



“I created the Lindentaler because as I see it, the ideas of a basic income, of local exchange trading systems and regional currencies, of flowing money and of socially responsible economic activity belong together. Previously, each of these ideas had developed independently. The way I see it they are interdependent, and only when combined can they enable economic activity in harmony with nature. Growth is always constrained by natural limitations, just as a seed develops into a fully grown plant before decaying and returning its component parts to the cycle.”

Rainer, 49, aus Leipzig

The Lindentaler

The name Leipzig comes from the Slavic word “Lipsk”, and means “place where the linden trees stand”. Again and again, the city has been a hub of social change. The Lindentaler is based on four pillars: the idea of a basic income as a means of ensuring people’s dignity as social beings; regionality, enabling the economy to think and develop in closed cycles; interest-free, flowing money to promote these cycles without forcing economic growth; and to return to the first point, an economy of solidarity enables people to fulfil their potential as social beings.

www.lindentaler.org



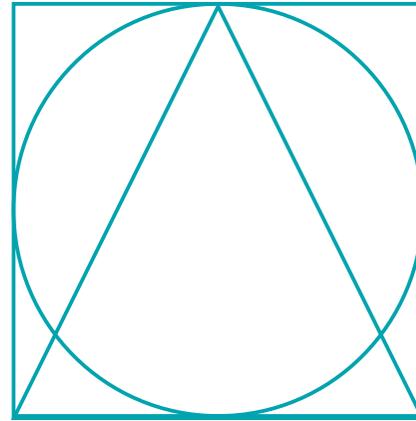
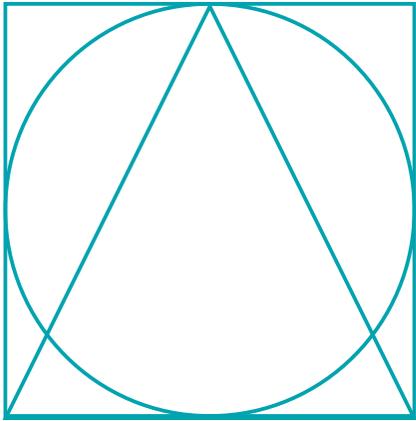
“The Lüneburger Lunar, the Chiemgauer or the Bristol Pound support local interactions and therefore everything that defines a region. When I pay with a local currency, I am forming a relationship with the products and the people who produce them. Value creation takes place locally, where I can see it and help decide what happens to the money.”

Anja, 27, from Lüneburg

Local currency

Local currencies are regional forms of payment which complement the Euro. They promote regional enterprises and stimulate regional economic cycles. This enables economic activity to more closely reflect the reality of those involved. As one of a number of instruments for regional development, local currencies have the potential to contribute to a “renaissance of the regions”. Instead of anonymity and transport routes, they foster sustainable, regional economic cycles.

www.regiogeld.de





"I am an active participant in the transition movement because concrete, local projects are the most rewarding. I am also inspired by the idea that outer change goes hand in hand with inner change. What is more, I have yet to find a greater variety of innovative and professional methods than I have encountered in transition projects. That is why I am actively involved in disseminating the approach as a trainer in German-speaking regions."

Matthias, 27, from Münster

Transition Towns

Transition Towns are initiatives by people who are not content to wait for high-level politics to take steps against climate change or the depletion of resources. Transition Towns strive towards energy independence, local economies and increased self-sufficiency taking concrete action at local level. Such action can include reducing energy consumption, own energy production from renewable sources, local currencies, urban gardening projects and much more. Examples of transition towns can be found all over the globe.

<http://www.transitionnetwork.org>



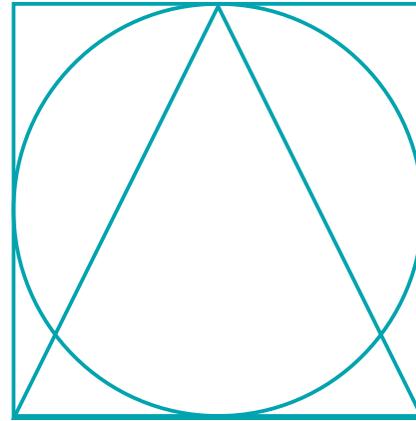
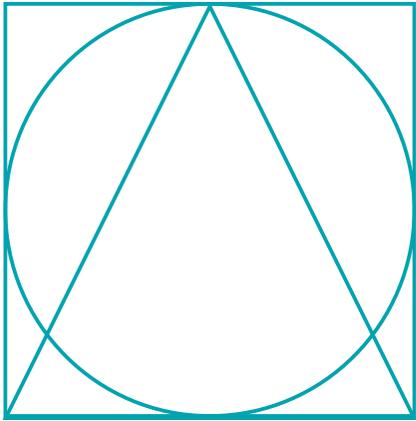
"Our shared flat has been involved in a food co-op in Berlin for seven years. It means we can buy food much more cheaply than anywhere else. In this way, especially organic food can be affordable for people who have less to spend. Sometimes, we visit the farm to help with the harvest. It's a lot of fun, and we get to know the farm. We share the admin work, and a lot is done online. For example, some members have developed software which greatly simplifies the ordering process. Even so, I know that there is always more I could be doing!"

