



Community Wealth Building: Learning from International Experiences

Policy Spotlight



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Highlights

From 2022-2027, as part of the [Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services \(RESAS\) Strategic Research Programme 2022-27](#)¹, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) researchers are working on the '[Novel insights on Scotland's rural and island economies](#)' (NISRIE, SRUC-E1-1) project². This report presents novel insights on international examples of Community Wealth Building. This is the third NISRIE report on Community Wealth Building (CWB) with the first offering insights into [CWB in a rural and islands context](#), and the second offering an overview of the evolution of [CWB policy and practice](#) in Scotland.

What were we trying to find out?

Community Wealth Building is a place-based approach to local economic development that seeks to redirect wealth back into the local economy and to place ownership in the hands of local people. The Scottish Government identifies five pillars of Community Wealth Building: inclusive ownership; finance; workforce; spending; and land and property ([Scottish Government, 2023a](#)).

This Policy Spotlight reviews a range of international examples of the application of Community Wealth Building principles in both rural and urban contexts. The key features and success factors of these examples are described. Based on this evidence-gathering, the report concludes with some suggested learning points for Scotland.

What did we do?

Community Wealth Building principles have been applied in different ways in different international contexts, including in Europe, North America, Australia and Africa. The international examples of Community Wealth Building reviewed here were identified through the existing knowledge and networks of the research team and were chosen to represent a range of different geographies as well as to be of relevance to the Scottish context.

The evidence-gathering work undertaken was desk-based, drawing on academic and other literature and web sources. We focused our evidence-gathering on identifying the main features and understanding the key success factors of the different examples.

What did we learn?

There is a great diversity of Community Wealth Building approaches adopted in different international contexts. Many of the examples reviewed here build on historical features and strengths, such as a tradition of cooperative business models

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/collections/environment-agriculture-and-food-strategic-research/>

² <http://www.nisrie.scot/>

(in Italy for example), or informal exchanges of goods and services (such as seed exchanges in the rural US), to shape initiatives which address current socio-economic challenges. Some initiatives are targeted at specific populations or issues, for example supporting the integration of vulnerable populations into the workforce (e.g. the GROW project in Victoria, Australia) to support the building of local wealth. Others focus on the embedding of Community Wealth Building principles and practices at a strategic level and in an integrated way across a range of sectors (for example in Sydney, Australia).

What do we recommend?

Despite the evidence here demonstrating the diversity of Community Wealth Building examples internationally, it is possible to identify a set of success factors which are common to many of them, and which offer useful learning for Scotland's application of Community Wealth Building, including in a rural context. These are:

- Supportive and facilitative national legislation and policies (on Community Wealth Building specifically or supporting some of its key principles, for example around community ownership of assets), alongside other support which could include funding.
- Building on existing strengths, assets and interests (for example, a history of cooperatives or of informal seed exchanges).
- Good working relationships 'vertically' between different levels of government, nationally, regionally and locally, and 'horizontally' through strong networks between cross-sectoral stakeholders at the local level, including anchor organisations and communities.
- Long-term commitment from key institutions (referred to as anchor institutions in Community Wealth Building terms) and other stakeholder partners
- Ongoing support for communities and/or businesses (of all different types) to build capacity and empower and enable them to fully engage in, and ideally lead, Community Wealth Building activities.
- An openness to 'do things differently'. This might be a commitment to support those who are disadvantaged in terms of (re)entering the labour market, for example, to identify 'champions' to lead change in different ways across different policy areas, or to ensure flexible frameworks to guide Community Wealth Building activities.
- Clear goals which can be effectively evaluated, and consistent data gathering (relating to the full range of indicators, outputs and outcomes) to measure and evaluate the efficiency of the actions against these outputs and outcomes.

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List of Acronyms

CLES	Centre for Local Economic Strategies
CWB	Community Wealth Building
EDAS	Economic Development Association Scotland
NISRIE	Novel Insights on Scotland’s Rural and Island Economies
NSET	Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation
RDI	Rural Development Initiatives
RESAS	Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services
SMEs	Small and Medium size Enterprises
SRP	Strategic Research Programme 2022-27
SRUC	Scotland’s Rural College
UK	United Kingdom
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

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1 Introduction

1. As part of the [Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services \(RESAS\) Strategic Research Programme 2022-27](#) researchers at SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) are exploring the characteristics of, and current challenges and opportunities facing, rural and island economies through the '[Novel insights on Scotland's rural and island economies \(NISRIE\) SRUC-E1-1](#)' project³. This project sits within **Theme E: Rural Futures of the 2022-27 Strategic Research Programme**, alongside projects examining issues relating to rural communities and land reform, land management and land values⁴.
2. Within the NISRIE project, one area of investigation is focused on exploring the characteristics of, and opportunities and challenges facing, Community Wealth Building activities in rural and island contexts. This Community Wealth Building Policy Spotlight follows on from the [NISRIE rapid evidence review of Community Wealth Building](#) and its specific application in a rural and island context (published in 2023) and the [NISRIE review of the evolution of policy and practice on Community Wealth Building in Scotland](#) (published in August 2024). This work will inform primary research which will be undertaken between 2024 and 2027 through this [NISRIE project](#) - focusing on the achievements of various Community Wealth Building activities across Scotland, assessing their critical success factors, and how they have been evaluated.
3. The [NISRIE rapid evidence review](#) published in 2023 found that the majority of Community Wealth Building research and practice has focused on urban contexts and that its application in a rural and island context may need to be adapted to take account of the different characteristics of these areas. For example, taking a wider perspective on which organisations may play the role of 'anchor institutions' is important as some of the organisations commonly regarded as being anchor institutions in urban settings (such as a large hospital or large private sector employer) may not be present in rural locations. It is also important to understand how these different organisations network together to support wealth creation locally, and how these networks can be enhanced in different geographical contexts.
4. The [NISRIE review of policy and practice](#) published earlier in 2024 discussed how Community Wealth Building activities in Scotland have been informed by early activities in the US, southern Europe and England (notably the city of Preston in the North West of England), leading to Scottish Government funding for pilot projects and for Ayrshire as a leader in applying Community Wealth Building, and the adoption of Community Wealth Building principles more widely in strategies, action plans and specific projects elsewhere in Scotland. The 2023 consultation on Community Wealth Building has informed subsequent Scottish Government work on legislation development.

³ www.nisrie.scot

⁴ For more information on these other projects, please see SRUC's [Rural Exchange](#).

5. This report summarises the available evidence on a range of international examples of Community Wealth Building in practice. The examples are taken from North America (both the US and Canada), Europe, Australia, and Africa. While all geographical contexts are different and, as a result, Community Wealth Building activities take different forms in different locations, sharing learning is important and valuable.
6. This report starts by summarising what Community Wealth Building is and how the concept has evolved in Scotland. It then reviews evidence on a range of different Community Wealth Building approaches and initiatives in different international contexts and summarises the key success factors to inform learning for Scotland.
7. The examples referred to here were identified through the existing knowledge and networks of the research team and were chosen to represent a range of different geographies as well as to be of relevance to the Scottish context. The evidence-gathering work undertaken was desk-based, drawing on academic and other literature and web sources. Links are provided to the source material that was reviewed by the team throughout the report. Evidence-gathering work focused on identifying the main features of the different examples and their key success factors.

