

Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme
Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World
Workgroup on a Solidarity Socioeconomy

Proposals Paper
For the XXI century

Women and the Economy

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Site: <http://women.socioeco.org>

SYNTHESIS DOCUMENT

This proposals paper summarizes the work of the "Women and Economy" Workshop, in which more than 50 people took part by means of an electronic forum (women@socioeco.org) and two meetings, one in Paris between October 9th and 11th, 2000 and the other in Le Havre between the April 9th and 11th, 2001. It was edited by Cécile Sabourin with the help of Josée Belleau.

1- OBSERVATIONS AND DIAGNOSIS

Women live, work and produce in strongly contrasting conditions. However it seems that they share an understanding of fundamental problems and of the need to transform the theories and practices of economics. They share a consensus about the objectives of equality for men and women as well as the inclusion of the value "solidarity" in economic relationships and structures. Economic autonomy, freedom of expression and liberty are equally at the heart of the personal and collective aspirations of women.

The term equality covers various different realities depending on the context. However women who demand equality and rights and the real possibility of exercising these rights rely on the vision of themselves as controllers of their own destinies and social, political and economic agents at the heart of the societies to which they belong. Therefore, they demand to be considered as people and citizens in the full meaning of the word. The value of "solidarity" is not a cure-all; women have known the power and the limits of the term solidarity within human relationships for a long time. However, they consider it a fundamental value for renewing economic relationships between people.

The specific position of women in society

A great majority of women on this planet are responsible for human reproduction, the nurturing of life and the care of others. Women's initiatives and attempts to become or not a part of the "dominant" economy are for the most part influenced by the need to protect life and assure the access to essential goods and services for themselves and their families. Women are equally motivated by the need to fill in the growing gap between their fundamental needs and aspirations, on one hand, and their living conditions, on the other. The daily life in which women and, in a great number of countries, girls pursue their aspirations is characterized by enslavement and constraining activities. The long hours they devote to work everyday, (paid, unpaid, domestic, community, education etc.) are never enough to accomplish everything. If some among them have sometimes improved their condition, many have failed to escape from their state of poverty and even destitution (material, social, cultural).

The over-representation of women among the destitute, poor and the « politically voiceless » persists throughout the world. Despite years of organized effort, notably the Women's International Year in 1975, the Beijing conference in 1995, the follow-up in 2000 (Beijing +5) and the World Women's March in 2000, the gap between men and women, just as among women themselves and men themselves, has continued to grow. The UNDP's Human Development Report (1997) recognized immediately this over-representation of women among the poor, which is accompanied by a lack of power and by relative constraints for productive work, related to childcare, domestic and community responsibilities. What is more, on the basis of the chosen indicators available for formulating the GDI (gender-related development index) the correlation between the economic situation of women and that of countries (HDI-human development index)¹, was clearly demonstrated in the World Human Development Report (2001).

Also, wherever daily life takes the form of « survival », women are found to be involved in initiatives aimed at « changing their world ». They are experimenting with new forms of production, consumption and exchange,

¹ The following indicators are taken into account: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rates, inscription rates in primary, secondary and higher education, estimated income levels.

bringing forth initiatives stemming from their concerns and values. Wherever there is a question of improving the quality of daily life, there are often women who are proposing initiatives and innovative strategies. They are never absent from places where social life is organized, but they are often excluded from the places where economic and political decisions are taken.

The position of women as a group is characterized by poverty, exclusion and violence, whose forms and levels vary with society and epoch. This position has forged their specific view of the socioeconomic system as a whole (production, consumption, exchange) and, consequently their point of view on the changes that are imperative.

Furthermore, a movement towards a greater complexity of women's identity clearly manifests itself in all the regions of the world. Everywhere women have expressed a determination to reconcile their roles as mother, wife, worker, businesswoman and citizen. This movement is characterized by the diversity of social and cultural contexts in which it expresses itself. The nature of this reconciliation is usually determined by the rural or urban context.

Everywhere women are confronted by the « dominant » economy where production, consumption and exchange are submitted to the demands of "financial" profitability and "corporate" globalization. Although essential to the activities of the "dominant" economy, only a limited proportion of women's economic activities are taken into account, whilst a large part is either hidden (invisible and unpaid) or undervalued (devalued and underpaid). In contrast, the control exerted by men on the resources and means of production and exchange often constitute an obstacle to the fulfilment of women's economic activities, even outside the "dominant" economy.

Lastly, the unequal share of domestic tasks between men and women, as well as the relationship of domination exerted by men in the couple and family, in the political as much as the economic sphere, has helped freeze the unacceptable situations of poverty and exclusion, making the search for ways to transform economic relationships even more complex.

Conditions for opening the path to fundamental transformations

Since long ago, social and political mobilization has allowed women to make progress in reaching their goals in the economic sphere. Women regroup and struggle to find their place within the 'dominant' economy. They struggle for effective recognition of their daily work in the context of socioeconomic life. They struggle also to discover, experiment and make known the new paths and initiatives that can satisfy their aspirations and generate equitable conditions.

However, preexisting conditions, which vary according to the context, are necessary for real and sustainable transformation on the ground to emerge and prevail. In some countries, women demand first their juridical recognition as human beings who have rights. Wherever legislation exists, they demand respect for the rights and the access to the means of guaranteeing their concrete fulfillment, such as access to land, to credit and to education.

Finally, the relationship of women with the economy is part of a global vision of society and a holistic concept of the human being. As part of the process of the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World, and more specially that of the Workgroup on a Solidarity Socioeconomy (WSSE) of the Alliance, the participants considered the theme Women and Economy a transversal issue. This theme is a key issue in the elaboration of proposals by the WSSE to be discussed at the 2001 Assembly of the Alliance in Lille, France.

