

FEMINIST ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

FOR A JUST RECOVERY

OUTLOOKS FROM THE SOUTH

OCTOBER | 2020



GENDER
JUSTICE AND
DISMANTLING
THE PATRIARCHY

ECONOMIC
JUSTICE AND
RESISTING
NEOLIBERALISM



**Friends of
the Earth
International**

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friends of the earth internacional | world march of women | latin american on women transforming the economy
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FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL is the world's largest grassroots environmental network with 73 member groups and over two million members and supporters around the world.

Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfilment in which equity and human and peoples' rights are realised. This will be a society built upon peoples' sovereignty and participation. It will be founded on social, economic, gender and environmental justice and be free from all forms of domination and exploitation, such as neoliberalism, corporate globalisation, neo-colonialism and militarism. We believe that our children's future will be better because of what we do.

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN is a feminist, anticapitalist and antiracist movement, present in 58 countries and territories. Changing the world and changing women's lives in one single movement. Equality for all. Strengthening women's collective spaces: popular, autonomous and diverse. Creative actions to confront heteropatriarchal and racist capitalism. Alliances with social movements in the fight to transform the world. Linking permanent activism at the local level with global processes and struggles. Solidarity and internationalism. These are the principal characteristics of the World March of Women.

THE LATIN AMERICAN NETWORK ON WOMEN TRANSFORMING THE ECONOMY since starting in 1997, REMTE has been a key driver of feminist economics in Latin America. Its work in generating debates and policy initiatives contributes to making feminism a collective subject in the struggles to transform economic relations, and is guided by a worldwide questioning of the capitalist, racist and patriarchal system and the construction of an economy based on life.

Cover photo: Women's protest at the Rio+20 Peoples' Summit. The poster reads: "For feminism, capitalism has no echo". Rio de Janeiro, 2012. Jessika Martins, World March of Women Brazil.

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PRESENTATION



Photo: 'March of the Daisies' in Brasília, 2019. The poster reads: "We are women in resistance for a country without violence". Isadora Mendes, World March of Women Brazil.

In June 2020, the Social Worldwide Transformative Economies Forum was held, which brought together hundreds of organisations and movements that work in the areas of solidarity and social economics, ecology, feminism, agroecology, ethical finance and the defence of the Commons. The Latin American Network on Women Transforming the Economy (REMTE), Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) and the World March of Women Brazil (MMM) participated in the forum's organisational process, which brought about discussion and feminist convergence. The need to expand transformative practices in the economy, which are carried out in different places worldwide, is now even more urgent, considering how the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the permanent crisis of the capitalist economy in such a severe and painful way.

To structure these reflections, REMTE and Friends of the Earth International invited the World March of Women to participate in the webinar "Feminist Economics and Environmentalism: Envisioning a Fair and Just Recovery: Outlooks from the South". In this publication, the talks given by the invitees Nalu Faria (member of the International Committee of the World March of Women) and Karin Nansen (President of Friends of the Earth International), are followed by a chapter that presents the diverse voices that came together in the virtual discussion, interspersed with the comments and replies by the speakers.

A video recording of the webinar can be accessed through the World March of Women Brazil's YouTube channel <http://bit.ly/recuperacaofeminista> and on the web page of Real World Radio <http://bit.ly/miradasdelsurfeminista>. As the debate was mainly held in Spanish and Portuguese, we decided to publish a written version in Portuguese, Spanish and English.

More than 100 people followed the live conference, which was subsequently viewed more than 500,000 times. Participants spoke from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mozambique, Australia, Holland, Germany, Japan, Scotland, Togo, Ecuador, Spain, South Africa, Peru,

Uruguay, Colombia and Iran. In addition to the member groups from MMM, FoEI and REMTE, another 15 social movements and organisations participated on YouTube or in the Zoom chat room.

The call for the virtual encounter had already expressed the organisations' common viewpoint, namely that the Covid-19 crisis is a result of the capitalist, racist and patriarchal system. The initial question to invitees was, "What are the contributions from environmentalism and feminist economics for an economy based upon justice?". This was the subject of discussion for the first block of 15-minute interventions, which were followed by brief interventions by 10 people on that issue, who were mostly women.

As a result, we had more than two hours of discussion about how environmentalism and feminism contribute to the construction of an economy that focuses on life itself, and would facilitate a just recovery based on solidarity and standing up to the systemic causes of the pandemic.

The participants' interventions indicate the need for a systemic change, linked to the construction of food sovereignty and the convergence of social movements in internationalist unity. It is strengthened and bound by the local experiences of resistance and organisation, and the reaffirmation of public interest and decommodification in all spheres of life.

Friends of the Earth International, the World March of Women Brazil and the Latin American Network on Women Transforming the Economy.

FEMINIST ECONOMICS:

The sustainability of life as the central axis when facing the Covid-19 crisis¹

Nalu Faria²

01



Photo: Nalu Faria at the Meeting of the Continental Day for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism, in Montevideo, 2017. Isadora Mendes, World March of Women Brazil.

The debate on the so-called Covid-19 crisis and the responses to it shows transformative economies to be very relevant in envisioning a fair and just recovery.

Social movements have reiterated that the current crisis has been triggered by the capitalist model, from with the actual origin of the virus to the way it has entered our countries, which were already facing a crisis resulting from austerity and public policy cuts. In other words, the pandemic arrived in the South in a situation where life itself was already precarious.

Simultaneously, the ways in which the majority of governments have responded to the pandemic exposes and deepens the dramatic situation in which we find ourselves.