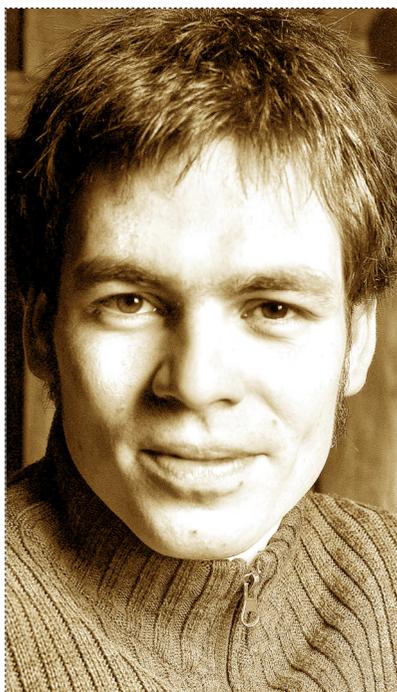
Dörte, 27, from Berlin

Food co-op

A food co-op is an association of people and households formed to jointly purchase (generally organic) food. This makes it possible to buy large amounts of foodstuffs directly from producers, or gain access to minimum order volumes from wholesalers. As this bypasses intermediaries, prices are lower, making organic produce affordable even to people on a tighter budget. Food co-ops generally operate on the principle of distribution of labour and collective management. The approach reduces consumer isolation, bringing together consumers with similar lifestyles. In addition, local farms are supported by direct purchasing of produce.

www.sustainweb.org/foodcoops





“The way out of self-inflicted political impotence necessarily involves the active participation of each individual in shaping society. More democracy is therefore not just a political necessity, but above all an inner attitude.”

Marius, 31, from Berlin

Political participation

At city, municipal or district level there are opportunities to participate in and influence planning processes so as to steer them towards development rather than growth. Sometimes, information is all it takes to achieve simple improvements. The creation of land use plans, urban development concepts and transport development plans involves a great deal of discussion about strategic issues. Here too, civic involvement is possible. Citizens contact their councillors to ask about the plans; realise that political groups are entitled to access records; read municipal regulations and see that their issue needs addressing. For important individual decisions, direct democracy is also often an option. Petitions and referendums are increasingly gaining importance. The essential idea is that the people should be allowed to decide upon important issues directly, by means of a fair vote.

www.mehr-demokratie.de



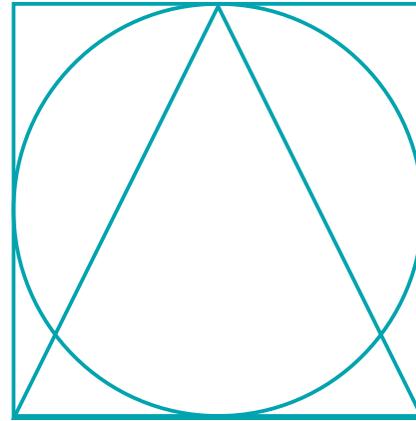
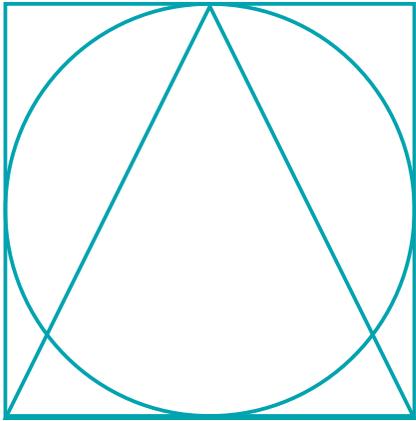
“Using banks to transfer money has become an integral part of our daily lives which we could hardly do without. For quite some time I have been asking myself to what extent this procedure is suited to meeting people’s needs. Other models, such as local exchange trading systems, are gaining in popularity, and there are alternatives to be found within the banking system itself. That is why I decided to switch to an ethical bank. I want my money to be invested in a meaningful and sustainable manner. Furthermore, I have the opportunity to take part in deciding which projects are invested in. This more than compensates for no longer having the convenience of countless branches wherever I go. In any case, I am very happy with how the bank advises me and represents my interests.”

