

Assertions We Tried On

- The “times” present an opening for significant change, but that will not automatically translate into the kind of transformation we would like to see.
- As much change as we see around us and as great the longing for a different path forward, it is actually very difficult for most to imagine a different set of possibilities. People don’t necessarily have ideas about how to better organize our lives and resources (i.e. around a commons sensibility).
- People need a glimpse of and a framework for a different future in order to grasp the opportunities in the present moment. A central goal in our work is helping people conceive of/ imagine a different framework for the future.
- One way of characterizing that future we seek is a “commons-based society,” one that offers abundance and opportunity and shared security.
- Giving people a glimpse of a different future will not happen just through exposure to new ideas. There must also be tangible ways that people experience / practice / live out new possibilities and feel part of this new community.
- The above speaks to a theory of social change. Those of us working on the commons need to be clear about the theory of social change we are operating from and what might be missing from our conception. We need to name what other avenues and catalysts we see as essential to creating change.
- The kind of transformation implied in moving from a “market-based society” to a “commons-based society” does not come about without a transformational movement.

As we plan our future work, we notice a number of elements as essential to a transformational movement:

- Shaping and naming a new, recognizable sense of possibility that taps yearning and imagination and offers a stark choice between different futures, different paths
- Offering ways of acting on, living out, affiliating with a set of beliefs and convictions critical to realizing that new possibility (i.e. in our personal lives, in our organizational lives and in our communities)
- Giving people a sense of being part of something bigger, attracting “adherents” and connecting a broad range of organizations, people, activities and campaigns.
- Elevating the stark choice between more of the same and transformation
- Offering and making room for activities from a broad range of cultures and tactical orientations that are designed to present this stark choice.

- Integration of strong cultural components into the array of activities.
- Catalyzing and advancing key organizations, individuals, ideas and events without anyone “owning” or “running” them
- Ultimately focusing on the political/policy strategies that are needed and building the power to move needed restructuring of society.
- Maintaining transparency throughout.

COMMONS-BASED – how would we recognize it

A commons-based society (and or a commons/based solution to one or more issues) is one where:

- 1) We all belong, we all have a stake – no exceptions. (mutuality)
- 2) Grounded in ‘there is enough’ and we have a mutual responsibility to take care of this abundance and pass it on
- 3) Grounded in valuing all of our humanness.
- 4) Where there is rough social equity in outcomes, decision making and society as a whole.
- 5) Takes account of history - who we are and where we start from. (regeneration, renewal, reparation)
- 6) Has structures, systems and rules in place to ensure continuity into future.