



News and views from the School

Twice termly: Issue no 14

Welcome to Insight No. 14.



I hope you will enjoy the three articles in this issue, all contributions from students in the School worldwide.

- Economics with Justice
- Families Without Borders
- School represented at the UN
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Go to the website Schoolinsight for sign-up form, back issues and other material. Please let me know if you know a student who has a story to tell - I'd love to hear about it.

With very best wishes,

Christine Lambie, editor



Last summer Dr Bowman was appointed head of the Economics Faculty in London. He has a PhD in chemistry and had previously spent 20 years teaching at St James.

Economics with Justice Peter Bowman, London

Economics is of immense importance because the prevailing ideas in the subject so strongly impact on the way we all live. They will influence whether we all enjoy prosperity together, or have a situation where wealth is accumulated by a few whilst the remainder struggle. Everyone partakes in the economy but the economist formulates the ideas and so sets the direction.

By connecting with true understanding it should be possible to set the direction in a way that can benefit humanity as a whole as well as the planet on which we live.

Opportunity after the Crash

This is a time of great opportunity for economics. In the aftermath of the crash of 2008 the flaws, weaknesses and injustices of the current economic system have become more and more apparent. A space has appeared into which fresh ideas can enter.

One of the most obvious needs exposed in economics is to restore the ethical basis of the subject. In the School our approach has been to develop “Economics with Justice.” The basic idea is that rather than taking “growth” or “efficiency” or “increased profitability” as the criterion for judging the success of a particular policy we should consider whether the outcome is just for all concerned whilst also taking into consideration our natural environment.

Initial stirrings

I returned to the study of economics a few years ago after a long gap. At that time I was fortunate to have the opportunity to stop, take stock, consider what was really important and in what area I really wanted to make a contribution. I had originally become interested in the subject of Economics when I was a student whilst studying chemistry at Oxford. I had recently joined the School.

I attended the Economics course and read Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty*. These two in combination made a deep impression, resonating with an innate sense of justice. They provided an insight into the underlying economic situation and the deeply ingrained injustices found there. They made me see the world in a different way. The way things worked out, those initial stirrings were not channelled at the time but remained dormant as I followed a career in science teaching.

When I returned to study economics some 30 years later I found that the approach the School was taking had moved on considerably. Although still grounded in the principles of Henry George and those of Leon MacLaren, there was now a strong urge to move forward, to make the economics relevant to the conditions as they are in the 21st century and for students to develop skills needed to research, write and speak. I was very happy to join this environment.

What we offer

Our main offering to the public is the three-term course in Economics with Justice. This is provided in London and other Schools. The students appreciate the ‘objective’ presentation and the space to question openly and discuss the content presented. In addition we offer a programme of public lectures to cater for students who are not able to attend on a regular basis. These lectures are held at weekends with speakers both from the School as well as visiting guests.

Developments

A useful recent development has been the way the Economics Faculty has worked with like-minded people in other organizations. Through the Coalition for Economic Justice, organizations that share the belief that the economic rent of land provides a natural basis for public revenue have been able to co-operate in a number of ways.

Last summer the School held a very successful joint conference with the Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative (GCGI) and from this other opportunities have developed. The recent publication of *The Science of Economics – The Economic Teaching of Leon MacLaren* edited by Raymond Makewell means the School’s economic teaching is now available both to the general public and to academia.

Economics and philosophy

A unique feature of the School is the way it has developed the study of both economics and philosophy together. The philosophical study has been a very practical one. Over many years, through enquiry and shared experience, a very full understanding has built up of what it is to be human in the finest and fullest

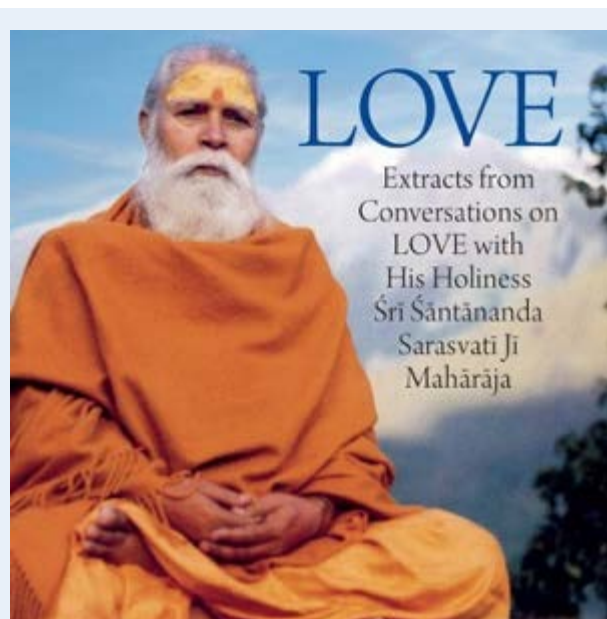
sense. This has had a strong impact on the study of economics.

