

Susmita Barua said: The time has come for citizens of the world to rethink economic systems that have left billions of people in poverty and undervalued the importance of informal economies in the developing world. In order for systemic change to occur, all citizens must learn fundamental economic literacy, and learn to value the contributions of women to our economic system.

As a Buddhist in Calcutta, I was taught to be mindful and compassionate towards the daily, existential suffering of others. It was obvious that this suffering was caused by poverty of the lower caste system and the societal inequities faced by women and minority groups. My college courses of study, on the other hand--economics, geography, demography, migration, regional development and planning--did not shed much light into the causes of this widening socioeconomic gap, a gap felt primarily between a formal, wage-based industrial economy and an informal, non-wage-based agricultural economy.

The following questions could be asked at the kitchen table, in the classroom and throughout the community:

- What is money?
- Who is collecting all the public and private debts and assets?
- What is fractional reserve banking?
- In what context did central banking originate?
- What is usury? How is it related to both ancient and modern (wage) slavery?
- Why do we have ever-growing private and public debt?
- What gives money its value?
- Is sustainability possible with unsustainable currency?
- What is the difference between a real economy and a speculative economy?
- What is the best way to allocate money so that basic human needs are met?
- Do we need different types of currencies for different economic sectors?
- Did currency exist before modern economics?
- Why do we need literacy when it comes to economics and their function in society?
- What role can women play in a more compassionate, humanitarian economy?
- What possibilities exist that we have yet to consider?

Asking profound questions is a way to generate a breakthrough, creative insights, and unforeseen possibilities. A diverse set of perspectives are required for sustainable solutions and a holistic approach. Albert Einstein commented that problems cannot be solved from the same point that they were created. And in *The Art of Questions*, Marille Goldberg echoes this sentiment: "A paradigm shift occurs when question is asked inside the current paradigm that can only be answered from outside it."

It is up to active, socially-conscious citizens to transform the system--not international banks, corporations and global institutions. The system is held both in our individual minds and our collective perceptions. When we become socially aware and engaged in making choices for the generations to come, our government and institutions are bound to change. The best part of such a transformative conversation: everyone has the opportunity to participate in shattering economic limitations and forging new pathways to a sustainable future.

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blog: <http://jlrbloginfo.blogspot.com/> ning: <http://abondanceandhappiness.ning.com>

twitter: @jeanlucroux "Les problèmes qui existent dans le monde aujourd'hui ne peuvent être résolus par le niveau de pensée qui les a créés." - Albert Einstein P Adoptez l'éco attitude... n'imprimez cet email que si nécessaire.