoners' ability to impose shared rules on themselves: an evolution of the so-called "vernacular laws" which do not descend from above – from the State or from the transnational law firms – but originate from below, expressing needs, interests and values that circulate within local communities at the grassroots level."

Commonifying water requires an understanding of water commons in three different dimensions: the legal form or governance, the non-economic values of the commons, and finally the political and social context in which commons are embedded. Understanding each of these dimensions can provide us with tools and strategies for protecting water commons.

Special attention must be paid to the legal form and governance of the commons, as Ugo Mattei's keynote talk made clear. We can identify different "templates" for constructing and protecting water commons if we identify the form in which water commons are owned (public, private to common ownership) and how these forms of ownerships are named in each legal system. Identifying the legal form may also help us evaluate how well the operational rules of a given legal form fulfill or flout "commons water design principles."

Water governance may require *nested* and/or *polycentric* governance, which is the coordination of many different levels of water governance regimes (local, national and international) as well as the

recognition of *customary* governance regimes.

Here are some basic design principles of water commons:

- There should be no right to transfer water individually. Any transfer of water rights must be accomplished collectively with full transparency to the user and manager community.

- There should be diffused, horizontal decisionmaking that allows for the widest amount of citizen participation, not only at the level of monitoring but at all levels of decisionmaking.

- Decisionmaking should not simply be designed to meet the needs of "stakeholders," but also of "need" and "care" holders. Those people who use and manage water should be involved in decisionmaking, and not just those with an economic interest in water.

- Allocation of water at certain minimum levels should not be dependent upon price.

- The price of water should only reflect costs and not profit.

The Stream then considered a variety of legal structures for water management. The typical model is known as the *PPP, for Public/Private Partnership* in managing water. This system consists of a management contract in which a private operator is responsible only for running the system, usually for four to seven years. It receives fees for its work that are to some extent performance-related. The public sector, for its part, finances and carries out any necessary investments.

Another arrangement is a *lease contract,* under which assets are leased to the private operator who receives a share of revenues. The operator typically bears a higher commercial risk than under a management contract, but investment is still fully or mostly financed and carried out by the public sector. The duration of lease contracts is typically ten to fifteen years.

There are two other possible arrangements: a *mixed-ownership company* in which a private investor takes a minority share in a water company with full management responsibility vested in the private partner; and *a concession* under which the private operator is responsible for running the entire system. Investment is mostly or fully financed and carried out by the private operator. The duration is typically 20–30 years.

The legal system used by the Eau de Paris is a company with a semi-independent legal entity that has its own budget, and reports to the municipality. It is publicly owned and city-run. Its board includes ten elected representatives, two elected local authority members and staff representatives, water and sanitation experts, representatives of consumer and environmental groups, and five users who belong to the municipal water system called Observatoire Municipal de L'Eau. Profits from the water system, rather than going to private companies, are reinvested.

The commoning processes of the Paris model means that the water system does not need to

pay dividends to shareholders, which has saved Eau de Paris 35 million euros per year. Contracts are transparent and the cost of water has remained stable at a cost below the national average. These extra savings have permitted a policies of social subsidies to guarantee poor families access to water and to assist local farmers to switch to organic agriculture methods to reduce water pollution.

In Naples, Italy, the commons model of water management took place when ABC Napoli was formed in September 2011. The system was converted from a private corporation (SPA to a public entity (azienda speciale); all five board members are appointed by the mayor. Two are from the "environmental world," and one is a technical/administrative expert. Citizens (water users) participate through a 21-person board of users, "Comitato di sorveglianza." ABC Napoli is now considering how to structure the role of the environmental experts; whether a user representative should be made a voting member of the board; and how to value water by something other than price. (Austrian economist Christian Felber has introduced a model called the "Common Good Matrix," which could be applied to ABC Napoli.)

Around the world, there are other models for managing water that are being explored. In the Great Lakes of North America, a number of citizen groups and indigenous peoples self-organized as the Great Lakes Commons are investigating how the public trust doctrine might be used to develop new governance models. The public trust doctrine is an ancient legal tradition that prohibits the state from giving away, selling certain or abusing certain inalienable ecological resources that belong to the unorganized public.

The Bolivian government has also been a pioneer in adopting a new "Law of Mother Earth provision (Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra) in 2010, which draws upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to explicitly recognize the "inherent rights of Mother Earth." Unfortunately, the declaration does not identify the mechanisms and procedures through which various obligations might be enforced.

The breakout session for water concluded that the value of the commons in managing water is that it honors the role of democratic participation, transparent procedures, eco-sustainability, access and reinvestment of surplus to improve sustainability, access and quality. These values, distinct from standard economic or market value, can be used as an alternative system to measure the success of water management. Under one scenario, it was proposed that commons-based values could be assigned point values that would allow them to be used in a matrix system for the common good, similar to the one developed by Christian Felber.

While the protection of water commons has varying political and social aspects from place to place, the political strategies for transforming private management systems to public or commons management include: ***People's referendums; the creation of instruments of direct democracy*** (such as the inclusion of users and managers in decisionmaking, as seen in Paris and Naples); ***court decisions*** that recognize the necessity of such transformations; ***political force*** initiated either through people's referendums or charters and/or the constitution at municipal, regional or national levels; and ***support of international treaties and initiatives*** that recognize the right to water, such as the UN General Assembly resolution or United Nations Water Day.

Description of Nature Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Land_and_Nature_Stream
Documentation on Nature Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Land_and_Nature_Stream
"Commoning Water" PowerPoint slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ECC-Commonifying-Water.pdf
"Water as a Commons" PowerPoint slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ECC-Water-as-a-Commons.pdf

Stream #2: Care Work

"Doing Away with Labor: Working and Caring in a World of Commons"

Heike Löschmann, Stream Coordinator

Currently, we witness two parallel phenomena: Global development policies cause the loss of use rights to the natural commons as the livelihood support system for an estimated two billion people. At the same time, an ecology of collaborative production is (re)emerging beyond markets, money and organizational hierarchies as we know them. The lines between production and consumption are becoming blurred by social practices, which are based on sharing and (indirect) reciprocity.

These practices are providing innovative answers to the fundamental question of how to (re)produce our livelihoods. Yet, most of the time, they do neither recognize "the whole of work," which means to overcome the structural divisions between productive work and care work (education, health, eldercare, household level, etc.) nor do they reduce embedded gender imbalances in the performance of these activities.

And yet, the emerging new patterns bear the potential for a historical transformation toward a model that we could term "(re)presumption." It is a created term to combine two sides on a structural level: reproduction and production on the one hand, and production and consumption on the other. It could provide alternatives to both, globalized capital(ism) and "national-developmentalism," and to overcome structural causes of gender inequality and the markets externalization of care and nature services.

These trends also point to the transcendence of the conditions that historically forced the division between social reproduction and economic production. While most unionists tend to focus on the labor market and a fair distribution of available employment in our world of today, the work of the future may no longer be a "product" that is bought and sold in the market, but it could be managed as a commons. This is the vision that the Care Work Stream addressed.

Heike Löschmann (Germany),
Keynote speaker, on behalf of
Daniela Gottschlich,
Leuphana University Lüneberg, Germany

"Doing Away With Labor:
Working and Caring in a World of the Commons"

Heike Löschmann, Stream Coordinator for the Care Work Stream and Head of the Department for International Politics at the Heinrich Böll Foundation, delivered a keynote talk that adapted the prepared remarks of Daniela Gottschlich, who was unexpectedly ill and could not attend. Löschmann and Gottschlich had consulted and shared extensively in the development of this collaborative keynote for the Care Work Stream. Gottschlich is a political scientist and feminist theorist from Leuphana University Lüneberg, in Germany. (Throughout this summary, the text will refer to Löschmann's presentation, but it should be understood that this talk was based on Gottschlich's prepared remarks, available for download here: http://www.boell.de/economysocial/economy/economy-keynote-working-and-caring-17397.html.)

The talk focused on how we might rethink the role of human reproductive labor and do away with the idea of labor as employment and commodity that we buy and sell in the market. Our goal should be to reframe our understanding of labor as what is *behind* our employability – namely, the human capacity and ability to work. If we can then consider this capacity as a common-pool resource, and imagine what it would take to organize it as a commons, then we may be able to reframe the economy from a feminist economics perspective.

Löschmann noted how "caring" and "commoning" are similar concepts. Both criticize the prevailing economic paradigm (maximization of profits, competition, etc.). Both emphasize the human dimensions of market activity. Both are based on cooperation and responsibility, and embody an ethics of care and reciprocity. Caring and commoning are both relational, not transactional. In this sense, caring and commoning both must be constantly created and re-created.

However, there are differences between the two concepts as well. Commons-based peer production is usually a self-determined, individual choice, whereas care work and reproductive activities are absolutely necessary activities (e.g., child-rearing, eldercare, individual household reproduction) that a society cannot do without. In a commons, humans are considered socially independent, and cooperation occurs between people with equal rights and status. But in care work, humans are usually dependent, fragile beings who need the help of others because they are young, old or ill. There is therefore an asymmetrical relationship between a care-giver and care receiver, and it is difficult or even impossible for a care giver to withdraw from the relationship.

In the theoretical framework of feminist economics, market economics is the realm of paid labor, which is more highly regarded than work that is unpaid. Unpaid work occurs in the "care

economy" and subsistence realms, as well as through ecosystem services that nature provides "for free." Even though these forms of labor are the foundation for all paid, market-based labor, care work is generally unpaid, low-value and gendered (performed by women).

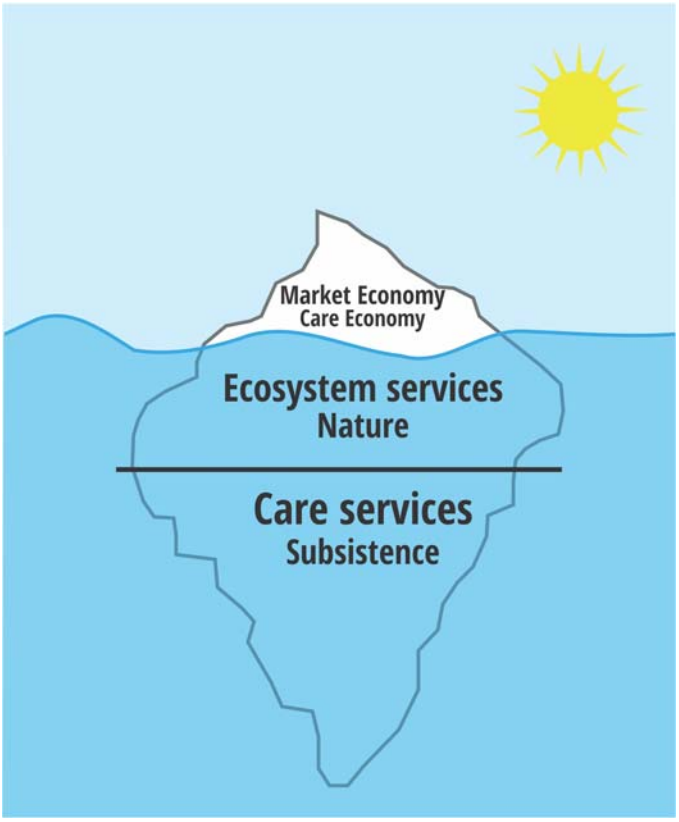
"Feminist economics criticizes this structural division between productive work and care work and its different validations," said Löschmann. It links this separation "to systemic mechanisms such as externalization, devaluation and exploitation – processes that are the underlying forces for the crisis of reproductivity."

While feminist economics may stress the "productivity" of reproductive activities and commoners would formulate it as the "inherently generative power" of reproductive activities, both call for the conscious redesign of the whole of economics. Both seek to validate *all* of the many kinds of work that are needed to ensure our livelihoods. The problem, in both care work and enclosures of the commons, is that certain forms of human labor have been "externalized" – regarded as "external" to the market and therefore de-valued – and must be reintegrated into our economic framework. This reintegration of paid and unpaid labor, and of market production and care work, is essential to overcoming the human alienation caused by the market economy.

Put succinctly, said Löschmann, "We should live to work, and not work to live. And work should be fun as much as possible."

So what do we need instead? she asked. "We need a system that enables social reproduction without social and ecological destruction. We need to switch perspectives, and use the principles of care economics and commons economics to transform the current system as a whole, and so that we can maintain social and ecological quality." This will require that we change our understanding and ways of life and work, and it will require a new language, perhaps a 'commonified' language," said Löschmann. This is, of course, a huge challenge, but it is the only way to successfully bring about the cultural change needed.

Löschmann then told three out of four short stories (from Daniela Gottschlich's text and prepared PowerPoint slides) to illustrate the *crisis of reproductivity* that must be overcome. The point in each story is that the (re)productive is not only the basis for all economic activities – emphasizing that such labor should not be ignored, belittled or exploited – but that it even forms by far the largest part of all that we call "the economy," whereas money and markets are only the tip of the iceberg of all work. Löschmann urged that we make more visible the submerged part of the iceberg – the life-provisioning services of nature and care work. After all, these services represent the stabilizing base of the iceberg that allow the tip of the iceberg – money and markets – to exist. Yet money and markets are the focus of our obsessive concern and imagination, and the non-monetary, wealth-creating capacity of nature and care services/ subsistence are generally given less importance than the market economy. Löschmann therefore argued for the need to recognize the actual role of these hidden (re)productive dimensions of in our daily practices worldwide.



Reconceptualizing the market economy as the tip of the iceberg, made possible by a larger system of ecosystem services and care services.

Story #1: How to succeed in autonomous work with and in the commons without social and ecological blind spots. Jan, a young information technology student in Germany, loves open source software, 3D printing, music-sharing and free access to knowledge. He likes the idea of being independent and working on socially important projects, but he has doubts about his ability to earn enough money to work in a co-working space as a freelancer.

One evening while his roommates are out, Jan orders dinner from his favorite Chinese restaurant, which is delivered to him by Hung Shung. Hung is a victim of trafficking who works ten hours a day, seven days a week for very low pay. He sleeps on a mattress in the cellar of the restaurant and avoids arguments with his boss since his boss took away his passport. The Peking duck that is delivered to Jan for his meal was raised on an industrialized poultry farm that essentially tortured the duck for its six weeks of life. Just as Hung is "one of millions of people being exploited in the global production chains," so the duck is a victim of inhumane farming practices. Jan doesn't know where the meat in his meal came from, or that Hung is a victim of trafficking.

