

A photograph of two men in a natural setting, crouching and planting a young tree. The man on the left is wearing a green t-shirt with 'KE ZION' on it and red pants. The man on the right is shirtless and wearing a necklace. They are surrounded by tall green stalks, possibly corn. The background is a lush green field.

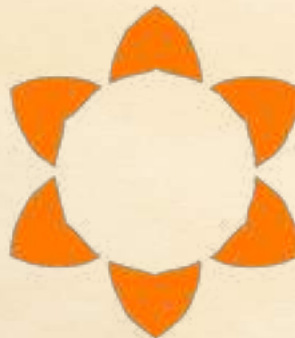
**Connecting people and sustainable Communities
in a global gift-network of trust and support**



ecobasa.org

Gift-Ambassadors Manual

This is the start of a comprehensive manual with a collection of tools and tips on how to use gift-economy to grow a community of trust and support, starting from your friends and colleagues wherever you are. If you already live in an intentional community, you can find lots of ideas here how to reduce your and your communities needs for money, become more resilient and how to connect and deepen relationships among the communities members and to other communities.



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Open-Source

This is something we are working on together, with our travels through communities that use or have used gift-economy we are collecting best-practices and tips how gift-economy can function and support communities.

As a Gift-Ambassador working with gift-economy in your community we encourage you to share your experiences with us and to co-create this manual. It is open-source on google docs for now, you can just edit it, but please don't delete stuff!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WPm6vEO1KUSPk6D15TsnoTfwPuWpu7VjTqWMSM83whw/edit?usp=sharing>

What is gift-economy

Gift-economy is more a culture than a system. Direct exchange is not necessary, you can pay-it-forward instead. This creates circles like in a healthy ecosystem. You can simply match offers and needs with the help of **communication**.

The sharing and receiving of gifts connects people and places. It creates **deeper relationships** between individuals and makes life feel more meaningful. It creates trust, which is the basis needed to unleash collective intelligence.

This culture creates a consciousness that everything is interdependent and connected. If you harm anyone or the ecosystem you live in, you harm yourself indirectly.

Gift-economy moves us out of separation, anonymity, disconnection and depersonalization. It builds connection, reunion and communities of supportive and enriching relationships. It is the most natural and healthy form of interaction for any entity in an eco(nomic)system.

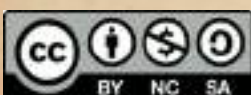
Creating and developing a gift-economy network will empower your local region by strengthening bonds among networks, people, communities and friends. These are the roots that will make you more resilient.

In a gift-economy your reputation is your currency. If somebody exploits the system, people will notice and give feedback and maybe ultimately exclude this person.

Money is a resource that can also be gifted. If there is no debt involved, money again becomes a natural tool for exchange. Until enough people are convinced and participate in this new system of sharing and caring, we can use money in a different manner for the period of transition. For further reading on this, see chapter "[Empowered fundraising](#)"

Reading recommendation:

Charles Eisenstein - *Sacred Economics*: <http://sacred-economics.com/read-online/>



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Starting with a community

Acts of unconditional giving create a community of trustful supportive relationships around you. It doesn't matter if you live in a city or on the countryside. Of course in the countryside everybody is much less anonymous and the word of mouth spreads fast. Also the feeling that you have to compete or protect yourself is much less prevalent. If you live in an intentional community, this is the ideal ground to start experimenting with gift-economy. People know and trust each other and the basic needs for food and accommodation are most likely already met to some degree. This gives us the freedom to start giving out of abundance. This is why ecobasa focuses its networking on intentional communities.

If you don't live in an intentional community already we recommend you to join an existing community first! Don't reinvent the wheel and start another one! It will be hard and you will make mistakes. They can be fatal and demotivating for this lifestyle! We all come out of a strong individualist culture of competition. We have to get rid of this mindset to change our culture on this planet.

There are so many communities out there who are looking for new people, your ideas and skills. They have already built the necessary infrastructure, and collected precious experiences. Probably they already grew roots in their area and it will be much, much easier to build upon their structures.

We recommend communities to be open for new people and ideas, because only then they can be sustainable. The best example we found in Damanhur (Italy), where every new member first becomes head of the community and is responsible for every decision.

The key to gift-economy is to build a supportive network of relationships around your person or project. So you want to get people engaged with you or the community. This can most easily be done with gifts.

No Debts

First and most important advice: Don't take loans or credits, especially from banks! You become dependent on money and will have to work maybe even outside of the community to make money to pay the debt and that is energy and work that doesn't stay in the community. Also you feed your lifetime and your property to the banks and you give them money to speculate on food, weapons, wars, industrial agriculture, destruction of the environment, human and animal exploitation etc. **The money system is designed to fuck you over**, if you take credits, you are basically giving your community and responsibility to the bank. There are alternative ways to do everything! **And everything you need is already somewhere in the world, you just need to figure out another way to get access to it, rather than putting money on the table.**

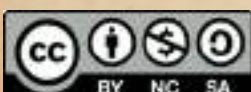
In general if you have a big network, you can source your needs just by communication, so invest your time in relationships and outreach, rather than money credibility. If you are well known and respected in your area, you might even get land for free out of a heritage. Locals have the access to local resources, so better be in good terms with them :)

(See below for strategies)

Avoid private ownership

We saw a lot of community projects fail, because there was one single person owning the land, houses or important resources of the community! It can easily create privileges, hierarchies and split the group. It is a good advice to share the ownership as soon as possible. There are legal bodies officially supporting this, like:

Foundations, Trusts, Cooperatives and Associations.



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ABCD

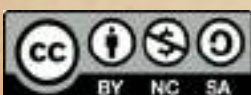
Asset-based community development (ABCD) is an approach focused on helping communities evolve and flourish using existing resources such as sidewalks, corner stores, local parks, and churches.

Essence Jackson, program coordinator at [Livable Memphis](#), says:

"Before you do any project — before you even start using ABCD as a methodology — make your first step figuring out if the neighborhood actually wants to do what you have in mind. Often, when government or other local leaders come into a neighborhood from outside and say, 'We're going to do XYZ here' and don't ask people first, residents won't feel good about the change and won't help it to succeed. So before you get started with anything, make sure to ask around — on the street, in church, at school — if people like the idea. If you get positive reactions, you can start pulling in public participation. ... People need to feel a stake in the process. They need to feel empowered and have a voice, or they won't stay involved. (Plus, of course, these people's skills comprise some of the assets your project will need to succeed) Inviting this kind of leadership involvement is also the key to keeping momentum once your project is underway."

