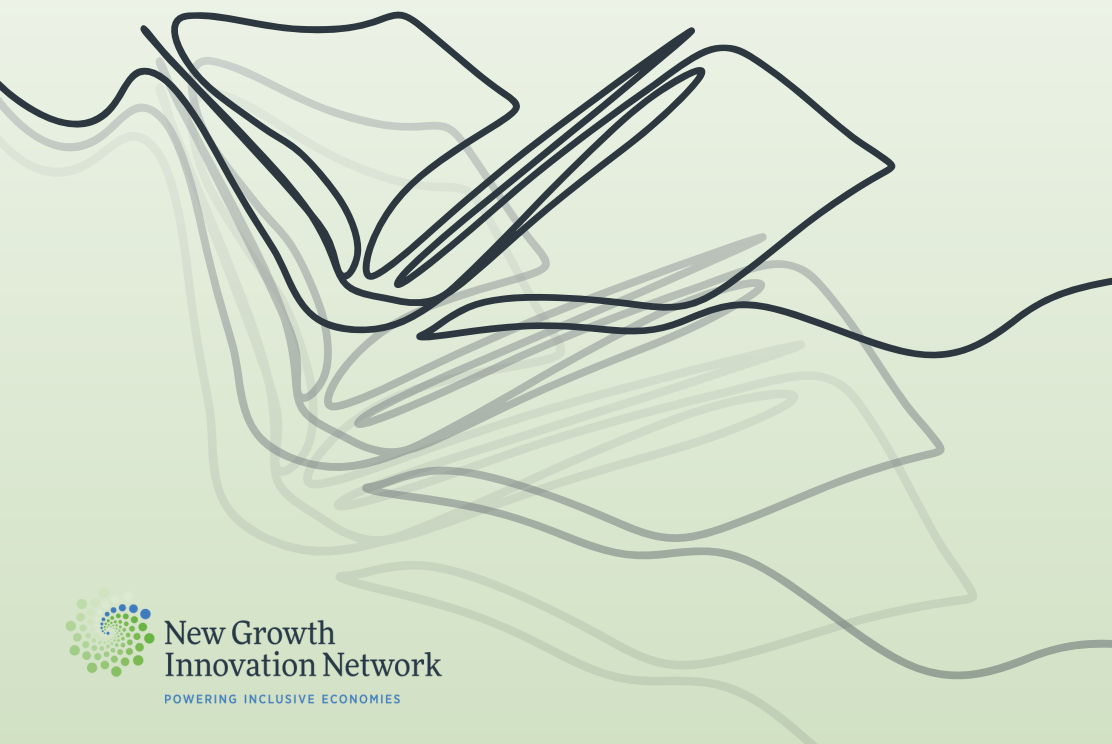


# PAGES *for* PROSPERITY

An NGIN Book Club



New Growth  
Innovation Network

POWERING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

**ISSUE 01 | JANUARY 2024**

**Discussing: A Civil Eats Investigative Series**

*“Walanthropy: Walmart and the Waltons Wield  
Unprecedented Influence Over Food, Policy, and the Planet”*

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A quarterly discussion group of New Growth Innovation Network (NGIN) Team Members that collectively dive into and understand books, podcasts, articles, and other content related to inclusive economic development.



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NGIN (pronounced “engine”) is a non-profit advancing inclusive economies in US cities and regions. NGIN identifies economic growth and ensures that historically economically excluded communities lead, shape and benefit from that growth.

*Learn more at [newgrowth.org](http://newgrowth.org).*

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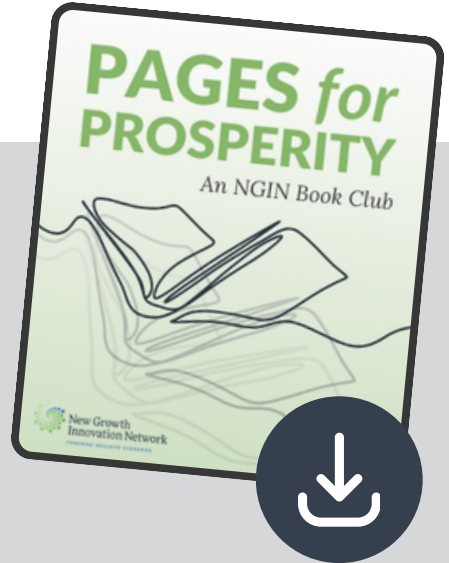
Inclusive Economic  
Development Advisor



# What is this document?

This document is a downloadable, sharable discussion guide for any other practitioners who would like to bring these conversations to their organization or community.

As NGIN convenes these discussions among team members to learn more about inclusive economic development, we wanted to share our discussion materials, questions, and takeaways with our broader network. As you feel it's relevant to your organization, partners, or community, please feel free to download and host a "Pages for Prosperity" discussion.



*Was this guide helpful? Did you host a discussion? We would love to hear more - reach out to us at [innovate@newgrowth.org](mailto:innovate@newgrowth.org).*

## Following Along with this Guide

- **Part One | Initial Reflections:** Set the stage for your discussion by identifying and sharing what stood out to everyone, what surprises you had, and what resonated with you.
- **Part Two | Discussion Deep-Dive:** Dive deeper into some of the specific sections of the materials selected for discussion, including specific articles, chapters, or quotes.
- **Part Three | Discussion Reflections:** Wrap up your discussion with what stood out to you from what you heard from other participants.



