

We Live in a World of Abundance

When We Share and Manage It . . . as a *Commons*

For centuries, Indigenous Peoples all over the world have understood and implemented this idea. They have maintained a direct connection with Nature that most of us have largely forgotten or lost. As a direct result of this lack of connection and failure to really appreciate and care for Nature we are now suffering economic, environmental and many other hardships.

What can we do – as individuals working together – to restore our proper relationship with Life? How can we ensure that all people can participate in protecting, managing and equitably sharing our common resources so that all of humanity *and* Nature can thrive?

The answer lies in *stewarding the resources we all need openly and democratically as a commons*. Thanks to millions of examples (see below), we won't be starting from scratch.

Commons Have Three Aspects

- **Commons Goods** – *resources a community collectively stewards or produces*
- **Commoners** -- *stakeholders who steward and produce these resources for all involved*
- **Commoning** – *an open and democratic form of making decisions about commons goods*

Commons Action for the United Nations was formed in 2009 to work together with other commons groups worldwide to create a commons-based global community and economy. The target date for accomplishing this is 2030. Commons Action has since expanded and is now working with numerous Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the UN as the **Commons Cluster** to more effectively advocate commons-based solutions to global problems.

We are currently:

- developing a Peoples Sustainability Treaty on the Commons;
- coordinating Commons work through The Widening Circles process (see: <http://sustainabilitytreaties.org> and <http://www.wideningcircle.org>); and,
- creating a Commons Abundance Network that will enable us as commons communities and networks to work together and learn from one another.

Our strategy: *To impact decision making top down via the UN by helping the Commons Abundance Network to expand into a bottom-up, commons-based global economy and community.*

Details on how *you* can contribute – are outlined below. But first, let's look at **what the commons idea is all about**.

All of us collectively create/build the world we live in today through the sum of the actions we take or do not take. This means that each of us is a ***global commoner*** whether we are conscious of it or not. Once we recognize this, we can realize how critical it is to actively practice the art of commoning and to do so for the well-being of all people and the planet.

Commoning is about sharing our resources and taking joint responsibility for them. The goal is to empower and enrich all of us with our combined efforts – something no one person can do alone.

Commoning can take place on a local to global scale. It involves sharing responsibility for resources we all need with our family, our communities or even with people worldwide.

It can involve growing a vegetable garden or building a park on a vacant lot; fishermen making agreements to safeguard dwindling fish stocks; university professors making their courseware available to everyone worldwide on the Internet; people from every part of the world sharing knowledge via Wikipedia; creating our public funds by levying rent for the use of land and natural resources instead of taxing labor and the production of goods and services; and, involving all the peoples of the world in governing by developing participatory decision-making processes.

One billion people are registered members of collectively owned and/or managed commons-type businesses called **cooperatives**. These include credit unions, banks, supermarkets, health insurance companies and much more. Cooperatives often flourish despite times of economic hardship because all members share responsibilities and contribute and, as a result, all benefit.

Commoning creates goodwill because it takes the needs of all into consideration. It creates abundance because people work together to steward and produce the resources they all need. When we use the commons approach to care for our environment we make it more resilient and sustainable. This benefits our children and children's children because they will need access to land and natural resources as well as healthy waters, air and all forms of life to be able to survive. Indigenous Peoples have lived this way for ages and there is much we can learn from and with them.

YOU Can Help Nurture This World-Changing Process

- 1) Learn about the commons. Take an on-line course, read our books and articles, or participate in a workshop.
- 2) Join or form a commons yourself and share any inspiring experiences you have with others via the newsletters of our various language coordination centers. To learn more, visit: commonsactionfortheunitednations.org
- 3) Help your commons to connect with the Commons Abundance Network. Work together to form commons trusts and commons-based public finance policies that safeguard commons resources from enclosure.
- 4) Participate in our advocacy work at the United Nations in either or both of two ways: by joining our Instant Action Network that allows you to participate in UN conferences and do advocacy work from your home; or, by joining the UN team working at a UN Conference.
- 5) Influence global policy by joining our research and/or letter-writing teams that communicate with world leaders and the UN officials. You also can organize actions to influence your own governments.
- 6) Help design, support, and implement the Peoples Sustainability Treaty on the Commons at <http://sustainabilitytreaties.org> and/or participate in the Commons Widening Circles process (<http://www.wideningcircle.org>). Or help us create and support the adoption of a Sustainable Development Goal on the Commons. Contact robwheeler22@gmail.com
- 7) Help to coordinate and enhance all of our work by participating in regular strategy meetings held online by Commons Action for the United Nations.
- 8) Become the coordinator of a Language Centre and act as go-between between those who speak your native tongue and those working internationally and at the UN.

For more information, contact:

In your language area:

Internationally: CommonsActionUN@gmail.com

www.commonSACTIONfortheUnitedNations.org