In Latin America, we have seen that the majority of governments did not offer adequate responses to the Covid-19 crisis. Once again, governments have prioritised the market to the detriment of emergency policies and the strengthening of public health systems.

As everyone already knows, the Brazilian government is intentionally genocidal and has wholly rejected the recommendations and norms proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to contain the virus' propagation. It also opposes physical isolation. The possibility of proper isolation has been greatly limited due to the reality that the majority of Brazilians have had to continue working, risking their lives to survive day to day.

In Brazil, great expectations were raised in regard to the strike by delivery people, those who work with bicycles and motorcycles doing express delivery for various platforms such as Ifood and Rappi. This mobilisation is an indication that resistance is beginning to strengthen, and shows us where it's coming from.

The impacts of Covid-19 are not uniform throughout the population. In our countries, it is clear how women, workers and particularly the Black population have been the worst affected

by the pandemic. For women in isolation, we have seen a phenomenon that is happening all over the world: an increase in domestic and sexual violence and an overload in domestic work and care. Beyond this, women are disproportionately in precarious work positions and unemployed. They are also the majority in the health sector and professionals on the front-line facing the pandemic, with everything that implies.

As a result, we must emphasise that the pandemic and associated crisis have revealed the inequalities in our country and especially highlighted the interests of the powerful sectors in our societies. Whilst the hegemonic policy prioritises the market to the detriment of human life, the crisis has revealed what is really necessary and essential to sustaining human life.

All of this relates to long-standing discussions within the social movements, regarding experiences of feminist economics and its contributions towards a fair and just recovery.

From the feminist economics perspective, we believe that the economy is not only a field for analysis and study but also an instrument of struggle. The meaning behind a critical economy is to understand the world in order to transform it. At the same time, dialogue is essential between feminist economics and the other economics and counter-hegemonic movements, such as ecology, small farmers movements, solidarity economy, food sovereignty and other forms of transformative economies that seek to break with the current model.

The second question that arises from our experience in the World March of Women is about how to build processes in alliance with other social movements. We believe that to transform the current model, we must establish programmatic convergences and syntheses between the various issues that we work on, ranging from ecology to food sovereignty, and (as mentioned above) workers', anti-racist and LGBTQ organisations.



Photo: International Women's Day, 8 March 2020, in São Paulo, Brazil. Elaine Campos, World March of Women Brazil.

From our point of view, a fair and just recovery must break completely from the heteropatriarchal, capitalist, racist, colonist and destructive model. Therefore, our response must be comprehensive in proposing both a break from the rationale of capital and the construction of a new model.

In feminist economics, we flag the need to put the sustainability of life at the centre, starting with well-being. This is linked to the fundamental conflict between life and capital and implies a radical reorganisation of the model of production, consumption and reproduction. What does this mean? We need to think about what, how and for whom we are going to produce to respond to our needs. We must also take reproduction into account, as it is vital when considering domestic and care work.

We are interested not only in the recognition of reproductive work and its importance, but also in recognising the unfair and unjust manner in which reproductive work is done nowadays, as women assume the majority of this work. We must urgently rethink a way to reorganise and redistribute domestic and care work.

Furthermore, there are two dimensions related to this recognition, namely that we are eco-dependent and that we are part of nature. The first means that we can only achieve sustainability of life through being in harmony with nature and respecting nature's processes. The second deals with the realisation that we, human beings, are vulnerable and relational beings, which means we must recognise that we are inter-dependent. We all need to be cared for, and we must consider this from the point of view of reciprocity.

These two dimensions raise some questions about the organisation of time and work. The current model imposes pressure upon our time, disrespects the time necessary for sustaining and reproducing life, be it nature or human life. The issue of time must be reconstructed as a crosscutting issue, related to everything we are building and proposing.

It is very important to acknowledge some of the Latin American experiences, both from urban social movements as well as peasant-led and Indigenous Peoples' movements, as their experiences point to the daily development of answers on how to sustain and maintain life. In many of these social movements, the majority

of participants and organisers are women. For example in cities, women participate in movements fighting for housing, day-care and schools, for basic sanitation and drinkable water. For many years, these movements were treated as movements fighting for survival, with specific demands. But over the years, from a feminist perspective that includes feminist economics, we have recognised how these movements have ensured that the market model is challenged, and developed resistance while also building alternatives.

This is related to the demand for public services from the State, and looking at the Commons from a public sector point of view. It is also linked to daily experiences with self-organised activities and solutions based on reciprocity.

It is so intriguing to think about how at this very moment, during the pandemic, solidarity actions are multiplying and strengthening. This is not only due to the emergency context itself, but also because solidarity forms part of the construction and experiences of diverse grassroots movements.

While facing the current crisis, we have seen how class solidarity has grown in our countries, presenting solidarity as an element of self-organisation. This shows us a path and a new dimension: that we want to an economic recovery based on social justice, by organising ourselves as collective subjects and ensuring democratic and autonomous participation. This will also allow us to demand that the State fulfil its public role.

This is an extremely important moment for our dialogue; we can see the need to enhance links between movements, including internationally. Our responses must be based on an array of global realities. The sustainability of life will become central if we can confront the current model in a way that responds to all people's needs.

1. Presentation in the webinar *Feminist Economics and environmentalism for a just recovery: outlooks from the South*, held on 30 July 2020.

2. Member of the International Committee of the World March of Women and the Network on Women Transforming Economies (REMTE).