2- VISIONS AND NEW MODEL

The exchanges within the framework of the Women and the Economy Workshop (forum and seminars) have shown the ability of participants to identify and express the basis of their actions and initiatives, the challenges posed by their own daily situation and the particularities of their position at the heart of their own community and country. Everywhere, women are confronted with the same predominant dialogue – on the *inevitability* of globalization and the *inescapable* competition leading to the growing exploitation of the less well-off, particularly women. In compensation, a unanimous discourse among participants and the vast majority of women arises and puts forth autonomy, creativity, collective responsibility. And the satisfaction of essential and fundamental human needs.

A consensus has emerged about certain fundamental principles necessary for building a new economic model. These are part of a vision of individual development and collective recognition of:

- The equality between women and men,
- The spiritual, mental, physical and social dimensions of the person,
- A harmonious and balanced development between the “centre” and the “periphery”; between the North, the South, the East and the West; within a region or a country; etc.

Eight principles have emerged from the Women and the Economy Workshop which constitute, for us, essential avenues for exploration and enrichment as foundations for a new economic paradigm. As we found out during the the Solidarity Socioeconomy International Meeting at Findhorn, Scotland, these principles are echoed in the work of other workshops within the WSSE. Thus, let us clarify the links between the visions that have taken shape amongst the women and men who aspire to a more responsible and united world.

Principles for the construction of a new economic paradigm are:

The multifunctional nature of « productive » activities and the work of women:

Women willingly recognize that an economic activity gives rise to interpersonal links, that it is a source of pleasure, an expression of conviviality and an occasion for inter-cultural meetings between people of different ages and backgrounds. As a result, a mainly « financial » approach to socioeconomic activities has no relevance.

De-compartmentalization and sharing of work and responsibilities:

Working relations at the heart of projects/initiatives/associations/businesses, initiated or led by women, are characterized by a search for relationships of equality, in the sense that members/participants of the project have the opportunity to acquire the training and experience necessary for assuming, in their turn, the various responsibilities of administration and production.

Recognition of the reconciliation of roles and activities, and equal sharing of time and tasks:

Day-by-day women take responsibility for multiple acts of reconciliation between roles, responsibilities, activities, tasks, and people. These acts remain invisible even though they are essential to the functioning of the economy and the whole of daily life. An egalitarian division and effective recognition of the time consumed in performing these acts is essential.

Acknowledgement of traditional knowledge and the knowledge of experience acquired outside the « dominant » sphere of the economy:

The knowledge (know-how and know-how-to-be) that women have developed outside of the labor market has contributed to the well being of people and collectives. It is essential to value them and recognize them as “socially profitable” as much as “economically profitable”.

Organization of areas of production and living, on a basis of the time and the needs of people and communities:

Production areas are presently conceived and located without concern for the conditions they impose on individuals, families and communities. As an example let us mention the time and extra stress linked to transport, reducing the time and availability given to family and friends. These areas have become more and more incompatible with the various family and social responsibilities assumed by a great number of people, chiefly women. Family and community life demands certain proximity between workplace and residence. The spatial planning of residential areas must also favor a harmonious interaction between individual and collective needs.

Hierarchy of priorities taking into consideration life and people:

People’s fundamental needs include food security as well as all other forms of security, access to health, a healthy environment, and to education, the maintenance and enrichment of social links between people and groups, etc.

Openness in practices at all levels:

Openness refers to the frank expression and share of information in everything that concerns the fundamental dimensions of socioeconomic life: stage and sharing of resources, decision making processes at all levels, i.e. within the family, the organizations, at state level. As an example, let us mention the places and subject areas for which participants have expressed a need for openness: the disclosure of wages between couples, the recognition

of respective contributions to family life, the contribution of participatory processes to collective decision making, budgetary processes of the state, the calculation of all costs when evaluating profitability, etc.

The synergy already existing between workshops

We present, as illustrations, some examples of the similarities and complementary nature of issues stemming from the work of the different workshops.

The « Work, Employment, Activity » and « Social Money » Workshops have clearly expressed similar targets to those of the « Women and the Economy » Workshop concerning the fundamental transformation of the theoretical premises and practices of the economy. Let us look at some examples of the similar concerns that have enabled us to establish the common or complementary approach of our work:

- The division of work time (paid or non-paid, public and domestic sectors),
- The socialization of productivity gains generated by new technologies,
- The acknowledgement of an economic rationality based on work and solidarity,
- The objective of neutralizing the scarcity of exchange means (money, currencies), of bypassing scarcity in all its forms and of facilitating the use of complementary currencies.

From the political viewpoint and concerning the role of the State, the “Economic Policies” Workshop has expressed the need to reverse the tendency towards the destruction of active citizenship, a tendency that is predominant in neoliberal and neoconservative States. This proposal links up with the concerns of women’s movements across the world who denounce the State’s recognition of women as « clients », which accentuates the *exploitation* of women’s groups and initiatives, rather than the equality and autonomy of all women citizens. The participants acknowledged that women have a contradictory relationship with the State. This is partly linked to the absence of recognition of women as independent citizens while they have little choice other than to collaborate at the heart of programs financed by the State. They expressed having gained confidence in themselves and leadership; they now need the real opportunity to express it.

Some of the participants at Findhorn highlighted certain other workshops raising issues similar to those of women - the “Solidarity Finance”, “Solidarity Economy”, “Fair trade” and “Fiscal Policy, Redistribution and Social Security » Workshops.

3- INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIONS

Women have often thought and acted from situations marked by inequality or exclusion. This « specific » position as well as the numerous ways in which they live and work have determined the expression of priorities and initiatives upon which this part of the report focuses, essentially based on the contribution of women during the Workshop seminars and electronic forum. It goes without saying that the meaning given to *innovation* varies according to the participants. Thus, women have expressed their realities as well as the innovative aspects of their initiatives as they have conceived and perceived them. At this stage, we have neither tried to (re) define or standardize them.

