

# OPEN CALL FOR RESEARCHERS!

(UN)USUAL BUSINESS IS LOOKING FOR RESEARCHERS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE COMMONS AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR THE CAPITALIST AND NEOLIBERAL MARKET ECONOMY.

## Project Description

(Un)usual Business (UB) is a research collective. We envision a world in which economic and social relations are based on self-organization, care, solidarity and sustainability. Starting from a firm belief in the potential of alternative economic self-organization, we are researching the commons and community economies, in collaboration with people who share our values and groups that practice them. Our research is published in our journal and on our website. We also organize an irregular public program, consisting of lectures, workshops and meetings with the aim to encourage dialogue. We're a

volunteers collective, work without hierarchy and make decisions based on consensus.

UB originated in 2013 from a collaboration between art organization Casco - Office for Art, Design and Theory and activist collective Kritische Studenten Utrecht. UB receives a participatory budget from Casco to carry out our activities.

## Research context in UB

We are facing social, economic and ecological crises and the withdrawal of the welfare state as a provider of our basic needs. Thinking, talking and writing

about the economy and alternatives is all the more relevant and pressing in this context. We are dealing with these issues from a feminist perspective of economy and the commons – resources that we share and manage collectively, ranging from air, water and forests to the Internet, language and culture. Authors such as J.K. Gibson-Graham, Silvia Federici and Maria Mies inspire us and help us understand the economy as something we can influence and do ourselves. With the concept of the community economy, coined by feminist geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham, we have been diving into the urban commons of our own local context.

Although the commons have played an important role in the entire world throughout history, small self-organized initiatives are becoming increasingly visible in the public debate as they take control over their own livelihoods and their shared resources. Food collectives, self-organized childcare or communal living are only a few examples. We see the work these initiatives do as incredibly valuable for imagining what an alternative economic system could look like. In collaboration, we gather, produce and share the knowledge we find to support each other and strengthen a larger community around the commons.

## **UB Research Working Group**

We are looking for critical researchers to help us move forward! In the past three years, UB has run three research working groups. Its members conducted a case study into a commoning initiative in Utrecht, and presented their findings in various ways, ranging from a docu-

mentary or photo report to an article or series of interviews on the website or as part of our journal.

## **Practical information**

(Un)usual Business, currently consisting of nine members, is looking for researchers who are interested in the commons as a viable alternative for the capitalist and neoliberal market economy. Ideally, the research consists of literature analysis, fieldwork and interviews. Researchers are free to choose in what form to publish their results.

## **Time commitment**

- Period of 3-4 months, starting in January 2017
- Individual or collaborative research of 5-6 days per month including participation in the working group
- These commitments are adjustable to your needs and desires

## **Activities**

- Small and/or in depth case studies (interviews, fieldwork) of one or more commoning initiatives in and around Utrecht
- Writing / documentation of the research
- Participation in the Research working group (introductory meeting, feedback sessions, etcetera)

## **Are you interested?**

Please send us an email at [info@unusualbusiness.nl](mailto:info@unusualbusiness.nl)

We will hold an introductory meeting in January 2017 and will keep you updated. In the meantime, check out our website to find our journals and other research: [www.unusualbusiness.nl](http://www.unusualbusiness.nl)