3. N. de la E.: The mobilisation "breaking the apps" was held for the first time in Brazil on 1 July 2020 by thousands of delivery people for Internet platforms. Read more in Portuguese: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2020/07/09/repartidores-en-brasil-realizaran-un-nuevo-paro-el-25-de-julio-repartidores-en-brasil-realizaran-un-nuevo-paro-el-25-de-julio>

BEYOND COVID-19:

The crisis of capitalist accumulation and responses/solutions from the South

Karin Nansen⁴

02



Photo: Karin Nansen at the 4th session of United Nations negotiations for an Internationally Legal-ly Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations with Respect to Human Rights, 2018. Victor Barros, Friends of the Earth International.

Good morning to all brothers and sisters from all continents who have come together to participate in this exchange and debate. We at Friends of the Earth International greatly value this opportunity to be able to share with friends from the World March of Women and REMTE, and also with all the social organisations that have joined us for this discussion.

We think that it is essential to support each other so that we can better understand the origin of this crisis that reaches far beyond this terrible health crisis. In this way we can also bring together our political agendas and find the necessary responses to the profound crisis that we are facing today.

Accordingly, from our point of view, we must begin with a common understanding that the crisis that we are experiencing, the so-called “pandemic crisis” or the “Covid-19 crisis”, in reality extends far beyond the realm of health and is linked to the systemic crises that the system of capitalist accumulation has caused.

The health crisis is directly related to the other systemic crises, including the crises of climate, biodiversity, food, water, the economic crisis and the care crisis. In our opinion, all of these crises have the same origin and are caused by a system that is designed specifically in the name of capital accumulation. The system is incapable of caring for ecological systems, their natural activities and the processes that make life possible; instead of this it destroys them and destroys social cohesion and the ties between society and nature.

It is a question of a system that prioritises profit at the expense of rights and our people’s health, territories, cycles and ecological equilibriums. This is seen clearly today through not only the origin of the crisis but also the nefarious effects on the majority of the population and the majority of the world’s peoples.

This current crisis shows us in a stark manner what neoliberal globalisation means and what has been imposed upon our planet; namely transnational power and the enormous power of certain

economic groups. They not only exert their power in economic spheres but also increase their power over governments and governance systems. This power has permitted the imposition of production systems that are gravely destructive, as can be seen for example with the continuity and the expansion of the system of extractivism and of agribusiness.

The extractivist and agribusiness system has colonial origins, but through neoliberal globalisation and transnational power, it continues its advance upon every territory throughout the world, displacing communities and local production systems. Moreover, we see it through the destruction of working class rights, dismantling public services, dismantling and weakening social security and in alarmingly deteriorating health systems. The latter have been converted into profit-oriented systems, converting health into merchandise, and as a result they are incapable of caring for life.

This expresses itself also in the exploitation through work and women’s bodies, and also in the care crisis, proving that this system is unable to guarantee the basic care necessary for life. In this way, it is commodified and privatised, especially as it is propped up by exploiting women through their work and the sexual work division to guarantee this care. So we are talking about multiple crises, a crisis that, as we stated before, is centred around the accumulation of capital, and also separating our societies from nature. This reality is not the responsibility of the population as a whole but has been designed and perpetuated by these systems of power at a global level. This is the true origin of the pandemic.

Yet, it is important to point out that not all of us are experiencing the impacts from this health crisis in the same way, because today our societies are clearly structured according to the systems of exploitation and oppression and the patriarchal, heteronormative, racist, colonialist and imperialist system. These are imposed upon our societies and organise our lives, and this is fundamental to understanding what type of responses we need.



Photo: Climate conference COP24 in Katowice, Poland, 2018. Babawale O. Obayanju, Friends of the Earth International.

We need answers that focus on popular classes, the working classes, women, Indigenous peoples, African-descent communities, the small farmer communities and all of the communities who directly suffer the impacts of this system and this model of accumulation.

At Friends of the Earth, we want to emphasise that the recovery cannot be a return to what was once considered normal, precisely because this is the origin of the crisis. This is not normal; instead it has been imposed and socially constructed by powerful interests. We must roll this back and move towards justice in all of its meanings— environmental, gender and economic justice as well as in support of the construction and strengthening the sovereignty of our peoples and grassroots power, the power of our peoples to make decisions.

With this framework, we are formulating some of the principals that from our perspective ought to orient this fair and just recovery. They are principals that we have been discussing with our partners from distinct social movements and Indigenous peoples with whom we work.

But they are under construction, they are principals that form part of this ongoing dialogue and form part of political action and the shared commitment in the struggle to defend our peoples' sovereignty and the sustainability of life. It is a dialogue that is not just joint analysis of the situation, but also the creation of convergence and common agendas.

On the one hand, we see that it has become quite clear that it is urgent and necessary to abandon the neoliberal doctrine, trade and investment deregulation agenda, privatisation and commodification of nature. We must also abandon austerity measures and immediately adopt actions that are legitimately grounded in justice. For instance, this means we have to reconceptualise the role of the State, reclaim the political sphere and public policies and our peoples' capacity to actively participate

in decision-making and exert control over economic, power, food, etc. systems.

The State's role must be central, but it should be a State based on the rights of our peoples and of the Commons, a State organised around the sustainability of life, the public interest and the defence of the common good. For example this requires public policies and public budgets aimed specifically to benefit the popular classes, working classes, Indigenous Peoples, African-descent communities and women; guaranteeing women's autonomy is fundamental to this crisis' solutions.

With that in mind, governments should in no way take on the costs that this crisis has created in terms of, for example, bailing out transnational corporations. We understand that public expenditure needs to be directed at the promotion of a productive economy, to put an end to economies based upon speculation, to promote local economies and local markets and autonomous production systems. We have to make a decision as to how public expenditure is going to be oriented and, of course, to aim for the redistribution of wealth.