# What are we discussing?

Participating NGIN team members suggested several discussion materials which led to a vote that selected:



An ongoing investigative series from [Civil Eats](#), an independent, nonprofit digital news and commentary site about the American food system, exploring '[Walanthropy](#)' and the unprecedented influence that Walmart and the Waltons wield over food, policy, and the planet. As described by Civil Eats: *"We take a detailed look at Walmart and its founding family's influence over the American food system, over the producers and policymakers who shape it, and how its would-be critics are also its bedfellows."* At the time of our discussion, there are six articles currently published in the series, including:

- [\*\*The Long Reach of the Walmart-Walton Empire\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Walmart's 'Regenerative Foodscape'\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Walmart and EDF Forged an Unlikely Partnership. 17 Years Later, What's Changed?\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Op-Ed: Walmart's Outsized Catch\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Diving—and Dying—for Red Gold: The Human Cost of Honduran Lobster\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Walmart's Pandemic Port Squeeze\*\*](#)

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# Initial Reflections



To get started, some possible initial questions to kick off your group discussion is as follows:



What key points resonated with you in in this article series? Was there one article in particular that stood out to you while reading?

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What is your personal relationship to Walmart? How has Walmart's business model impacted the economy in your local community?

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Corporate philanthropy has a huge capital footprint. How does this influence economic and community development? How have you seen it show up in your work?

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Which of these six articles stood out to you? How is it relevant to your work? Share a quote from that article that resonated with you.

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ARTICLE ONE

# The Long Reach of the Walmart-Walton Empire



Published in: [Civil Eats](#) | [Civil Eats Editors](#) | Nov. 1, 2023

*“Walmart’s annual revenues are larger than the GDP of Sweden; its founding family are prolific philanthropists. Their nexus is poorly understood.”*

[READ THIS ARTICLE](#)



The article highlights that Walmart has incredible power over land use, climate policy, and food policy (to name a few). When you think about powerful agents in food and climate policy, who comes to mind? Did Walmart? What does this say about their role, and societies understanding of these social issues?

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The article notes that the Waltons spent about \$10 million in avenues that influence journalism. How does this relate to their economic and community power?

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ARTICLE TWO

# Walmart's 'Regenerative Foodscape'



Published in: [Civil Eats](#) | [Lisa Held](#) | Nov. 1, 2023

*“Walmart’s efforts to redefine itself as a regenerative company are at odds with its low-cost model, and combined with the Walton family’s vast investments in regenerative agriculture, have the potential to remake the marketplace.”*

[READ THIS ARTICLE](#)



Increased production needs and demand for higher crop yields has been fueled by Walmart stores. At the same time, the Walton family has been a loud critic of industrial farming’s impact on the environment. What do you think of some of their proposed positive changes they hope to implement?

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Shared understanding and language is a cornerstone of equitable community and economic development. How has shared (or not shared) language and definitions influenced organic, regenerative, and climate smart food production?

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ARTICLE FOUR

# Op-Ed: Walmart's Outsized Catch



Published in: [Civil Eats](#) | [Aaron Van Neste](#) | Nov. 21, 2023

*“Walmart and the Walton Family Foundation have relied on a debatable definition of “sustainable” seafood that allows it to achieve its sourcing goals without fundamentally changing its business model.”*

[READ THIS ARTICLE](#)



Do food labels like organic, sustainable, fair trade, etc. influence your purchases? Has your opinion on these labels changed after this article?

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How does corporate green-washing effect small businesses?

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ARTICLE FIVE

# Diving - and Dying - for Red Gold: the Human Cost of Honduran Lobster



Published in: [Civil Eats](#) | [Alice Driver](#) | Dec. 6, 2023

*“The Walton Family Foundation invested in a Honduran lobster fishery, targeting its sustainability and touting its success. Ten years later, thousands of workers have been injured or killed.”*

[READ THIS ARTICLE](#)



This article focuses on the lived experience of workers within these food systems. How can the food and climate movement center worker equity?

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# Walmart's Pandemic Port Squeeze



Published in: [Civil Eats](#) | [Dana Cronin](#) | Dec. 13, 2023

*“While most retailers dealt with congested ports and unprecedented shipping prices, Walmart chartered its own ships, increased sales, and used its market gains to sideline competitors. Then it weighed in on shipping reform.”*

[READ THIS ARTICLE](#)



We all felt the effects of disrupted supply chains during the COVID pandemic. Were you aware the role that Walmart played?

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What is our role as consumers, if any, in this issue? Corporations clearly hold outsized power and influence, yet are controlled by individuals. How can we disentangle the role of institutional power and people power in this vast and complicated web of the food system?

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# Discussion Reflections



As you wrap-up, some possible questions to identify themes or actions include:



Climate change action is often focused on asking individuals to make changes. How do you feel about this after reading these articles?

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What role does food policy play in your life and your community?

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What are some large scale possible alternatives that challenge Walmart's hold over food and climate policy?

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What resonated with you most after reading this series?

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