The targeted goals

As we saw earlier, women have expressed the importance of:

- Taking their place in society and the economic realm, on a basis of equality, autonomy and solidarity.
- Reconciling the different roles and activities that they assume daily, not only in the perspective of their recognition/visibility but also in view of sharing them and reducing the associated difficulties

According priority to certain basic principles guiding their initiatives: multifunctional and de-compartmentalized work, diversity and richness of knowledge, reorganization of time and space, pre-eminence of life and people, openness of practices and decision-making, recognition of contributions.

Women’s initiatives have responded to *contextual* needs, i.e. that the physical, political, economic and cultural environment determines the needs and initiatives themselves. Also, that which is considered to be essential in a « poor environment » could be established somewhere else, where other needs remain unsatisfied and are the object of initiatives. In particular countries or regions in crisis (following a natural catastrophe or an armed conflict) or in process of transformation (towards a market economy, for example) present specific situations that must not be underestimated.

Besides the fact that it illustrates the dynamism of women, the abundance of initiatives in certain sectors and environments reveals the catastrophe that the “dominant” economy has imposed on human development. Thus the initiatives highlight aspects of the economy which, until then, never were, and sometimes still have not been, recognized and accounted.

The initiatives are presented here mainly from the point of view of types of needs and activities, secondly by showing the radical means which have been deployed, mostly to overcome obstacles and, thirdly, by setting out the innovations in terms of their « way of working » and goals pursued.

Initiatives, response to various needs

The range of needs that women have wanted to address is broad. Some could be described as « basic » without hesitation. Others would appear to be less fundamental whilst coming from the individual and collective aspirations of women not finding the goods and services they seek in the commercial or public sectors of production. The activities linked to daily life, health, education and culture are those most often mentioned by women. Let us highlight, in their words¹, the areas in which women have led experiments and initiatives bearing the values of change:

- Food/nutrition: group purchasing, social groceries, restaurants, food kitchens, catering services, collective kitchens, cereal banks, activities of self-sufficiency and resistance, etc.
- Sewing and the upkeep of cloth: washing, repair, dry-cleaning, ironing, fashion shop,
- Counselling services, needs connected to relationships,
- Health: essential services, « alternative » services, herbal therapy, etc.
- Activities chosen because they generate income, activities pertaining to market access, exchange mechanisms and barter, groupings of female *prosumers*
- Education: literacy methods, skills and knowledge exchange, apprenticeship activities concerning the relationships between people. The forms of discrimination and exclusion, etc.
- Culture and communication: media, areas of cultural and political expression, etc.

Conditions for the emergence of initiatives

The conditions for the emergence and development of initiatives are also strongly influenced by the context: existing obstacles and the means to overcome them.

Already beyond project stage, obstacles have arisen on the path of initiatives likely to question habits, tacit or formal rules. Accessing activities that are not traditionally women’s, having the right to decide for themselves, having access to the earth, raw materials and appropriate areas of production often constitute the first obstacle for women to overcome. Access to resources includes monetary and technical aspects and the knowledge without which any initiative outside the domestic context is impossible. Where women do not have access to property and credit, the challenge is considerable.

Bureaucracy itself gives rise to many constraints: permits, financial, access to resources, contract systems, grant systems and programs, etc. Everywhere one feels inadequate between the projects and the procedures set in place by private enterprise as much as by public and para-public and, sometimes, non-governmental organizations. Budgets rarely take into consideration the time and rhythm of maturity that is peculiar to each of these initiatives. Standards have been set by maintaining parameters of financial profitability without taking into account the specific aspects of women’s initiatives and the need for apprenticeship. The participants of the Women and the Economy Workshop are conscious of the utilitarian bias towards women: a means to political ends for the States, a means for purely economic and financial ends for many companies, in particular transnational corporations. Sometimes, women themselves put breaks on their own initiatives. The fear of taking risks, the misunderstanding of their own potentials and a lack of consultation between themselves are among a number of factors which limit the scope of women’s initiatives, and in particular the structured interventions likely to change things truly for them.

¹ Reference to the documents prepared by women notably in the framework of their participation in the seminars in Paris and Le Havre and at the forum, reproduced on the site «<http://women.socioeco.org>».

Faced with the substantial challenges that determine their daily life, challenges that sometimes appear insurmountable amidst the day-to-day state of political values and « dominant » values, the participants have expressed the need to persist in their efforts. However, they demand direct support and actions of validation to make their initiatives both possible and viable and to take their place in hostile or unwelcoming environments.

The necessary support takes the following forms:

- Financial and technical support, training and follow-up,
- Compensatory strategies to influence discrimination and rights,
- Research: *participatory* analysis of cases and thinking to follow, validation of relevant sources of **grey** scientific literature
- Communication between experiments: dynamics of exchange centered on mutual relationships, dissemination of results.

Actions of validation communicate women's success and the parts played by people-resources, parties, prize giving or diplomas for example, fuel confidence and persistence and favor women's *empowerment*. They shape public opinion and add to the creditability and recognition of women. They change the imagination and help demolish myths and stereotypes. Their forms can be as diverse as the contexts but they always include an appeal to broadcasting, public expression and the media. .

Innovations at the heart of these initiatives

Women innovate in different manners and in multiple areas. Women's initiatives include:

- Giving access to credit: savings and sharing resources, *tontines*, solidarity guarantees/deposits, solidarity saving banks, etc.
- Offering different goods and services, widening women's choices: traditional medicine, natural medicine, etc.
- Public gathering and expression: well established physical sites, art and other forms of expression, active and direct exercise of citizenship, etc.
- Those not traditionally associated with women, ones that are currently considered as masculine,
- Those that generate revenue,
- Those that guarantee subsistence: food, lodging, etc.
- Those that respond to relationship needs: meeting places, counselling centres, etc.
- Those related to broadcasting and information transfer: newspapers, bulletins, Internet sites, etc.
- Those that contribute to the quality and density of the social fabric. Some people speak about « social capital », which elsewhere is limited.

