Contents

Stage 1 - organizing the convinced and privileged

Gathering leadership in an economic area

The strategy presented here aims at being the most effective and efficient way of generating a global cultural and institutional paradigm shift.

Let's assume that accomplishing our goal will require an organization of some sort. At this point we can be very vague and abstract about the nature of such an organization, we can just define it as a group of people who do some work in coordination in order to allocate some resources to advance their goals.

It seems logical therefore to start with the low hanging fruit: to find and gather those who are already convinced, and among them the privileged, those who have access to money and time, typically because they have the skills and credentials that give them access to well-paid jobs, and have few family commitments. There could be other profiles that fit the description as well, for example people who have inherited wealth, or who have already retired with a good pension.

This first step seems to flow logically and follows seamlessly from the most basic and abstract definition of an organization presented above. It seems obvious that the more time that the people who are part of the organization can devote to it, and the more resources they can offer, the more effective and efficient the organization will be. An organization where people have little time to devote to it quickly becomes very inefficient because, proportionally, there is a big overhead on time dedicated to coordination compared to the overall time that each individual devotes to the organization. An organization that has few resources, no matter how efficient it is at allocating them, will have much less impact, and therefore be much less effective, than if it had more resources.

However, this first step is already controversial and unpopular. Very often, when people set out to do something for the greater good, they tend to want to involve the ones who will be benefited the most as soon as possible. This means involving the least privileged at the very beginning of the project. There doesn't seem to be data on this dimension of projects, but a casual observation seems that this is especially true in the projects with anarchist or pro-commons goals. Unfortunately this rush to produce benefits from the beginning tends to drain

the resources of the project very quickly and create dynamics where the few privileged ones among the founders end up de-facto leading the project, making the rest of members dependent on them, and finding it very difficult to advance towards equality of the members.

Therefore, following the above logic, the first step of the strategy will be finding like-minded people, preferably in the same economic area, with the goal of joining together to build an organization. The constraint of the same economic area, basically the EU or the USA, is that it will make it easier to collaborate together in the same legal structures, and also to travel, and even to settle, together.

It has been possible for a while, and the covid pandemic has made it much more easy and common, to work fully remotely. Therefore it is feasible and desirable that this initial search spans an area as wide as possible. The members that want to join will find it easy to start collaborating remotely, to travel to get to know each other in person, and eventually to move all in the same settlement to prototype communal life.

The first step therefore will consist in advertising and organizing events, online or offline, around the main cities in a given economic area, to present the ideas developed in these pages and recruit people who would like to join the leadership.

The requirements for the people who would like to join the leadership are that they are willing and able to invest time and money for others in a structured way, and obviously, that they agree with the outlines of the theoretical analysis and strategy presented here. This text is not meant to be the final say on those dimensions, it is just the starting point. It is meant to be extended and adjusted with the same scientific and evidence-based spirit.

Prototyping and implementing community building

There are two dimensions where the leadership should start working as soon as possible. Funding and community building.

Since we aim at building a world where people live in communities and share resources, the leadership should practice what they preach. This should be done progressively because it will most likely be a trial-and-error process. It is therefore very advisable to start very low key and progressively turning up notches as people feel comfortable and there are objective reasons to do so. The alternative, to move in together and put all the capital in common at once, would most probably be a recipe for failure: tensions would inevitably arise before the trust and the tools for managing conflict had been built, and the outcome would be predictably catastrophic.

A more progressive approach could involve traveling to each other's places and spending some days, and then weeks, living and working together, remotely, from the same place. Space would be likely limited and that would involve possibly only two or three people at a time, that can keep rotating to get to know each other. Also occasionally the leadership could spend some time all

together, booking a big place like a resort, or maybe staying at a big project that might be sympathetic and might want to help.

As people get to know each other and build trust they might even want to start discussing about which area they would like to build a settlement and even some of them move in that area.

At the same time they might want to try to start building a commons economy. Maybe starting with something inconsequential, like buying family subscriptions to online media. Then, the ones that are moving in the same area, can buy physical stuff together. Maybe starting with small inconsequential stuff, like tools, games, bicycles, . . . then move to something bigger like a fleet of cars, maybe even an RV, . . . for those who don't live in the same area yet they might want to try something like renting together a place at a vacations destination, in this way they can practice at once sharing an economy, managing a scarce resource, in the case that several want to use it on the same dates and exceed the available capacity.

