



GREEN FEMINIST ECONOMY IS GENDER-EQUAL AND SUSTAINABLE

A REPORT FROM GREEN WOMEN



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PROLOGUE

The energy for this report comes from a long period of thoughts on the fact that all kinds of work, also such work created by accidents, can be regarded as profits in calculating the GDP. Human suffering is not valued at all. Furthermore, I am amazed at how economics teachers still educate about supply and demand curves without explaining that it is only a technical model which is not concerned with real correlations, nor do they explain how it all works together. In the bookstore, if you ask for economic literature which considers social and ecological consequences you will be referred to the bookshelf with philosophical works. If you then continue asking about economic literature that considers the unpaid labor you may have trouble being understood. The fact that the unpaid labor and care for each other are the basis for the whole economy in all countries is not considered as economy. A common language is being formulated in order to communicate what is really happening today and every day, beside the reports of the stock markets' plus and minus. We see a movement towards uniform images of changes necessary. In the best of worlds, these changes are not blocked by military abuse, religious fundamentalism and climate catastrophes but strengthens the demands for democratic and equal transformation, a transformation now happening...

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PROBLEM FORMULATION IN AN ECONOMY UNDER TRANSFORMATION

Hazel Henderson is one of the sharpest critics of politics performed under the veil of economics theory. She has written several proposals to promote change. In her famous cake model, the whole bottom of the cake represents the greatness of the earth, the earth we all live on. In Rio de Janeiro 1992, a decision was made to measure biological diversity, biodiversity. The biological diversity of the earth was assigned a value. Unpaid labor resulting in added value (performed mainly by women) is illustrated by Henderson as the jam. The fictive values, different money transactions (which benefit a few), she illustrates as thin icing on the cake, smeared all over. She focuses on what money is, what money influences and does – and argues for creative financing solutions for concrete needs. Henderson stresses that all innovations put high demands on integrity and openness towards the world.

Riane Eisler started way back in history when she wanted to study why it is as it is today and searched for answers to what we can do about it. Eisler describes the old world and a world development based on a matrilineal thinking which used to govern societal organization through maternal inheritance. With the use of different powers and over thousands of years, a patriarchal world order has taken over, emphasizing man's dominance over woman and nature. Eisler goes on to present solutions and points at today's need of a joint financing of joint welfare. She says: "trade must take place between equal partners, a partnership economy".

My own contribution is a report on the meaning of gender roles and societal roles (Green Women series). I raise the fact that formulation of problems, institutional solutions and objectives in society can make us believe that society consists of men only. The conditions and perspectives of women are rarely illuminated, and when so, mainly as victims. I show how economic theory actively pursues the old fashioned scenario by taking for granted that today's prices express real values. "Economic Man" needs to be complemented by an "Economic Woman". Woman and feminism are part of the solution.

The Bruntland Commission set the objective in 1987 by defining sustainable development. The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future was written by the World Commission on assignment from the UN. Gro Harlem Bruntland led the Commission. The report analyses the relationship between economic development and environmental destruction and proposed a long-term strategy and an superior objective. The environmental movements of the world agreed to establish Lester Brown's definition of 1981 of sustainable development:

” A sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ”

Who defines the needs of today and decides about the needs of future generations?



ATTITUDES AND GENDER

Women and men influence society differently through their different experiences and conditions for life. In general men have more money and they spend them in ways that burden the climate. Men are in charge of political decision making that sets the rules for unethical and environmentally damaging activities. They also own and control the industry that causes environmental changes. This they do based on the rules of the game that spell profit maximization on all levels. These rules of the game are based on old fashioned and unsustainable basic views in turn originating from a theoretical scenario of a reality that never existed.

The manager of the Swedish Central Bank, Riksbanken, concluded in early 2010: "we are approaching stricter rules in the financial system" and he urged banks to create larger buffers to cover the risks they take. What he did not say was that banks for the past ten years also have the right to speculate and invest the clients' wage accounts. Similar initiatives came simultaneously from the Basel Committee to sharpen the international capital requirements. The World Bank observed that better preparedness was necessary. None of the institutions governing the banks have urged them to take fewer risks. Not a word is said about the fact that the banks themselves can take the investment responsibility for climate changes and social marginalization.