Start a community with growing local roots

1. Start with a small group of committed and motivated people, be exclusive first and open up later, once a group culture is established
2. Talk to the locals, neighbors, ask about their life, the area, the plants, the nature, the customs and social structures
3. Ask about local social meetings (markets, pubs)
4. Attend them regularly, speak to people personally about your values and ideas first.
5. Only after they know you personally tell them about your plans
6. Identify influential and important people for dinner (or a drink on the campfire), also neighbors, they are very important
7. Feel their openness, don't approach, don't force friendship, feel the right balance for a beneficial relationship
8. Mark your project as experiment, make clear that you don't know everything and you are just trying different ways
9. Ask for local, self-made seeds, plant as many as possible, maybe even in communal places. Give away their produce as gifts
10. Invite a journalist to write an article about your project. Open up the worldview of the readers with humor and don't take yourself too seriously.
11. If you enjoy writing and it is possible, get a feature in the newspaper about ecological techniques
12. Host a Communities-Convergence, it is a great tool that will kick start your community and grow a network around it (see below)
13. Establish a book exchange with a local library, or open up a library with your books
14. If you will be asked to give workshops, do it. Don't over-push it.
15. Approach the kindergartens, schools and cultural centers in an open letter and offer to share your knowledge on sustainability.
16. If people like and respect you and your ideas and if they like your project ideas, you will get easier access to land for sure and maybe even some free land from a heritage. If you already have land they will more likely support you.



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Managing volunteers

If you have an interesting community-project that want's to use gift-economy you will need them and they will be curious to visit you: volunteers.

Many communities have volunteers, because people's interest to visit these places is huge. But often programmers are placed in the garden where they confuse carrots with weeds, while the community is desperately saving money for someone to fix their website.. We are here to change that:

If you register your community on <https://ecobasa.org> you can check the box in your profile that you are happy to host volunteers and you can wish for people with specific skills and experiences. Easy. But when they actually show up in person and especially if you manage to assemble a community of supporters, it is a true art to keep them productive and happy.

Keep volunteers happy and engaged

Having a team of engaged volunteers who understand the project's vision and are committed to seeing it through is a vital part of creating a strong community-based project. Rebecca Matlock Hutchinson, site director of [Soulsville](#), offers these tips for keeping volunteers happy and engaged:

- Keep people posted. When they know what's happening and feel they can express their opinion, that gains you credibility, respect, and trust.
- Don't make assumptions. Outright ask them: They might know someone or be interested in something you might never have guessed.
- Espouse the benefits. People want to know that what they're doing is making a difference.
- Express gratitude. Always provide food, drinks, and the right tools for the job. Make sure people are comfortable. Thank-you letters, certificates, t-shirts, and volunteer picnics are inexpensive, but important gestures.
- Mark your milestones. When you've reached a goal or passed an anniversary, celebrate it.

Integrating gift-economy in your community

We collected and developed some tools that you can use in your community. There is no order or dependency, just pick what fits your needs.

The key to gift-economy is to build a supportive network of relationships around your person or project. So you want to get people engaged with you or the community to build up relationships. This can most easily be done with gifts – for sure you have lots of them:

- What do you have in abundance?
- What do you have lying around that could be a valuable resource for somebody else?
- Is your community producing any products that you sell? Could you imagine to give them away as gifts?

If you specialize on people's demands and needs, you can receive what you need from another member of our network. If you have a lot of apples and you make good vinegar, you can offer this and get olive oil from a community in southern Europe for example.



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Hitchhiking

Not only a good way to get from A to B when you are traveling without money, hitchhiking is a perfect gift-economy tool and situation. People are driving their cars with empty spaces anyway, so it is an abundant available resource. In some countries it is more established than in others, but as soon as someone stops for you, you are sharing a very personal space where both every passenger can decide how deep they want to go into the contact. They are going from one place of their life to the other (work to home) so you already know a lot about the person. Mostly the driver or the co-driver will be curious where you are from and where you are going and why you are hitchhiking. You will see immediately if there is an interest in you projects and the conversation can go deeper. If you are going home to your community and they are interested, they might even want to bring you to your door, just to see the place and how you are living. Work commuters are usually electricians, plumbers, craftsmen and if you are lucky even politicians and bankers. Obviously these people can be very useful for your community or project. You can use the time to find out what their needs and interests are. Maybe you can think of a way to satisfy them and a mutual supportive relationship can start. If you hitchhike more close to your community, the people that will take you are most likely lose by and they might as well have a lot of contacts in your neighborhood. In general it is always good for your project, if it is locally known and you are recognized as approachable and communicative people. Then there is less space for projections, and campaigning against you. Actually you might even get more support than you could afford to pay for with money. For mor emoneyless traveling tips, see the chapter community-tours and <https://ecobasa.org/en/community-tours/traveling-tips/>



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Gift-Shop

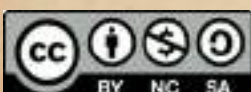
An easy start is to create a space for a gift-shop, also known as “swap-shop” “free-shop” or “give and take corner”. Make it look nice and ideally easily reachable from the outside, so neighbors, visitors and random people can have low barrier access and get to know your project. This is your shop window.

It is important to have a system to maintain order, overview and a nice look. You should sort things and keep them tidy.

Rent can be covered by donations. You can even give recommendations, install a "donation barometer" like a diagram that shows how much money is still needed, so people can feel responsible and it is not up to you personally to provide the space. The maintaining service can also be compensated with additional donations or volunteers.

Usually you will have a great time there and people will start bringing cakes and nice things to thank you. You can also make a music corner and host workshops or even better: offer the space for other people to host workshops.

Gift-shops often contain clothing, books, jewelry, toys, but you can also have corners for reusing and upcycling.



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Tool Library

Tools can be sorted, administered and maintained in order to be borrowed and not privately owned. Like this they are more used and also create relationships between the users. If something breaks or something new is needed, it can be a collective effort and bounding experience to fix or renew it. Also little handling workshops (necessary!) and skill sharing will emerge from this and most likely you can get easy support for building or repairing projects from the other users of the library. You need to find a system to keep it organized. You can hang the tools on a wall and spray over them. You can then distinguish the library tools by their color and see if a tool is missing by the empty space on the wall. People could stick a note with their name and when they will bring it back in the place of the tool when they borrow it.

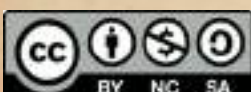
- See also <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-start-a-tool-library-in-your-community>



Book Library

Share your knowledge in an unobtrusive way. If neighbors and visitors get inspired by the things that interest you and your community, they can be of greater help in the future!

You just need a shelf and some books to start. People can add their books if they want.



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Open Wishlist

It is good practice to have a board at the entrance/exit of your project with a wishlist of what you need/want. Visitors can bring it and people that go out into the world can have that in mind and look out for the things that you wished for, and bring them back next time they come. Be precise in describing what you want, to make sure you don't accumulate useless things. Also this wishlist can be on your website, newsletters and invitations you send out. Whenever people come to your place, they can bring some things along.

