

# Living Economy for a Living Earth: A Comprehensive Guide



## Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth by David C. Korten

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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The concept of a living economy is gaining traction as a potential solution to the pressing environmental and social challenges facing our planet. A living economy is an economic system that is designed to be in harmony with the natural world, prioritizing the well-being of both humans and the environment.

In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the principles and practices of living economies, examining how they can be implemented to create a more sustainable and just future.

## Principles of a Living Economy

The principles of a living economy are based on the understanding that the economy is a subsystem of the natural world and that human well-being is

inextricably linked to the health of the environment. Here are some key principles:

- **Regenerative Design:** Living economies prioritize the use of renewable resources and regenerative practices that restore and replenish the natural world. This includes minimizing waste, promoting biodiversity, and supporting sustainable agriculture.
- **Distributed Ownership:** Living economies seek to distribute ownership and decision-making power more equitably. This can be achieved through worker cooperatives, employee ownership, and community-supported businesses.
- **Local Focus:** Living economies prioritize local production and consumption, reducing transportation emissions and strengthening community resilience. This includes supporting local businesses, farmers, and artisans.
- **Fair Trade:** Living economies promote fair trade practices that ensure that workers and producers are justly compensated for their labor. This includes paying fair wages, providing safe working conditions, and respecting human rights.
- **Circular Economy:** Living economies aim to minimize waste and pollution by adopting a circular economy approach. This involves designing products for durability and reuse, reducing single-use plastics, and promoting recycling and composting.

## Implementation Strategies

Implementing a living economy requires a multifaceted approach that involves changes at both the individual and systemic levels. Here are some

key strategies:

- **Support Sustainable Businesses:** Consumers can make a significant impact by choosing to support businesses that are committed to sustainable practices. This includes purchasing organic and local produce, investing in renewable energy, and banking with ethical institutions.
- **Participate in Community Initiatives:** Community gardens, farmers' markets, and local exchange trading systems (LETS) are examples of initiatives that can help to build a more resilient and sustainable local economy.
- **Advocate for Policy Change:** Governments can play a crucial role in supporting living economies through policies that incentivize sustainable practices, promote fair trade, and reduce inequality.
- **Invest in Education:** Education is essential for raising awareness about the importance of living economies and equipping people with the skills needed to participate in them.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Building strong partnerships between businesses, governments, and civil society organizations is crucial for the successful implementation of living economies.

## **Benefits of Living Economies**

Adopting a living economy can bring numerous benefits, including:

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Living economies promote practices that reduce pollution, conserve resources, and protect biodiversity,

helping to mitigate climate change and ensure the long-term health of the planet.

- **Social Justice:** Living economies prioritize fair trade and distributed ownership, addressing issues of inequality and promoting social inclusion.
- **Economic Resilience:** Living economies are more resilient to economic shocks because they rely on local production and consumption, reducing dependence on global supply chains.
- **Improved Well-being:** Living economies support local businesses, create jobs, and promote community engagement, contributing to a sense of place and well-being for residents.
- **Innovation:** Living economies foster innovation by encouraging sustainable practices and supporting entrepreneurs who are committed to positive social and environmental impact.

## Examples of Living Economies in Practice

Living economy principles are being implemented in various forms around the world. Here are a few examples:

- **The Green Belt Movement in Kenya:** The Green Belt Movement is a grassroots organization that has planted over 51 million trees in Kenya. The trees provide numerous benefits, including soil conservation, water filtration, and carbon sequestration, while also creating jobs and empowering local communities.
- **The Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in Spain:** Mondragon is the largest worker cooperative in the world, with over 80,000 worker-owners. The cooperative model promotes employee participation, fair

wages, and social solidarity, while also generating significant economic success.

- **The Transition Town Movement:** The Transition Town Movement is a global network of community-led initiatives that are working to build more resilient and sustainable local economies. Transition Towns focus on reducing energy consumption, promoting local food production, and fostering community connections.

Living economies offer a transformative vision for a sustainable and just future. By aligning economic systems with ecological principles, we can create economies that nurture the planet and promote human well-being for generations to come.

The transition to a living economy requires a concerted effort from individuals, businesses, governments, and civil society organizations. By embracing the principles and practices outlined in this guide, we can create a living economy that supports both people and the planet.



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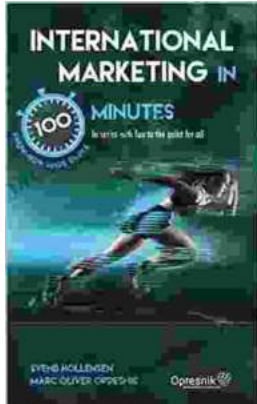
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