We have noticed that women's individual and collective aspirations vary according to the degree to which basic needs are satisfied and also according to the development level of the region, cultural values and the immediate physical environment. Thus, the desires and wishes for change expressed by women are pluralist in just the same way as the diversity of their practices in the socioeconomic sphere. Therefore, we must avoid grouping them under the same heading or in one single model. We must also work on the analytical structure of initiatives, the main goal being to break through the dichotomies that confine and limit the analysis of initiatives in one category or another, for example: formal/informal, production/reproduction, economic/social, solidarity economy/economy, etc.

Recent research has recognized that, everywhere in the world, the greatest potential for change stems from women. Let us see how this postulate can be made concrete by bringing forth proposals for transforming economic relationships.

4- PROPOSALS

Immense creative effort, given that many women are still at the stage of diagnosis, the proposals of the Women and the Economy Workshop has targeted three issues:

- Constructing a new economic paradigm based on women's analysis and practices of solidarity,
- Developing the methodological tools for the recognition of these practices,
- Highlighting women's practices and developing practices of solidarity in the field.

The proposals will take various forms and will necessitate strategies adapted to contexts and to the local, national and global levels. In our opinion they will remain as the indispensable bases for the profound transformation of economic relationships. The 5th part of the text focuses, in further detail, the strategies and actors to guarantee the follow-up.

Proposal 1: Deconstructing myths (persistent biases that peddle the idea of women inferiority and un-productivity)

It is not by chance that myths exist that we wish to overcome. Ideas repeatedly received either directly or in the form of unsavory humor contribute to fixing images and stereotypes about gender, rooting them in imagination and giving them a statute of reality. Myths nurture negative images of women as well as obstacles to their participation, credibility and legitimacy in the heart of many, if not all, companies. We propose to deconstruct the myths, a first step towards their disappearance.

Each culture/region is the ground for the creation of its own myths. We have highlighted, as an illustration, some of these myths or persistent biases bearing on women themselves and some conceptions/ideologies that fashion the thoughts and actions of a great many. Here they are:

- Women « don't work » before their entry into the labor market as we now know it; in other words women's work in the domestic or family sphere has allegedly no importance or effect on the economy,,
- Whilst women occupy a job, they are always absent, they don't commit themselves totally, etc; in other words, family and domestic responsibilities taken on by women have no importance or value for the correct running of the companies or economy,
- « Women's problems are only women's problems »: in other words, the problems of half the population have no interest for men, society, or the economy as a whole,
- The main sources of human progress and development are: competition, standardisation, consumerism, performance, growth and progress, etc; in other words the « laws » of the capitalist market are “ the way, the truth and the life »,
- Economic concepts are “ scientifically neutral »; in other words, all types of production (milk, houses, arms, chemical products for consumption or for bacterial warfare, etc) and all types of services (childcare, insurance, prostitution, etc) can be treated in the same manner without any consideration for the desired aims or the negative impacts on the human, social or environmental plain, etc.

Proposal 2: Re-examination of basic economic concepts

The critical vision developed by women from their specific position in the economy, as presented above, in particular the invisibility of «caring»² work, deserves to be better documented, examined and diffused. Among the concepts that must be redefined for the construction of a new economic model, women have picked out as priorities the following:

- The human being, her/his position in the economic sphere in the largest sense of the term
- Nature
- Time
- The economic domain in all its diversity
- Growth
- Value
- Wealth
- Labor
- Terms of exchange
- Productivity

Priorities for the way forward were identified during the meeting at Findhorn. They have drawn on the proposals put together by a number of workshops.

- To recognize the different forms of work and to break the link between wealth and financial/materialistic accumulation, and between work and revenue, since this leaves no opportunity other than offering one's

² In its broadest meaning, “caring” signifies being concerned with other people and maintaining interpersonal links.

services in conditions that are continually deteriorating under economic globalization and growing competition between people and regions.³

- To develop chains of production based firstly on the identified needs and abilities of the local area. The choices regarding consumption, production and exchange that have been imposed by large transnational corporations should therefore be called into question⁴.

These suggestions also relate to the proposals that came from the Workshops on Fair Trade and Solidarity Finance. Finally, let us point out the importance of drawing from the available studies and practices that relate to these questions. Annex 1 of this document focuses on information sources that provide examples on this subject.

Proposal 3: Devising appropriate and diversified indicators of wealth and labor

Only appropriate indicators would be able to highlight women's traditional activities, the voluntary activities of women and men, the immaterial aspects of people's quality of life, creative activities and social links, the importance of free, user-friendly and « non productive » exchange.

Therefore, it is essential to:

- Develop the means for an equitable evaluation, using other yardsticks than money,
- Provide women with the means to influence economic decision-making and diffuse, discuss and accept a new economic paradigm.

Discussions in the Workshop on Women and the Economy underlined the importance of spheres or dimensions that reflect the « hidden face » of the economy, for example:

- The different forms of economic activity: production, consumption and exchange in all spheres of activity: market, non-market, non-monetary: public, community, domestic, private.
- Social and human development: nutritional safety, physical security, housing, health, literacy, education, culture, quality of life, etc..
- The physical environment: resources, environmental damage, over-exploitation, etc.
- Time: free use, restricted use, reconciliation of acts and roles, time for recharging and personal development, etc.
- Work: *multifunctional* and *multidimensional* nature of work, and its cultural value, which is particularly important for women.
- « Social profitability », « cultural profitability » and « environmental profitability ».

Proposal 4: Help establish and strengthen existing networks that operate in the field of « women and the economy » relationships.

Synergy between potential allies and eventual partners, based on shared or complementary objectives, is essential for a collective construction of economic relationships within a context of transformation. This assumes:

- Identifying networks and the orientation of their work
- Proposing means to enable them to collaborate and support the process of consolidation of their relationship
- Opening and articulating a debate with agents of the solidarity economy and of the various dimensions of economic activity
- Basing this work on the demands and analysis provided by the different feminist movements throughout the world. Several large and well-known networks are identified in the 5th part of the present text

³ Inspired by women, the participants of the Workshop on Work, Employment and Economic Activity stressed the need to: recognize the value of "other" forms of labor and human activity; break the link between work and revenue; separate citizenship and people's dignity from the amount of work that is socially necessary; distinguish between the struggle to de-alienate work and the struggle for mechanisms that assure human dignity; develop a new social pact for the transfer of the profits of productivity.

