# **New economy reading group programme**

# **Session plan: Booklet 2 – good work 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 work and business structures.*

*Below are three 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 minutes |
| 1. Introduction
 | 5 mins |
| 1. Check in
 | 20 mins |
| Exploration | 1. Worship sharing
 | 30 mins |
| 8. Organisational structures | 20 mins |
| Closing | 12. Next steps | 20 mins |
| 13. Closing  | 10 mins |

Total time: 2 hours (with a 10 minute tea break between activity 8 and 12)

**Example 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome
 | 5 minutes |
| 1. Silence / worship
 | 10 mins |
| 1. Introduction
 | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 1. Check in
 | 20 mins |
|  7. Experiences of work | 20 mins |
| 1. Organisational structure
 | 20 mins |
|  | 1. Examples and inspiration in our area
 | 30 mins |
| Closing | 1. Closing
 | 20 mins |

Total time: 2 hours (with a 10 minute tea break between activities 7 and 8.

**Example 3:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Timings** |
| Introduction | 1. Welcome
 | 5 minutes |
| 1. Silence / worship
 | 10 mins |
| 1. Introduction
 | 5 mins |
| Exploration | 1. Check in
 | 20 mins |
| 1. Questions for discussion
 | 60 mins |
| Closing | 1. Closing
 | 10 mins |

Total time: 2 hours (with a 10 minute tea break mid way through activity 6).

## Materials needed

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

 Flip chart paper if you are doing activities 8, 10 and 12.

 Optional: Handout sheet for activity 6 (see appendix)

 Paper copies of Booklet 2: *Good work for 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 second new economy booklet, *Good work in the new economy*

It is assumed that people will have read booklet 3 (*Good work in the new economy*) in advance.

If there is anyone new in the room (who wasn’t at the first session), 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).

***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 work or ethical businesses in the area, we’d love to hear about these. You can share examples by sending them to us at 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. **Worship sharing (optional) (30 – 60 minutes)**

See accompanying guide to worship sharing in the email.

Prompts for contemplation could be:

* What vision of work and/or organisations do you long for most deeply?
* Share your responses to the booklet
* Share your own experiences of work

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

1. **Questions for discussion (optional) (15 – 100 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.

Group 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. **Experiences of work (optional) (10 – 30 minutes)**

Small group discussion.

Break into groups of 3 or 4. Ask participants to share with their group the best job they’ve ever had – paid or unpaid. What was good about it? And why? Could anything have been better?

Do they agree with the definition of ‘good work’ that begins on page 3 of the booklet?

1. **Organisational structures (optional)**

Tell the group that you have an extract from the constitution of the Scott Bader company about their ‘commonwealth’ structure.

Quakers Ernest Bader and Dora Scott founded the Scott Bader company and then gifted it to the company’s workers in 1951.

Scott Bader is now a global chemical company employing over 650 people. It has manufacturing sites in Europe, Middle East, South Africa, Canada, India and South America.

The company continues to be run as a ‘commonwealth’, meaning it is owned by its members. More information is available at www.scottbader.com

This is from the revision of their constitution in 1963:

[*read out the statement below or ask a volunteer to read it out]*

*Power should come from within the person and the community, and be made responsible to those it affects. The ultimate criteria in the organization of work should be human dignity and service to others instead of solely economic performance. We feel mutual responsibility must permeate the whole community of work and be upheld by democratic participation and the principle of trusteeship.*

*Common-ownership of our means of production and a voice in the distribution of earned surplus and the allocation of new capital, has helped us in our struggle towards achieving these aims.*

Discuss in small groups what organisational structures and forms of ownership you think are most compatible with Quaker values? How can we uphold and promote these structures?

After groups have discussed together, ask one representative from each group to briefly feedback on their discussion to the whole group.

Once everyone has fed back, try to establish the common ground between the different groups. Does everyone agree that certain structures are favourable?

You can jot down ideas for upholding and promoting more positive organisational structures on a flip chart.

