

Summary Report – Future Workshop, Berlin, 21 to 24 October, 2012

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▪ **Overview of the participants**

Twenty seven young people (16 women and 11 men) from Germany (20), Austria (5), Switzerland (1) and Australia (1) came together at the “Future workshop” in Berlin to discuss key issues related to the scarcity and current misuse of resources. The aim was to develop alternative and innovative pathways for more resource equity. The participants came from different disciplines, ranging from sociology to technical engineering, agronomy, history, psychology to political science. Some currently work as researchers, others as “practitioners” in NGOs or other institutions. The diversity of the participants` knowledge, experience and professional backgrounds allowed crossing disciplinary boundaries and thus approach the issue of resource equity from various angles.

▪ **Summary of the workshop’s phases**

The workshop started on 21 October late afternoon with the participant welcoming followed by an introduction about the Resource Summit Project by Annette Kraus, Christine Chemnitz and Lili Fuhr (Heinrich Böll Stiftung – HBS). Ralph Griese (finep) then presented the workshop’s methodological concept and programme. At the end, the participants and HBS staff shortly introduced themselves based on several images which had been distributed around the room.

After the introductory evening, the participants work was divided in three phases as from the Future Workshop methodology:

Day 1 – Critique or problem phase

The critique phase started with an introduction about the day’s schedule and objectives. This phase was divided into two levels: a) a thematic and b) a structural one.

The participants were randomly divided into five groups with an equivalent number of people for the work at the thematic level during the morning. The thematic level aimed at stimulating the participants to answer the following guiding question: *“When you, from your personal perspective, think of resource use and policy in Germany / Europe, where do you see the biggest problems and challenges until 2050?”* At this level, the participants working in small groups were requested to: a) first brainstorm individually, b) discuss results within the small group, c) define thematic headlines, d) select the three most important themes, e) prepare a 10-minute group presentation.

Each group presented its results from the thematic level. A short discussion followed each presentation according to the participants' needs. The main topics approached were:

Group 1 (Thematic level):

- Wrong social welfare model.
- Exploitation of Southern countries and spatial conflicts.
- Economic rationale as dogma and insufficient regulation.

Group 2 (Thematic level):

- Non-ecological, unsocial and non-transparent resource policy.
- Politics guided by growth compulsion, economic and financial sectors.
- Consumption and individualisation as wrong welfare model.

Group 3 (Thematic level):

- Overuse of land due to extractive rationale.
- Loss of biodiversity as foundation for life.
- Prevailing consumption / economic order and missing socio-political regulation.

Group 4 (Thematic level):

- Sectorial approach.
- Externalisation.
- Resource degradation and consumption.

Group 5 (Thematic level):

- Governance deficit: information and enforcement.
- Dissociation between nature and society.
- Rudimentary economic principles.

Having completed the thematic level, the participants were again randomly divided into new groups for further work at the structural level. One member of the previous group remained as reference for the new group formation to clarify possible questions related to the earlier work at the thematic level. The guiding question for the structural level was: *"Who or what has blocked an equitable resource policy considering the chosen thematic areas?"*. After clustering similar topics, the participants were divided into four new small groups and requested to: a) undertake a group brainstorming, b) discuss possible approaches, c) represent their ideas in a mind-map format.

The new groups presented their conclusions and answered requests for clarification. On the basis of those presentations, the participants elected the most important topics for further work in the coming phases that was guided by the following question: *"When you look at the problem fields you have discussed, which ones seem the most crucial until 2050?"*. The following thematic areas were chosen:

1. Who or what has blocked an adequate *political regulation* for an equitable resource policy?

Lack of (political) governance: This included a critique of the proceeding privatization of public goods, and a lack of political will and power to safeguard so-

cial and ecological interests. Decision-makers' mere orientation towards economic interests was identified as an underlying key problem.

2. Misconception of economic and social welfare:

The critique challenged the prevailing conceptualization of welfare as economic output and material consumption. This ignores that there are many activities and goods that are not and may not be measured in monetary terms, but still contribute to human wellbeing. Moreover it neglects that material consumption alone does not necessarily lead to more happiness and satisfaction.

3. Who or what has maintained *hegemonic economic principles*?

The critique challenged that our current economic system is based on logic of unlimited growth and competition. Moreover the critique focused on the way possession of material goods is currently being defined, as well as on the increasing monetization of public goods and services.

4. *Externalisation* of negative social and ecological effects.

The externalization of negative effects within countries (e.g. contamination of groundwater), as well as across nations and regions (e.g. industrial countries dumping their wastes in countries of the global South) was identified as one key issue of current misuse of resources. A key challenge worked out was how to account for and ultimately minimize such effects.

5. *Exploitation of Southern countries*.

It was criticized that industrial countries use their political and economic power to exceed pressure on countries of the global South. Unfair trading systems are one results of their weaker bargaining position. In addition, a lack of institutions and infrastructure was debated and regarded as another reason why countries in the global South can hardly escape their roles as pure raw material deliverers.

Day 2 – Utopian or fantasy phase

The utopian phase is designed to ease innovative thinking through the application of creative techniques (e.g., drawings, role playing and singing). The phase started with a brief explanation of the schedule and objectives. The working day was divided into two levels: a) 2050 vision development, b) a role-playing report from 2050 on how such visions could become true.

