



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

COMMUNITY ECONOMIES IN ACTION: A PRACTICE RETREAT

The Community Economies Institute
announces its first practice retreat,

12-19 July 2023,
Rovereto, Vallagarina Valley, Italy



Illustration by Justine Hartwig

A valley in the Italian Alps is teeming with people who are building community economies in place. There is a collective who makes refreshing drinks in circular processes, another that makes bread in a mobile oven and is forging more-than-human relationships. There is a feminist research lab, activating participatory methods to cultivate a community-run academy to learn what is necessary for equitable futures. All this is happening in the cracks that open up in a seemingly endless agricultural and industrial monoculture and against the backdrop of enormous biodiversity loss in the Alpine region. In this place riven with opportunities and tensions, participants in the practice retreat will gather to press forward with ways of enacting postcapitalist worlds!

Overview

The Community Economies in Action Practice Retreat is aimed at practitioners from diverse fields (e.g., agroecology, art and design, urbanism, food transformation, crafts, pedagogy, co-housing) as well as practice-oriented PhD students and researchers with a participatory, activist approach.

Participants will learn from each other, mobilise situated knowledge, and share the beauties and blind spots of their projects, initiatives and research. They will forge new alliances, and explore ways of doing, feeling and knowing that value collectivity and interdependence.

Community economies refers to the body of thought and practice that foregrounds economies based on our interdependence with each other and our environment. The Practice Retreat engages with the key concepts and tools associated with community economies work and provides a forum for stimulating discussions and debates around the questions:

- How do our practices contribute to the exciting proliferation of economic experimentation and commons?
- How can we experiment with community economies-friendly rituals, habits and ways of doing in our daily modes of organizing our work and livelihoods – including potentially tricky areas like money and administration?
- What practices do we use to activate community economies, what theories do we draw on, and what hurdles and possibilities emerge from these theory-practice interweavings?

The Practice Retreat is designed as a flexible and lively programme of activities and encounters in which participants' practices take a central role.

The Practice Retreat is offered by the [Community Economies Institute](#) (CEI), a group of scholars, artists, activists and practitioners from around the world who foster thought and practice to help communities survive well together. The Practice Retreat is connected with and complementary to the [Community Economies Institute Summer/Winter School](#) (June 20-29, 2023). The Summer/Winter School centres on an in-depth reading and application of the theoretical underpinnings, while the Practice Retreat focuses on practice and experiential learning.

The retreat will be facilitated by CEI researchers and practitioners [Bianca Elzenbaumer](#) (IT), [Kate Rich](#) (AUS/UK) and [Flora Mammana](#) (DE/IT), whose multidisciplinary practices cross between practice and theory, and between individual action and collective contexts.

Programme

The 8-day programme is based on creative and collaborative forms of exchange and engagement, including:

- Workshops that revolve around the practices of the participants
- Exploratory reading of key texts that introduce community economies thinking, in relation to participants' practices
- Individual tutorials and mentoring
- Presentations by and talks with artists, activists and researchers from the Community Economies Institute
- Meetings with local actors and projects that are cultivating equitable and regenerative economies
- Cooking and outdoor activities.
- One day of rest (Sunday) for individual or collective explorations according to peoples' own choice.

The days are full but with time and space for slow thinking and practical activities.

The retreat will bring together practitioners who would like to gain or deepen an understanding of community economies and how this applies to and strengthens their work, as well as scholars and researchers who are interested in extending their academic theory approach into other realms of life, such as acting as part of a community, engaging with the place they live, or reformulating the material protocols of academic life.

We encourage applications from individuals and also from collectives, i.e., groups of people who are collaborating in ways that could range from informal, peer-to-peer groups to formal organizations or associations. This might include artist collectives, community gardeners, workers' co-operatives, co-housing projects, activist-academic networks and other experimental endeavours. For collectives, the first member pays a full fee, the second and additional members pay a reduced amount.

We invite people to bring partners, friends and children. We will not run a programme for these people, but we encourage them to self-organize to explore the local area (ideal for hiking in the mountains, and swimming in rivers and lakes). Each day, there will be times for conviviality between all people present.

Practicalities

Practitioner Fee (for participants without access to academic funding):

- 750€/person
- 375€/second person in a collective
- 187,50€/ additional people in a collective

Academic Fee (for participants with access to academic funding):

- 1000€/person
- 750€/second person in a collective
- 250€/ additional people in a collective

Low or non-monetary participation is a possibility. Please state this on your Expression of Interest form (see below) and we can negotiate options.

The fees cover all programme activities. Travel to and from Rovereto, accommodation and food are not included. We will supply participants with a range of accommodation options, including camping, in order to fit different budgets. Food will be affordable, via self-catering and shared meals.

Information Session

We will be holding an information session on how you might fund your participation in the Practice Retreat. This session might be useful for those who work or study at a university in Europe (where it is highly likely that your participation can be supported through an Erasmus+ scheme), or if you are a practitioner needing support for funding applications (or to think about non-monetary ways of accessing the school). Or just come along to ask any questions about the Retreat before you apply. This session will take place on **January 16 2023, 11:00-12:00 CET**,

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82355991029?pwd=R3lFWFRsNUhMRE5qV2lmZ3cxVG5LUT09>

Expressions of Interest

Please complete the information outlined on the following page and email to practice_retreat@ecommunityeconomies.org. Please use this email for any questions.

Expressions of Interest: Due by 27 January 2023

To register your interest in attending the Practice Retreat, please email the following information to practice_retreat@communityeconomies.org

Name:

Email:

Group / Organisation / Institution (if applicable):

1. Tell us about your practice and your background in a short statement (no more than 200 words)
2. Tell us why you are interested in the Practice Retreat (no more than 200 words)
3. Collectives: if you are joining as a collective (or group), please tell us about your collective (or group) and let us know how many people would like to attend
4. Please indicate your fee level (practitioner fee or academic fee) or whether you would be seeking a low or non-monetary option.

For further information, contact us at practice_retreat@ecommunityeconomies.org