The economy professor John Kay had another tone of voice the same year. He argued that "it can get worse". He considered that the central banks should be more active. The banks run "business as usual" and a new bubble will grow, according to Kay. Considering the three latest crashes, the Asia crisis in 1997, the IT crash around 2000 and the current financial crisis, which is the most serious of them all, he envisions the next crash to be extremely severe. Many countries have already run their public sectors to a complete drainage. He proposed a separation between the banks, "the money-savers should not be mixed with the bank's own business." He wanted to make structural changes to hinder a repetition of the past crises and not accepting speculation with deposited funds.

The EU heads of Government also agreed that the banks should be regulated, but they did not take any responsibility themselves. New institutions financed by tax money should handle the regulation. If money lenders, big and small, would choose to place their money in banks that take social and ecological responsibility, automatic remediation would take place. Some control measures would simplify the transition, e.g. company board members being made responsible for damages caused, and that small banks would be excluded from some of the regulations intended for the big banks.

Recurring financial crises can be seen as examples of off-track credit driven consumerism.



In a green feminist economy, balance income, social values, environment and ecology are assessed the same value.

Green Women also argue that holding shares should imply responsibility, not only for the profits but for the social and ecological actions of the company. We support the movement towards social entrepreneurship, a movement that includes more and more people. The foundation of the social company is participation and reinvestment in the own business or in companies with similar direction. The business concept is a combination of democracy, power and self-help. The social companies combine entrepreneurship with the individual's need for work and society's need of goods and services. In Europe social companies have already created hundreds of thousands of new jobs. That is where we are now. Courageous politicians without personal interests in the large banks should immediately create the prerequisites for creating new and sustainable banks. But even without political support we already have Ekobanken in Sweden, Merkur in Denmark, Cultura in Norway, GLS in Germany and Triodos in Holland.

Some of those who make money on today's production of goods and organized trade feel threatened by and are afraid of losing their control and their markets. They work against this development. Simultaneously others hurry to reorganize their production to be more climate friendly, envisaging increased market shares and profits. But the basic prerequisites for the common rules of the game require an extended responsibility. Otherwise nothing will be left for future generations and their needs.

Lester Brown has participated in the definition of sustainable development and he has also strived for the achievement of concrete objectives. He is skeptical to the possibilities of politics and business to be able to manage the transition at the speed necessary. They are considered having too many fingers in the cookie jar. Instead he sees scenarios where people take things in their own hands, just like the case of choosing a local bank that only invests in sustainable projects. He mentions the fall of the Berlin wall, where decades of irritation over the wall finally made people demolish it. But he also establishes that we do not have the time to be annoyed over the irrelevance of the implemented politics and the real development. He also sees catastrophes as potential alarm clocks to change direction and transition. For me, it seems like the human is a little bit like the frog in the anecdote. We stay in the cooking pan although the water gradually gets warmer. What Brown seems to forget completely is that women are the forerunners of transition. More women today get an education and can take a position in politics and business. That is a part of the solution. Together and fairly we make the transition.



HUMANS – A RESOURCE

In the optimal growth scenario, humans and nature are generally considered objects to be used on the market. Industrial production gets very close to the individual through advertising and the media – and affects conditions for life. Tailor-made advertisements via the personality design of Google and a constant advertising column for all those who interact on Facebook are accepted as something normal. Unclear structures and lack of rules for how the industrial society produces the goods that are consumed, the origin of the goods or its components, possible child labor, emissions into land and water, safe working conditions and wages, lack of possibilities to join labor organizations – all benefit short-term thinking and irresponsibility. Uncertainty about who benefits from what and who are the winners and losers in the end seem to be accepted or only marginally requested. Consumption in itself seems to be the essential. Tim Jackson discusses the identity of growth, how the construction itself leads to individual identity and says who you are or who you want to be. Countries measure GDP with each other through internationally sanctioned entities, whose is the largest? In spite of all the awareness of the fact that welfare and long-term environmental effects are not included among the factors of GDP, the measurement continues to be used. Most people today know that traffic accidents, nuclear plant accidents, floods, etc. still result in a plus in the traditional GDP measurement. The requirement voiced by Green movements to mark products with countries of origin and contents are met by marginal changes of declarations of content. “Business as usual” dominates.