2 What is Community Wealth Building?

8. Community Wealth Building (CWB) is defined as a place-based approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people (Scottish Land Commission, 2022). It was initially inspired by co-operative and solidarity economies in Mondragon in the Basque region in Spain and Emilia-Romagna in Italy (Dennis and Stanley, 2023), developed in the United States by the [Democracy Collaborative](#) and piloted in Cleveland Ohio, and introduced to the UK by the [Centre for Local Economic Strategies \(CLES\)](#).
9. The [Centre for Local Economic Strategies](#) defines Community Wealth Building as being a *“people centred approach to local economic development which aims to increase the flow, circulation and ownership of wealth”* (Longlands, 2024). Atterton and Glass (2023) adopted Goodwin and Power’s (2021) definition of Community Wealth Building: *“Community wealth building reorganises local economies to ensure they are best placed to tackle the inequalities and disadvantages that are now, more than ever, so acutely felt by people across the UK.”*
10. In the UK, the [‘Preston model’](#) is a well-documented example of the Community Wealth Building approach within an urban setting. In accordance with Community Wealth Building principles, so-called ‘anchor institutions’ (key employers with a strong local presence, such as Preston City Council, the University of Central Lancashire, Community Gateway Housing Association, and Lancashire Constabulary) are seen as having a central role in driving forward changes in the city. Activities in Preston have included an increase in procurement spending retained locally (particularly by these anchor institutions), the establishment of

worker-owned cooperatives across a range of sectors, an increase in the proportion of local workers who are paid at or above the Living Wage, and heightened attention to local skills and employment needs, through close working with local training and education providers.

11. The Scottish Government has adopted a Community Wealth Building approach to economic development as a means of delivering the wellbeing objectives outlined in the [National Strategy for Economic Transformation \(NSET\)](#) (Scottish Government, 2022b) to create wealth and prosperity for everyone. In 2020-2021 the Scottish Government announced funding for Community Wealth Building pilots in rural and urban areas across Scotland, and since then Community Wealth Building principles have been adopted across many local authority areas to deliver a range of projects, including relating to strengthening local economies, fostering community ownership and control of resources, and promoting economic equity such that everyone can access and benefit from the resources and wealth generated by the economy.
12. In the [2023 NISRIE evidence review](#), Glass and Atterton (2023) elaborated five core principles of Community Wealth Building based on models developed by both the [Scottish Government](#) (for Scotland) and [The Centre for Local Economic Strategies \(CLES\)](#) (for the UK):
 - (i) Plural ownership of the economy
 - (ii) Making financial power work for local places
 - (iii) Fair employment and just labour markets
 - (iv) Progressive procurement of goods and services
 - (v) Socially just use of land and property.
13. The Scottish Government's five interlinked pillars of Community Wealth Building correspond to these principles: (a) Inclusive ownership; (b) Finance; (c) Workforce; (d) Spending; (e) Land and property ([Scottish Government, 2023a](#)).
14. Several concepts, initiatives and terminologies are frequently referred to in relation to Community Wealth Building. These are described in Table 1 by way of providing some additional background information of particular relevance to Community Wealth Building in Scotland.

Table 1 Community Wealth Building concepts, approaches, initiatives and terminologies

Concept	Description
Community Wealth Building	Community Wealth Building is defined as a place-based approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.
Preston Model	The " Preston Model " is a term used to describe how Community Wealth Building has been adopted in Preston, a city in the North West of England, and the wider Lancashire area, by Preston City Council and other partner organisations.

Concept	Description
Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) Five core principles of Community Wealth Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plural ownership of the economy 2. Making financial power work for local places 3. Fair employment and just labour markets 4. Progressive procurement of goods and services 5. Socially just use of land and property (CLES, n.d.).
The Scottish Government's five interlinked pillars of Community Wealth Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Inclusive ownership b) Finance c) Workforce d) Spending e) Land and property
The Bute House Agreement	<p>The Bute House Agreement, officially the Cooperation Agreement between the (Scottish National Party, SNP) Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group, was the power-sharing agreement which was agreed in August 2021. It set out how the SNP Government and the Scottish Greens would work together and the appointment of Green Ministers. It was accompanied by a shared policy programme.</p>
LEADER	<p>LEADER is a local development method which has been used by the EU for the last 30 years to engage local actors in the design and delivery of local development strategies and activities, decision-making and resource allocation. It is implemented by Local Action Groups which bring together public, private and third sector stakeholders. LEADER comes from the French acronym for "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale", meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions'.</p>
Five Community Wealth Building pilot areas in Scotland	<p>The Scottish Government, working with local authorities and other partners, has supported five pilot areas to develop bespoke Community Wealth Building action plans, covering a range of actions across the five pillars of Community Wealth Building. The five areas are Clackmannanshire, Fife/Tay Cities, Glasgow City Region, South of Scotland and Western Isles.</p>
Ayrshire Growth Deal	<p>The Ayrshire Growth Deal is a partnership being driven forward by the Scottish Government, the UK Government and East, North and South Ayrshire Councils. Through adopting a Community Wealth Building approach, it is targeting co-ordinated investment throughout the region to stimulate growth, increase job opportunities and prosperity for Ayrshire, for Scotland and for the UK as a whole.</p>
Community Wealth Building Consultation (2023a)	<p>The Scottish Government launched a consultation in January 2023 on Community Wealth Building legislation and the changes required to accelerate Community Wealth Building in Scotland, including the potential for new powers, abilities and duties for local authorities, public bodies, wider community planning partners, etc. The consultation was open until April 2023. An independent report (Scottish Government, 2023b) summarising the consultation responses was published in October 2023.</p>

Concept	Description
<u>Plunkett UK</u>	Plunkett UK is a charity that supports people to set up and run a wide range of businesses which are owned by local communities, where members have equal and democratic control. At the start of 2023, Plunkett represented around 750 community-owned businesses in rural and urban areas throughout the UK, from shops and pubs through to woodlands, farms and fisheries.
Community Wealth Building in Rural and Island Scotland Roundtable, December 2021	In December 2021, Scottish Rural Action, InspirAlba and the David Hume Institute organised a roundtable which brought together experienced practitioners to discuss rural and island Community Wealth Building strategies and to explore how wealth building policy, particularly the Preston model adopted by the Scottish Government, may be leveraged to strengthen these strategies in rural and island locations. A <u>summary report from the event</u> is available online.

Source: Vuin, A., Atterton, J., Nelson, B. & Thomson, S. (2024) [Community Wealth Building in Scotland: The Evolution of Policy and Practice](#). A NISRIE Policy spotlight report.