We must revitalise and restore the control of public services to public ownership. Public services have demonstrated once again that they are on the one hand essential to preventing this type of crisis, and then also to respond to the other crises through supporting fundamental rights. Public services are not merchandise, they need to be in the hands of the State, municipalities, cooperatives, but they must also be public and cannot be organised on a profit basis.

Furthermore, we have to move forward towards internationalism. In other words, we must place emphasis on the need for solidarity and cooperation among peoples, so that we mutually strengthen ourselves and change the balance of power in our favour. The internationalist perspective and agenda should be driven towards



Photo: 4th session of negotiations for an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations with Respect to Human Rights at the United Nations, 2018. Victor Barros, Friends of the Earth International.

a new multilateralism that is not structured and organised based upon the interests of big business, large economic groups and transnational corporations that are directly responsible for the systemic crises. Instead, it should be based on our people's collective rights. Once again it has been shown that multilateralism has to be grounded in internationalism that strengthens solidarity and our planet's defences.

What we can see today is that while there are those countries that have opted for internationalism, for example with doctors and with health services, as Cuba has done; at the same time criminal blockades and the brutal repression in Palestine are also imposed. This new multilateralism must not permit the continuation of this. Additionally, it must ensure a fair revenue system and not allow corporate tax avoidance and evasion. At the moment, businesses are attempting to take advantage and profit from the crises, and this must be blocked by a new multilateralism. The internationalism that we want to construct should put an end to all the violations of peoples' rights and the impunity of those transnational corporations that are responsible for perpetrating them. We need to guarantee access to medication, treatments, vaccinations, so that they are truly universal and reach everyone. This means that finally we must put an end to the system of intellectual property that converts health into merchandise.

Here we have many measures to propose and consider together, those put forward by the different social movements. We have to understand that to construct this internationalism, the grassroots struggle is also fundamental. To do this, there must be a convergence of agendas and of international solidarity created through struggle, which we need to nurture.

Today we are experiencing such a profound crisis in the context of democracy being under threat, and as a result we consider it vital to defend peoples' rights and defend the radicalisation of democracy. This means that we must reverse and fiercely condemn these coup d'état processes, the elections manipulated to benefit the right, and the electoral processes where mass media exercises enormous influence. We need to ensure an end to the criminalisation of social movements, which is occurring on all continents, and the attempts to silence their voices with the intention of maintaining

and perpetuating the systems of oppression. Those who defend the territories, the peoples' rights, the right to a home, land, water, health, the workers' rights, women's rights, today are seriously criminalised and persecuted. They try to delegitimise social movements' actions at the convenience of political power, mass media and other economic powers, that have a monumental role in this context.

We also see the advance of the right, of conservatism, clearly pitted against women's rights and how they want to once again control life and women's bodies and reproduce these systems of oppression and injustice. They also deny fundamental rights such as the right to sexual and reproductive health and make fundamental services such as abortion a service which can be waived, using the pandemic as an excuse.

As Nalu stated, with respect to the issue of confinement, it has brought about an increase in violence against women who are required to remain locked up with their perpetrators. It is essential that we end patriarchal violence once and for all.

We also believe that it is fundamental to put an end to the brutal systematic and systemic violence against all peoples that rebel, that fight, that resist; all of which is related to the attack against democracy.

Additionally, we realise that the solution to the crisis must address the systemic crises, it must offer a response to the crises as a whole. Thus, when we talk about solutions to the pandemic crisis, in reality we are talking about a response to the climate crisis, the food crisis, the water crisis, the care crisis, the biodiversity crisis. All of which are very severe and have played a key role in the origin of the pandemic crisis.

This means that we must reclaim control over our food system, for example. Today, it is clear that we need to sufficiently nourish ourselves, that this is a fundamental right and it must be a priority. To accomplish this, we need small farmer agriculture, food sovereignty and to defend our local markets. They are currently threatened by many measures that are being applied in supposed response to the crisis but, in reality, they respond solely to big money interests.



Photo: March of the Daisies⁴ in Brasília, 2019. Isadora Mendes, World March of Women Brazil.

It also implies that we must regain the collective administration of biodiversity and peoples' knowledge, which have been able to organise themselves and now are also organising to revive, defend and nurture biodiversity collectively. This can get us out of this market logic that reduces nature to tradable units where they place a price on it, commodify it and privatise it.

We need to figure out a response to the crisis that permits distancing ourselves from the fossil fuel dependent economy and to foster a fair and just transition. It must be built around the working classes and the local communities and guarantee climate justice and the human right to energy as a fundamental right. This requires not only changing the energy matrix sources to renewable energy but also a radical change in the power system to reach energy sovereignty, which means it's decommodification and nationalisation. We must ensure that central issues such as energy are responded to democratically and from a perspective that incorporates environmental, social, gender and economic justice.

The response to the crisis also denotes fundamental changes in economies, and this is the central theme that has been discussed, namely that we should consider transformative economies. Nalu has already offered many suggestions that orient our rethinking and reorganisation of systems and modes of production and social relations in our societies. This can happen through decommodification, the reaffirmation of the public interest, the dispute over the economic sphere and on the meaning of the economy based upon the sustainability of life. Care of our ecological systems and of all of the systems that make life possible would be enhanced by this strengthening of the public interest. The other issue that we need to keep in mind is that we cannot permit this crisis response to lead to the resurgence of destructive, concentrated projects that exclude other elements and that are led and engineered by the large transnational corporations.

