

Debt for Climate: an introduction to the global movement [workshop plan]



Spring 2024

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1. Introduction

Document objective: Guidelines for a workshop aiming to connect people who care about the climate to the importance of debt and introduce them to Debt for Climate. It describes what we did, how, and why. It provides you with editable print-outs for most of the exercises.



Document structure:

1. Introduction (p2)
2. Theory and feedback (p3)
3. Facilitation plan (p4-12)
4. Workshop materials (p13)
5. Printable templates (p14-18)

Context: As part of Earth Night (where nightlife meets climate justice), we hosted a workshop in Barcelona on the connections between the climate crisis and debt, and of course Debt for Climate. The game aspect was tested on friends first, and the full workshop was in April 2024. The audience was people who care and consider themselves active on the climate crisis, but know little-to-nothing about debt. **This feels like an audience that many chapters will be engaging with so we hope that, by sharing these lessons, this workshop can be a useful tool for D4C chapters elsewhere.**

Workshop Objective:

Plant the seed.

- Primary objective: make people aware of sovereign debt problem as a colonial problem and how it is related to the climate crisis
- Primary objective: make people aware of D4C - its origins and strategy
- Secondary objective: get people to contemplate on how their work/activism on climate can also include action on debt
- Other objectives: recruit to D4C, fundraising

Workshop scale:

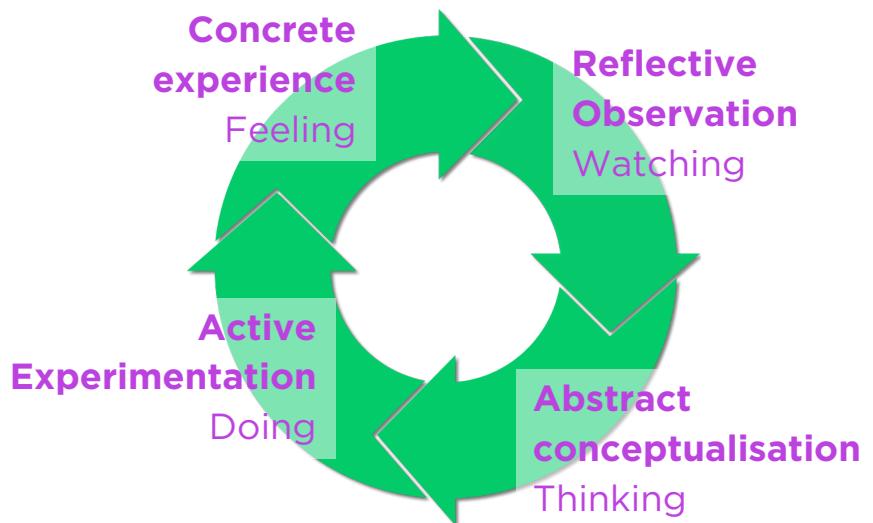
12-21 people, 1.5-2h

Who's 'we': Tanguy (D4C Spain) and Bascule coop (Fede, Anouk, Rosalie), a radical consultancy for socio-ecological transformations who provided time pro-bono. Fede has also done research for D4C.

Contact: You can contact Tanguy on Signal (or tanguy.tomes@hotmail.com) with any queries or concerns! Bascule are also available to discuss support, you can contact Fede at fguarachi@gmail.com

2. Theory and Feedback

Facilitation theory: This workshop started by recognising that knowledge is not just a rational thing - it also requires emotional connection and different ways of understanding. Embodied experiences (like games!) can have a lot of value in getting people around that process. And so, by doing an interactive workshop rather than a fact-heavy presentation, we might be able to get people to learn on a deep and long-lasting level. We took inspiration from ideas in Kolb's Flow of Learning, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Mindell's Sitting with Fire, and the Prevention Staircase.



Kolb's (1984) flow of learning: it's not just thinking and watching!

Know your audience: When planning, we predicted our audience would be: privileged sustainability professionals and depoliticised environmentalists. People who care about the climate but perhaps don't see capitalism/neocolonialism as the problem(s). Age 20-50ish, mostly middle class and up. Varied politics and varied levels of technical understanding of climate/finance.

