



Dear Friends:

We appreciate your interest and hope you will become a part of what we do.

The challenge: Over the past twenty years, **economic globalization** has accelerated at an incredible speed. Large transnational corporations now control most inputs and outputs of our economy. Major financial institutions are imploding and threatening the livelihoods of millions.

We ask: Can **democracy** thrive in a global economic system where the primary decisions that affect people are made thousands of miles from where they live?

Is it possible to have the same quality of love and compassion for our neighbors, and an appropriate sense of responsibility for their well-being, if fewer and fewer people have an **ownership stake** in local economies?

Are these large corporations able to recognize the fragility of our **natural environment**, and mitigate the damage to the Earth now taking place?

Our response: We envision a network of diversified **local living economies** that enhance community life and natural systems.

We support **entrepreneurs and business owners** who are committed to the health of *a particular place*.

In communities across North America, we are working to connect, strengthen, and promote human-scale companies whose owners and employees are creating **a different way of doing business** based on local living economy principles (see attached).

Please review the examples of our local networks, member companies, and specific projects – get to know what we’re doing and how you can get involved!

All the best,

The BALLE Team



BOARD

Baye Adofo-Wilson, Lincoln Park/Coast Cultural District, Newark, New Jersey

Matt Bauer, Lowcountry Local First, Charleston, South Carolina

Merrian Fuller, at large

David Korten, Positive Futures Network, publishers of YES! Magazine; author, *When Corporations Rule the World*, *The Great Turning*

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DEFINING LOCAL

What area?

Are "locally owned" businesses those in our neighborhood? The city? Our county? The region?

"Local" is really the area that people in the community considers to be local. Do natural landscape features, or historic boundaries, define your community? In rural communities, an entire county or even multiple counties may be the most appropriate area to serve. Some "buy local food" campaigns consider their local food-shed to be anywhere within a two-hour drive from farm to table. In a large city, you may want to think in terms of both the greater metropolitan area and business district neighborhoods, depending on the situation.

Which businesses?

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine which businesses are local and independently owned. How about a locally owned McDonald's? How about an insurance agent with a national company and a local office?

Many businesses participate in cooperative marketing, offer exclusive lines, and have all sorts of other business agreements. A locally owned and independent business would be one where the owner and community member has full autonomy and local decision-making authority with respect to his or her business practices.

We define a locally owned business as one where the community member has full autonomy and local decision-making authority with respect to his or her business practices.

A simple survey like this one might help you figure out which businesses in your community are locally owned:

1. Is the business privately held (not publicly traded)?
2. Do the business owners, totaling greater than 50 percent of the business ownership, live in your local region?
3. Is the business registered in your state, with no corporate or national headquarters outside your region?
4. Can the business make independent decisions regarding the name and look of the business, as well as all business purchasing, practices, and distribution?
5. Does the business pay all its own rent, marketing expenses, and other expenses (without assistance from a corporate headquarters)?

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A LOCAL LIVING ECONOMY

To build a local living economy, we must first determine what one looks like – what are the components, or building blocks, that comprise this sustainable system? By identifying the building blocks, we create a holistic vision of a local living economy that we can work toward achieving. The concept of organizing local networks around building blocks is to:

- Have each building block self-organize around their passion and interest
- Have someone be at the table in leadership meetings representing each area essential to a living economy
- Organize network events and programs cooperatively, with each building block contributing their expertise and knowledge to the benefit of the whole.

Sample building blocks:

Food: Farming; fishing; production/processing; distribution; beverages; water; grocers; restaurants

Programs may include: cooperative extension services for local farms, community-supported agriculture programs, farmers' markets, marketing campaigns: "sustainably certified" or "grown in (your region)" labels, "Taste of (Your Region)" festivals, community gardens, farming land trusts, "chefs' collaboratives" – connections between farmers and restaurants

Shelter: Building services (builders, painters, architects, etc.); wholesale and retail natural/local/'green' materials; house wares, home furnishings, hardware; real estate; development/construction, planners

Programs may include: green building associations, model/showcase buildings, land trusts for affordable housing.

Energy: Solar power; wind power; bio-diesel, renewable fuels

Clothing: Apparel and textile manufacturing; retail

Manufacturing: Materials sourcing;

distribution; manufacturers

Capital: Credit unions, community investment, local banks

Education: Schools, entrepreneurial education, research studies

Media/Communications: Independent magazines, newspapers, radio, television; graphic designers; writers; independent bookstores; local printers and binders

Business Development/Professional Services: Consulting, marketing, insurance, law, accounting, etc.

Transportation: Bike shops, car-sharing

Health & Well-Being: Pharmacies, personal care products, medicinal herbs; health clubs, recreation facilities; yoga studios, personal and spiritual development

Arts & Culture: Artists, musicians, craftspeople, museums

Habitat: Landscaping, gardening, nurseries

Waste and Recycling



JOINING BALLE: LOCAL NETWORK BENEFITS AND DUES

Members of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies are autonomous local business networks committed to creating thriving local economies in their regions. (Individual businesses do not join BALLE; rather, they join their local network, which is a member of BALLE.) These networks support one another with information, new resources, program ideas, and other connections. We continuously collect and share new ideas and initiatives, so the benefits of being a part of BALLE grow all the time!

ANNUAL NETWORK MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$500

New member networks immediately receive access to the Members Only section of our website, which includes the following tools:

- Tip sheets on how to establish a local network, recruit members, and obtain funding
- Program ideas for community education campaigns, encouraging sustainable business practices, and strengthening community-based businesses and organizations
- Quick-start guide to forming a non-profit organization
- Organizational documents such as articles of incorporation, by-laws, board member roles and responsibilities, and committee descriptions
- Sample proposals and grant applications

*These startup tools will save you thousands of dollars and/or
hundreds of hours of time in the initial years!*

Ongoing network benefits include:

- Ongoing one-on-one consultation with BALLE staff on operations, program development, funding strategies, and referrals to key partners and resources
- National and regional conferences that bring together dynamic leaders, including a training retreat for local network coordinators
- Comprehensive "Local First" how-to kit that includes sample promotional material, logos, budgets, timelines, and other planning documents
- Monthly newsletters, peer-to-peer conference calls, and member-only calls with visionary business owners, community organizers, authors, and public leaders
- Media visibility and PR through BALLE press releases, referrals, and articles
- Access to our online library of "members only" resources, including the program materials of other local BALLE networks
- Collaboration with strategic partners, such as the Social Venture Network (SVN)

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BUSINESS RECRUITMENT SURVEY (Draft interview with potential new members of your network)

You might start the conversation by...
Sharing information about BALLE, including
examples from other local networks.