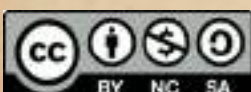
The ecobasa.org platform is made especially for this, but also locally it makes sense to communicate your needs in different contexts, you never know who might be responding. Just keep talking about your needs to whoever you talk to, you will just higher the chances for the universe to provide!;)



Work camps / Mingas

You can organize workshops and community events for construction sites, building projects, harvesting, or any large scale action that you might need machinery or money to pay people for.

If you manage to outreach, communicate and coordinate a lot of people, you can move mountains in a short time. Also the more people come, the more they can bring (materials, tools, experience, ideas etc.) So you should train the people coordination and communication skills from the start, this is your capital: your extended support- community



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Discover your gifts ecobasa presents: the Gift-Basar



Gift-Bazaar

Also known as “Gift-Market”, “Gratifieria” or “Really Really Free Market”.

A Gift-Bazaar is a creative space where people present their products, projects and dreams, it is a social place where you build relationships instead of exchanging money or goods. It is about getting to know each other's qualities and needs and developing trust, so more gifts can flow in the future, not only at the bazaar. The Gift-Bazaar may take anywhere from 3-4 hours to a whole day! These are moments for celebration and connection.

Organize your bazaar

To organize a gift-bazaar, you can use the Dragon Dreaming project-wheel and start to imagine it by answering this question:

“What needs to happen, so I can say that this bazaar was the best I could have spent my time with?”

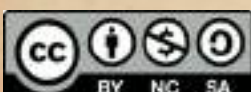
Gather volunteers in and outside your community to support this event happening. It is an opportunity for you to get to know your bioregional networks better. Are there already sharing circles in your region? Are there similar networks, social entrepreneurs that could be interested in joining the event?

Think about logistics! Always keep in mind that this is a moment of celebration. Choose a place that can comfortably welcome enough people. A comfortable, supportive and trustful atmosphere should be created, so that the participants feel ready to open up and share their projects and needs. Set up a celebration atmosphere by decorating the space, inviting some musicians or artists, preparing different music playlists. Ask people to bring some drinks, coffee and homemade cakes to share.

It is important to have a clean and open atmosphere, so everybody can relax and stay open. It is a good idea to have some people keeping an eye that the place is clean and beautiful. If you have a lot of free clothes on a table, it starts to get messy pretty soon.

Start outreach for your event at least three weeks before. Start with a draft poster including date, time, venue, name of the event, theme...

- For further reading: <http://ecobasa.org/en/group/ecobasa/note/organize-a-really-really-free-market/>



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Gift-Circle

First we started calling them gift-auctions and made a funny playful show, to encourage people to attend. But after a while, people started taking over the concept and came up with wishes and offers faster than we could facilitate. We will stick to the name gift-circles as this concept is already known under this name (other people had the same idea).

Also we prefer a culture where everybody is self-responsible for their needs and offers.

Hosting gift-circles at various events, is also a great opportunity to get more donations for your project in form of services and things. You can use them also internally to see who can help who in your community.

You can do them on a regular basis and as soon as some people know how it works, you don't need to facilitate, new people will just join in naturally. Of course anyone can ask a specific person if they have a wish, that is very beautiful..

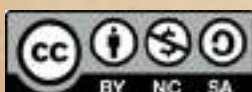
How to host a gift-circle

1. You need a flipchart or big paper and a marker (pen) as well as a small paper and pen. It also REALLY helps if everybody brings a paper and a pen, so they can take notes for themselves who to contact later.
2. On the big paper you draw a table to record the offers and needs.

We suggest the following structure:

Offer (orange pen) or Need (green pen)	From (Name + Contact)	For (Name + Contact)
-------------------------------------------	-----------------------	----------------------

3. It helps to have these roles:
 - a. Facilitator (keeps the flow and helps shy people)
 - b. Scribe (writes down offers, wishes and names)
 - c. Timekeeper (if there is an agreed timeframe, otherwise just go with the flow and stop when it's time :)
4. The group forms a circle, so everybody can see everybody. While standing brings more dynamic to the group, sitting is better suited for longer sessions.



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5. During the circle or in a break you give around the small paper with people to sign up their email address and name - this is important in order to fulfill the wishes later! You can also use a laptop, tablet or smartphone, then it is just copy-paste for the email later.
6. The facilitator asks: Who has a wish or an offer? You can also make a funny show as if it would be an auction:
 - a. Ask for wishes, first wishes first, 3, 2, 1.. Somebody will come up with something like a massage or a pen. If not just give suggestions of something that is very easy to fulfill.
 - b. Then you collect bids for this wish: Who can fulfill this wish 3, 2, 1..

7. If no one signs up to fulfill the wish, then you ask: "Who knows someone who can help with this wish?" If no one signs up you ask: "Who has an idea how to help with this wish?" (building the thing, organizing an event, where to look for information etc..)

That way people go away from seeing money as a solution for everything. Instead they start developing a systemic thinking of what existing factors could I stimulate to help with the fulfillment of this wish. This kind of thinking is much more social, holistic, healthy and intelligent. It is the basis of gift-economy and of a new culture of responsibility and collective intelligence.

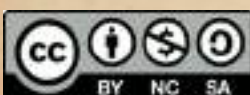
The limits to finding solutions is just people's imagination. You can make World-Cafés, Fishbowls, Open-Spaces, use Drivers and Proposal Forming from Sociocracy 3.0, "How would you solve this?"-rounds to find solutions for complex needs.

8. If the wish is granted in a way, the scribe writes down on the flipchart paper the wish, the name of the wishing and the fulfilling person. It can be the job of the scribe or the facilitator to consolidate people's wishes into one word or sentence. This helps the wishing person to be more concrete and the fulfillers to feel addressed.
9. You continue asking for the next wish or offer. If there are much more wishes than offers on the board, you can ask the participants what do they observe while looking at the board and how this shows our consumer mindset. Then encourage the rewarding feeling of offering things.
10. We suggest to keep it not longer than 1,5 hours, because the energy might drop. It depends on the location and group. You can throw in energizers or do something together in between (you can invite for a potluck before, so everybody brings food and then you have a nice buffet to snack after the circle)
11. In the end make a photo of the paper or type it in a spreadsheet and then send it around to all the email addresses you collected. If you make a spreadsheet we could even import the data into a system like ecobasa later if people wish. Then their wishes are much more likely to be fulfilled by a huge network.
12. Remind people that they are self-responsible to follow up on their wishes and that they have to make contact to their wish-fulfillers.
13. If they want, they can share their success stories with the others on the email-list, or with the ecobasa gift-economy network, so we can inspire more people!

