



THE NEW NORMAL IN DISPUTE:

TRANSFORMATIVE
PROPOSALS FROM
THE SOLIDARITY &
FEMINIST ECONOMY

30 JUNE 2020



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During these difficult times where lockdown has become the norm and is used as the justification to stop the spread of COVID-19, our societies continue to face the daily challenge of taking care of life during the state of emergency and the uncertainties that arise from this. This is done without losing sight of the immediate future, whilst recognizing that the world will never be the same and that it is rapidly transforming. In this current context, civil society organizations and social movements are currently working towards consolidating a set of economic proposals and alternatives aimed at the sustainability of life, rather than at the expense of it.

DAWN and **REAS** jointly convened a webinar on 30 June entitled: **The New Normal in Dispute: Transformative Proposals from the Solidarity and Feminist Economy** and provided the space for a dialogue to enrich the process of collective movement-building and re-thinking. We had more than 130 attendees from 11 countries, mostly from Latin America and Spain.

This event allowed the attendees to deepen their knowledge on the current analysis around how social, solidarity, and feminist economies are all interrelated. The knowledge that was imparted to them will be key to thinking about proposals around transformative economies in conjunction with other social movements (e.g., agroecology, commons, popular economy, etc.). The dialogue also offered the space to share local experiences in the Global South and North. This webinar was part of the global program of the **World Social Forum of Transformative Economies**.

Panellists talked about the foundational elements of transformation that form the basics of feminist, social, and solidarity economies. They presented educational materials created by their organizations, highlighting the lessons learnt from local experiences in agroecology-based communities, social care networks, alternative markets and other initiatives where money is not a priority. Finally, the webinar also gave a chance for both the panellists and attendees to reflect on possible future collaborations across sectors and within organizations

to defeat the challenges rising out of pandemic economies and to be able to create opportunities to build a new system that puts the sustainability of life at its core.

REFLECTIONS OF THE COLLECTIVE PROCESS

The webinar program had two distinct parts. In the first part, DAWN and REAS shared their vision and experiences in the formal arena of capacity building in feminist economics. During the second part, the panellists commented in detail about methodologies and toolkits. During this webinar, DAWN proudly launched the **School of Feminist Economics** website.

REAS shared their vast knowledge of working across a membership composed of 15 territorial networks and four sectorial networks in Spain. All together this is comprised of more than 800 organizations that work in support of social and alternative markets that include projects on food and energy sovereignty, social money, and alternative currency systems, just to name a few. REAS practices and local alternative proposals are enriched and complemented with academic theories and analysis, and with knowledge and insights from their territorial experiences. It is through this mutually reinforcing strategy that REAS is able to reinforce the importance of social care in sustaining life and the planet. **“The pandemic is a consequence of the interconnected ecological crisis, care crisis, and the numerous crises that people have been facing and denouncing in the past,”** says Marian Díez.

REAS went on to discuss the importance of creating spaces for dialogue where social, solidarity and feminist economics, theories, and principles can be discussed. REAS restated that the solidarity economy is a “proposal that is alive and in transformation.” This process of analysis and reflection has important consequences inside REAS, in a time where we are revising our working¹ principles, definitions, and the basis of our thinking. **“We need to call for a radical transformation of the current system, and the radical transformation has to be feminist,”** concludes Marian.

DAWN also has vast experience in promoting critical and creative thinking. Since the mid 80s, DAWN has been producing analysis and opening spaces to listen to critical voices from different expressions of *feminisms* from within the Global South. This webinar presented another opportunity to expand the ongoing reflections. In the context of a pandemic, DAWN has been reflecting on the tensions and conflicts between the sustainability of life and capital. **“In a time when capitalism stands as a model that extracts not only resources, but also our lives, our time, our data, it is important that we highlight the conflict, and how we re-define this conflict in a new pandemic context. This needs to be done with more creativity, together with the resolve that has always been the main characteristic of our feminism whilst promoting collaborations and mutual understanding,”** concludes Corina Rodríguez (DAWN Executive Committee Member).

SOCIAL, SOLIDARITY & FEMINIST ECONOMICS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A COLLABORATION IN PROGRESS

“We are at the forefront of an opportunity to rethink and reappraise what is meant by the following terms: planetary, the commons, the public and solidarity. A close collaboration between feminist economics and social and solidarity economics is key to giving birth to strategies of resistance. Both proposals depart from a conceptualization of economics that puts people and the sustainability of life at the centre of economic activities, analysis, and decision-making.” Today we have the chance to **“amplify the transformative power of proposals that are aimed at building a more just society with no room for sexism and patriarchy,”** affirms Zaloa Pérez from REAS Euskadi.

Zaloa also warns of a number of challenges that need to be tackled in order to advance towards more democratic, horizontal, and just forms of holding

1 - See REAS Charter of Principles: <https://www.economiasolidaria.org/carta-de-principios>

power, alternative distribution of decision-making authority, and greater access to decent work for women. First, it is important to revise internal practices and move towards more horizontal, democratic practices within our own organizations. There is a need to build spaces that are more comfortable and better planned to contemplate and respect the many tasks and responsibilities that women have. A second challenge is to think about economic alternatives that are not centred on markets, access to current markets and to open debates with different movements on a few issues: what is our common understanding of a decent salary? How do we promote ways of living that are not based on consumption? Are we really producing goods and services for a better standard of living, or are we contributing to a market-oriented society where new spheres of life are being marketized?

