

# How to help create environmentally sustainable and self-reliant neighbourhoods

## Produce and Consume Less

Look at everything you want, do and relate to — and ask:

- Do I need to do/buy/continue this?
- Can I achieve the same/more benefits using fewer resources?
- Can people's skills and knowledge be used more effectively?
- What substitutes, alternatives avoid buying new goods?

What follows are some alternatives to full-time work to earn an income to pay for the things sourced from the impersonal global retail marketplace.

## Work and basic needs

Try to find paid part-time work expressing ethical values with respect to other people and nature. Work for money part-time, for just enough to live modestly. This way you can spend more time doing things that express ethical values with respect to other people and nature, enjoying people and nature by treading-lightly-on-the-earth-and-other-people. Exercise your power in the workplace to make it progressive like this too.

Generously pass on and, when you need them, gladly accept offers of free goods and services. Barter, swap, lend, borrow, share and cooperate.

## Collective Structures

Create and maintain in your neighbourhood collective structures for a growing a range of processes aimed at meeting basic needs. For instance:

- Try and meet all basic needs through collective production, e.g. grow/produce and exchange food in community gardens and food distribution cooperatives using democratic and ethical principles
- Establish and support formal and informal, regular and ad hoc swap meetings and markets
- Internet-based networks for swapping, sharing knowledge and re-using goods and services, including skills training
- Libraries of books, magazines, computers, toys, vehicles and other equipment and resources. These are most easily run in ways where each person takes responsibility for an appliance or resource or two,

storing and maintaining them and freely lending, informing and training others in their use.

## Shared Governance

Try to act in ways that will transform, not bolster or enhance capitalism. Instead work towards creating structures that will enable us to have direct power over our lives by working within networks of people with similar values, principles and relationships. This involves reflection, discussion and action in formal and informal political forums and activities. It involves experimentation and the development of celebratory and supportive practices and cultures. Within environmentally sound and socially just structures celebrate non-disruptive diversity. Practice non-violence.

## Knowledge and Skill Sharing

- Access, and volunteer to contribute, free advisory services
- Swap your expertise or work-power directly with someone-else's

## Food

- Grow your own locally using organic, permaculture methods
- When you swap or buy, try for local and organically grown foods
- Think local community gardens, food swaps and food cooperatives
- Buy in bulk and/or make joint purchases with friends
- Share — give away — edible food surpluses and gladly receive them
- Store and preserve foods to keep well for longer — avoid waste
- Prepare food at home to eat when away, taking bottled tap water
- Celebrate together by all bringing 'a plate'.

## Clothing

- Keep your wardrobe small
- Mend clothes, adjust and revamp them
- Buy second-hand clothing from garage sales, charity shops, street stalls and markets
- Make clothes, truly unique and made to fit, for you and as gifts
- Buy cheap remainders
- Share — give away — clothing that is not useful and gladly receive clothes to wear.

## Housing

- House-sit (looking after someone else's house or studio while they are away, for free or 'next-to-nothing'); likewise, offer your house
- Shared-house tenancy — share a leased house, service costs, utilities, vehicles and so much more
- Co-housing — shared dwelling spaces with multiple co-owned dwellings and shared infrastructure and land for growing food
- Squat.

## Cleaning

Procure cheap basic laundry and bath soap, bicarbonate of soda, vinegar and salt and a guide to cleaning with the most basic ingredients. Use 'elbow grease', soak dirty things, learn the properties of herbs, such as lavender, that you can grow in your garden and use in your wardrobe.

## Equipment and materials

- Share equipment and materials
- Give away goods and services and gladly receive the same
- Intervene if used, but still usable, goods are being put out as garbage
- Look out for cheap new goods, e.g. pre-used for promotional purposes
- Purchase cheap second hand and recycled goods.

## Transport

- Walk
- Use a push bike, foot-powered scooter or skate board
- Use public transport: train, tram or bus
- Car share, bike share (formal and informal arrangements).

## Travel

- Join a group such as Willing Workers On Organic Farms
- Stay with friends or couch-surf
- Camp using environmentally-friendly practices
- Volunteer on environmental or social research programs
- Stay in cheap, modest, safe accommodation, e.g. youth hostels.