Jehan, 29, from Berlin

Putting money to good use

Increasingly, people are saying to themselves: “My money can do more than just make more money!” Happy to accept slightly lower interest rates, they take their money to a bank which uses it to finance projects which make social and ecological sense. Nuclear or coal power plants, arms production or child trafficking are out of the question. GLS Bank in Germany, Charity Bank in the UK, Triodos Bank in various European countries – the list of banking institutions which regard depositors’ money as an instrument of social change, and therefore operate in a demonstrably ethical manner, is growing. The ecumenical development cooperative Oikocredit or ethical investment funds also offer opportunities to invest money in socially meaningful causes.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_banking





“Urban gardening highlights the real value of food, as it makes you realise just how long it takes until you can harvest even a single tomato. For me, it is not so much about self-sufficiency as self-care: enjoying the sunset in the company of others in the midst of a thriving garden gives us space in which we can learn to see and think about things in a different light.”

Therese, 29, from Berlin

Urban Gardening

Another world is plantable! All over the world, more and more people are following this motto and taking at least a part of their food supply back into their own hands. On rooftops, in green belts, in old allotments or disused airports, urban gardening groups everywhere are conjuring tomatoes, lettuces and strawberries out of the ground. As well as re-establishing people’s connection with nature and the origins of the food they eat, this phenomenon also contributes towards increased subsistence, i.e. self-sufficiency. What is more, urban gardening leads to shorter transport distances and social cooperation.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_agriculture



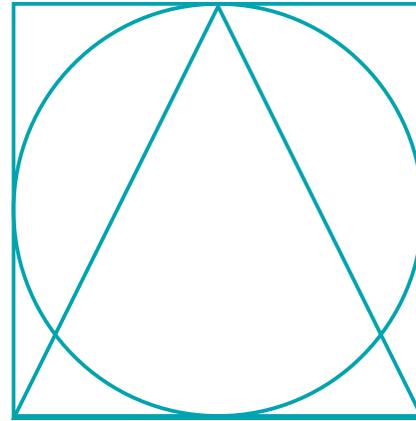
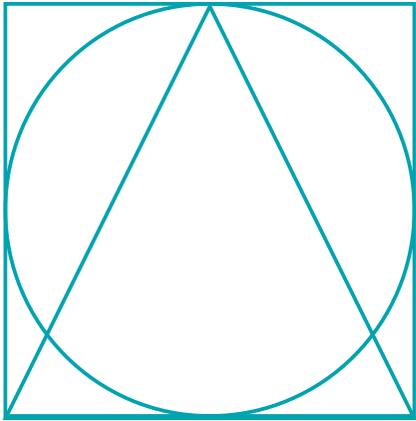
“With the performance collective Bauchladen Monopol (roughly translated: Hawker’s tray monopoly), I try to find the intersection between art and politics by means of interventions in public spaces. I use performative adusting to draw people’s attention to the absurdity and tragedy of their faith in consumerism, manipulative beauty standards or gender roles in advertising and in society. I want to circumvent, reinterpret and broaden assumptions and rules. It is not about ‘opposition’, but rather ‘reinterpretation’, using rigid order as a vehicle for the unpredictable, thereby playing a part in shaping reality.”

Caro, 29, from Hamburg

Adbusting

In public spaces, particularly in cities, wherever we turn we come face to face with advertising for products and brands seeking to tempt us to consume. In Germany, a single person is exposed to up to 6,000 advertising messages every day. These messages tell us: “What you are and what you have are not enough!” The practice of adusting arose as a form of resistance against this message. It consists in altering, pasting over or otherwise transforming adverts in public spaces so as to reverse or parody their message. The goal is to increase people’s awareness in everyday settings and draw their attention to what lies behind brands’ shiny facade.

www.adbusters.org





“As a business administrator and publicist I explore alternative, non-profit forms of economic activity. I am driven by the question of how I can use my unearned privileges to contribute towards a world in which human rights are a reality for all. How can economic activity be organised in a way that does not result in the destruction of natural resources and labour, but instead cares for and values these things? And how can cooperation between people of different genders with different social and geographical backgrounds and abilities succeed? How can a culture of cooperation contribute towards social change?”

Elisabeth, 57, from Berlin

Socially responsible economy

Socially responsible economies are economic models which aim to satisfy human needs by recourse to voluntary cooperation, self-organisation, mutual assistance and democratic structures. In these models, the principle of solidarity stands in opposition to the approach of capitalist market economies based on competition, cynical individualism and maximisation of returns. The focus is on people rather than profits. Examples range from the small self-managed bar round the corner to the large cooperative which supplies half a city with food in Venezuela.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_responsibility



