Forum/Tribune

Economic Globalization: A Need for Alternate Visions

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Abstract

This article argues against the economic globalization agenda. It describes the impact of economic globalization on Canada, explores ways for university adult educators to challenge the pro-globalization forces, and calls for adult educators to take a strong stand on this issue.

Résumé

Cet article argumente contre l'agenda de mondialisation économique. Il décrit les effets de la mondialisation économique sur le Canada, explore comment les andragogues universitaires peuvent contester les forces en faveur de la mondialisation et appelle les andragogues à prendre vigoureusement position sur cette question.

Introduction

Economic globalization is a potent worldwide force that changes the power structure of society—destructively, many people believe. As Lind (1992) says, "It has reinforced the power and enriched the lives of some and threatened the livelihood and impoverished the lives of many others" (p. 9).

The Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United

Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education
Vol. 22, No. 1, Spring
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States, which began in 1989, its successor, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), including Mexico, and new amendments to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) all give tremendous power to transnational corporations at the expense of national governments and ordinary people.

What long-term impact will these economic changes have on Canada? Can university adult educators play a role in the challenge to economic globalization? Using a grounded theory research approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Bogdan & Taylor, 1975) and working from a social change perspective, I conducted taped interviews as follows:

1. In 1993, I interviewed nine extension staff and faculty members from a number of universities in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

2. In 1994, I interviewed two additional university adult education faculty members from British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

The participants opposed the current stampede toward economic globalization. They have been given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Building on a review of the literature, I argue against economic globalization. I briefly explore the impact of this trend on Canada and, relying on selected interviews, I look at ways for university adult educators to challenge the corporate agenda.

Overview

The term "economic globalization" describes the transformation of the world economy. It changes the relationship between markets and states and places the world economy ahead of those of nations (Drache & Gertler, 1991a). According to Ellwood (1993), the theory of globalization "is simple and seductive"(p. 6): "all barriers and regulations that might impede the free flow of capital or restrict the operations of the marketplace should be dismantled" (p. 6).

Those who espouse this ideology believe that entrepreneurs are the most important people in society. Because of their importance,

> businesspeople should be given all possible incentives to redouble their efforts. And while investors and managers are being encouraged by tax cuts and subsidies, the rest of society should not be entitled to higher wages and salaries, to better working conditions, or to improved social and environmental programs. (Laxer, 1993, p. 12)

Drache and Gertler (1991b) maintain that, under this ideology, "driving down costs becomes the single most important priority for business and the state" (p. 4). Daly (1993) suggests that companies can reduce costs in two ways: (a) by increasing efficiency or (b) by lowering standards. He adds:

> A firm can save money by lowering its standards for pollution control, worker safety, wages, health care and so on—all choices that externalize some of its costs. Profit-maximizing firms in competition always have an incentive to externalize their costs to the degree that they can get away with it. (p. 52)

Most countries have legal and administrative structures to prevent local industries from reducing social and environmental standards. However, there are no similar international standards and national laws differ widely. As a result, free international trade encourages business to move to countries that have the lowest standards (Daly, 1993).

Drache and Gertler (1991a) stress that, as trade barriers fall, many countries are forced to modify their institutions to accommodate transnational corporations. They argue that these corporations are demanding greater "flexibility" in their workforce, a trend that forces profound changes on society.

> More competitive labour markets means not only fewer jobs but lower pay and insecure employment for young people, for women in the service sector, and for older workers in mature industries. (Drache & Gertler, 1991a, p. xi)

Drache and Gertler (1991b) note that business elites have "welcomed the prospects of unleashing the market on a world scale" (p. 3). They want to conduct business with minimal restrictions and they demand that if a government wants them to locate within its country, it must remove barriers that might impede corporate profits, "even if it means overturning existing national programs" (p. 3).

This view is echoed by Ellwood (1993), who refers to the recent GATT negotiations in which corporate rhetoric about the need to "harmonize" standards to produce a "level playing field" has reached new heights. He says:

> From the corporate perspective these "barriers" are all-embracing. National health insurance, worker safety laws, environmental standards, agricultural marketing boards: all can be challenged as "subsidies" and thrown onto the bargaining table in the name of reducing costs. The pressure to harmonize is all one way. Down. (p. 7)

Ellwood (1993) notes that this "downward spiral" results in a "whipshaw effect" in which companies "play one country against another to see who will offer the lowest labour costs and the best give-away package" (p. 6). Because of this, he says, living standards are deteriorating around the world and "competitiveness" becomes "a race to the bottom" (p. 6).