Gottschlich's story draws several lessons and questions from this scenario. Although Jan is fighting for a better world, he does not have to care for people who depend on him. Which raises the question, "Do all people with their different biographical backgrounds have the same opportunities to become a Commoner? The scenario does point to the possibility of open source permaculture and technological cycles offering a way to meet basic human needs while using resources sustainably, and pursuing sustainable livelihoods. But the scenario also illustrates how preparing a meal as a service is regarded by the market as something of little value and low costs.

The market logic of our economy is indifferent to the quality of life for people and animals.

Story #2: The economization and ethnicization of transnational care chains. Sonja works as a paid carer for the elderly at an outpatient nursing service. She doesn't earn much, and the job can be emotionally challenging. But her employer is constantly forcing her to accomplish more work in less time, to the extent that certain "hidden" activities, such as fetching the mail for the people she cares for, is now banned as part of her daily work routine. Meanwhile, Sonja's mother suffers from dementia and needs 24/7 care, but Sonja cannot work full-time and take care of her. She begins to worry about her own future as a sick and needy elderly person. Who will take care of her, and will she be able to afford care? It turns out that an elderly neighbor of Sonja's hired a Polish nurse to care for her at home. This is part of a larger trend for elderly people and nursing services to "import" carers from other countries such as the Ukraine and Poland.

From this story, Gottschlich seeks to illustrate that "the underlying principle of the existing economic system is to externalize reproductive activities / care services. This leads to the depreciation and underestimation of care work provided by the market. The work is poorly paid, it is mainly provided by women, and working conditions are getting worse. In market terms, the reason for low pay is low productivity. In fact, the productivity and efficiency of these activities cannot be increased. As long as market criteria are used to evaluate care work, it will always remain undervalued. Caring for other people's lives thus goes against the logic of profit maximization and efficiency dominating the market economy." It also inflicts "great psychological and physical stress" on care givers who cannot provide for themselves financially and yet must give unpaid care to others.

This problem is often solved privately by falling back to traditional gendered division of labor, in which women give care and men earn money. Another "solution" that has arisen in recent times is transnational ethnicized care chains. Women from other countries such as Poland are brought into Germany to provide paid care to the elderly – a market remedy that fails to deal with the people who continue to need care in the carer's home country.

Story #3: Livelihood provisioning work and the difficulty of bridging the gap between life and work. In this story, Marlin is a young mother who feels great stress in her responsibilities in raising her children, and the satisfactions of working in a paid job outside of the house. The basic problem is that "domestic work has been excluded from the economic system so far, and it has been mainly women carrying out the work." The divide between the "productive sector" and the "reproductive sector" stems from a "corporate-driven growth paradigm that tends to overexploit common-pool resources and deny recognition and valuation of all livelihood provisioning." The issue to be confronted is "not to pay for housework and be done with it, but to enable societies to evolve forms of mutual and collective support and respect for care work." Currently there is so little time to perform the reproductive activities of cleaning, washing and cooking, while also taking care of one's job and desire for community life, political engagement and leisure.

For feminists, the question is not to monetize activities that combine living and working, but to develop a transition strategy that allows us to care for others while surviving in a world that requires money for everyday life. A basic income is one possible solution to consider. But we also

"need a vision of how to establish a framework for a good life."

An article written by Armin Falk, a German professor of economics, in the journal *Science* in 2013, described an experiment to see whether the market tempts people to commit immoral deeds. The answer is yes, reported Gottschlich: "Many people tend to ignore their own moral values if the anonymity of the market enables them to either save or earn money. The market creates a distance between us and the consequences of our own actions. We see neither the working conditions under which people have to suffer in the global production chain nor do we see the factory farming when buying cheap food." And in any case, as the author of the study explained, "Others do it too, so the individual seems to have only little influence. It seems to be an 'infringement' that is socially accepted."

In Gottschlich's prepared text, it said: "While the market seems to take away responsibility due to the distance it creates, caring and commoning require proximity and responsibility (care is relational work), thus strengthening moral values and social norms. Hence, we can conclude that the aim of developing a new way of living and working is twofold: 1) Expressing radical criticism of the destructive market logic and making efforts to push it back. 2) Working on a vision and (re)thinking the role of human (re)productive activity and its inherent nature in a generative commons network." The unresolved challenge, however, is "how to ensure a fair balance of responsibility between individual and collective responsibility, between men and women, between people of different 'ethnic origin,' between the Global North and the Global South, etc."

In her prepared text Gottschlich noted that "we have to differentiate between the different levels of discussion: criticism or vision, transition strategy or options that have already been implemented or those that are still evolving in our imagination. " Creating new working environments as described in the first story of Jan as a networker helps us to blur the distinction between producer and consumer leading us to the notion of the 'prosumer.' But 'prosumption' does nevertheless not yet mean that we have fully overcome the separation of these two spheres of production and reproduction. Yet, they remain two sides of one and the same coin, namely "(re)productivity.

Linking back to the concept note for the Care Work Stream, Gottschlich concluded: The aim is to shape the whole of all those activities that are required for a resilient livelihood provisioning system. This leads us, amongst others, to the vision of (re)prosumption. We will have to use this combined vision to reorganize work for needs-oriented livelihood provisioning, which includes "a reduction in working hours, minimum wages, decent working conditions, social and ecological standards. All of these actions refer to the re-modeling of gainful employment/paid labor. This is undoubtedly very important. But there will only be room for gainful employment in this vision of new working environments if it promotes the means for a good life for each individual, for the society and for nature. Gainful employment will no longer be at the heart of work since it also includes alienated work, which is part of the problem. And last but not least it is up to trade unions to face up to the challenge of redefining their activities to embrace this new trend: re-organizing work not just for, but as a good life.

Daniela Gottschlich's Prepared Text:
http://www.boell.de/economysocial/economy/economy-keynote-working-and-caring-17397.html
Video of Heike Löschmann's Presentation:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bwckeOXReE
PowerPoint slides for the presentation:
http://www.boell.de/downloads/Presentation_Keynote_Daniela_Gottschlich_Working_and_Caring.pdfh

An Account of the Care Work Stream Deliberations

A synthesis by Hilary Wainwright in collaboration with Heike Löschmann, based on the contributions of Stream participants

In the breakout sessions for the Care Work Stream, the vision is a paradigm shift from an economy in which our capacity to work, to labor – or to phrase it differently, to create/re-create and co-create – is managed as a *commodity,* priced, bought and sold in the "labor market," to an economy where this human capacity is managed as a *commons,* the responsibility of society and of benefit to all. This is a radical shift indeed, especially for the many trade unionists whose organizations are based on the struggle over the price of labor and over the distribution – fair or otherwise – through the labor market.

The shift is radical, too, because this vision would reverse the relation between work and life that has underpinned conventional economics for centuries – ever since the existence of money. For those desiring social justice, the conventional question concerning this relation between labor (as in the capacity to labor) has been how to organize the economy so that we are all working *for* a good life/ society/ the common good/to meet social needs. The paradigm shift that this Stream explored goes beyond this traditional objective of the left and seeks to build an economy in which the organization and character of labor *itself becomes part of the good life.* So instead of exercising our creative capacities *for* a good life for all, we exercise or express this capacity *as* the good life. As Brigitte Kratzwald, a German social scientist and political activist, put it: "The first purpose of every kind of economy, production, work, however we call it, should be to produce, reproduce, strengthen and enhance life and aliveness, to improve our living conditions, to create the conditions for a good life, a decent life for all. And all the activities that serve this purpose are not separated from our life – they *are* our lives."

This runs counter to the instrumental logics of modernist, industrialist thinking that underpin not only capitalism but also many forms of socialism. These logics have been challenged by several contemporary social movements, especially the women's liberation movement which in its practice insists in a logic of prefiguration – of acting in the present in accord with the values of the society you are trying to create. This principle is meant to guide ways of organizing for social change, but Kratzwald's point implies that it needs to be a principle *built into* the relationships and dynamics of the society that we are building.

This change in the relation between life and labor, is a key component of the paradigm shift entailed in a commons economy. It underpins a recurrent theme of commons thinking: *to overcome*

the separation of production and reproduction, and related to this, the separation of production from consumption. How could such a shift be achieved? What can we learn from what is taking place in our economies already? What are the seed forms on which we must build?

Gottschlich's framing keynote established the importance of rethinking the relation between life and work – as well as the need for a language that expresses the possibility and desirability of this new relation. Her remarks also noted the challenge that, from the perspective of the labor market, unpaid care work is simultaneously invisible and yet indispensable. Stream participants rejected the idea of the marketization/monetarization of unpaid labor of reproduction as the sole solution to their undervalued, gender divided character. But this forces us to consider on what basis, beyond a price mechanism, labor could be organised in ways that acknowledge its value to society and treat its nurturance and management as a societal responsibility.

Tom Walker, a Canadian instructor in the Labor Studies Program at Simon Fraser University, suggested that we start by exploring the logical flaws in Locke's foundational theory of labor as personal property. Even though labor is generally *perceived* as private property, it is essentially a set of *social relations*. Locke's narrative justifying labor as private property uses the concept of possession in a way which, Walker argues, *mixes* the idea of the ownership of a thing with the idea of the thing owned. "Thinking backward from possession to creation," argued Walker, "introduces the misleading analogy of the making of the thing and the thing made. What we end up with then is a notion that labor is a thing (substantive, enduring) that can be owned, rather than an action (expressive, fleeting) that is performed."

Whatever the logical flaws behind a 17th century theorist's justifications, the perception of labor as personal property persists to this day and indeed makes the idea of labor as a commons appear somehow unnatural. To counter this misconception, Walker suggests that we look to the work of an 18th century radical thinker, Thomas Hodgskin, who was also an influence on Marx. Hodgskin shows that the capacity to create – as exercised in the labor market and paid for with a wage – depends on a massive amount of unpaid labor. In particular, Hodgskin points to the labor involved in bringing up children – "by far the most important (of operations that take more than a year to complete) is the rearing of youth and teaching them skilled labor, or some wealth-creating art," he argued. He went on to point out that "this most important operation is performed… without any circulating capital whatever." By "circulating capital," Hodgskin was referring to the notion of a stock of subsistence goods that the classical political economists of the early 19th century called the "wages-fund." In short, the upbringing of the next generation of skilled workers was unpaid work, "logically prior to wage labor and without which there would be no one to perform it."

Hilary Wainwright, a British researcher and writer on the emergence of new forms of democratic accountability, urged that we make the argument for labor as a commons explicit by taking the shared characteristics of the diverse phenomena that are widely considered to be commons, and ask how far these characteristics may apply to labor. These phenomena include things considered essential for life, understood not merely in the biological sense; resources that we maintain or reproduce together, according to rules established by the community; and spaces or resources to be rescued from the post-democratic élite and self-governed through forms of participative democracy.

All of these apply to labor, understood as the capacity to create. It is a capacity that is shared by all humanity – indeed it is what makes us human. The capacity to labor is a powerful social force, a necessary condition of the life of many other commons; and which, though in one unique moment is individual-centered, is also and necessarily socially shaped. The capacity to create is in good part dependent on the nature of education, culture and distribution of wealth. Moreover, it can be nurtured and developed or suppressed, or left undeveloped or wasted.

On this basis, Tom Walker and Hilary Wainwright suggested that labor can be understood as a common-pool resource on a plane analogous to natural resources. "This," stressed Tom Walker has many socially and environmentally beneficial consequences: it promotes the integration of ecological sustainability and social justice issues in place of the current dichotomy of jobs vs. the environment. There are no routinely ignored 'externalities' in this model! "Secondly," Walker continued, "treating labor as a common-pool resource lays the foundation for a fundamentally different collective bargaining framework based on comprehensive social and environmental accounting rather than a treadmill of individualized wage and income maximization.

Viewing labor as a common-pool resource is also the foundation of time-based economies (T-BE). Allen Butcher presented his experiences living in intentional community practicing and studying time-based economies. Butcher defines T-BE as an economic system (defined as the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services) using time exclusively as a unit of measure and not as with money as a store of wealth, nor as a medium of exchange.

Most people encounter forms of time-based economies outside of the family when volunteerism is encouraged, such as in religious and social organizations. In the case of the former, churches, temples, and other places of worship encourage people to donate time or labor to the association (as well as money), thus creating a labor-gifting, time-based economy. In the case of social organizations, when people talk about "giving back to the community" and "paying it forward" they are talking about labor-gifting. In both cases, all labor is valued equally since there is no differential compensation for different labor contributions. If the labor contribution is not a membership requirement then the organization is using a labor-gifting system, while if the labor contribution is a requirement of membership then the organization is using a labor-sharing system.

In the case of labor-sharing in egalitarian communal societies, both community-owned businesses (or production) and domestic labor (or reproduction) are managed using the same labor-sharing system. Income generated by community-owned businesses is not paid as wages or salaries, but is instead used for the needs of the community as budgeted through the community's decision-making process involving all members. This provides for what Daniela Gottschlich refers to as "feminist economics." The most developed labor-sharing systems provide for vacations, through members working over the minimum requirement to save hours for covering their weekly labor requirement while they are away. Labor-sharing also provides for sick-leave and old-age pensions simply by a reduction in the individual's required labor-hour contribution.

There is also the hybrid economic system of labor-exchanges, which use time-based currencies like "Time-Dollars" as an exchange medium. Butcher explains that when barter networks exchange labor services on an hour-for-hour basis they are functioning as labor-exchanges, which is both the primitive form of property exchange and the simplest form of time-based economy.

Treating labor as a common-pool resource (re)opens the question of value and its measurement – reinforcing the many critiques and practical challenges to current monetary-based metrics that have been raised by feminism, environmental economics, peer-to-peer digital production and free software collaboration, for example.

A final thread of discussion focused on strategies that could help bring about a new understanding of labor as a commons. Allen Butcher and others analyzed the issues of sharing work and valuing labor based upon the principles of time-based economics – especially the problem of labor that nobody wants to do in collective intentional communities using labor-gifting for reproduction. Communal intentional communities using labor-sharing for both production and reproduction have the same problem – yet finding people to do the most onerous work is less of a problem when members must find work to meet their weekly labor-hour requirement.

Allen Butcher does not advocate a "paradigm shift" but "parallel cultures," at least as an interim step. That is to say, the old paradigm can remain as a form of cultural diversity for those who want it, while people may also choose from among a selection of cultural alternatives for how they are to live: whether by labor-gifting, labor-sharing, or labor-exchanging. While this view was contested in the debate, he explained that he developed the idea of parallel cultures in order to be non-threatening, since some people resist change, and to affirm that people have choices. Particularly in the case of collective intentional communities like cohousing and community land trusts, people live in both paradigms or parallel cultures simultaneously; they work for money in their jobs during the day, then return home to collective domestic work in the community. Butcher suggested that such choices can provide for a transition period between paradigms in the possible eventuality that a paradigm shift may result from the increasing understanding and use of time-based economics.