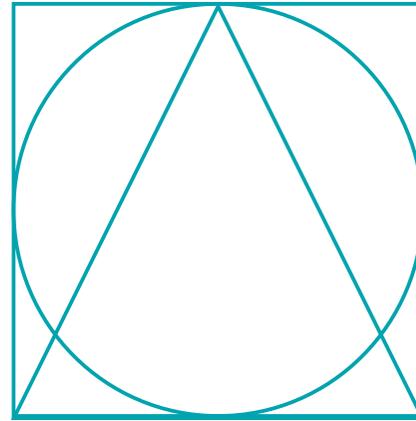
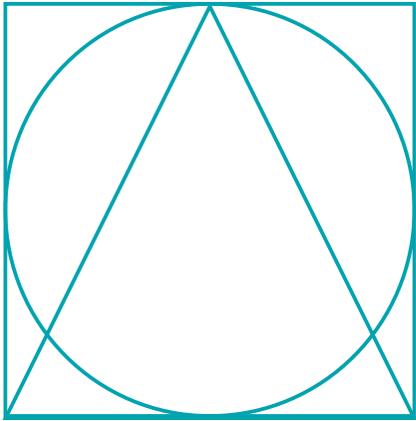
“I heard about the idea of skipping a few years ago, and soon tried it for myself. Why do I do it? For one thing, I find skipping to be a great deal of fun, as every time is a surprise – a bit like opening presents – and for another, I cannot understand why edible food is being thrown out. You don’t just find food when skipping: once I came across three bins filled with flowers which ended up in my home and as presents to other people.

Anja, 27, from Berlin

Skipping

In the EU, an average of around 180 kg of food per person ends up in the rubbish every year. A great deal of this food is thrown away by supermarkets, generally because of expired sell-by dates, bruising or surplus stock. This waste inspired the practice of ‘skipping’, or ‘dumpster diving’ as it known in the US. The practice consists in recovering unspoilt food discarded by supermarkets from containers and rubbish bins in protest against the throw-away society. Besides, skipping can save a great deal of money too.

<http://www.moneylessmanifesto.org/book/food-and-water/skipping/>





"I live in Leipzig in a house with 17 residents. Each floor is a separate shared flat with its own kitchen, but we do a lot of shopping together. Feeding yourself with regional, seasonal, environmentally sustainable and fair produce can be very difficult to do alone. However, in a large group the effort is distributed among a number of people, while choice and quality of living are increased. For example, it makes a lot of sense to order staple foods in bulk directly from an organic wholesaler. Shared living has many other advantages as well. You always have a friend nearby. We have a shared event room where we regularly organise whatever kind of event we feel like: readings, concerts, film screenings or dance courses. There's always something going on!"

Nina, 28, from Leipzig

Communal living

Per capita living space, along with the associated energy consumption, has risen sharply in recent decades. This is largely due to the growing number of people living alone. Communal living is a socially and ecologically meaningful way of countering this trend. Communal living structures are by no means limited to the notorious shared student apartments. Older people too can find opportunities to remain active participants in society with alternative housing concepts. In intergenerational housing projects, young and old people mutually support each other, creating a healthy living environment. Besides sharing living space, the residents of these projects often also share everyday items, and not least friendships.

<http://www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk>



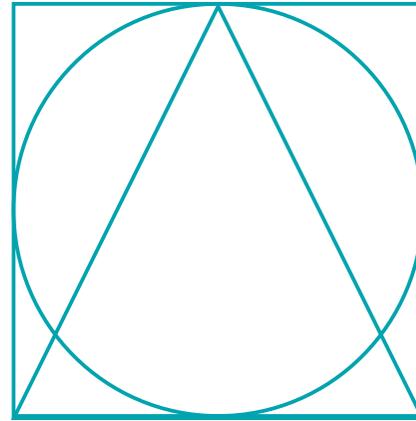
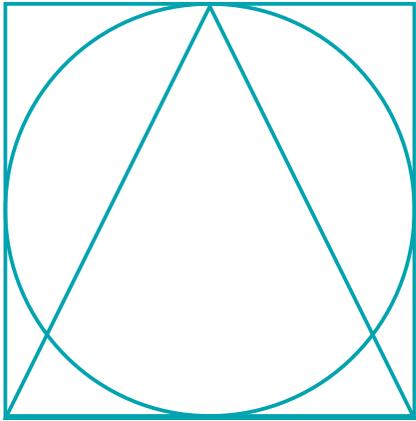
"I grew up with carsharing. My parents shared a Citroën 2CV with a number of friends. I am now carrying on the tradition and use a car jointly with friends. I use my bike to get around Berlin on a daily basis, and have the option of using a car when I need to. I use it to transport large items or to drive out to the countryside."

Jessica, 31, from Berlin

Carsharing

Many people own cars which mostly just sit in the garage. This would be anathema to any businessperson: an expensive machine which is idle most of the time. However, cars can also be shared. Sharing can be organised privately, or by recourse to one of the increasingly attractive commercial operators. The major advantage: for many people, the need to own a car which is mostly idle disappears. Instead of more air pollution, the result is more space in cities and use of a car at any time, at a much lower cost.

www.carpooling.co.uk





“Today, many people are taking responsibility for the creation of a worthwhile future, free from the compulsion to constantly acquire more.

This is happening in communal gardens, in science, in education... The aim of the Wachstumswende network is to give these initiatives a forum for networking and exchange of ideas, and to demonstrate to the public at large that major changes begin with small ones – and there are already plenty of those.”