Recently the School's economics faculty has been working on beginning a new formulation of the subject. It is centred around the concept of the householder. Conventional economics has invented the concept of homo economicus - a rational, self-interested, utility-maximizing individual existing as a convenient consumer of the goods and services produced by profit-maximising corporations. Our proposal is that economics should be centred on real human beings who in practice live in households of various types and have very real needs and aspirations. The idea is that the economy should be arranged to serve these important realities.

Vision

My vision for the future is that the economics developed in the School, strongly influenced by the philosophy, should make a significant contribution to the subject as a whole in the world, helping to make it a more human science.

This is not just an academic matter. The advice that policymakers take from economists comes to affect the way we live. Our vision of the future is an economics that puts the welfare of households at its centre and aims at real prosperity for all, that recognizes the fullness of human potential and seeks to provide the conditions where this can be realized.



Words of Wisdom

Love CD:

Shri Shantananda Saraswati Maharaja has been the inspiration for the School since 1965.

This CD is a recording of extracts from conversations with Shri Shantananda Saraswati Maharaja, providing some profound questions and answers concerning aspects of love, faith and relationships. The anthology is read by two senior students who have studied his teachings over decades. Available from the School bookshop. NEW option to order online: go to [SchoolBookshop](#).

Terri Khonsari (pictured top centre) has been a student in San Francisco since 2010. She tells the adventure of her life so far, and the development of family for her. She was awarded the global citizen award from the United Nations association in the East Bay in October 2012 for the impact of her work on International Development.



Families Without Borders Terri Khonsari, San Francisco

I was born and raised in Iran, married when I was 19 years and had a daughter when I was 20. My husband and I decided to leave the country for Germany with our 18-month-old toddler. After three months living in Germany, he left me and our daughter at a train station and I instantly became a single mom prior to my 22nd birthday. He offered a divorce in Iran, which was not an option for me considering the political situation. He then offered either to take the child and I would never see her again, or to give her to me and he would not support or take any interest in her. I chose the latter, and the new and more interesting chapter of my life started.

I found myself in a country that I did not know anything about. I had very little money in my pocket, five suitcases to carry, an 18 month-old toddler who was confused about what was going on, no friends or family to go to and a brand new challenging and/or exciting life in front of me!

Fast-forward 27 years: my daughter is a well-rounded young attorney, having graduated from one of the top universities and law schools in America. Her area of focus is immigration and refugee rights. She started a legal service non-profit organization and services the poor immigrants and refugees from Africa, South America and the Middle East. She speaks five languages fluently, she runs ultra marathons, and dances to balance her life. Most importantly she loves the human family and has a positive outlook on life. I now hold a Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, speak three languages, am happily remarried and live a fulfilled life in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Sierra Leone

In December of 2009 the universe put a greater responsibility in my path, something greater and more meaningful than the small "me." I went to Sierra Leone to visit my daughter who was there on a Fulbright fellowship, and the more fulfilling part of my life started.

There was a great need for help. I was touched and had to do something. The work started small and is growing behind me. My daughter said it costs US\$50 to send a child to school for one year and yet many families cannot afford it. Children stop going to school in the middle of their elementary school, middle school or high school because their families cannot afford it.

Families Without Borders

I asked my friends and family if anyone wanted to support a child to go to school for one year. This was the beginning of a work that later became an official non-profit charity organization, Families Without Borders, with the focus on empowering families to become self sufficient. Our focus is education, health and economic sustainability.

We started providing school supplies and sponsorships to 45 children and bought a generator for the school in the village. Today, we are serving thousands of children and families in rural areas. The work is very fulfilling and rewarding.

I have become close to a family which is now my Sierra Leonean family; Mr. T and Mrs. T live in Makeni, the fourth largest city in Sierra Leone. Our college students are all in Makeni but most of our work is in remote villages where Mr. T's family come from. The people in the villages that we serve are now my extended family.

What I learn

I see the people in Sierra Leone as rich people in a special way. I learn so much every time I go there. The love, purity and genuine feelings that are shared is a very special experience that takes me back year after year and gives me the motivation to continue the work. I feel honored to be able to serve my Sierra Leone family. What I receive is much greater than what we all give; this does not compare with anything else in life.

Living in the moment and being happy just because we exist, is a big lesson that I learn from my Sierra Leone family. They are happy to live and they are happy to be; I have not experienced them in search of happiness. When I look at the children with their faces happy, just because I smile at them or hold their hands, I start thinking about the true meaning of happiness and joy. Life becomes so much more beautiful and so much more simple.