Butcher's approach could be summed up as, "propaganda by example": Intentional communities provide "research and development services" and "experimental cultures" for addressing issues of gender equality, ecological responsibility (particularly in the case of ecovillages), and community ownership of businesses providing for the common good (particularly in the case of communal societies). Butcher provided a detailed description of how time-based economies are being used within intentional communities to provide for gender equality in work-roles, sharing skills, etc. A challenging question that remains for us to ponder, he insisted is "how best to integrate the two existing economic systems, the debt-based economy and the time-based economy, in a way that they are at not in conflict, but instead support social and environmental responsibility in ways that are complimentary, synergistic, and co-evolving?" More detailed information about Butcher's perspectives can be downloaded from his School of Intentioneering website, at: www.Intentioneers.net See especially: http://0350f21.netsolhost.com/WordPress/2012/01/19/time-based-economics-as-the-basis-for-community .

Friederike Habermann, an economist and historian, raised the issue of how to free up more time for people, and also possible problems with the proposal for a basic income. She was equivocal: on the one hand, a basic income could liberate people from the time pressures of labor in an economy dominated by money and hierarchy. It would provide large numbers of people with autonomy from the labor market, freeing their time for commons-based alternatives. On the other

hand, she warned that an unconditional basic income could split people between those who have to bring in so much money so that other people can be paid for doing work, and those receiving a basic income, who could be even more gravely stigmatized as "non-productive." This would especially affect unpaid work in the sphere of reproduction, which is under-valued and generally carried out by women, often in subordinate roles as part of family relationships. "Instead of all work being finally accepted as part of the whole," Habermann said, "an unconditional basic income would probably lead to the contrary: the recognition of non-reproductive work would increase, and the reputation of care work would decrease."

Soma Kishore Pathasarathy, a gender, sustainable development and livelihoods specialist who works with grassroots groups and government agencies in India, described how many impoverished households depend on the commons and therefore have embedded ways of managing natural commons for their subsistence. In essence, she warned against over-optimism in changing the social relations of communities in organizing their natural resources as subsistence commons. Without education and a culture of women's autonomy, these communities reinforce long-inherited patriarchal relations between men and women and the gendered division of labor, not only in the reproductive economy but also in the care of the natural commons – a set of inequalities that the state reinforces. (Here is a text that Pathasarathy based her contribution on: http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/KP_Soma.pdf And here are the slides that she presented in a speakers' corner session: http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Soma-ECC-PRESENTATION-19th-May.pdf.)

As part of the Care Work Stream, Michel Bauwens, the founder of the P2P Foundation, outlined how commons-based peer to peer production, originating in the free software movement, has challenged the idea of labor organized as a commodity and successfully manage digital resources as common-pool resources. He noted that a paradigm shift in labor implies a wide range of alliances with others who also wish to challenge the idea of labor as a commodity, a goal shared by the co-operative movement and innovative trade unions, among others.

But even here, the persistence of the gendered division of labor and linked to it, the subordination of women, point to an important and unresolved problem: it is not only waged labor which depends on and reinforces a sphere of unpaid caring work, no matter whether it is a private, state-based, commons-based or peer-production-based economy. And this unpaid, under-valued, often invisible labor in turn depends primarily (but not exclusively) on the subordination of women. None of these economic forms appear to be in the process of creating a new paradigm or solution to the gendered division of labor. In this context, the experiment of intentional communities that consider all work as equal practicing time-based economics, was the only currently lived example that at least integrated care work on an equal footing with productive work or gainful labor.

Hilary Wainwright offered this historical reflection on the challenge:

> On the one hand, the issue of reproduction of the capacity to labor, both generationally and day to day, is central to any critical discussion of the organization of labor, looked at holistically and in relation to life and social purpose. The sphere of reproduction as it is presently organized depends centrally on the subordination of women and their invisible and under-valued carrying out of domestic labor through

> familial, personal relationships. The feminist or women's liberation movement of the 60s and 70s was central in making these unpaid, unrecognized, value-producing forms of labor visible and politically sensitive. Significantly, this movement was a product of the same processes of mass education which created the conditions for the pervasive character of the immaterial or knowledge based labor which favored the birth of the free software movement and commons based peer to peer production, mainly involved in cultural production.

In theory then, the conditions for a solution are ripe. They clearly concern the question of the recognition of division and inequality within society. These issues cannot be overcome simply by commoning but require other forms of self-conscious and self-reflexive human centered organization. Clearly there are wider society-wide issues of economic security, gendered socialization and egocentric, male-centric cultures that need to be addressed. Maybe it helps to put this problem in the historical context of the contested transition from Fordism that we are in the midst of, which points to an ambivalence running through the conference. The vanguard of capitalist business recognizes the exhaustion of the Fordist paradigm, and like a predatory magpie is watching for the shine of innovative forms with commercial potential. This development is not necessarily a cause for anxiety; it also offers an opportunity to look beyond particular seed forms to the wider economic and political conditions that may help us recognize the potential of the commons framework as an alternative to subordination to the imperatives of capital accumulation.

Care Work Stream overview:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Working_and_Caring_Stream
Documentation of Care Work Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Working_and_Caring_Stream
Full report on the Care Work Stream session:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Working_and_Caring_Stream

Stream #3: Knowledge, Culture and Science

Mike Linksvayer (USA), Stream Coordinator
Keynote Speaker: Carolina Botero Cabrera (Colombia)

Science, and recently, free software, are paradigmatic knowledge commons; copyright and patent paradigmatic enclosures. But our vision may be constrained by the power of paradigmatic examples. Re-conceptualization may help us understand what might be achieved by moving most provisioning of knowledge to the commons; help us critically evaluate our commoning; and help us understand that all commons are knowledge commons. Let us consider, what if:

- Copyright and patent are not the first knowledge enclosures, but only "modern" enforcement of inequalities in what may be known and communicated?
- Copyright and patent reform and licensing are merely small parts of a universe of knowledge commoning, including transparency, privacy, collaboration, all of science and culture and social knowledge?
- Our strategy puts commons values first, and views narrow incentives with skepticism?
- We articulate the value of knowledge commons – qualitative, quantitative, ethical, practical, other – such that knowledge commons can be embraced and challenged in mainstream discourse?

These were the general questions that the Knowledge, Culture and Science Stream addressed.

Carolina Botero Cabrera (Colombia)
Activist, consultant, lawyer
"What If Fear Changes Sides?"

Carolina Botero Cabrera, a free culture activist, consultant and lawyer from Colombia, delivered a plenary keynote for the Knowledge Stream entitled, "What If Fear Changes Sides?" As an author and lecturer on free access, free culture and authors' rights, Botero focused on the role of information and knowledge in creating unequal power relationships, and how knowledge and cultural commons can rectify such problems.

"If we assume that information is power and acknowledge the power of knowledge, we can start by saying that controlling information and knowledge means power. Why does this matter?" she asked. "Because the control of information and knowledge can change sides. The power relationship can be changed."

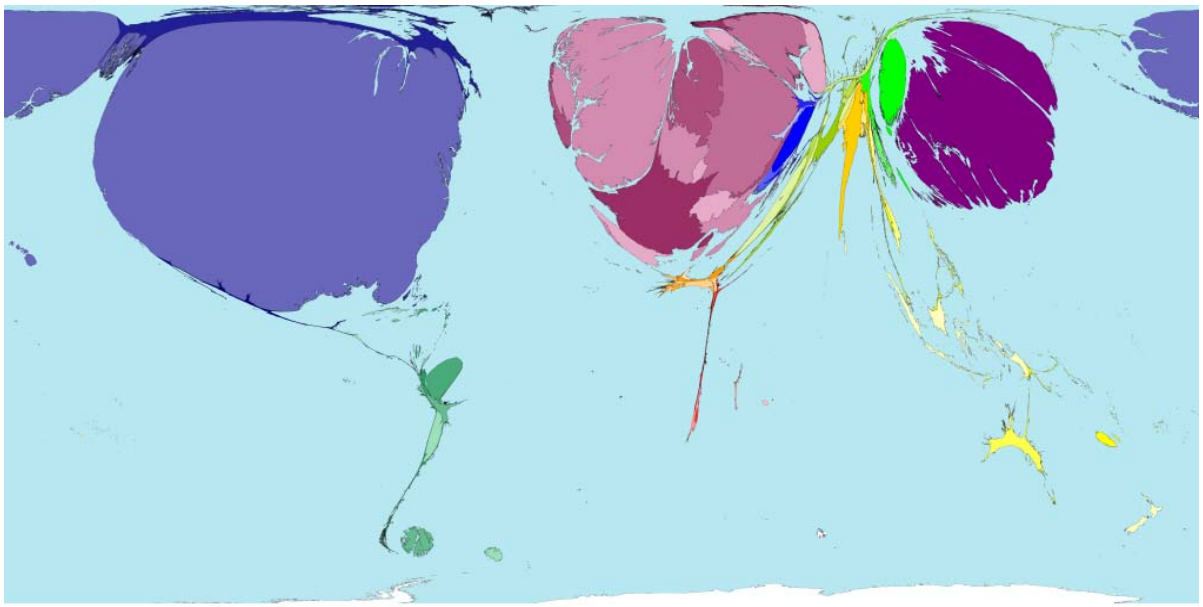
One of the primary motives of contemporary enclosures of information and knowledge, said Botero, is to instill fear in people – fear of violating copyright law, fear of the penalties for doing so. This inhibits natural tendencies to share and re-use information. So the challenge facing us is to imagine if fear could change sides. Can we imagine a switch in power relationships over the control of knowledge – how we produce, distribute and use knowledge? Botero said we should focus on the question: "How can we switch the tendency of knowledge regulation away from enclosure, so that commons can become the rule and not the exception?"

"There are still many ways to produce things, to gain knowledge," said Botero, who noted that those who use the word "commons" [in the context of knowledge production] are lucky because it helps name these non-market forms of sharing knowledge. "In Colombia, we don't even have that word," she said.

To illustrate how customary knowledge has been enclosed in Colombia, Botero told the story of *parteras,* midwives, who have been shunted aside by doctors, mostly men, who then asserted control over women's bodies and childbirth, and marginalized the *parteras* and their rich knowledge of childbirth. This knowledge is especially important to those communities in remote areas of Colombia that do not have access to doctors. There is currently a huge movement of *parteras* in Colombia who are fighting for the recognition of their knowledge and for the legal right to act as midwives.

Botero also told about how copyright laws have made it illegal to reproduce sheet music for songs written in 18th and 19th century Colombia. In those times, people simply shared the music among each other; there was no market for it. But with the rise of the music industry in the 20th century, especially in the North, it is either impossible or unaffordable to get this sheet music because most of it is copyrighted. So most written music in Colombia consists of illegally photocopied versions. Market logic has criminalized the music that was once natural and freely flowing in Colombian culture. Botero noted that this has increased inequality and diminished public culture.

She showed a global map illustrating which nations received royalties and fees from copyrights and patents in 2002; the United States receives more than half of all global revenues, while Latin America, Africa, India and other countries of the South receive virtually nothing. (Source: http://www.worldmapper.org/display.php?selected=168) This is the "power relationships" that Botero was pointing to.



Botero warned, "We have trouble imagining how to provision and govern resources, even knowledge, without exclusivity and control." Part of the problem is the difficulty of measuring commons values. Economists are not interested, she said, which makes it difficult to go to politicians and persuade them why libraries matter.

Another barrier is our reliance on individual incentives as core value in the system for regulating knowledge, Botero said. "Legal systems of 'intellectual property' place individual financial incentives at the center for knowledge regulation, which marginalizes commons values." Our challenge is to find ways to switch from market logics by showing that there are other logics.

One reason that it is difficult to displace market logics is because we are reluctant or unable to "introduce the commons discourse from the front door instead of through the back door," said Botero. She confessed that she herself has this problem because most public debate on this topic "is based on the premise that knowledge requires enclosure." It is difficult to displace this premise by talking about the commons. But it is becoming increasingly necessary to do so as new policy regimes, such as the Transpacific Trade (TPP) Agreement, seek to intensify enclosures. The TPP, for example, seeks to raise minimum levels of copyright restriction, extend the terms of copyrights, and increase the prison terms for copyright violations.

One way to reframe debate, suggested Botero, is to see the commons "not as the absence of exclusivity, but the presence of non-exclusivity. This is a slight but important difference," she said, "that helps us see the plenitude of non-exclusivity" – an idea developed by Séverine Dussolier, professor and director of the Revue Droit des Technologies de l'Information (RDTI, France). This shift "helps us to shift the discussion from the problems with the individual property and market-driven perspective, to a framework and society that – as a norm – wants its institutions to be generative of sharing, cooperation and equality."

Ultimately, what is needed are more "efficient and effective ways to protect the ethic and practice of sharing," or as she put it, "better commoning." Reforming "intellectual property" is only one small part of the universe of knowledge commoning, Botero stressed. It also includes movements for "transparency, privacy, collaboration, and potentially all of science and culture."

"When and how did we accept that the autonomy of all is subservient to control of knowledge by the few?" asked Botero. "Most important, can we stop this? Can we change it? Is the current tragedy our lack of knowledge of *the commons*?" Rediscovering the commons is an important challenge to be faced "if fear is going to change sides."

Video of Carolina Botero's keynote talk:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJlFK5fLHgE
Botero's presentation slides:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ECC-Botero-ppt-slides.pdf

An Account of the Knowledge, Culture and Science Stream's Deliberations

There were no presentations in the Knowledge Stream breakout sessions, but rather a series of brief provocations. These were intended to spur a lively discussion and to go beyond the usual debates heard at free and open software/free culture/open science conferences. A primary goal of the breakout discussions was to consider what it means to regard knowledge as a commons, rather than as a "carve-out" exception from a private property regime. The group was also asked to consider how shared knowledge is crucial to all commoning activity. Notes from the Knowledge Stream breakout sessions were compiled through a participatory titanpad, from which this account is adapted.

The Knowledge Stream focused on two overarching themes, each taking advantage of the unique context of the conference:

1. Why should commoners of all fields care about knowledge commons?

2. If we consider knowledge first as commons, can we be more visionary, more inclusive, more effective in commoning software, science, culture, seeds ... and much more?

The idea of the breakout session was to contextualize knowledge as a commons, first and foremost: knowledge as a subset of the larger paradigm of commons and commoning, as something far more than domain-specific categories such as software, scientific publication and educational materials.

