

IN HONOR OF ELINOR OSTROM NOBEL PRIZE 2009 | ECONOMICS



Kosmos Congratulates Elinor Ostrom

who recently won the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics for her work on the commons. She is the first woman ever to receive this prestigious award. A political scientist at Indiana University and Arizona State University, Ostrom has been researching commons issues for over four decades. She has repeatedly demonstrated how commons resources can be successfully managed and shared without the intervention of private companies or government regulation. Ostrom's groundbreaking work has inspired several generations of scholars and activists to focus on the structure of commons governance.

Reclaim The Commons Manifesto

Humankind is suffering from an unprecedented campaign of privatization and commodification of the most basic elements of life: nature, culture, human work and knowledge itself. In countless arenas, businesses are claiming our shared inheritance—sciences, creative works, water, the atmosphere, health, education, genetic diversity, even living creatures—as private property. A compulsive quest for short-term financial gain is sacrificing the prosperity of all and the stability of the Earth itself.

The dismal consequences of market enclosures can be seen in our declining ecosystems: the erosion of soil and biodiversity, global climate change, reduction of food sovereignty. Aggressive intellectual property politics harness those suffering from neglected diseases or who can't purchase patented medicines, reduce cultural diversity, limit access to knowledge and education, and promote a global consumerist culture.

The World Social Forum of 2009, meeting at Belem, Pará, in Brazil, convened at a very special moment: a time when the neoliberal vision of unfettered markets, global finance and private regulation and control has utterly failed. It also meets at a time when people are recognizing the many life-giving resources of our Earth and human societies should not be privatized or commodified because of the enormous harm and inequality that result.

As more citizens discover this reality, a new vision of society is arising—one that honors human rights, democratic participation, inclusion and cooperation. People are discovering that alternatives and commons-based approaches offer practical solutions for protecting water and rivers, agricultural soils, seeds, knowledge, sciences, forest, oceans, wind, money, communication and online collaborations, culture, music and other arts, open technologies, free software, public services of education, health or sanitization, biodiversity and the wisdom of traditional knowledge.

The signers of this Manifesto, launched at the World Social Forum of 2009, call upon all citizens and organizations to commit themselves to recovering the Earth and humanity's shared inheritance and future creations. Let us demonstrate how commons-based management—participatory, collaborative and transparent—offers the best hope for building a world that is sustainable, fair and life-giving.

This Manifesto calls upon all citizens of the world to deepen the notion of the commons and to share the diverse approaches and experiences that it honors. In our many different ways, let us mobilize to reclaim the commons, organize their de-privatization and get them off markets, and strengthen our individual initiatives by joining together in this urgent, shared mission.

for more information: <http://bienscommuns.org>