3 What can Scotland learn from Community Wealth Building initiatives and approaches elsewhere?

15. As mentioned earlier, the Community Wealth Building approach was initially developed in southern Europe, particularly in Spain and Italy (Dennis and Stanley, 2023), and was further advanced in the US by the [Democracy Collaborative](#) (particularly Cleveland, Ohio) before being brought to the UK by the [Centre for Local Economic Strategies \(CLES\)](#). Much of the early work to implement Community Wealth Building principles happened in [Preston](#) in North West England.
16. Looking internationally, there are many examples of Community Wealth Building principles being applied in approaches and initiatives in different contexts, both urban and rural and in both a narrowly focused way (through an emphasis on one particular pillar or activity, for example) and in a more holistic, place-based way building on multiple pillars through a range of different, linked activities, usually guided by an over-arching strategy. Some of these approaches are firmly embedded in historical traditions and practices which may not have been described or formally 'labelled' as Community Wealth Building⁵.
17. In the remainder of this report (Sections 4 to 8) a number of different examples of the application of Community Wealth Building principles are reviewed from across the globe, including in North America (the US and Canada), Europe, Australia and Africa. The approaches and initiatives reviewed vary from a focus on procurement by anchor institutions, to building co-operatives, to a focus on fair work for employees and tackling societal inequalities. However, all are underpinned, at least to some

⁵ For more discussion of this issue, see the [report from Scottish Rural Action's roundtable on Community Wealth Building in 2021](#).

extent, by a desire to pursue a Community Wealth Building approach. Section 9 concludes the report and summarises the key learning points for Scotland.

4 Community Wealth Building in the US

4.1 Strengthening local procurement in Cleveland, Ohio⁶

18. The Community Wealth Building activities undertaken since the late 2000s in Cleveland, Ohio are an early and relatively well-known example of this kind of approach. At this time, decades of post-industrial decline had seen Cleveland's population decline substantially from approximately 1 million to half a million. A key challenge impacting the economic performance of the city and its surrounding areas was that the major institutions did not procure from, and spend on, the city itself, leading to the loss of jobs and income from the area. The solution for Cleveland focused on encouraging the formation of employee-owned cooperatives that grow over time by leveraging the purchasing power of large anchor institutions by supplying to them, and recruiting and training local residents, thereby rebuilding the economy and community in Cleveland from the bottom-up (see Focus Box: 1).

Focus Box: 1 The Evergreen Model in Cleveland, Ohio

The 'Evergreen Model' as it has become known aims to transform and revitalise low to middle-income neighbourhoods in Cleveland through employee ownership. The work, led by Evergreen Cooperative Corporation, is focused on economic inclusion and building a local economy from the ground up by:

- i. Acquiring a small or medium-sized business
- ii. Converting it to employee ownership
- iii. Creating quality jobs in those businesses
- iv. Training new employee owners
- v. Providing ongoing business support to the worker cooperative.

The aim is to ensure profits are shared with the network of worker-owned, community-based cooperatives. The cooperatives work towards maximising equality, diversity and inclusion in their workplaces. Early 'Evergreen Cooperatives' included a company delivering large-scale sustainable laundry services, a large urban greenhouse and an energy production company.

The Evergreen mission has four elements:

- *Economic opportunity* - Promote, coordinate and expand economic opportunity for low-income individuals, through a growing network of sustainable community-based enterprises.



⁶ The information in this section is adapted from EDAS's Community Wealth Building Guide (2023): [Community Wealth Building Scotland | EDAS](#)

- *Community stabilisation* - Promote community stabilisation and revitalisation of the divested neighbourhoods in Northeast Ohio and beyond.
- *Public understanding* - Promote public understanding of cooperative principles and how cooperatives and other community wealth-building models function.
- *Local Programme Implementation* - Encourage and enable cities and other areas throughout Ohio and the United States to implement their own local programs, inspired by Evergreen's mission, vision, strategy and principles.

Key success factors include: an ongoing commitment from anchor organisation partners; ensuring that the jobs that are created are high quality; and providing ongoing business support for the cooperatives, including through encouraging networking and providing access to practical shared resources.

For more information see: [Evergreen Cooperatives \(evgoh.com\)](http://evgoh.com)

4.2 Building regional wealth-building value chains in rural Oregon

19. Community Wealth Building activities in rural Oregon in the US have focused on developing regional wealth-building value chains. The US Government Department of Agriculture (USDA) worked in collaboration with local stakeholders, including [Rural Development Initiatives \(RDI\)](#)⁷, to identify several rural regions across Oregon in need of further support.
20. In those places, a community-identified value chain coordinator was appointed to lead the work, including by engaging stakeholders on an ongoing basis to keep a shared focus on Community Wealth Building goals. Grants were made available to businesses in key local economic sectors (e.g. small-scale seafood in north west Oregon) through the federal government's [Rural Economic Development Innovation co-operation agreements](#) with businesses expected to generate positive impacts through a regional wealth-building value chain. Investment in businesses well-placed to develop a value chain appears to have led to incremental income increases for many local businesses (Glass and Atterton, 2023). More information about Oregon's WealthWorks approach is provided in Focus Box: 2 below.

⁷ [Rural Development Initiatives \(RDI\)](#) is a regional rural development hub organisation working to create thriving rural communities in the Pacific North West area of the US.

Focus Box: 2 Learning from the WealthWorks approach to CWB in rural Oregon – a focus on Lewistown (summarised from the findings of Rahe and Hause, 2020)

The WealthWorks approach focuses on developing a network of locally rooted organisations and businesses that carry out activities involved with bringing a product or service to market. It is locally led and combines economic and social development with three main goals:

- Creating wealth
- Ensuring wealth is rooted through local ownership and control
- Improving livelihoods for people and firms struggling economically

Initial work focuses on finding opportunities to develop a region's assets to meet market demand through a wealth-building value chain. Businesses and other stakeholders, including communities, are engaged in this process and the aim is to identify a broad range of benefits to be achieved, which are sustainable in the longer-term. WealthWorks aims to *“advance a region’s overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase jobs and incomes for lower-income residents and firms — all at the same time.”*

In one specific example, work in the town of Lewistown has focused on making the town an attractive place to raise a family, run a business, and visit. The town has been suffering from population decline, particularly as young people leave for education and employment, and a declining economic base. A series of ‘Recharge our community’ workshops gave stakeholders the chance to come together and discuss different models of economic development through WealthWorks, based on the town’s assets (rather than what it was lacking). The focus was then placed on working with existing and potential entrepreneurs to explore different forms of wealth and to identify the demand levels for a new service or shop. Alongside the work with entrepreneurs to identify opportunities, a series of working committees (including business owners, residents and public sector officers) were set up to focus on key issues in the community, including finance, housing and youth engagement.

Key success factors include: building new and strengthening existing relationships; an openness to do things differently and change mindsets; and identifying champions to lead things forward and create change.

