


HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EARTH4ALL 2023 GLOBAL ACTION WEEK

February 2024

Local voices for global
change: Systems change,
not climate change



**Rethinking
Economics**
International




Even if the IPCC climate science makes sense on a factual level, it doesn't make sense on a social one. Data has been conveyed, but not context: what does these facts mean for someone reading them while living a social life? The most important questions swirling in most readers' heads will still be these: What shall I say about this to others? Facts do not exist in social vacuum, and to create local meaning they have to be communicated with this in mind.

You can start telling your own personal story to people you care about. Explain why you yourself are worried about a future in which we fail to address climate crises, and what kind of world you'd prefer. Rather than preaching, dare to share your dream.

Per Espen Stoknes

Earth4All science chair,
psychologist and economist



Earth4All calls for a complete transformation of our economic system. Our five turnarounds: poverty, inequality, empowerment, food and energy are the minimum requirements needed to improve wellbeing for all within the limits of our planet. We have outlined policy levers that would transform our societies for the better, and we need policymakers to take note and take action. But changes such as these require citizens to rally together.

Together we can drive systems change, and our combined power should not be underestimated. As the recent Action Week in collaboration with Rethinking Economics has shown, there is appetite for systems change across the globe, we are grateful to every individual and every partner who has participated, and we implore you to keep the conversation and momentum going to continue to push for an economy that services people and planet.

Sandrine Dixson-Declève

Earth4All executive chair,
co-president of The Club of Rome

THE EARTH4ALL X RETHINKING ECONOMICS ACTION WEEK

26 EVENTS

13 COUNTRIES

The 2023 Earth4All Action Week: “Systems Change, not Climate Change!” was a two-week global initiative dedicated to sparking discussions on the need for economic systems change, organised by Earth4All and Rethinking Economics.

It took place from 1 - 15 November 2023, and was open to anyone – individuals, organisations, businesses, and governments from around the world – who felt called to engage in conversations around the deep changes our world needs.

Through 26 events in 13 countries, over one thousand citizens of the world discussed what systems change means for their local contexts and culture.

This report presents some of their voices¹, their views for the future and how to get there. This report presents their Earth for All.

Earth4All is an international initiative to accelerate the systems-change we need for an equitable future on a finite planet.

Rethinking Economics is a global network of students and organisers fighting for a new way of teaching and practising economics.

¹The Earth4All team asked participants to share outcomes and a summary of their events. The team has then further summarised the information into a few highlights for the purpose of this report. Events and conversations were organised autonomously by local groups to participate in a global conversation. Opinions and ideas do not necessarily reflect the views of Earth4All or of its conveners.



First International Day of the Donut Economy / Primer Día Internacional de la Economía de la Dona

Mexico City, Mexico

Systems change is not only about focusing on climate, but also about considering the social and ecological needs and priorities of each context. It means finding the people who are interested in changing the current situation in the same sustainable way. It is about managing resources better in a way that we limit our negative impact on the planet, while improving our wellbeing. Therefore, it is about changing structures, policies and patterns.

Coalicion Tricolor recognises that a sustainable future is a complex challenge, which requires the participation of diverse actors and the inclusion of many points of view.

Earth4All in Mexico: A proposal to adapt Earth4All measures to the Mexican case / Earth4All en México: Una propuesta para adecuar las medidas de Earth4All al caso mexicano

Mexico City, Mexico

In the case of Mexico, some key issues highlight the need for system change. A large socio-environmental crisis is approaching and the response given by the vast majority of the nations on Earth has been lukewarm and deceptive. In this event participants concluded that we need to firmly distance ourselves from technological solutions that do not solve but rather aggravate the problem. There is a strong injustice in the way wealth is delivered and redistributed, especially to those who worked hard for it. Inequalities and growing and bring our society away from equitable sharing.

Making progress in true poverty reduction depends on the gradual reduction of inequality, and on a government that advances the construction of an efficient society, with a widespread and high-quality health system and with an education system that truly trains the professionals that the country requires.

El caso de México 2024-2030

- **Modelo E4A:**
 - Es dinámico y complejo
 - Tiene salidas (índices) mensurables y entradas (políticas o acciones) factibles y modificables
 - ¿Puede hacerse una versión regional (mexicana)?
- **¿Cómo se ven las propuestas para el caso mexicano?**
 - Ambas contendientes al gobierno proponen elementos de los cambios sugeridos por Earth-for-All
 - ¿Serán suficientes? ¿Hay algún avance?
 - ¿Cuál de las dos tiene mayor compromiso?
 - ¿El escenario es optimista o pesimista?

