# **New economy reading group programme**

# **Session plan: Booklet 5 – markets in the new economy**

*A note on how to use these session plans:*

This plan is written for session facilitator(s) rather than for the whole group.

Facilitators are the people hosting and running the meeting. They do not need any expertise whatsoever on economics. They will also take part in all meeting activities where possible.

This plan is intended as a guide to help you run useful sessions. If parts of the plan are not relevant to your group, then feel free to discard or change them! Do whatever works best for your group.

**Agenda outline**

*This plan contains different options for how to structure the session. There are some recommended introductory and closing activities. You can pick and mix activities from the middle ‘exploratory’ section. There are also optional ‘reflection on action’ activities if you think your group wishes to explore the practical steps that they can take out in the world to build the new economy in relation to markets and public/private provisioning.*

*Below are two example ‘agendas’ which contain difficult combinations of the activities listed. You can take inspiration from these agendas, or compile a different agenda which best suits your group.*

**Example 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 3. Introduction | 5 mins |
| 4. Check in | 10 mins |
| 5. Recap from last session | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 6. Worship sharing | 30 mins |
| *Tea break* | 10 mins |
| 9. Questions for discussion | 10 mins |
| 10. Examples and inspiration | 15 mins |
| Action | 11. Our power – the role for Quakers | 20 mins |
| Closing | 12. Closing | 10 mins |

Total time: 2 hours

**Example 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome | 5 mins |
| 3. Introduction | 5 mins |
| 4. Check in | 15 mins |
| 5. Recap from last session | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 6. Worship sharing | 30 mins |
| *Tea break* | 10 mins |
| 8. Government cuts : welfare benefits | 30 mins |
| Action | 11. Our power – the role for Quakers | 15 mins |
| Closing | 12. Closing | 5 mins |

Total time: 2 hours

## Materials needed

Tea, coffee / refreshments (if you decide you want them)

Flip chart paper if you are doing activities 8 and 9.

Optional: Handout sheet for activity 6 (see appendix)

Paper copies of Booklet 5: *Markets in the new economy*

Paper copies of *Principles for a new economy* (optional)

## Session plan

**Introductory activities**

1. **Welcome and introduction (3 minutes – not including worship time)**

You may want to offer people tea and coffee as they arrive. Make sure everyone has a comfortable place to sit. Chairs should be arranged in a single circle.

At the start, thank everyone for coming, introduce yourself if anyone doesn’t know you and begin the silence / worship.

1. **Silence / worship (optional)**
2. **Introduction to the session and housekeeping (5 minutes)**

Welcome everyone, and thank all those involved in organising the session. If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at the first session), suggest that everyone in the room goes round the circle and introduces themselves briefly (saying their name and one brief detail, such as where they’re from).

Once this is done, outline the agenda for today (see agenda outline above). Explain that the aim of the session is to have a chance to discuss some of the ideas in the fifth new economy booklet, *The role of markets in the New Economy.*

It is assumed that people will have this booklet in advance.

If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at the previous sessions), emphasise again that no prior economic knowledge whatsoever is necessary and that you want everyone to feel welcome, even if they don’t have experience of discussing subjects like this. You can suggest that if anyone thinks they might have practical difficulty reading the booklets they can talk to you after the session to think of ways to work around this. Large print copies of the booklet are available from Friends House (email [neweconomy@quaker.org.uk](mailto:neweconomy@quaker.org.uk)).

***A record of discussion***

Some meetings have decided to keep notes of their discussion, in order to record their responses to the ideas in the booklets, and add ideas of their own. Redlands meeting in Bristol is also collating local examples of people, organisations and groups building the ‘new economy’. If your group has found examples of case studies related to the support of public services, we’d love to hear about these. You can share examples by sending them to us at [neweconomy@quaker.org.uk](mailto:neweconomy@quaker.org.uk) or share them on our private online new economy forum on Loomio: https://www.loomio.org/invitations/adfc4d5c2f5c9b416cf2

You may want to propose to the group that your reading group could also keep records or produce some kind of response to the session. If so, you could arrange at this point for someone to take notes or write up the session.

**Exploratory activities**

1. **Check in (10 – 20 minutes)**

Ask everyone to go round and feedback briefly on how they found the booklet, including any questions they have relating to its content. You could add these questions to notes about the session (if you’re keeping them). You may wish to ask participants to limit their feedback to one or two minutes each (see facilitation tips).

1. **Reflection on last session (5 – 15 mins)**

* Recap briefly what you discussed in the last session (5 mins max – don’t get in to discussion about any of the specific issues)
* If anyone committed to specific action from the last session (e.g. asking the meeting clerk about the energy supplier) invite them to feedback what they did and how it went.
* Ask if anyone else has made changes or taken any action around their energy supplier since the last session.