Eventually once enough people feel confident enough about the alignment of their ideas and also their ability to enjoy living in community, sharing spaces and contributing to each other's lives it will be appropriate to work on living collectively in bigger numbers. The groups should consider options that offer a good balance between individual and collective spaces. They could consider buying an old abandoned town and rebuilding it, or maybe a big rural hotel complex and redistribute the spaces. Each person could have their own sleeping and working space, maybe grouped together in a co-living area with a dedicated bathroom, entertainment room, and some basic kitchen for when they desire eating in isolation. In the same complex there should be a big collective eating and cooking area, where most people would have their meals, entertainment areas for big groups and co-working spaces. There should also be spaces for kids so that the community could do parenting collectively and parents could have time on their own while others take care of the kids. The adult caretakers could be a combination of parents and professional workers.

Tactical self-funding via professional careers and collective freelancing

Most organizations devoted to the greater good rely on external funding for their operations. Typically those consist of grants from governments or private foundations. Or maybe some philanthropist funds the project directly. They might also rely on periodic membership fees, which might look like internal funding, but, in the end, they condition the viability of the project on pleasing people who are not involved in the day-to-day operations.

The strategy proposed here instead suggests to rely exclusively on internal funding for the core operations of the project. The expression internal funding here means both resources that the core members contribute and also, collective

businesses created with the explicit purpose of funding the non-profit organization tasked with transitioning the market society to a commons-based one.

Additionally the organization might receive external funding as long as it is used for acquiring more commons. I.e more real estate, machinery, intangible rights, etc. The point is that the livelihood of the core members of the project, their housing, utilities, food and monetary allowances, is not contingent on external funding, so that their autonomy won't be easily compromised.

The most likely scenario for new members is that they have access to money through the labor market thanks to having skills, credentials and experience that are in demand. In this case an easy collective intervention to increase the total funds available to the collective is to help each other advance in their career. Each member could provide the others with information about job opportunities that would help advance their careers in the firms that each one is employed at. They could help each other get hired by referring them and helping them improve on any gaps they might have in their knowledge.

This effort could be professionalized by **hiring a dedicated agent**, or maybe even a team consisting of agents and coaches. This could be one of the first investments in a collectivized economy. The role of the agents would be to look for opportunities, to apply for jobs on behalf of the community members and negotiate compensation on their behalf. A second benefit that the agent could help brokering is reduced work time and extra vacations.

Once the bonds among members are strong enough to embark on a joint professional venture, if there are several people who work in the same sector, they might consider skipping the middleman and going collective freelancing instead. Freelancing as individuals is risky and costly because opportunities might come and go. One might have a lot of work at once and then none at all for a while. Looking for good opportunities is a job in itself that requires investing a lot of time. Doing it collectively allows to distribute the cost of finding opportunities and also reduce the risk of peaks and valleys of work. Also, in case of sustained peaks of work it is more feasible to hire people to help with that and make extra profit while having more free time.

This section might sound suspiciously self-serving and even anti-revolutionary to some readers. Having a group of privileged people joining forces in order to achieve more privileges, to make more money and work less time, even to outsource some of the work to others, are actions that taken out of context could certainly be attributed to selfish greedy behavior.

Take into account however that the point of this coordination and mutual support is to have more spare time, financial and emotional resources to invest in the commons and to help the less fortunate. In parallel with this financial optimization the group might decide to formally donate to the commons by creating a legal pro-commons entity, a foundation or similar, and buy housing through that entity. This might still look a bit suspiciously self-serving to some observers since many community members will be living in the housing that is

being purchased for the commons. Remember though that this is a very early stage. One of the goals of this stage is to build long-term wealth producing structures, via pro-commons entrepreneurship (next section). Once those are in place the project will be in a position to start investing in the less fortunate.

Furthermore, there won't be any coercion for the members to put a minimum amount or percentage of their wealth, or the wealth gained with the help of the collective, towards the commons. Everybody has to go through their own journey and find what works for them at every moment. Having coercive devices would defy the point of building a culture that promotes individual autonomy.

Strategic self-funding via pro-commons entrepreneurship

In the previous sections we've covered how the community can help their members optimize the standard arrangement in our society which consists of having a career and paying for housing and other necessities. By supporting each other the members of the community can manage to work less time, make more money and spend less time and money in their housing and daily necessities.