An overarching premise of the Knowledge Stream was the point made by Silke Helfrich in her keynote, that *all commons are knowledge commons* and *all commons are material commons*. Saving seeds in the Svalbaard Seedbank are of no use if we forget how to cultivate them, for example, and various digital commons are ultimately grounded in the material reality of computers, electricity

infrastructures and the food that computer users need to eat.

There is a "knowledge commons" at the center of each commons. This means that interest in a "knowledge commons" isn't confined to those people who only care about software, scientific publication, and so on. It also means that we should refrain from classifying commons into categories such as "natural resources" and "digital," and begin to make the process of commoning itself the focal point.

Of course, one must immediately acknowledge that digital resources *do differ* in fundamental ways from finite natural resources, and therefore the commons management strategies will differ. Knowledge commons can make cheap or virtually free copies of intangible information and creative works, and this knowledge production is often distributed at very small scales. For cultural commons, noted Philippe Aigrain, a French analyst of knowledge governance and CEO of Sopinspace, a maker for free software for collaboration and participatory democracy, "the key challenge is that average attention becomes scarcer in a world of abundant production." This means that more attention must be paid on "mediating functions" – curating – and "revising our cultural expectations about 'audiences'."

It is helpful to see the historical roots of Internet-enabled knowledge commons, said Hilary Wainwright, the editor behind the UK political magazine *Red Pepper* and a research at the Transnational Institute. The Internet escalated the practice of sharing knowledge that began with the feminist movement's recognition of a "plurality of sources." It also facilitated the socialization of knowledge as a kind of collective action.

That these roots are not widely appreciated points to the limited vision of many knowledge commons, which tend to rely on a "deeply individualistic ethical ontology," said Talha Syed, a professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley. This worldview usually leads commoners to focus on coercion – enclosures of knowledge commons – as the problem, he said. But "markets are problematic even if there is no monopoly," he noted, because "we need to express both threats and positive aspirations in a substantive way. Freedom is more than people not coercing us."

Shun-Ling Chen, a Taiwanese professor of law at the University of Arizona, noted that even free, mass-collaboration projects such as Wikipedia tend to fall back on western, individualistic conceptions of authorship and authority. This obscures the significance of traditional knowledge and history from the perspective of indigenous peoples, where less knowledge is recorded by "reliable sources."

As the Stream recorded in its notes, knowledge commons are not just about individual freedoms, but about "marginalized people and social justice." "The case for knowledge commons as necessary for social justice is an undeveloped theme," the group concluded. But commons of traditional knowledge may require different sorts of legal strategies than those that are used to protect the collective knowledge embodied in free software or open access journal. The latter are both based on copyright law and its premises of individual rights, whereas traditional knowledge is not recognized as the sum of individual creations, but as a collective inheritance and resource.

This discussion raised the question whether provisioning knowledge through commons can

produce different sorts of "products" as those produced by corporate enclosures, or whether they will simply create similar products with less inequality. Big budget movies and pharmaceuticals are often posited as impossibilities for commons provision (wrongly, by the way). But should these industries be seen as the 'commanding heights' of culture and medicine, or would a commons-based society create different commanding heights?"

One hint at an answer comes from seeing *informality* as a kind of knowledge commons. "Constructed commons" that rely upon copyright licenses (the GPL for software, Creative Commons licenses for other content) and upon policy reforms, are generally seen as the most significant, reputable knowledge commons. But just as many medieval commons relied upon informal community cooperation such as "beating the bounds" to defend themselves, so many contemporary knowledge commons are powerful because they are based on informal social practice and even illegality.

Alan Toner of Ireland noted that commoners who resist enclosures often "start from a position of illegality" (a point made by Ugo Mattei in his keynote talk). It may be better to frankly acknowledge this reality, he said. After all, remix culture would be impossible without civil disobedience to various copyright laws that prohibit copying, sharing and re-use – even if free culture people sometimes have a problem with such disrespectful or illegal resistance. "Piracy" is often a precursor to new social standards and even new legal rules. "What is legal is continent," said Toner, because practices we spread now set traditions and norms for the future. We therefore must be conscious about the traditions we are creating. "The law is gray, so we must push new practices and organizations need to take greater risks," eschewing the impulse to be "respectable" in order to become a "guiding star."

Felix Stalder, a professor of digital culture at Zurich University of the Arts, agreed that civil disobedience and piracy are often precisely what is needed to create a "new normal," which is what existing law is explicitly designed to prevent. "Piracy is building a *de facto* commons," he added, "even if it is unaware of this fact. It is a laboratory of the new that can enrich our understanding of the commons."

One way to secure the commons for the future, said Philippe Aigrain of Sopinspace, is to look at the specific challenges facing the commons rather than idealizing them or over-relying on existing precedents. As the Stream discussion notes concluded, "Given a new knowledge commons problem X, someone will state that we need a 'copyleft for X.' But is copyleft really effective at promoting and protecting the commons of software? What if we were to re-conceptualize copyleft as a prototype for effective, pro-commons regulation, rather than a hack on enclosure?"

Mike Linksvayer, the former chief technology officer of Creative Commons and the coordinator of the Knowledge Stream, noted that copyleft should be considered as "one way to "force sharing of information, i.e., of ensuring that knowledge is in the commons. But there may be more effective and more appropriate regulatory mechanisms that could be used and demanded to protect the commons."

One provocative speculation was that there is a greater threat to the commons than enclosure – and that is obscurity. Perhaps new forms of promotion are needed to protect the

commons from irrelevance. It may also be that excluding knowledge that doesn't really contribute to a commons is a good way to protect a commons. For example, projects like Wikipedia and Debian mandate that only free knowledge and software be used within their spaces.

Description of Knowledge Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Knowledge_Stream
Documentation for Knowledge Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Knowledge_Stream
Full notes from the Knowledge Stream session:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Knowledge_Stream - Schedule

Stream #4: Infrastructure

"New Infrastructures for Commoning by Design"

Miguel Said Vieira (Brazil), Stream Coordinator
and Keynote Speaker, in collaboration with Stefan Meretz

One of the main challenges in advancing commons as a stable paradigm is finding ways to develop commons-friendly infrastructures. As commoning practices grow more complex, so does the need for infrastructures to help sustain and organize them. Commons, whether they are small or large scale, can benefit a lot from dependable communication, energy and transportation, for instance; frequently, the issue is not even that a commons can benefit from those services, but that its daily survival badly depends on them.

When we look at commoning initiatives as a loose network, it does not make sense that multiple commons in different fields or locations should have to repeat and overlap their efforts in obtaining those services independently. This is especially so in cases where infrastructures could be shared in ways that do not severely affect each commons' autonomy. Many existing infrastructure systems, however, enable commons-unfriendly practices (e.g. fossil fuel-based individual transportation) or generate negative social and environmental impacts (e.g., nuclear power and even "clean" energy sources). While some infrastructures work to counter privatization and serve as important drivers of social justice (e.g., some public healthcare and education systems), others reinforce inequality by catering to the needs of large corporations or of already well-off elites. Familiar examples include energy and transportation infrastructure built by the state to benefit gigantic mining companies in Latin America, and urban planning and investment guided by real estate speculation in large cities all over the world – even as nearby poor and marginalized populations, as well as their grassroots, alternative-building initiatives, remain underserved in all those aspects.

In contrast to this scenario, we need infrastructures that can "by design" foster and protect new practices of commoning; infrastructures that help bring about positive social changes instead of power concentration and individualistic behavior. Some examples of this are already emerging, such as initiatives around distributed energy production, the sharing of computing and networking resources (in projects such as Guifi.net and FreedomBox), and the sharing of basic knowledge and instruments in hackerspaces and farmers networks such as Open Source Ecology. But there is still a lot to do and to invent in order to bring them to the forefront in our societies.

Keynote Talk by Miguel Said Vieira (Brazil),
Coordinator of the Infrastructure Stream,
in collaboration with Stefan Meretz
"Commoning Infrastructures, Infrastructural Commoning"

Miguel Said Vieira, a researcher and activist in the fields of free knowledge and culture at the University of São Paolo, Brazil, presented the keynote talk, which he had prepared with Stefan Meretz, a free software advocate and peer production theorist from Germany. Vieira's talk focused on what infrastructures are, how most of them are structured and used today, and two challenges in moving forward in a more commons-friendly way.

At their most basic level, infrastructures "are systems that enable and mediate certain activities," said Vieira, either in helping produce materials goods and services or in shaping social relations. Significantly, infrastructures are *produced* in the sense of being socially and historically constructed; they are not naturally occurring. This is an important fact to note because it calls attention to the reason why we are so dependent upon markets: infrastructures are designed to create market dependency.

Infrastructure is not generally associated with individual goods or private property because it is a resource that *lies beneath* the individual, as the term "infra" suggests, and structures other activities. For example, the highway system has an infrastructure consisting of roads, traffic signals and traffic rules, all of which are used by multiple actors. "This implies that infrastructures are eminently social systems," Vieira explained. Infrastructures are generally shared because it is too expensive for individuals to provision them; the activities typically require coordination or agreement (communications); and they involves sectors that we value socially, such as public education, public health and sanitation. "The shared and social character of infrastructures means that they have the *potential* to be related to commons," said Vieira.

"Unfortunately, most current infrastructures are designed to favor and extend commodity-production," he noted, and to privilege individual behavior and ignore environmentally destructive impacts. Vieira cited the many mega-development projects in mining and industrial agriculture mentioned by Professor Maristella Svampa in her keynote talk, as well as large dams and publicly funded research centers largely devoted to agribusiness. "All this investment fuels activities such as mines and monocultures, which are environmentally destructive, profit-driven and export-driven, and which are socially corrosive because they kill jobs and livelihoods and appropriate people's land." Whether state-run or privately owned, infrastructures tend to be tightly integrated with commodity production.

This is significant because commodity production requires a specific set of social relations. As Vieira explained, "Private producers are in general separated from workers, who do not own the means of production, and from consumers, who are related to production only via the market. In

addition, production and reproduction of life are separated. The labor to manufacture a care and, say, the unpaid labor done by a woman in her family's household, are treated *as if* they were fundamentally different. Finally, commodity production uses markets to determine what to produce and how much of it. "This is problematic," Vieira pointed out, "because markets are at most an indirect index of societal needs; what they're really good at is measuring profitability."

By contrast, commons share the fruits of their production, and share in the choices of what to make, how to distribute it and how to maintain the commons. Rather than mediating production and consumption, and the production and reproduction of livelihoods, the commons integrates these functions into a single process and set of social relations.

The chief problem with most infrastructures today is that they foster individualistic, environmentally destructive behaviors. The car culture that has arisen in most industrialized societies is an example. "We should not forget that individualism is not intrinsic to human nature, but owes a great deal to public efforts and investments in infrastructures that favored automobile and oil industries," said Vieira.

What should be done? It is clear that we must first intensify the whole debate and research about commons as infrastructures. There is very little reliable work being done on this topic nor enough general awareness about the importance of commons-as-infrastructure, even within the commons movement. Our larger goal, Vieira argued, should be to turn more existing infrastructures into commons. Communities should be able to appropriate state-provided infrastructures and run them as commons, for example. The management of those infrastructures must also be made more directly democratic. But it is also important to recognize the structural limitations of "reforming" many existing infrastructures. Car-sharing initiatives can only do so much to overcome the problems of the car culture because the structural design of the entire highway, traffic and motor vehicle infrastructure privileges individual transportation.

Another challenge to be met is to turn more commons into infrastructures on a wider, societal level. The problem is that many commons are quite topic-specific (such as a free software project) or are geographically limited. "So the issue becomes: How can they be expanded and networked, so that our society is less dependent on commodities?" asked Vieira.

To show where we are at and show what's possible, Vieira suggested a few alternative approaches (practices) to infrastructures. *(The description below incorporates some additional information and insights made by Silke Helfrich.)*

1. Guifi.net. One interesting model of infrastructure is Guifi.net, "the open, free and neutral network; Internet for Everybody," which is a large and successful community-built wifi system. Guifi.net is "*based on a peer to peer agreement that lets anyone join the network by providing her/her connections, which in turn extends network connectivity to others. Guifi.net is an independent network owned by commoners, but also constituted as a foundation that lets it interact with the state and market in order to have access to other infrastuctures (such as the electro-magnetic spectrum) and to grow."*

There are other such networks based on common principles. An example are WLAN hotspots in Athens, Barcelona and Vienna that are integrated with antennas and software

programming . The European Union is currently funding research projects about their potential because if "*many such community networks are set up together they can form a distributed network." This would be a new and lightweight, community-controlled, peer-to-peer form of enabling communication beyond the big corporations, and based on computers having relatively low performance.* (For more, see *CONFINE,* Community Networks Testbed for the Future Internet and Community-lab.net.) The revelations of state spying on ordinary citizens makes an infrastructure of free, distributed networks for digital communication more important than ever.

2. Smart Grids. Smart grids for electricity generation and distribution could help spur countless initiatives of commons-based, distributed energy production. The same benefits could emerge with a smart grid for telecommunications. However, the exchange of energy via the smart grid would likely be mediated by markets, and not commons-based infrastructure, and so the infrastructure tends to simply reinforce the "green economy" paradigm, which ignores the problem of excessive consumption, privatized benefits and constant economic growth.

3. Education: Marabá Rural Campus, Brazil. This public higher education institute shows how communities can themselves appropriate infrastructures that are usually state run. The institute offers technical and undergraduate degrees in agroecology and rural education, and has an extremely diverse student body and pro-commons curriculum. Marabá Rural Campus teaches small-scale family farming, agroecology and food sovereignty as principles, and blends them with research focused on the community's needs. One of its strategies is called *alternation pedagogy*, in which students spend one third of their time in their respective communities. This allows for process-oriented learning and research, and minimizes the rural exodus.

The Campus is directed by peasant movements involved with land reform, indigenous people and quilombos, many of which share and produce their livelihoods collectively. Trade unions and other social movements pressured the government to set up the campus, and the Movement of Landless Workers, MST, donated the land. The location for the campus was chosen because it is close to Eldorado dos Carajás, where 19 people were murdered by the police in 1996. Symbolically, the Marabá Rural Campus represents an important stronghold for commoners in their fights against neo-extractivists.

4. Transportation and Urban Planning. Infrastructure as a commons can include car-pooling and car-sharing, achieved through a distributed sharing system of transportation needs and routes. Shared cars could have preferred access to key roads, for example. In Tallinn, capital of Estonia, a system of free public transport was recently instituted that lets registered residents of the city use the system at no cost, while visitors from other parts of the country and foreigners must pay. It is based on the idea is that citizens have already paid via their taxes for the transportation. The system seems to help in making urban spaces denser, which is desperately needed to prevent more urban sprawl.

