

Ideas for the future

Movement history reveals where new ways of thinking, big ideas, and propositions for reorganising our world to upend power and confront injustice took root. Some of these became a driving force behind struggles for power like anti-colonialism, liberation, socialism, and communism, while others were also critical to changing how people organised themselves economically and politically, like cooperativism, trade unionism, etc. This is a list of ideas and propositions that are under construction, emerging, or being renewed – that are shaping discourse, narratives, and how we organise ourselves for the future.

Many ‘big ideas’ and propositions listed here are not new. Take **feminism**: this ever-evolving paradigm, political agenda, and set of practices have been around, morphing, and embattled for over 300 years. Take **cosmovision**: an indigenous worldview that has survived centuries of struggle in the Americas. Like **internationalism**, a proposition that in the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s helped shape liberation struggles in the Global South, the Non-Aligned Movement as an alternative structure for global arrangements, and even the practices of popular education (Paolo Freire) and Black consciousness (Steve Biko).

Even though they have been around for a long time, these Big Ideas are undergoing a refresh by new generations as new crises unfold. Many have their origins in the Global South. Some newer concepts, such as Just Transitions and Regenerative Economics, are inspired and shaped by other ideological propositions and attempt to land in a policy framework or set of solutions shaped more in the Global North.

Buen vivir

Loosely translated into English as ‘good living’ or ‘living well’ (but not as welfare), buen vivir is a worldview shaped by indigenous belief systems in the Americas and critiques of global capitalism and international development. Its defining characteristics are harmony between human beings and nature and a sense of collective development based on reciprocity and mutual support. Property ownership is absent, because humans are never owners of the earth and its resources, only stewards. Buen vivir is one of the many sources for the thinking of regenerative economies. [[Oliver Balch, Buen Vivir](#)]

Commons

A concept which, while its name originated in Roman law, can be found in pre-industrial and indigenous practices and laws all over the world in which particular resources were understood to be shared and managed by the community, belonging neither to the state nor private owners. The Commons include both tangible and intangible goods – communal lands, fishing and hunting access, parks, air and space, water and waterways, traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and the Internet – to which

all members of a society have or should have access. Commons embody the efforts of multiple individuals and inputs: no single individual or entity can claim private ownership of common resources, such as government-funded scientific research or intellectual property. But the current stage of capitalism, in a major offensive against the public commons, privatises land and resources. The extractive industries – including mining, fossil fuel, timber, palm oil and other kinds of mass crop production – appropriate and deplete public and indigenous lands. Today, activists are reinventing and reclaiming the commons to democratise access to vital resources and protect them for current and future generations [[JASS Feminist Movement Builder's Dictionary](#)]

Solidarity economy

An alternative to the market economy consisting of economic enterprises undertaken not for profit but for collective benefit. In many economic crises, women and neighbourhoods band together to produce necessities or coordinate small enterprises such as shops, gardens, neighborhood kitchens, and childcare or financial cooperatives. The solidarity economy promotes organisation and a culture of shared decision-making. It can help women and poor people access basic economic and social rights such as food, credit, and education, as well as reduce women's burden of unpaid labour in the care economy by sharing tasks that usually fall to individual women in a single household. [[JASS Feminist Movement Builder's Dictionary](#)]

Regenerative economies

A direct response and counter proposal to an extractive economic model that destroys and depletes ecosystems and drives climate crisis. Regenerative economy – also called a circular economy – is inspired by the ideas of [Kate Raworth about "donut economics"](#). To be regenerative, the products and materials are used and re-used for as long as possible so that natural systems are regenerated. A regenerative economy does not just retain resources; it creates new resources while maintaining a dynamic balance to the sustained benefit of people, planet, and profit. It is holistic by nature and enhances the individual and collective characteristics of the natural environment, the built environment, and the social environment.