Feedback: As facilitators, we were very happy with how it went! The atmosphere was good, we managed to hold different political perspectives and knowledge levels, and got some great feedback from participants:

“I feel driven to be more involved going forward”

“It was nice the way you did it, to talk about such a serious topic in such a fun and dynamic way”

“What's inspiring is seeing how debt and climate can become common sense for everyone once someone explains how it's connected”

“In my mind, climate change was already connected to money and what people do to get money, but this direct connection of debt to climate [was new to me]”

“I'm very interested to learn more. Very interesting and so many more times better than I expected”

“What I'll be taking back is awareness of how little I know about this and I'm going to get nerdy about it”

“I'm taking away a sense of being inspired.”

3. Facilitation plan

Overall workshop structure:

Section	Time	Description and objective
0. Arrivals	10mn	Allow time for participants to arrive (late!); facilitators make some small talk with participants, perhaps play some music.
1. Intros	5mn	Brief introductions from participants to get them talking in the space; facilitators give introductions + set workshop expectations.
2. Sociograms	10mn	Quick exercise to understand perspectives in the room and get everyone moving in the space.
3. Game	30mn	Participants are given a character and try to progress as far as possible along a 'green transition' pathway. After 10 minutes, facilitators prompt reflections based on what participants see / felt.
4. Talk	15mn	A short-ish talk on 4 points connecting debt, climate, and D4C. Relate it to the game / reflections.
5. Questions	10mn	Space for questions, comments, and observations from participants. More learning.
6. Takeaways	10mn	Give hand-outs with more resources, go around circle asking participants and facilitators for something they'll take away from the workshop. Close the space.
<i>Total</i>	<i>1h30</i>	

Space layout: In the space, ideally you will have room to set out the 'green transition pathway' before the workshop begins and a separate area (without sheets of paper on the floor) to sit at the beginning and do the sociograms. It might be helpful to have a table nearby on which you can put your materials (notes, sociogram papers, pre-prepared envelopes for the game, and the handouts).

This is how we set up ->



Facilitators: To do the workshop as we did it, you will need 3 facilitators. It could be adapted to 2.

Materials: Full material list can be found in Section 4

3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
0. Arrivals	10mn	Allow time for participants to arrive (late!); facilitators make some small talk, perhaps play some music.

Have participants leave their stuff to one side and join a circle sat down on the floor, with you as facilitators. Make some small talk about their day so far and their connection to the place (e.g. "have you been here before"; "how long have you lived in [Barcelona]?"'). Create a calm, curious, welcoming atmosphere. Allowing for this time makes the rest of the timekeeping less stressful - people *always* arrive late!

Materials: cushions or chairs to make people comfortable, speaker (optional)

Facilitation: all sat in the circle - all can try to make small talk but as long as one person is, it's ok

Section	Time	Description and objective
1. Intros	10mn	Brief introductions from participants to get them talking in the space; facilitators give introductions + set workshop expectations.

Go around the circle and get participants to introduce themselves (name, pronouns if they want to share, and something that excites them in the environmental movement).

Facilitators do the same - identifying themselves as facilitators, and sharing any groups they're associated with - and then introduce the workshop:

- **Objective:** introduce us all to international debt - a topic which is very important to climate change but receives too little attention.
- **Structure:** a little exercise, then a game, reflections and then a brief talk
- **Guidelines for creating a safe space:** no such thing as a stupid ideas or answers, respectful of others, we're all here to learn and be curious, every exercise is optional (always the option to sit out and observe).

We aimed to create a calm, curious, friendly atmosphere but give people some understanding of who we were and what to expect for the time ahead.

Note: If there are more people, this section will take longer!