For more information see: [Welcome - WealthWorks](#)



4.3 Strengthening community ownership and control in Chicago, Illinois⁸

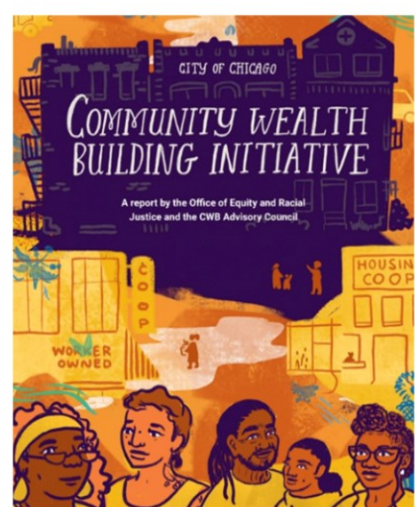
21. Chicago is the third largest city in the United States and is marked by its post-industrial heritage and diverse population. The city has a strong network of anchor institutions and other organisations working to support local economic ownership and job generation, promote access to finance, and encourage local procurement and

⁸ The information in this section is adapted from EDAS's Community Wealth Building Guide (2023): [Community Wealth Building Scotland | EDAS](#)

investment. In 2021, the Democracy Collaborative announced it would be working with the city's Office of Equity and Racial Justice to explore initiatives which could promote community ownership and community control. Funding (\$15 million) was provided for Community Wealth building Pilots which aimed to develop a new approach to economic development rooted in community control.

22. Building on the work in Cleveland, Ohio and in Preston, England, the work in Chicago is grounded in a desire to pursue bottom-up revitalisation strategies where the economy works better for local people. It was argued that the economic challenges that the city had experienced provided an opportunity to think deeply about a new way forward, and experiment and do things differently. With a particular focus on democratic and shared ownership models, there was an opportunity to address the city's sizeable racial wealth gap and systemic inequalities to increase the financial stability and power of all residents. Housing has been one particular theme of work (see Focus Box: 3). For more information see [this article by the Democracy Collaborative on their work in Chicago](#).

Focus Box: 3 Learning more from the Department of Housing in Chicago, Illinois about the relevance of affordable and accessible housing for households at a range of incomes



The Department of Housing (DOH) provided a \$600 000 grant to Pilsen Housing Cooperative (PIHCO) to acquire three buildings allowing six households to enter into permanently affordable housing. The aim was to ensure that this demonstration pilot project would serve as a learning exercise for the DOH to launch a larger Shared Equity Housing Programme in 2023 (to date this has not yet been released) and to inform policies and programmes for their strategic plan.

This pilot is a continuation of DOH's commitment to Community Wealth Building. In 2022 the department launched the South Shore Condo/Co-Op Preservation Fund Pilot, supporting repairs of condominiums and housing cooperatives to enable low-income owners to 'age in place'. In 2020, the

Department supported the Woodlawn Preservation Ordinance, protecting residents from displacement and creating affordable new housing, for rental and ownership, for households at a range of income levels. The Ordinance also created a 'right of First Refusal Pilot Program' to allow tenants the opportunity to make an offer on their property prior to its sale.

Key success factors include: a recognition of the importance of affordable and accessible housing and the role of shared ownership to deliver this; acknowledgement of the importance of, and support for, anchor institutions in shaping policy-making and regulations processes; support for vulnerable demographic groups and recognition of the need to improve their housing conditions to tackle inequalities and exclusion.

For more information see [Community Wealth Building Initiative in the City of Chicago](#)

4.4 Increasing local procurement in San Diego, California

23. Small businesses make up a particularly high proportion of the workforce (around double the national average) of the San Diego region. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, one in three of these small businesses closed. The Anchor Institution Collaborative was formed in response to a recognition of the need to aid these businesses in recovery and enhance their resilience to future shocks (see Focus Box: 4).

Focus Box: 4 The Anchor Institution Collaborative, San Diego

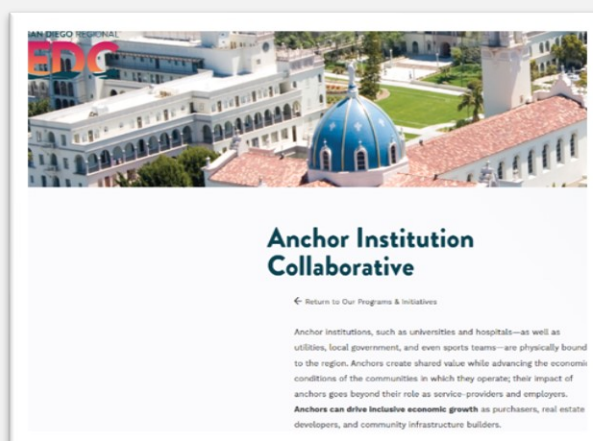
The Anchor Institution Collaborative consists of 45 major (anchor) institutions in San Diego, including universities, healthcare entities, the navy, utility companies, and the port authority. These organisations collectively employ over 70,000 workers and spend \$9.9 billion annually on goods and services.

To support the recovery of local small businesses, the Collaborative analysed procurement data from 14 institutions and established goals to increase local procurement, fostering stronger connections between large buyers and small local suppliers. The San Diego example highlights the significance of consistency and coordination in creating uniform definitions and requirements, as well as encouraging coordination in bidding processes. Additionally, it emphasises the need for leadership and resources, including through shared resources and platforms to align organisational leadership with procurement targets.

Leveraging prime contractors is also essential to help establish and achieve procurement goals. This collaborative effort illustrates the potential impact of coordinated actions by major institutions to support and uplift local businesses.

Key success factors include: strong collaborative relationships between anchor institutions, including with regard to procurement; consistent data gathering and clarity of definitions and requirements; strong leadership and adequate resources; recognition of the important role of small businesses in support of large anchor organisations.

For more information, see: [Anchor Institution Collaborative - San Diego Regional EDC \(sandiegobusiness.org\)](https://sandiegobusiness.org/anchor-institution-collaborative)



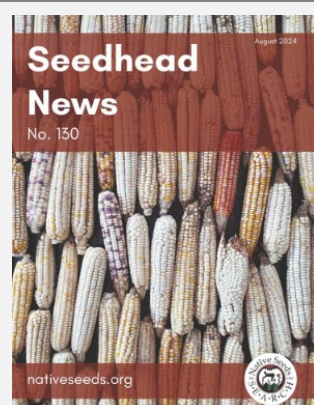
4.5 Reconnecting communities and food sources through informal seed systems in the Sonoran Desert, Arizona