Lind (1993) stresses that competitiveness is not a new issue—what is new is that competitiveness now is the *only* issue. He argues that everything is being judged by its effect on Canada's competitive position:

> For example we are being told that universal medical care is now an obstacle to our competitiveness. Progressive rates of taxation, requiring citizens to pay according to their ability, puts our country at a competitive disadvantage. Legislation which is proposed to strengthen the rights of workers is now opposed on the grounds that it will weaken our competitive position. The net effect of this isolation and elevation of competitiveness as the dominant moral norm is to subordinate questions of social justice to questions of economic efficiency. (p. 14)

Transnational corporations want "unfettered" power in the new global economy. Barnet and Cavanagh (1994) believe such corporations already hold immense power and argue that the power and mobility of corporations are undermining the efforts of governments to carry out their traditional mandates. They state:

> National leaders no longer have the ability to comprehend, much less control, these giants because they are mobile, and like the mythic Greek figure Proteus they are constantly changing appearances to suit different circumstances. The shifting relationships between the managers of global corporations and political authorities are creating a new political reality almost everywhere. (p. 19)

Speaking of the power of the transnational corporations, Sale (1993) stresses that they are able to "twist laws and regulations, shift plants around the globe, open or close markets, set prices, monopolize research and development. The rules, written by the big players, always favour the big players" (p. 26). Warnock (1994) believes that, with NAFTA and the new GATT agreement, this power has been cemented even further. He says that these agreements "prohibit future governments from imposing any standards on foreign investors and restricting in any way the repatriation of dividends, interest, royalties or management fees" (p. 3). One example

stands out clearly. Diane Marleau, when she was Minister of Health, announced she would introduce legislation requiring manufacturers to sell cigarettes in plain packages. The American cigarette manufacturers warned that "such a policy would constitute a 'taking' of their intellectual property (specifically their trademarks). Unless they were fully compensated for the resulting loss of sales, such a 'taking' would violate NAFTA and open Canada to retaliation from the United States" (Robinson, 1995/1996, p. 14). The proposal was abandoned.

Barnet and Cavanagh (1994) believe that transnational corporations are rapidly becoming the "world empires of the twenty-first century" (p. 14). They present a frightening picture of a world in which the balance of power in world politics has shifted from national governments to these corporations. They argue that, as governmental power declines, transnational corporations are exerting more influence over areas once considered to be public space. This argument is reinforced by Barlow and Robertson (1994), who state that transnational corporations control 80 percent of the world's trade and 80 percent of the world's land cultivated for export-oriented crops. They argue:

> Almost three-quarters of the world's nations have smaller economies than do major companies. Ford's economy is bigger than Saudi Arabia's and Norway's. Philip Morris's annual sales exceed New Zealand's gross domestic product. This situation has profound implications for democracy and the future of government as we have understood it. (p. 62)

Ellwood (1993) argues that national governments and the international community must face this crisis "head on." He believes that, without restraints, short-term profits will always take precedence in the corporate agenda. A "globalized economy," he says, "has to be about more than just productivity and competitiveness; it also has to concern the health, safety and economic life of all our communities" (p. 7).

Consequences of Economic Globalization

The Canadian experiment with economic globalization "has been a disaster" (Laxer, 1993, p. 135). Laxer says:

> The neoconservatives' most reckless belief has been that they can divest Canada of its sense of direction and that somehow, the institutions of the state will simply grind on, as if suspended in midair. The

> absurd irony is that, having destabilized Canada to promote short-term gains for investors and business, they must now find a way to live with the result, which is a business climate that is less than favourable. (p. 135)

According to a study conducted by *The Globe and Mail*, "In the early 1990s, the number of part-time jobs in Canada grew by 266,000. Yet at the same time, almost 500,000 full-time jobs were lost. Nearly 70 percent of new jobs have been part-time" (York, 1994, p. A6). York predicts that, even when the current recession is over, companies will continue to hire part-time workers because it keeps costs down and "it's a lot less costly for employers to get rid of these workers when they're not using them" (p. A6).