Those are tactical moves. Short term maneuvers to quickly gain an advantageous position on the playing field from where to deploy the strategic moves more decisively.

The actual strategy is for the community to provide itself with their own wealth-producing firms, rather than depending on external firms for employment, which also inevitably will syphon off a great part of the worker's plusvalue.

The community should aim to create a conglomerate of market-leading global industries as soon as as possible. The entrepreneurship mythology describes the genesis of successful startups in garages where the founders spend endless hours on a seemingly crazy idea. In reality those are very rare occurrences where the founders count on previous wealth, typically from their families, to work on their ideas for as long as necessary for them to succeed. A more common and realistic entrepreneurship pattern is for founders to keep a day job while setting up their start-up and only leave the security of their job once the startup has got some momentum that makes success likely. The main reason for this pattern being a recommended best practice is that the first steps of startups are erratic and fortuitous. Typically there are many trials and errors, many failures before a success, many attempts before having a minimum viable product and paying customers that can support growth. This process is very unpredictable and it's very risky to set aside some savings to devote fully to the vision, because costs typically are higher than expected and timelines longer than anticipated, which can put a lot of pressure on the founders if they don't have a secure income stream.

Therefore the proposal is that the community members keep their well-paid secure jobs and invest some of their disposable income and spare time in building startups. Preferably one at a time, so that more resources can be put into it and

it can advance faster, using the standard entrepreneurship framework of "fail fast". The faster a prototype can be built and tested against the market, the sooner the community will learn if it's viable or should be discarded and move on to the next one, either the next iteration or pivot in this startup idea, or to give up the whole concept and move on to the next startup idea.

An alternative, not recommended path, would be that some of the community members leave their job to work full time on kicking off a startup with the other member's funding. This is a common pattern in the world of alternative, local and fair trade economies, where some of the members are "freed", as it is called, from the capitalist economy by the revenue generated by the other members' membership fees. The strategy presented here does not recommend this strategy at this early stage (it will be appropriate later). At this stage however it seems too risky because it creates asymmetries between the members which could easily lead to tensions complicated to diffuse. For the members that put money in it can be very easy to become impatient and suspicious of the inevitably apparent lack of progress, and for the ones who put the time, it is easy to feel pressured to deliver on the trust of their peers and overwork and burn out as a result.

Therefore the proposed strategy is that all the members participate in time and money until at least one of the startups is financially viable on it's own. In order to speed up the startup it is also plausible to hire staff outside of the community. The community members would be responsible for the most creative and strategic decisions and the paid staff would be responsible for more standard tasks and workflows, which are common across different industries and have clear expected timeframes, inputs and outputs. For example, doing accounting, developing software, managing customers, etc.

The community could start with ideas that require little capital, such as online services and platforms, and leave for later ideas that require more capital, such as manufacturing something or running a biotech research laboratory. In this way, profits from the round of firms, 100% owned by the community, could be invested in later rounds of startups. However, if the idea that seems to hold the most potential requires a significant investment, beyond the means of the community, it would also be reasonable to go through the usual investment paths. After all, owning 51%, or even 30% of a huge hit will bring in more capital for the second round of investments than owning 100% of an average successful firm. Notice that obtaining external funding for some of the enterprises of the conglomerate doesn't jeopardize the future ideas and those can still be funded 100% by the community. If one of the early ideas is really good, it should be relatively easy to obtain external investment since the community will have already covered the first round, the FFF (Family, Friends and Fools) which will speed up the process and give confidence to investors.

Pro-commons entrepreneurship resources and mindset

There are many resources available to new entrepreneurs. On top of extensive free online resources, many governments want to promote entrepreneurship and offer free or partially subsidised trainings. They often also run contests and offer perks to the winners such as free office space. Those are of course often meant to encourage capitalism, and applying to those would mean to subvert their intent, to use resources meant to foster capitalism to instead promote the commons. Often people competing for those are very small teams of one to three people with little funding, having a bigger community behind a startup project should give it a lot of advantage in such competitions since the judges usually value quite highly the prospect of the startup standing on it's own, when the perks from the contest end.