⁴ Inspired by women, the participants of the Workshop on Social Money stressed the need to: overcome the paradigm of scarcity; renew the form of resolving inadequacy problems between individual desires that are unsatisfied and the impetus to build a paradigm for social change; use the backing of social money to encourage a production and ethical consumption in solidarity.

- Carrying our message to non-familiar environments with these, sometimes hostile, often masculine, challenges; acting within a company as a movement; intervening in scientific committees; participating actively and critically in anti-globalization organizations against corporate globalization, etc.

Proposal 5: Revindicate the expression of creativity and diversity from economic initiatives

The « dominant » economy along with State technocracy has proven to be a straightjacket as far as the expression of creativity and diversity in economic practices is concerned. Existing models and standards have prevented the emergence and viability of initiatives that do not follow the rules: sectoral compartmentalization, definition of companies, demands for profitability, *forced* growth and globalization. Therefore, deprived of the appropriate means, many initiatives vegetate or never see the light of day.

For example, women from the Southern countries have expressed the difficulty of having access to material, technological, and financial means as well as knowledge; European women demand a « right of initiative » to be able to get out of exclusion /marginality and simultaneously to strive for multiple objectives without attaining financial profitability as understood by the « dominant » economy.

Recognizing the great diversity of contexts and means, this demand aims at underlining the actions to deploy by women and by all spheres of political organization, in order to make it possible and viable for initiatives to target the pursuit and attainment of women's aspirations. Supporting women in the expression of their creativity implies:

- Supporting the steps/process targeting the development of women's identity and abilities: getting out of the house, overcoming submission and secular silence in some case, becoming conscious of oneself, of one's unrecognized abilities and knowledge, undertaking new apprenticeships and becoming aware of their role in the economy, tying the pursuit of individual aspirations for collective projects, etc.
- Demanding the legislation, political and administrative measures that are essential for allowing access to, and an equitable share of, physical, technological and monetary resources as well as knowledge. For women in particular, it is urgently necessary to review the legislation and procedures concerning ownership, appropriation and the methods of land, financial and material resource, and knowledge transfer.
- Create an interest for methods of exchange inspired by practices of solidarity and women's values, for example social money and solidarity finance. One can think about SEL/LETS (système d'échange local/Local Exchange Trade System), forms of collectively-managed allowances, solidarity collateral, etc.

Proposal 6: Develop political practices that support the development of solidarity economic relations

Recognizing that the decisions likely to change economic relations arise largely from a political project, promoting women's participation in political processes appears to be essential. The rules of the political game, the centralization and hierarchy of political authority as well as the lack of openness in decision making processes are some of the obstacles to participation for a great number of women. From there stems the need to participate in the construction of countervailing powers, which are no longer overshadowed by unequal relations between women and men. The challenge that is unfolding for women is apparent from the following steps:

- Develop methods to transfer solidarity practices towards the « dominant » sectors,
- Develop communication and sensitivity towards public opinion; diversify the subjects (other than militants and specialists) and the means (for example, press articles, television, etc.),
- Encourage women and women's groups to speak out, and support the subsequent activities (training tools, debate opportunities, resources for animation and communication, etc.),
- Set up spaces for diverse expression (word, art, celebrations, etc.) adapted to the context, physical places endowed with means, meeting places allowing shared and public expression,
- Develop mechanisms to allow participation in the decision making stages that exert an influence on the place of women in the economy and the inclusion of the values of solidarity and justice between men and women in economic relations: locally, nationally and globally.

The Workshop on Economic Policy made proposals in the same direction, stressing the importance of democratization and the renewing of democratic methods of participation⁵.

⁵The workshop has proposed, among other things: to contribute to an overhaul of State democracy based on human and social rights, State as democratic chamber for conflicts, expression of the diversity of actors; the reorganization

Let us finish by mentioning that a change of mentality is a fundamental requisite for a sustainable transformation of economic relations, including solidarity and justice among all, women, men and children. Picking out the areas of education and «consciousness raising », it seems to us to be important that the proposals and recommendations are transmitted to allies involved with value and culture, education, government and citizenship.

5- STRATEGIES AND ACTORS

The strategies as well as the actors likely to put these proposals into practice are many, as are the time perspectives (short to long term) and the areas of action (from local to global). It goes without saying that it is impossible to anticipate now all the strategies and actors concerned. Considering the magnitude of the challenges – developing a new model, building methodological tools and spotlighting women’s contributions – collaboration between the several actors becomes essential.

Besides focusing on those who favor a transformation of the underlying values of economic activity, promotional work with the agents of economic life is necessary in order that they become a relevant part of the process of change. A certain number of companies, producers and investors already share some of our values and some of our goals, at least in theory and sometimes in practice. Identifying them and forging contact are among the follow-ups envisaged during the Workshop. However, the main priority appears to be aiming towards a shared vision.

The work of the WSSE (Workshop on a Solidarity Socioeconomy) at Findhorn has enabled us to advance in the formulation of a shared vision of the “Solidarity Socioeconomy” taking into account women’s specific contribution and innovations. :

«Given that wealth is a social creation, we maintain that the socioeconomy is an open, diverse and dynamic system that allows everybody, especially women, to take their place in society and in the economic environment on a basis of equality, autonomy and solidarity. The objective is to build associative, solidarity forms of property, of control and management of the economy and natural resources.

We consider the Socioeconomy as a new paradigm of consumption, production and social and humane relations in which the value of solidarity collaboration plays a pivotal role.

