



*“We cannot solve our problems  
with the same thinking we used  
when we created them.”*

Albert Einstein

It has become increasingly apparent that ‘business as usual’ is no longer an option: less clear is whether the obstacles to fundamental change can be overcome in time. A primary goal of *Roots of Change* is to **expose the assumptions that diminish our ability to bring about real and lasting change.** Among these is the deterministic assertion that ‘there is no alternative’ – that the world we live in is the inevitable result of history, evolution, or human nature. Enhancing our historical and economic literacy is an important first step toward freeing ourselves from these stories and becoming more effective agents for positive change.

Since the *Roots of Change* program began in the early 1990s, participants have gone on to initiate inspiring projects in their own communities – from farmers’ markets and coops to alternative currencies and local food councils. In doing so they joined millions of others around the world who are resisting the destruction of people and the planet, while renewing their local economies, communities and cultures. Rather than leaving things to the ‘experts’, it’s time to heed the words of Alice Walker: **“we are the ones we’ve been waiting for”**.

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## ROOTS OF CHANGE

COMMUNITY STUDY CURRICULUM



ISEC

**Rethinking basic assumptions  
Exploring root causes  
Pointing to a new direction**

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## THE ROOTS OF CHANGE

### Community Study for Local Action

*Roots of Change* is a ground-breaking program of guided community study that describes how we've arrived at our present predicament, and what we can do about it. The curriculum, comprising voices from the world's leading political, economic and ecological thinkers, does not require an academic background. The emphasis is on *education for action*: moving beyond single issues to look at the more fundamental influences that shape our lives.

The program has three main goals:

- to encourage a broad analysis of the origins and workings of the global economy;
- to promote discussion of the impact of globalization on participants' own communities, as well as others around the world;
- to generate strategies for effective local action and global partnership.

Study groups (usually 6-20 members) meet once or twice a month to work through the curriculum. There are no 'teachers', though most groups choose one of their members – sometimes on a rotational basis – to act as facilitator. ISEC staff are available throughout the program both for logistical and intellectual support, and to facilitate the move from education to action.

*“The readings challenge me to reconsider things I ignore or take for granted, and help to counteract the mesmerizing effect of everyday life in urban America.”*

Diana Young, Berkeley, CA



## THE CURRICULUM IN BRIEF

Over the last 500 years, societies the world over have been transformed from those that are predominantly local and human scale, to those that are industrialized, globalized, and ever larger in scale. In the process, power has become consolidated and centralized, the separation between production and consumption has grown, and people have become alienated from each other and from the natural world. This broad, structural change is at the root of many of the crises we face.

The first part of the *Roots of Change* curriculum ('500 Years of Progress?') unravels this history. In the process readers will be treated to a selection of powerful voices that question a number of widely-held assumptions about progress, growth, wealth, and development. **Deep questioning of this nature can be exciting and liberating, but it can also be overwhelming.** In recognition of this, the curriculum also includes the *Hope Trove*, full of beautiful and moving excerpts of poetry and prose on hope, on working through despair, on expanding our boundaries, and on personal/social transformation.

The second half of the curriculum ('Resistance and Renewal') provides readers with a broad understanding of the steps needed at the local, national, and international levels to shift the world in a more sustainable direction. We have taken pains to showcase examples of movements of *resistance* to the dominant order, as well as *renewal*, through brilliant ideas and initiatives that prefigure a much more humane, healthy, and happy future. **For every critical exposé in the first section, we include in the second, new ideas and tangible, instructive, living solutions that will inspire.** Where the curriculum ends, the journey of action begins.

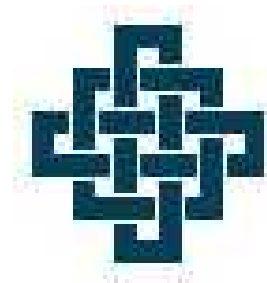
## CURRICULUM OUTLINE

### SECTION I: 500 Years of Progress?

- Cultures of Place: Scale, Place, Community
- Colonialism and the Tragedy of Enclosure
- Questioning Development
- Paradoxes of Progress and Growth
- The Economic Paradigm
- Corporate Globalization
- Science & Technology
- The Meaning of 'Education'
- The Consumerism Trap

### SECTION II: Resistance & Renewal

- 'A Movement of Movements'
- Alternative(s) to Development
- Alternative(s) to Education
- Rethinking Science & Technology
- Beyond Consumerism
- Toward Diverse, Local Living Economies



*Contact us for more information, or if you're interested in joining or starting a study group.*