Green Women demand equality and gender balanced structures where at least 50 percent of the participants are women in the transformation.

In the socially fair scenario, the democratic participation of the individual is considered a key function in relation to development. Here is a contradiction in comparison with the free market basic assumption, where humans and nature are merely production inputs. They can be seen as values of partial functions. But democratic interactive participation also requires responsibility in order to become sustainable. Underlying assumptions are gender inequality and non-equal opportunities, which persist but which are not accounted for alongside the mantra of increased growth as the great solution to all problems.

There is little doubt, growth can solve problems in the short run through increased consumption, but in the long run it will inevitably create final societal problems in the form of environmental destruction, like in Fukushima. Through capital placements and distribution of profits, resources are transferred, although not having been evaluated ethically or morally. Both social barriers and environmental damages have increased since 1987, when measurable sustainability objectives were introduced globally by the UN in Rio de Janeiro. Women’s movements and the environmental movements have increasingly voiced their demands for change. Most significant are the demands on the large corporations, the banks and the shareholders to pay compensation to the countries or peoples who will have a worse situation, not improved, based on the companies’ actions.

Those who emphasize investments in green jobs most often exemplify by infrastructural investments such as expansions of public transportation systems and energy efficient housing. The answers to increased demand of energy are technical development, energy efficiency and investments in renewable energy. But a green transformation in the production line does not reduce income differences and poverty automatically, just because it is green. To formulate politics for a green development without suggesting rules of the game for an equal and fair practical implementation is not sustainable. The patriarchal structures as such, in which we all operate and where opposites are emphasized, are not clearly analyzed in the green economy of today.



It is astounding that the persons who will manage the breakdown of capitalism have not yet comprehended that women and men together have to develop and decide the future of the world.



AN INTEGRATED GAME PLAN

The previous focus of the UN on economic effects of climate changes will now in Rio de Janeiro be extended to include social effects as well. This is self-evident for many people. However, previously climate friendly has been interpreted as green wash of today's business existing economic power structures. Thereby climate has been discussed using a technical language and technical solutions, which have brought mostly men to the negotiation table. For some unfathomable reason this gender selection takes place in Government administrations as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, NGO:s.

Earlier UN focus on equality have been based on themes like women as victims, women are the poorest among the poor, women are raped as actions of war, the general violence of men towards women and difficulties of women to decide over her own body in certain religiously fundamentalist countries. These issues have brought women to the negotiation tables, working on the Commission of Women and Platform for Action. Women have been gathering to demand influence and power through affirmative action and equal pay. Women demand the right to their own bodies, sexual and reproductive health and the right to get an education and share the responsibility for the home and children. The negotiation teams of the participating governments have been dominated by women. The same is true for inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

It has still not been officially concluded that women are a part of the solution for a sustainable planet. But gender naturally must be integrated in all processes in order to achieve justice. This is a basic prerequisite for all processes and will now apply for Rio+20. The principles of the Rio Declaration compose a general framework for the development of just and effective strategies for delimitation and adjustment to climate change. Of those more than one billion women living in extreme poverty, we find more than 700 million in the countryside. Of the 925 million people living in constant hunger, 60 percent are women. We also know that women perform two thirds of all labor in the world, but their earnings are only ten percent of the total world income and they own only one percent of the world assets. That is our starting point when we demand immediate transformation of economic structures. We demand that equality and justice carry the same weight as environmental considerations when new rules for trade and exchange of services are formulated.



CAUSE AND EFFECT

Today nobody denies that climate change is taking place and that social barriers are increasing in the whole world. However, the culprit always seems to be somewhere else but at your own table. According to the EU, an annual investment of less than world 's combined annual spending on military rearmament would "save" the climate. The example clarifies that the climate threat is not primarily an economic issue, but rather a structural issue. I would like to add that it is also a one-eyed, unisexual issue, so far.