What we are experiencing in many countries is that businesses are the supposed solution to the crisis. This permits the continuation of extractivist and polluting projects that destroy life and the basis of sustainability; projects that grab land, destroy territories and which also strengthen the systems of oppression. This is

unacceptable. They also take advantage of the difficulties that the peoples encounter when mobilising and demonstrating on the streets as a consequence of the pandemic. Austerity policies, regressive measures and reorganisation of the State has been imposed, and has escaped public scrutiny in my country Uruguay.

In actuality, there is an attempt to show so-called business solidarity as a response to the crisis whilst, as we say, the large companies and big economic groups continue to profit from this crisis. Therefore, we cannot permit the weakening of environmental norms to continue during quarantine.

To conclude, because my time is almost up, let us think anew upon what is important in collective construction, grassroots organisations originating from classes and popular movements, and also the reaffirmation of struggles and constructions that have been coming from the peoples. As Nalu stated clearly, the peoples have the answer, we have historically organised against oppression, against destruction, and we have the capacity to mobilise ourselves to profoundly transform our societies and change the system. Our call is for an increasing convergence of movements to strengthen our political agenda of struggle and to ensure that the construction of solidarity remains alive, which has permitted, for example in my country, the creation of local soup kitchens. However this must not happen through charity, as the government and big business have attempted to do, but from a perspective of political construction from the ground up, which will eventually facilitate our overcoming this crisis.

⁴ Founding member of the REDES – Friends of the Earth Uruguay and President of Friends of the Earth International.

THE COVID-19 CRISIS

and the challenges for movements from the global South – weaving exchanges⁵

03



Photo: 'March of the Daisies' in Brasília, 2019. Isadora Mendes, World March of Women Brazil.

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in countries of the global South has brought to light many contradictions. These have shown that the current crisis is part of a much wider crisis, that of the capitalist system.

The current capitalist crisis has many different aspects, but perhaps the main one is that for the first time life itself is at the centre, and we must consider the extent to which it is threatened. Given this reality, movements are relying on their own experiences and accumulated analysis, experiences and practices – from both far away and closer to home.

Through exchanging experiences between movements and organisations of the Global South, some answers have already been identified as a synthesis of their common agendas, connecting experiences and trajectories from different sectors with their common practices, all viewed through economics that sees life itself as a key element.

From a feminist economic perspective, one of the approaches to economics based around life is that women underpin the economy and bring more than just social issues to the transformative agenda. In other words, women do not solely come from the perspective of oppressed people denouncing pressure, exclusion and exploitation but they also build reality from different economic practices amidst injustice and discrimination. This economic practice identifies the connection between life and the possibility of transforming the economic system. This is key for defining the path towards transformation and establishing the roadmap towards recovery.

During the lockdown, it was said that the economy ground to a halt. But only one part really stopped. The care economy has been more challenged than ever, under greater pressure as our homes have become the focus of not only care but also production. This demonstrates an existing capacity to create economic value, and this capacity to meet demand demonstrates economic diversity. This was the case especially in the first phase of quarantine in some of our countries. The corporate structure did not immediately

respond, whereas local and small farmer economies were able to respond to the call for solidarity and cover basic needs.

So there is this inherent capacity, in real and existing care systems, which are not necessarily those that are needed or that social movements propose. They exist purely because care based activities, which are performed in neighbourhoods, socially, communally and by public services, actually returned to the home setting. Day-care and school closures had an impact, not only in terms of caring for children but also with respect to the provision of food, as many public schools provided food to students. A poorly created care system was thus dismantled and moved entirely back in to the domestic setting. This had significant consequences for the care economy, but also brought to light some production and supply capacity.

Ultimately, a lot is happening in this supposedly “frozen” economy, and it is important to conceptualise transformative elements. This is because we can clearly see the accumulation, capacities and possibilities of women’s lead role in the visualisation and the practice of economies focused on life. Care must be understood more broadly, not only as the care of people, but care of the system of life as a whole.

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE CARE ECONOMY

Quarantine has also caused many contradictions in the area of the care economy: on the one hand, the actual situation of domestic care could be an issue that would bring more women into the debate, but the challenge of isolation complicates daily interactions with women at a grassroots level, as it is usually conducted through in-person discussions and workshops.

One of the difficulties that arises in the context of this pandemic is that many women who participate in peoples’ movements do not have internet access, especially in Brazil, where the internet is not accessible to everyone.



Photo: Women in the 'March of the Daisies' in Brasília, 2019, holding the banner: "Ribeira Valley for land, water and agroecology". Elaine Campos, World March of Women Brazil.

Also when considering protests, one of the challenges is organising participation in street protests that comply with preventive safety measures against the spread of Covid-19. This challenge can be overcome, even in São Paulo and other large Brazilian cities, the main virus hotspots. Often the women who create these movements are the first to wonder about their participation in these public events, because they have children at home and are afraid of infecting their loved ones as they may be exposed to the virus out on the streets. Given this difficult context, organisations must confront these contradictions when attempting to form and advance the debate on the issue of care.

STRENGTHENING THE COMMONS THROUGH GRASSROOTS ORGANISING

At the same time, during this health crisis, women are the first to be called upon to care for life, not only the lives of their families but also the community's health, and to provide food for the community. It is women who have the experience in organising, those who were once forgotten or neglected and invisible in their jobs, and who now have clearly put forward concrete responses. It is women who have reopened local independent soup kitchens. As have young people, who previously did not want to have the same experiences as their mothers because it was such a burden. They are now working for their community and are adapting these experiences, looking at their mothers' and organisations' accumulated knowledge and valuing it. And now they do it with even greater experience, advocating public food policy which is not solely based on women's work but that also supports the experiences they have been developing. We can reactivate the economy for food and care through these organisations.