Ask about their interest in an alliance of local
independent businesses and farms that could
strengthen their prosperity and the
community's health.

Have them rank the following potential
benefits according to their interest. Their
advice can help guide the direction of your
new network.

Educating the community, marketing, and promotion

- A local business-to-business directory that help new customers find local independently owned businesses
- A "Buy Local" marketing campaign aimed at promoting the benefits of businesses such as those who are a part of this network (could include window decals, advertising materials, coupon books, co-marketing among members)
- Community education forums and conferences – showcasing local businesses and national speakers

Shared knowledge and education

- Mentoring from other local businesses
- Support in becoming more sustainable – tips on how to become more environmentally friendly and locally interconnected in your business practices
- Sector-specific meetings and workshops (e.g., bring together members of the regional food system or construction industry)

- Networking programs to bring local business owners together to learn from each other and do business together
- Newsletters and online list-serves

Strengthening and germinating community businesses

- Purchasing clubs and co-promotion that allow for greater competition with national chains and large non-local corporations
- Coordinated attempts to purchase benefits (such as insurance) for small local businesses
- New opportunities for financing your business
- Creating a public policy voice in support of local, independently owned businesses and environmentally sound business practices
- An opportunity to help other local entrepreneurs to build needed community businesses

You could also ask some questions...

- What challenges do you face as a local independently owned business in trying to balance profit, people, and planet?
- What are your own feelings, as an individual, about our community – the things you love about it, as well as your concerns for its future?
- What else would you like to see a network such as this do?
- What other kinds of business alliances or membership organizations are you a part of, and why? What do they offer you? What do you wish they would offer you?
- Who else do you think we should talk to about this? What other business owners do you know who you believe would be interested in a network like this?

Close with an invitation to an exploratory or kickoff event some date a few months out when you will explore many of these questions with a much larger group.



FAQ – ORGANIZING A LOCAL NETWORK

(1) I love the BALLE principles and understand the benefits a local network could bring my community. How do I start?

Find Early Champions

Find a core group of business champions who share your vision! This is critical - local business people trust and respect other local business people and everyone wants to know who else is involved. To find champions, take the owners of a few different businesses out to coffee one or two at a time and present examples of how BALLE networks have worked in other communities to the benefit of local businesses and the entire community, then let them talk! Ask them for the names of other local business owners you could approach together (see Business Recruitment Survey).

Businesses that make up the building blocks of a local living economy are good first businesses to approach (see FAQ #7). Local bookstores, food cooperatives, community newspapers, local hardware, drug, and office supply stores and neighborhood coffee shops make great prospects.

Encourage ownership of the idea in your community! Give early champions the title of “founders” of your local network. Credit and praise the founders every chance you get. These are busy folks who give a lot of themselves.

Form a Steering Committee

After a couple of months you may have five or six businesses interested in moving forward. Call a first steering committee meeting. A great early activity is for each committee member to survey four or five other business owners to uncover the need for your services and to generate new interest in your community. Another great early activity is to take an “inventory” of what local resources are available to meet basic community needs in a sustainable way – food, clothing, energy, housing, transportation, finance, media, arts/culture, education, and waste disposal, and to consider how they can be supported, promoted, and connected.

Out of respect for everyone's time, we recommend clear agendas for your meetings that are sent out in advance. Stick to your meeting times. Consider organizing a kick-off event or first program for team building, rather than spending early days wordsmithing mission statements. Avoid showing up at a meeting with a blank white board. Bring drafts and ideas that others can work from. People like to be involved with “action” groups, not “meeting” groups.

It is often a good idea to schedule a kick-off event a few months out from your first steering committee meeting. This should serve as a motivating deadline for incorporating your organization, opening a bank account, developing your collateral materials, creating your membership dues structure, and determining the benefits of membership.

Recruit Members!

As you evolve to a membership organization with member benefits and services, we recommend developing a firm framework before you begin accepting member dues. People like to know what they're getting for their dues and what everyone else is getting at their levels of dues.

Here is an example of a dues structure:

- \$100 for a sole proprietor with revenues <\$50,000
- \$150 for a small business with annual revenues of \$50,000-500,000
- \$350 for a business with annual revenues >\$500,000
- \$25 for an individual supporter

AND consider asking business members to become Sponsoring Members at \$1,000 per year. They might receive additional benefits such as: promotion and public thanks at all your public forums and workshops, promotion in your newsletter and on your website, and free admission for employees to events.

Because your services and member benefits will still be developing early on, we also recommend starting with a membership discount for anyone who joins before some future event, perhaps six months out. Try offering 25% off membership while you are still developing programs and services. It will encourage some members to join early. And finally, developing a brochure and website content that lays this out (before asking for dues) is also comforting to people. They like to know their money is going to a "real" organization!

(2) How do we recruit early members?

Talk about the benefits that other communities have seen for their members and the unique benefits your network is offering (see the Sample Member Benefits Document):

- Stress the promotional benefits and community education your network will provide.
- Point out the benefits of group purchasing or cooperative advertising.
- Identify the benefits that can be derived from members teaching members about their own efforts to build healthy workplaces, environmentally healthy products, strong communities, and local economies.
- Some businesses will appreciate the networking opportunities.
- Some businesses won't like attending meetings but may appreciate the value of a local network of businesses working on building a local living economy.
- Offer in-kind memberships for early needs like graphic design, printing, office space, food for events, and advertising. Offer payment plans or "scholarships" for fledgling businesses. (Encourage others to contribute to your "scholarship" fund.)
- At your kick-off event, charge a significantly reduced rate for "members" (e.g., \$15 for general admission, \$5 for members). People will ask what it takes to be a member!
- Generate media coverage. Your work will be taken more seriously if you've been covered in the media.

- Be positive and inclusive! Look for solutions and build community. Don't criticize or contribute to divisiveness. Stress what you are FOR, not what you are AGAINST. For instance, you are working to preserve the unique character of your community, to protect your local environment, to strengthen local, independently owned businesses...
- Leverage the influence of your core steering committee. Ask them to invite business peers.
- Give examples. Tell stories.
- Don't re-invent the wheel. If there is a local sustainable business group in your community that shares your ideals, talk to them about joining efforts and becoming the BALLE network for your area!

(3) Do we need to be a non-profit organization?

You can start by simply incorporating the organization and getting a local bank account. Your organization can propose and do contract work for government or other organizations and you can collect membership dues and events income. Many of your members will write off their membership fees as a marketing expense, so you may not see early demand for 501(c)(3) status.

Once you are more established and interested in applying for charitable grants from foundations you may want to become a 501(c)(3), entitling your donors to tax-deductible contributions. You could also consider partnering with another 501(c)(3) that will provide you with "fiscal sponsorship." This relationship usually means your fiscal sponsor will charge some percentage of the funds you raise for administrative expenses to generate necessary reports for your donor foundations. In either case, BALLE can be of assistance to your local network (see the Quick Start Guide to Forming a Non-Profit).