24. Informal seed systems, as explored by Connolly⁹ (2023) in the Sonoran Desert, Arizona, offer a compelling example of an alternative form of Community Wealth Building which is community-driven and provides an alternative to commercial agriculture based on local networks of exchange. Emerging in response to the commercialisation of agriculture, these systems focus on reconnecting communities with their food sources.
25. Researchers like Howard (2016) and [Helicke \(2015\)](#) have emphasised the importance of local, non-market food provisioning methods, such as community gardening and food shares, to reduce reliance on commercial agriculture. A critical aspect of these community-driven movements is informal seed exchange systems, a form of seed activism. Here, community members save and share locally adapted open-pollinated seeds, along with the knowledge associated with them. This practice, highlighted by experts like [Hernández Rodríguez \(2023\)](#) and [Lachance \(2022\)](#), not only boosts community resilience but also plays a vital role in reclaiming food systems, preserving cultural identities, increasing plant genetic diversity, and strengthening social bonds. In terms of the Community Wealth Building it contributes to the pillar of Socially Just Use of Land and Property, especially in the light of the current climate emergency. Through informal seed systems, the local communities are not only actively participating in alternative and more sustainable economies, but also increasing community resilience by empowering members and supporting increasing autonomy, fostering social, environmental and cultural connections, preserving and circulating local and indigenous knowledges and engage future generations with their land and foodscapes (Connolly, 2023).
26. Seed systems encompass both formal and informal sectors. The formal sector, part of the commercial industry, focuses on the production and sale of commercial seeds, often bound by Western knowledge systems and global market dynamics. In contrast, the informal sector thrives on community-based seed sharing networks, preserving landraces and open-pollinated varieties integral to local cultures and ecosystems. Studies in the Global South have shed light on how these informal networks support crop biodiversity, encourage regenerative agriculture, and contribute to food and seed security. Community seed banks, central to these systems, play a crucial role in conserving and circulating local seeds, building social networks, and transmitting traditional knowledge.
27. The literature also discusses the recreation of the seed commons, emphasising collective resource management and protection from privatisation. This idea is fundamental to understanding the dynamics of seed systems in sustainable agriculture. While research on this topic in industrialised economies, particularly the

⁹ This original research was completed by Shannon Connolly as part of the MSc Ecological Economics degree at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. A copy of the dissertation is available in the University's repository system.

USA, is less extensive, there has been some work on these topics. These include analyses of seed libraries in California, the cultural significance of apple diversity in the American South, and the Seed Savers Exchange. Such research highlights the challenges posed by intellectual property rights and the importance of enhancing the resilience of local seed systems (see Focus Box: 5 for more information).

Focus Box: 5 Informal Seed Networks in the Sonora Desert, Arizona (Source: Connolly, 2023)



In the Sonoran Desert, a region marked by its arid conditions, native seeds have special significance. Adapted over generations, these seeds encapsulate the history and knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Native Seeds/SEARCH, a non-profit in Tucson, Arizona, has been pivotal in preserving this crop diversity and associated Indigenous cultural knowledge, particularly as the region grapples with severe droughts and climate change impacts.

The findings from Connolly's research (2023) reveal how informal seed networks in the Sonoran Desert enhance community resilience by empowering members, fostering connections, preserving knowledge, engaging future generations, and contributing to various forms of justice. Despite these benefits, there is a noted lack of institutional support (e.g. anchor institutions) underscoring an opportunity for greater engagement from policymakers and stakeholders to strengthen these vital networks.

Key success factors include: acknowledging and building on the cultural and historical aspects of current activities; empowering individuals and community groups to network; reintroduction of native species and encouragement of biodiversity across the variety of landscapes, the need for positive input from stakeholder (anchor) organisations, but with 'power' retained by local people.

For more information, see [native seeds search arid-adapted heirloom seeds from the southwest – Native-Seeds-Search](#)

5 Community Wealth Building in Canada – The importance of the social economy in Quebec, Canada

28. Quebec's political and economic landscape is characterised by a strong history of negotiations between key stakeholders including businesses, government and the (strongly unionised) labour movement, which is embedded in Quebec's culture. The economy of Quebec is characterised by large state-owned enterprises, reflecting the province's societal nature and commitment to building its economy through dialogue with major stakeholders, and also a history of cooperatives, including in agriculture.
29. A pivotal moment occurred in 1983 with the creation of the [Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs](#) (Publications Quebec, 2024a) also known as the Workers' Solidarity Fund by the [Fédération des travailleurs\(euses\) du Québec](#) (FTQ, Quebec Federation

of Labour), which has shaped Quebec's contemporary history and provides the context for its social economy.

30. [The Fonds de solidarité](#) is primarily a pension fund, comprising voluntary contributions from members of [the Quebec Federation of Labour](#) and ordinary citizens. However, its creation provided the labour movement with a means to participate in Quebec's economic development by directly investing in enterprises and sectors with assured job creation and maintenance (facilitated by the enabling role of the state). In addition to [the Fonds de solidarité](#), the [Confédération des syndicats nationaux](#) (CSN, Confederation of National Trade Unions) established a labour solidarity fund in 1996 called Fondaction ([Le Fonds de développement pour la coopération et l'emploi](#) (Publications Quebec, 2024b)). Like the [Fonds de solidarité](#), Fondaction enjoys similar fiscal advantages and is designed to pursue socio-economic objectives (see Focus Box: 6 for more information on finance-based initiatives in Quebec).
31. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed increased civil society initiatives across Quebec, indicating a growing social consciousness and including citizens' committees, workers' coops and other community-based projects ranging from co-operative housing to women's health centres. At this time, many community organisations transitioned from social interventions to active involvement in economic revitalisation efforts, particularly in response to urban economic challenges in Montreal.
32. For many commentators this was one example of the dynamic nature of Quebec's economy and its ability to adapt to changing socio-economic landscapes. One example is the [Programme économique de Pointe St. Charles](#) (PEP), which pioneered community-based economic initiatives in Quebec, specifically in the southwest of Montreal. Serving as a blueprint, PEP inspired the establishment of [community economic development corporations \(CDECs\)](#) by the Quebec government in the mid-1980s, initially in Montreal and later across the province. These CDECs exemplified what could be termed a 'negotiated economy', demonstrating the benefits of collaboration among multiple stakeholders at the local level.
33. CDECs involve all three levels of government (provincial, federal and municipal) but acknowledge that effective strategies for economic revitalisation were best developed by those at the community level who know the community's needs and dynamics. In addition to 'vertical integration' across levels of government, CDECs also serve to horizontally integrate different domains, including the labour market, enterprise services, social integration, local revitalisation and development, including through ongoing multistakeholder dialogue. Through the latter, they have helped to achieve sustainable change in political culture by recognising the invaluable knowledge that local actors bring to the policy table and the consequent need for flexibility in programme design and delivery (Mendell, 2008).

Focus Box: 6 Example of the first patient-capital investment instrument for the social economy in Quebec, Canada

First patient capital product for social economy enterprises

The Chantier Trust manages an investment fund that was the first in Quebec to offer patient capital for social economy enterprises (excluding community housing). A main feature of this product is the fact that no guarantee is required for operators' investments and a subordinate guarantee is added only in the case of real estate investments.