Through this reality, they are also re-establishing common experiences between neighbourhoods and farmers' organisations, which have started to sell their produce in communities and have

donated to soup kitchens. There is a process of revival underway, of an economy based on the common practices and experiences of these organisations.

This is important to highlight for future alliances because it shows that capitalism has never addressed people's needs, and makes it clear that neoliberalism is also unable to do so. Rather, these social actors are taking care of life, community life and nature itself. Peasant women energetically reaffirm that we must confront mining and pollution because they are destroying our capacity to produce in the countryside and to provide food to society.

In many countries, the current struggle is to create emergency policies, and simultaneously highlight the goals of the movements through these responses. This transects the State's relationship with public services and autonomy, be it regarding water, energy or health. The issue is that you cannot negotiate the "not State-owned" from a market point of view. It must be decommodified, and grassroots management is one way to achieve this decommodification. If the market framework prevails, civil society will be stuck managing insufficient resources; while the market will have the profitable ones. An example of this is in Brazil, where non-profit organisations participate in outsourcing day-care services. Thus, the perspective from which this public issue is debated is an essential consideration.

In the context of the pandemic, the debate around a universal basic income has intensified globally, clearly demonstrating its importance. For example in Argentina, nine million people have received economic assistance during the Covid-19 crisis, which was recently extended for another three months. It has been proposed that in the future this support be continued for the most vulnerable sectors.

However, we must be careful that basic income is not appropriated or manipulated by neoliberal policies. In Brazil, as in other countries, it is clear that some sectors support it but to the detriment of



Photo: 'Fruits of the Resistance' agroecology market in the 'CaSanAT' social centre. Puerto Alegre, Brazil, 2017. Douglas Freitas, Friends of the Earth Brazil.

employment and also some public services. As a result, discussions are underway as to whether it should be called 'basic income' or something else, so that we can analyse the link with social security and other strategic issues.

In Uruguay, basic income forms part of the intersocial political platform, a convergence of social movements where unions linked to the National Workers Federation (CNT) play an important role. Through this structure, a temporary income is being demanded for the working classes affected by the crisis. Whether this will become a universal basic income in the long-term is still under discussion; but to reiterate, we must consider how to ensure that this does not impact our right to work and the centrality of work in social construction, as well as the production and reproduction of life. Work continues to be the focus and cannot be called into question. However, work does not necessarily need to be salaried employment; it can be autonomous work such as that of caring, production and the reproduction of life.

PROPOSALS FOR A JUST RECOVERY

With respect to a fair and just recovery, one of the challenges is how to renew the discussion on feminist and environmental macroeconomic policies, with a focus on sustainability. This is essential when we consider how transnational corporations talk about "recovery", co-opting the discussion just as they have done with human rights. In other words, how can the debate on these concepts be revived while also taking into consideration that it is already on the agenda of the world powers.

New kinds of macroeconomics must be discussed, along with how we think about this from the social movements perspective. But it is also important to continue backing the knowledge that peoples have accumulated regarding economic construction and economic relations in the caring for life. We must think about how we can organise the economy around a popular political project, from a

local perspective. It must reach beyond territories and integrate movements in an internationalist, class-based, anti-racist and anti-patriarchal perspective. We must talk about the importance of public policies, incomes and support for working classes, who are excluded from the formal economy and face insecurity and exploitation.

From there, we must examine how to scale this up, so that these experiences which appear small and seem local and marginalised, can be presented as macroeconomic. We should also look at how to ensure that there are caring ethics throughout the economy so as to avoid an economic recovery similar to the response to previous crises like in 2008-09, which dragged us into a permanent and systemic crisis.

In other words, solutions should be sought that do not focus on the financial, and finance should not only rescue companies. Instead, the focus should be on a genuine recovery through changing modes of production. This is not simply saying "we support businesses that create employment" or "we support businesses because we need to jump start the market", or "we are going to be selective and only support certain types of production while punishing other types of production". We are not only talking about products but also forms of production. The business format is projected as unique and the most efficient. Yet, what we have seen is that there are other productive economic constructions, such as small farms, cooperatives, associations and handicraft workshops. These production models need to be revived and supported. Women and the working classes comprise the basis of the economy, they also have the right to decide what happens and should not be sidelined in the social agenda but should also have a say in overarching and big economic decisions.

The peoples of Latin America have the experience and practice in doing this, as they have pursued post-neoliberal models and alternatives to capitalism arising from recent progressive experiences. This involved a foray in to taking overriding decisions,

and configuring and conceptualising an economic agenda for our countries and for our region, with alternative types of trade from the institutional perspective. These experiences are a valuable resource that has to be mapped out in the pursuit of these transformative macro-economies.

For example, in the Brazilian context, movements are creating the “Remove Bolsonaro” movement, safe spaces and security to debate the issues and policies by sector. Brazil needs not only a new health system but also a different government. To do this, the issues must be considered within an overall project, so that at an opportune moment they could once again be part of our agenda as an issue for debate. We can then accordingly organise the various frameworks.

Here the question arises of how movements can construct global strategies to bring back or revive the memories of production and food sovereignty from and for traditional Peoples, particularly peasant women. This should be from the perspective of the construction of a food culture that is not linked to the globalised production model.

From the grassroots, systems of production and reproduction of life were created wherein women have a central role. Women have not necessarily been recognised as political participants in the construction of these systems, but their foundations were secured through women’s labour.

Now, it is clear that it would be counterproductive to reproduce the sexual division of labour that brought us to this crisis in the care economy, and which led to increased pressure upon women. We need to undo this, but how? One way is to consider care work as work which is essential to the economy, while remembering that it must be taken on not only by society but also by the State. Therein arises a dispute with the State.