At first, the participants were requested to work in five small groups divided randomly according to the topic selected in the end of the previous day (critique phase). The following assumption guided the work during this first level: *“A fairy will visit Berlin today and will make true all your wishes for 2050 related to the chosen topics, no matter how utopic they may be. However, the fairy can only understand drawings. Nothing written will be considered.”*

During the second phase, the role-playing was used to facilitate the analysis of possible consequences derived from the realisation of the visions from the previous step. The participants were asked to take on the role of *historians living in 2050, who would meet in their annual congress to discuss resource-related issues back in the beginning of the 21st century.*

Some *polemic / conflicting issues* throughout this phase were:

- Imposition of social and ecological rules vs. democratic regimes.
- Increased trade barriers based on environmental performance of countries.
- Likelihood of broad changes without violent conflicts / crises.
- Border controls vs. ecological global governance.
- A global government vs. local participation.
- Economic regionalisation vs. globalisation.
- Unconditioned basic financial security for all.
- Income redistribution and basic security (nutrition, energy and housing).
- “Participatism” instead of capitalism.
- Internalisation of external costs vs. price increases.
- Industrial restructuring, dematerialisation and stricter ecological standards.
- Fair and organic products only.
- Renewable energy only
- Inclusion of labels related to resource use in all supermarket products.
- Additional taxation depending on ecological footprint.
- Ecological taxation on a national basis vs. imports of cheaper products.
- Social and environmental return on investment.
- What to do with those who fail or do not want to comply at all with ecological restrictions?
- Compulsory use of additional leisure time vs. free-will to work.
- Public transparency about lobbying (“Lobbyleaks”).

Day 3 – Realisation phase

The realisation phase started with a brief introduction about its purposes and the planned schedule for the day. This time, the participants were free to choose which main topics they would like to work with among those selected in the end of the critique phase. They were requested to choose three ideas inspired by the previous phase. The criteria suggested for the selection of these ideas were as follows: a) Ideas should be realistic while also being convincing and motivating, b) executable within the next 15 years, c) implementing actors involved should be interested in the idea, as they should initiate them.

For each of the three selected ideas, the participants were asked to develop concrete measures / strategies from the perspective of the relevant implementing actors during the morning of the final day. The structure suggested for the design and presentation of the ideas were:

- Title of the idea
- Implementing actor(s)
- Objective (as concrete as possible as of potential target / goals)
- Target-groups
- Concrete steps (including a time-frame)
- Potential partners / supports
- Risks and obstacles

Due to the time restriction, all groups opted to work with one instead of three ideas, as it had been planned initially. Apart from clarification questions, practically no discussion of the presentations in the realisation phase was possible. In short, the titles of the ideas by thematic area were as follows:

1. Political regulation for an equitable resource policy: *“Transference and structuring of the production and use of solar energy to the local level”*.
Shift of responsibility, production and consummation of solar power to a local decentralized level as an alternative model for prevailing political governance in the field of energy. Innovative instruments such as participatory budgets and eco-taxes should be introduced on the local level in order to overcome “NIMBY” (not in my backyard) attitudes and building on citizens` initiatives and like-minded actors.
2. Social welfare model: *“Introduction of the ‘Theodora-model’ to a European small- or medium-scale enterprise”*.
More flexible work schedules in order to counter the current welfare model based on physical capital. The proposed steps emphasize new references such as time as central points for measuring welfare. Companies have to offer more flexible working time models. The project suggests a points system in which activities such as care for the elderly or children are rewarded by points that can be saved and exchanged for other services or be “paid back” via the pension.

3. Hegemonic economic principles: *“Establishment of transition towns (TT) as societal models”*.

Establishment of Transition Towns as a societal and economic counter model where hegemonic economic principles are to be challenged by building on social networks and ideas such as resilience, “the great reskilling” (strengthen abilities to solve problems e.g. fix broken things, or work cooperatively), the triad of reduce/reuse/recycle, sufficiency, renewable energies and regional economic circuits.

4. Externalisation: *“Internalisation of ecological and social effects”*.

Legislation for the internalisation of ecologic and social effects: The proposed steps for a mandatory disclosure of ecological and social externalities include initiatives and research for the establishment of accounting and more transparent standards. After introduction of a respective legislation, fossil and non renewable solid and liquid emissions are to be taxed.

5. Exploitation of Southern countries: *“Glassware: labelling of products by resource use and origin”*.

Transparency on resources used for technical products as one step to counter the current exploitation of the global south. The proposal suggests the introduction of a mandatory label that shows consumers the amounts and geographic origins of resources a product contains, as well as their recycling rate. If such mandatory label shouldn't provide enough incentives to alter consumer behaviour and make them opt for the more resource friendly products, a tax should be introduced in addition.

Also the roles and duties expected from the delegates that will be send to the Resource Summit in September 2013 have been explained before their election. Ballots with the candidates' name and city of origin were used during the election to ensure anonymity. All participants were considered candidates, except for those who refused. The vote counting took place during the above mentioned presentations, and the results were presented right before the final evaluation of the workshop.