Boris, 28, from Freiburg

Networking and exchange for social change

For most economists, economic growth is a kind of panacea to solve all social problems. The network Wachstumswende (roughly: ‘growth transition’) provides a platform for people who question this standpoint and want to explore, implement and disseminate lifestyles and economic models beyond the growth paradigm. In addition, the platform offers those interested an exciting overview of current discussions and events.

www.wachstumswende.de



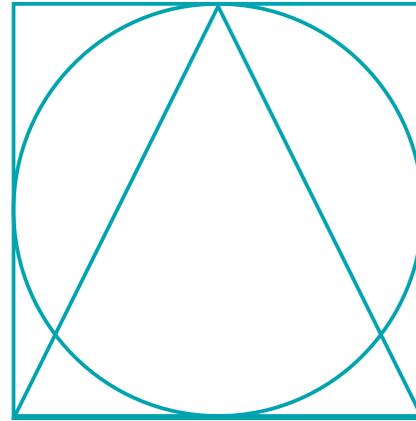
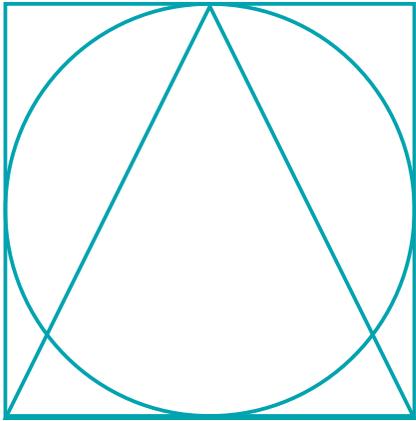
“I am convinced that discussions on the sustainability of our society must include an examination of the concept of economic growth. As well as critical insight into existing circumstances, this requires vision, ideas, goals and real-life examples showing possible paths towards an economy designed to serve human needs while having as little impact on the environment as possible. Our aim in developing educational materials in this field is to enable young people and those working with them to take part in the debate. The questions are largely the same as those asked in scientific and political contexts. However, through the perspective of young people, the answers to those questions become more varied, enabling change on multiple levels.”

Arun, 31, from Eberswalde

Educational work on post-growth

In recent years, economic growth has increasingly come under critical fire. Growing numbers of articles and books are being published, meetings and conferences are being held, and people are coming together in search of alternatives to the idea of growth. The members of the association FairBindung e.V. are motivated by the conviction that economy and growth should not be left in the hands of the so-called experts, namely economists and politicians. Accordingly, for a number of years the self-organised association has been busy developing educational materials to provide young people with a gateway to this topic and enable them to form their own ideas. This card is a part of that work.

www.endlich-wachstum.de





“I don't think any of us knows what an ecological and social economy and society will look like. However, it is high time we started thinking about alternatives and getting creative. The messages coming from politics, but also from established economics as taught at universities, are unfortunately very limited and do not provide any real alternatives. We must therefore become informed civil society experts and develop our own concepts, both practically and theoretically!”

Susanne, 28, from Leipzig

Developing and disseminating new solutions

New concepts for a different economic model which is both ecologically and socially more sustainable are urgently needed, as are people who take the time to develop such concepts and introduce them into the public awareness. There are also good concepts which have existed for a long time, and “just” need to make themselves heard. Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie in Leipzig pursues both these aims. Its staff of around 10 see themselves as working at the intersection between science and political practice, taking a scientific approach to current economic issues and making concrete proposals for political action beyond “business as usual”, aimed at ecologically and socially transforming society.

<http://konzeptwerk-neue-oekonomie.org>



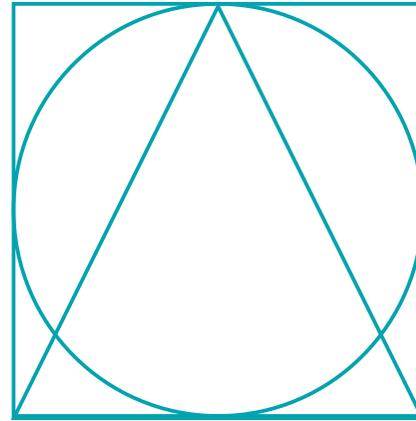
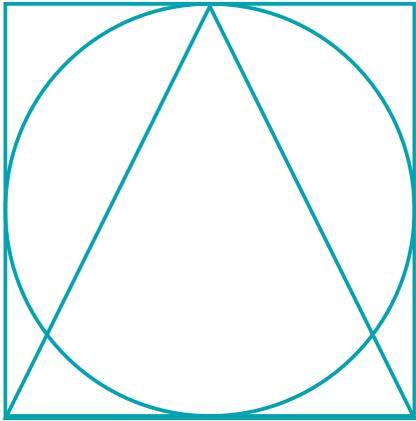
“The feeling that “it's our farm” changes everything. We are no longer consumers, but take part in decision-making and financing, in production and distribution; we discover and enjoy what we like, together. Almost incidentally, this leads to a truly sustainable and socially responsible economy. It is great to experience the abundance and variety that the land has to offer, not to mention the challenges involved . The experience and growing awareness that another way is possible – along with the delicious spinach of course – give us strength.”