Too many politicians around the world now expect the business society to "save the world". Leading Swedish politicians continue to let their fund planners place their money in arms trade, tobacco industry and nuclear power. They do not consider themselves responsible since they are not the ones buying the shares. The fact is that these double moral standards have never been sanctioned, which becomes very clear when investigative journalists bring them out into the open. In Sweden we recently could read in one of the big morning papers that one minister, responsible for the banking system; he himself owns shares in all the large banks. Another important minister owns weapon manufacturers ' shares while at the same time overseeing that Sweden does not export weapons to belligerent dictator regimes, which we do.

What then are the alternatives in order both to demand responsibility and take responsibility? How can we make the money work without harming other people or the environment – but instead work for a long-term, equal and sustainable development? We agree with many others in the demand that large corporations should be held responsible for the damage they cause. That is the case in countries with environmental legislation, union laws and social codes to follow. But in many countries where stock brokers today harvest huge economic profits, there are no legislation to protect the environment and humans. Corruption in the courts, politics and police benefits the one that pays the most. Here the shareholders should be accountable for what their actions lead to. A Swedish minister with responsibility for foreign relations places money in 18 funds where several of them are Russian banks and oil companies. He never buys stock in his own country. If stock brokers would be personally responsible for the way profits were created, a transformation would happen very quickly. Such a responsibility would make all funds ethical. The corporations ' own responsibility for damages to the environment and humans can be expressed so clearly that their influence can be measured and described in the annual reports. It has been said many times that the one causing the damage should pay. It is time to go through with that now. Furthermore, tax cuts could be awarded those who participate in e.g. energy transformation, from use of fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy.

The organization Green Women presents an economic model based on different ingredients about how to live a good life. In this model, knowledge about equality is integrated in the general education. Possibilities for self-realization based on basic needs are considered the pillars of a resilient and sustainable economy. These principles relate to human development through a good life and enable a respectful interaction between individuals, animals and nature in general. The individual is the central starting-point and an interactive player. With the human being in the center, human growth becomes an objective.



The ingredients are: controlling your own options; taking responsibility and being aware of consequences of your actions, that your actions lead to environmental balance; being able to develop competence that lead to hope and belief in the future; having choices that coincide with your visions; having spiritual freedom and cultural integrity; being socially respected; having possibilities of political and civil participation; understanding your relationship with and dependence of all and everything; having possibilities of a good health, security and safety; having the possibilities of personal satisfaction; being able to participate in production; having the freedom of trade and exchange of services with others.

It is thus fundamental that the human is "maximized" and seen above the material. Today's society considers increased personal consumption a prerequisite for economic and societal growth. When the human is freed from her role as a consumer, completely new objectives and visions appear as possibilities.



Green feminist economy is sustainable.

Transition takes place through work and green jobs take on a new meaning for a sustainable economy when the social dimension is given the same value as the economic and ecological dimensions. An equal and just holistic perspective of goods and labor can lead to making green jobs for all. The interaction between individuals in society becomes essential. I call that a green feminist economic development, sustainable today and sustainable for future generations.

Thus, the basic economic structures need to be reformed and transformed. Women leave smaller ecological footprints than men. Women have a more sustainable life style not only because they are the poorest and own the least, but because they perform all the unpaid labor that a society cannot live without. Women should be the role models in the transition towards a sustainable society. Women must be ensured to take an active part in the work on their own terms; affirmative action is a tool for rapid implementation of this principle. Another tool is gender budgeting which shows how and what is benefitted by the budget; in that way the direction becomes clear. All the different parameters mentioned above should be considered when money is to be distributed. Then the money becomes a tool which makes it possible to evaluate if investments have an impact to evaluate social respect and what the consequences are for the workers and for the environment. It is really self-evident things that will make it fun to work, produce and trade. It will be more satisfying to consume when the intrinsic value of every product means added values for others in the whole production chain. Green feminist economy is sustainable.