Family

I also have to thank the School of Practical Philosophy in California for the tremendous support that I have received for our work in Sierra Leone. The majority of our funding either comes from the students or their families and friends; our website is built by one of my School friends. Everyone who has taken a piece of the work does it wholeheartedly.

Today, between the teachings from the school and my work in Africa, I feel like I live the most fulfilling life I could wish for. The service that I am honored to offer and the teachings that I am privileged to receive are giving me the greatest fulfillment. It's behind joy and happiness. It's a deeper level of satisfaction that I cannot compare with all my other experiences in life.

The School and the circle of friends from the School have become my immediate local family. The people in Sierra Leone are now my family across the Oceans. I don't feel much difference between my feelings for my Sierra Leonean family and my biological family in Iran. I don't know if I love my Sierra Leonean son, Ibrahim, whom we sponsor to go to college much less than my biological daughter! It feels good to expand the meaning of relationships. At the end of the day we are all part of one big human family.

See more at [FamiliesWithoutBorders](#). Contact Terri on the contact page of her website.



Top Tips - items recommended by readers

The Science of Economics This book is based on the 3-year course prepared by Mr MacLaren in the 1960's. Editor Raymond Makewell (student in Sydney) presents the original subject matter revised with more examples and statistics. NEW option to order online: go to [SchoolBookshop](#).

2. Living Bridge: This 5 minute video details the most successful execution / construction of a living Bridge with a life span of many centuries in one of the most remote parts of the world, Assam.

Go to [LivingBridge](#)

3. **TED talk.** Following the recent news about North Korea, readers may be interested to watch this young woman's account of her escape from North Korea. Go to [TEDLee](#).

San Francisco School hosts Mr Donald Lambie

4. **TEDMED talk.** Eli Beer tells how first response medical services have been re-invented, saving 40,000 lives this year alone. Inspiring. Go to [TEDBeer](#). The SF School was started by Mariam Safinia in 2004 and now has 130 students. In April, Mr Lambie conducted a weekend at the beautiful Stillheart Retreat Centre, with 60 students both from SF and Arizona. One student wrote after the weekend: *Thanks for the greatest ever retreat any one could have given - the kind of magical atmosphere that goes beyond teaching. I have grown so differently in this retreat that I cannot believe! It is time to move from me and my improvements to something bigger.*

See the San Francisco School website: [SPPCalifornia](#)



Donald Lambie and Mariam Safinia



Meeting at Stillheart Retreat Centre



Perfect location



Principal of London School speaking at the UN

Ian Mason, Principal of the School of Economic Science in London was invited (as an outcome of an annual economics lecture) to address the United Nations' Harmony with Nature Dialogue on 22 April in New York. He cited the importance of justice in economic progress, and recognition of a duty of care for Nature and for land, as essential measures to developing a more natural way of living for all people, everywhere.

The dialogue, in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, was opened by the President of the General Assembly. This was followed by a short presentation by the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon.

The four panellists, including the Principal of the School, then each gave 15 minute presentations before the subject was opened for wider discussion. For the full text of Ian Mason's address go to [MasonUN](#). For a summary of the entire proceedings, go to [AprilUN](#). Mr Mason is introduced at around 51 minutes.

To see more of Mr Mason discussing economics, go to this excellent interview: [UTubeMason](#).

Reader Feedback



*Thank you for including me in your mailing list for Insight, I will look forward to each copy and its inspiring read. I attended the Pietermaritzburg school for ten years until I moved from there to a new place in November last year. Although I have settled very well in Wakkerstroom and love living here, I miss my weekly lessons in philosophy. The wisdom for daily living and the practices taught have enabled me to live my retirement years to the full. The tools I received from the School will stay with me for the rest of my days. For this I am very grateful. **South Africa***

Dear Reader, I'm so glad you found your time in the School valuable. Please remember, if you'd like to reconnect with the School, you could always join an online class. Details available at [InsightDL](#). Editor

*As usual, I greatly enjoyed reading Insight, with its articles that always seem so pertinent to life's most significant issues. My only complaint is that for some reason no apostrophes appear in the text. I know it is fashionable to omit them, but in my view to do so weakens the clarity of the writing, and appears sloppy. I suspect it was caused by a technical rather than an editing reason, as every single one is gone, even in the word "I've" (i.e. I have). **Oxford UK.***

Dear Reader, I'd be annoyed too if all the apostrophes had gone. Some email accounts distort the newsletter, so always click on View Web Version at the top if you've any problems and you'll see it as it was created! Editor

Thanks for reading

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Please keep that feedback coming. I need all your suggestions of personal stories, insights, links, articles, cartoons, video clips – anything that will be of interest to our philosophy community. Do you know someone in the School who has an interesting story to tell? E-mail me at: editor@seslondon.org. Thanks again for reading, CL

The views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the Fellowship of the School of Economic Science

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