To discuss next steps for upholding these organisations, go to activity 12.

1. **Examples and inspiration in our area (optional)**

Tell the group that the end of the booklet, there is a quote from Ed Mayo, the Secretary General of Co-operatives UK. In his Salter Lecture at Britain Yearly Meeting, he said that ‘the process of imagining a better world and nurturing practical local changes’ is like ‘raising the sails for when the wind changes’.

It is important to support, uphold and celebrate those doing ‘sail raising work’ in our area.

Examples included in the booklet are the Real Food Store in Exeter (p.9) and Socialist Self Help in Germany (p.11). Other examples could include food producer Suma, which is the UK’s largest workers’ co-operative.

Ask if anyone knows or has found out about businesses and other organisations that are doing ‘sail raising work’ locally?

*(optional)* See activity 10. for a follow up action related to these examples.

**Reflections on action**

1. **How can we uphold and promote better work and businesses in our area?**

*This exercise encourages people to reflect on how they can uphold promote good work and ethical enterprise.*

Tell the group that we all have power in various different roles that we hold – as employers, employees, consumers, business owners, citizens and investors.

Ask people to raise their hands for each of the following statements, if they apply to them:

* they make decisions about spending and which shops to shop in for themselves, or for their household.
* They own or manage an organisation (or part of an organisation) that employs people
* They are an employee
* They can vote in regional, council or national elections
* They have a pension in a pension fund or hold shares in companies through any other investments

Tell the group that these roles all come with power, to varying degrees. We can decide which organisations to support by shopping there. We can influence the employment practices of our organisations. We can join a union as an employee and attempt to create change through that channel, or work for organisations that we believe in, if we have the choice. We can use our leverage as voters to engage elected representatives on issues we care about. We can use our pension savings or investments to challenge corporations on their practice.

*Option 1: Silent discussion.*

Place flip chart paper around the room, with different roles written on them: worker, employer, investor, voter / citizen, consumer. Ask Friends to circulate round the room in silence and make notes on each sheet of flip chart paper about either: what they *already* do within this role to promote good work and ethical enterprise **or** any ideas they have for what they *could* do. Ask them to phrase ideas for what they could do as ‘I could…’ to make it clear that it is a suggestion.

*Option 2: group discussion*

Ask the group to divide into small groups (3-4) and make a list of things they already do to promote good work and ethical enterprise. If you did exercise 8, you could also ask the group to reflect on how they could uphold, support and celebrate the local organisations mentioned earlier.

*Whole group feedback:*

*If you’ve done silent discussion:* ask for a volunteer to briefly summarise the suggestions on each sheet for the group. Jot down the different forms of action on a flip chart.

*If you’ve had a group discussion:* ask for one representative from each group to briefly feedback on the discussion in their group and the ideas they have for how to uphold, support and celebrate local organisations. You can jot down these ideas on a flip chart.

1. **The Living Wage (optional)**

*This activity is designed to get Friends to reflect on the Living Wage in the local area. In preparation for this activity, you could visit* [*http://www.livingwagemovement.org/map*](http://www.livingwagemovement.org/map) *to discover what organisations in the local area pay the Living Wage*

1. **Introduction (2 minutes)**

Tell the group you’re going to talk about the Living Wage. Ask if anyone knows the current rate?

Answer: £8.45/hr outside London and £9.75/hr within London.

Tell the group that the Quaker Living Wage Campaign, based in Lancaster Meeting, aims to make the Quaker community a ‘Living Wage Community’.

Questions for whole group discussion:

* Is anyone involved in the Living Wage campaign, and if so, how are they involved and why is it important to them?
* Are other people in the group broadly supportive of the campaign?
* Is the Area Meeting a Living Wage employer (if it employs people)? Do people know of any organisations in the area which pay the Living Wage?

(Optional: You can share information about which businesses locally pay the Living Wage from [www.livingwagemovement/map](http://www.livingwagemovement/map)).