➤ See more at: <http://ecobasa.org/en/group/ecobasa/note/the-gift-economy-auction/>

Karma Rules

1. **Know that there is no wish-fulfillment guarantee.**
2. **The greater the wish, the more karma.**
Just go for it, you might be lucky ;)
3. **Your concern may only spread good karma.**
The Gift Circle is not a place to make revenge plans, plan pranks or organize crimes. How about with bliss, surprise parties or forgiveness instead? :)



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4. **The person asking for a wish is self-responsible for its fulfillment.**
Everybody that wishes or offers help / tips / contacts is responsible for approaching the respective persons. Take notes and don't be shy to ask again for names and contacts!
5. **Ask for support that can not be measured in money.**
The gift-circle is not a place to buy and sell. Rather, you can ask for objects, ideas, contacts or mutual learning.
6. **Give unconditional.**
Don't expect anything in return, that kills the magic.
7. **Just give what you can give.**
You are not obliged to do something that does not feel good to you. Pay attention to your own energy resources and what you can easily give away and what not. We want this to be sustainable!
8. **The possibilities of how to help someone in the circle are infinite!**
Use dormant treasures, knowledge, experiences, creative ideas, contacts, networks and collective effort.

Inspired by [KarmaKreis from Pierre Lischke](#)

The Gift-Economy Board

Your community might already have an information board or you can create one especially for the sharing of gifts.

The Gift-Economy Board can be set up within the community or names can be taken during presentation of people interested in helping / supporting (then the list can be given to the presenter).

We use the same sheet during the gift-circles to record offers and wishes. At ongoing events we leave this board for people who did not attend the gift-circle or the same people to come up with additional offers / wishes after the circle. And of course to find people that can satisfy the wishes or are interested in the offers.

A gift-circle is a great way to start and establish the board. You can also make regular gift-circles reading the offers and needs from the board and interactively find solutions with the participants.

You can leave this board at the entrance or exit area of your community, in order to include visitors - that highers the chance of a match!

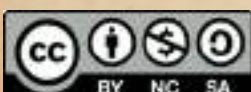
We suggest the same structure as in the gift-circle (see above)

Hosting events on gift-economy basis

<http://ecobasa.org/en/group/ecobasa/etherpad/hosting-gift-economy-events/>

When organizing an event or offering a service in a gift-economy, there are some learnings and best practices that help to make it more succesful! Here we want to collect them:

1. Communicate thoroughly all the expenses and efforts (including time and education etc) needed to offer the service, place or event, BEFORE people participate.
2. Communicate your needs as much and best you can, so you can be supported from visitors, participants, contacts etc.
3. Make some kind of binding sign-up. So people do value it. Like take a fee for registration and pay it back if wanted. Or some kind of engagement, like a preparation meeting.
4. Get people involved in the organisation at the earliest stage.
5. Name a concrete suggested amount for average donations and explain the concept of solidarity economy. Some people can pay more, others less. See balance point.



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6. Communicate your open needs and wishes again when and after the event is over, for other possibilities of support.
7. Assign another person than the organizers for collecting the donations.
8. Coach this person about the balance point and that they should speak with the donors on a personal level about the feeling of the contribution and the process of giving. With and after a deep conversation, the process and outcome will be better for both sides!
9. Host a gift-circle in the end to communicate your needs other than money and collect offers that you could not think of.
10. Create a community around your activities, places and people. With gift-economy this will grow by itself naturally. But at first you can foster it with organising get-togethers, dinners, parties, meetings etc.
11. TRUST that it will work and just try it, you will learn to do it better
12. If you did a gift-economy event before or a gift-circle you might already have a database of people that can help you with the organisation. There might be designers, fundraisers, facilitators, etc..

➤ See also: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-run-a-business-in-the-gift-economy>



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Swap seeds

Seeds are most important for self-sufficiency, food sovereignty and a healthy independent community. It gets harder and harder to get non-GMO organic seeds and Monsanto is buying all companies, so it really makes sense in a lot of aspects to grow your own seeds!

Many sustainable communities and CSA projects do this already and you can exchange seeds with them! It makes sense to swap seeds locally, so the plants are already adapted to your climate, soil etc.

Also this creates local relationships: People will think of your community when they see the plants growing or eat them. It is a very deep and emotional connection to your place and many priceless things can come out of such a relationship..

Grow more - Food is free

Not only in permaculture it is a rule of thumb to always plant 30% more for animals and natural disadvantages for your yield. How about planting 50% more and offering neighbors and visitors some food to take away from your garden? You can offer this at the entrance, fence or even have a stand at the local market. People will start building a relationship to you and maybe start asking about why you do such crazy things. They will get into your world of thinking and doing things and they might like it and support you. Also they are much more open to return a favor, thanks to all the healthy food they got. Maybe they will even get inspired to grow something themselves and give it back to you :)

For sure they will develop a closer relationship to you, because the food you grew is in their bellies and bodies and maybe if they had a nice meal they will think of you. And if you get sick or need something, they might be there for you. With the food prices nowadays this is probably better than selling it and paying insurance.

Also it is a very good investment to plant food for volunteers. All they need is accommodation and something to eat, and they can help you with daily things and big projects.. Always good to have some space and food for helping elves :)



Communities-Convergence

This is a great event format originally developed by Andrei Iuroaia.

A Convergence is a bioregional or thematic gathering, where individuals, communities and organizations form networks of collaboration and undergo a community building process together. These are opportunities for connection, exchange, learning, inspiration, networking and sharing.

Communities-Convergences can be hosted by your community.

Organizers and hosts can connect and coordinate on the ecobasa.org platform.

Every day we dedicate 2 hours of the program to collective working time with 40+ people to your hosting community. We can build houses, fix and plant things and move mountains if we coordinate!

Good for starting communities: We can build the infrastructure we need ourselves in advance: compost toilets, solar showers, outdoor kitchen

During a Convergence you can experience a wide variety of happenings, from lightning presentations and workshops provided by the participants themselves to group dynamics and a gift-economy market. According to the needs and the interest of the participants and the organizations they represent, thematic work groups are formed. They will continue the work on solutions after the event.

We build trust and learn about each other's skills, experience and projects, so that we can map out our needs and potential for collaboration.

We will be using: Open Space Technology, World Cafe, Lightning Talks, Flash Forums, Fish-bowl Forums, Constellation Dynamics, Networking Dynamics, Deep Ecology, Dragon Dreaming, Sociocracy, spaces for spontaneous self-organization and a gift-economy market as well as many other tools for organizing meetings and work groups.

Collective intelligence can emerge in groups where trust, responsibility and solidarity are cultivated.



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Community-Tours

The Community-Tours are our sustainable logistic network. Travelers can transport resources, materials, seeds, knowledge, experiences and experts between the communities. There are a lot of community tours crisscrossing the globe, you can have a look on <https://ecobasa.org/en/community-tours/> to find a tour that you can join.