Dagmar, 37, from Kassel

Community Supported Agriculture

It is perfectly possible for agriculture to be practised regionally, ecologically and without market constraints. A group of consumers assumes the operating costs of a (generally ecologically run) farm in advance, e.g. for a year. The advance financing takes some pressure off the farm and enables it to operate with greater respect for nature and the environment. Marketing costs are eliminated, as are losses due to produce which does not comply with supermarket standards. Members of the regional consumer association consume the produce as needed, without buying it individually. This teaches people to cook seasonally and shows them that organic quality regional self-sufficiency is affordable and possible.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture>





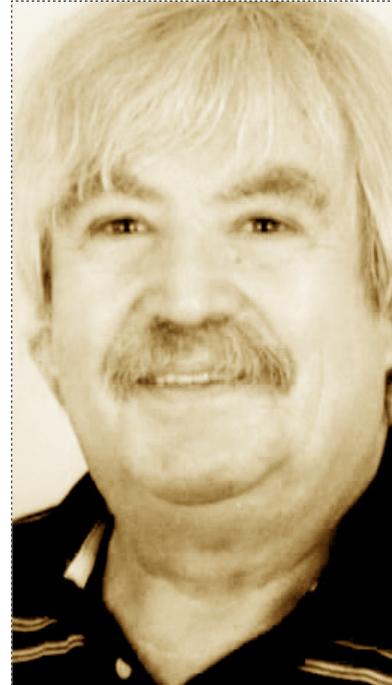
“For six months we have been members of a CSA association in Kreuzberg, Berlin. We think it is a brilliant idea, as it brings farmers and consumers together in a more direct and personal relationship. Consumers work on the farm once a year, which gives people who live in the city a chance to remember where their food comes from, how it grows, and how valuable natural cycles are. It doesn't all work out perfectly of course: the idea is for each of the 40 members to decide for themselves how much they should take from the weekly deliveries according to their needs. However, the vegetables are now generally weighed and divided into shares, as before there was either too much left over, or it disappeared too quickly. Helping out on the farm doesn't always work out either – we didn't manage to go this autumn. New approaches always experience some difficulty as long as they exist in a niche. However, the idea of Community Supported Agriculture is good, people-oriented and close to nature, which is why we take part.”

Jantje, 33, und Johannes, 35, from Berlin

Community Supported Agriculture

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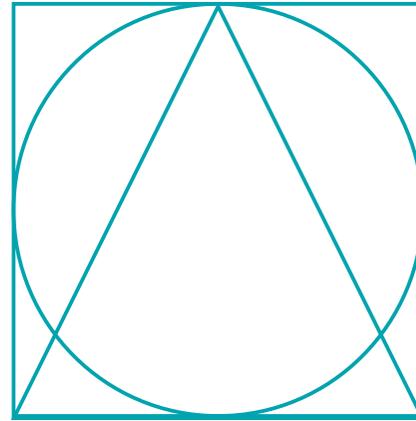
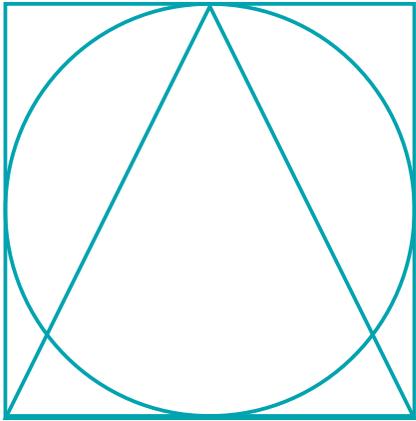
“(Aircraft) noise is a health hazard, and threatens our children's development” (German Congress of Physicians 2012, German Federal Environmental Agency).
“It is unacceptable for economic interests to be rubber-stamped by our politicians at the expense of the health and quality of life of our population. This is why we are fighting against aircraft noise with over 200 citizens' initiatives in Germany.”

Norbert, 64, from Berlin

Citizens' initiatives: stopping destructive projects

When the number of large power plants, animal factories, motorways or airports threatens to grow, protest is called for. Projects which set back the transition to a sustainable society by decades must be stopped. Committed citizens lodge objections to land use planning procedures, write to newspapers, collect signatures and take part in demonstrations. In many cases they are successful. Numerous destructive projects have already been prevented in this way. In addition, the population's growing critical awareness means that in future projects, citizens are involved in planning issues at an earlier stage.

www.buergerinitiative.de





“The last few clothes swap parties I went to were a huge amount of fun. At the end, everyone told a story about one of the items of clothing they had brought with them. Some of them were truly fantastic. Most were unbelievably funny and absurd. For the party to work, it’s important to think about presentation: on hangers, rails or sorted into different containers by theme. Just throwing everything into a pile doesn’t work as well and “devalues” the clothing. It can also be a good idea to agree on whether particular categories should be excluded (e.g. underwear or clothes with holes in).”