The results of urban planning and public spaces can be considered infrastructure as well. From that perspective, urban gardening or urban agriculture are attempts to reclaim spaces that have been taken over by development and/or abandoned. Other approaches to convert urban infrastructure into commons-enabling infrastructures (CEI) include social housing projects and community land trusts. Two examples: The Ca La Fou in Spain (Catalunya) – "Colonia

Ecoindustrial Postcapitalista – is an industrial colony that has built low-cost housing that is owned, managed and governed by the community. And the Community Land Trust in Brussels has developed organizational forms (trusts) to convert urban land and housing into something used and stewarded by the communities themselves, on a fairly ambitious scale.

Obviously in all those areas there are plenty of tensions. The government may show a lack of commitment to land reform. Guaranteeing participatory management is a constant struggle. Corruption is not unknown in the commons, nor is conflict. And so on. But once we conceive commons-enabling infrastructures in a clearer way – once we understand why they are so crucial in expanding the commons and how many thrilling initiatives can be (and already are) connected to each other – we can begin to reconceptualize commons as infrastructures and infrastructures as commons.

Miguel Said Vieira's presentation slides:
http://www.boell.de/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/InfrastructureStream_VieiraMiguel_23052013.pdf
Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5_5-fSnMJs

An Account of the Infrastructure Stream's Deliberations

by Miguel Said Vieira

Anna Seravalli, a researcher involved with Fabriken, a maker-space in Malmö, Sweden, presented some of her reflexions stemming from that experience, and how they relate with the commons paradigm. One thing that became clear for her is that, while space and materials were being shared in that context, the resulting production was not; the objects were mainly for personal use of each member, and in some cases there were even commercial actors using the space. Later in the discussion, someone compared this situation with that of commons-based fisheries: they are managed as commons, but as soon as the fish lands in the boat it becomes the fisher's and/or the boat's owner' private property. This challenged the general framing offered in the keynote that commons necessarily share the fruits of their production.

Among the challenges that are faced in trying to make Fabriken commons-friendly, she underlined two in particular: the fact that most people acted in the extremes of either treating it as public space (in the sense that they assume someone else – the state – will take care of it), or as a private space ("fencing" it instead of sharing it); and the struggle for coming up with a nuanced system of sanctions and rewards.

An interesting feature that she noticed in Fabriken is the fact that the NGO that runs it acts as a sort of "partner-producer," an idea that derived from the concept of partner-state, developed by Michel Bauwens. The municipality (the original owner of the premises) puts the NGO officially in charge, and pays for its costs; but it does so according to the activities that are developed there by the community that gathers in the space, not at the direction of the NGO itself. The community involves commercial actors, but also people who are on sick leaves or suffering from burnouts, and who benefit from the maker-space's activities as opportunities for rehabilitation or occupational therapy.

Anna also made two broader analytical remarks, the first about the definition of infrastructure. Following the tradition of participatory design, she suggested it was important to look at infrastructure not as a "what", but as a "when" and "where", stressing its relation to the local context it is used in. The second was about the idea of "economies of scope": trying to reach sustainability and efficiency in the use of infrastructure not by reaching a large scale of standardized production, but by a broad and diverse ecosystem of usages, which engages its community.

Mike Linksvayer, the coordinator of the "Knowledge, Culture and Science" stream, presented some of the connections between the two stream subjects, knowledge and infrastructure. Digital platform-based knowledge commons show the intertwining of knowledge and infrastructure at the level of basic commons principles, such as that expressed by Peter Linebaugh's motto, "there is no commons without commoning." If social relations around such platforms are not cared for (regarding, say, system administration), that instance of knowledge-sharing can be quickly – and sometimes irrevocably – disrupted.

Linksvayer also pointed to the distinction between tools and infrastructure as something that must be better grasped by those in knowledge-related movements, such as free software. We sometimes mean "tools" (things related to immediate, localized usage), and use "infrastructures" because we want bigger-sounding words, but without acknowledging the wider social implications of the term.

Finally, Mike suggested that, if being a commoner is actively protecting and nurturing sharing, an efficient method to do this for the Internet's physical and legal infrastructure is by moving knowledge into commons. This would be an "offensive" mechanism of protecting the Internet as a commons, as it allows people to avoid giving more resources to large, monopolistic copyright holders and others who do not want the Internet to remain as a commons-based infrastructure.

Discussion in the breakout session was somewhat disconnected because participants came from so many different contexts, and many varied sectors (post-soviet Russia, psychotherapists networks, community land trusts, open government initiatives, to name just a few). While this was a boon in terms of getting people to glimpse the breadth of this discussion, the linkages that exist between those experiences were not always obvious, easy or devoid of contradictions.

Later, discussion focused on the relationship between infrastructure and the public sphere. While it is generally accepted that commons occupy a third realm, different from the public (that is, state-based) and private realms, things are more complex when it comes to infrastructure. Some examples given during the sessions (such as the case of community land trusts) pointed to the possibility of forging productive, strategic "public-commons partnerships", particularly with local governments.

In many of the sectors discussed, the state has been the main, or even the only infrastructure provider. It is true that frequently this infrastructure was designed in ways that favored corporate actors instead of common interests, and that states themselves – captured by the Washington consensus – took an active role in dismantling and (cheaply) selling a significant part of that

infrastructure to private hands. But when one looks at the big picture, it seems hard not to look at states as potential strategic allies for building commoning infrastructures. At the very least, they are sites of struggles with regard to the privatization that is still ongoing in vital fields such as telecommunications, energy and water. There was the suggestion, however, that we should rethink our need for the state based on our cultural remembrance of times when it was yet absent, but nonetheless communities managed to live and care for their needs collectively.

Another topic discussed was the rules of access to infrastructure – more specifically, whether we should envision commoning infrastructure as being open/universal access, or closed/managed access. The latter is the configuration usually thought of for commons; the former, for infrastructure provided in the form of public services.

This is a complicated issue, as the community- or membership-based aspect of commons might conflict with the idea that all humans have fundamental rights – to health, water, education etc. – and that all citizens, not just a specific and limited group (as would typically happen in a commons), should be provided for. On the other hand, this universal equality in rights – an important part of the Enlightenment mindset, which influenced much of our political thinking since then – has always remained, in a sense, an unattained ideal. This is quite clear in the case of public services and infrastructure: access to them is not universally open, but generally closed to the citizens of the nation that infrastructure belongs to (that is, closed to a community as well, even though usually a larger one).

Should we aim even higher then, for actual universal access regardless of nationality? Another alternative would be to emphasize that, when we think about "public, universal services." public and universal should refer to the fact that such services are *rights*, and not that they have to be run by national states. Along that line, some wondered if it would be possible for states to move from being welfare state providers, to being commons enablers, specially with regard to infrastructure (in ways that would help guarantee those rights). It was also suggested that there are probably many shades of gray between these two extremes of rules of access, and that things such as the "public-commons partnerships" mentioned above are examples of creative and hybrid solutions lying therein.

A third topic of the breakout sessions was the issue of commercial usage. Besides the already mentioned comparison between private appropriation of results in a maker-space and in a commons-based fishery, people discussed commercial usage from the perspective of public services. If water should be treated as a commons, and also a universal human right, should it be equally accessible to, say, the Coca-Cola Company, as suggested (and implemented) by the copyfarleft principle? Should citizens and companies be distinguished in their rights to use commoning infrastructures?

In the knowledge-commons arena, this debate still exists, but there's a tendency to consider that commercial usage must have equal access (but ideally, maintaining commons-friendly licenses). In our discussion, however, while some defended commons-oriented businesses and ventures, many voices were against an equal standing between citizens and companies in terms of infrastructure access and usage. It was clear, though, that we are far from having such distinction in current, existing public infrastructure; the lack of critical thought about this distinction also appears in much

of commons theory in the academy, with Ostrom's famous study of the California water basins being raised as a case in point. The state might not be the best actor to guarantee this distinction, as the production of commodities imply taxation, and thus the state has a keen self-interest in adding to state resources.

There was also a discussion regarding the relation between commercial usages and commodity production, which in turn can distort the balance of societal needs, because market demands are privileged. This was exemplified by urban development issues such as the fact that today even housing already is designed with planned functional obsolescence.

Finally, the Infrastructure Stream considered the issue of scale. Does commoning infrastructure require large scale, or is it sustainable in smaller endeavors? Examples such as maker-spaces and the notion of economy of scope show that it is feasible to build and operate some kinds of commoning infrastructures at a small scale. But many pondered that this might not apply to other sectors, such as electricity. While electricity generation is feasible at small scales, its distribution (through a grid) is almost intrinsically a complex, large-scale initiative. Also, localized commons-based electricity generation would require changes in the distribution infrastructure, particularly if we want electricity to be shared with others through non-market mechanisms. Smart grids are necessary for that, but not sufficient, partly because their design and implementation is being driven by other interests (for instance, optimizing metering and exchange instead of offering possibilities for sharing).

Some participants were skeptical about small-scale infrastructure for the production of basic materials (steel, for instance); barring unforeseen technological breakthroughs, they remain as a fundamental obstacle to a wider localization of production, because of their general importance in so many other products. A reasonable consensus was reached, however, around the idea that the issue of scale has to be examined in a case-by-case basis, and generalizations are not very helpful.

Infrastructure Stream overview and schedule:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Infrastructure_Stream
Documentation on Infrastructure Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Infrastructure_Stream
Rough notes from the Infrastructure Stream session:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Rough_Meeting_Notes_from_the_Infrastructure_Stream

Stream #5: Money, Markets, Value and the Commons

Ludwig Schuster (Germany), Stream Coordinator
Keynote Speaker: Professor Jem Bendell

The dominant economy is to a huge extent market-fundamentalist and money driven. It is built around unsustainable principles like extraction, competition, profit and exponential growth and fueled by interest bearing credit creation through a profit oriented banking system. A commons economy is driven by other motives and proposes a different mindset and different ordering categories than capital, ownership and money. Some commoners tend to imagine a commons economy as a world beyond (artificial) scarcity, rendering money and markets irrelevant, which suggests that commons can function without money as we know it. Others focus on redefining the role of money or how to design money itself as a commons. But all agree that if a commons economy still has credit, money and markets (or at least marketplaces), they will be very different in character than our current economy. The objective of this Stream was to integrate the different "paths of imagination" towards a commons economy, and to get a clearer picture of the architecture and underlying design principles of commons-oriented marketplaces and exchange systems.

Professor Jem Bendell (UK)
Founder & Director,
Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS)
"Commoneering Money, Markets and Value"

Professor Jem Bendell, Founder and Director of the Institute for Leadership and Sustainability at the University of Cumbria, gave the keynote for the Money Stream. He focused on the need for innovative currencies and credit systems, functioning as commons, as indispensable tools for challenging the systemic problems of the global economy.

"Why consider money if we're talking about the commons?" asked Bendell. He offered three reasons: "First, our current mainstream monetary system represents an almost total enclosure of our ability to trust each other because governments, central banks and private banks dominate the means of exchange and credit that we have with each other. This drives further enclosures and works against the commons," he said, "because of the way that currency and credit are created."

Another reason to focus on alternative money systems is that there are already thousands of people worldwide, inspired by a collectivist, communal approach to life, trying to build such systems. There is "lots of innovation" underway in this area. "But most people don't think that money is really an issue," Bendell said. "They think the more important issues are how we earn money, how we spend it and how we invest it. They don't really think about *where money comes from*." Bendell was pleased to see that a large number of people understood that the private banking system originates money.

"In fact, in nearly all advanced economies today," said Bendell, "over 97% of all money that we use is issued by private banks, from the loans they issue. This money is not savers' money that they are lending to us. It's new money that they are creating as they lend to us." He cited a recent book by the New Economics Foundation entitled, *Where Does Money Come From?* which shows "that we really have *non-reserve* banking. Banks can lend as much as they want, so long as they make sure they have enough central bank reserves to clear transactions between banks. So we [citizens] have very little control over monetary supply. If you look at the euro, the pound and the dollar," Bendell said, "you might think they are different things. But they are really the same thing. They all rely on bank-issued debt to create new money. The same system behind each of them."

However, more people are beginning to ask deeper questions about what the monetary system means for life, he said. This is an important issue to confront because collective we are all in debt forever. He explained that all money is created through debt, but compounding interest on that debt means that there is always more debt than there is money to pay off the debt.

"So the only way that this system can continue is for there to be ever-increasing loans every year," he said. This has many dire consequences. Perpetual indebtedness leads to spiraling inequality in society. It also means we need to constantly grow the economy. "Banks can make loans only if there is additional economic activity to be conducted with those loans. This creates a growth imperative. We have to commodify more of the stuff of life so that we can extract a yield and generate profits to service the interest on the debt."

By this logic, Bendell concludes that *"this monetary system is anti-commons. With this system, you cannot grow a commons economy."* Our monetary system also results in widely fluctuating amounts of money, which produces booms and busts, and in periods of shrinking liquidity, mass unemployment.

The monetary system also distorts our lives and priorities. "We think that buying a house is the best investment we can make because prices will always go up," said Bendell. This occurs because banks are making loans (and creating new money and consumer demand) that fuel property markets. "All this new spending power is going into the property market – about 80% of all loans to individuals goes to property," said Bendell. "What this means is that since the mid-1950s, property values have soared 8,000%. That is because this is how banks are channeling new spending power into the economy." Their lending reflects their own self-interests, which are the least transaction costs, the least risk and the most return."

Bendell considers the whole monetary system a kind of "entrapment" because the ways that we create new money through private banks engenders all sorts of unnecessary pressures in people's lives, such as sacrificing a full life in order to pay high mortgages and rents. We are all entangled in a system that requires us to live off bank debt. Since most transactions for our food are mediated by bank-issued debt, you could say that we live in "a bank-tarian society – a totalitarian society of bank rule. And yet it is so pervasive that people don't every see it or ask where money comes from."

"I've come to realize that the monetary system creates all these effects," said Bendell. "We think wealth is scarce, and that we must all compete -- when, in fact, our wealth is *us* and our ability to help each other and to support a healthy environment."

The big question is what to do about the monetary system. Bendell gave a brief overview of many existing systems and experiments in alternative currencies. The rise of Bitcoin, a cryptographic digital currency with a global payment infrastructure, has done a lot to raise the visibility of alternative currencies, he noted. But there is also a long history of such currencies, such as the WIR, a Swiss currency that has existed since 1934 that has 64,000 business members doing $2 billion of trade each year. The WIR is essentially a cooperative bank that offers cheap loans and facilitates business-to-business exchanges in their own currency, "WIR Francs," independent from Swiss Francs.

