



THE ZAPATISTAS OF MEXICO



SMALL FARMERS  
AND FAIR TRADE NETWORKS



CITIZEN JOURNALISM  
OPEN SOURCE NETWORKS  
VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES  
CREATIVE COMMONS

## REFUSING TO PLAY THE WAR GAME

The problem is not about whether to win the (war)game this way or that way, the problem is the game itself. In many ways we are all trapped in this game, rich and poor alike, in the thrall of a system that serves nobody's long-term interests. The game itself needs transforming, with an alternative thinking or logic, different principles and values, through transforming the people and organisations who play it and by experimenting with new forms of organisation, relationship and engagement between them.

“ You never change anything by fighting existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete. ”

R. Buckminster Fuller

## A NEW THINKING IS TAKING HOLD..

There are already signs that new thinking is taking hold. Consider..

The Zapatistas of Mexico, having laid down their army and faced with the possibility of winning political power in Mexico in the 1990s, chose a different role, acknowledging that if they won and took power they would become like other parties, compromised and corrupt. Instead they have focused on transforming their relationship with the idea of government itself, beginning with changing the way they do things themselves. In the Chiapas region, they are re-creating government from below, autonomous and sovereign self-government, authentically theirs, an image of future possibilities.

Across the world small farmers are re-organising their relationships with each other and their customers, creating farmer's markets, decreasing their dependencies on agri-corporates through organic movements and fair trade networks. New forms of ethical community-based banking, like the Grameen banks or the daily savings schemes are growing, enabling millions to access resources to invest in the future and building new forms of solidarity and community at the same time.

The internet is breaking the monopoly of the old media and communication elites, enabling surprising forms of networked organisation to emerge, not only in the North (Obama's ground campaign was an interesting example) but across the globe. Open source networks, creative commons, virtual communities in social networking technologies linking people across the globe are beginning to redefine many relationships, especially amongst young people. Ideas are being exchanged, horizontally, at an extraordinary pace. Indeed, new models are already emerging.

## CREATING SPACE FOR ALTERNATIVES

So new ground is being broken, not just by confronting the old hierarchies and taking over old levers of power, but also by creating space for offering and building alternatives. It is an emergent and experimental challenge to create new forms of organisation and networking and new