We consider the Socioeconomy as a basis for empowering (more responsibility/more autonomy) women, men and children in order that they become subjects of their own humane and social development that is part of the development of life on the Earth and in the Universe. »

We recognize the need for strategies adapted to the various proposals of the Workshop. Fundamental and sustainable change always demands a process of constructive confrontation between theory and practice.

Education is also essential and must adapt to the circumstances and contexts in which people live and work. It is important to make literacy and basic education accessible, particularly to women, as a basis for personal development, understanding and democratic participation in decision-making that concerns « socioeconomic » life. The Workgroup on Values and Culture, in particular the Workshop on Education, and the Workgroup on Governance and Citizenship are very specifically concerned with the setting up of global strategies concerning education. Thus, we call upon them to identify the levers for provoking or encouraging change, i.e. forge the conditions of a « civil society » in movement towards global change.

of politics, a search for new ways of conducting politics, the passage from representation to direct participation, devolution of resources, decentralization of power, citizens’ control of the State apparatus, strengthening the role of advisory councils within public institutions, public discussion about budgets, economic policy and priorities within all governmental agencies, reinforcing the Legislative by removing from the Executive the exclusive right to make economic decisions, establishing methods of democratic participation prior to decision making processes and the signing of multilateral or international agreements; recognizing the initiatives of the solidarity economy.

Women's groups, mixed sympathiser groups, feminist and pro-feminist researchers, feminist research associations and those that work in the field as professional personnel are the partners to associate around the overall Workshop's strategies. Other agents will be added according to the proposals.

Proposal 1: Deconstruction of myths

Myths become embedded in the imagination and shape thoughts and actions without people necessarily realizing it. Becoming aware is difficult, especially demanding if it is the result of questioning the choice and fashion of everyday life. « Affective », « scientific » and other resistances often prevent women, as much as men, from understanding and imagining differently. For this reason, deconstructing myths is as much a personal step as a collective one. Rarely spontaneous, personal or collective progress can result from contact with efficiently transmitted information: identification of debates, written documents, actions that maintain undesirable myths with respect to women and the relation between sexes. Educational institutes at all levels, the media as well as artistic practices and contact with the arts are particularly likely to contribute, in their way, to the emergence of an apt imagination for participating in the construction of a world that is more responsible and more united.

Proposal 2: Reformulating basic economic concepts

Reformulating economic concepts on a basis of women's innovative contributions means carrying out basic work, including a « systematic » collection of their ideas and initiatives. Also, in order to move towards the priorities already sketched out, it is important to equip ourselves with the means of registering, understanding, analyzing, imagining and “modelling” work in all its diversity; one thinks particularly of its creative dimension and human resourcefulness, and the production chain, basis for the satisfaction of fundamental needs. Furthermore, the strategies proposed take into account an everyday life that forces us all, women and men, to consume goods and services produced outside the domestic, community and local circuit, and it is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to live in an appropriate manner without renewing the ties between rebuilt local markets and global markets. Here they are:

- Use an appropriate methodology to understand and put together women's practices, those of intermediaries (space of convergence and revindication) and spaces of reflection (space of work and conceptual and theoretical exchange).
- Redevelop production chains beginning locally; linking the local and global markets; linking domestic, voluntary, non-paid activity with those of the commercial and trading circuits etc.
- Examine the tension between « drives » that are not always compatible, i.e. the individual « desire » to consume and that of changing the « dominant » consumption paradigm. One knows that in many contexts, women are seen as « responsible » for daily consumption. Regardless the socioeconomic origin and the financial means at their disposal, many women are aware of this tension between the desire to consume and the impossibility of supporting the « dominant » model. Participants in the Workshop on Women and the Economy had raised the importance of depending on the possibilities of fair trade, voluntary simplicity, the development of collective purchasing and use of equipment, and solidarity production. These approaches are similar to ideas put forward by the « social money », « fair trade » and « ethical consumption » workshops, among others.
- Set up solidarity exchange systems: time banks, mutual credit, community currency etc.
- Link the different forms and sectors of the solidarity economy, starting with the local dimension.
- Develop solidarity economy circuits from local level to global level.

Fair trade and ethical consumption networks, solidarity finance and local development networks can contribute to the researchers upon whom rests the challenge of presenting and proposing, in an organized and systematic fashion, the new concepts and models that are emerging.

Proposal 3: Design varied and adapted indicators for wealth and labor

The pooling of resources carried out within the framework of the Findhorn Synthesis Meeting has enabled us to formulate a proposal aimed at re-examining wealth and labor on the basis of objectives ensuing from the work of

several workshops⁶. The strategic axes subsequently chosen revolve around the identification, evaluation and conception of varied and adapted indicators of wealth and labor; the development of reconstructed fields in order to link the sectoral workshops within, for example, a workshop on indicators; experimentation, evaluation and a larger diffusion of practices regarding money; appropriation, transfer, education. The actions necessary should be adapted to those we intend to reach: women, practitioners and contributors on the ground, partners within networks, researchers.

Already this proposal has given rise to exchanges where actions aimed to structure this strategy concretely were foreseen:

- Bring to the fore an Internet forum dedicated to the theme of indicators; develop an method for animating the workshop on indicators.
- Use the approach of the Alliance and the follow-up as a «laboratory» where one can experiment on partnerships, the recognition of the respective contributions (notably time and money) based on the values and the participatory process.

Over and above work that can be carried out with the help of the Alliance, many national and international authorities hold mandates with regard to the development and calculation of indicators about the quality of life, human and social development, the situation of women, etc. Their work should reflect the concerns that we have identified as priorities. In order to assert an influence, it is important to:

- Provide us with the means to know which work already exists and their underlying values, analyse them, criticize them and reshape them according to the values and the recognition of women's concerns and contributions. Among those concerned: The United Nations Program for Development (UNPD) and the work of other United Nations (UN) agencies, those responsible for systems of national accountability (GDP, labor charges, natural resources etc.)
- Diffuse innovative work that is concerned with the dimensions to include in indicator systems and with the appropriate methodology to reflect the proposed issues: highlight and include the human, social and environmental costs of production, consumption and exchange; make known the work already carried out in Italy on the «time banks», etc.