There are a wide variety of local currency systems around the world, too. Successful example include BerkShares, which is administered by the E.F. Schumacher Society in western Massachusetts, in the US, and Bangla-Pesa in Kenya, a mobile payment solution with an internal fiat currency issued by a trusted local organization. Time Banking is another form of mutual credit used by local communities. Based on the hour or minute as a unit of account, Time Banking is meant to promote equality and challenge the premises of markets. Bendell said that there are many different currency designs, each of which reflects different motivations and different potential for scaling and challenging mainstream markets.

Another sign of a healthy development of alternative currencies: some 60 active community currencies around the world that use free open source software provided by CommunityForge, a nonprofit association that designs, develops and provides complementary currency systems and tools in over 400 communities. (Bendell is a board member.) Community Forge has a philosophical commitment to restoring the credit commons, said Bendell. A core goal is to provide opportunities for people to engage in transactions in trusting ways. "Our ability to transact shouldn't be regulated by global banking systems," said Bendell. "We can come up with systems of exchange together. But this requires a shift in thinking about how we can issue credit, or IOUs, to each other. We need to see currency *as* a commons rather that currency as just supporting the commons."

Bendell worried that the whole process of currency innovation could disappear in a cloud of talk, however. "What we really need to do is find betters ways to *act* and *build* the commons," he said. But he expressed some concern that the term "commons" is not appealing enough to attract mainstream support; instead he suggested new marketing gambits and rebranding, suggesting specifically that we talk about "commoneering." "Instead of talking about enclosure and protecting things, let's talk about something more dynamic – about restoring the commons and building future commons. We should say that 'We are commoneers' to convey how *we* relate to each other and what our intentions are. We need to shift the debate and say that we are unlocking the treasury of the commons."

Bendell proposed three specific strategies / requirements for moving forward:

1. We need support in the development of innovative currencies with commons principles and new technologies – perhaps a mutual credit type of Bitcoin, for example. "That way, we would not need to persuade politicians; we could create the future ourselves in a way that can't be switched off."

2. We need allies, perhaps local governments, who can help us scale these currencies. Local governments, for example, could accept such currencies for the payment of local public services.

3. We need a better political voice, and a political philosophy and voice to help scale it.

Bendell concluded by urging an action-oriented focus on alternative currencies as a way to help us "tear down fake ideological divisions of left vs. right, of austerity vs. spending, of humans vs. the environment, and of what we truly desire and what we can afford. Wealth is ours to unlock and discover and create together. We have to free each other up to do that." That is why monetary policy must be at the center of a commons agenda.

Video of Jem Bendell's talk:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_f0QUln8PU
PowerPoint slides for Bendell's talk:
http://boellblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/MoneyStream_BendellJem_23052013_1.pdfh

An Account of the Money Stream's Deliberations

The breakout sessions for the Money Stream sought to survey and discuss the diverse commons-oriented strategies and attitudes towards money. The basic goal was to increase the understanding of, and building bridges between, two main strategic approaches for challenging the monetary logic of the old economy. The first approach questions the *inherent market logic* of money (mediated exchange, commodification, prices); while the other approach questions the *capitalist principles* inherent in money (extraction, accumulation, exclusion).

There are three major schools of thought regarding the relation between money and the commons, each with their own lines of argumentation and differing visions of a future society. They are:

1. *Demonetize.* Organize the commons economy without money and explore how the functions of money and finance could be replaced. Can nonmonetary approaches and the existing monetary economy stand side-by-side or play complementary roles on the path towards an economy of the commons? How could both be integrated in everyday life? (For more, see, e.g., http://demonetize.it.)

2. *Commons-creating / commons-supportive / commons-protecting money.* Design money specifically to support, sustain and protect the commons, allowing for new forms of allocation within the commons. This raises the question of how the problem of "market logic" should be dealt with. Is it necessary to get rid of the capitalist principles or could they just be "turned around" so that they become commons-supportive?

3. *Money and markets as a commons.* Understand money itself as a commons and design it accordingly. The challenge is to design money in a way that it can be democratically

created and controlled. Is that a necessary or sufficient condition for a commons-oriented economy, and what changes and risks would that bring about?

These different schools of thought might turn out not to be mutually exclusive; they just might be mutually supportive, depending on the circumstances. Each approach may also be valuable at different points in the future, or in a different phase of transition.

The Money Stream probed these main schools of thought within the commons debate and sought to develop mutual understanding for both monetary and non-monetary approaches to the core question of values and value in a (money/credit/finance) commons. To open the discussion, the Stream heard three different perspectives on how to approach money and commons.

Pat Conaty, a fellow of the new economics foundation and a research associate of Co-operatives UK, gave a broad historical overview of attempts to develop local and interest-free money systems over the past two centuries. He noted how Silvio Gesell, a successful German businessman oriented to co-operative solutions developed the idea of a "demurrage" or "negative interest," so that the nominal value of the money would "decay" over time rather than increase, to help deal with the injustices of interest and inflation. The "WÄRA," a currency privately issued by coal mining companies in Germany, and by the small Austrian town of Wörgl whose mayor, Michael Unterguggenberger, introduced the scrip-based "Arbeitswertscheine" in 1932 during the Great Depression, and succeeded in reducing unemployment and debt and stimulating the local economy.

Conaty also cited the proposal by Frederick Soddy, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist, to do away with fractional reserve banking and have the government incrementally issue debt-free money and phase down debt-based money. The idea was picked up by American economist Irving Fisher in the 1930s as a way to increase liquidity and stability in the economy. The idea was to separate the making of money from bank lending, which in turn would help prevent great booms and depressions.

Another noteworthy example in interest-free lending is the JAK bank in Sweden, a co-operative finance enterprise that has over 35,000 members and assets of $163 million. Like in a credit union, JAK members save money and are entitled to obtain loans, but savings in JAK do not earn interest and therefore loans are also interest-free. Loans are given mainly for housing and social and ecological enterprises.

Michel Bauwens of the P2P Foundation and the Commons Strategies Group, surveyed the range of alternative digital currency experiments around the world. He drew a simple chart plotting the varieties of peer-to-peer-based currencies along two axes – one axis showing a spectrum of for-profit to for-benefit currencies; the other axis showing a spectrum of centralized control of peer-to-peer interaction (e.g., Facebook) and distributed control.

He situated Bitcoin in the lower left quadrant as a commodity currency that is for-profit oriented and distributed. It is a commodity currency that is scarce, like gold, whose design favors early entrants (because the value of the currency increases as more people wish to use it and so it becomes relatively more scarce). About a dozen people own 70% of Bitcoins, said Bauwens, which suggests that it is currently being used more for speculation than exchange. A fork of Bitcoin

known as Freicoin occupies the lower right quadrant of the graph because it is distributed and for-benefit in orientation. Freicoin has a negative interest rate and functions as a kind of global reserve money. "What is missing is a currency for the upper righthand quadrant," said Bauwens, "—a global currency that is scaleable and P2P, which can complement sovereign currencies and facilitate what Bauwens calls "netarchical capitalism."

A third presentation, by Stefan Meretz, Webmaster at German United Services union and a free software advocate and theorist, focused on the demonetization movement. Meretz believes that even introducing alternative currencies of different designs "basically does not change the underlying monetary logic of equivalent exchange and its codified set of social power relationships." Alternative currencies "amount to changing the tools while keeping the workshop," he said.

"The core element of the monetary logic…demands that you get something only if you give something back," said Meretz. "This underlying logic creates relationships of guilt and subordination, as anthropologist David Graeber has convincingly shown in his history of credit over the course of human history." The demonetization approach aims at reducing the necessity of using money and engaging in transaction, and instead strengthening social relationships: "While transactions always enforce direct reciprocities that link giving with taking, commons is about commoning – a more open, flexible system for freely determining the rules of interaction and distribution of the wealth we produce…. [A]lienation is inherent in both conventional currencies as well as in alternative or complementary ones. If we want to gain self-determination we have to break with money, and if we want to break with money we have to break with direct, reciprocal exchange."

Operationally, the key challenge of demonetization is to "decouple the inner social process of commoning from the logic of transactions with 'outsiders.' This means, for instance, that commoners should not resort to selling commons products on the market in order to finance a project, because it invariably means that the project must adopt market requirements to successfully sell its products" – and this, over time, insinuates an "alien logic" into commons and encourages its members to postpone their own needs and wishes.

Assuming that a project requires some amount of monetary flow to keep it running, commons activity can be de-coupled from markets by relying upon foundations, donations, crowdfunding and bidding, said Meretz, much as Wikipedia has done. Another model is a symbiotic cooperation between commons and private firms. A firm pays activists and innovators to do work that can then be directly or indirectly used to make profits. This type of financing the commons has been used to finance development of the Linux kernel.

The Money Stream hosted many breakout groups to allow spirited small-group discussion of the themes raised by the short talks and related issues. Again, those rich dialogues cannot be fully distilled here, but here are few excerpts from some of those groups.

1. Should we demonitze, and why? This group assessed the benefits of money vs. the benefits of trying to reduce or eliminate the use of money. Money is seen as a useful tool to facilitate transactions between two parties that have no prior relationship. It may also be needed as a "service" to achieve commons-based ends, such as working with a third party from elsewhere that

you trust. And money may be necessary to motivate people to do less appealing work. Even in non-monetized economies, there is the need to enforce promises and sometimes, repression.

And yet, it is also true that some needs cannot be served by money. A number of arguments can be made against money. Transactions between strangers can be achieved through non-monetized means, as CouchSurfing does. Money amounts to "objectified trust" for anonymous, intertemporal, third-party transactions, which requires the backing and enforcement of the nation-state. It was also pointed out that money-mediated exchange is not spontaneous and context-sensitive; it is non-negotiable and crowds out other motivations for helping others. Commons are able honoring intrinsic, authentic motivations and "enacting the sacred," not about impersonal exchange.

2. Money as a tool for the commons. This group looked at how to design and use money to support the commons. A key distinction was made reflecting a *conceptual difference between money and currency*. Money was seen as a general term used for a storage system for trust and promises. The term "currency" was defined as referring to a broader concept that includes trust and honor, which indicate one's relationship in a community. "The question to be discussed, therefore, is how to design *currencies* that foster and support the commons and human relationships? Establishing a currency brings about a social dimension, which is not necessarily the case with money. There was a consensus among several participants that, given that money should equal trust, whereas today it often only regulates expectation via coercion; and that, in order to foster the commons, a currency should be able to bring people together to engage in commoning, and use the currency to foster reciprocity and mutuality. Several examples were cited:

> ***#punkmoney,*** which is a gift currency that everybody can create, print, transfer and redeem on Twitter. It is based on the idea of promises between people; for the moment, reputation cannot be tracked.
>
> ***Goldmarie***, which is a local currency system for the *unpayable* – that is, a currency that expresses no quantity or measurement and eschews the very idea of equalivence. The playful idea is to acknowledge the pleasure of a relationship of mutual trust after the fact, not to facilitate exchange.
>
> ***Stadin Aikkapanki*** (Time Bank), which is a transition tool based on one hour/one unitto help people who don't know each other come together. Time banks can be combined with local currencies and participate in global exchanges, as, for example, E-flux time bank in The Netherlands.
>
> ***BerkShares***, the local currency in Berkshire, Massachusetts, which has served as an instrument of everyday exchange for 33 years. A new frontier for BerkShares and other alternative currencies may be finding ways to create credit and/or hand out loans.

3. Money as a Commons. This small group considered what design principles must exist for a commons complementary currency (CCC) that could help commons thrive and spur a commons-creating peer economy. Six principles were identified: 1) Use value must trump exchange value; 2) Those who take from the commons must contribute to the commons; 3) Commoning includes self-

organization and self-healing; 4) Share what you can and defend the right to share; 5) Produce commons, not commodities; and 6) Foster relationships, not transactions.

The group speculated that rather than creating a single global currency, it would be more practical and attractive to create a network of interoperable currencies that would allow the use of local currencies in a globally integrated world. "It helps to pass from a massive scale to a smaller one that is autonomous, dense in social practices and integrated with human settlements," the group concluded. The CCC could be used to help generate basic incomes independent of the State and store value for an individual or a community in a locality. It could be used, also, for getting something back from people all over the world.

The group then did a quick evaluation, from a commons perspective, of some of the existing alternative currency systems, including Bitcoin, Freicoin, LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems), CES (Community Exchange System and Community Forge), C3 (Commercial Credit Circuit), Time Banks, Ripple, mutual credit systems, and Flattr.

Detailed description of Money Stream:
http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013/Money_Streamhttp://commonsandeconomics.org/streams/money-markets-and-value
Documentation from Money Stream
http://p2pfoundation.net/Documentation_on_the_ECC2013_Money_Stream

III. BEYOND THE CONFERENCE

A variety of materials were produced before, during and after the Economics and the Commons Conference that extended the range of discussion, public education and follow-through activity. This part of the report briefly summarizes some of those key initiatives so that the interested reader can follow through by visiting websites containing additional materials or contact the organizers of initiatives.

Two of the most useful portals for learning more about commons-related discussions, activities and documentation that occurred outside of the conference itself, can be found at the ECC Communications Platform at http://commonsandeconomics.org. That website not only has most basic materials on each stream but a range of participant-posted commentary and weblinks. There was also many types of post-conference blog posts, observations and focused proposals. These materials can be found at http://p2pfoundation.net/ECC2013 - Post-Conference_Coverage.

Below are accounts of three significant extra-conference activities: an extensive series of video interviews of commoners produced by Remix the Commons, one of the ECC co-organizers; Side Events at which commons with special interests discussed and planned new initiatives; and the ECC Wiki, a valuable reference tool that surveys some of the more significant resources about commons-based economics. It was prepared by Michel Bauwens of the Commons Strategies Group.

A. Remix the Commons

Remix The Commons is an intercultural space for sharing and co-creating multimedia documents about the commons. It aims to contribute to the emergence of the commons movement by enhancing the ability of communities and collectivities to document their practices and develop their experiences of the commons. To promote this goal, Remix The Commons is providing a prototype web platform (http://remixthecommons.org) for sharing, cataloguing, remixing and distributing multimedia documents about the commons. (This platform is not intended for remixing videos online).

Remix the Commons was launched in 2010 by Canadian Alain Ambrosi with the support of Communautique (Quebec, Canada) and VECAM (France). The project is hosted by an intercultural collective of people and organizations from Senegal, Morocco, France and Canada, who share the vision that one of the best ways to promote the concept of the commons is to enable people to do their own curation, exchange and remixing of diverse narratives, definitions and images of the commons. At the International Commons Conference in Berlin in 2010, Remix produced two series of short videos, "Define the Commons" (32 videos) and "Framing the Commons" (10 videos). Over the past three years, Remix the Commons has produced ten additional sets of commons videos and projects.