An example of regeneration, "[restoring forests ... would capture 37% of our greenhouse gas emissions](#) to ensure a good chance of staying below two degrees by 2030. Recreating living soils also helps to capture carbon, regenerate biodiversity, and improve yields. Reintroducing wolves into certain regions helps to regulate species that eat vegetation and thus improves carbon transformation through photosynthesis." [[Circulab](#)]

Five principles of [regenerative economies](#):

- ⋮ sobriety, not abundance
- ⋮ no more extraction
- ⋮ local, interactive, and aimed at improving resilience
- ⋮ cooperation, less competition
- ⋮ develop life and evolution

Regenerative agriculture

As a philosophy and approach to land management, regenerative agriculture asks us to think about *how all aspects of agriculture are connected through a web* – a network of entities who grow, enhance, exchange, distribute, and consume goods and services – instead of a linear supply chain. In refocusing the ways we farm and ranch to better nourish people and the earth, specific practices vary from grower to grower and from region to region. There's no strict rule book, but the holistic principles behind the dynamic system of regenerative agriculture aim to restore soil and ecosystem health, address inequity, and leave our land, waters, and climate in better shape for future generations. (National Resources Defence Council, [NDRC](#))

Feminisms

An ideology, an analytical framework, and a practice, feminism is undergoing another renewal, breaking from the neoliberal feminism prevalent in the Global North in recent decades. Feminisms today reclaim and intersect with radical traditions and liberation struggles. They are shaped by many convergences and the influences of indigenous and rural women, queer activism, women workers, Black and Brown liberation struggles and land defenders. While still encompassing women's rights and equality, today's feminist practices and ideologies seek to expose, uproot, and transform power; end violence in the intimate, private, and public spheres; revalue care and bodies; protect the earth on which we depend and ensure basic needs, autonomy and social inclusion. Feminists are organised differently in various regions of the world, drawing on distinct histories of struggle. Today, feminist leadership and practice can be seen across many movements and organisations, as well as within institutions and classrooms, workplaces and cultural spaces – even as there is pushback and backlash – around the world.

Food sovereignty

Originally coined in 1996 by La Via Campesina, a global movement of farmers founded in Brazil, the term describes a vision of a better food future defined as the right of Peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. Adapted by many agricultural, environmental, and food activists, as well as farmers and indigenous movements, food sovereignty puts producers and democracy at the centre of our food systems. It recognises food as a right and a public good, not as a commodity. It identifies sustainability as essential and promotes the use of agroecology. It also recognises the various layers of discrimination that combine to place an even heavier burden on, for example, women, indigenous people, youth, and LGBTQI+ farmers. [Food sovereignty](#) requires bringing all voices to the table, and sharing land, seeds, water, credit, and other resources equitably.

Just Transition + Just Feminist Transition

A vision-led, unifying, and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable, redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through

reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there. [[Just Transition Alliance](#)]

Decolonial Feminist Green New Deal

A strategy not only to promote the necessary interconnection between the main structural challenges of our times but also to emphasise the structural demands of justice. The Decolonial Feminist Green New Deal challenges:

- : colonial financial extractivism based in a white supremacist North–South division of labour, with the corresponding depletion of wealth and resources as irreparable damage is done to ecosystems’ integrity
- : a sexual division of labour, in which women subsidise the entire economy by means of unpaid domestic and care work and the precarity in which they are placed, both in informal and formal employment
- : existing economic, trade, and financial dynamics, under the umbrella of a call for a UN Economic Reconstruction and Systemic Reform Summit
- : This movement seeks a New Global Economic Architecture that works for the People and Planet. (Bhumika Muchal)

Healing Justice

A framework that recognises the impact of trauma and violence on individuals and communities and names collective processes that can help heal and transform these forces. In a system and society that actively targets Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies with violence, oppression, and terror, it is critical to build movements that fight for and achieve justice for all people. This justice includes healing, well-being, and not only surviving but thriving. Resiliency and healing are strategic – we need everyone in our movements to have access to healing from trauma and violence, as it strengthens all of us and all of our movements.” (Melina Laboucan-Massimo and other)

Energy Justice and Democracy¹

Emerging from the global climate justice movement, particularly activists from the Global South, is a framework to decentralise and involve communities directly in managing energy production and distribution to address fairness and equity within the current extractive energy system and incorporate aspects of ‘deep democracy’, cooperation, and regeneration that feature in the just transition frame. Energy justice considers: 1) energy burden, which refers to the expense of energy expenditures relative to overall household income; 2) energy insecurity, which refers to the hardships households face when meeting basic household needs; 3) energy poverty, which refers to a lack of access to energy itself; and 4) energy democracy, the notion that communities should have agency in shaping their energy future with particular attention to gender, racial, economic, and social justice, using energy as a catalyst for their development and wellbeing. (Just Energy for All, United Methodist Women and others.)

¹ Fairchild, Denise and Al Weinrub, Editors, Energy Democracy: Advancing Equity in Clean Energy