Materials: cushions or chairs to make people comfortable

Facilitation: All facilitators introduce themselves, but we had just one facilitator leading this section



3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

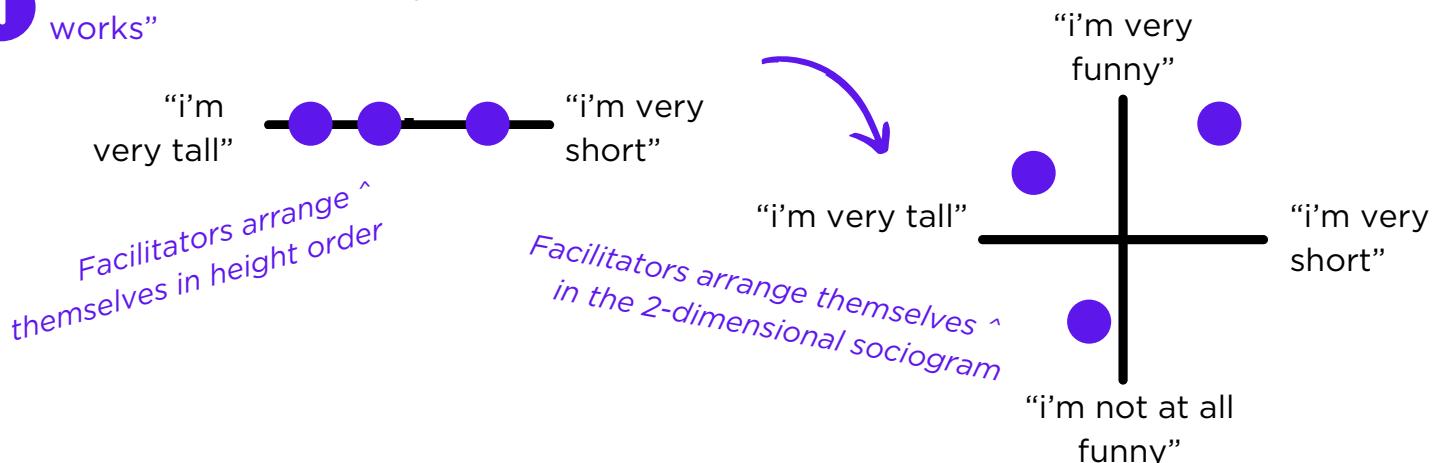
Section	Time	Description and objective
2. Sociograms	10mn	Quick exercise to understand perspectives in the room and get everyone moving in the space.

Here, we asked if anyone knew what a sociogram* was - answer was no so we got participants to stand up, make some room, to demonstrate.

*A sociogram is a graph of social dynamics. Here, people make the graph with their own bodies, placing themselves in space according to how much they identify with different statements

To facilitate sociograms: **introduce** the axes, allow people time to **arrange** themselves, then **interpret** together. When interpreting, start by asking what people see around them - it can be very obvious! Add what patterns and outliers you see. Perhaps ask someone who is on their own (or someone from a clump) to say a little bit why they have put themselves there.

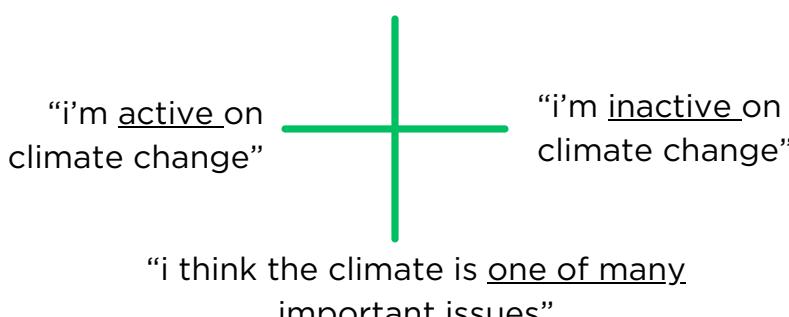
1 "ok, so first we'll show you how it works"



Check everyone understands the idea: we arrange ourselves according to the 2 axes in space and then can interpret by looking around us. Now participants try!

2 "first we'll look at your relationship with the climate crisis"

"i think the climate is the most important issue we face"



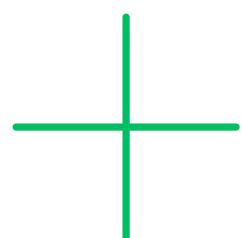
3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
2. Sociograms	10mn	Quick exercise to understand perspectives in the room and get everyone moving in the space.