(4) Where can we get funding to get started and how much will we need?

This largely depends on what programs and initiatives you take on and the pace at which you add new ones. Some networks start with a group of busy businesspeople, all of whom are volunteers and none of which is the lead coordinator. These networks may spend a year deciding on their vision and goals and programs and services, and creating their collateral materials.

Other networks have more ambitious goals and a dedicated coordinator. An amazing amount of progress can be made with a few thousand dollars, some examples and customizable materials provided by BALLE, and committed steering committee members. With significant volunteer time (15 hours a month from each steering committee member and a volunteer coordinator able to work almost half time on organizing efforts), it is an achievable goal to aim for enough funding (from underwriters, member dues, and events income) to cover a part-time staff person six to ten months from your first meeting.

Ask business members to become sponsoring members (see FAQ #1).

Solicit underwriters for quarterly events. If you have an active calendar of events, consider asking an underwriter to support your efforts at \$5,000 per quarter. Your City or County government may be supportive. Consider themes for your events each quarter of the year and consider a match for that theme, such as your food co-op for local food systems or a solar power company for a quarter

on energy.

Charge admission fees for your public forums. Ask your steering committee to chip in the funds for committee meeting snacks or facilitators. You're all in this together.

(5) What about ongoing funding?

Membership dues, events income, sponsors and underwriters are important sources of revenue to your annual budget.

Once you have a dedicated steering committee, a set of programs and services, and early collateral materials, we would recommend that you ask for membership dues. A dues structure helps new people to get involved who don't want to be steering committee members. A structure helps them see their responsibilities and what they can expect for getting involved. The dues income helps you to offer early programs and services.

Often the income from early events is not much more than your costs, even when leveraging significant volunteer labor. Consider developing one or two annual events that are larger in scope and can become fundraisers. After you have planned and implemented these events once, they become less costly and are likely to generate more revenue the second time around. Annual events could be a Local Living Economy/Sustainability Conference; a Social Venture Institute in partnership with the Social Venture Network; a Healthy Home and Garden Tour of homes and buildings in your area that feature low-impact development, gardening, and renewable energy; a "Taste of..." with local restaurants and farmers... Use your imagination and learn what others have tried!

Grants may be a possibility. Consider grants from local community foundations. Foundations may be interested in supporting your projects that involve business and the environment, local food systems, or low-impact development. And remember, people generally don't give money to people they don't know...so form relationships with the right people within targeted foundations.

Visit with economic development agencies, city government, and department of ecology offices locally to see whether they have project funding that meets both of your organizations' goals. These government agencies can contract with your organization.

What can you sell? Local business coupon books, T-shirts and bumper stickers, advertising in your online local marketplace. Brainstorm with your members...they *are* businesspeople, after all!

(6) We want business owners to join but they are so busy... Should we focus our efforts on concerned citizens?

This is a fine balancing act. Business owners are busy and you need significant volunteer energy to build local living economies and an organization in your region. Yet business owners see great benefit in participating in a network with other business owners. Full-time students, activists, and other concerned citizens do not face the same challenges as businesses committed to using their organizations as role models and vehicles for change while making payroll.

It is true that building a local living economy requires everyone -- but how many programs and services can your network successfully deliver? Can you effectively reach a large percentage of the general public to change behaviors as well as serve business members well? Focus can be empowering.

Be clear in your mission so that all members as well as others interested in learning more understand your focus. Consider building a steering committee made up of both committed individuals who have time, energy, and passion for your mission, AND seasoned business owners who have respect and credibility in your community.

Consider offering memberships to businesses and to individuals with different levels of services provided to each. For instance, you might promote member businesses, but not the businesses associated with individual members. Focus your significant outreach and recruitment efforts on potential business members.

(7) What kinds of businesses are other BALLE networks recruiting for membership?

- Co-op America or Social Venture Network members in your area
- Local cooperatives/employee-owned businesses
- Independent businesses that advertise in your community newspapers
- Businesses that fit within the building blocks of a local living economy:
- Sustainable agriculture and local food systems – natural food stores, food co-ops, local farmers, farmer's market participants, organic foods, native plant nurseries; sustainable fisheries
- Housing and green building: members of local green building associations. Local retailers of environmentally healthy home supplies such as low-VOC paints, FSC-certified wood products, or energy-efficient lighting
- Community capital – credit unions, CDFI's, locally owned banks
- Clothing – local clothing manufacturers
- Energy – solar, wind, bio-diesel
- Independent retail – local hardware, computer and office supply, drug stores, local coffee shops
- Transportation – local bicycle shops, electric vehicles, local transit authorities, car-sharing companies
- Independent media – community newspapers, local bookstores
- Arts and culture – artists, musicians, independent film theatres
- Waste and re-use – RE Stores, manufacturers that build from re-use
- Health & well being – naturopathic physicians, yoga and fitness studios, massage practitioners

(8) Do you have suggestions on criteria for membership?

Sample criteria from Sustainable Connections, Northwest Washington's BALLE network:

- Members are locally owned independent businesses and farms, organizations, and individuals who are committed to the purpose of the organization.
- Members agree to a pledge to benefit our local economy, environment, community, and their workplace.

- Members pay annual dues.

(9) What about non-profit organizations as members?

Non-profits are also employers that make purchases and affect the local community and environment. Some have relevant expertise from which your business members could benefit. Consider welcoming them as “business” members.

(10) Should we have a membership test that ensures we have only “sustainable” businesses as members?

Becoming a monitoring organization that evaluates the sustainability of potential members and approves or disproves their application is fraught with challenges. How much staff time do you have to dedicate to monitoring? What does that monitoring look like? By which standards will you measure your businesses? Can you name a purely “sustainable” business?

We are all on a path and at different places on that path. We have an opportunity because local living economies tend to attract a wider group of business owners than just those who see themselves as “green” or “alternative.” By rejecting a business owner who has genuine interest in progressing from wherever they are right now, we will never reach more than the “choir”... and change isn’t possible without the rest of the congregation!

Consider asking members to create an annual “pledge to action” or some other commitment to take a new step down the path. Support them in making those steps by facilitating collaboration to make new choices more convenient or affordable, through education and mentoring, and through publicly promoting the importance of purchasing from community-based businesses.

(11) What if a businessperson from a nearby Wal-Mart or other non-local, public company really cares about these concepts and wants to join?

Welcome them! Individuals working for positive change within large corporations face significant challenges in doing so. If they want to work to connect, strengthen, and promote local businesses and farms, and they think your network is a place where they can learn, contribute, and benefit,, they should join you! Invite them as individual members – you aren’t promoting the business they work for, they are helping to promote local living economies.

If they want to join as a business, let them know that your network is for local business owners who have the authority and freedom to make and implement any decision they’d like to across their entire business. Our goal is to work with the decision makers, owners who:

- Don’t have to seek policy changes at company headquarters before making decisions to the benefit of community or environment,
- Can choose to purchase locally or from businesses that share their values rather than from central distribution or only company-approved vendors.

Additionally, your local network is not fully able to serve all arms of a large multinational company. Consider recommending Businesses for Social Responsibility, an organization with expertise in sharing best practices among public, multinational corporation employees who are working within these constraints.

(12) Help! People aren't doing what they said they would. I feel like I'm doing everything!

Form committees or work groups to allow members and volunteers to focus. Never leave a meeting with unassigned objectives (even if that assignment is to defer for discussion at the next meeting). Be aware that joining a committee can instill the "every Tuesday, 8 a.m. for the rest of my life..." fear. Be clear about the committee's objectives – what plans do you need them to implement and upon completion, can they disband? Consider calling them Action Teams or Work Groups.

LOVE your volunteers! These are not employees. Yes, they should feel accountable and that their work is important, but it definitely has to be FUN! They are volunteering because it's fun and they feel good about what and how they are contributing. They will stop volunteering when those things change.

Give your volunteers a lot of pats on the back! Create an award that is passed from person to person for outstanding contributions – you may give it the first time, but the recipient should pass it to the next outstanding contributor.

Make sure the network isn't equated with you alone. Regularly emphasize the volunteer nature of the network. Rotate the meeting chair for your steering committee. Ensure everyone is empowered to contact each other and to suggest new initiatives. Make decisions by consensus (not unanimity but true consensus).

Be humble. Encourage your member's and volunteer's dreams rather than talking about your vision/legacy/personal goals. When the media wants to do a story about your network, pass the attention to your members. Their pictures and quotes should accompany the article.

(13) We're past the start-up phase and want to grow – any tips?

Have a steering committee retreat. Analyze where you've come from and where you'd like to go. Identify resources needed to get you there.

Leverage your Members' Newsletters to share the word about your network. Many retailers including food co-ops, independent movie theaters, and bookstores have newsletters going to several thousand people.

Partner with your chamber of commerce or university small business development center. You likely are offering workshops and events that they hadn't previously considered.

Be clear about who you are and what you do! Clearly state your case or elevator speech:

- What is our business (mission)?

- Who is our customer?
- What does the customer want/need?
- With what services do we respond?
- What is the value to our customer and to the community at large?
- What resources do we need (and how do we assure them)?
- What is the cost to the community if these services are not provided adequately?

(14) Could you just quickly summarize how to organize one more time?

Consider the following as a potential organizing model:

Organize around interest groups or building blocks of a local living economy: food and agriculture, energy, clothing, housing/green building, alternative transportation, community capital, independent media and bookstores, neighborhood arts & culture, and waste and recycling, etc.

By identifying the building blocks, we create a holistic vision of a local living economy that we can work toward achieving. The concept of organizing local networks around building blocks is to:

- Have each building block self-organize around their passion and interest
- Have someone be at the table in leadership meetings representing each area essential to a living economy
- Organize network events and programs cooperatively with each building block contributing their expertise and knowledge to the benefit of the whole.



OUR SHARED PRINCIPLES

A local living economy ensures that economic power resides locally to the greatest extent possible, sustaining vibrant, livable communities and healthy ecosystems in the process.

Living economy communities produce and exchange locally as many products needed by their citizens as they reasonably can, while reaching out to other communities to trade in those products they cannot reasonably produce at home. These communities value their unique character and encourage cultural exchange and cooperation.

Living economy public policies support decentralized ownership of small businesses and farms, fair wages, taxes, and budget allocations, trade policies benefiting local economies, and stewardship of the natural environment.

Living economy consumers appreciate the benefits of buying from living economy businesses and, if necessary, are willing to pay a price premium to secure those personal and community benefits.

Living economy investors value businesses that are community stewards and as such accept a "living return" on their financial investments rather than a maximum return, recognizing the value derived from enjoying a healthy and vibrant community and a sustainable global economy.

Living economy media provide sources of news independent of corporate control, so that citizens can make informed decisions in the best interests of their communities and natural environment.

Living economy businesses are primarily independent and locally owned, and value the needs and interests of all stakeholders while building long-term profitability.

They strive to:

- Source products from businesses with similar values, with a preference for local procurement
- Provide employees a healthy workplace with meaningful living-wage jobs
- Offer customers personal service and useful, safe, quality products
- Work with suppliers to establish a fair exchange
- Cooperate with other businesses in ways that balance their self-interest with their obligation to the community and future generations
- Use their business practices to support an inclusive and healthy community, and to protect our natural environment
- Yield a "living return" to owners and investors



LOCAL LIVING ECONOMIES: The New Movement for Responsible Business

By Judy Wicks

President of the White Dog Café and Co-Founder of Business Alliance for Local Living Economies

A socially, environmentally, and financially sustainable global economy must be composed of sustainable local economies. Yet, tragically, from American “Main Streets” to villages in developing countries, corporate globalization is causing the decline of local communities, family businesses, family farms, and natural habitats. Wealth and power are consolidating in growing transnational corporations that wield alarming control over many important aspects of our lives – the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the news we hear, and even the government we rely on to protect the common good. By working cooperatively, locally owned businesses and conscious consumers can create an alternative to corporate globalization that brings power back to our communities by building sustainable local economies – living economies that support both natural and community life.

Socially Responsible Business Movement

Over the last ten to fifteen years, the socially responsible business (SRB) movement has made great strides in raising consciousness about the responsibility of business to serve the common good, rather than simply increasing profits for the benefit of stockholders. The triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit has become a new measurement of performance for a growing number of companies that consider the needs of all stakeholders – employees, community, consumers, and the natural environment, as well as stockholders – when making business decisions. Yet, problems have continued to worsen around the globe. All natural systems are in decline, global warming is accelerating, wealth disparity is

increasing, and wars over dwindling natural resources pose a growing threat. Clearly a new strategy for building a just and sustainable global economy is crucially needed.

Old Paradigm of Continuous Growth

While the SRB movement has brought improvement in business practices for many companies, overall business success is still measured by the old paradigm of continuous growth and maximized return on investment. Stockholder expectations and a “grow or die” mentality move companies to expand their brand nationally, competing with and often eliminating community-based businesses around the country, and eventually internationally. In the end, even progressive companies are often forced to choose undesirable exit strategies when they become too large for purchase by employees, family members, or neighboring businesses with a commitment to the local community. The forced buy-out of Ben & Jerry’s, a movement leader and innovator of the multiple bottom line, by the international conglomerate Unilever in the fall of 1999 was a wake-up call for those who had looked to that company for innovative leadership.

