

THE MEANING OF HOME

ECO MEANS HOME : 'ECO' COMES FROM THE GREEK WORD OIKOS, MEANING 'HOME'



ECO SYSTEM ("HOME" + "SYSTEM")

Ecosystem means all the relationships in a home - from microorganisms, plants, animals and people to water, soil and air. An Ecosystem includes the terrain and the climate. An Ecosystem is not simply a catalogue of all the things that exist in a place; it more importantly references the complex of relationships. An ecosystem can be as small as a drop of rain or as large as the whole planet. It all depends on where you draw the boundaries of home.

ECO LOGY ("HOME" + "KNOWLEDGE")

Ecology means knowing, reading and understanding home - and by definition, the relationships of home.

ECO NOMY ("HOME" + "MANAGEMENT")

Economy means management of home.

How we organize our relationships in a place, ideally, to take care of the place and each other. But "management of home" can be good or bad, depending on how you do it and to what ends. The purpose of our economy could be turning land, life and labor into property for a few, or returning land, life and labor into a balanced web of stable relationships.

Economy does not mean money, or exchange or financial markets, or trading or Gross Domestic Product. These are simply elements or tools of specific economies. Economies ("how we manage our home") can be measured in many ways: How healthy are the soil, people, water, animals? How much wealth is generated? Who owns the wealth? What even constitutes wealth? Is it money? Well-being? Happiness?

All economic activity has ecological consequences. That doesn't mean that those consequences are always bad. The economic activity of peoples who have developed long relationships with the ecosystem they are a part of have tended towards balance. This traditional evolved knowledge of place is held in language, food, culture and story.

Other human communities have mismanaged home, and have created ecological consequences that are not beneficial to a sustainable relationship with the web of life. But when a people outstrip their resource base, or create damage to an ecosystem in such a way that it can no longer sustain them, they move on or die off - hopefully learning some lessons. Mother Earth has been sufficiently resilient to recover from these paper-cuts. But...

If you globalize the economy, you globalize the ecosystem. The scale and pace of globalization combined with the power imbalance in decision-making has made it virtually impossible for people to read and respond to the changes fast enough - and in fact, we have not. If you globalize the ecosystem and you have a destructive economy (mismanagement of home) then the consequences can be big. Very Big.

The current globalized economy is compromising the life support systems of the planet: destroying biodiversity, exploiting labor, killing cultures, polluting water and disrupting the atmospheric-hydrologic cycle.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE ("HOME" + "JUSTICE")

Ecological Justice is the state of **balance between human communities and healthy ecosystems** based on thriving, mutually beneficial relationships and participatory self-governance. We see Ecological Justice as the key frame to capture our holistic vision of a better way forward.