1. **Worship sharing (optional) (30 – 60 minutes)**

See accompanying guide to worship sharing in the email.

Prompts for contemplation could be:

* Share your responses to the booklet
* Share your response to the subject in light of Quaker testimony

But feel free to choose your own prompts or ways of framing the worship.

1. **Questions for discussion (optional) (15 – 90 minutes)**

Read out the questions that are included in the blue boxes in the booklet (see list in appendix) or distribute print outs of the appendix to participants. Ask participants to identify any questions that they would like to discuss.

Participants could break into pairs or small groups to discuss questions and then feed back to the wider group.

Or you can work through the questions identified as a whole group. In this case, ask that Friends be mindful of the balance of participation (see facilitation tips also included in the email).

1. **Meeting for Sufferings Statement – Government cuts: Welfare Benefits**

(see below)

If possible, ensure there are a few copies of the statement for participants to read through. If not, read out the second paragraph ‘our vision of equality…’ and the final 3 paragraphs ‘ Many Quakers across Britain are helping….’

This statement was adopted by Meeting for Sufferings in April 2014.

Does this feel applicable today? More or less so?

Spend a few moments considering the final sentence.

Share thoughts on how to ‘witness to a different way of living’.

**Reflections on action**

1. **Our power – the role for Quakers**

This exercise focuses particularly on the discussion point ‘What role could Quaker meetings and meeting houses (if applicable) play in supporting public spaces and services?

This works best as a whole group exercise.

Use a large sheet of paper, such as a flip chart paper.

Encourage the group to contribute responses to the questions in these categories.

**Energy** – do you have existing projects/initiatives, or unfulfilled ideas?

**Assets** – think creatively about your financial resources, meeting house, garden, reputation etc..

**Skills** – who do you have in your meeting? What skills do you have?

**Relationships** – what relationships do you have in your local community? Amongst other faith groups and likeminded organisations? How can you use these?

**Closing activities**

**12. Closing (5 – 10 minutes)**

Thank everyone for coming.

Announce who will be facilitating the next session (or arrange someone to facilitate if it hasn’t yet been arranged).

Remind everyone / confirm / arrange the date for the next session.

Remind everyone to download a copy of the next new economy booklet 6 The Role of Markets in the new economy. It will be made available on the website late April. Copies are available from www.quaker.org.uk/neweconomy. If you need to order paper copies of the booklets, you can do so by emailing neweconomy@quaker.org.uk.

Invite group members to join the online discussion space, available at:

www.bit.ly/new-economy-discussion. Emphasise that it is not compulsory! The contact person can send the link to those people who are interested.

*Optional evaluation:* go round the circle and ask each participant to say one thing they will be taking away from the session and one thing they will be leaving behind.

**Closing reflection**

*Optional:* Closing reading. Read something related to economics and/or social change that inspires you (see some suggestions particularly related to public services below).

**Closing silence / worship.**

**Suggestions for closing reading:**

**Quaker Faith and Practice 23:04**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. Uncomfortably we stand with one foot in the kingdom of this world and with the other in the Eternal Kingdom. Seldom can we keep the inward and outward working of love in balance, let alone the consciousness of living both in time and in eternity, in timelessness. Let us not be beguiled into thinking that political action is all that is asked of us, nor that our personal relationship with God excuses us from actively confronting the evil in this world. The political and social struggles must be waged, but a person is more and needs more than politics, else we are in danger of gaining the whole world but losing our souls.  Eva I Pinthus, 1987 |

## Blossoms of Spring

The spring blossoms appear on the trees,

Blessing the environment,

The beautiful sun shines through the clouds,

A walk through the park,

Viewing the countryside,

Days with your relatives and friends,

The warmth returning after a long cool winter,

I don't miss the snow at all,

The snowflakes falling or the snowy days,

The environment goes from white to green,

What a lovely blessing from God,

Author: Gwen von Erlach Schutz

## Sheet to accompany activity 6

**Discussion questions from booklet 5:**

1. What do you think are the basics we should provide in our society?
2. What basic rights to social goods should be protected?
3. Do you think they should be available for all residents, including prisoners and those without citizenship in the UK?
4. What role could Quaker meetings and meeting houses (if applicable) play in supporting public spaces and services?
5. What else contributes to social cohesion?
6. Why should the state be more efficient than the private sector?
7. Does it matter who provides goods and services if the quality is good?
8. Do you agree that big corporations have too much power in the UK?
9. Do you think gas, electricity, water and train lines should be provided by private companies?
10. What provisioning of natural monopolies do you think would work best?