Many other model companies in the SRB movement have recently been sold to multinational corporations, adding to the concentration of wealth and power that the movement was intended to combat – Odwalla to Coca-Cola, Cascadian Farms to General Mills, and most recently 80 percent of Stonyfield Farms to the parent company of Dannon Yogurt. The sale of these businesses collectively demonstrates that companies

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committed to continuous growth and national branding, though financially successful and even environmentally friendly, end up detracting from, rather than contributing to, the creation of a democratic society where ownership, power, and prosperity are widely shared.

Building an Alternative

While there is important work being done to reform the corporate system by consumer groups and companies within the system such as Stonyfield and Ben & Jerry's, a second front of the SRB movement has emerged. Rejecting the notion that corporate rule is inevitable, the Local Living Economy movement is building an alternative to corporate globalization – a decentralized global network of local living economies composed of independent locally owned businesses. The new movement focuses attention on issues of scale, ownership, and place, which the SRB movement has largely ignored. The Local Living Economy movement also demonstrates the importance of working cooperatively outside of individual companies, often with competitors, to build whole local economies of triple bottom line businesses. Businesses in local living economies remain human- scale and locally owned, fostering direct, authentic, and meaningful relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, neighbors, and local habitat, adding to the quality of life in our communities. Decentralized ownership spreads wealth more broadly and brings economic power from distant boardrooms to local communities where there is a short distance between business decision-makers and those affected by the decisions.

Rather than depending on large corporations for basic needs, which gives up economic power and adds to the environmental costs of global transport, living economies produce basic needs – food, clothing, shelter, and

energy – locally and sustainably. This builds community self-reliance, provides new opportunities for ownership and job creation, and keeps capital within the community. What is not available locally is sourced from community-based businesses and small farms in other regions and countries in an exchange that benefits the communities where products and resources originate. Global interdependence is based on trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity, rather than exploitive resource extraction and sweatshops.

Local living economies spread business models, not brands. Rather than expanding in the conformist, cookie-cutter style of the industrial era, entrepreneurs seek to diversify, creatively addressing the needs of their community through new business ventures that increase local self-reliance and sustainability. Many new business opportunities lie within the “building blocks” of local living economies – local food systems, renewable energy, alternative transportation, locally designed and made clothing, recycling and reuse, green building, holistic health care, eco-friendly cleaning products, independent retail, local arts and culture, neighborhood tourism, and independent media. Addressing the deeper needs of their communities, local business owners can provide more fulfilling jobs, healthier communities, and greater economic security in their bioregions. Success can mean more than growing larger or increasing market- share: It can be measured by increasing happiness and well being, deepening relationships, and expanding creativity, knowledge, and consciousness.

Role of Investors

To provide sufficient capital for growing local living economies, the old paradigm of measuring success simply by maximized profits must also change for investors. Traditionally, investors seek the highest and

quickest return on investment. But should we not also measure a return by long-term social and environmental improvement? In a living economy, investors seek a “living return” – one partially paid by the benefits of living in healthy, vibrant communities.

By law, publicly owned companies are required to put the financial interests of stockholders above the needs of all other stakeholders. Therefore, even “socially responsible” funds, though screening out weapons manufacturers and tobacco companies, invest in a system that values profits over people and the planet. By choosing stock market investments, citizens take capital out of local economies, and give more power and control to boardrooms in faraway places, where the well being of local communities is not a priority. By investing our savings in community funds that loan money at affordable rates to small businesses, neighborhood projects, and housing developments, we receive a living return of improving the quality of life in our own communities. Rather than looking for a maximum return, investors who accept a living return help grow sustainable, community-friendly businesses that contribute to building a just and sustainable global economy in the long term.

Toward a Positive Future

Unlike publicly held corporations, independent companies are free to make decisions in the interests of all the stakeholders. Local business owners are likely to understand that it is in their self-interest to run their companies in a way that benefits their own neighborhood and natural environment. Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” of the market works well when the self-interest of the business decision-maker is clearly tied to the well being of the community.

Through corporate globalization our unsustainable Western culture, which takes more natural resources and gives off more pollution than the earth can restore, is being spread globally. Corporate monoculture has no sense of place and the same chain stores and consumer goods are seen around the world. Locally owned independent retailers such as bookstores, coffee shops, craft stores, dress shops, and restaurants give each town and city unique local character. Family-owned hardware stores, drugstores, and department stores provide personal relationships, quality jobs, and civic engagement that are missing in national chains.

In a system of local living economies, cultural diversity flourishes, local languages are preserved, and what is indigenous to a region is valued for its individuality. Unique indigenous products – from wine and cheese to art and automobiles (sustainably powered, of course) – are traded in an intricate global web of small-to-small, win-win relationships that celebrate what it is to be human.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, large corporations have historically used militaries to protect their ability to exploit natural resources and cheap labor in less developed countries, which is often the underlying cause of war. Through equitable and sustainable use of natural resources, local food and energy security, decentralized power and control, and celebration and understanding of cultural differences, local living economies will gradually build the foundation for lasting world peace.

Around the world, people are speaking out against the destructive role of corporate globalization in our lives – from indigenous uprisings in Mexico and farmers’ strikes in France to attacks on McDonald’s in India and mass protests in Seattle, Washington, Prague, and Genoa. Many people, especially the

young, have lost all faith in business as a positive force, and need a new vision for the constructive role business can play in our communities. Progressive business leaders are uniquely positioned to articulate this new vision, span the gap between the left and right, and direct the energy of concerned citizens, entrepreneurs, and young people toward creating a positive future for our world.

The Local Living Economies Movement is about:

- ~ Maximizing relationships, not maximizing profits
- ~ Growth of consciousness and creativity, not brands and market-share
- ~ Democracy and decentralized ownership, not concentrated wealth
- ~ A living return, not the highest return

- ~ A living wage, not the minimum wage
- ~ A fair price, not the lowest price
- ~ Sharing, not hoarding
- ~ Life-serving, not self-serving
- ~ Partnership, not domination
- ~ Cooperation-based, not competition-based
- ~ Win-win exchange, not win-lose exploitation
- ~ Family farms, not factory farms
- ~ Bio-diversity, not mono-crops
- ~ Cultural diversity, not monoculture
- ~ Creativity, not conformity
- ~ Slow food, not fast food
- ~ Our bucks, not Starbucks
- ~ Our mart, not Wal-Mart
- ~ Love of life, not love of money

Judy Wicks is the president of the White Dog Cafe in Philadelphia. She also co-founded the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), a network of business groups in North America that create living economies in their regions. Judy is also co-chair of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia, the BALLE network in her region. More information about BALLE (www.livingeconomies.org), the Sustainable Business Network (www.sbnphiladelphia.org) and the White Dog Cafe (www.whitedog.com) can be found online.



