

THE ECOS GATHERING

Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

April 21-28, 2017

ECOS - in planning for April 2017 in Santa Fe - is a gathering of creative thinkers, activists, and leaders from innovative humanitarian organizations, indigenous communities, and the frontlines of failing political and economic systems. What unites ECOS participants is commitment to building a new blueprint for the global economic and political order founded on compassion, reverence for the earth, on cooperation rather than control.

Seventy years ago, as the Second World War raged, more than seven hundred people converged on a pristine New Hampshire ski resort to draw up the blueprints for a brand new world. The delegates to the Bretton Woods Conference irrefutably proved that ideas matter: The concepts, designs and, principles that emerged from their meeting set forth an unprecedented expansion of global trade and finance, steering the course of the world for the better part of a century.

But the Bretton Woods blueprint had unforeseen consequences: the mindset of endless economic growth enshrined in those New Hampshire mountains has resulted in unsustainable resource exploitation, the proliferation of credit and indebtedness, oppressive power relations between rich and poor countries, and the suppression of indigenous cultures and knowledge.

Today, in another era of struggle and change, there's consensus emerging across regions and across ideological divides:

We need a new blueprint.

We also need a new visioning event.

While effective planning and creative problem solving require access to a diversity of perspectives, the meeting at Bretton Woods was comprised almost entirely of white men from the upper socioeconomic strata of wealthy industrialized countries. While actionable and meaningful solutions to the problems of the global economy require buy-in and support from people from varied backgrounds around the world, the conversation at Bretton Woods was predicated on top-down power rather than broad-based participation.

Seven decades after the Second World War, in a new era of uncertainty and possibility, it's time to consider the question:

What might a new and radically inclusive Bretton Woods look like?

Like Bretton Woods seventy years ago, ECOS is a platform to connect, face-to-face, and to combine efforts toward cultivating and realizing a unified vision. Unlike Bretton Woods, ECOS will be a radically diverse collection of young grass-roots activists, span multiple modes of collaboration, and rigorously transcend individual issue areas to craft sustainable and systems-oriented solutions that combat social and ecological injustice. Distinguishing ECOS from other gatherings today will be the unique diversity of delegates and a facilitation process based in COMPLEXITY SCIENCE that ignites collective intelligence to take the conversation from single-issue band-aid responses to scalable transformative action.

It's natural to want to break complex problems into their simplest components. But we no longer have the luxury of addressing only the individual components of complex global problems. The system-of-systems approach of Complexity science—informed by traditional indigenous modes of thinking and visioning—provides a rigorous platform for making whole system connections and breaking disciplinary silos. This holistic orientation is the core value proposition of the ECOS gathering.