Clearly, this is impossible unless there is an overriding political discussion at the highest level. This is where internationalism is required in the construction of a peoples’ political project, a strong commitment that has existed for many years during the Latin American integration project. We must underline the need to achieve a greater level of integration and complementarity among peoples, to jointly envisage a political and economic process based on the rights and necessities of peoples and the working classes.

This is at stake today; we can see it through the coup d’états which have taken place in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia and the continuing criminal blockade against Cuba and Venezuela. It is also evident in the occupation of Palestine, which worsens every day. Therefore, internationalist solidarity is channeled through political debate, as politics are fundamental to human behaviour. We will seek to redesign economics through this debate.

It is important to further discuss the issue of public services. For example, movements believe that the energy system needs to be under public control – whether it be state, municipal or in the hands of the community and cooperatives. Decommodifying and nationalising energy, as well as water and public health, are important steps to be taken, and we can reconsider systems, some that already exist, as autonomous and community-based systems.

For example, the Uruguayan movements continue to fight for public services, including public services under complete State control. Notwithstanding the fact that the current government is a conservative government that imposes a neoliberal agenda,

the dispute continues because it is a political dispute that deals with who makes decisions. It has to do with who controls and has ownership over public services and who defines how they are organised. We fight for civil society regaining control over the food and water systems, and so forth.

In Chile in October 2019, a social uprising began that was intentionally interrupted by a lockdown due to the pandemic. The cost of this unrest was very high in terms of loss of life, mutilations, increased militarisation and the criminalisation of protest. Through internationalism, we need to figure out how to support our peoples and join together to be able to achieve this transformation without having to die in the attempt.

Considering the issue of organising and internationalism – in the Americas, grassroots movements have established the Continental Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism, and internationally, the International People’s Assembly was created. These are important initiatives that strengthen our tools and construct some responses to the issues raised here in this debate; namely food sovereignty, the revival of our experiences and the recent experience of the Chilean people, and so on.

Environmental justice is another question that connects to the fair and just recovery, as we know the scale of the climate crisis that humanity faces today. It will devastate many more lives than this pandemic, which is also very destructive. In the end, the climate crisis is a question of justice, because those who have caused it and those who are suffering from it the most are disparate groups. This difference is due to power, inequality and money.

While the pandemic progresses, climate change has not stopped. Cyclones, locust infestations in East Africa and now affecting South Asia, are just a few examples. Obviously, these events will devastate agriculture and affect the food we can put on our tables. This has an enormous impact upon the care work we referred to above, which is that we need to nourish our bodies and take care of life.

The climate justice movement is fighting against the capitalist system of extractivism, which destroys forests and pollutes our bodies, land, water and air. We have seen during the pandemic how some communities which have been exposed to the effects of coal-powered plants and whose lungs were already damaged for various generations, are at higher risk to complications and impacts from this pandemic.

Although we are seeing temporary emissions reductions at the moment, this does not represent a just transition, as millions of people are out of work and women’s bodies suffer with the extra work that has been piled upon us.

To construct a path towards a fair transition, we fight against false solutions and corporate greenwashing. The fight against so-called “net-zero” is so important because the root of the pandemic and all the other crises are the same. That is to say, they are caused by the manner in which the capitalist system treats the planet, nature and people’s bodies. Now, because of the climate crisis, transnational corporations are trying to grab more land, forests and resources and convert them into carbon sinks so they can attempt to bargain their way out of the climate crisis.

The fight against “net-zero” is an enormous struggle that is being led by climate justice organisations and movements. It is also a fight against carbon markets, because the corporations want to

take communities' resources – rivers, forests, land – and turn them into commodities. Of course the ones who are really taking care of land and resources, in many cases, are women.

Furthermore, in regard to false solutions; despite the acknowledgement of agribusiness as the cause of the Covid-19 pandemic, we must be wary of the responses that arise, so that they do not lead to a strengthening of the conservation movement which stands in complete opposition to the true solutions of agroecology and community-forest management.

Thus care must be taken to not fall into the trap of the 'financialisation of nature'. We must emphasise the importance of caring for ecosystems and ecological systems that make life possible, such as agroecology, and which should not be considered an ecosystemic service. In reality, the ways in which social relations are organised, this symbiosis and reciprocity with nature, do not translate into "ecosystemic services" – a concept often used to privatise nature and convert its functions into tradable market goods.

So, we must distance ourselves from this reductionism where nature is transformed into a bargaining chip. Further discussion is necessary, but what agroecology clearly provides is an answer to the multiple crises, as does food sovereignty. However, it must be put forward on the basis that it is not market or privatisation based.

Whenever one thinks of a monetary economy, everything must be monetised, not only nature but domestic and care work as well. This perspective must be challenged; instead we should think collectively through other paradigms.

The feminist economic perspective and the debate raised by this Transformative Economics Forum discusses disrupting, demonetising and decommodifying. From this perspective, regulation of domestic service does not constitute a definitive revolution. We must fight to guarantee domestic workers' rights, but the answer to the issue of domestic work is not outsourcing.

In terms of the reorganisation of domestic and care work, what is proposed is redistribution and State action, but also how we can collectively organise care work in its various dimensions. This deals with decommodification and overlaps with the debate about production, and other various issues. For example, when we talk about what is to be produced, we must dismantle consumerism and also put an end to the planned obsolescence of diverse products that are used today, such as mobile phones, television and even cars. This debate leads to criticism of what it means in terms of the destruction of nature. There are numerous ways in which we need to progress and make the sustainability of life our focus.