VOICES OF RETHINKERS



Ignacio Silva Neira

Rethinking Economics Chile

**Economist, Executive Director of the
Observatory of Economic Policy (OPES)**

The inequality prevalent within countries and between those in the global North and South is alarming. It's not just a matter of the immorality in how wealth is distributed and perpetuated, but also the impending burden on future generations in Southern countries who are set to bear the costs of Northern living.

We must radically change the way we relate to each other, recognize and transform the power asymmetries that exist and perpetuate an unequal system. These power asymmetries are not only those expressed in the concentration of economic wealth but also those stemming from the patriarchal and racist system that constantly generates exclusion.



Naima Andris

Rethinking Economics Haiti

**General Coordinator of ECO-DETAY
(affiliated to Rethinking Economics)**

Our country, Haiti, is facing a multi-dimensional ongoing crisis. Severe political and socio-economic issues added to environmental emergencies made it a hell place to live.

Understanding the current situation in Haiti requires a full comprehension of the core structures of imperialism that have historically impacted Haiti's sovereignty. From our colonial history with France that forced former Haitian governments to pay for our freedom to now, we are always under economic pressure from the Global North. Only last month, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted on a resolution for a Multinational Security Support Mission authorizing the deployment of a foreign military and police intervention into the Republic of Haiti. I don't think it's pessimistic to say that we are nearing a national collapse.

We must demand change and apply pressure to our local authorities, by mobilizing collectively, by having conversations and roundtables where we constantly challenge how the system is legitimized, and how it leaves out the marginalized.





Local Conference of the Youth Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya

The Kenyan population is predominantly made up of young people – yet they face a variety of challenges, such as unemployment, poverty, mental health problems, substance abuse, and lack of trust in national institutions due to corruption.

During this workshop participants discussed diverse visions for Kenya's future and what is needed to get there. This included:

1. A Kenya that has invest in wetland ecosystems and increased blue spaces and prioritised the restoration of wet spaces.
2. A Kenya that has invested in capacity building for the youth, equipping them with the skills to continue building the nation.
3. A Kenya with economic, political, social and environmental security.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and civic engagement in Uganda

Makerere University, Uganda and online

Systems change is needed in Uganda. Topics of high priority include climate change education and the empowerment of civil societies for taking over responsibility for their environment and their communities.

Civic engagement education deals with the topic of global climate change from a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective and enables students to take over responsibility for their communities and for their own futures.

Provision of quality education contributes to empowering individuals and society to take responsibility for community wellbeing. Civic engagement enables a mutual transfer of knowledge and experience from school to community and vice versa, and must be supported.



The Debt and Climate Crisis

Lusaka, Zambia

The climate and debt crises in countries most vulnerable to climate change creates a vicious cycle, as each crisis reinforces the other. According to a recent report by , over two-thirds of climate finance is provided through loans – and not grants - exacerbating the debt crisis and driving nations towards actions that worsen the climate crisis.

In Zambia, like elsewhere, climate finance in the form of loans intensifies the climate crisis by trapping countries in a debt-driven negative spiral. This forces governments to prioritise debt repayment, leading to increased fossil fuel extraction, mining, chemical-based agriculture, deforestation, and environmental destruction with severe human rights implications. To break this cycle, it is crucial to think systemically and consider tax-based alternatives and advocate for debt cancellation as a central demand of climate justice.

VOICES OF RETHINKERS



Petrus Nathinge Junior

Master student in Economic Development, REFA UCT Chairperson 2023 and Development Economics tutor



Amaarah Garda

Master student in Applied Development Economics and Junior Programme Officer of the Rethinking Economics Project at the Institute for Economic Justice

Rethinking Economics South Africa

Countries in the Global South don't have much power or autonomy in global political decisions, even though we are the most affected: we cannot decide of our own development trajectory.

There is a disconnect between civilian voices and governments. Politicians make their decisions for their own benefit or at the behest of rich elites. There is a need for collective solidarity, collective power and effective participatory democracy. People feel disenfranchised. This has to change through education and the empowerment of community voices, so that we build a collective future.

In South Africa, and the African continent more generally, we are concerned about the energy crisis and energy poverty; food insecurity; austerity and the destruction of social infrastructure or mismanagement of social investments. There is continued environmental destruction caused by corporations. Profit-seeking is prioritised over environmental concerns and community voices.

We are struggling with high levels of youth unemployment, poor working conditions and exploitation. There is a lack of protection for the poor and working class.

We must use different metrics and criteria to evaluate economic systems (HDI, wellbeing, ecological health, collective opinion, lived experience, as opposed to GDP and profit-centred metrics). All policies should include socialist values to ensure the minimum protection of rights that all humans are entitled to. Priorities for our region are investment in social infrastructure as well as divesting from non-renewable energy sources.

For that to happen, we need consistent pressure from civil society and effective government action, as well as well-mobilised student movements and international solidarity. We need a global push for better, by the people. The collective power of people must be harnessed to create a fair system.