Lena, 32, from Paris

Clothes swap party

The wardrobe is full. But so many of our clothes are never actually used. What to do with them? Used clothes collected in containers often end up in Africa, where they damage local markets. And why should they be sent somewhere so far away? Clothes swap parties are enjoying growing popularity. They are a way for people to spend a pleasant evening together, bringing clothes they no longer need and swapping them for others. This way, rather than ending up as landfill, the clothes are taken home by a happy new owner.

www.harmoniousliving.co.za/Environment/Eco-Friendly/Why-is-a-Clothes-Swap-the-Best-Way-to-Refresh-Your-Wardrobe



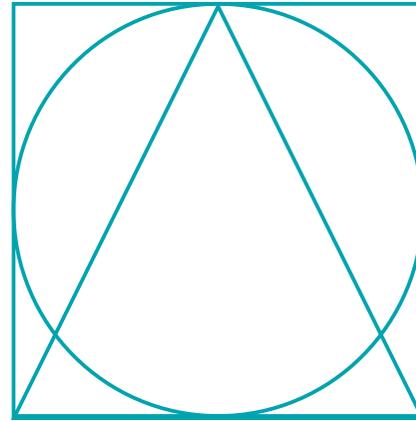
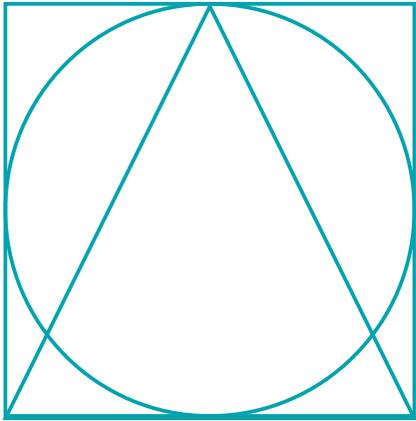
“I think free shops are a great idea. They are a small step away from the rationale that everything must immediately be paid for in some form or other. Instead of throwing away things that are no longer used, or selling them for cash, by giving them to a free shop I can take pleasure in knowing that they are useful to someone else. And I always find things that come in handy to me as well. Free shops are a criticism of the capitalist throw-away mentality, and in a small way they offer a practical alternative to it.”

Robin, 31, from Berlin

Free shop

The idea behind free shops is simple: many people own things that they no longer use or need. These things can be taken to a free shop. They might be exactly what other people are looking for, and they will be delighted to find them in a free shop in their neighbourhood. A free shop makes it possible for things that are still in working order to continue to be used instead of being thrown away. No money changes hands – as the name indicates, everything in the shop is free.

www.umsonstladen.de





“I take part in a local exchange trading system because it’s not about economic competition, but mutual support. If I need help in a particular area, I can find people to provide it. Money doesn’t even enter the equation. In principle it’s a kind of moneyless neighbourhood assistance system, in which everyone puts their talents and abilities to use. It also means I get to use all sorts of skills that are not a part of my job. I’ve met lots of great people. It reinforces a sense of community, and it’s fun.”

Jona, 32, from Leipzig

Local exchange trading systems

In local exchange trading systems, services are exchanged mostly on the basis of a time account, with no money involved. Baking, language courses, transport, massages, child-care, consultancy, repairs, gardening, reading out loud – everyone can offer their skills and ask for something in return which they cannot do for themselves. Many local exchange trading systems also organise parties and regular meetings. These systems bring people together and strengthen the community.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_exchange_trading_system

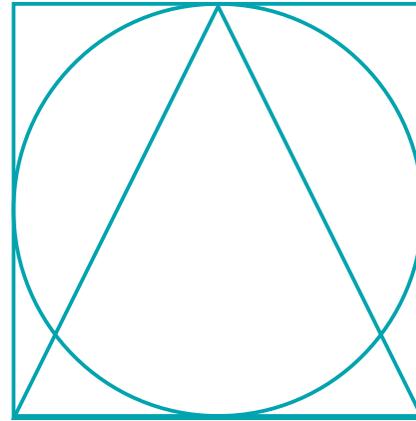
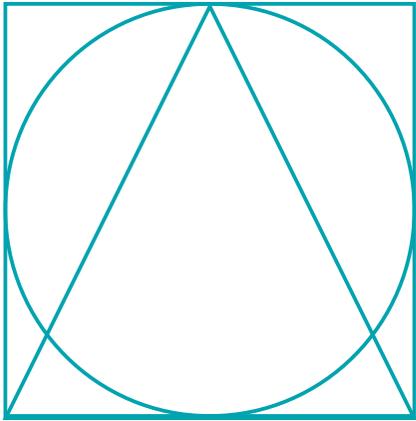