A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) clearly exposes the misinformation of the corporate agenda. In the debates leading to the Free Trade Agreement, most of the corporations associated with the BCNI (Business Council on National Issues) promised that the agreement would help them create more and better jobs for Canadians. Instead, these corporations have made substantial cuts to their workforces. For example,

> Thirty-seven of these companies, which had a combined total of 765,338 employees before the free trade era began, had dropped to 549,924 workers by the end of 1994. This was an overall reduction of 215,414 jobs . . . . During the six years that they were "shedding" more than 200,000 jobs, they were increasing their combined annual revenues by $32.1 billion—from $141.9 billion in 1988 to $174.0 billion in 1994. (37 corporations, 1995, p. 1)

The policies of the Conservative Mulroney government have left a devastating legacy. Because of its excessive pandering to big business, the Canadian state has been severely weakened. The Mulroney government, in power from 1984 to 1993, stripped Canada of its ability to control its economic future (McQuaig, 1991). Consequently, Canadian policies and priorities "are now being set by the U.S. and by corporations, with the collaboration of Canadian governments. Canada has regressed from nation to colony" (Free trade's shackles, 1995/96).

Manfred Bienefeld, a Canadian economist, spoke at a national conference on social and economic policy alternatives held in Regina, Saskatchewan. Bienefeld (1994) says:

> Incredible as it may seem, it appears that . . . [the Conservative] federal government intentionally relinquished those sovereign powers in order to lock the country more firmly into its neo-conservative nightmare. (p. 22)

Bienefeld continues:

> When Pat Carney as Minister for International Trade was asked why Canada needed a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, she said the main reason was "to ensure that no future Canadian government ever goes back to those bad nationalist policies of the past." The fact this treasonable and utterly undemocratic statement did not lead to the government's resignation or the Minister's resignation or even to an intense public debate is a truly sad comment on our media. (p. 22)

In the debates leading to the Free Trade Agreement, the Mulroney government claimed social programs would not be effected. However, McQuaig (1993) argues that the agreement greatly increased pressure to cut these programs back. He says:

> It has thrown open our border to goods produced by companies paying lower taxes and lower wages, thereby increasing the determination of Canadian companies to bring down Canadian taxes and wage rates. Lower taxes of course diminish our ability to pay for social programs. And so our competition with low-tax countries has become a powerful argument for those . . . who wish to roll back the welfare state. (pp. 107–108)

As a direct result of these policies, unemployment continues to be high, more people are on welfare, food banks have become a growth industry, an increasing number of people are homeless and forced to live on the streets of our cities, and "blaming" and "scapegoating" occur with greater frequency as people try to make sense of what is happening to them.

While the Conservative government was soundly defeated in the 1993 federal election, the Liberal government that replaced it continues down the same path. It has made major funding cuts to the provinces in health, education, and social programs. In the 1995–96 budget, the Liberals announced they would cut payments for these programs by $7 billion over a three-year period. With these cuts, they have signalled a major change in the method of financing these programs, a change that will both paralyze Ottawa's ability to set national standards and plunge Ottawa's place in the national economy back to where it was in 1951 (Stewart, 1995).

The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. In 1994, employees' pay rose by 3 percent, while the average pay of top business executives climbed by 23 percent (CEOs' pay, 1995). The top 1 percent of the population now holds 25 percent of the wealth in Canada. At the same time, the rate of poverty is rapidly rising: nearly one in five Canadians now lives in poverty (Gap between, 1995).

We live in a society where greed is glorified, where corporations and executives make massive profits, while Canadians are being told to "tighten their belts" and "share the pain" in order to get the economy "back on track." For example, in 1995, Canadian banks made a profit of $5.18 billion, while the earnings of their executives rose to outrageous heights. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce increased its profits by 14 percent to $1,015 billion, while its CEO received $1.83 million in salary and bonuses. At the Royal Bank of Canada, profits rose to $1,262 billion in 1995, while its CEO received a whopping $1.66 million. The list goes on (Partridge, 1995). At the same time, we see a tragic assault on the poor taking place in Ontario, under the guise of deficit reduction. While promising to cut provincial income taxes by 30 percent, a move that will benefit the rich, the provincial Conservative government cut welfare rates by 22 percent. It also cut provincial housing projects, job training programs for welfare recipients, and day-care programs designed to enable welfare mothers to enrol in training programs. More cuts are forecast. This assault is being applauded by many (Campbell, 1995), which is an indication of the mean spiritedness that is now sweeping the country. With the dismantling of our social infrastructure, we are quickly moving back to the conditions of the 1930s (Barlow, 1995).

