

A woman with tattoos, wearing a dark tank top and jeans, is working in a garden. She is bent over, handling a large pile of straw or hay. The garden is filled with various plants, including blue hydrangeas and purple flowers. In the background, there is a blue house with a grey roof.

2019 Annual Report

A man wearing a light-colored cap, sunglasses, and a plaid shirt is working in a garden. He is bent over, handling straw or hay. The garden is filled with various plants, including green leafy vegetables and red flowers. In the background, there is a white house with a red roof and a red car.

WE CAN MEET OUR NEEDS
WITHOUT BEING EXPLOITED
WITHOUT EXPLOITING OTHERS
WITHOUT EXPLOITING THE ENVIRONMENT

The logo for Cooperation Humboldt, featuring a stylized white swirl design on a dark blue background.

**cooperation
humboldt**

Our Mission

Cooperation Humboldt helps to build a solidarity economy on California's North Coast. We support existing cooperative efforts and create new solutions where needed.

A solidarity economy empowers us to meet our needs in harmony with nature, without exploiting anyone. It puts people and planet over profit by prioritizing collaboration over competition and cooperation over domination.

What is a Solidarity Economy?

EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

- Power over
- **Domination**
- Competitive
- **Commodity based**

vs.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

- Power with
- **Cooperation**
- Collaborative
- **Needs based**

2019 Highlights

- Winter
- » Moved into first physical office space
 - » **Food Drive for furloughed federal workers in partnership with labor unions**
- Spring
- » 2nd Annual Artists Dismantling Capitalism
 - » **Planted 23 free community fruit trees in publicly accessible spaces**
 - » Wardrobe of Joy Grand Opening
 - » **Began hosting Eureka Food Not Bombs for weekly meal prep**
 - » Post Capitalism Conference at HSU
 - » **Began hosting monthly Queer Safe Space potlucks**
 - » Established greenhouse partnership with North Coast Community Garden Collaborative
- Summer
- » **Launched Hosting Hub partnership with Centro del Pueblo to support local sponsorship of asylum seekers**
 - » Completed seven lawn conversions
 - » **Established Media Lending Library**
 - » Began Community Benefits Agreement discussions with organized labor and other local nonprofits
- Fall
- » **Hosted first annual Edible Garden Tour**
 - » Launched Care & Wellness Team
 - » **Established Tool Lending Library**

Front Lawn Conversion
Eureka, CA
2018-2019

Food Production & Distribution



Resilient communities are built on strong neighborhoods. As we come to terms with the reality of the climate crisis and its current and future impacts on our society, we at Cooperation Humboldt believe that rediscovering neighborly relationships and reconnecting with traditional skills will become increasingly critical – not only to our happiness and well-being – but to our very survival.

As we work to fulfill our mission to create a solidarity economy on the North Coast, one important area of focus is food. Nutritious food is a fundamental human right that should never be dependent on wealth or income, and our food team is building local collaborative solutions to create this new reality.

Our Little Free Pantry project installs boxes in locations where anyone can donate non-perishable foods or personal care items, and anyone can take what they need – 24 hours a day, no questions asked. The 12 boxes we've installed to date have been well received by their neighborhoods, and pantry stewards have reported a significant increase in meaningful conversations with their neighbors as a result.

Early this year, we planted 23 free fruit trees in locations where they can be enjoyed by anyone who passes by. Over the upcoming years, the hosts of these trees will always make the bounty available to anyone passing by who would like to take some. This is another tangible way to challenge the notion of food as a commodity that must be bought and sold.

Perhaps our most energizing project this year has been our lawn conversions. Cooperation Humboldt volunteers have worked to convert eight front lawns into productive gardens featuring edible plants, beneficial pollinators, and native plants. Utilizing eco-friendly techniques like sheet mulching, we're using low cost, locally sourced resources – cardboard from local retailers, manure from local horses, and wood chips from local tree companies – to turn previously underutilized front yards into neighborhood assets – beautiful and productive gardens that support wildlife and nourish neighbors for years to come.

To help insure that gardeners are prepared to make good use of their home-grown bounty, we've also begun offering a variety of helpful

tools at harvest time. These include a workshop on building solar dehydrators, a community apple pressing event in partnership with the North Coast Community Garden Collaborative, and the launch of our Tool Lending Library, where members can borrow from an assortment of tools for the garden and beyond.

We're proud of what we've accomplished to increase local folks' skills and bring neighbors together over the past year, and excited for what can come next. We invite you to connect with Cooperation Humboldt to explore how you can join our efforts to build a more resilient community – one where everyone has what they need, no one is exploited, and nature is treated with the reverence it deserves.



Front Lawn Conversion
Eureka, CA
January 2019

Nutritious food is a fundamental human right that should never be dependent on wealth or income, and our food team is building local collaborative solutions to create this new reality.

Economic Democracy

Our Economic Democracy program area exists to help transition our local economy away from the current extraction-oriented model to a solidarity-oriented model.

In order to assist this transition, in 2019 we focused on public banking and worker cooperatives.

A public bank is a bank operated in the public interest, owned by the people through their representative governments. Public banks invest in Main Street not Wall Street, and promote a transparent, independent and publicly governed finance system accountable to the people they serve. Infrastructure costs can be literally halved, doubling community investment power.

This allows public banks to focus on pressing local needs like affordable housing, clean renewable energy, and public infrastructure projects. Mega-banks profit from financing fossil fuels, private prisons, weapons manufacturers, fraudulent business practices and other reprehensible activities that our communities are actively fighting against.

Cooperation Humboldt co-founder David Cobb serves on the Steering Committee of the California Public Banking Alliance, and helped to pass AB 857 this year - a historic law that enables the creation of public banks in California.