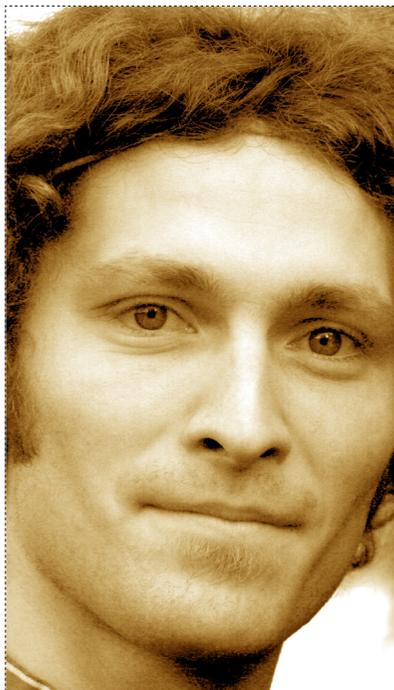
“When I finished university, I made a conscious decision to find a part-time job. I didn’t want my life to completely change and consist only in paid work and relaxing in the evening. It is important to me to have time for social engagement and to be active in the association I belong to. It also enables me to pursue other activities which do me good, like meeting friends or doing lots of sports. Of course a part-time job also means a lower salary, but it is worth it, as this way I also have the time to spend it meaningfully.”

Simon, 29, from Regensburg

Shorter working hours

Shorter working hours are the most effective way of enabling paid work for as many people as possible. This addresses the problem of high unemployment as an argument for economic growth. Over half of all employed people in Germany would like to have shorter working hours. This would be beneficial to their health, and leave more time for friends and family.





“My grandparents’ and parents’ generation left many important aspects of their lives such as water, food or energy to large corporations. My feeling is that these corporations, like the state, are not in a position to bring about the transformation that our world so badly needs. Therefore, common citizens must come together and invest in these essential areas, reclaiming and in some measure relearning them. Our cooperative BürgerEnergie Berlin brings people from the region together to operate the power grid and generate renewable energy locally. Everyone contributes financially, and can benefit from the profits.”

Julian, 31, from Berlin

Energy cooperative

In order to establish sustainable, regional and democratic energy concepts, citizens form cooperatives and invest in renewable energies. These cooperatives produce electricity where it is needed, helping make the region independent from large, supraregional energy suppliers. As corporations operating on behalf of shareholders, large power companies have to pursue growth, increase profits and pay out high dividends. Sustainability and the common good come second. In a cooperative, on the other hand, they are the central goals. What is more, all members participate equally in deciding on the affairs of the cooperative. Each member has one vote, regardless of the size of their share. Profits do not end up in corporate bank accounts, but serve the interests of everyone involved. In the last five years alone, around 300 successful new cooperatives were formed in the renewable energy sector in Germany.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utility_cooperative



„Wir sollten das Unmögliche probieren, um das Mögliche zu erreichen und unsere Träume leben. Was würdest du tun, wenn Geld keine Rolle spielen würde? Das ist eine der entscheidenden Fragen, die auch wir uns stellen. Seit Anfang 2013 leben wir geldfrei und möchten unabhängig unsere Talente in die Gemeinschaft schenken. Hierfür gründeten wir das Projekt und Aktionsnetzwerk living utopia – wir organisieren verschiedene Projekte sowie Aktionen mit den begleitenden Prinzipien vegan, geldfrei, ökologisch. Außerdem geben wir viele Workshops. Dabei steht immer wieder die Frage im Raum: Wie stellen wir uns eine Gesellschaft von morgen vor?“

Pia und Tobi aus Mainz

Geldfreiheit

Schon der Begriff „geldfrei“ trägt die Bedeutung des befreienden Aktes in sich. Unabhängig werden von Druck, Angst und Zwängen. Was wäre, wenn deine Grundbedürfnisse gedeckt wären, einfach so, weil du einen leistungslosen Selbstwert in dir trägst? Was würdest du tun, wenn Geld keine Rolle spielen würde? Eine kapitalistische Gesellschaft funktioniert nicht von heute auf morgen ohne Geld – auch wir leben indirekt durch Geld (alles wurde durch Geld produziert). Uns geht es darum, einen Perspektivenwechsel anzuregen und Impulse zu geben, um in verschiedenen Lebensbereichen geldfreier – unabhängiger vom Geld – zu werden. Begleitende Fragen dabei sind: Wieso in dieser unglaublichen Wegwerf und Überflusgesellschaft noch mehr Nachfrage schaffen für ein Angebot, welches schon in zu großen Mengen vorhanden ist? Warum so viel Zeit und Energie in die Fokussierung auf das Geld stecken?

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