Systemic change will include eradicating the imbalance of power between the Global North and the Global South, and eradicating the imbalance of power between governments and civilians/communities.



VOICES OF RETHINKERS



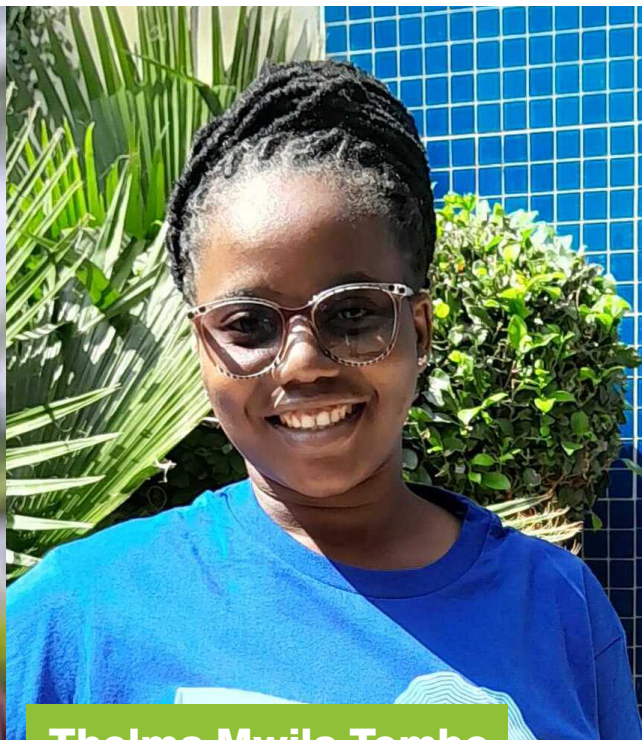
Thomson Silomba

Bachelor student in Agricultural Business Management, Founder and Lead Organiser of Rethinking Economics Zambia, Rethinking Economics International Members' Council Officer

Rethinking Economics Zambia

Most African countries got their independence over five decades ago. Since then, economic thinking, teaching and practice have been stuck in the old economic stance across Africa. But there is a collective voice emerging, advocating for economic models that are decolonized, democratized and fairer, and prioritising real-world pressing issues.

This is the question we brought to the COP28 conveners: what does it mean for our communities in Zambia and Africa at large to truly use the SDGs as a lens, for our economy but also for our envisioning our future, for instance through (economics) education? The SDGs are present on paper, but are missing in action – be it in thinking, teaching, or practice. They could



Thelma Mwila Tembo

Bachelor student in Mathematics, and Rethinking Economics International Communications Officer

be a blueprint to reach decolonized, pluralised, democratized, critical thinking, real-world pressing issues-focused, sustainable and fairer processes for the wellbeing of our communities.

In order to drive necessary change and to move towards a more equitable global economic system, we need to decolonise economics and economics education, to address the legacy of colonization and end contemporary forms of colonization in the post-colonial era. Furthermore, encouraging citizens to take part in conversations between themselves but also with economists can bring this process to be better democratized and diversified, and ensure citizens' concerns and priorities are heard.





Local Conference of the Youth Austria

Vienna, Austria

Climate change exists not because of one or two wrong policies but because of the systematic failure of the system we live in. The ideal of infinite economic growth, disregarding the planetary boundaries, is not working.

The way of thinking that led us into this crisis won't be the way of thinking and acting to lead us out of the crisis. The system as it is today hasn't just led to climate breakdown – it has led to bigger and smaller breakdowns happening all over the world. Many of these overlap with the climate crisis - social injustice being one of them. In this event participants discussed that how it is very important to look at the systems we created, see who they benefit, and then reflect on which systems we can keep and reform and which need to radically transform.

Rethinking Economics UK National Gathering

London, United Kingdom

'Crisis' feels like an overused phrase but this event discussed if there a better way to describe the intertwined threats of growing poverty and destitution and environmental degradation. At what point do we diagnose the source of these woes as being in part a product of structural issues from what we perceive to be good economics?

As a start we need to rethink these perceptions, replacing crude economic accounts with a focus on welfare, of people and the planet. At the Rethinking Economics UK in London, students from universities around the country started by discussing how we can rethink the relationships between the economy, society and the environment and start recognising the embedded nature of these systems.



Maj Larsen-Lechuga

Rethinking Economics Denmark

**Master student in Degrowth, Chairperson
of Rethinking Economics Denmark**

In Europe, we are utterly neglecting the fact that our colonial history and our companies have created an economic system that only works through unequal exchange and appropriation of resources. I also fear for the consequences of climate change and that we are now destroying the foundation of life with Europe and the West having done most of the damage, while paying the least.