Zalao invited the attendees to go beyond self-organized, community-based strategies, and to work towards also influencing macro-debates on energy, telecommunications and finances. To think about how to make the solidarity economy a more viable and generalizable proposal that can be supported by more people, regardless of their ideology, education, or proximity.

The key message was to continue strengthening spaces and promoting collaborations across differences and conflicts that are constitutive of any collective work. **“It is important to undo and retrace normative and essentialist existing views of social, feminist, and solidarity economies. In the organizing of those experiences, the differences are at play, and these differences are valid, and we need to navigate across these differences,”** affirms Flora Partenio (DAWN Executive Committee Member).

Another challenge is to analyse and defeat the voracious process of appropriation of knowledge, concepts, and lessons derived from the feminist and solidarity economies. According to Flora, there is an opportunity to dispute these concepts working with other movements and sectors, such as the term “sustainability” (market, debts, etc.). For example, one of the crucial ways to do

this is to give visibility to these appropriations and to see how to stand in front of *greenwashing*² or *pinkwashing*³.

Flora proposed that we use this context to think about the following interrogations: What kind of post-pandemic world are we talking about? What is this “new normal” like? As we face these questions, she called us to dispute the current productivist logic and perspective that feminists have been challenging, so that it is not merely impregnated with solidarity economy, but that it also incorporates *care*, including *self-care* and *emotional networks and relationships*: “It is about valuing and putting political value to the reproduction of care within production itself.”

We must continue debating with proponents of social economy on what Flora calls “arid spaces of the economy,” such as energy, telecommunications and finances, but from a feminist perspective, while acknowledging that these debates happen in parallel channels. ***Feminists still need to deepen the discussions around restructuring financial systems, to see the role of private funds in indebtedness, and to analyse financial ethics as possible and real models.***

The issue of energy sovereignty also offers opportunities for new debates and for building alliances across movements. Flora asked: “How do we build energy transitions and scenarios that are not based on extractivisms, nor based on energies that destroy the environment? These are some opportunities for

2- Greenwashing, is a concept used to expose the bad practices that some companies present proposals or products that are in compliance with environmental rights, but in fact they are not.

3- Pinkwashing refers to a material act and discourse that produces a pink wash over some marketing and policies that take historic struggles of the LGBT+ communities as their own. An example of this corporate power actions are exposed in the following DAWN seminar: https://dawnnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/20190725_SRHR-Webinar-Report.pdf

collaboration with environmentalist movements, just energies and sustainable cities' groups.”

Finally, she highlighted the debates that activists are not invited to, for example, the debate on technologies and telework that is moving fast during the pandemic. In the case of Argentina, the discussions in the National Congress have just called in business associations and some small and mid-size enterprises. Still, they have not invited recovered businesses, nor solidarity or social economies proponents. These debates are key for the post-pandemic recovery debates. Proponents of transformative economies can and should be the main actors in the discussion around the regulation of teleworking, remote work, work via mobile apps, and so on. In this scenario, it is important to answer the question on what the role of solidarity and self-organized economies in the building of digital sovereignty can be.

TOOLKITS & METHODOLOGIES FOR A FEMINIST CAPACITY BUILDING

In the last part of the webinar, the dialogue centred around the toolkits and methodologies that REAS and DAWN have produced. Conchi Piñeiro, from ALTEKIO cooperative & REAS, shared a vast array of tools that are readily available both on the REAS's website and the new website of the School of Feminist Economics (DAWN). The first compilation of Papers on Solidarity Economy (REAS) is a set of analysis, prepared by its members that discuss issues on how to build, care and inhabit solidarity economy organizations.⁴ They expose different feminist practices in these organizations.

REAS Euskadi shared a plan for Gender Equity, the **BIZIGARRI, el plan Pro-Equidad de Género 2018/2022**, that reflects on the strategy the group developed to activate an organizational change to promote gender equity in all EUSKADI and REAS. The plan is the result of intense work led by some groups that form the membership and structure of REAS Euskadi. Conchi noted that a

remarkable characteristic of the text is that it is flexible, and it allows members to adapt themes and processes to the different moments that organizations experience. It is a guide aimed at the transformation they envisaged, and it has a pedagogical characteristic that allows them to apply the lessons as they work.

The Gender Observatory Guide created by the feminist economies commission of Solidarity Economy Network (XES) from Cataluña, allows them to both observe and use visualization of dynamics of gender participation in the spaces of the organizations.