Proposal 4: Contribute to bringing together and consolidating existing networks that act in the field of « Women and the Economy ».

Several networks are active in updating and defending renewed relationships between women and the economy. Let us mention for example: the follow-up to the 2000 International Women's March, the Beijing +5 follow-up group, the women's networks that have joined forces regionally, like the women's associations working in the informal economy such as the SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association, which has brought together more than 200,000 female producers and merchants from the state of Gujarat in India), Mujeres Transformando la Economia in Latin-America, and the networks of economists who have attempted to redefine the economy from a feminist point of view, such as the Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE), etc. Thus the strategies of application for this proposal implies:

- Following up the directions set out in the 4th part of the text through personal and collective commitments and contributions.
- Stressing the work of participants and sympathisHERs from the Workshop on Women and the Economy. An enlargement and increased knowledge of the activities and positions of the different networks happens through the development of both formal and informal links: particularly Internet links to enhance the site of the Workshop on Women and the Economy, involvement in activities, a presence in different networks, issues in common etc.
- Diffusing and fully debating this report. Actions with this in mind are already in preparation, notably in Latin America and Quebec.

⁶ This proposal is the following: stop linking wealth and work; acknowledge the value of other forms of work; acknowledge the multifunctional nature of work; recognize traditional knowledge and the knowledge of experience; organize living and production spaces on the basis of the needs of people and communities; select the priorities on the basis of the human livelihood; assure women access to rights and resources, etc.

The programs of preferential partners are the ones likely to support the work of active networks. It is particularly worth mentioning the UNIFEM and programs relating to women, organizations of international cooperation, non-governmental organizations, etc. The associations, groups and networks mobilized in order to transform economic relationships such as the World Social Forum, ATTAC, Slow Food, SalAmi. Adbusters (No shopping day), Voluntary Simplicity (*Simplicité Volontaire*) are also potential allies.

Proposal 5: Revindicate the expression of creativity and diversity of economic initiatives

Supporting women in the expression of their creativity is first of all a matter of a movement by women and towards women, individually and collectively. It is also a political step since public expression of differences or traditionally unacceptable behavior demands a change in the laws as much as in mentality. Finally, setting in place the appropriate mechanisms for encouraging the expression of creativity is everybody's responsibility at every level, from local to global.

The indispensable agents of this proposal are women and their immediate environment, the networks and groups working to support and accompany women's initiatives, often community or para-public. Always crucial are those responsible for laws and regulation guaranteeing women's rights.

Proposal 6: Develop political practices to help the development of solidarity economy relations

As mentioned from the beginning of this text, women want to be recognized as fully-fledged citizens and to participate in the procedures of a truly democratic and « open » State. This is an issue shared by several workshops, among them the Workshop on Economic Policy. In the current state of relationships that women maintain with different States, the implications for them of the most promising strategies are to:

- Recognize, clarify and/or accept the complex relationship between women, and groups of women, and the State
- Recognize the gains of their varied experiences with the State, notably in the development of their self-confidence, their capacity of public expression and leadership at the heart of their organizations
- Preserve the autonomous orientation and action of women's groups, despite the importance of collective support for their actions, which is often linked to public financing
- Contribute to the definition of new relationships between the State, the market and civil society in terms of democratic practices: respect the diversity and multidimensional initiatives, adaptation of rules and contextual standards etc.
- Strengthen the territory, particularly by putting the accent on action at the local level, in neighborhood centers
- Develop communication strategies to spread the word about women's concerns: contents, targets and means.

The main actors for the application of this proposal are the women's groups, organizations and networks already active in political spheres, researchers who can contribute to the structuring of the debate and of written documents most likely to influence political authorities directly. Preferential partners are the consultative bodies and authorities responsible for women's rights in governmental structures.

ANNEXE 1: INFORMATION SOURCES

Some additional sources of information on the themes discussed in the report are presented here. These are for information only or as references for the text. Clearly many other publications are not mentioned that would be sources of inspiration for the follow-up work of the Workshop on Women and the Economy and the WSSE.

About the recognition of all forms of work, women's non-paid work and its invisibility in national accounting, the scale, complexity and intensity of women's productive activities, the works of Marilyn Waring, agriculturist and ecologist from New Zealand:

WARING, M., 1997, *Three Masquerades: Essays on Equality, Work and Human Rights*, Univ. of Toronto Press.

WARING Marilyn, (1988), *If Women Counted. A New Feminist Economics*. New York: Harper & Row.

Who's Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics, a film from the National Film Board, Canada.

About work and wealth,

MÉDA Dominique (1999). *Qu'est-ce que la richesse*. Paris : Alto/Aubier

MÉDA Dominique (1995). *Le Travail. Une valeur en voie de disparition*. Paris: Alto/Aubier.

MÉDA Dominique et Juliet SCHOR (1997). *Travail, une révolution à venir*. Paris: Mille et une nuits/Arte Éditions.

About «caring», «care giving»,

FOLBRE Nancy (2001). *The Invisible Heart*. New York: The New Press.

About the visible and invisible economy,

HENDERSON Hazel, (1995). *Paradigms In Progress. Life Beyond Economics*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

PIETILÄ Hilka (1997). The Triangle of the Human Economy: Household-Cultivation-Industrial Production. An attempt at making visible the human economy in toto. *The Journal of the International Society for Ecological Economics*. Vol 20 No 2 pp.113-127

FERBER, M. A., NELSON, J. A. (Ed.) (1993), *Beyond Economic Man*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 178 p.

FOLBRE, N., (1997) *De la différence des sexes en économie politique*, Paris, Coll. des femmes, 238 p.

