

## **INTRODUCTION: FOCUS, LOCUS, SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK**

“If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples  
then you and I will still each have one apple.  
But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas  
then each of us will have two ideas.”

*George Bernard Shaw*

This book consists of a number of articles presented at the I DUSKE<sup>1</sup> INTERNATIONAL FORUM “LOCAL INITIATIVES TO THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS”<sup>2</sup> that took place at the University of Deusto on the 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> of February 2010. The forum aimed to be a meeting point and a platform for interdisciplinary exchange of ideas, experiences and initiatives among participants both from Sylff and non-Sylff scientific and professional communities in the light of the 2007-2008 international financial crisis, focusing on feasible, reasonable and creative alternatives to the current socio-economic world view. Moreover, through the forum we exposed and explored some concrete examples of how ordinary people are dealing with and responding to the financial and social challenges posed by the last crisis of capitalism in their everyday lives.

In what concerns the locus of this book, we would like to stress its international and interdisciplinary character. We have not only been fortunate to have received contributions from economists, jurists, international relations experts and sociologists, but also to compare various European perspectives with that of our Congolese colleague Bruno Kaimwa, who brings us closer to the fascinating world of Moziki women. Together with contributions from academia, NGOs have also made their voice heard. Particularly interesting is the article by the local member of SOS Racismo Zuria Arzua on the impact of the crisis on migrant populations. Fresh as it is, Zuria’s determined voice has definitely made a number of pertinent statements. While some articles offer accurate and broad explanations and theories, loaded with precise and not-to-be-disregarded facts and examples – the one by Mikel Larreina on the 2008 global financial crisis together with Felipe Gómez’s article on the reversibility of economic, social and cultural rights – others have sought to explain concrete local initiatives which are already being implemented at the meso and micro levels – we are specifically referring to Peru Sasia’s article on ethical banking, which focuses on

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<sup>1</sup> DUSKE is the name of the association of current and graduate Sylff fellows of the University of Deusto, currently run by Eider Muniategi (President and Project Director), Lina Klemkaite (Vice-President and Communication Director) and Bruno Kaimwa (Treasurer). DUSKE was launched on March 2009 aiming at building an active network of Sylff fellows in order to support and promote the development of academic research and projects between the various Sylff associations.

<sup>2</sup> The forum has been funded by the Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (Sylff) Program under the Sylff Leadership Initiatives, and is one of the first initiatives funded by the Sylff Plus Program, which was announced in 2009 in order to encourage and support the initiatives of Sylff community members. The Sylff Program is administered by the Tokyo Foundation (TKFD) and unites a network of 64 Sylff institutions, 44 countries and 12.000 Sylff fellows around the world.

the Spanish example of Fiare as a legitimate, capable as well as much needed social movement (and therefore one *to be taken into account*), and to the article by Lina Klemkaite and Eider Muniategi on time banking experiences. Finally, Felix Boellmann's article, full of aesthetic and moral beauty, remains as an unquestionable source of inspirational references for *must visit and reads*. Ultimately, the present book's added value lies on its multi-sited visions.

The scope we looked to encompass, or to put it in other words, the book's greatest aspiration, is to shed some light upon the current socio-economic scenario, stress the importance of bridging and bounding and, as a result of it, contribute to strengthening the social (global and local) tissue. We would like to adopt what could be called a Chinese perspective – as you might know, in the Chinese language the character for *crisis* combines *risk* together with *opportunity* – while sharing and embracing the different alternatives, initiatives and responses to the so called *2007-2008 International Financial Crisis*.

As for the structure, the book is divided into three main parts. The first part is devoted to understanding the crisis from a macro-theoretical perspective, focusing on its impact on economic, social and cultural rights, and more precisely on the effect it has had on migrant populations, since we understand that being *the outsider* too often translates as unstable and even precarious socio-financial (and juridical) situations. The second part looks at several initiatives taken at the local level in order not only to tackle financial issues in a different, heterodox way, but to create social local capital, which we believe to be one of the main keys to overcome the crisis. The third part stresses the importance of rethinking the *problem* in terms of the needed moral beauty to cross the bridge and eventually bond. The concluding article goes through (some) dissatisfying features of the current socio-economic order while also collecting and proposing alternative initiatives to move towards more egalitarian and liberating horizons.