For the ECC in Berlin 2013, Remix interviewed about fifty-five people about the commons, which included 11 individual interviews and 12 roundtable interviews. The round tables interviews focused on certain commons themes and geographic groups of commoners as well as interviews with ECC Stream Coordinators and the Commons Strategies Group. Remix also shot footage of the different plenaries and breakout sessions at ECC, and some informal, self-organized meetings and cultural events. There are also video and audio files from other contributors at the conference, namely Jose Ramos and San Hoertz.

Remix is now in the process of publishing a new set of videos on economics and the commons, and making all footage available for possible remixes by making it technically shareable and searchable and organized as a complete, documented collection. All the rushes of the shooting in Berlin have been catalogued on the Remix the Commons platform, with 43 entries in the catalogue. Video and audio files from the interviews with Ramos and Hoertz will be catalogued soon.

Remix the Commons wishes to encourage its different partners and future collaborators to use the footage that it has shot, and remix it according to their needs, visions and desires. A call to collaborate will be launched to allow more people to use and remix the different files when the technical and methodological conditions are properly defined. Finally, commoners will be invited to participate to improve the catalog by adding tags and documentation to the interviews and by improving its technical quality.

Remix the Commons has published two different playlists of videos, on Youtube and the Remix the Commons website:

Define the commun / Définir les communs / Definir el procomùn
http://wiki.remixthecommons.org/index.php/Definir_le_bien_commun
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiO9RvnsUfkYA3AHFtDOUCQCcCvEzkn-S

Economics and the Commons: Roundtable interviews
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiO9RvnsUfkatF08AS-5t1PJSU35khJ3S

The videos will be posted on the playlists progressively as they are finalized.

B. Francophone Network for the Commons

The Francophone Network for the commons is an informal network established in September 2012 in response to a call from the Paris-based association VECAM (http://vecam.org/article1255.html) published on July 3, 2012. The network includes individuals and organizations that share the belief that the solutions to our economic, social and ecological crises cannot be reduced to a binary debate of market versus state. The commons promotes other ways of thinking about development that are more friendly to both humans and the planet, more cooperative than competitive, and more creative.

The Francophone Network has sought to improve the networking of actors and promoters

of the commons within the French-speaking world to give it more visibility; to facilitate mutual education about different commons-based approaches in respective countries; and to contribute to a international dynamic, wider and complementary with existing networks. In 2013, the main focus of this networking has been carried out by the organization *Ville en biens communs* ("Towns in the commons," at http://villes.bienscommuns.org). But the ambitions of the Francophone network for the commons goes beyond this effort, and seeks to develop a shared vocabulary and political strategies for facilitating the adoption of commons-based approaches in political arenas.

By bringing thirty people from the Francophone Network together, the Economics and the Commons Conference in Berlin strengthened links among commoners from the different French-speaking countries in Africa, North America and Europe. In Africa, where a commons networks is just now emerging, the ECC helped to open a new space for reflection for a genuine movement of commoners. A diverse group of African commoners from all domains hope to produce knowledge about the commons based on Africa-specific action research, and to come into dialogue with the rest of the international commons community. Significant efforts are expected to mobilize people, especially those who are more capable of moving the commons agenda forward, such as intellectuals, economists, community leadership, advocacy groups and activists.

In North America, the ECC conference helped strengthen the work of "actionists" coming mostly from the world of digital commons. For many Quebec participants, the Berlin gathering was the first opportunity to connect with the movement of commons at the international level. Even if some were put off by the style of the conference, Canadian commoners opened up new relationships or consolidated old ones with commoners of other parts of the world, especially with Latin American media activists and people from the cooperative movement.

In Europe, the French network of the commons, mainly composed of people from France, is strong and organized. The conference was an opportunity to connect and link with others and to strengthen ties in political advocacy at the local, national and European levels. There were also new conversations and coordination begun among commoners involved in theoretical work, the politicization of practices (the *Indignados* in Spain; Degrowth economists, cultural activists involved in P2P production, social solidarity economy and social movements addressing global issues such as the environment, RIO+20, democratic reform and peace).

C. ECC Side Events

Commons Culture Communications

The main objective of the meeting was to gather different persons with skills on communication and educational projects in order to share and communicate what already exists in the field of communication and education of the commons; produce and enrich the community with new languages/processes and methods and animate and engage the commoners' identity; and provide a creative environment to come up with new projects, ideas and alliances to improve commons communications.

Among the possible projects discussed during the workshop: The formation of a

"commons curation commons"; producing a collaborative and distributed documentary film; developing Open Educational Resources about the commons; developing best ways of communicating commons themes clearly; hosting a participatory mapping of global commons inspired by the recent Ibero-American P2P wikisprint; developing a common platform for urban commons initiatives (based on the Francophone Villes en Biens Communs concept); and reaching out to other social movements.

The organizers paid particular attention to using participatory techniques of facilitation adapted to the subject matter and format of this pre-conference. In inviting Samantha Slade and Yves Otis, Montreal-based practitioners of diverse approaches to facilitation, including the Art of Hosting, Alain Ambrosi was aiming both to respond to the expectations of participants already familiar with such techniques, and, more importantly, to frame facilitation and communication in the commons as key issues for the emerging movement. Side event participants willingly contributed to this participatory process, and many are now firmly convinced of the need to develop what some like the author Georges Pór call 'The Art of Commoning.'

Overview of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Commons_Culture_Communications_-_2013
Side Event Report (by Samantha Slade):
http://commonsandeconomics.org/2013/10/01/side-event-commons-culture-communication.
Convenor of Side Event:
Alain Ambrosi (ambrosia@web.ca)

Commons for Public Health

Publicly funded research plays the key role in generating solutions to tackle major societal challenges – in health, food, green technologies, culture and arts, and other sectors. Yet within the current innovation and technology transfer paradigm, these inventions often do not reach their full potential to serve the public good. The current model of commercialization tends to entail restricted access to the fruits of public investment, lack of transparency, and monopolies - classical consequences of the enclosure of the (knowledge) commons.

Increasingly, initiatives are seeking ways to make publicly generated knowledge available for the greater common good. The Open Access movement is gaining momentum in the battle for access to knowledge. But intellectual property rights, for example patents, still constitute the basis for private commercial exploitation of knowledge. More public awareness and new civil society alliances are desperately needed, not only to reclaim the (knowledge) commons, but to co-develop frameworks, tools and legal mechanisms to protect them.

Different initiatives around the world currently struggle to "save our seeds" (as commons), achieve better "access to medicines" or disseminate "green technologies", amongst others. These movements have independently started to design and to establish legal mechanisms and policy concepts that could foster the general availability of public innovations and protect them from re-appropriation. We believe that all of these movements could benefit greatly from a joint analysis, an exchange of good practice and lessons learnt, and a debate on future strategies.

Overview of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Commons_for_Public_Health_-_2013
Convenors of Side Event:
Lukas Fendel (lfendel /a/ uaem.org) or Peter Tinnemann (ptinnemann /a/ charite.de)

Commons Education Commons

Over the last few years there has been a growing demand for commons-related education. This has resulted in an increased number of academic courses, public seminars and lectures, and online education events. Almost universally, participants in such courses and events indicate that the paradigm of the commons is not only relevant, but necessary for the well-being of society. They also suggest that the commons as a living construct is virtually unknown to ordinary citizens in both developed and developing nations.

For the commons movement to become a world-changing force, traditional research needs to be coupled with action research aimed at increasing the collective consciousness and intelligence of the movement itself. This Side Event explored what sorts of collaborative, open-source approaches to commons education and research could be developed. As described by Ana Betz in the Side Event report, the group focused on three major categories:

1. Needs for Commons Education. Commons advocates could work constructively with the voluntary sector, community-led products and Transition movements. Attention could also be paid to training commons facilitators; co-production between public sector (state) and the commons; and a commons course for social work students; consultations with policymakers.

2. Educational models, including updating of content. Different educational models for commons education include formal classrooms; virtual learning; learning for specialized communities; community-led learning; learning circles; among others.

3. Next action steps. These include developing open, remixable content on health commons; making an inventory of resources with tagging and keywords; making a UNITAR course on the commons more available free of charge; and drawing upon the educational resources in commons-related websites.

Overview of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Commons_Education_Commons_-_2013
Convenors:
Leo Burke (leoburke1948@mac.com) and George Pór (george.por@gmail.com)
Full Report of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Further_Developments_on_the_Commons_Education_Commons
Post-Event Forum:
http://commonsandeconomics.org/groups/side-event-education-commons-22-may-1300-1630/forum

How to Change the International Rules for Commons in Europe?

In Europe, the services developed in a commons-based approach, in most cases, are ignored by institutions, or are considered as exceptions in the context of the internal market, mostly governed by economic logic. Regulation of the commons and of commoning by the rules of the internal market tends to their enclosure. Economic rights exert dominance over other rights and lead to alienation of the beneficiaries of these services. However, much of the social, health, environmental and cultural services are carried out by organizations that claim for the commons. These organizations integrate missions of public services in their actions and are motivated by the general interest. They are mixing market and nonmarket logics and engage the active participation of the people concerned and are sources of social innovations.

So, in Europe, the notion of general interest should be revisited. New rules of the European institutions, more favorable to the commons and commoning, are required. The introduction of new approaches must go through the redefinition of subsidiarity mechanisms between local, national and European level, and the recognition of collective rights of the civil society self-organized as well as local and national governments, the recognition of the complementarity between creditworthy and non-creditworthy services. We need standards of managements compatible with these alternative approaches, and decline them in accounting tools.

Initiatives to recognize the commons are numerous in Europe: European Charter for commons, the recognition of water as commons at the local (Naples, Paris, Berlin), national (Italy), and European level (European Citizens Initiative, ICE), Agenda positive public domain, access to land (UK), inclusion in the law of neutrality of the Internet (Netherland), framework laws for ESS (Spain, France). Other initiatives are planned, such as a common chamber. The workshop brought together people involved in these initiatives to discuss possible linkages and to "build and renew our arguments and our agendas."

Description of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/How_To_Change_the_International_Rules_for_the_Commons_in_Europe%3F_-_2013h
Convenors of Side Event:
Nicole Alix (nalix@confrontations.org) and Frédéric Sultan (fredericsultan@gmail.com)

Commons in Africa

More than a dozen ECC participants met to explore ways and means to create and energize a movement of commons in Africa and give it greater visibility. This report is derived from a brief account of the Side Event prepared by Adama Dembele, a FOSS actor in Africa and commoner

The group concluded that the concept of commons has a secular existence in Africa, particularly in rural areas, but the concept is not necessary known by the name "commons." To help recognize the concept of the commons in Africa, protect commons and build a movement both within Africa and internationally, the group proposed organizing advocacy for better awareness of the concept of Commons in Africa; working with educational networks; and creating a website portal on Commons in Africa that would describe African commons and present success stories in

commons management. The idea is to develop a "Commons in Africa" network and discussion list. Participants hoped to continue discussions online.

Organizer: Adama Dembele (Dembele111@yahoo.fr)

Commons Abundance Network

The Commons Abundance Network (CAN) is an emerging Social Learning Network to enable commons and commoners to learn from one another, share best practices, resources and expertise, collaborate, innovate, and open channels for advocacy from local - P2P to global levels. As a new initiative is in a formative stage, CAN sought to gain ideas, suggestions, help, thoughts, and support from conference participants. CAN includes:

- A *social network,* where members can register, and send messages to other members,
- A *wiki,* called NORA (Needs, Organizational forms and Resources for Abundance), an information resource on how appropriate organizational forms - typically based on commoning - can use resources sustainably while satisfying the needs of humans and other living things,
- *Groups* that members can form and join, within which they can create and edit documents with real-time collaboration and other tools.

More functions are planned, such as optimizing the existing groups forums function.

Description of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Commons_Abundance_Network_-_Post-conference_2013
URL for Commons Abundance Network: http://commonsabundance.net
Convenors:
Wolfgang Hoeschele (whoesch@truman.edu) and Helene Finidori (hfinidori@yahoo.com)

Commons in Intentional Communities

There is a gap between ecological commons activists and digital commons activists with respect to age, habitat, worldview, life style and communication style. The former rarely feel committed to rural lifestyles, and the latter are often oriented towards urban life styles. Using the example of the holistic approach of ecovillages, the roundtable hosted an exchange of experiences between commons activists dealing with digital and knowledge-based commons and people living in intentional communities, and commons activists representing urban and metropolitan milieus and commons activists representing rural milieus. The roundtable was a pilot workshop in a series of workshops and conferences in 2013, "Sustainable Lifestyles through a Commons Economy," organized by the European Business Council for Sustainable Energy (e5) and the Global Ecovillage Network of Europe (GEN Europe).

Description of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Commons_in_Intentional_Communities_-_2013
Convenor: Julio Lambing (julio.lambing@e5.org)

Enabling a Global Climate Commons Pathway

This Side Event had the very practical goal of starting a process to explore how to set up a support network, or meta-framework for a global commons system, focusing on the example of a global climate commons regime built by community action. We would seek to create a global climate commons pathway through protecting, networking and legislating in support of local commons systems. A longer paper by Brian Davey and Justice Kenrick explained an envisioned process to enable a convergence between communities, groups and commoners who are focused on being effective on the ground, who have an eye on the need for a global commons system that expresses rather than overrides their autonomy, and who understand [or wish to understand] how to combine (a) the use of international human rights legislation and international pressure; and (b) on the ground flashpoints, struggles and causes, to create a pincer movement through to (c) mobilizing society-wide constituencies for key legislative, economic and political changes.

Davey and Kenrick suggested that this needs to be grounded in establishing dialogues between communities in the Global North and South (not through conferences but through exchange visits between community members) to explore the experiences of (and possibilities for) community land ownership, responsible and equitable natural resource management and the management of carbon in soils and forests. They envisioned these exchanges and the media and networks generated to combine (a) international pressure, and (b) grounded struggles and examples as well as to achieve (c) society-wide change to act as examples to other societies to follow suit. The results of the discussion are posted in the link below for the Side Event report.

Description of Side Event:
http://p2pfoundation.net/Enabling_a_Global_Climate_Commons_Pathway_-_2013
Convenors:
Brian Davey (briadavey@googlemail.com) and
Justin Kenrick (justinkenrick@yahoo.co.uk)
Report:
http://commonsandeconomics.org/2013/06/09/notes-and-power-points-for-climate-side-event

Post-ECC Reflections

Following the conference, the Steering Committee, Support Team and some ECC participants gathered to reflect on what next steps might be useful. As summarized by Silke Helfrich in a June 7, 2013, document, the group came up with three initial ideas for lines of action: 1) A new virtual global platform for the commons movement; 2) More real-life commonopolis's (opportunities for diverse commoners to meet and learn from each other); and 3) New institutions and new institutional alliances.