The Challenge for University Adult Educators

One key feature of economic globalization is that it instills a feeling of powerlessness, a belief that "there is nothing we can do." In effect, Canadians are being led to believe that world economic forces are unstoppable (McQuaig, 1991) and that they should support this trend. Bill Blaikie (1992), an NDP member of Parliament, argues that we do have a choice: we can accommodate economic globalization, or we can resist it. He describes the choices:

> The accommodationist says . . . that we really have no option. The accommodationists suggest that those who run the world are increasingly designing a world in which this is the stark reality and that the sooner we get on the bandwagon and redesign ourselves to fit this new world, the better. . . . The accommodationist . . . [believes] . . . that globalization is something like the weather, that we cannot do anything about it, that the emerging global marketplace is not a human creation . . . but a force unto itself to which the wise would do well to submit. (p. 1)

On the other side, Blaikie describes the resisters:

> The resister says that the globalization we have now before us, and which we are asked to embrace, is nothing other than a politically sanitized concept designed to cover up reality. The reality is that the multinational corporate elite want to turn the planet into a playground for themselves, unfettered by nuisance factors like the needs of the community and democratically elected governments and well supplied with the equivalent of cannon fodder, i.e., anxious populations ready to accept injustices or even the dismantling of existing structures of justice in order to secure investment or jobs at the expense of other equally anxious populations less willing or less able to offer the same deal. (p. 1)

Working from the resistance side of the debate, I asked the participants in my study how university adult educators, particularly those of us who work in extension departments, can help to challenge the economic globalization agenda. While there are clear limits to the type of work that can take place within university extension departments, there is still room for some pro-active adult education work around this issue.

Jim, a professor in an arts faculty, believes universities have an obligation to provide education on public policy issues. He points out sadly that academia, in general, has chosen to support the stampede toward globalization. "Virtually every university that I can think of . . . has courses on international economics, on explanations of free trade and trade issues, on multinational corporations, international agreements and so forth." However, Jim says, very few of them offer courses—let alone diplomas and certificates—in local politics, in local economics, and in democratic decision making at the local level. "So a de facto choice has been made to focus at the high end and not the low end. . . . It's sort of an elitist bias that tells us that one is more important than the other." He feels it is important to change this one-sided approach to university education, to re-evaluate our institutional goals and the direction and content of our programming.

John, another professor, believes extension departments must organize programs to address the impact of the new economic order. "What does globalization actually mean?" he asks. "What is going to happen to us? How can we effect what is going to happen? What steps do we take?" John firmly believes that if these questions aren't addressed, unemployed Canadians will eventually resort to violence to vent their anger and frustration.

Kevin, who teaches in an academic adult education department, stresses the importance of ensuring that people have accurate information. "What we must be able to do is describe the full picture of what is happening and how it impacts on our communities and our families and our schools and our workplaces."

Kevin's view echoes that of many writers. For example, Sale (1993), who is vehement in his opposition to the corporate agenda, believes it is essential to expose the values of the globalization ethic, values that are "so deeply held that they are not usually even perceived as arguable" (p. 24). He says:

> Because, you see, if those values are allowed to go unchallenged and unaltered, and the gospel of globalism does indeed triumph, the result cannot be anything but the increasing impoverishment of the South, dangerous economic and political distentions for the North and environmental ruination of the greater part of the earth. (p. 24)

Lind (1993) speaks of the language that has been used to sway people to accept the inevitability of economic globalization. He believes that one of the reasons the globalization rhetoric has such a strong hold on people is that people have been told, and now believe, that the opposite of competitiveness is *un-competitiveness*. He says:

> Un-competitiveness means a lower standard of living, and no one wants that. If we were talking only about economic factors, this would be a true statement, but when we elevate competitiveness to a single over-riding concern it ceases to be a factor and becomes an ethic. For this reason, it is important to understand that the opposite of competitiveness is not un-competitiveness. The opposite of an ethic of competitiveness is an ethic of cooperation. (p. 14)

Jim builds on this when he observes that, because of the language that has been used, Canadians believe they should jump on the globalization bandwagon or "be left behind," support free trade or "stagnate." He asks:

> What's wrong with stagnation? And why stagnation? Why not call it something else? We play word games all the time. Nobody wants to stagnate, because that image is of a pond with mosquitos in it and lots of algae growing on it, right? Whereas "steady state economies" that have a kind of steadiness about them conjures up a different picture in your mind.