It is a nice opportunity to get to know alternative sustainable lifestyles in ecovillages and communities. On ecobasa.org you can find communities that match your specific interests, or that are looking for your skills. If you can help out a community with a wish they have on their profile they should be open to host you without charging money. Especially because they are registered in our network :)

If you already live in a community

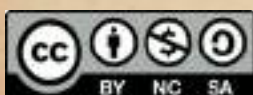
The Community-Tours offer a practical way to grow your own regional gift-economy network. You can visit the communities around you and find out what they have to offer and what they need. Try to interview as many people as possible to find out what they are good in, what products they produce and what materials they have to offer. You can also speak about a common resource pool of tools. See [the tool library](#) on how to do this. Especially for bigger machines that can drive between the communities, this makes sense (if not too far apart).

Grow the network

To be a really good gift-ambassador, make sure the communities you visit, register themselves on ecobasa.org. That way not only you know about their offers and needs, but also other communities and individuals can support them and benefit from their gifts. It makes sense to sit down with one of their members, that wants to be their ambassador and go through the registration on ecobasa.org with them. This is not only more human, but also in this interview-style conversation they might get more ideas of what they have and need. We are not used to think about ourselves and our projects in this way. Resources we do not need are considered as trash and skills that we don't professionalize to earn money, are considered useless. But to the right people and places they are very valuable!

Traveling without money

If you did not find your place to settle down yet, or you want to grow your network and find inspiration in other places, we want to support you doing this without the need to waste your time working for money. Here we collect tricks and resources you can use to travel in a sustainable and almost moneyless way to the next community, or for the times when you are not volunteering in sustainable communities :) Please add your ideas and changes that we can add to this list here: <https://ecobasa.org/community-tours/traveling-tips/>



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Hitchhiking

It's definitely the best way to go from one place to another: you can read some tricks on hitchwiki.org, but it's basically an art you learn with experience. Sometimes it's useful to check Hitchwiki to find good spots, most of all when you have to get out from big cities.

Biking

Check www.warmshowers.org, an hospitality website for cyclists, and www.ecotopiabiketour.net, a cycling Community-Tour. If you can not join them, you can get inspired to start your own cycling-tour!

Public Transport

Using public transportation just without paying a ticket is obviously not recommendable, but you can ask the driver of a bus or the people in service of a train if they would take you without ticket. They can do that and you would be their personal guest and legally not abusing the service. Just tell them about your pioneering mission of spreading gift-economy or that you don't want to use money, maybe you get a smile, or at least the next one might take you in :) Sometimes they are happy about an apple or a cookie as well :)

Hitchhiking Boats / Sailing

You can go to the piers and ask around, you may find some free place or someone looking for crew if you are patient or lucky ;) You can choose where you want to go, OR when you want to go... but rarely both. So there are basically two ways to find a boat: Online, or in person. Most people do both.

Check www.hitchwiki.org/Hitchhiking_a_boat

You can find boats looking for people at: www.handgegenkoje.de (german)

findacrew.net crewbay.com crewseekers.net are sites for people searching crew or crew searching a ship. It is possible to find unpaid/unpaying positions, but it helps to have some qualifications or experience.

- Weed out the dodgy 'seeking relationship' skippers. It's not hard, just read their profile well, and check the signs. If they are looking for a 'female' between the ages of '18 and 35' for a 'friendship/relationship' you'll probably get the idea. There are good people on these websites, you just got to find them! Also remember, it can take a lot of time for captains to plan journeys/crew, so the more time you have up your sleeve, the better. Start looking months before you want to head off. On the other hand, some will need crew right away, so be ready to go when they are!

Starting Points

The following locations will be the easiest and best places to make contact with yacht skippers who might be considering taking crew aboard

North Pacific Ocean

Southern Californian ports from Santa Barbara to San Diego in October. Cabo San Lucas and La Paz, Mexico, at Christmas.

Hawaiian Islands

Hilo (Radio Bay), Hawaii and Lahina, Maui from May to September in all directions. Ala Wai, Honolulu in August/September for returning TransPac racers to the USA



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Philippines

Liloan, Cebu Island in August/September. Hong Kong from December to April for deliveries of yachts built in Taiwan going north to the USA or south to Europe.

South Pacific Ocean

Tahiti, French Polynesia from April to September/October, Fiji in September. New Zealand, North Island at Bay of Islands in March.

Indian Ocean

Australia at Darwin in July. South Africa at Durban in December. Sri Lanka, Galle in December.

South Atlantic Ocean

South Africa at Cape Town in January/February.

North Atlantic Ocean

British and North European Ports – Lisbon/Vilamoura. (Yachts should have crossed Bay of Biscay by the end of August.) Bermuda in November and April to August. The Canary Islands, Las Palmas and Madeira, Funchal in November. Fort Lauderdale, Florida in November.

Mediterranean

Gibraltar, Palma, Malta and many other ports from April to November.

Note: Apart from some diving charters in the Red Sea area, there is very little cruising traffic to rely on from the Mediterranean into the Indian Ocean. An inconvenient passage combined with a difficult political area reduces the flow of yachts going south. In the opposite direction, more yachts go via the Suez Canal as a convenient short cut back to Europe from the Indian Ocean – despite the inconveniences – if they do not wish to go around Africa.

Caribbean

St Thomas, Virgin Islands in November. Barbados/Grenada in November/December. Panama Canal – Panama Canal Yacht Club, Cristobal, and Balboa Yacht Club in March/April.

Sailing Tips

- The best way to find a boat in person is to network network network. Hang out at the local bars (they're sailors!), stay close by, hitchhike around, and try to meet as many people as you can. The word of mouth is huge in the yachty world, it's all about someone who knows someone who knows someone. If you have time, get down to the cruising area just before the season begins, and stay a while (like a month or more!). Often they are great places to hangout anyway (British Virgin Islands, Majorca, Sicily...) and small communities, so you'll be in with the crowd in no time. Be social!
- What experience do you need? Obviously, any time at sea, courses etc... is going to help, but don't worry if you don't have this. I started with nothing but a love of water. A lot of sailors will want to teach you THEIR way anyway, so having a clean slate might even help. Be prepared to offer whatever you have. Think of how your skills could be useful. Medical, cooking, and engineering, all very handy! Even a good musician can be a welcome addition to a crew. Be fit, be handy, be positive. Light hearted and fun, but sensible and with lots of common sense, that's what most skippers will be looking for.
- Ask about money. What is it going to cost you? The most common is that you pay for your food, and they pay the rest, but keep in mind this might be more than you would normally spend on food while on the road, so make sure you ask. Some skippers will ask you to pay a few boat costs too, mooring fees or fuel. You might be able to organize a 'work exchange' deal, if they need varnishing or maintenance done to the boat. Maybe they are getting hauled out, put on the hard for a week, and could really use a spare



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pair of hands. If you're REALLY lucky, they will pay all the costs... and once you start getting some serious sea miles, you'll even get PAID to go sailing!

