

On the Commons

The commons is the essential form of wealth that we inherit or create together,
and which must be shared in a sustainable and equitable way.

Ranging from water to biodiversity to historic knowledge to the Internet,
the commons provides the foundation of our social, cultural and economic life.

To ensure a hopeful future for ourselves and coming generations,
we must vigorously protect and promote the commons.

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When our commons are privatized we all lose.

Our commons are taken from us when corporations own our seeds, cities privatize our public services, public funds are used to protect investors while people lose their livelihoods and our communities go bankrupt.

Appropriation of our commons is felt most sharply among the poor, communities of color, farmers, and indigenous communities around the world.



Our future depends on our commons and on each of us as commoners.

We share a mutual responsibility to name, claim, protect and equitably manage what belongs to all of us for future generations.

The commons is about how we collectively manage what we share. Commoners around the world — from Amazon and African villages to urban and suburban neighborhoods — are rising up to protect what rightfully belongs to all of us.

Examples of the commons in action, old and new, can be found all around. Land trusts, co-ops, Wikipedia, community gardens, libraries and many other collaborative ventures show how we can exercise power in the decisions that affect our lives—not just as consumers, constituents and clients, but as citizens, creators and co-owners. In other words, as commoners.

On the Commons believes it's not only possible, but necessary, for us to work together to create a commons-based society.

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE COMMONS

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We help to build and bring visibility to the commons movement

We initiate and catalyze commons work

We develop and encourage commons leadership

Commons Magazine

Visit OnTheCommons.org to read the Commons Magazine—a gateway to the latest thinking and action happening right now in the commons movement. Look for profiles of everyday people who stand up to protect what belongs to all of us and groundbreaking ideas that will be useful in your life as well as current news examined in fresh ways through a commons perspective.

On The Commons recently published book *All That We Share: A Field Guide to the Commons* to help you discover the power of commons-based solutions. The books' contributors regularly visit campuses, congregations, conferences and communities to promote the commons movement and jump start local commons efforts.

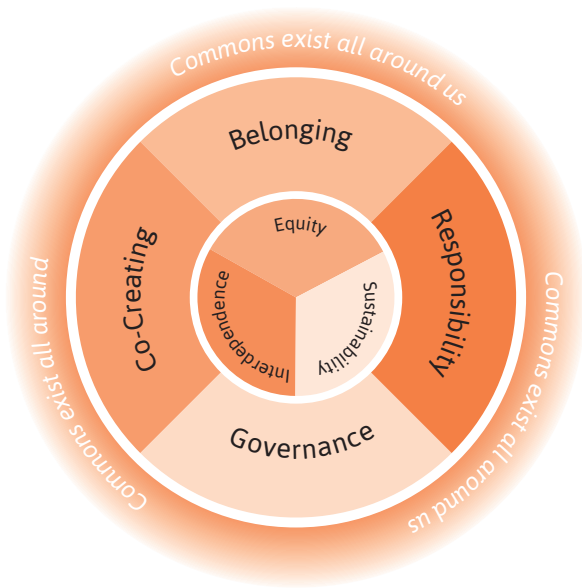
Commons Work

OTC is engaged in many kinds of practical, field-based commons work. We craft new initiatives that promote and increase involvement in communing—the diverse set of practices that bring the commons to life for everyday people.

Additionally, OTC sponsors a network of commons animateurs—people from all walks of life who play a seminal but often invisible role helping communities and organizations to see new possibilities, to claim and share resources in more equitable ways and to develop new capacities for a brighter future.

The Commons Work online resource center at OnTheCommons.org shares stories, resources, practices and connections of our work and network.

A COMMONS MOVEMENT STRATEGY CENTER



I. Center of the Circle

These core principles characterize all commons-based initiatives and any vital commons

EQUITY: Everyone has a fair and just share of our commons to expand opportunities for all.

SUSTAINABILITY: Our common wealth must be cared for so that it can sustain all living beings, including future generations.

INTERDEPENDENCE: Cooperation and connection in our communities, around the world and with our living planet is essential for the future.

II. Second Ring of the Circle

New ways of life arise when our communities and society as a whole become more rooted in the practice of the commons.

SHARED GOVERNANCE: Everyone is engaged in gathering information, making decisions and exercising power to steward common resources.

DEEPENED RESPONSIBILITY: Together we claim the power to repair inequity, restore our common inheritance and expand opportunities for human fulfillment and planetary resilience.

BELONGING: A more expansive view of belonging fosters broader understandings of what ownership means and new structures for how it works.

CO-CREATING: Abundance, not scarcity, prevails when we invite wider participation in our endeavors.

III. Outer Ring of the Circle

Commons exist: what we inherit and create together

THE COMMONS EXISTS ALL AROUND US: We can see it, name it, claim it, protect it and expand it.

THE COMMONS FRAMEWORK

BE A COMMONER!

-  Join the commons movement. Healthy commons needs each of us.
-  Get together with others to share skills, swap ideas, pool resources, exchange tools, grow food.
-  Claim a role in how decisions about our commons are used.
-  Challenge threats to the commons in your community and around the world.
-  Share what you are doing to protect your commons through On the Common's Facebook and Twitter.
-  Start or join a commons initiative. Learn how and connect with others through our online resource *Commons Work* at OntheCommons.org.
-  Read and discuss *All That We Share* and other commons books with friends, colleagues and neighbors.
-  Grow the commons movement by becoming a sustaining donor.

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