

Street School:

For public understanding
of corruption and economics
and building a better future



This leaflet is **A** bout why the economy and environment are in a big mess and what we can do. It's increasingly likely this system will #pop#. People aren't being given the full picture. The way we produce and distribute wealth can be done in a Just way:

- Without poverty and exploitation
- Without wrecking our planet

There are vested interests at work and barriers to good information, so confusion can reign, but really it's not so complicated! There are ways to protect your family and community.

For more information: www.streetschooleconomics.wordpress.com

In the UK
0.3% of the
population
owns 69% of
the land

Our economy is **B**ased on the "neo-liberal" school of thought.
Neo-liberal economics are seriously flawed:

- They have massively increased poverty, inequality and the destruction of the environment.
- They ignore the role of debt and so they don't predict financial crises.
- Neo-liberal dominance has largely been achieved by force and secrecy
- There are alternatives, much better ways to run our economy.

Economic success could be based on our happiness and protecting the environment (rather than growth whatever the cost). You can understand markets, wealth, capital, money, etc and decide what kind of economy you want.

See: www.streetschooleconomics.wordpress.com

Why is such a broken system not being changed? - because it is systemically **C**orrupt...

- Tax havens facilitate corruption, they hold between £13 and £20 Trillion of assets, They are used for illicit political donations and to get round regulation.
- There are 4000 people working professionally in the UK's £2billion lobbying industry.
- For every \$1 spent on lobbying, a company can expect \$100 return on the "investment".
- Wealthy donors and owners shape the focus of media, think-tanks & academic institutions

Why are the forces of Corruption so powerful?
Because they control the money and keep the rest of us in Debt so we have to pay them interest...

"Poverty, great wealth and democracy are ultimately incompatible elements in any society" - NYE BEVAN



DEBT CORRUPTION

Most money is created when banks type **D**ebt figures into bank accounts. There is very little control of this process, leading to huge increases in debt amongst householders, businesses and banks. (Government debt is much smaller but is a great excuse for cuts). Interest payments go from poor to rich people; think debt slavery.

Debt based economies are unstable (a new crisis is on its way) and lead to:

- Inflation - the value of money and savings decline and we need more money to buy the same things.
- A need for economic growth, cheap energy and natural resources, otherwise recession comes.
- Pressure on transport systems and a need to expand away from local production:
In 2004, the UK imported £310m of beer and exported £313m of beer!
- Waste through breakable, disposable goods; quantity over quality.
- Life choices based on the need to repay debts or get on the property ladder and the general feeling we all carry: of being spread too thin.

Neo-liberals want to overcome our debt crisis by getting back to economic growth, but the limits to growth are being reached.

Only 3% of
money is notes
and coins;
97% are digits
in computers
registering
debts.

We have **D**epleted the earth's natural resources and its capacity to cope with our activities.

Our entire way of life has been built on the availability of cheap energy. As supplies diminish, the energy required to extract resources increases; cheap energy is no longer cheap. Energy prices will go up and up.

We also have the challenge of a rising and ageing population. Chaotic changes in weather patterns are affecting the global economy, increasing food prices, insurance and damaging infrastructure.

Climate change is such a big subject it is easy to stick our head in the sand, hope that "somehow" we and our children will be OK. In the fossil record there was a rapid climate change triggered by volcanic activity, which killed 95% of all species. We are currently on the same path, but solutions exist

"Anybody who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist."
- KENNETH BOULDING

The richest are able to buy gated communities and private security and health. What will be left for the rest of us?

Actions you can take as an individual / family

- Build your resilience by reducing your dependence on a failing system!
- Reduce your need for energy for heating and transport
- Reduce your debts and resist the pull to shop for things you don't need
- Grow food at home and on allotments.
- Be an active part of your community, join local initiatives (see below)
- Join a campaign or union, fight back! (e.g. Positive money, Tax Justice UK)
- Move Your Money from corrupt banks to ethical providers (a UK campaign)
- Shop local, ethical and fairtrade, join coops; who supplies your energy?
- Stay healthy; fasting and seasonal local food helps
- Get informed outside the mainstream- fore-warned is forearmed - and have fun!
- Spread economic literacy- share street school economics

Details are given in www.streetschooleconomics.wordpress.com/future

Actions that can be taken at a Community Level

- Develop a local currency like the Stroud Pound
- Develop a local Community Supported Agriculture
- Promote boycotts of tax-dodging companies
- Develop a local farmers market and online local shop (like Stroudco)
- Increase community owned renewable energy
- Become a transition town and look for ways to localise the economy

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BUILDING
BETTER
A
FUTURE

"Remember the Golden Rule: those with the gold make the rules"

- JOHN CHRISTENSEN (TAX JUSTICE NETWORK)

Draft Manifesto for Economic Justice

1. An Economy for the people and planet

Support the development of a mixed, locally-focussed economy: small private enterprises, larger cooperatives and public ownership of things best run as monopolies.

2. Reduce the potential for corruption

- Tackle tax havens and tax dodging
- Tackle inequality which allows the wealthy to have a larger voice
- Limit the scale of political donations and lobbying
- Support transparency in lobbying (see Who's Lobbying for more details)
- Localise decision making as far as possible, introduce liquid democracy
- Prosecute the board members of businesses who break the rules

3. Tackle the Debt Crisis and prevent another from happening

- Replace capital controls
- Re- regulate the financial sector to give complete separation ordinary banking and investments. Use a Financial Transaction Tax to reduce speculation to a minimum. Loans should only be made as sound investments.
- Make it illegal for any enterprise other than the State and local cooperatives to create the nation's money.
- Run a citizens debt audit and cancel toxic debts owed by Governments
- Instigate a Modern Debt Jubilee – give everyone some money to pay off debts
- Spend money into the Economy through a Green New Deal
- Put credit into the economy by giving everyone a Citizens income

4. Transform from an economy based on fossil fuels to renewables with reduced consumption

- Undertake a "Great Transition" of the economy as outlined by NEF
- Localise food production through cooperative, permaculture farms
- Use Green taxes, regulations and tariffs to reduce carbon footprints and pollution
- Invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and support community ownership

5. Tackle inequality and level the playing field

- Promote cooperatives and employee owned businesses based on peer progressive principles
- Limit the pay differentials in any business to 20:1
- Introduce a land value charge (and charges for the use of other commons) to free land back to ordinary people.
Remove the charging of interest for loans (other charges would remain)
- Build publicly, cooperatively owned infrastructure, housing and health services.