About debates on citizen's revenues or universal allowances, work in Europe and North America concerning ways of procuring revenue security based on citizenship, and not on productivity:

BERNARD Michel et Michel CHARTRAND (1999). *Manifeste pour un revenu de citoyenneté*. Montréal : Éditions du renouveau québécois.

BLAIS François (2001). *Un revenu garanti pour tous. Introduction aux principes de l'allocation universelle*. Montréal : Boréal.

FERRY Jean-Marc (1995). *L'Allocation universelle. Pour un revenu de citoyenneté*. Paris : Cerf.

La Revue du MAUSS « Vers un revenu minimum inconditionnel » no 7, 1^{er} semestre 1996. (articles from Alain Caillé, Robert Castel, Bernard Eme et Jean-Louis Laville, Jean-Marc Ferry, Jean-Marie Harribey, Dominique Méda, Philippe Van Parijs).

VAN PARIJS Philippe, dir.(1992). *Arguing for Basic Income*. London/New York : Verso.

In the ecology and development field, the work of practitioners involved particularly in community economic development, advocating the pre-eminence of the local area and everyday life, the works of Barbara Brandt, organizer and activist from the United States of America, and women of the South:

Barbara BRANDT (1995). *Whole Life Economics. Revaluating Daily Life*. Philadelphia (USA)/Gabriola Island (BC) : New Society Publishers.

SEN Gita & Caren GROWN (1987). *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions*. New York : Monthly Review Press.

SHIVA Vandana (1989). *Staying Alive. Women, Ecology and Development*. London : Zed Books.

About human development,

L. PARPART Jane, M. Patricia CONNELLY & V. Eudine BARRITEAU, eds (2000). *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*. Ottawa : International Development Research Center (IDRC).

PNUD (1997, 1999, 2001), *International report on human development*

SITE AND ALL CONTRIBUTIONS

Site: women.socioeco.org

Co-organizers of the Workshop: Josée Belleau ; Cécile Sabourin.

Participants at the seminar in Paris:

Rabia Abdelkrim-Chikh, Sénégal; Maria Teresa Battaglino, Italia; Josée Belleau, Canada; Annie Berger, France; Emanuela Buscemi, Italia; Halimatou Diallo, Burkina Faso; Dominique Foufelle, France; Laurent Fraise, France; Madeleine Hersent, France; Maria Rosa Lotti, Italia; Marie-Hélène Mottin-Sylla, Sénégal; Joelle Palmieri, France; Sandra Quintela, Brasil; Cécile Sabourin, Canada; Catherine Souissi, France; Pierrette Soumbou, France; Marlène Tuinunga, France.

Participants at the seminar in Havana

Guadalupe Abdo Infante, Mexico; Maritza Alva, Peru; Angelica Alvarez, Chile; Josée Belleau, Canada; Nalu Faria, Brasil; Tania Garcia, Cuba; Ana Cecilia Hernandez, El Salvador ; Nora Hernandez, El Salvador; Zenaida Joachin, El Salvador; José Hipolito dos Santos, Portugal; Yanira Kuper Herrera, Cuba; Lizavetta Marbelí Lanuza, Nicaragua; Blanca Munster, Cuba; Rosa Maria Mejivar, El Salvador; Vilanece Oliveira da Silva, Brasil; Sandra Quintela, Brasil; Herminia Rodriguez, Cuba; Cécile Sabourin, Canada; Maria Ulloa, Colombia.

Electronic forum

Participants who contributed to the discussion: Baye Gueye Diop, Louise Yanga, Oumou Lam, Jacqueline Dianbangouayila, Rabia Abdelkrim-Chikh, Danielle Fournier, Laurent Fraise, Mariateresa Battaglino, Madeleine Hersent, Patricia E. Perkins, José Hipolito dos Santos; textes from Joëlle Palmieri and Dominique Foufelle posted on the Pénélopes website presenting interviews with Pierrette Soumbou and Sandra Quintela.

Informal caucus, “women and economy”, at Findhorn:

Rabia Abdelkrim-Chikh, Guadalupe Abdo Infante, Maritza Alva, Josée Belleau, May East, Blanca Munster, Patricia Patino, Sandra Quintela, Cécile Sabourin.

Explicit support from a great number of women and some men during the meeting at Findhorn: «the women’s question is paramount and runs through everything» in the workshops, plenary sessions and the corridors of the meeting at Findhorn: especially Jean-Patrick Abhelson, Meredith Ailloud, Marcos Arruda, Sylvie Bourinet, Laurent Fraise, Yoko Kitazawa, Cécile Lapenu, Armando Lisboa, Pascale Morand, Heloisa Primavera, Alain Simon, Catherine Souissi, Françoise Wautiez, Chilo Villareal.

QUESTIONNAIRE

We would be very happy to have your opinion on the proposals contained in this notebook. In order to facilitate this task, you will find below some questions to which we hope you will take the time to answer. Your assessments and comments will be very important for the continuation of the collective work. We hope that the reading of this notebook will inspire you and will bring you to read other Proposal Papers of the Workgroup on Solidarity Socio-Economy and of the Alliance (see <http://www.alliance21.org/en/proposals>.)

We also invite you to indicate what are, for you, the proposals most crucial and important to build alternatives to the present model of globalization, and to suggest projects that would represent the practical application of these proposals.

The Proposal papers:

- What is your opinion on the notebook in general?

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- On the diagnosis?

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- On the proposals?

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The proposals

- What are the proposals you agree with?

Numbers:.....
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➤ Any comments?
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➤ What are the most useful proposals for your everyday action? In what way (inspiration for the action, for lobbying, for experience sharing...)?
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➤ What are the proposals you don't agree with? Why?
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The future

➤ What suggestions would you do for the follow-up of this workshop?
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THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO BE SENT BACK TO FRANÇOISE WAUTIEZ, EMAIL:<[MAILTO:PSES-SP@ALLIANCE21.ORG](mailto:PSES-SP@ALLIANCE21.ORG)>