Tell the group that if anyone wants to get involved with the Living Wage campaign a good place to start is to get in touch with the Quaker Living Wage Campaign. Their website is [**www.lancquaker.org.uk/livingwagecampaign**](http://www.lancquaker.org.uk/livingwagecampaign)**.** This is also listed at the end of the booklet.

1. **Next steps (optional)**

*Once the group have discussed what they could do to promote positive organisational structures (activity 8), good work (activity 10) and how to support the Living Wage campaign (activity 11), you can discuss practical next steps to make this happen.*

If you have made notes about possible action then make sure that everyone can see the flip chart.

Tell the group that they have gathered ideas for upholding or supporting ethical organisations and working practices. Now they will have a chance to think about practical steps to make this happen.

Option 1:

Ask the group to split into pairs to reflect on:

1. What could they do themselves in the next month or two to contribute to or uphold this work?

Tell them that their next steps must be

* + Specific, so they can tell if they’ve done it or not
	+ Realistic, considering their time, energy and other commitments
	+ Time bound: *when* will they do it by?

They could also talk about what might *stop* them from achieving this next step and how will they overcome these potential barriers.

Option 2:

Ask for suggestions from the whole group as to what you could do as a group to contribute to or uphold this work? This could be joining with or upholding the work of someone within the group who is already active. Or it could be someone else. Emphasise that there may be people within the group who have more time than others, and that those who don’t have time / energy at the moment could support the group endeavour in other ways e.g. by holding those active in the light.

Once a group action has been decided, break it down into smaller sub-actions if required, that members of the group can volunteer to take on. Decide *who* will do the action, *what* exactly the action is, and *when* it needs to be done by.

For example:

You may decide as a group to make sure that the Meeting pays its staff the Living Wage. One person could be nominated to find out what the current situation is and report back at the next reading group session.

**Closing activities**

**13. 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 take or download a copy of the new economy booklet 3 ‘Energy in the new economy’ and read it before the next session. 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:* ask Friends to find out whether there are any community energy projects in the area and bring the information to the next session. Booklet 3 explains what is meant by ‘community energy projects’.

*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.

Suggestion:

From Ed Mayo’s Salter Lecture:

“Imagination is the most powerful tool that we have for social change. By re-imagining the world around us, we can put it together again in a different way - first in our minds, then in our stories and ultimately in reality. We have to invest in imagination. I describe this as raising the sails for when the wind changes.

[…]

The prevailing winds mutter competition. We assert co-operation. In a time of challenge and denial, we have to re-enchant the future. We have to raise sails for when the wind changes. And feel. Feel for its new breath coming.”

**Closing silence / worship.**

## Sheet to accompany activity 6

**Discussion questions from booklet 1:**

1. What’s your idea of a good job?
2. How many hours would you work per week in an ideal world? What kind of activities would you do (and not do)? What kind of organisation would you like to work for? Or would you rather be self-employed?
3. What might be the positive and negative effects of a general reduction in working hours?
4. What do you think the maximum ratio or gap between the highest and lowest paid workers in an organisation should be?
5. Which jobs do you think are currently undervalued in our economy?
6. Which organisations do you know of that currently pay the Living Wage?
7. How can society better recognise the work that is done in caring, charitable and voluntary activities?
8. How might we protect against the unintended negative impacts of volunteering, e.g. the impact on wages and unemployment?
9. What can be done to address the inequalities around race and gender that play out in the job market?
10. How might future changes in working lives be managed? e.g. loss of jobs due to automation.
11. What type of enterprises would best support human and planetary flourishing and better fit Quaker values?
12. Do you own stocks and shares in any corporations, including through your pension? If so, how might you use your membership of these corporations to influence their decision-making?
13. Have you ever been a member of a union? What could be done to build the power of workers in the UK?
14. Which of the ideas for action above are familiar to you and which are new? Which do you think are good ideas?
15. Has most of your work in life been paid or unpaid?
16. How can Quakers support and promote good work?
17. What level of income would you consider sufficient for your material needs?