3 “next one is more about responsibility for addressing it”

“addressing the climate crisis is responsibility of Global North”

“i think individual action is important”



“i think collective...”

“... of Global South”

Check people understand Global North/South terminology - acknowledge it's imperfect!

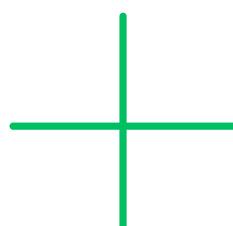
Remember: **introduce** axes, **arrange** bodies, **interpret** together

**be ready to clarify and explain: public external debt!

4 “last one focusses more on debt***”

“i think debt is a problem”

“i know a lot about debt”



“... debt is not a problem”

“i know very little about debt”



Close the exercise and try to summarise the lessons (e.g. “so now we understand better who we have in the room: lots of people who are active on climate, different views on where responsibility lies, some people with some knowledge of debt but most without much at all - and that's ok, that's what we're here for!”)

Materials: 12 A4 paper with masking tape, split into 3 groups of 4. [We prepared these in advance so that they were already in the right order]. Use chairs to stick these to if walls are not available.
Facilitation: one person can lead this whole exercise, other facilitators participate

3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
3. Game	30mn	Participants are given a character and try to progress as far as possible along a 'green transition' pathway. After 10 minutes, facilitators prompt reflections based on what participants see / felt.

After the sociogram, we moved towards the green transition pathway and introduced the game! This section has a [game phase](#) and a [reflection phase](#). The audio of us introducing the game is available [here](#).

Game phase (20mn)

- **Objective:** To complete the green transition / to reach the end of the path
- **Gameplay:** teams of 2 or 3
 - Step 1: Teams look at pathway and see what they would like to choose
 - Step 2: Teams receive an envelope (containing a persona profile and some ‘coins’) and get into character
 - Step 3: Teams pay their debt to the ‘debt collector’ and then start negotiating their way along the green transition pathway, deciding between themselves over what they want to invest in



- **Facilitation:** Facilitators are there to check if there are any doubts or lost-looking people, re-explaining and clarifying the game where necessary.
- **Rules:** You can't skip a level of the pathway. You have to count out your coins (post-its!) and put them on the tiles you choose. You can pay for more than one tile on the same level. You can change your mind and move your coins. Leftover coins? Too bad!

3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
3. Game	30mn	Participants are given a character and try to progress as far as possible along a 'green transition' pathway. After 10 minutes, facilitators prompt reflections based on what participants see / felt.

Reflection phase (10mn)

- Once people have made their investments, ask them to stand by the tile where they ran out of money and look around them, in silence. Ask:
 - How did you feel during the game?
 - What patterns do you see? Look for outliers (e.g. winners, losers, tiles which only one team picked) and ask them about their decisions
 - How was the decision-making? Did you have conflicts? What green decisions did you have to sacrifice? Reflect back what you're hearing.

Materials: 45 A4 pages for the different pathway tiles; 7 envelopes with their own profile and their own coloured 'coins' (post-its). These can all be pre-prepared and reused.

Facilitation: We had 2 facilitators for this section

Note: We had 7 pairs - groups of 3 may take longer!

Audio link: [here](#)



3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
4. Talk	10mn	A short-ish talk on 4 points connecting debt, climate, and D4C. Here we give content and relate it to the game / reflections.

After the game, sit back down in a circle on the floor. Then, give a talk: filling the experiential learning in with a bit of theory and some real-life examples. Our talk covered **four points**, *roughly* 2.5min each.

If you can, link these 4 points to what specific participants have said during the workshop!

The full audio of the talk we gave is available [here](#)

Talk notes:

“So, one key lesson from the game is that debt means you can’t always make the decisions you want to, especially environmental ones.

Point 1: debt restricts much-needed climate investment.