Returning to the theme of climate justice and debt, the debate should revolve around the ecological (climate) debt because we know who is responsible for this climate crisis. We must demand that they assume their responsibility and respond immediately.

During this pandemic, many countries from the South are becoming more indebted and live in perpetual and profound debt crisis. For example, China gave a loan to Sri Lanka to deal with the pandemic. This should not be wielded as a weapon but instead considered as a grant or donation so that these countries can face the health crisis without exposing themselves to another crisis.



Photo: Palm oil plantations, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, 2015. Victor Barros, Friends of the Earth International.

We need to fight against this global debt dynamic because the countries from the North have a responsibility to the South, as the North is the one that has created the majority of these crises, including the roots of the Covid-19 pandemic. When countries request climate financing or financing to confront the pandemic, it must be in the form of grants or donations and not as loans. Through this perspective, we envision and promote the struggle against the transnational corporations and remind ourselves how they are trying to step into every single aspect of life.

The policy frameworks on food sovereignty, with an agenda based on food sovereignty through a movement, with broad practices and policies, are related to feminist economics and a fair and just recovery. This has many aspects to it. There is the aspect of the transformation of care, not only in the sense that we need to take care of ourselves but also in considering we can get closer and take better care of our world, ourselves and others. We also need to care for the seeds, which are life itself, and understand landscapes and territories that have been devastated due to the rise of the agro-industrial model and food industry.

Moreover, this is closely related to the pandemic because there is now really strong evidence that the expansion of industrial agriculture into forested territories has led to the creation of what some people call "sacrifice zones" for capitalism, where everything is devastated through exacerbated consumption and accumulation. The Covid-19 pandemic and other pandemics originate from these zones. Indeed, this reality truly demonstrates, in very dire terms, what it means when the earth and humanity's health are ignored.

In this sense, the perspective of internationalism is also considered from the perspective of sovereignty and agroecology, in that we must to oppose bailing out corporations and the trade system. These are linked to exacerbated consumption in some countries, extraction in others and how the system works.



Photo: International Women's Day mobilisation, 8 March 2019, Environmental Rights Action (ERA)/Friends of the Earth Nigeria.

Especially at this moment, it is essential that movements continue doing what they do from the South because what can be seen in Europe and the global North is worrisome, in terms of the provision of food at every level. For example, in European cities governments are increasingly pushing the industrial model to address the crisis, either through promoting supermarkets as the answer to people's food needs during the pandemic or trying to negotiate free trade agreements. These are the types of responses that they offer. There is no public debate in the North regarding the impact on the Southern hemisphere or the ecological debt.

In Latin America it is more than clear what debt means and the burden on its peoples and countries. Undeniably, the peoples and working classes of the South are owed a historic debt. We must demand that this historic debt be paid. The debt logic must be reverted and not only that of debt but also regarding everything to do with monetary transfer; all currency transfer that goes from the global South to the North belongs at the very heart of our discussion.

It is obvious that the entire system that generates destruction and damages life and violates peoples' rights is based upon this logic of capital accumulation. Capital increases its accumulation base by expanding internationally and grabbing land, violating rights, destroying territories and thereby threatening people's health.

The extent to which transnational corporations, national economic powers, the oligarchies and the bourgeoisie continue to support and impose this system of accumulation poses enormous risks. This is currently being confronted; otherwise solutions will continue to reproduce this logic of exploitation and oppression that define our societies today.

Here it is important to examine the role of States and the leading role of transnational corporations in organising the architecture of impunity through free trade agreements. They facilitate their

continued violations of peoples' rights and human rights without any legal recourse.

Additionally, the extreme right is becoming increasingly organised internationally and working, for example, with mass media and conservative religions, then brutal persecutes peoples and grassroots initiatives. It is specifically a racist, patriarchal, misogynist and xenophobic persecution that violates the rights of the working classes. Here there truly exists a power dynamic where governments have the upper hand. In a context of the extreme right growing globally, the creation of new solutions becomes necessary and we must incorporate human rights through a vision of cooperation, solidarity and interconnection.

Through this exchange of experiences from different organisations and movements in the global South, in their spaces and alliances, we see the real alternatives that have been expressed through the practices of grassroots organisation and activism collected in this text. This synthesis also outlines our hopes in a reality as demanding as the current one.

⁵ Synthesis from the virtual seminar on 'Feminist Economics and environmentalism for a just recovery: outlooks from the South', with contributions from members of different organisations and movements such as Tchenha Maso, Move-ment of People Affected by Dams (MAB in Portuguese), Mariana Leite (Christian Aid), Magdalena Leon (REMTE), Natalia Salvatico (Friends of the Earth Argentina), Daniel Gaio (Unified Workers Centre Trade Union of Brazil), Rosa Gullen (World March of Women Macronorth Peru), Dipti Bhatnagar (international programme coordinator for Climate Justice and Energy, Friends of the Earth International), Kirtana Chandrasekaran (international programme coordinator for Food Sovereignty, Friends of the Earth International), Dominica Rodríguez Silva, Bernardete Monteiro (World March of Women Brazil), Johana Molina (World March of Women Chile), with the final comments from the speakers, Karin Nansen (Friends of the Earth International) and Nalu Faria (World March of Women).

FEMINIST ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM FOR A JUST RECOVERY

OUTLOOKS FROM THE SOUTH

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Photo: Mobilisation during the Rio+20 Peoples' Summit. The banner reads: "We women will not pay for this crisis". Rio de Janeiro, 2012. WMW Brazil.

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