- Finally, have a good think about if this is really for you. The idea of sailing off into the sunset might sound awesome, but try to imagine being at sea in rough weather, heeled over, raining and cold. Everything falling all over the place and never being still. Most watch schedules will mean 3-4 hours alone at night sailing the boat (after you have experience of course) and sleeping patterns are always erratic. You'll be in a small space with several people (depending on the size of the boat, usually 3 or 4 crew on board) and not always in the best situations. You'll need to keep your head together and be switched on almost 24hrs a day. Also, remember than more than HALF of your time on the boat will be spent anchored, moored, or docked somewhere. Usually this means working at putting the boat back together, installing new gadgets or waiting for the weather to change, and as crew you're expected to help with this. It won't all be high energy stuff. On a brighter note - it IS everything you imagined... dolphins, sunsets, sustainable transport and using your hands to carry you along... if you're up for it, it's magical!

Sleeping / Accomodation

If you're not a tourist interested in monuments and museums, but a traveller who wants to discover more about this world and the people who live on it, it's definitely worth to look for projects to spend some time in; squats, communities, project-houses, organic farms... of course, every community has different rules about visitors, some are very easy about it and some others not so much; some ask for money and some don't. Here some online networks that could help you finding a place that could be good for you:

ecobasa.org

ecovillage.org/projects/map/

HelpX.net

Wwoof.org (Costs a little fee)

Rainbow Gatherings → ask a hippie (seriously! for raw food rainbows, check <http://rawrainbow.webnode.com/>)

nomadbase.org

Trustroots.org

BeWelcome.org

Couchsurfing.com

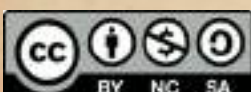
If it's summer and you have a tent, no problem! Just find a place a bit out of the way (remember, humans are more dangerous than animals!) and you're done. A good trick is to ask the people you meet, if you can put your tent in their garden. But if it's too cold or you don't have a tent, try one of the following options:

Couchsurfing

On Couchsurfing.org you can often find nice hosts, and if you check some profiles before sending couch-requests you have even more. Couchsurfing once was a very nice community, but it became a for profit corporation and is now very crowded.

BeWelcome and Trustroots are platforms that where built open-source out of the original couchsurfing community. They respect more your privacy and usually people who join them are on average more into alternative lifestyles than Couchsurfing members.

It is propably easier to find people there, that you could get along well with. The only thing you have to remember is that sometimes, when you're traveling without many plans, Couchsurfing is not as flexible as you would like it to be, and so you should rely on something else. However, in many big cities there are last-minute groups, if you manage to find an internet connection you can post a message with your phone number even few hours earlier, and hopefully somebody will call you!



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Squats

Often in occupied places you can find a very welcoming and open-minded atmosphere. The only problem is that an eviction can occur when you're there and often because of this uncertainty they don't put much love and time into the space. When you're outside in the time of an eviction and you left all your stuff there you can just say goodbye to all your belongings because usually police destroys everything. When you arrive try to ask to the people who live there if an eviction is likely to happen, usually most of them are predictable and they should know about it. Here a good website, with a lot of squats listed: squat.net Remember: squats are not alternative hostels for tourists: go there just if you share their anticapitalistic values (having a contact helps a lot) and if you're interested to help them.

Drivers

when you're hitchhiking, try to understand if your driver (if you trust him/her) could be able to host you; usually they're very nice and if they can, they will do it, but try to make it as spontaneous as possible ("Now I'm going to spend the night in your city, could you suggest me any place where to sleep for free?") and NEVER force or pressure them, since they could feel in danger and this is really not nice.

Petrol stations: if you're hitchhiking on the highway and you don't want to leave the road for sleeping, try 24h open petrol stations; you won't sleep very well, (lights are of course turned on for the whole night, and often there are movies or music as well), but it's still better than sleeping outside, especially during winter.

Churches

If you're in a small village and you're really desperate, try to ask for the priest; you have a few chances that he's one of those few priests who still believes in the original christian message of unconditional love.

Alberge (Spain)

This are public dorms where you can be hosted for a limited number of days without paying anything, and quite often there are some also in smaller cities; usually people who stay there are immigrants who arrived in the city for the first time and stay there until they find another place where to go, but nobody should object if you ask to stay there for the night (if you wanna stay for longer maybe try to find another accommodation).

In order to sleep there you have to give your personal datas to the employee, of course, so you have to have a document; and if you don't manage to find the Alberge, ask the police and they will tell you (and sometimes drive you as well!). I have personally experienced this just in Spain, but probably in other countries there will be something similar, try to ask, people will help you!

Ask people

When nothing else worked or I felt lonely, I was just talking to people on the street that looked like they would enjoy my company. I was looking for people that share an interest of mine: Jugglers in the park, Musicians on the street, strange museums, whatever you're into. Asking for a place to sleep straight away will very likely result in a no. Hang out and chat a bit before!

Food / Eating

Foodsharing.de: A legal framework for fetching left over or expired food from markets, shops, institutions and events. You have to sign up, get qualified and then you can see where you can pick up food and contract new places!

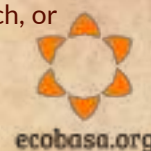
Fallingfruit.org and Mundraub.org: open-source urban harvesting maps, mainly for fruit.

Shop-diving

You can ask for things that (organic) supermarkets or shops will throw away, because they have too much, or



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they are expired. You usually get food that's still good and you reduce the waste of the system. You have to look for the shops that sell food: restaurants, bakeries, bars, small supermarkets... go there around closing time (We know, it's not easy when you're traveling) and ask if there's some food left that they are going to throw away. You can say that you are traveling without money, in order to make them understand that, in any case, you wouldn't buy anything. There's one thing to say: quite often they answer that they don't have nothing, but that they can offer you something. It's up to you to accept or refuse, just remember that this way you're not reducing waste, but increasing consumption, since after giving a sandwich to you they will have to buy one more for their clients.

Market-diving

If you manage to find a market it's great, at the end of it there will probably be a lot of fruit and veggies left. Sometimes they just leave it in boxes on the ground and you can take it, sometimes you have to ask; in any case it should be quite easy...

Table-diving

In restaurants and bars there's always a lot of food left after customers leave; gently try to ask if you can have some, or just take it before waiters come, if you're sure that nobody can see you...

Dumpster-diving

very often in the garbage you can find very good stuff; check most of all in front of supermarkets and restaurants... Here is a link for good dumpsterdiving spots and technique tricks: trashwiki.org

Hosts

even though you cannot count on it, many couchsurfers or people who host you will actually invite you dinner.