Re #1, it was agreed that it would be useful for the commons movement to have a space (or several spaces according to the different communications needs) where stories about problems, crisis and challenges could be brought together. However, this work at sense-making (interpreting the significance of events, connecting people, identifying tasks, etc.) takes an enormous effort of systematization. So far, this process has been irregular.

Now, the question is: How can we do an even better job at it? Can we do this in a more deliberate and organized way (focus on key messages, translations, feedback mechanisms, make top stories more visible) while spurring semi-autonomous operation of such a virtual device? There is already a huge diversity of websites, mailing lists, blogposts and communications projects serving different constituencies in different languages. For ECC we created both the Communication Platform and the ECC Wiki. Furthermore there is CAN, the Commons Abundance Network, created to make the diversity of the commons visible and to show how they are related to each other in a systemic approach. CAN as a knowledge base and collaboration toolbox is ready to be used as an online relay to face-to-face conferences or commons-labs, etc. What is missing, however, is the knowledge architecture and associated processes for systematization and institutional support for it.

As for #2, "More real-life commonopolis's," a major hurdle is that "many commoners are not consciously aware that they do commoneering work." Another hurdle – which some regard as a blessing – is that many commoners "are outside of the digital connect." The processes of operationalizing and conceptualizing the commons need to be supported through new types of interfaces among commoners, semi-structured "commons-labs," "transition-labs," experiential sharing and learning spaces, action research, etc. The point in each instance is to foster personal relationships between commoners with different agendas and to build alliances among different commons constituencies through shared actions

Finally, in terms of #3, "New institutions and new institutional alliances," regional networks of commons can emerge that might be connected through a virtual platform and mass communication strategy, and through conferences like ICC and ECC. However, such an approach would require institutional support and a "consortium of funders and supporters (including governmental institutions)," beyond hbf and FPH.

The group proposed the following ideas for further discussion and development:

1. Connect the different communities not through discourse but through joint action that responds to the global political agenda and makes visible that all commons communities share the idea of protecting spaces for non-exclusivity.

2. Work on an ontology of ways to protect the commons (in all areas). The idea is to address for example the "open/closed" duality that must be dealt with to minimize the risks of co-optation or corruption of a commons.

3. Start planning towards a movement congress in 2014/20151 (international if possible vs. European) to give public visibility to the commons. The location is a message in itself about global inclusiveness. The challenge here is "not building a movement," but connecting with "adjacent movements" such as transition, solidarity economy, Degrowth, Via Campesina, climate justice networks, A2K, feminist movement/economy, Great Transition, Political Ecology, FLOSS, Attac, Maker Scene, P2P, Open Everything, Free Culture, cooperative movements, post-colonialism, etc.

Full document on post-ECC reflections:
http://commonsandeconomics.org/2013/06/12/post-ecc-2013-session-from-here-to-there-moving-forward

D. ECC Wiki

To help people pursue further research on the topic of "commons economics," Michel Bauwens prepared the following wiki resources:

ABC of Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/ABC_of_Commons_Economics

Articles on Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Articles_on_Commons_Economics

Audio Podcasts of Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Audio_Podcasts_on_Commons_Economics

Books on Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Books_on_Commons_Economics

Cases in Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Cases_in_Commons_Economics

Discussion on Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Discussions_on_Commons_Economics

Events on Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Events_on_Commons_Economics

Video on Commons Economics
http://p2pfoundation.net/Events_on_Commons_Economics

E. Some Final Reflections by the Commons Strategies Group

It is challenging to make sense of the impact of a conference that had so many diverse participants, conversations, initiatives and ongoing innovation. However, the Commons Strategies Group, as a co-convenor of both the ECC and the earlier International Commons Conference (ICC), in May 2010, believes that it is worth reflecting on how the commons movement has evolved over the past several years and what the future may hold.

The ICC gathering was a major achievement because it brought together a worldwide (albeit not representative) community of activists, academics, project leaders and others who self-identify with the commons as a paradigm for change. Most notably, the conference brought together "digital commoners" and "natural resource commoners," beginning a new conversation and debate. At the ICC, commoners from around the world – isolated for centuries, one might argue – were tentatively (re)discovering each other.

Of course, there have long been many progressive alternative movements that share the values, practices and political agendas of commoners. These include the renewable energy movement, some peasants networks, the cooperative movement, the Social and Solidarity Economy movement, the Transition Town movement, the P2P movement, the Open Access movement, the Degrowth movement, the feminist movement's struggle to elevate respect for care work, the Free Software movement, people living in intentional communities, local projects to reconfigure the food supply chain, the alternative currency movement, among many others.

Happily, the fitful but growing convergence of many of these movements in recent years is leading to all sorts of new conversations, collaborative projects and mutual strategizing. It seems likely that the social and political discourse of the commons has facilitated some of this convergence. After all, the commons discourse has helped provide a clearer understanding of the problems of neoliberal economics, how so many different people are being victimized by market forces and a state coopted by a market-fundamentalist logic, and how self-organized democratic governance and provisioning might be secured.

At the ICC, people were looking for commonalities and trying to figure out the significance of their differences. Of course, indigenous peoples and traditional communities living in their (endangered) commons had always been there, and a corps of researchers studying them – especially Professor Elinor Ostrom together with a worldwide community of academics – were familiar with the promise and complexities of the commons.

But there were also many other commoners who were essentially invisible or disconnected to a broader commons discourse and the collective effort to move towards a societal paradigm shift: a peripheral community of commoners of the sort mentioned above. They may not necessarily call themselves commoners but their social practices (which is finally what matters) prove their kinship. By 2010, however, the work of these movements and the discourse of the commons had not penetrated civic and media discourse. Besides trying to bring dispersed commoners together, the

ICC was designed to seed conversations beyond the conference itself; indeed, to foster the commons as a cultural meme.

We have since learned that some of the conceptualizations that we as commoners used needed to evolve. For example, at the ICC, most of us tended to see the commons from a resource-driven perspective – "natural, physical commons" on the one hand and "intangible, cultural and knowledge commons" on the other. This understandably led to a search for bridge-building and common ground, an effort that sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed -- and it obviously continues (as can be seen in all publications by CSG members).

By contrast, at the ECC in 2013, our main focus was the commons as a generative paradigm in which "natural commons" and "knowledge commons" are *always* intertwined. All digital commons require important physical and natural resources to function, and all "natural commons" require shared, social knowledge to function. In other words, we began to get beyond the idea that commons are primarily or exclusively about the management of certain collective resources. We began to engage more critically about modes of social governance and organization, and the principles of human interaction that enable a commons. *This* truly is the basis for a broader, more robust convergence of commoners of all types and all parts of the world.

The ECC may also have been the first occasion at which a highly diverse international group of activists self-consciously tried to re-imagine "the economy" from an integrated commons perspective, going beyond smaller, discrete areas of commoning such as software, public spaces or forest or water management. There was an intense focus on the foundational principles that must be honored and operationalized in a commons-based world. There were debates about how best to combine consumption, production and governance in a unified, logical way, and how different communities of commoners might open up richer ongoing dialogues and collaborations with each other. There were even issues that have barely surfaced in commons research and debates, or in the commons movement, such as infrastructures as a commons and infrastructures for commoning.

In this sense, the ECC marked a step away from the resource-based commons framework of the Ostrom research community and from the managerial perspective of the commons (the commons as a mere "add-on" to the market and the state). This idea had actually been anticipated by some bright minds like Ivan Illich, Vandana Shiva, Stephen Gudeman, Bolívar Echeverría and others. This self-awareness has grown in recent years, in part, because the neoliberal state and market have proven ineffectual in rehabilitating themselves especially since the 2008 economic crisis, and because more and more people are embracing alternative, innovative provisioning systems, often to meet their most basic needs.

Commons is more a verb – commoning – than a noun. Which is to say, social practice is key; the commons debate is not more than an attempt to frame it. Commoning can be seen in free software communities, which have created major economic ecosystems that steward the software commons and the freedom of commoners; and in open design and hardware communities that dominate emerging niche industries (even as legacy systems flounder in trying to adapt). A vast ecosystem of new physical spaces has been created, thousands of them, such as hackerspaces, makerspaces, self-repair-cafés, open workshops and coworking sites, all of which are hosting new cultures of collaboration. As such projects mature, people naturally wish to understand the

principles underlying their social governance and operations – and this, quite understandably, has led many social and political movements to explore and sometimes adopt the commons discourse for making sense of their initiatives.

Commons and other festivals are now routinely bringing together the various sub-domains of peer and commons production. In 2010 it was possible to keep track of the many new occasions and commons events. No longer. Commons initiatives can be seen in dozens of cities and regions, as in the policies for a "sharing city" being developed in San Francisco and Seoul, the water commons initiative in Naples, the Open Information Commons project for the region of Linz, Austria; the evolving commons discourse in Turkey; and the many schools of commons in different countries where young people are showing a keen interest in the topic. We can see the burgeoning interest in the commons in the French region in Bordeaux, and in the commitment of Ecuador to develop transition policies to move from a conventional economic model to an open knowledge, commons-based society.

Our challenge is to constantly reflect upon these unfolding developments and to deepen our relationships with each other. This entails the paradoxical task of developing a diverse, ecumenical sensibility (because commons are so diverse, and diversity trumps all!) but also a coherent-as-possible discourse that articulates our shared convictions and commitments: to emancipate ourselves from predatory market principles, to foster self-organized, decentralized and/or P2P governance, to learn to recognize and honor the boundaries of the natural world, to unleash the infinite potential of human creativity, and to nurture a strong social fabric that goes beyond a world of commodities and consumption. ECC was a first step in a longer process of reflection that needs to occur. It was a first try, insufficient and in some aspects disappointing, if only because of our high ambitions. But this is surely part of the process and the complexities of exploring something that in its largest dimensions is new and unfamiliar.

Looking ahead, we face a number of significant challenges. In the next phase of work, commoners need to enlarge our shared "mental map" of relevant commons activity, and begin to systematize its clusters in a loose but coherent fashion, perhaps in a kind of mesh-network; a commons of the commons so to say. We must also expand our dialogues and collaborations with various commons-oriented social movements and practices. We must actively learn from each other and our diverse historical experiences, and mutually identify new strategic pathways forward to discover if the commons perspective can unleash their potential.

A large question hovers around the issue of how the commons movement should engage with "politics," or at least, conventional political parties and policy processes. Clearly the movement must assert its alternative political values and ideas. But we must also be wary of the siren call of "political relevance" as the primary beacon for our work. Striving to become "political relevant" – presumably in order to harness the levers of state power – can be terribly constraining and harmful to real progress. It can fuel false hopes and divert creative energies.

We know that, given the different mindsets of policymakers with scant knowledge of the commons, for example, that "convincing by arguments" can be nearly impossible. Only strong and coherent social practice, good examples and "Vorbilder" can be persuasive ("convincing by

commoning"). The point should be to make established political institutions and leaders *come to the commons*, on our terms – moral, social, economic, political – rather than scrambling for scraps from a neoliberal polity that has no real interest in reforming itself. We should not shun political engagement (in terms of engaging with existing political institutions and framework; obviously commons work is political per se); but neither should we let established political and policy institutions dictate the agenda for the commons movement.

As we proceed, then, as Commons Strategies Group, we will need to develop a new ecosystem of policy think thanks and collective public intellectuals who can formulate credible commons-oriented alternatives at a societal level. We will need significant social mobilizations that can influence public opinion, social movements and, perhaps, entrenched political systems. We will need to develop innovative commoning practices and infrastructures. We will need to explore how a shared unity among commoners can coexist and flourish amidst great diversity. Inevitably, we will also need to examine how commoners can engage with existing configurations of power while preserving the integrity of commons principles. That remains an open question.

But in seeking answers to these challenges, it is worth remembering how deep and expanding our relationships are; how many parts of the world and types of commoning we represent; how much knowledge and know-how we collectively command; and how the multiple crises of the market/state duopoly is constantly creating new opportunities for commoning and the commons paradigm.

These are some of the thoughts that the ECC has provoked in us. But we feel certain that there will be many important new projects, forums, mobilizations, and eruptions that none of us could have anticipated, that will propel the commons forward in the coming years.

The Commons Strategies Group

Silke Helfrich David Bollier Michael Bauwens

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the four co-organizers of the Economics and the Commons Conference – The Commons Strategies Group, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation and Remix the Commons. Special thanks to Silke Helfrich, David Bollier and Michel Bauwens (CSG); Barbara Unmüssig and Heike Löschmann (Heinrich Böll Foundation); Nicolas Krausz (Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation); and Alain Ambrosi and Frédéric Sultan (Remix the Commons).

We wish to express our great appreciation for the considerable work done by the five Stream Coordinators in framing and managing their dialogues. A big thanks to Saki Bailey (Nature), Heike Löschmann (Care Work), Mike Linksvayer (Knowledge), Miguel Said Vieira (Infrastructure) and Ludwig Schuster (Money). Finally, we wish to thank our keynote speakers for introducing many challenging new ideas into our debates about the commons. In addition to some of the people named above, these speakers included Stefano Rodotà, Maristella Svampa, Joshua Farley, Ugo Mattei, Daniela Gottschlich, Carolina Botero, Stefan Meretz, Jem Bendell and Andreas Weber.

We would also like to thank the many, many individuals who actively contributed to discussions before and after the conference, and who helped orchestrate the planning and logistics of this large international conference.

Organisers

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.
Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin

T +49 (0)30 285 34-0
F +49 (0)30 285 34-109
E info@boell.de

www.boell.de

Commons Strategies Group

http://www.bollier.org (David Bollier)
http://commonsblog.wordpress.com (Silke Helfrich)
http://p2pfoundation.net (Michel Bauwens)

Partners in Cooperation

Remix the Commons
Communautique
65 De Castelnau Ouest, suite 202
Montréal, Québec,
H2R 2W3, CANADA

http://remixthecommons.org
Alain Ambrosi: ambrosia@web.ca
Frédéric Sultan: fsultan@vecam.org

Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme

Bureau de Lausanne:
Avenue Charles Dickens, 6
1006 Lausanne - Suisse
T +41 (0)21 342 50 10
F +41 (0)21 342 50 11
E contact.lausanne@fph.ch

Bureau de Paris:
38, rue St Sabin
75011 Paris - France
T +33 (0)1 43 14 75 75
F +33 (0)1 43 14 75 99
E contact.paris@fph.ch

www.fph.ch