There are many radical actions to jumpstart this transformation. Four important ones that economists or Rethinkers can already do are:

Demanding and creating more pluralism

We need a more nuanced understanding of how problems such as climate change and human rights abuses are connected to economic growth. If economists are to have any power in society, our knowledge should be broadly informed.

Engaging non-economists in economics

Non-economists can offer different and important perspectives on economic issues. Working together across disciplines and with civil society can help us make the connections between different issues clearer.

Challenging the legitimacy of economists

There are many problems internal to economics both as a science and with its role in society, so it is crucial to challenge the legitimacy of economists, by criticising beliefs and assumptions in mainstream economics, challenge the enormous power that economics as a discipline has in society, help to bring forward economic alternatives and visions of the world to the public discourse, raise the awareness of how limited the tools that come from mainstream economics are when it comes to representing real lives.

Bringing together interconnected issues

The degrowth movement, for example, has the potential to offer a coherent systems critique of growth, capitalism, productivism, extractivism, colonialism, etc.

We need to create, join and support alliances where we can connect these issues and bring forward a common language to address the problems in order to challenge the current economic order. The climate and racial justice movements are doing this a lot in my opinion. Critical economists should join forces with activist movements.



REFORMING OUR EDUCATION TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Rethinking Economics is built on a network of local groups from around the world. Student members work together to enact change at their universities and institutions. Local campaigners fight to reform economics curricula, decolonise departments, and bring important issues like climate change into economics education. Student groups do this by raising awareness with the student population, running events, and bringing their collective calls for change to their departments.

For the Earth4All x Rethinking Economics Action Week: Systems Change not Climate Change, Rethinkers from five countries around the world tell us what an economics education for a fair, equal and sustainable future looks like.



**Thomson Silomba and
Thelma Mwila Tembo**

Rethinking Economics Zambia

Economics, and economics education, should be for the people and planet, and follow values of decolonisation, democracy, critical-thinking, real-world pressing issues, and should promote politics of responsibility.

There are amazing projects encouraging change in economics in thinking, teaching and practice. We cannot underestimate how much economics shapes global policies. Reshaping the discipline and the way it's taught to our and future generations is a paramount stronghold to foster an economic system that is fair, equal and sustainable.

Furthermore, beyond formal education, citizens and non-practitioners should get the opportunity to engage and ensure economics focus on the lived experiences and real-world pressing issues. This can be achieved through engagement with the Rethinking Economics network by implementing a mixture of campaigns, workshops and engaging projects within universities as well as with the general public.



Naima Andris

Rethinking Economics Haiti

To achieve a future that's fair, equal and sustainable, we need an economic education that examines the ways that power structures, social institutions, and cultural/societal norms perpetuate the oppression and exploitation of the marginalised.

It is important also for this education to emphasise proposing concrete alternatives, and giving full clarity on how to steer society down the road of systemic change through collective action and consciousness-raising.





Maj Larsen-Lechuga

Rethinking Economics Denmark

An economics education for a world that's fair, equal and sustainable is pluralist: it takes into account various ideas and perspectives.

It should consider biophysical realities (such as the planetary boundaries) and the power dynamics that exist in real life and in our economic system. This also means teaching how the current economic order came to be, for instance through colonialism and unequal exchange.

An economics education should recognise that our current economic system is highly destructive to life. It should also teach us how we can engage in challenging the current order and how we can use economics in activism (whether it be grassroots activism, local government, the UN or whatever it might be). Students' perspectives should be accounted for too.



Ignacio Silva Neira

Rethinking Economics Chile

A curriculum fit for fair, equal and sustainable future is a curriculum that comprehends the neocolonial position embedded within the economic theories we study, and consequently, reevaluates the policy conclusions they lead to.



Petrus Nathinge Junior and Amaarah Garda

Rethinking Economics South Africa

An economics education must be pluralist, decolonial, intersectional, multidisciplinary, contextual, and accessible.

For economics education to truly be fit for the future, it has to incorporate the history of economic policy and economic ideology. This includes explaining the current global economic system more truthfully.

There needs to be less emphasis on the technical tools and more focus on the social aspect of economics. An economics education must be informed by community engagement and it must be accessible to all: everyone needs to have an understanding of economic forces, and economics education needs to be informed by community voices and experiences. An economics education must present different point of views, perspective, people and options. Indigenous knowledge must be included.



Join Rethinking Economics to campaign for change:



We can reimagine our future, we can achieve an Earth for All

earth4all.life



Earth4All is an international initiative to accelerate the systems changes we need for an equitable future on a finite planet. Combining the best available science with new economic thinking, Earth4All was designed to identify the transformations we need to create prosperity for all. Earth4All was initiated by The Club of Rome, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Norwegian Business School. It builds on the legacies of *The Limits to Growth* and the planetary boundaries frameworks.

www.earth4all.life

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