In 2020 we will build on this momentum, collaborating with public banking advocates in several other Northern California counties to focus on the creation of a 'Regional Bank of the North Coast.'

Cooperative businesses (or co-ops) are those that are owned by their members or workers, rather than by shareholders.

Worker cooperatives empower workers to make decisions that impact their lives and livelihoods, learn new skills, and share equally in a business's profits. Employee-owned businesses are more productive and have more stability than traditional businesses, and worker owned co-ops have much lower rates of employee turnover and business closure, are almost always more profitable, and pay better wages to workers.

Because the people doing the work for the company are also the ones who own the company, they feel a greater sense of responsibility for and personal stake in helping the business succeed. Equally important, a worker owned co-op instills a sense of autonomy, dignity and empowerment. We believe these are essential characteristics for a self-governing people.

We are actively incubating a worker-owned construction company, and have explored the possibility of a community composting co-op.

Care & Wellness

Cooperation Humboldt's Care and Wellness Team formed in mid 2019 with the shared belief that health, wellness, and care are fundamental human rights.

The mission of the team is to inspire transformation by creating education, services, and community partnerships that remove the profit motives of traditional healthcare, empowering people to care for others and actively participate in their own well being.

In collaboration with Humboldt Parent Hive, the team is preparing to launch their first project, cooperative childcare.



Arts & Culture

We hosted our second Artists Dismantling Capitalism symposium in February in Arcata. Over 150 people, many of them students from HSU, attended this one-day event examining the role of art and culture in social change. More than 18 local artists came together to share their liberatory practices in 12 workshops offered over the course of the day. Planning has begun for the third annual convergence in 2020.

Several of these artists have come together to incubate a Humboldt Artist's Guild to address the needs of artists in our community. The most prominent need determined is the lack of affordable housing and work space for artists.

In the Fall, our Art & Culture lead, Ruthi Engelke, produced and directed "The Revolutionists," a feminist and intersectional play that addresses the importance of art and

culture as storytelling and world-changing. We hosted a talk-back with four local artists who employ their craft as a tool of change.

Ruthi also presented a Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) workshop - 'Imagining a Solidarity Economy' many times throughout the year - in HSU classes, at Artists Dismantling Capitalism, at our Post-Capitalism Conference, in a public workshop, and by invitation at a Solidarity Economy Network training in Jackson, Mississippi this year.

Image Theatre is employed to discuss how to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative one. Humboldt TO is using this workshop to re-launch with 5-7 performers who will be using TO techniques to teach principles of the Solidarity Economy in support of other progressive issues, values, and organizations.

Humboldt Hosting Hub

We are proud to be partnering with Centro del Pueblo and Freedom for Immigrants to establish a community-based alternative response to immigration.

Our program matches local folks willing to physically host an asylum seeker with an individual currently in ICE detention. This provides a safe and welcoming way for asylum seekers to heal while they work towards permanency in the U.S.

These pairings are supported by teams of wrap-around volunteers who help with meals, transportation, finances, and more.

Freedom for Immigrants hopes that this project will serve as a model that can be implemented nationwide, to demonstrate a tangible alternative to criminalizing immigration.



Artists Dismantling Capitalism
Arcata, CA
February 2019

Wardrobe of Joy

Wardrobe of Joy is a free clothing closet providing quality pre-owned clothing for all ages, genders, and occasions located in Eureka.

By partnering with Cooperation Humboldt, the founder of this program was able to see her dream for giving back to her community become a reality, and she's now able to provide a much-needed service for low income folks in and around Eureka.





Post Capitalism Conference
Arcata, CA
April 2019

Education

Cooperation Humboldt is committed to ongoing education, both for our own volunteers and for the broader community.

We facilitate 12-week study group cohorts to explore topics including solidarity economy theory and practice, race, patriarchy, and local history in a small group setting. These sessions not only increase participants' individual understanding of the topics discussed; they also build social solidarity and a shared analysis of where we are, where we want to go, and how we might get there.

We also offer regular volunteer workshops to deepen our understanding of the issues we're facing (both internally and externally), and how we can best function as individuals and as a group to improve ourselves and our community.

Our public educational offerings in 2019 included Artists Dismantling Capitalism in February, the Post Capitalism Conference at HSU in April, four movie nights, and an Edible Garden Tour that inspired 150 attendees to imagine what can be grown in a typical yard.

Civic Engagement

We at Cooperation Humboldt understand that movements cannot succeed without engaging in elections and other civic processes.

There are many avenues that nonprofits can pursue in this arena, including candidate questionnaires, candidate forums, and work on legislation. We are proud to have partnered with other local nonprofits, as well as with our brothers and sisters in organized labor, to facilitate forums for board of supervisors and city council candidates in 2018, and we plan to do so again in 2020.

In 2019, we've advocated for ranked choice voting, public banking, and universal healthcare, at both the local and state level.

We're also engaging in a collaborative process, alongside about 10 other local labor and nonprofit groups, to establish a Community Benefits Agreement that would codify a set of best practices for proposed new business/infrastructure projects.

We deeply value the relationships we've built with allied local organizations through this work.



Single Payer Healthcare Rally
Jim Wood's office in Eureka, CA
September 2017

What We Believe

- We believe that our current institutions are racist, sexist, and class oppressive.
- **We believe our current economic system is based upon exploitation and oppression, and that it will destroy the planet if we do not shift to a cooperative and sustainable model.**
- We believe it is possible to create new institutions that incentivize cooperation, love, compassion and kindness.
- **We believe in lifting up and supporting groups that are doing grassroots organizing with working class people and people of color, creating new models for a joyous and collaborative new future.**
- We believe we can work with you (or your organization) even if you do not believe these things.

cooperationhumboldt.org

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Little Free Pantry at HUUF
Bayside, CA
June 2019