LOCAL NETWORK INITIATIVES

What do local BALLE networks do?

These are some of the goals and a sampling of program ideas that local networks have found helpful in building local living economies.

Goal One

Encourage local and environmentally friendly purchasing by consumers and businesses.

- Develop a "Buy Local" campaign that includes a media campaign, labeling of locally made products, and local product expos.
- Create brand recognition in your community - develop a window decal that differentiates your members.
- Create a guide/map of members and freely distribute copies through member businesses.
- Encourage the use of the BALLE online marketplace to build a directory of your community's own independent locally owned businesses.
- Create cross-promotional materials such as bookmarks, coffee cups, shopping bags, and table tents for members to use in their businesses.
- Provide your members with digital versions of your logo in a variety of colors and sizes so they can use it in their advertisements, business cards, and on their fleet vehicles.
- Offer promotional discounts to participating member businesses. Respect the thin operating margins local businesses already face and carefully consider the merits of programs that offer continuous discounts vs. one-time promotional discounts. Some potential options:
 - Create a card for public purchase that entitles cardholders to discounts from participating businesses.
 - Develop joint holiday gift certificates good at any member business.
 - Consider a seasonal campaign – businesses can offer each customer one discount voucher good at other participating businesses. To get another voucher, customers must shop again with a participating merchant.
 - Create a coupon book with discounts from member businesses and educational content about the importance of choosing local businesses that are working to the benefit of your community. The books could be sold through your member businesses. One model and potential partner is www.chinookbook.net.

Goal Two

Collaborate to make local purchasing and environmental practices more convenient and affordable.

- Give all new members a survey that encourages them to indicate what they'd like to learn more about (e.g., composting food waste), and which topics they have particular expertise in (e.g.,

sustainable agriculture). Connect member needs with member knowledge.

- Form an environmentally friendly office supplies purchasing club with a local retailer. Consider a similar model for janitorial supplies, organic foods, renewable energy or any line of products that many of your member businesses purchase.
- Consider simple, practical solutions to common problems. Example: Members say they have no good alternative to disposable serving ware for their meetings and conferences. Solution: Members collaborate to purchase tubs, flatware, cups and plates, and cleaning supplies. Select a central pick-up/drop-off location for the kits.
- Partner with a community newspaper and negotiate significant discounts on open rates for members. Offer the newspaper an in-kind membership in exchange for this benefit.
- A New York BALLE network began hosting industry dinners to facilitate member collaboration. Bring members of a local living economy building block together (farmers/restaurants/grocery produce managers; builders/public sector planners/building materials suppliers). Encourage them to examine what is possible from a new local living economy perspective. A question could be, "How can we collaborate to make sourcing and business practices in our industry more local and more environmentally friendly?"

Goal Three

Create opportunities for business leaders to be proactive in their sustainable behavior, to network, and to share best practices of sustainable businesses.

- Partner with your city's environment department or your state department of ecology to help your members reduce solid and hazardous waste and decrease pollution. These government agencies can give grants to, or contract with, your local network. For an example visit www.watershedpledge.org.
- Members of the NW Washington BALLE network, Sustainable Connections, annually pledge what they will do with their business to benefit their local economy, environment, workplace, and community. Each pledge is unique and appropriate to the business's industry and particular values, and represents a step toward a local living economy. All members are committed to genuine progress and recognize that they are at different places on the path. The network supports pledge takers with resources, connections to expertise from other members, and assistance in implementation.
- Consider regular salons or conversation cafés. By coming together to talk about serious topics affecting your region, you will likely generate innovation that contributes to the creation of a local living economy. Visit www.conversationcafe.org.
- Host monthly or quarterly networking social events.
- Create community leader awards to recognize innovation by your members for exemplary actions to support your local economy, environment, community, and workplace. Publicize the recipients and their actions through the local media.
- Host on-site business visits so member businesses can learn from each other.

Example: Business members meet at A-I Builders, 7 pm, May 29th. After a brief presentation on the practices that helped A-I Builders win the 2001 Governor's Award for Waste Reduction and Sustainable Practices, everyone will have an opportunity to cycle through tours of:

- Office practices – waste management; duplex copying; high grading paper recycling; 100% post consumer/GOOS (good-on-one-side) paper
- Building practices - SmartWood certified wood; advanced framing; vegetable oil concrete form oil; debris sorting; SWAP loader truck; "absolutely free" area; Honda Insight as bidding vehicle
- Xeriscaping - no lawns; no herbicides/pesticides; near-zero watering
- Adaptations showroom walk-through - "green" building materials; discussion of design goals to minimize a client's need for additional space

\$8; Wine, cheese, and good conversation included. Business members and business member guests.

Goal Four

Support the well-being and germination of community-based businesses.

- Take an inventory of the building blocks of a local living economy in your community – food, clothing, energy, housing, transportation, finance, media, arts/culture, recreation, education, and waste disposal. What locally owned businesses supply these basics in a sustainable way and how can they be supported, promoted, and connected? Where are the gaps in providing basics locally that currently drain community capital? What are the opportunities this provides for new local business ventures?
- Support investment in community-based businesses and farms. Work with community investment and social purpose venture funds, and community banks and credit unions, for investments in local businesses. Identify companies for sale, and strategize to keep ownership in the area. Use the online BALLE-Calvert Community Capital Center to find leads for your members.
- Hold business-training workshops on topics in demand by your members. Consider partnering with a local university small business development center.
- Start an investment club among your members. Members can provide living return loans and hands-on advice to local living economy entrepreneurs.
- Create a "new business ideas" section of your website and/or newsletter and present compelling opportunities to create local living economy enterprises in your region.
- Consider holding a regional social venture institute (SVI) in partnership with the Social Venture Network. SVIs offer business leaders a confidential and collaborative forum to discuss their business challenges and learn from successful colleagues. SVIs provide advice and counsel from successful, approachable, socially responsible business leaders.

Goal Five

Educate and engage the community about the significance of local living economies.

Resources

- Consider forming a progressive library of sustainability resources. Have a potluck and ask your members to bring a book or video to donate. House it at a member café.
- Build relationships with business schools. Provide speakers and work with students, particularly MBAs involved in Net Impact (Students for Responsible Business). Develop curricula for teaching the principles and importance of sustainable business practices to college students and youth. Train your members to be the trainers.
- Create a newsletter (paper or electronic – give members a choice!) that highlights successes. Use it to remind your members of the great things you can do together and as a recruitment tool. Consider infrequent publication (twice yearly), leaving you free to place the majority of your outreach in existing publications with wider audiences, such as your members' newsletters, your community newspaper, and other local media.
- Look into creating Green Maps, which are real maps meant to guide people to the places and community resources that add to the sustainability of your region. You may want to create one for community businesses in your region and share maps with customers of member businesses. View this example from Seattle: www.seattlegreenmap.net/.
- Create an awards programs at local business schools and high school science and business fairs that encourage, recognize, and reward social purpose business plans that will help to grow a local living economy in your region.

Media

- Effective use of the media can help to “normalize” local living economy businesses and activities. Consider forming a writers club among your members. Approach business and consumer media with the idea of a column focused on sustainable business behavior. Submit press releases profiling members. Submit opinion editorials, which are important vehicles for community dialog and an important adjunct to ongoing local media coverage.
- Utilize the “BALLE Beat,” a regular part of every issue of In Business magazine. Your membership can benefit from significantly reduced subscription prices and get the latest news from local networks, upcoming events, and new local living economy business models.

Events

- Consider holding an annual local living economy conference and business member expo. Conference tracks could cover the different building blocks of a local living economy.
 - For ideas, consider this online description of EcoTrust's “Sustainability Now! Leadership for a World That Works,” a series of 19 intensive workshops on topics ranging from ecosystem services to green finance: www.ecotrust.org/sustainabilitynow.
 - Take a page from or, even better, partner with Global Exchange, Co-op America, and Bioneers on one of their highly successful business expos: www.greenfestivals.com.
- Partner with an independent movie theatre and show films relating to local living economy topics. Create a local living economy film festival.
- Host public forums – bring in speakers that support your mission and your members with their message.
- Demonstrate and teach environmentally sustainable practices such as conservation, renewable energy, waste reduction and recycling, composting, and supporting sustainable agriculture. Work

with local environmental groups.

- Create opportunities for tourism in neighborhood venues – support local artists and craftspeople.
- Take field trips – hire a bus and make it a day! Nothing helps people to better understand what you're talking about than to see a model example for themselves.
- Host a healthy home and garden tour – develop a community tour of homes, gardens, and buildings that incorporate low-impact development principles. Showcase what's possible and how to start. Highlight local landscapers offering xeriscaping and native plant design, solar energy providers, green builders and designers, and craftspeople who use local materials and offer more sustainable services. Co-sponsor with other non-profits, government agencies, and local associations to create these kinds of events. Organize the activities by quarterly themes. For example:

Winter Land Use – Urban & Rural – A consideration of commercial, residential, and agrarian use of land, community forestry, low-impact development/"green building," and effective land-use planning.
Spring Livable Jobs – A consideration of wages, flexible scheduling, responsibility and development in line with abilities and interests, and in balance with quality-of-life factors outside work.
Summer Renewable Energy – A consideration of the full range of options available to businesses and individuals locally, and an analysis of the opportunities for additional provision of energy locally.
Fall Food & Agriculture – A consideration of food systems: food production, distribution, and consumption and their impact on the community, economy, and environment.

Goal Six

Advocate public policies supporting the health and growth of local living economies.

- Engage your city and county council in an effort to create policies that support independent local businesses and farms, promote economic equity, and protect the environment. Cities and regions across the US and Canada have adopted effective local policy initiatives. Borrow examples from:
 - Institute for Local Self-Reliance – Information about policies specifically designed to support your independent business community, Visit www.newrules.org.
 - Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia – Their "White Paper on Regional Economic Development" caused quite a stir in the last mayoral race in Philadelphia. It lays out a vision of how the Philadelphia city government could work with their business network to help build a local living economy. Available in the Members Only Resources of the BALLE website.
 - Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility – One of the main reasons for founding VBRSR was to influence public policy and legislation with the progressive business voice. They canvas their members annually and choose three topics to focus on every year. Check out their website at www.vbsr.org.
 - For more information about business leaders advocating for economic justice, see www.responsiblewealth.org.



FAQ – LOCAL FIRST

Addressing 10 Common Questions About Local First Programs

By Michael Shuman, author of *Going Local* and *The Small-Mart Revolution*

(1) Aren't local goods and services more expensive?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. The truth is we actually do not know. Careful studies of the comparative prices between local and non-local retailers are rare. But here are some intriguing data points.

- A recent survey of pharmacies in Maine, for example, found that chain drugstores there sold prescriptions at average prices that were 15 percent higher than those of local stores.
- According to Stacy Mitchell of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, of the few studies available, a Consumer Reports study of bookstores found that Barnes & Noble and Borders prices are 4-8 percent lower than those of independent bookstores. Yet many of the best independent bookstores in the country now offer "frequent buyer programs" that completely erase these price differences for regular customers.
- Mitchell also notes that discount prices from chain stores are often temporary: An interesting aspect of the Maine survey was there were some dozen or so different Wal-Mart stores around the state included and prices for the list of drugs surveyed varied by 15 percent from the lowest priced Wal-Mart pharmacy to the highest priced Wal-Mart. What was apparent was that Wal-Mart's prices are lowest in areas where it is fairly new on the scene, and highest in towns where it has largely eliminated the competition. What happens long-term to consumer prices as the number of competitors in the retail industry dwindles? Already 2-3 firms control a dominant share of every retail sector. Wal-Mart has 10 percent of all retail spending, more than 1/3 of the market nationally for numerous basic-needs products, and has a monopoly for some types of goods in many smaller communities. There's plenty of documentation that Wal-Mart routinely sells entire lines of goods below cost in order to squeeze the competition and gain market share. Then prices go up. It has done this in pharmacy goods, toys, gasoline, and now groceries.

A critical mission of Local First is to make sure consumers, businesses, and government purchasing agents ask the right question before spending dollars in a way that will hurt the economy: Is there a reasonably priced local alternative available?

(2) Isn't Local First protectionist?

Not at all. Local First is entirely about the free choices of consumers, businesses, and government purchasing agents. No one is being forced to buy local, and no tariffs or other burdens are being placed on non-local goods.

Some economists believe - incorrectly - that Local First must mean putting up trade barriers or inducing consumers to buy more expensive goods and services, which, as noted above, it doesn't. They also forget that economic models assume all consumers have perfect information. One way of

looking at Local First campaigns is that they aim to give consumers better information - about the availability of attractive local goods and services, and about the significant benefits of buying local.