- Local level example of climate investment: Barcelona has spent millions on superblocks for climate mitigation and adaptation
- Global North (GN) investment examples: In Spain, billions go into high speed trains; UK, billions invested in offshore wind energy
- But, as in the game, debt means your decisions are restricted: harder for heavily-indebted countries of Global South (GS) to invest
- Plus: *responsibility* for GN mitigation vs *NEED* for adaptation in GS
- In some places, barely meeting people’s primary needs -> hard to pay for adaptation or for responding to climate catastrophes: Bangladesh’s 2022 floods: most financial support came as loans. Helps in short term, but more debt to pay back in the long term
- Note: In the game we went up to 60% of budget: Sri Lanka 80% recently! Leaves less than 20% to pay for all public services: housing, education, transport, social security; nevermind climate mitigation and adaptation!

Point 2: countries are caught in a debt-fossil fuel trap

- This idea is slightly less related to the game, but we’ve just seen how climate change creates more debt in Bangladesh.
- That debt is held in foreign currency: The Colombia economy in pesos, can’t pay your USD debt in pesos. How do you get USD? By exports. But the only thing these countries are competitive is fossil fuels (FFs.)
- So debt drives FF expansion & FFs are of course a key driver of climate crisis, making disasters more likely. These require more debt, and so more fossil fuels to pay them... Before you know it, you’re in a trap; a vicious cycle.
- And sometimes, it’s way more explicit than that! Unlike with household debt: some loans come with conditions, you can only have this money if you do XYZ: Senegalese oil, Argentinian fracking for gas

3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
4. Talk	10mn	A short-ish talk on 4 points connecting debt, climate, and D4C. Here we give content and relate it to the game / reflections.

[cont.]

So you can see how debt ties together climate and anti-imperial struggles; through the game we saw how it also has a huge social justice and feminist dimension [e.g. X couldn't even afford education or healthcare]. Lots more we could say about this but also want to spend some time talking about solutions!

Point 3: D4C as a movement

- In the game, the last step of pathway was the more social aspect; something this makes sense for everyone - change starts with us, with the people!
- And another thing to recognise, is that, really, the debt is owed the other way. [In the sociograms, a participant in our workshop mentioned climate debt, so we referred to that] Climate & colonial debt - we need climate reparations to tackle the climate crisis. Debt cancellation is a concrete first step
- Consistent demand from across the GS from Africa to Asia to Latin America
- Debt for Climate is a young global movement calling for debt cancellation to enable a just, self-determined transition.
- Initiated by Global South, led by women.
- Changing the discourse from focussing on emissions targets to focussing on climate justice - importantly, justice is seen as reparations and that starts with debt cancellation. Something for us all to reflect on

Point 4: Call to action

- Here, set out a variety of roles in the movement - perhaps what you've been doing [e.g. for me, mainly research], and other roles: organising actions, finance, grant writing, meeting notes, facilitation, graphics...
- Then suggest 1-3 possible actions [we suggested (1) get involved (2) donate (3) reflect on how you can make debt a part of your climate work (e.g. follow and share on social media, learn more, support petitions, host conversations in workplace)]”

Materials: cushions or chairs to make people comfortable

Facilitation: One facilitator leads this part

Audio link: [here](#)



3. Facilitation plan (cont.)

Section	Time	Description and objective
5. Questions	15mn	Space for questions, comments, and observations from participants. More learning.

Ask anyone if they have any questions or comments!

Facilitation: here, we had the facilitator who gave the talk responding to questions

Materials: cushions or chairs to make people comfortable

We got questions on:

- Q: how realistic is the demand? A: we spoke about (1) debt cancellation as an ancient tradition, citing Graeber, (2) successes of Jubilee 2000 movement, with 2025 the next Jubilee year and with lessons learned from that movement (3) recent Norway example
- Q: are carbon offsets connected to debt? A: we compared the coloniality of both systems, but made it clear that they aren't really connected. After a second question, we suggested continuing topic afterwards and asked for other Qs.
- Q: How to get involved/learn more? A: spoke about D4C and some local events and orgs (e.g. ODG in Barcelona), offered to talk more afterwards

Section	Time	Description and objective
6. Takeaways	10mn	Give hand-outs with more resources, go around circle asking everyone for something they'll take away from the space. Close.

