

Reconomy: Towards a combination of global infrastructure and local empowerment.

By Kevin Parcell, Founder and Steward of Reconomy Global Cooperative.

“This is a very cogent text, well written and understandable on the global-local connection.”

Michel Bauwens, Founder and President of P2P Foundation and Director of Research of FLOK Society Project of Ecuador.

<http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/the-reconomy-project-towards-a-combination-of-global-infrastructure-and-local-empowerment/2014/03/13>

The problem with the existing structure of democratic government is that its top-down distribution of power tends to render illegible to the system both the structure and value of very-local natural and human systems, which are the foundation of eco-sustainability (ecologic and economic), and also the unique offerings and needs of each individual. This circumstance of course suggests that full distribution of power to the individual at the most-local scale can maximize efficient use of natural and human resources. However the inverse illegibility also occurs with bottom-up structure: illegibility of the aggregate to the individuals, interfering with useful synergy.

For instance, we as individuals experience all kinds of weather, wherever we are, such that global climate trends are very difficult to estimate based on any particular local experience. Consequently, the power that can be distributed to individuals to greatest effect is empowerment over the ground beneath their feet (e.g. development and conservation of local resources) because that is most legible at that scale; but the useful directing of that effect depends on top-down global design and management of the infrastructure, such that all individuals and local communities function harmoniously and to best effect within the whole system, or, in other words, such that valuable knowledge is transmitted well and innovations scale well in all directions. Put another way: with a global infrastructure such as the internet, collaboration can outperform institutions because they allow greatest inclusiveness, but we need a global structure that synergizes performance positively.

To summarize, we need a global infrastructure that functions as both an interface between local and global economies, such that we can exploit global economy-of-scale to provide ever-changing and evolving appropriate local technology, and functions also as an interface between local communities such that they are connected in a global web of mutual support for specifically local knowledge, for instance how to build with local materials. This is what's missing — indeed what has never existed — and the

lack of which has made us dependent everywhere on supply from a global marketplace that is indifferent to the intrinsic value of persons and local systems upon which all depends. Now that our global climate has entered a transition state, and no new steady state is anywhere in sight, we need this combination of global infrastructure and local empowerment more than ever to empower individuals to act locally to greatest effect: we need to think locally and then act globally to best distribute and support local empowerment for best local and global effect.

Our advancing high-speed interconnectedness can serve as the foundation of this infrastructure because it can transform person-to-person “weather reporting” into a high-speed global picture of “climate change” through the aggregation of local data, permitting global-scale response. However, to accomplish this response we still need a fundamentally new infrastructure that is a global network of mutual support for specifically-local solutions because small populations can sustain everyday wisdom but can’t maintain all the specialized skills necessary to longterm sustainable local prosperity, such as how to make stuff such as homes and tools that are appropriate to evolving climate using only local materials. Or, in other words, we need a global infrastructure to support the preservation of valuable local-maker knowledge of lasting components, and this infrastructure can

be in the form of a global trading platform for a living library of local knowledge, traded person-to-person, hour-for-hour, because that local knowledge of how to make lasting components is everyday wisdom within the aggregate.

This global platform can also engage in the trade of knowledge of how to create/scale and maintain local trading platforms that develop and conserve local natural and human resources, which local marketplace structure is also something that has never existed; and these two new structures can be arranged as complementary, much as unique local ecosystems are part of the common global ecosystem: the platforms are autonomous but continuous, like a mobius strip: they use separate, autonomous accounts — one for local trade within the local platform, especially trade of goods and services, and the other for global trade within the global platform of intangibles, especially knowledge — but each maker belongs to both platforms (their particular local and common global) and each maker has one of each type of autonomous account.

Local and global ecosystems engage in trade, such as trade of water, with water carrying nutrients to the roots and then transpiring into the atmosphere for either local or global use. Our local economic systems need to do likewise but instead now transpire value only into a global system that transports the value to where it is needed least - to

the affluent - as if it rained only over oceans. In such an ecological mess, we'd need to find a way to keep water local without shutting down global systems. Likewise with our economy, we must keep value local to build prosperous local systems without shutting down the global system, otherwise the local systems will fail and the global system with it. Local moneyless trading systems scaled from a global moneyless knowledge commons is the Reconomy solution.

(For more info visit <http://reconomy.net>)