Paradoxically, Local First turns out to be the best way to develop prosperous links to the global economy. Export-led development usually means supporting a small number of globally competitive niches within a global economy. If one of these industries collapses - like automobiles in Detroit or steel in Youngstown - the entire local economy collapses as well, especially its export sectors. The work of Jane Jacobs and others has shown that import-replacing development, which underlies buy-local initiatives, tends to nurture hundreds of existing locally owned businesses, some of which will then become strong exporters. Development led by import replacement rather than export promotion diversifies, stabilizes, and strengthens the local economy.

(3) Does Local First seek to subsidize inefficient local business?

No. Free-market economists forget that the United States is a crazy-quilt of thousands of market imperfections - subsidies, regulations, insurance liability limits, tax wrinkles - nearly all of which favor non-local business. Buy local campaigns are very modest efforts to adjust this tilt in the playing field. The tilt is so extreme - probably 99% of subsidies go to non-local firms - that we would have a very long way to go before it was undone.

(4) How sound is the methodology for the studies that show a better local multiplier for locally owned businesses?

Some critics have attempted to downplay the studies that have been done in Austin, Maine, and other places because of their small size and because they don't have complete data from the chain stores. To be sure, the methodology of these studies could always be improved, but the results are driven by a simple fact: Local businesses spend more locally - on local management, on local advertising, on local services, and on local profits. Because most economic multipliers are in the range of two to four times the initial expenditure, these differences in local business spending will always result in substantially greater benefits to the local economy.

(5) Aren't local businesses less regulated and therefore worse for the environment?

It's hard to generalize. Some communities have tougher environmental laws than the nation as a whole; some don't. Some types of pollution control devices work best at a large scale; others don't. There are four reasons, however, to believe that local businesses are generally better for the environment. First, many local businesses are service related, and these usually are labor intensive and have few environmental impacts. Second, a community is more likely to clean up a local polluter spoiling the local quality of life than to clean up a polluter located 10,000 miles away. Third, local business owners certainly have a higher commitment to clean water when their own children must drink it. Fourth, a community with primarily locally owned businesses - businesses that will not consider moving to Mexico or China - can raise environmental standards with greater confidence that these firms will adapt, which tips the political balance in favor of greater environmental responsibility.

(6) Don't local businesses pay worse wages?

Businesses with more than 500 employees pay about a third more on average than businesses with fewer than 500 employees. But these wage differences have been shrinking in recent years, as many high-paying larger firms move factories overseas and as low-wage retailers like Wal-Mart displace existing small businesses. Moreover, studies suggest that over time, as smaller businesses naturally mature and grow, these wage differentials largely disappear.

(7) Shouldn't we leave the market alone?

A healthy market requires, as Local First insists, that consumers fully gather information about available local alternatives before they make purchasing decisions, in full awareness that every dollar spent locally will have two to four times more benefit than a dollar spent non-locally.

(8) Are Local First campaigns legal?

Unquestionably. In a free-market economy, consumers and businesses may make any purchasing decisions they wish. And in a free-speech society, citizens may persuade one another why local purchases are advantageous. The only real legal questions concern government procurement policies that give preference to local bidders. The U.S. Supreme Court generally has held that the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, which normally prevents officials from discriminating against goods on the basis of origin, does not apply when they are acting as market participants, which is the case for procurement officers. The World Trade Organization and other trade agreements, however, may weaken the ability of officials to discriminate against non-U.S. goods and services, though these provisions have yet to be fully defined or tested.

(9) Won't Local First hurt the poor in the Third World from whom we import?

If a large number of U.S. communities successfully move toward self-reliance, then yes, many imports from the global South - whether bananas, aluminum, or oil - would be reduced, to the detriment of the exporting poor countries. But a growing number of development economists are recognizing that the key to improving the plight of these countries is to end their export platform status and to help them become more self-reliant. Communities committed to helping the South might form partnerships like sister cities that facilitate the transfer of state-of-the-art technology and policy. An example is the city-state of Bremen in Germany, which for two decades has been helping its Third World partners become more self-reliant in energy by sharing technology that converts manure, garbage, and sewage into biogas.

(10) Is Local First a front for a radical agenda?

The vision of a world of sustainable communities does differ dramatically from a vision of globalization that tolerates enrichment of a few at the expense of hundreds of millions of workers and families and the destruction of the communities and ecosystems in which they live. But it's hard to imagine more traditional values than those underlying Local First - namely free markets, small business, fair play, and local empowerment.



LOCAL NETWORKS

Brit. Columbia	Values-Based Business Network, Victoria
Arizona	Local First Arizona, Phoenix and Tucson
California	BALLE Napa Valley BALLE Sonoma County Berkeley Business District Network East Bay Sustainable Business Alliance Oakland Merchants Leadership Forum San Benito County Chamber of Commerce San Francisco Locally Owned Merchants Alliance Sierra Business Council Think Local, Chico! Think Local First Santa Cruz County Think Local First West Marin Willits Chamber of Commerce
Colorado	Be Local Northern Colorado, Fort Collins Boulder Independent Business Alliance La Plata Organizations Cooperatively Advocating Local, Durango Longmont Small Business Association Mile High Business Alliance, Denver Business Alliance of Greater Gainesville
Florida	Inspiring Futures, Atlanta
Georgia	Think Boise First
Idaho	Fairfield First
Iowa	Local First Chicago
Illinois	Annapolis Sustainable Business Alliance
Maryland	Chesapeake Sustainable Business Alliance, Baltimore
Massachusetts	Cambridge Local First Pioneer Valley BALLE (Western MA) Responsible Business Association of Greater Boston Roslindale Board of Trade Sustainable Cape Ann Worcester Local First
Michigan	Capital Area Local First, Lansing Local First West Michigan Think Local First of Washtenaw County (Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Chelsea)
Montana	Sustainable Business Alliance, Missoula
N. Hampshire	Seacoast Local, Portsmouth, and Kittery, Maine
New Jersey	SBN of the Ridge and Valley (NW NJ)
New Mexico	Santa Fe Alliance
New York	Buffalo First Capital District Local First Sustainable Business Network New York City Sustainable Hudson Valley

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North Carolina	Asheville BALLE
Ohio	Toledo Choose Local
Ontario	Green Enterprise Toronto
Oregon	Sustainable Business Network of Greater Portland The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy THRIVE (Southern OR)
Pennsylvania	Susquehanna Sustainable Business Network Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia Sustainable Business Network of Lehigh Valley
South Carolina	Lowcountry Local First, Charleston
Utah	Local First Utah Vest Pocket Coalition, Salt Lake City
Vermont	Local First Vermont Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
Washington	BALLE Seattle Jefferson County BALLE Sustainable Connections, Bellingham
Wash., DC	Local First DC
Wisconsin	Our Milwaukee Wisconsin Partners for SustainAbility, Madison