At this stage, give participants handouts (explain the QR) and then go around the circle asking for each person's main takeaway from the workshop - we asked this of everyone: participants and facilitators. *With more time, we would have split into three mini-discussions according to what participants' specific interests e.g. (1) getting involved in D4C, (2) general questions on debt, (3) bringing debt into their own lives/work outside of D4C. Then come back together for the takeaways.*

Then, close the space! Describe again what is on the QR code (diverse resources and contact details) and emphasise that you're open to staying in touch!

Facilitation: one person leads, all participate

Materials: handouts with a QR code [print-outs below], chairs or cushions for comfort

Section	Time	Description and objective
Total	1h30	

Facilitation: you could have someone taking notes or recording the session if you wanted. In our case, it was all audio recorded.

Materials: pen and paper or audio recorder (optional); watch or timer

4. Workshop materials checklist

Before the workshop, check whether you will have necessary materials:

Section	Materials
0. Arrivals	chairs or cushions for comfort; speaker (optional)
1. Intros	chairs or cushions for comfort
2. Sociograms	12 A4 paper with axis labels*; masking tape; chairs to stick to if necessary
3. Game	45 A4 paper for green transition pathway*; transition pathway map; 7 x envelopes with a persona print-out and a unique-colour set of post-its inside [these can all be reused]
4. Talk	chairs or cushions for comfort; notes if needed
5. Questions	chairs or cushions for comfort
6. Takeaways	chairs or cushions for comfort; sufficient hand-outs (with your own QR)
Overall	Ideally: a light, quiet space with room to move around and no interruptions. It *could* be outside! Pen+paper or audio recorder (optional); watch/timer

*To do the workshop as we did it, you will also need 57 pieces of A4 paper (they can be colourful and they can be reused!):

- 12 for the sociogram: active, inactive, most important issue, one of many important issues, Global North, Global South, collective, individual, know a lot, know very little, debt is a problem, debt is not a problem
- 45 for the green transition pathway: see pages 17 and 18 for the different tiles



Marketing...?

In our workshop, we were asked to provide a title and blurb to help with the bigger event description - including this here in case it's handy for you

Workshop Title:

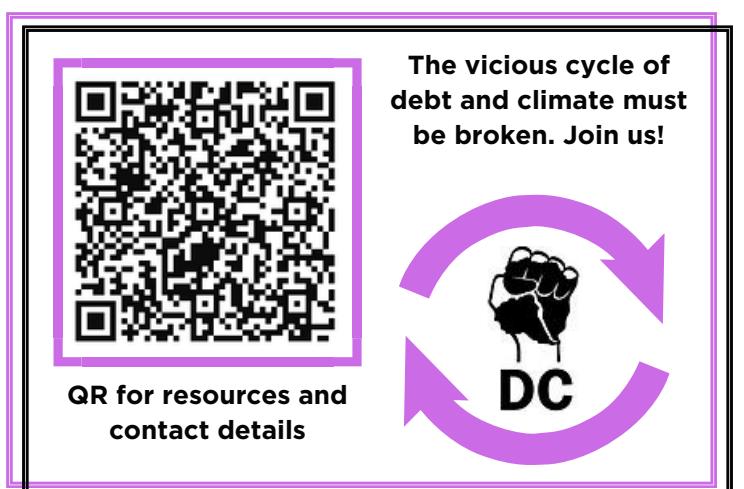
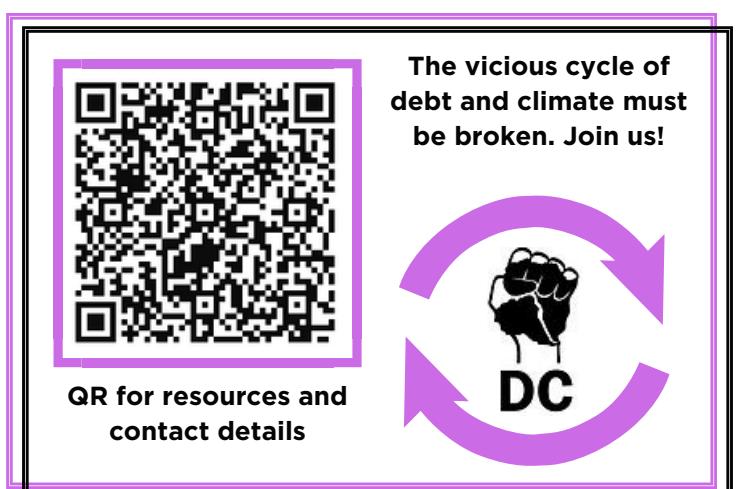
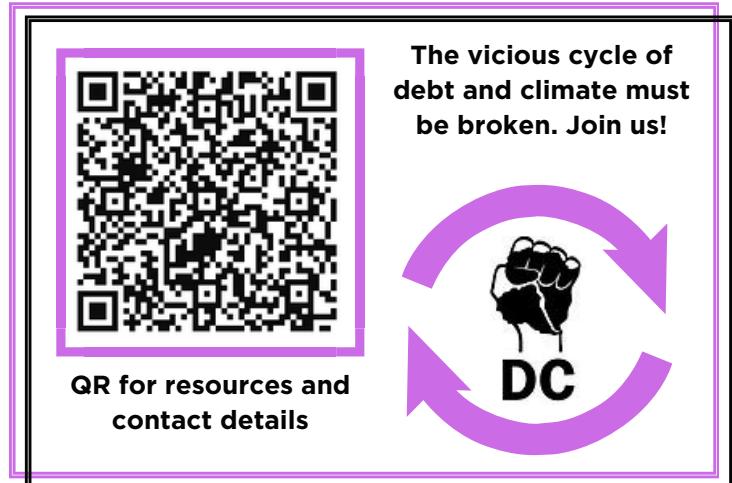
Debt for Climate : an introduction to the global movement