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FACTS

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is by far the most used measurement of a country's development. It measures economic activity, or more exactly the value of total consumption of goods and services, gross investments, plus exports, minus imports. Economic growth is defined as the increase of GDP, i.e. an increase of goods and services are produced in a country.

Real GDP is a measurement that indicates the economic activity in a country. Just like GDP, real GDP is a measurement of growth but possibly more accurate since it also considers the economic activity in relation to other countries. However, it is only in a few countries that the difference between GDP and real GDP is of importance.

Human Rights has a long story, but a declaration of human rights was made in the UN in 1948, stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

The Stockholm Conference in 1972 and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 with recommendations for action.

CEDAW, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, has a long history, but was accepted by the UN General Assembly in 1967. A Convention under the same portal was approved in 1981. More than 90% of the countries of the world have signed the CEDAW, which is legally binding.

The UN Platform for Action, an action plan with a long history, was adopted at the fourth UN Women Conference in Beijing in 1995. Twelve objectives were agreed upon, of which one deals with women and economy and one other deals with women and the environment. The action plan is followed up every year by the UN Commission of Women. More and more countries with different religious motives have difficulties accepting formulations about sexual and reproductive health, particularly the rights of woman to her own body and the possibility to abort a pregnancy.

The Millennium Goals of the UN were adopted in the year 2000 by 189 countries. The Declaration consists of eight measurable goals, of which one is increased equality and another securing a sustainable development. The poverty of the world should be abolished by 2015. The Millennium Goals are meant to simplify for governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to focus on a few, clearly defined, limited in time and measurable goals. They could also be used in broader activities for information, education and public opinion. The Millennium goals are essential for the development cooperation around the world, for the first time we have a joint agenda for the global development. The Millennium goals are integrated in all UN programs and are followed up every year.

The UNCD in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 after a long prolog, five agreements, of which two are binding.

COP; start in Berlin in 1995, the same year as the big Women Conference was held in Beijing. Parallel with COP1 was a Women Forum called "Solidarity in the Greenhouse" where more than 200 women representing 25 different countries discussed how climate change could be counteracted. The subsequent COP conferences did not reflect on women's conditions for life. COP6 brought up the rights of women to participation in delegations. In COP meetings after that, women have organized side events where energy and climate have been essential topics. The Network Gender CC – Women for Climate Justice was established after COP 9 in Milan, with the objective of "mainstreaming gender into the climate change regime".

UN Women was established in 2011 with headquarters in New York. The strategic plan consists of five themes, of which one is to strengthen participation of women as an economic actor, the second gender budgeting the third, to increase the number of women on positions as leaders and in general, to integrate equality within the whole UN system.



GREEN WOMEN WANT GENDER-EQUALITY NOW!

Green Women is a unique feminist non-partisan women ´s organization with equality, environment and economy as focus areas. We see the whole picture.

We connect societal processes such as violence of men towards women and violence towards nature, Mother Earth and we demand zero tolerance.

By illuminating the context of man, society and nature, we strengthen women to take active part in the general debate and in democratic decision making processes. At least 50 percent women should always participate.

We make visible the greater poverty among women in the world and unveil structural connections between inequality, environmental destruction, war and patriarchal structures.

The UN should establish a Global Economic Security Council;

We illuminate how prosperity rests on the services of nature, on caring for others and social voluntary organizational work, basic factors which today are considered of less importance and less economic value;

We elucidate the patriarchal structure ruling energy systems of today; we see the connection between mining of uranium, nuclear power, nuclear waste and nuclear arms – and we show the way to renewable energy systems;

We provide an equal view of sexuality and work against sexual subordination constructed and conserved through the sexualization of the public space and the general descriptions of media a unisexual violent and greedy world;

We consider chemicals to be clearly named in declarations of content. The precautionary principle and the welfare of humans and the environment shall guide the use of chemicals and nano substances.

We pay attention to how and who contaminates the water; we demand tougher legislation and sanctions and that the UN establishes a Chemicals Panel;

We work for a feminist green economic transition and we propose ingredients for a long-term, gender-equal and sustainable development



THE FUTURE IS NOW!
www.gronakvinnor.se