

Fourth International Conference on Degrowth
for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity

Short concept

2nd - 6th of September 2014, Leipzig, Germany

Bridging movements and research for the great transformation

1. Introduction

The 4th International Conference on Degrowth will take place in Leipzig from September 2nd till 6th, 2014. It is part of an international cycle of events: so far, there were conferences on degrowth in Paris 2008, in Barcelona 2010 and in Venice and Montréal 2012.

The strategic goal of the conference is the advancement of the degrowth movement. In order to achieve this, the conference facilitates the exchange between scientists, civil society, pioneer projects of a social and ecological economy and artists. The main theme of the conference is „building bridges“. We want to build bridges between the above-mentioned protagonists but also between the degrowth-debate and similar discourses, as well as the Global South and the Global North. The conference aims to give an impulse for a common degrowth vision by bringing together people with different backgrounds.

Our primary target group consists of scientists, activists, practitioners and artists who work on degrowth projects. We want to create links between them and between different regional backgrounds. Secondly, bridges are to be built to reach scientists, activists and practitioners of similar movements, e.g. commons, solidarity economy, unions, church groups, transformation movement, development critics and university groups. Thirdly, we want to reach out to persons from politics, business and civil society

who are interested in degrowth but have not yet learnt much about it. We are currently expecting about 1000 participants from all over the world, though mainly from Europe and Germany in particular.

We feel Leipzig is a perfect venue for Degrowth 2014 as it was a „shrinking city“ for a long time. The people and the administration had to find ways to deal with abandoned houses, derelict land and small budgets. This led to a striving environment for experimental projects one the hand - many examples for degrowth practice and concepts can be found here. However, at the same time the city is struggling to finance its social services and there is a rising growth-driven development and a tendency towards gentrification - this ambiguity constitutes an interesting background for the conference.

2. Programme

The conference will consist of an opening night, three complete days and a closing morning session. The opening event will be open for the general public. Along with a final discussion, the closing event will include a festival and potentially a public action. Since the goal is to build bridges, the conference will not only consist of *scientific sessions*. There will also be *workshops* and *panels*. Open interactive formats such as *open space* and *world cafés* as well as *cultural contributions* will also play an important role. Fur-

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thermore, *excursions* to degrowth projects in and around Leipzig are planned.

Scientists will be invited to hand in proposals for the conference via a *call for papers*. The proposals will be selected in a *peer review process*. There will also be a *call for participation* in order to stimulate a broad contribution, especially from practitioners and social movements, and an exchange between scientific and non-scientific participants.

The programme is oriented along the following guiding questions:

What is the conference about? The *thematic threads* describe the content of the conference and divide it into three main threads: „Organizing society“, „Creating a social and ecological economy“ and „Living conviviality“.

Which story do we unfold? The conference follows three *narrative steps*. The first day is devoted to analysis: „Facing the current crises: critique and resistance“. The second day aims at „Building alliances“ and the third day seeks to develop „Visions and strategies for the transformation“.

Who contributes to the conference in which way? The *perspective* defines the way we look at the content. We want to be sure to include different perspectives such as gender, regional backgrounds, theoretical and practical approaches.

3. Organization

The Conference on Degrowth 2014 is organized using grassroots democracy. The members of the organizational team have equal rights and decisions are made in consensus. The main body is the plenary assembly, which consists of all members of the organizational team. The main work takes place in different working groups: they develop concepts for their area of responsibility, come to an agreement on them with the other groups and implement them autonomously. The existing working groups are: art, coordination, finance, logistics, partners, public

relations, practice&movements, supervision and science. The coordination of the project and the programme is done by two full-time employees as part of the coordination group. Official organizers of the conference are the University of Leipzig, DFG-Research Group Postwachstumsgesellschaften (a research group of the University of Jena), Netzwerk Wachstumswende (a German network on degrowth), Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie (a Leipzig-based think-tank for a social and ecological economy) and Research & Degrowth (founders of the degrowth conferences). Partners so far are Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Anstiftung & Ertoomis, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE), BUND/Friends of the Earth Germany, VÖÖ and VÖW (two German associations for ecological economics), Ernst-Friedrich-Schumacher-Society Munich, Institut für Wachstumsstudien (Institute for studies on growth), Wuppertal Institut and Initiativkreis „Anders wachsen“ (an initiative of the German protestant church on degrowth).

4. Support

You'd like to support the 4th International Conference on Degrowth? Great!

If you want to join us as an individual, you can do so by becoming a member of the organizational team. In this case, please contact Nina Treu at

coordination@degrowth.de.

If you want to support us with your organization, you can become an official partner of the conference and make a financial, organizational or content-based contribution. This option is open to all groups and organizations who pursue social, ecological and emancipatory goals. If you are interested, please contact Daniel Constein,

partners@degrowth.de.

Organizers:

