

# THE ECONOMIES OF THE COMMONS

## *Reshaping Economic Education*

Economic-  
Philosophical  
Fall Academy,  
2012

15 to 23 September 2012,

at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences in Alfter near Bonn, Germany

and at the Right Livelihood College (RLC) / Center for Development Research (Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung ZEF), Bonn

## *Call for Applications*

### DESCRIPTION

Prior to the current crises in business and finance, politicians have claimed that the key to a successful economy can only be found in privatization, i.e., in the powers of the market. In a reversal, they are now calling for government control of the economy. However, social alternatives beyond the market and the state are lacking, and not only in our experience. In particular, we lack a vocabulary to articulate the value and the specificities of these alternatives. This gap can be traced back to a deficit in economic education, which totally neglects the cultural, social and ecological embedding of the economy. As a result, economic education constricts the space for thinking in which persons perceive economic problems and seek solutions. Reshaping economic education means recognizing these cognitive boundaries and breaking them up. The Fall Academy responds to this demand by placing the *economies of the commons* at the center of the economic curriculum. The Academy defines these economies (tentatively) as places of being-together, in which people consciously shape their economic activities freely and in cooperation, thus beyond self-interest as well as pre-given rules and laws.

The Fall Academy reflects on the *economies of the commons* in three steps. First in the dialogue of disciplines – primarily philosophy, anthropology, and heterodox schools of economics – we develop a new vocabulary for a cooperative-creative economy that is no longer defined solely by the market and the state. In the process, it fundamentally questions the cognitive conditions for developing such a new language. How can scientific reflection empower social participation and not simply a pitilessly distanced observation? How can it make tangible the *betweenness* of persons as a creative site, which grounds all competitive activities? On this basis, how may for instance trust and mutual respect be conceptualized? The second step clarifies how the economic mainstream ignores and combats the *economies of the commons*. How is it, that the following quote can be applied to the mainstream in general which Friedrich A. Hayek once said only about himself: „I have to confess [...] that I cannot think socially, since I don't even know what social means“? What consequences arise when the theories and models of the economic mainstream unconsciously shape our opinions and attitudes to the *economies of the commons*? These issues – which, not least, have been exhaustively posed by Elinor Ostrom, the Nobel prizewinner in Economics in 2009 – will be investigated during the Fall Academy from the perspective of economics theory and history. The third step addresses how we can actively strengthen the *economies of the commons*. How may we promote them in the midst of competitive activity without submitting to its alien logic and allowing the *economies of the commons* be destroyed in its hands? What do communities need in order to organize themselves? What contribution can economic education offer, here? How should it be shaped in the future? It is in this third step that the Fall Academy associates persons, organizations and social movements supporting the *economies of the commons* in a dialogue that we hope will bear fruit in politics, society and economics.

The Fall Academy is not only concerned with creating a thematically new focus in the landscape of the economics discipline. It is also about blazing new trails in relation to the form of academic teaching. Beyond “free” educational markets and petrified textbook science, it seeks to open a space for that renewal of thought and action which makes possible the *economies of the commons* in the first place. To this end, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences and the Cusian Academy of European History are offering a nine day workshop of coordinated reflection. During this workshop, knowledge will not be abstractly communicated, but instead transformed in scholarly dialogue and an exchange of experiences. Experts in research and practice will provide a stimulus for a re-orientation in economic thinking in their lectures. Individual themes are elaborated and deepened by students and lecturers working together within the framework of presentations, workshops and organized discussions. In an evening program (of lectures, films, workshops, etc.), the public is invited to participate in the dialogue.

## ORGANIZATION

- Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences  
Faculty of Education and Human Development, Department of Philosophy and Aesthetics:  
Prof. Dr. Silja Graupe (Junior Professorship of Philosophy and Economics)  
Faculty of Business Management, Chair of Economics and Social Science:  
Prof. Dr. Steffen Koolmann
- The Cusian Academy of European History: Prof. Dr. Harald Schwaetzer
- Right Livelihood College (RLC) / Center for Development Research  
(Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung ZEF), Bonn

## WORKING LANGUAGES

German and English

## LOCATION

Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Campus II, Alfter near Bonn.

Right Livelihood College (RLC) / Center for Development Research (Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung ZEF), Bonn

## LECTURERS

- Prof. Dr. Karl-Heinz Brodbeck, University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt
- Prof. Dr. Silja Graupe, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter near Bonn
- Prof. Dr. Steffen Koolmann, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter near Bonn
- Prof. Dr. Jochen Krautz, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter near Bonn
- Prof. Dr. Walter Ötsch, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria
- Prof. Dr. Sven Remer, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter near Bonn
- Prof. Dr. Harald Schwaetzer, Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, Alfter near Bonn & Cusian Academy of European History
- Dr. Ulrich Thielemann, MeM – Thinktank for Economic Ethics
- Dr. Martin Thomé, Federal Ministry of Education and Science (invited)
- Representatives of the Heinrich Böll Foundation (invited)
- Representatives of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation (invited)
- International Laureates of the „Alternative Nobel Prize“ (Right Livelihood Award) (invited)

## PROGRAM

A detailed program will be made available in the coming weeks.

## PARTICIPANTS

The number of participants is limited to 70 students. All Bachelor and Master students of economics are eligible to take part. Students from other faculties (BA as well as MA students) who are interested in economics and education policies may also submit an application. It is expected that the number of interested participants in the academy will exceed the limited amount, in which case a selection will be made by the organizers of the fall academy.

## FEES

The Fall Academy fee is 50,- Euro for non-Alanus University Students. The participants themselves are responsible for the expense and arrangement of travel, accommodation and meals. In proven cases of need, we will attempt to provide students with a stipend. Students of Alanus University will assist in finding affordable accommodations for a maximum number of external participants.

## APPLICATIONS

Please send your application (in German), consisting of a letter of motivation, a short CV with personal information, field and level of study, as well as contact information to: [herbstakademie2012@alanus.edu](mailto:herbstakademie2012@alanus.edu)

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS 30 JUNE 2012 // CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION WILL BE SENT BY 15 JULY 2012**

For up to date information on the academy go to [www.alanus.edu](http://www.alanus.edu)

In cooperation with:



Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung  
Center for Development Research  
University of Bonn



Campus Bonn