



THEME COMMONS

SUB-THEME:

DEGROWTH: ROOTS AND GRAFTS

TITLE OF WORKSHOP

**20. Good living/buen vivir towards a
democracy of the earth**



PROPONENT

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“Towards a society of the commons: from the democracy of the earth to new institutionalities

By Giuseppe De Marzo and Lucie Greyl

ABSTRACT

In June 2011, Italian citizens voted through referendum against nuclear power, for a reform of the national energetical model recognising energy as a common good that should be democratically administrated. Not only energy is central in the industrial sector, it is essential for every human being life. In a context of multi crises (economical, financial, climatic, environmental, migratory, food) that stress every day more the need for reversing the dominant development model, it is fundamental to rethink completely the energetical system. There is a urging need for the development of local energy plan (EU's Covenant of Mayors and SEAPs) based on citizenship and social sectors participation and on distributed renewable energy and on energetical efficiency. This implies a global change and reconversion of the productive model that translate itself also onto the energetical system, passing from a centralised and gerarchical system of generation and distribution to a decentralised system based on intelligent networks. Changing model also implies the experimentation of new local and democratic decision making processes, aiming at the creation of new participative institutions starting from the local level for the development of alternatives measures and practices. Such processes represent a field of action to be explored and implemented through new spaces of dialogue and participative decision making involving both local government and social stakeholders.



Degrowth and buen vivir (living well): a critical comparison

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A dialogue on the concepts of *degrowth* and *living well* [“buen vivir”, “vivir bien”] seems necessary and could be very informative. Such a dialogue should explore what both concepts have in common (particularly their critique of development: scepticism regarding its promises and its presumed universalism), as well as the specific and most important characteristics of each (references to the limits to growth and environmental sustainability in the case of degrowth and the connotations of cultural identity and community orientation in the case of living well, etc.), paying attention to potential areas of disagreement, conflict and incompatibility. This is the aim of this text; it is not meant to provide a definitive analysis, but to participate in an exchange of views that is already happening.



TACKLED ISSUES

CONTEXT: Multidimensional and structural crisis of capitalism

- Rich/poor gap is increasing
- Division North/South to be reviewed
- Over exploitation of resources
- Unequal burdens and benefits distribution, leads to social conflicts

VISIONs: we need to solve the crisis with a different society model;

We can start from the paradigm coming from the indigenous world

- complementarity
- reciprocity
- cooperation
- + respect of pacha mama

Buen vivir means also rebuild horizontal connections versus the vertical ones;

Buen vivir has to spread at global level

EXAMPLES

- Ecuador and Bolivian constitutions
- Movements versus British Petroleum
- Real life examples from participants (Italy TAV, and ILVA Taranto)



GIVEN ANSWERS

- 1) We don't have to import south America buen vivir as it is in our country or others constitutions, it couldn't work. We need to find our way to buen vivir locally. The process is equally important as the results.
- 2) Environmental justice shall walk hand in hand with social justice and lives through cultural change
- 3) We need to base our language on actions/processes and not on things, and try to decolonise our minds
- 4) Commons could be one way to start buen vivir in our western society.