



## NESI Track 3 report "Globalisation & Localisation Food, energy, trade and resilient communities"

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*Málaga, April 2017*

### **Workshop summaries**

Where does the 'new economy' come home? In a place where we live and make our livelihoods of course. So, in a very real way, this track brought together many of the elements discussed throughout the conference.

The working sessions included 6 different workshops looking at everything from how we make and trade (eco-design, circular economy, local production, trade), to how we eat (food sovereignty), how we live (social, sustainable sharing smart cities) finally to how we are (wellbeing and happiness). The variety of conversations generated within this track spanned over 30 different topics with many ideas generated for how to move forward.

### **Great stuff already happening / challenges**

Workshop participants found cause to celebrate a number of initiatives currently underway. These included Valencia being selected as a Global Food City, accessibility for differently abled people has improved in Madrid and the Sierra Nevada Station – these developments in Spain highlighted as reasons to celebrate. Others noted that the tendency toward localisation is already happening in many places across Europe and USA and seems to have momentum. There are inspiring examples, such as Totnes in the UK and Ungersheim in France. Some cities have banned, or made difficult the process of evicting families from their homes. It was also mentioned that we share common problems and that we are not alone – a reason to celebrate, as well.

There are, of course, many challenges. Some specifics were mentioned such as disseminating information and knowledge to a populace that lacks awareness of the issues and is in thrall to corporate media; overcoming the great advantages possessed by the powerful; social isolation; cities ill-prepared for climate change and all that that entails; the education system and engaging universities.

## Key themes/insights

Key insights for many of the track's participants were that we need a human centric approach, not building around organisations; that to achieve anything we must be united and be persistent. Key to pushing the agenda of the track is to normalise local and make it beautiful, empowering local and multi-local trade. And lastly, to provide help where there is pain.

## New ideas/possible actions

A number of and ideas came out of the conversations across the various workshops. Below is a summary of the cross-cutting issues with key actions highlighted in italics.

- **Networks** - The need to build networks, to connect, collaborate and work collectively to support new initiatives came through clearly in many of the sessions. As was the imperative to reach beyond the 'usual suspects', therefore listening to others, especially those with different backgrounds and perspectives. This is a necessary condition for knowledge sharing, resource sharing, and an authentic practice of solidarity at every spatial scale - local, municipal, regional and so on. In other words, this is essential for growing the movement.
- **Education** - In many of the working sessions, the need to educate people about 'neoliberalism', full cost accounting, various product and company certifications, the wisdom of supporting local enterprises and supply chains, and so on, was discussed. More interesting, was also a recognition that those people trying to bring into being the new economy - the entrepreneurs, organisers, local investors and members of local government needed to build their own capabilities and capacities. *Mapping exemplars, sharing best practices and 'know how'* - activities that also relate directly to the need to build networks - were points made with great emphasis.
- **Creating the conditions** for localisation - this emerged from the many points made about gaining control over infrastructures and resources, building structures that support local production, supply chains, retail and distribution channels, and creating public space for meetings, events, and networks. All these things contribute 'ecosystemic' contexts for the emergence of local alternatives to the global system.
- **Making available the productive capital** implicit in excess capacity and under-utilized assets - this is another emergent theme bringing together many conversations around *mapping local assets, implementing sharing models, putting vacant buildings back into productive use.*

- Using **holistic approaches** - another common thread was a focus on thinking in terms of systems and wholes, developing analyses that emerged from a recognition of complexity, and prescriptions that are therefore non-dogmatic, adaptable, reflective - more listening, less talking, more experimenting, less grandiose planning. 'Ecological/design/systems thinking' were key words. As was 'emergent.'
- **Age friendly cities.** There are many challenges and opportunities related to rapidly increasing elderly population. This action is focused on the local level and everything that we can promote there. *Co-housing, participation in local decision making processes of elder population, connecting young entrepreneurs with the wisdom of elders, etc.*
- **Policy** - Finally, influencing policy was identified as a necessary, but not sufficient, element for supporting a shift toward local and regional 'import substitutes', as well as substitutes for the consumerist paradigm, entirely. Many ideas were put forward to *protect, subsidise and finance local actors*. As well, there were clear calls for policy led by wellbeing indicators rather than growth and productivity indicators, of which several were discussed - 'Gross National Happiness', 5 Ways to Wellbeing, Genuine Progress Indicator, Human Development Index.