Drivers

very often if you establish a good contact with them they will invite you for lunch or, more probably, if they're carrying food in their car, they will share it with you.

Money

If you travel with our tips, you shouldn't actually need much money, but if you might need some, you can try the following options

Busking

If you know how to play an instrument or to juggle/breakdance/be a clown you can easily raise some money; you have to find a place with many tourists and be careful about police, in many cities it's illegal and you risk a fine. The same if you want to draw portraits, to write improvised poetries, to play a monologue, to read the future or something else. Use your phantasy!

Handcraft

If you know how to carve wood, how to build dreamcatchers or necklaces you can try to sell them to the people you meet; be careful of police, don't put a stand in the middle of Piccadilly Square!

Drivers

Sometimes drivers offer you money, it's up to you to accept or refuse it.

Small jobs

Ask to shop owners if they need some help; sometimes you can work for them for a few hours – but it's quite difficult, and you can not really rely on it.

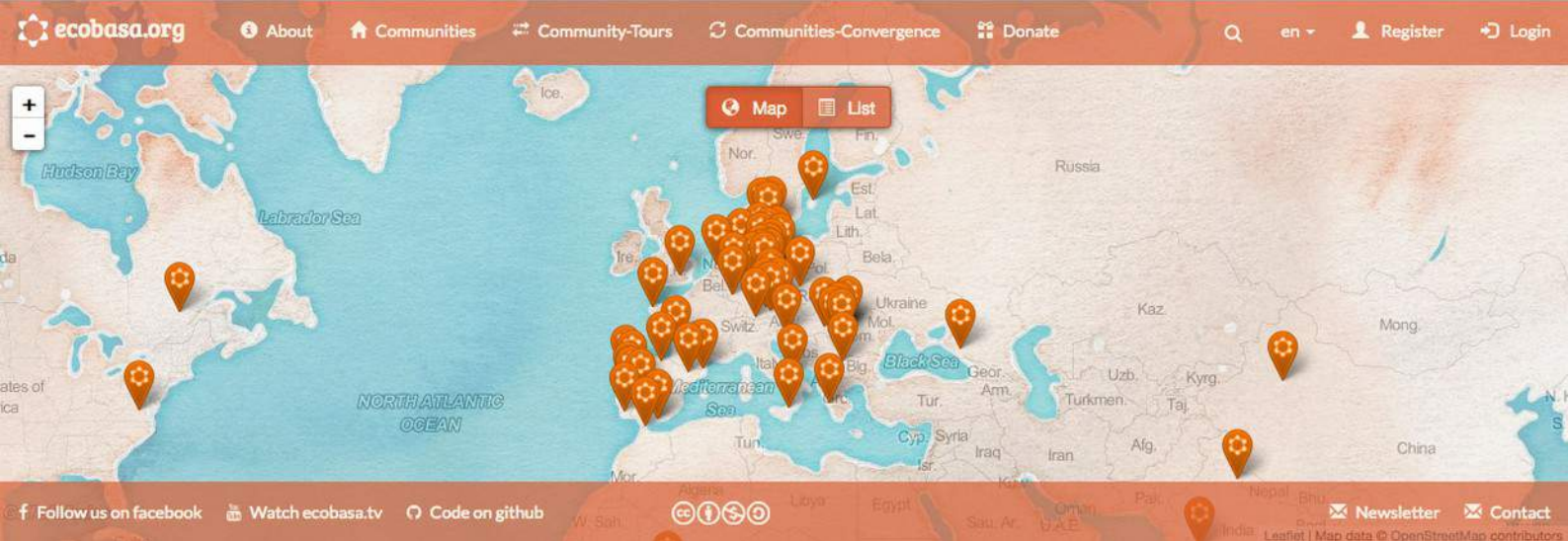
Also check out The Ultimate Guide to Traveling Without Money from shareable.net

If you know other tricks please let us now!



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ecobasa.org – growing your network online

ecobasa.org is an open-source social networking platform that facilitates a culture of gift-economy by creating and maintaining a network between sustainable projects and interested people. It does that by connecting people with matching skills and interests. Communities and Individuals can use the platform to find professionals for any project they want to realize. People can find interesting projects where they can learn new things. It's a win-win game, creating a third win for everybody through the growing network. So obviously gift-economy is about local communities, communication and relationships, and this has to happen offline. But some things like knowledge, ideas and experience can be exchanged globally without traveling at the expense of the planet's atmosphere!

Together we are developing this online tool to connect you to all the different Gift-Ambassadors and communities on this planet to form a "glocal" network. And it is supposed to make your daily Gift-Ambassador life more easy and fun!

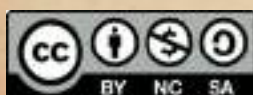
Create an account

To sign up your community on ecobasa.org you have to create an account as a "Gift-Ambassador". Here you can create a profile for your community. It can be an intentional community or a more loose community inside a city for example.

You can contact other communities and people with specific skills and experiences you are looking for. If you motivate them to sign up and update their profiles, it is easier for us to match offers and needs. So please add your interests and skills to your pioneer profile as well, and give a short description of yourself. This makes it possible for people with matching interests to contact you.

Taking ownership

The website is still in beta-testing status and needs a lot of improvements. Part of the Gift-Ambassadors work will be to take ownership of the platform and start shaping it to their needs. Gift-Ambassadors will make decisions on how to change the platform and will be accountable for these changes (see below the chapter for organisational structure).



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Give Feedback

If you find something not working as you expected, please give us feedback about the error or what could be improved. We have a Feedback & Suggestions button on the bottom right of every page on <http://ecobasa.org>. You can add bugs (things that are not working, errors) or ideas of what we could change / add / improve on the website.

Search for what you need

At the moment we don't have an automatic matching-system on the platform (we are still looking for experienced programmers). You have to search manually for the things that you and your community need. You can use the search function <http://ecobasa.org/find/> (needs to be improved) or look directly in the community (<http://ecobasa.org/communities/>) or member database (<http://ecobasa.org/pioneers/>).

Manage your community group

When you register as a communities gift ambassador, a community group will be created that you are administering. You can add other admins (Gift-Ambassadors) and change your membership to a normal one (community member). Other members of your community can join the community-group as normal members as well with the "request to join this community" button on the top right of your community's profile (only they can see it) <http://ecobasa.org/en/group/YOUR-COMMUNITY/join/>

You can also make them community-members by clicking the "users" button at the top right. (only you can see it) <http://ecobasa.org/en/group/YOUR-COMMUNITY/users/add/>

Please encourage your community members to sign up as pioneers on ecobasa as well and then join your community, because their private skills, products, interests and wishes will automatically be listed on the communities profile if they want!