Sometimes there are extra resources available for startups that promote social or environmental goals which also present opportunities. Sometimes the goals might be too narrow for the startup ideas of the community to qualify, but when they fit, such programs could give a significant boost. Furthermore, they are usually much easier to tap into, since the people who compete for them usually come from social and environmental activism and are very focused on the goals but have little idea on how to make their proposals financially viable.

Regardless of the availability of external supporting resources, it is key to cultivate an entrepreneurship mindset. The key for achieving that is to learn to look at the world as a place full of opportunities rather than scarcity. This might sound like a cheap new-age aphorism but in the context of entrepreneurship has a very specific meaning. It consists of looking at the world with rich people's eyes: when finding some product or service that is much more expensive than expected, instead of thinking in terms of scarcity, that is a bad thing to have to spend more than anticipated for it, think in terms of a potential market opportunity. If it's priced like that, it probably means that there are people willing to pay that price, and if it seems so expensive to you, then probably means that you are thinking of a much cheaper way to produce it. Is that cheaper way actually feasible and so cheap? If so, you've just found a business opportunity to pitch to the community! Otherwise, you have learned that you were wrong, that the price is actually fair, and you have updated your assumptions which will help you have better intuitions next time.

A similar mindset can be applied in professional contexts. At the company you work for, you can look for entrepreneurship opportunities. Thinking how to do the same cheaply is way too obvious, and unlikely to yield results because probably many people have already pondered the very same question. A more promising route is to look for processes that are necessary to be done but are not part of the core business and the people who work there find it tedious and unfulfilling because it lies far from their core competencies and interests.

Such non-core business activities could be outsourced if there was a reliable company providing those services. Of course there is way too much competition

for the obvious ones such as accounting and IT, and they will likely be already outsourced. However, there might be less obvious ones. A real-life success story is of a person who worked at an advertising company and noticed that after creating an advertisement there was a lot of work to adapt it to different formats, since each print newspaper and magazin, and each online property, had very different and strict requirements on the format they accepted. Furthermore, those requirements were not clear or stable and required a lot of communication. That work was far away from the core creative competencies of the employees and was not appreciated. There were external companies providing the service, but they were unreliable and they would often miss the deadlines. Therefore that work was done inhouse begrudgingly. That person created a successful company to provide exactly that service, properly managed, which resulted in reliable and timely completion of their projects.

This particular example might be controversial. It might look like creating such specialization, where the cool creative and well paid job is concentrated in a few people, and the more tedious and boring job is outsourced to people with lower salaries is promoting inequality, which is contrary to the stated goals presented here.

However, the contrary is true. As we'll see in the following sections, having control over a large quantity of low-skills jobs will be symbiotic with the strategy. In later stages of the strategy resources will be devoted towards helping the less fortunate. Very often members of that cohort have few specialized skills. Therefore, providing stable low-skills jobs can be a good starting point. If the community owns the operation, the job could even be offered at a slightly above-market salary, which would eat from the profits. That could be combined with subsidized housing to lower the expenses and give that person more free time for investing in learning specialized skills. The support package could include training and coaching. This would be more cost-effective than providing full economic support to somebody unemployed, therefore more people could be helped at once with the same budget. Also having a job often gives people a sense of autonomy and fulfillment, even if the job is not very well paid. That job is also a reference point against which to track the improvement gained through the empowering program that the community would offer. Moving on to better paid jobs would indicate success and staying stuck in the same position would signal a failure for the program.

Finally, a second aspect to take into account when cultivating an entrepreneurship mindset is intentional networking. It can be very useful to network with like-minded people, inside and outside the community. This facilitates, on one hand, to advance professionally oneself. On the other hand, when entrepreneurship opportunities arise, one can run them through their connections to see if they see value in that, or maybe some pitfalls that we've missed. If we move on with that entrepreneurship idea the first customers are likely to come from our network.

Tactically converting expenses into profits

One pattern that has already been successfully used by intentional communities is to professionalize the teams that are providing services for the community and sell those services outside of the community for a profit.

When a significant amount of people move in together it makes a lot of sense to hire staff to take care of common needs. Educators can be hired to take care of the pre-school kids while parents are working. Chefs and kitchen aids can be hired to save time to the community members, or money, as compared to eating out or ordering food. Caretakers can be hired to maintain the property and do gardening and repairs involving masonry, plumbing, electricity, painting, carpentry and car mechanics. A team can be hired to take care of procurement, to buy in bulk for all the members of the community, to save their time and money compared to each one of them going to the supermarket or shopping online, and also to procure for the shared services that provide child care, nutrition, repairs, and so on.