Jim argues:

> You can talk about things in ways that begin to counter some of the linguistic aggression that goes on in the globalization field, where it's always "either" "or." "It's either free trade or stagnation. What do you want?" Well, we were presented with that and we opted for free trade because we were petrified of the opposite.

Jim believes that many people would see the sustainable, "steady state" society as described by Daly (1993) as a reasonable alternative. Jim continues:

> A lot of people are questioning whether they want to fly to the moon in the 21st century . . . or whatever it is they are promised. But if the alternative is stagnation, or regression, you get the response, "I don't want to live in tents" or "I don't want to go back to living in caves." That's meant to be the alternative to globalization.

These are "bogus arguments," Jim says, and they are presented to Canadians as the only choice. He firmly believes that university adult educators should begin to confront supporters of economic globalization on the misinformation they spread. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this.

People need reliable information in order to make positive change. Adult educators can be actively involved in cooperative research projects both with community groups and with colleagues in other academic disciplines. Because the issue is so massive, we need to use a variety of research methods: participatory, qualitative, and quantitative. Universities have a mandate to disseminate this research—by publishing in books, in journals, and in the popular press—and to raise community discussion.

Maude Barlow (1995), in a CBC television interview, emphasizes the importance of constantly asking questions. For example:

> Where did the money go? How come corporations don't pay taxes any more? How come wealthy people pay so few taxes? How come we don't make laws in this country any more? How come lobbyists are given the kind of power they are? How come the corporate sector rules in this country?

Keith, who works in an extension department, suggests a number of ways such questions can be discussed and debated: through courses, workshops, projects, public forums (which reflect a variety of viewpoints), and "working" conferences, where people can come together to search for alternatives. Even the "one-shot events," says Stephen, a professor, would help people to begin to understand the implications of economic

globalization. Mary, an extension worker, believes that such events can "lead to the possibility of people saying, 'We're going to do something about this.'"

Kevin believes that adult educators have a critical role to play in challenging economic globalization. He believes we should challenge the corporate agenda, both on the front lines and in support roles, and says:

> When you internationalize the economy, suddenly you're into what people call a market utopia where there's no control. So as adult educators, we shine the light on that dark side and we need to say, "No, that's not good. It can't be done that way. You can't just set up production without thinking about environmental protection, without thinking about fair wages, without thinking about day care for children, without thinking about adequate health." And we have to fight to maintain things like universality, because those programs are going to be under immense pressure as they talk about the "level playing field."

Discussing the experiences of groups opposing the free trade pacts, Jim speaks of the problems associated with being "anti-something." He says, "It's not much fun being against things" and recalls that "the anti-free trade people automatically were a sort of negative group." The pro-free trade side exploited this image and claimed, "They don't want change! They want to stay with the way things are! They're dinosaurs."

In many societies, of course, tradition is a virtue. But in western society, Jim observes, changing of the guard is perceived as being good, almost for its own sake. "So when you're anti, then you're against change." The solution for educators, he says, "is not to be anti-free trade, but to be pro-community. You have to say, 'if you're against this kind of internationalism that goes with globalization, then you have to be *for* something.'"

Jim believes this type of thinking can form the basis for developing extension programs. Instead of putting on an "anti-free trade" seminar series, extension staff can think about a series titled "Community Development" or "History of Community" or "Communities I have Known." However, Jim warns:

> Universities and extension departments have to be very careful not to think they are going to do too much. Economic globalization is a huge issue and it has deep, deep roots and interests. Within the union movement, there are huge disputes between various factions, and within the business community there are disputes as to whether it's a good or a bad thing. So the most you can do is do something about public education.

Both John and Stephen believe extension units should forge alliances with other groups in the challenge to economic globalization. John suggests co-sponsoring sessions with local labour organizations. For Stephen, it is imperative to develop as wide a variety of alliances as possible, not just unions, churches, and social activist groups, but also such organizations as the Kiwanis and the Kinsmen. "We need to move out and create partners, make links with people that you might not expect would be interested in this, to make yourself available to be surprised at who might be a partner."

Stephen, however, speaks of the long-term nature of this task. He has worked with farm organizations for almost three years and recalls that rural people were startled when he told them farm debt was a consequence of economic globalization, not of bad management. "After two years of this, when I go out and say this . . . now I start getting the question, 'Okay, but what do we do about it?'"