Capitalization from the Chantier de l'économie sociale Trust

Government of Canada \$23.8 million	Investissement Québec \$20 million
Fonds de travailleurs FSTO and Fondation \$40 million	Total invested in the fund \$83.8 million

The implementation of these financial products is made possible thanks to contributions from investment partners and non-reimbursable financial support from the government of Canada.
Returns are offered to private investors on the basis of management of portfolio risk.
Today this financial product model has new targets through the creation of specialized funds that it implements.

The government of Quebec is currently participating in various financial initiatives within the growing sector of 'solidarity-based finance' (finance solidaire), targeting local and regional development and the social economy. Notably, the government committed CDN \$10 million in the last budget to [FIDUCIE](#), a new CDN \$52.8 million quasi-equity investment fund. [FIDUCIE](#) represents the first patient-capital investment instrument for the social economy, developed by the [Chantier de l'économie sociale](#) in collaboration with [FTQ's Fonds de solidarité](#), [CSN's Fondation](#), and the federal and provincial governments. The initial capitalisation of FIDUCIE came from the federal government, highlighting its commitment to capitalise on the social economy nationwide.

Key success factors include: building on the strong historical political and economic traditions and cultures in Quebec but also an openness to be dynamic and responsive to changing circumstances; good 'vertical' relationships between levels of government; and good horizontal relationships between different actors to ensure multistakeholder dialogue happens on an ongoing basis.

For more information, see [Our Accomplishments – Fiducie du chantier de l'économie sociale](#)

6 Community Wealth Building in Europe – Strengthening social cooperatives in Italy

34. The Emilia-Romagna region of Italy (alongside the Mondragon region of Spain) is one of the locations where the concept of the Community Wealth Building first emerged, in the form of cooperative and solidarity economies. Here, these cooperatives were fostered by a tradition of interconnected family businesses.
35. The cooperative movement in Italy dates back to 19th century, but it was reorganised and consolidated in the post-war period, and finally recognised by Italian legislation in the 1990s (Pansera and Rizzi, 2020). In 1991 for example, legislation was enacted to regulate the activities of volunteer organisations in integrating disadvantaged individuals into society, and thus in contributing positively to local economies.
36. Generally, the cooperatives focus on achieving collective benefits and are based on rootedness in specific localities (Kohn, 2020). The cooperatives are diverse but two types tend to be recognised: one type focuses on caring activities like health and social care, and the other concentrates on training marginalised individuals for employment (Borzaga, 1996).
37. Over the last few decades, cooperatives in Italy have evolved with many taking on a social purpose of advancing the common good rather than only focusing on

achieving individual benefits. Many have multi-stakeholder governance arrangements, including employees, volunteers, sponsors, and beneficiaries. Some have also expanded their activities beyond social services to include environmental conservation and sustainability efforts (Osti, 2012; Pansera and Rizzi, 2020). Focus Box: 7 provides Kohn's (2020) insights on the role of social cooperatives in Italy.

Focus Box: 7: The role of Social Cooperatives in Italy

Social cooperatives in Italy collaborate with local governments to provide social services to vulnerable populations or employment opportunities to disadvantaged groups. They also act as hybrids aiming to stimulate economic activity in regions facing limited or reduced investments. They engage various stakeholders interested in broader, non-commodifiable benefits specific to a place which makes them distinctive and unique ([Kohn, 2020](#)).

38. One issue that has raised concerns, however, is about the role of social cooperatives particularly in relation to the provision of welfare and health services, with fears that they become 'professional' service providers and lose their connection with civil society. There are other challenges too as often taking on these roles requires a larger organisation with higher organisational complexity and the adoption of new managerial practices and professional skills, but managing this transition can be hard, particularly without compromising an organisation's fundamental social mission and local legitimacy (for more discussion of this, see Varman and Chakrabarti, 2004). One particular social cooperative case study is discussed in Focus Box: 8 below.

Focus Box: 8 An example of the Italian social cooperative 'Cooperativa Insieme'

[Cooperativa Insieme](#) provides a particularly interesting example of Community Wealth Building. It has operated for around 40 years with a focus on fostering social inclusion, particularly in terms of waste recovery and reuse initiatives.

Founded in Vicenza, Italy, in 1979 by volunteers from a local foster home, Cooperativa Insieme was driven by a mission to provide dignified employment opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised individuals. Over the years, it has provided employment to over 800 individuals facing social exclusion, disabilities, or health conditions.

The cooperative's decision to adopt a non-profit legal status was guided by ethical principles of solidarity, equality, and mutual cooperation, aligning with its focus on waste recovery and recycling to promote environmental conservation. What sets Cooperativa Insieme apart from other cooperatives with similar backgrounds is its proactive approach to cultivating a broad ecosystem of local stakeholders (anchors) who actively support its initiatives.

This 'ecosystem' began taking shape in 1983 with the establishment of a legal service to assist prisoners in their rehabilitation and societal reintegration. Subsequently, in 1995,



the [Open Families Network](#) was founded to provide shelter for the underprivileged, followed by [Tangram](#) in 1997, offering professional training for disadvantaged minors. In 1999, Cooperativa Insieme unified these entities into an association, leveraging voluntary efforts and physical infrastructures like recycling centres and second-hand shops, which serve as vital community hubs as well as the basis of its waste-to-second-hand business. These infrastructures not only facilitate waste recovery and reuse but also host various community initiatives, including a cafeteria offering organic and local fare and cultural events. The cooperative's commitment to community engagement and empowerment has been further solidified with the inauguration of a new headquarters in 2005, marking the beginning of a decade of expansion.

Presently, Cooperativa Insieme manages the region's largest waste reuse/recycling centre and plays a significant role in the local second-hand market, showcasing its enduring impact and sustainable growth trajectory.

Key success factors include a recognition of, and a desire to support, people from disadvantaged backgrounds based on the principles of equality and mutual cooperation; taking time and energy to create a network of supportive anchor organisations; valuing the work of volunteers; and strengthening physical infrastructure (e.g. shops) which also serve as community hubs.

For more information, see: [Home | Cooperativa Insieme \(coopinsieme.it\)](#)

7 Community Wealth Building in Australia

7.1 A Community Wealth Building Strategy in Sydney, Australia

39. Up until early 2020, Australia, including Sydney its largest urban centre, had experienced nearly three decades of continuous economic growth. However, the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic for both communities and the economy, and the realisation that not all communities across Australia, including in New South Wales, had experienced this growth, led the City of Sydney to decide to formally adopt a Community Wealth Building model for economic transformation and community recovery from the pandemic ([City of Sydney, 2021](#)).