Workshop Blurb:

In this workshop, participants will learn about one of the most important and most invisibilised dimensions of the climate crisis: international debt. Starting from personal reflections and then zooming out, we will aim to build the climate movement by informing and activating. Come with an open mind and let's talk about justice!

5. Printable templates

You probably want to make your own QR - you can do that on [this link!](#)



5. Printable templates (cont.)

Ana

Ana has a salary of 40 coins, but 60% of her salary goes to debt she has on her credit card, and on different credits she has asked for to banks, to support her two kids.

She lives in the city*.

She is left with 16 coins after paying her debt.

*City people cannot choose the alternative with **

Claudio

Claudio has a salary of 40 coins, but 50% of his salary goes to pay back a debt he asked the bank to start a company selling chinese products on amazon. That project failed two years ago.

He lives in the city*.

He is left with 20 coins after paying his debt.

*City people cannot choose the alternative with **

Juan

Juan has a salary of 40 coins, but 40% of his salary goes on debt he has from student loans to pay for college. He is married and has one child.

He lives in the countryside**.

He is left with 24 coins after paying his debt.

**Countryside can choose: Windmill energy; river water; growing food.

Albert

Albert has a salary of 40 coins, but 30% of his salary goes on debt he has from binge shopping online.

He lives in the countryside**.

He is left with 28 coins after paying his debt.

**Countryside can choose: Windmill energy; river water; growing food.

5. Printable templates (cont.)

María

María has a salary of 40 coins, but 20% of his salary goes on debt he has from the credit she asked to go on holidays to Bermuda.

She lives in the city*

She is left with 32 coins after paying her debt.

*City people cannot choose the alternative with **

Diego

Diego has a salary of 40 coins, but 10% of his salary goes on debt he has on his credit card from different expenses.

Diego is disabled** and lives in the city*.

He is left with 36 coins after paying his debt.

*City people cannot choose the alternative with **

**Since Diego is disabled he cannot ride a bike, and has to consider special mobility when choosing transport. He cannot participate in the urban garden either, because it doesn't have mobility considerations.

Carmen

Carmen has a salary of 40 coins, but she doesn't have any debt at all. She has one kid, and one husband. She receives 10 extra coins from an apartment she inherited that she rents.

She lives in the city*

Carmen's monthly budget is 50.

*City people cannot choose the alternative with **

5. Printable templates (cont.)

Use these two pages as a **map** to organise the steps of the green transition pathway. We recommend writing each step out on A4 paper.



5. Printable templates (cont.)