Each one of those teams are an expense for the community that can be turned into a thriving profit-making business. The community can put together a pedagogical program that empathises the community's values such as non-directive education, playfulness, creativity, autonomy, spending time in nature, etc. and sell it to parents who live nearby and share those values but don't want to be part of the community. At the same time, the community members will have those services for free, sponsored by the paying students.

The more straightforward way to commercialize the rest of the services is to get into the hospitality business. If the community buys an abandoned town and rebuilds it for its members it should plan to rebuild as well many extra empty units and rent them for short stays. It could cater to conscious eco- and socially-friendly tourists, as well as remote workers who want more than a standard co-working space. The community can easily leverage their assets to offer an all-inclusive options for those who want to travel or co-work in a hassle-free environment.

Also it is quite common for intentional communities to elaborate common foods and drinks that are relatively easy to produce from ingredients that are much cheaper than the finalized product. Typical examples are bread, cheese, beer, muffins, . . . It is also quite common to make many more of what they need, 10s, 100s or 1000s more and sell them for profit.

Similarly, a reforms and repairs company could be easily spun off from the processes already in place to procure material for those activities and already having staff with those roles for the maintenance of the community's buildings.

Another symbiotic area that could be commercialized is wellness. The community might want to hire a yoga teacher or a masseur for their members, and those services could be packaged as well with the hospitality offering.

All the examples in this section are meant to illustrate tactical opportunities that typically arise when people get organized organically. It is very natural when a community starts settling in an area to share costs and errands. For example, it would come quite naturally to share one internet service for all the members, to take turns driving to the nearest shopping center to buy groceries, to take turns cooking and cleaning up the common areas, etc... Another typical emerging feature of communities is building a veggie garden which serves as a tool to relax while doing gardening as well as provides healthy fresh vegetables which are often hard and expensive to find in supermarkets that tend to favor processed and non-perishable food.

Once those needs and routines are becoming established and the community grows it also would come quite naturally to start hiring people to take care of them. Keep in mind that the focus of the community is to build an organization as quickly as possible that promotes a global paradigm change. Community members should focus on the areas where they can contribute the most, which are the leadership of the organization. Everything else should be delegated if possible so that the community members can provide the most value, i.e. can give the most to the global common good.

Delegating aspects of the community operations to non-community members is quite controversial. Many people oppose it out of concerns of promoting inequality in the relationships with the people with whom the community have daily interactions. Typically the kind of tasks that are delegated are relatively low paid.

However in the context presented here such criticism is not valid. Hiring staff is obviously not part of a long term strategy that aims at having a two-tiered society, where some privileged people are part of communities and other non-privileged work in the labor market. The goal is to help everybody who wants it leave the labor market and join a commons-based community. The point here is that we want to be strategic about how to do that, and investing first in a structure that will allow the community to help people at a larger scale has a much higher expected value for the greater good than randomly helping the first person that the community interacts with when they want to delegate some work.

Of course the community won't abuse their staff and will offer payments that are satisfactory for the employees, however those salaries will at this stage be relative to what the labor market pays. Going too far from that would be unfair to the people in the world, and in the future, who are even less privileged than those who are hired by the community, because it would prevent the community from saving money to help them later on.

The takeaway from this section is that dynamics where the community coordinates to cover their own needs in a time- and cost- effective way are going to happen organically and when the community grows it will make sense to hire staff to help on those. Therefore, it is worth being conscious about such

10

dynamics and looking for opportunities to take tactical advantage of them. To look for cases where, with a little more effort, collectively paying for goods and services can be converted into an investment, and then into some modest profit, rather than being a cost for the community.

At this stage we are not (yet) aiming at building global empires on real estate, health and nutrition. Therefore such initiatives should be carried on only if indeed they are quick wins, that take little effort to set up and then require almost no maintenance from the community. The reason is the kind of businesses described here require relatively high capital investment and they tend to grow slowly. At this stage the community should focus on low-capital investment, high-growth potential startups mentioned in the previous section.

Later on, having the kind of structures described in this section, might become symbiotic with other strategic goals, and the cost-benefit analysis might change though.