7.1.1 What actions has Sydney taken?

40. The process of implementing Community Wealth Building included an early assessment of the City's role in the active cultivation and preservation of wealth within the wider region, including strategic procurement, employment strategies, utilisation of City-owned land and assets, and supporting the expansion and diversification of the local economy. Based on this thorough assessment and related background work, the decision was taken to integrate Community Wealth Building principles into all policies guiding the functions of the City of Sydney (2020).
41. The Council devised a clear definition of Community Wealth Building to guide their activities (see Focus Box: 9). Key to this definition was the recognition of the need to enhance the city's role in wider regional resilience, including in terms of improving circular economy practices.

Focus Box: 9 Sydney City Council (2021) – Definition of Community Wealth Building

The council defined Community Wealth Building as “an economic development model focused on fostering an inclusive and sustainable local economy grounded in widespread ownership. Its primary goals involve mitigating inequality and addressing specific social disadvantages prevalent in local areas while enhancing collective well-being and regional resilience”.

Source: [City of Sydney, 2021](#)

42. A [discussion paper published for consultation in 2021](#) set out actions that Sydney was already taking to deliver Community Wealth Building and actions it could take in future to expand its activities in this area¹⁰. It also included information gathered through a community consultation which invited residents to give their ideas to shape the strategy. These actions included:
- Creating a network of anchor partner organisations aiming to amplify the advantages of adopting the approach, and potentially magnifying the positive impacts across various sectors and stakeholders within the city.
 - Promoting a diversity of corporate structures (including not-for-profit entities, social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives, sole traders, start-ups and scale-ups, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and major corporations listed on national and global stock exchanges) and organisations with varying purposes (i.e. from ‘extractive’ to ‘generative’). It was argued that this helps to create a more competitive and dynamic environment.
 - Seeking to enhance the social enterprise sector before, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, through supporting advice and support organisations, organising networking workshops and developing digital platforms (see Focus Box: 10 for more information on the support for social enterprises).
 - Supporting new business start-ups, including tech start-ups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses, and businesses in specific sectors (e.g. retail) and fostering innovation and entrepreneurial skills amongst high school students, etc.
 - Increasing security, fairness and equality across the labour market, including for women, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and refugees and asylum seekers, through decreasing the number of casual roles, publicly reporting on gender pay equity and reviewing conditions of work, parental leave, and launching mentorship programmes. Specific programmes have been launched to create and retain meaningful employment opportunities, particularly for individuals facing barriers to employment or career progression.

¹⁰ For more information, see: [Your say on developing a community wealth building policy - City of Sydney \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

- Supporting community organisations (including through [The Connect Sydney](#) programme) by providing networking opportunities and training workshops covering various essential topics.
- Utilising the resources of local anchor institutions to drive economic, environmental, and social benefits within the community. By strategically directing their spending, including through progressive procurement policies, these institutions can support local businesses, including SMEs, social enterprises, startups, and cooperatives.
- Since 2017, the City of Sydney has encouraged the use of '#sydneylocal' to boost visibility for local businesses and precincts on social media.
- Transitioning to 100% renewable electricity across city operations including facilities and buildings, endorsing community-driven renewable energy projects and creating new green areas in the city for wellbeing benefits.
- Work to better understand and address local housing challenges including with respect to homelessness and to explore innovative financing mechanisms to stimulate private investment in affordable housing.
- Supporting the establishment of community gardens on both public and private land to promote community engagement and skills development.
- Introducing initiatives, guided by the principles of the Community Wealth Building approach, to leverage financial power to benefit local communities and to address financial exclusion experienced by the small to medium business sector and the startup community in the local economy (for example establishing a business growth fund, government guarantee schemes and support to businesses to become finance-ready).
- Supporting members of the Customer Owned Banking Association, including credit unions and mutual banks which offer alternatives to major banks in the City of Sydney and surrounding area.

Focus Box: 10 Examples of strengthening the social enterprise sector through support of the anchor institution in Sydney, Australia



The City of Sydney supported the establishment of the Social Enterprise Council of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory as well as a number of other social enterprises and initiatives across Sydney, including:

- [FoodLab Sydney](#) - An innovative programme offering training and support for those aspiring to start local food enterprises, in collaboration with the Sydney Environment Institute, Technical and Further Education New South Wales (TAFE NSW), and FoodLab Detroit.
- [OzHarvest](#) – A social enterprise mobile kitchen that provides educational workshops and free nutritious meals to local charities.
- [Co-operative Federation Ltd](#) - A rider-owned delivery service, ensuring secure employment and benefits for local riders and businesses.
- [The Sydney Commons Lab Forum](#) - An event focused on the Community Wealth Building topic, including speakers and workshops, and discussion on potential projects.
- [The Chicken Soup Project](#) - Providing nutritious meals to the 'food insecure' population.
- [Mission Australia](#) - National Christian charity motivated by a shared vision of an Australia where everyone has a safe home and can thrive.
- [The Pure Foundation](#) - Producing meals for partner charities and sustaining employment and training programmes.
- [Good360](#) - distributing goods to vulnerable community members during the pandemic.

Key success factors in Sydney's Community Wealth Building activities include:

- Background and preparation work to understand the existing economic and social landscape and to ensure that initiatives build on this, and to learn from what has worked elsewhere.
- Partnership-working across all organisations, including public, private and third and community sector bodies, and clarity and agreement on the vision and purpose, and the approach for getting there with these embedded into key planning and policy documents.
- Active promotion of local businesses and support for community groups.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation is crucial for measuring programme benefits, and aligning this with the City's commitment to achieving long-term community, economic, and environmental goals.
- Overall, taking a proactive, holistic place-based approach which incorporates and links together a number of different interventions can ensure that the benefits of a Community Wealth Building approach are maximised.

For more information visit [The City of Sydney Community Wealth Building Report](#).

7.2 Addressing local procurement and reducing barriers to work: the GROW: G21 Regional Opportunities for Work initiative

43. The GROW: G21 project (GROW stands for Growing Regional Opportunities for Work) builds on the collective impact model and involves the creation and signing of a pact by 110 partners in the Geelong Region of Victoria, Australia. Signatories to the pact have committed to a preference for local procurement and to offer employment to people who are experiencing significant barriers to work. The project involves a partnership of businesses, community groups, individuals and government.
44. The project is based on four core principles which aim to support businesses and help create sustainable and equitable jobs:
 - **Be Inclusive:** Create safe and supportive workplaces for all our community
 - **Spend Local:** Buy from local businesses to help the local economy and create jobs
 - **Spend Social:** Buy from businesses who employ from GROW communities
 - **Advocate and Collaborate:** For region-wide change and to strengthen the GROW network.
45. A 2024 seminar for GROW stakeholders discussed the challenges, processes and outcomes in implementing social change to achieve better investment and outcomes in their community, known as social procurement. Their [social procurement toolkit](#) offers advice on how to foster greater procurement from the third sector and from within communities. For more information, see: [GROW G21 Region | A Give Where You Live initiative \(growvic.com.au\)](#).

