



# PEOPLE'S ECONOMY SOCIAL/SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

CANADA, UNITED STATES,  
MESOAMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN

ALTAGRACIA VILLARREAL  
COALICION RURAL MEXICO  
SEOUL KOREA

# People's economy

- The People's Economy / Society and Solidarity is at the heart of a social debate in our geographic region. In the 1990's, our organizations began to discuss economic solidarity and to link at the local, regional, national, binational and international level. The groups involved include GESQ, ECOSOL MEXICO, COALICION RURAL COALITION, MESOAMERICA FORUM, APC CARIBBIAN PUEBLOS ASSEMBLY.
- We understand the People's Economy as rooted in oikos or the Household. The economy of the people includes the House of the family, the House of the community and the House of the whole society. Using this idea, we find a new way to produce, consume, transform, distribute and trade -- a new way of living and thinking about the economy. This new economy is now practiced in tens of thousands of projects in Northamerica, Mesoamerica and the Caribbean Region.

# OLD AND NEW EXPERIENCES

- 
- Rural or Urban settings
  - Formal or Informal sector
  - Specific groups-- producers, consumer, woman, youth, farmers, craftspeople, etc
  - Community Organizations
  - Small Organizations
  - Family organizations
  - Cooperatives, Unions, Associations
  - Formal or non-Formal status
  - Generally initiated by civil society
  - Communities look for alternatives to secure economic, social, political and cultural necessities.
  - Organizations use their traditional knowledge and add new technology
  - They understand work as the relationship to and collaboration with the earth to produce what they need.
  - Their technology and methods include environmental protection, good organization, small amount of capital and culture, consensus, collaboration, collective action.

# INTERNATIONAL AND WORLD COORDINATION

- WSF Porto Alegre and Mumbai
- International Networks working as an International Collaboration
- Farm, Farmworker and Rural Organizations working together, including Coalición Rural and Via Campesina from United States to Panama
- Jubilee Campaigning
- IFAT Fair Trade Net's
- Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World ( Alliance 21 )
- RIPPEES Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy ( Dakar 2005 )

# Globalization

- In our Region, neoliberal globalization is set in place  
Free Trade Agreements between the countries
- NAFTA is Canada, United States and Mexico
- PPP From Puebla Mexico to Panama
- CAFTA Central America and United States
- FTAA All the Americas ( 34 Countries )

In essence, trade and investment agreements are designed to convert the neoliberal model into **supranational law** and therefore to establish a kind of insurance against democratic changes. Democracy and elections have less and less to do with peoples' economic lives, standards of living, ability to secure jobs, or to protect the right to health, to education, to human rights, etc They are based on an economic theory that assumes that everything will work better if left to **market forces**

\* **DEBT AND MILITARIZATION** are another two issues

# 10 years after NAFTA

- The impact of NAFTA for the majority of people in all three countries has been devastating. The agreement has destroyed more jobs than it has created, depressed wages, worsened poverty and inequality, eroded social programs, forced people from the land in all 3 countries, undermined democracy, enfeebled governments, and greatly increased the rights and power of corporations, investors and property holders.
- Few example in; Agriculture in the US huge subsidies go to big corporations. Mexico is losing food sovereignty, people are displaced from the land and left no economic option except Emigration to the North. Job losses is happening in all 3 countries-- in Mexico the Maquiladoras are closing and going to China where the wages are less, Social Programs, had been cut in all the 3 countries specially in old age security, health care, education and unemployment insurance in Canada and USA. There is a growing movement to privatize electricity, water, oil, ,education, social security and government services.

# What are we doing to face Globalization

- 1993 Alternative NAFTA , MEXICO-USA
- 1994 YA BASTA EZLN Chiapas Mexico
- 1999 WTO Seattle Washington United States
- 2001 Quebec 11 Summit of the People's
- 2003 WTO Cancun Mexico
- 2003 Miami FTAA

For each event, we prepare our participation through: consultation. Study, marches and mobilizations, workshops, informal training, exchange of experience. By collaborating, we are building a very strong social and political articulation of an alternate agenda and why the neoliberal policies are failing. In each country, we are doing the same work because we believe that another world is possible and we are living it.

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

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- Projects of Integral and Sustainable Development in collective and community organizations that multiply the energies and help use their own resources and get also from other sources. Being responsible the organizations and the society.
  - National networks around Social Finance, Production projects, FairTrade, Education, Values.
  - National and Regional networks to market cooperatively.
  - Training and sharing of knowledge and experience
  - Policy networks promoting Civil Rights, human rights, workers rights sustainable agriculture, economic justice, community food security and immigration rights.
  - Community health projects and services.
  - Collective environmental protection by reforestation
  - Community housing set up by associations and coopreatives.
  - Autonomous Towns The Winkels ( Mexico Chiapas)
  - The Countryside Can't Take it Anymore Campaign (El Campo no Aguanta Mas) calling for suspension of NAFTA or at least for its renegotiation
  - Big mobilizations against FTAA, PPP, CAFTA, WTO, rescue of biodiversity, traditional knowlege.



# STRATEGIES INSIDE PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC/SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

- Assure that people's economy becomes a condition for human dignity, quality of life, common well and respect to human rights.
- Strength all priorities of the people's economy: fair trade, social money, trueque, cooperatives. Utilize them in building alliances and networks at all the different levels: regional, national and international so that the others could see this as an alternative force to merciless trade.
- Build new strategies to reach and mobilize ethical consumers to buy locally of good quality and made by our own organizations.
- Practice and spread a solidarity culture reaffirming the ethical value of promoting human dignity in all dimensions of our life.

# STRATEGIES FOR OUR NATIONS

- To reassert the sovereign right and responsibility of nation states to determine their own development agenda, to regulate their economies and to protect their biological and agricultural resources
- Farm support programs based on human needs and individual and community food security, that incorporate the goals of gender, racial and ethnic equity, and respect farmer's and farmworkers rights-above all equitable access to land, secure land tenure and sustainability, the right to farm, the right to a decent standard of living, and the primacy of food security and sovereignty in national policy.
- The right to legislate and enforce national labor, environmental and health standards, even when this are higher than international standars, or those of partner nations. ( Including *GMO's*)

# FUTURE THRUST

- There is a great evidence that the planetary process of disorder that affects nature, human societies and its members  
Constitutes a generalized moment of change:
  - The process going from one wave to another wave with the respective implications (some already visible)
    - in the new **scientific and technological focus**;
      - in the new fields of Work
    - the closing of good part of the traditional jobs;
      - in the information technology and
        - the massive media,
        - and so on . . .

# FUTURE THRUST

- Integration of productives and trading net's linked between them in the different region
- that help us to cover the whole territory planet
- with extractive process, production, distribution and trading
- Spreading the values and vision of PEOPLES ECONOMY.
- With all this, from economy we will get the central points
- Standars of life that dignifies the person. the groups, and the societies,
- showing that another world is possible

