

## Report of the Sustainable Future event held at Memorial Hall on Thursday, May 7th:

### "21<sup>st</sup> Century Motueka: Unleashing Creativity for an Economy of Thriving"

*Report by David Armstrong & Zahra Lightway*

The advertising flyer said: "This event, part of the Motueka 2030 series, will generate practical and innovative ideas for a strong, enduring Motueka economy. We seek a community wide focus on ultra-creativity, collaboration between sectors and the uptake of new learning skills to answer the compelling needs of the future in order to develop a sustainable and thriving economy.

"The workshop leaders will present an array of inspiring examples of progressive communities where interweaving economics, learning and well-being has become the pathway to a sustainable future. This workshop spotlights technologies that are both enabling and necessitating adaptive change."

The meeting attracted just on 50 people, enough to almost pack the hall's supper room. After a very brief introduction by this writer speaking about the Motueka 2030 program, the facilitator Joanna Santa Barbara introduced the two speakers.

For the last 25 years, Laurence Boomert has researched and promoted social and environmental solutions in green business, complementary currencies, relocalisation, community development, sustainable land management and contingency planning. He lives in Takaka.

First, Laurence talked about innovative thinking in economics. With full use of a PowerPoint presentation, he spoke of three steps in the process of creating new economics and projects based upon these economic tools: how may it happen, the resources to make it happen, and why bother - the "why" being the foundation for the activity.

He said the aim of the meeting was to encourage a group of local people to carry some of these ideas further with local projects.

He gave many examples of future use of a range of alternative currencies or trading systems, all based on what people actually valued rather than just money. He also gave examples of self funding of projects through the use of social capital.

Zahra Lightway M. Ed. is a US-based education consultant and coach to parents and communities. She came to New Zealand to help organize and present at the International Democratic Education Conference held in Nelson in early April and has since been asked to lead workshops around the country

Zahra used as her topic innovative thinking in education. Fundamental to this, she said, was creativity using collaboration of all sectors of community. The need is to focus first on the education system, which needs to prepare people for the 21st Century collaborative, ultra creative workplace not the 19th and 20th Century standardised, factory model and cubicle process. The education model of the last century cannot hope to prepare children for the 21st Century work world.

The next focus is on workplaces, which are becoming places that you want to go to for creative work, not just places of employment in standardised buildings or factories.

For these changes to take place, learning tools are now available using the Internet and face to face networked learning tools that look like ad hoc classrooms formed in freely available community spaces such as libraries, halls or even homes. The key here is flexibility. It's not just about learning things, but learning how to learn creatively.

She then described the local branch of a global initiative called Education City, which is being developed for the Top of the South Island and is being called a "21st Century Learning Network". The whole region becomes involved in collaborative, cross sector, cross generational learning. The first part of that project - mapping the learning resources that already exist in Motueka and the region - is the goal of a team which have begun to meet to find and put together such information. Those meetings are at Riverside Community Hall at Riverside Community every second Thursday at 7pm. The next one is on May 28th.

After a supper break, about 15 of the people who remained talked about ways in which they might become part of such an initiative.