The **Protocolo Activo, Asambleario Feminista** (The Feminist Assembly Active Protocol) is very interesting and readily accessible. It emerges as part of a **project that ended in an internal process of redefinition of the name of the group itself**. They went from a Group on Care to the current Feminisms Group, which now better reflects their objectives and functions. This reflection resulted in a new logo and symbol, which is very humorous and meaningful, from the flus-flus of care to the PAAF. This acronym, which conveys the sound of a cleaning spray, stands for Protocolo Activo Asambleario Feminista. Their material is aimed at improving the functioning of assemblies and meetings and proposes simple and concrete forms to manage assemblies through briefings, role plays and infographics. The objective of PAAF is to raise awareness that in any entity, all people count, and therefore, it is important to listen to all voices.

This Guide in Spanish, **La Guía de Análisis de Prácticas de Corresponsabilidad en la economía social y solidaria**⁵, has the main purpose of contributing to women and men that form part of ESS to understand their co-responsibility practices better, better measure their scope and analyse their transformative and strategic value. Conchi highlights that this Guide was fundamental to unpack

4- See materials in the REAS EUSKADI website: <https://www.economiasolidaria.org/reas-euskadi>

5- This Guide is the result of the work of the Community of Practice, CAP, (for the name in Spanish) also connected with the work of Proyecto MARES of Madrid, a space composed of members and entities of REAS, the Social Market of Madrid and the Commission on Feminisms.

the idea of care, how the groups are considering the decision-making process, governance and how to talk about it. Last but not least, it is a tool to facilitate the effective application of the principles of social and solidarity economies to build business activities that are viable and alive. The Guide includes different examples of concrete practices and questions to analyse them.

LAUNCH OF DAWN'S SCHOOL OF FEMINIST ECONOMICS WEBSITE

The attendees were invited to navigate the **website** as a pedagogical space that offers access to self-organizing, capacity-building materials and resources. The website is a place to share, download, and disseminate readings that allow for ongoing learning. Its launch is the result of a process developed by DAWN and working with organizations and networks from different countries. It marks the beginning of a new cycle of work and collaboration during challenging times.

This School proposes to open a capacity-building space to provide the analysis and tools for the construction of critical perspectives about the interrelations between economic dynamics, gender-class-race-ethnic relationships, and the mechanisms of reproduction of inequalities. This is a space for reflection from a feminist economics perspective on issues of financial, global capitalism, corporate capture, digital economy, public policy financing, the future of work, organization of care, feminist experiences of resistance and building transformative economies. At the same time, DAWN proposes to multiply spaces of capacity building from feminist pedagogies, for activists in the context of these resistances in a fierce new world, while strengthening dialogues and the articulation between analysis and social movement-building.

In conclusion, emanating from the discussions there was clear evidence of the importance of feminist economics as a set of methodologies, theories, and analysis. It was also clear that there is a need and opportunity for feminist economics to continue challenging the established hegemonic knowledge and to offer new visions on the construction of alternatives to this unfair and unequal world.



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EVENT.**



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TECHNICAL SUPPORT & SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

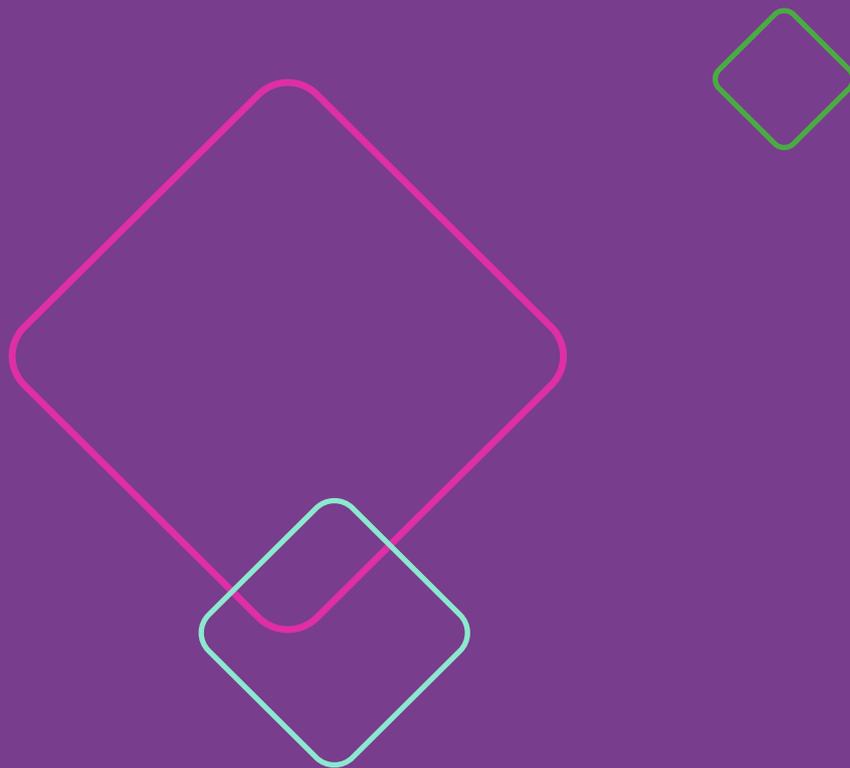
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**Development
Alternatives with
Women for a
New Era**



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