For Stephen, there is no magic answer; no single policy is going to solve the problems created by globalization. He says, "It's the very hard work of building up community and it's going to take a lifetime to do it, and maybe more."

Fortunately, the work has already begun. As Nozick (1992) points out:

> Economic globalization is indisputably the most powerful and dominating force in the world today, but it is not the only game in town or the only vision. There is evidence all around us of grassroots resistance to globalization—in community movements, local actions and citizen protest against top-down political authoritarianism. (p. 31)

Barnet and Cavanagh (1994) suggest that "globalization from below" is proceeding rapidly as a reaction to the world economy forces (p. 429). Nozick (1992) argues that popular movements have gained considerable ground since the mid-1980s, particularly the ecology, self-determination, and women's movements, and suggests that each has been "a counterforce to the top-down powers of globalization and an agent for grassroots change and reclaiming communities" (p. 36).

Kevin stresses the importance of making connections with these movements as we challenge the economic globalization forces. He says:

> We have a role in informing ourselves, working with people and supporting those groups, making alliances (strategic or educational or whatever) and strengthening the educational component of those networks or local groups that are working on it. And that's where I think we have a very specific contribution. We have lots of skills and

experience on the educational stuff. A lot of the movements are very good at organizing and they may be very good at research, but they usually use an information strategy or a mobilization strategy. They don't use an educational strategy. That's where we can help in our communities.

Conclusion

As university adult educators, we make choices when we develop education programs. Do we choose to support the exploitation of workers? Or do we choose to support and help shape an alternate vision of society?

Ilsley (1992) believes that adult education is a field that is "designed essentially to help people face the future" (p. 32). He argues that "certain images of the future favor only certain groups of people, depending on the values contained in and served by those images" (p. 32). As Laxer (1993) says, economic globalization creates a "very clear hierarchy of winners and losers" (p. 12). Do we want to simply line up with the so-called "winners" and develop programs that will help business to compete in the global marketplace? Do we want to support a vision of society that justifies inequality? To support this new vision is to support the rhetoric of the corporate agenda and its devastating effects on Canada: "two-tiered health care, inferior public services, high unemployment, more poverty, declining living standards, and mounting social unrest" (Free trade's shackles, 1995/96).

The new global economy "is built on free trade, world markets, competition, unfettered growth, trading blocks, level playing fields, harmonized national programs, transnational corporations and the decline of the nation state" (Nozick, 1992, p. 19). The values of the new global economy centre on inequality, competition, greed, ruthlessness, and selfishness, all of which are clearly incongruent with the traditional adult education values of justice, equality, and fairness.

Lind (1992) refers to economic globalization as "a fundamental moral concern" (p. 9). He believes Canadians have an ethical responsibility to take a strong stand on this issue.

In the past, Canadian adult educators have been involved in some exciting and valuable work (Faris, 1975; Selman, 1991; Welton, 1987a, 1987b). While we seem to have lost much of our original sense of purpose (Cruikshank, 1993; Selman, 1985), it is imperative that we recapture the vision and become actively involved in challenging the corporate agenda. As Stephen says, "Adult educators who don't take economic globalization into account are failing in their responsibility."

Nozick (1992) believes that:

> Communities more than ever need to find the local means and wherewithal to survive the current forces of economic globalization threatening their existence. To this end, there needs to be an alternate vision to the global economy (which is being promoted by the powers-that-be as the only economic reality)—an alternative development strategy which has as its main purpose and goal, the preservation and revitalization of community "for the sake of community," as opposed to "profits for the sake of profit." (p. 6)

While some of the participants, such as Kevin and Stephen, believe adult educators should link with and support social movements and other community groups, others, like Keith, Jim, and Mary, take a less-activist approach and believe we should conduct research and offer courses, seminars, public forums, and working conferences. There is room for, and a need for, both approaches. What is important is that we take a stand and actively work against inequality.

Lind (1993) believes that economic globalization is "a human creation and a social rather than a natural fact" (p. 9). Consequently, it "lies within the realm of human choice" (p. 9). Because economic globalization is socially constructed, we can change it. However, we must act now, as the damage may soon be irreversible.

For Apps (1989), it is important to "broaden the purpose of adult education to focus on the many societal problems [we] face" (p. 28). We need to think of alternate ways of working and living, and we need to support people who are engaged in such work.

We, as university adult educators, must become actively involved in helping to raise and support alternate visions of society. If we fail to do so, we abdicate our responsibilities to the communities in which we live.

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