Add needs to the community-profile

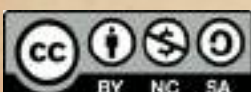
As a Gift-Ambassador it is part of your role to gather the needs of your community. For sure you already have some in mind if you think about your communities plans and projects. But also the individual needs of the members can go here, either on their own profile if they are a member, or on the community profile if they are Ambassadors. You can make a little stand or gift-shop where people can wish for things. You can then collect and add the wishes on the community profiles. If they get delivered by Community-Tourists you can store them here and people can get them later. It's like shopping, but for free, and it takes more patience :)

Use the online tools

Your community group has a dashboard that you see when you click on your community in the dropdown menu under your name in the upper right corner (if you are signed in).

There you can add widgets for the ecobasa tools:

- Notes (a newsstream from other communities, community-tours and the ecobasa core team)
- Your latest ToDo's
- Etherpads (the latest meeting notes)
- Events you are hosting



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Notes

If you create notes and check the checkbox “Public” your articles will appear as blogposts on your community’s profile. If the box is not checked only members of the community can see and edit them.

They are a bit fancier than facebook posts, but essentially the same.

We recommend that you share best-practices and experiences with gift-economy here. We are working on a stream where you can see the notes of other communities and you can filter them by tags and topics.

ToDo's

ToDo's are projects that your community needs help with from the network, like building a house, fixing a car, babysitting, etc.. For construction projects it makes sense to add a time when the project is being realized, so all the experts you need can come on that date to build it together. For something complex like a house we recommend to make a list “Building the community house” and add individual tasks for special groups of experts. Like “Installing the electric grid and components”. You can then time them so the electrics come after the house is finished.

Try to be as specific as possible on what you need and how. You will soon be able to add needed skills, experiences, tools and materials that helpers from the network can bring.

Etherpads

With Etherpads you can write documents and meeting notes collectively. This makes note-keeping faster and allows collective intelligence and collaboration. We also use them to write texts for grant applications or event invitations.

Events

Here you can post events happening in your community, like workshops, Gift-Bazaars, Gift-Circles, etc.. Also here you need to check “public” if they should be seen by everyone and appear on your profile. Private events are just seen by members of your community.

Posting your gift-economy events here are especially nice for the network, but also payed workshops are ok for us, this is your thing :)

You can add tags and topics here, so other communities and pioneers can filter and find them by their interests.

You can also manage your volunteer visits here internally, just don't check the “public” box and only members of your community can see it. This is especially handy if you have more than one gift-ambassador that is managing the volunteer requests, like this you can make sure that there are always enough beds and food :)

Sustaining your work

So if your new job will be Gift-Ambassador, you might ask yourself these questions: Where will my income come from? How am I supposed to pay rent?

Don't worry, we suggest to take it easy anyway and not to start these activities full-time! Deepening your relationships with gift-economy, establishing new connections and growing your network takes time naturally, like a forrest ecosystem takes time to develop. You can and should still use money at first, because we have a lot to learn in order to grow out of the culture and structures that we are used to!

Always remember: it is good and necessary to make mistakes, in order to learn from them and to improve. Nobody is perfect, ever. So just start doing something :)



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The good news is: once your relationships are trustful and supportive and you have developed a network around you and your activities and places, you will need less and less money. If you want personal tips on your situation or you are impatient, don't hesitate to contact us to get personal consultation: info@ecobasa.org

Until then you will still need money, and there is plenty of that available. So what you can do, is find people who can support you and ask them for a gift.

Empowered Fundraising

Empowered fundraising inspires and enables us as participants to create the funds necessary to implement our projects in line with our values and visions. Primarily this is about building relationships with others and **offering them the gift of participating in projects which add meaning to their lives.**

Empowered Fundraising is about transforming people's relationship with money.

The secret of empowered fundraising is not about the money at all. It is in reality about building a community of relationships – where each relationship is based upon trust and intimacy. It is essentially a process of true community building. Raising the funds for your project is really about building the relationships that will sustain you both – the giver and the receiver – for a long time to come.¹

For a functioning gift economy, we need to recognize and be aware of our relationship with money.

Here is an introduction about the balance point, a tool that can help you find a sincere monetary contribution towards what brings you energy.

The Balance Point

What is the right amount to contribute, that is healthy for the giver and the receiver and helps strengthen deep and authentic relationships? To find that out, there is a tool called "Balance Point".²

The Balance point resembles an amount that lies between a token (a symbolic amount that makes no difference) and a sacrifice (an amount that threatens the livelihood or work of the giver) and is neither of those. It is an Amount that really matters to you. All Balance points have the same intrinsic value and come with the same energy. Because of that, an amount of 5€ is worth the same as an amount of 1000€ when they represent the Balance Point of two people with different contexts, giving them different availability of resources.

How to find your balance point?

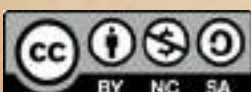
- Estimate how much money is flowing into your life.
- Make an assessment of how much money is flowing out of your life.
- Figure out how important the project is to you.
- Make sure you take a small step outside your comfort zone, to really give.

Using your body intelligence to find the Balance Point

- Make two points on the ground (you can also make them up in your mind) and give one of them a very high amount of money, and the other a really low amount of money.
- Position yourself between these two points by following the sensations in your body. The balance point is where you feel good and still feel enough tension and intensity that it makes you feel awake and alert. If you go too far out of your comfort zone, and even pass your learning zone, you can feel it in your body because you either feel like you are over-charged with energy or you go numb. That is the danger zone, if you are there then you passed the balance point.

¹ <http://dragondreaming.jimdo.com/sources-1/john-croft-fact-sheets/>

² As taught in the Empowered Fundraising part of Dragon Dreaming, and originating from Kathy Burke



If your balance point is too close to a token, there is no real personal involvement. The feeling of giving lasts just half a minute and the donation doesn't create a deeper relationship, which is the reason why we're doing this in the first place.

If your balance point is too close to a sacrifice, you will sabotage your own well being or your capacity to give your personal gifts to the world and make the difference you could make.

Further Reading Recommendations : *Lynn Twist (2003) – The Soul of Money*

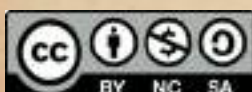
Sustaining our Work

We hope to support you to grow a supportive community around you and to support your community to become more independent from money. However we are also dependent on your support. We still have to pay money for the hosting of our online platform, to print these booklets and sometimes for its transportation so they can find their way to you. And until now all of our volunteers have to pay rent, too. If you still have some coins or virtual money lying around that you don't need so much anymore because you are now able to cover your needs from your network, please support us and our work with a donation so we can keep supporting you and many more people that will become part of our network. Only together we can change our future on this planet for the better. That means it does not work without your contribution. You can give us a donation and see other options to support us with your time, skills and resources on ecobasa.org/support/

Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Arne Bollinger (Founder & Project Manager)



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