8 Community Wealth Building in Africa

8.1 Inclusive ownership and progressive procurement in Tanzania - the 'Kigoma Model'

46. Community Wealth Building approaches and initiatives have reached beyond advanced economies contexts. One such example is Kigoma, the capital of the Kigoma-Ujiji District in Northwest Tanzania. Located on Lake Tanganyika, the city hosts a busy port and urban centre whilst the remainder of the district is largely agricultural. Eder (2021) notes the similarities between Kigoma and Preston, where the socio-economic contexts, political appetites for alternative development approaches, and histories and traditions of self-reliance make Community Wealth Building an attractive proposition.
47. In 2015, these factors in Kigoma combined with the election of an opposition ACT party MP in Kigoma whose principles resonated with many of the Community Wealth Building pillars. The party's [founding declaration](#) states that the party wants "*many people to own parts of the economy through their cooperative unions and associations*". Recognising these contextual similarities between the two cities and

building on ties between the ACT and the UK Labour Party¹¹, a group of academics, politicians, and advocates in Kigoma sought to [collaborate with and adopt](#) lessons from the Preston model (Kabwe, Guinan and O'Neill, 2018). This international partnership aimed to develop a local authority-led 'Kigoma model' of Community Wealth Building specific to the region's context, culture, challenges, and opportunities. The activities largely focused on the inclusive ownership and progressive procurement pillars of Community Wealth Building (Collord, 2019).

48. More generally, Tanzania has a rich history of cooperatives and alternative forms of ownership (rooted in the [Ujamaa ideology](#), based around principles of communal ownership, egalitarianism and fair distribution, and participation based on a pre-colonial vision (Bosel, 2023; Schneider, 2014)). While some collective settlements created following the Ujamaa ideology experienced corruption and left residents poor (Schneider, 2014; Boddy-Evans, 2019; Collard, 2019), the tradition of cooperative ownership remains pervasive in Tanzania. Today, cooperatives remain an important part of Tanzania's economy, recognised by the national government as critical in achieving economic and social development (Katundu, 2018). In 2019, there were 11,626 registered cooperatives in mainland Tanzania directly employing 90,090 people and a production value of 2.9 trillion Tanzanian shillings (estimated to be around 4.7% of national GDP) (International Cooperative Alliance – Africa, 2020).
49. A large proportion of these cooperatives are Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS), providing a range of financial services including savings and loan facilities, and Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS), providing a range of agricultural market services, storage, transportation, and processing services, as well as loan and credit facilities. The agricultural sector in Tanzania is significant in terms of employment (56% of the country's total employment in 2019) and GDP (26% in 2019) (United Republic of Tanzania, 2021), but incomes across the sector are low (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020).
50. Dukila and Mato (2022) noted numerous motivations for the creation of cooperatives including economic growth and improving socioeconomic conditions, empowering marginalised communities, addressing market failures, benefiting from economies of scale in transportation and storage options, and collective bargaining power with regard to input and production prices, as well as lobbying power on issues such as land redistribution. They have also been found to provide more intangible benefits such as social protection to members during periods of crisis or emergency (Maghimbi, 2010).
51. The Kigoma region actually hosted fewer cooperatives than the national average in the mid-2000s (Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission, 2021) presenting an opportunity and priority for Community Wealth Building plans as part of the 'Kigoma Model' to promote local ownership and good quality jobs. Work was done to improve training and education for managers and to expand information-sharing but

¹¹ For more information, see also: [Building community wealth globally: The Kigoma-Preston collaboration \(thenextsystem.org\)](#)

a key challenge experienced was a lack of finance (Maghimbi, 2010). Local councils tend to have limited fiscal autonomy, lack revenue-generating capacity and have also faced austerity measures recently, all of which have limited their capacity to direct anchor institutions' spending, promote progressive procurement strategies, and provide financial support to the development and running of cooperatives. This led the Kigoma Council to seek international aid and donor funding for Community Wealth Building initiatives and cooperatives (Moloo, 2022).

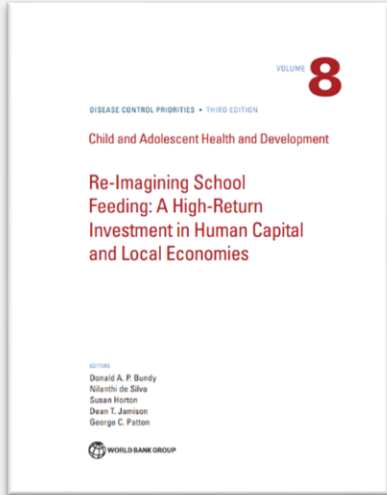
52. However, this reliance on external funders and donors has been argued to restrict the local or community grass-roots decision-making capacity of cooperatives, in favour of national government or even international NGOs (Collord, 2019). A further challenge experienced in implementing the 'Kigoma Model' has been that authority over land management sits at the national level so Kigoma Council's ability to influence collectively owned land (a key pillar of Community Wealth Building) is limited (Collord, 2019). The role of national government in supporting and facilitating (or not) Community Wealth Building is important, as are the relationships between local, regional, and national decision-makers, which can impact on the ability of local actors to develop innovative solutions and approaches to Community Wealth Building.

8.2 School Feeding Programmes and their wider benefits in Ghana

53. Many African countries have implemented school feeding programmes with the expectation of life improvements, including providing nutritional value to children, improving school attendance, and alleviating poverty (Verguet et al., 2020).
54. Ghana's school feeding programme, established in 2005, aims to provide one hot nutritious meal per day to children in primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas. However, the programme also has broader goals, including a long-term contribution to poverty reduction and food security, through using locally grown produce. Its short-term objectives include reducing hunger and malnutrition, increasing school enrolment, attendance, and retention, and boosting domestic food production.
55. Several studies have examined the impact and effectiveness of Ghana's school feeding programme. Bundy, et al. (2009) highlighted the benefits of such programs, including their potential to provide food transfers to poorer households and their contribution to domestic expenditures. However, certain challenges have emerged, such as delays in fund release and lack of supporting infrastructure (Gokah, 2008; Serebour, 2017). Regarding food security and sovereignty, studies have shown improvements in household access to food and better availability of local farm produce in districts with participating schools (Quaye et al., 2010). Yet, there's limited evidence of deliberate efforts by farmers to expand production in response to the programme.
56. Similarly, research on value-chain collaborations has provided insights into fostering farmer autonomy and sustainable food production (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015), but the explicit linkages with school feeding programmes remain underexplored. Salifu,

Boateng, and Kunduzore (2018) found a positive influence of Ghana's feeding program on school enrolment and retention, contributing to the achievement of free compulsory basic education. However, little is known about the situation in non-participating schools within the same communities. Additionally, Iddrisu, et al. (2019) raised concerns about the selection of participating schools and their alignment with poverty reduction objectives, highlighting issues associated with the selection process. For more information on Ghana's feeding programmes, see Focus Box: 11.

Focus Box: 11 Using Ghana's feeding programmes to highlight the relevance of continual monitoring and evaluation of Community Wealth Building activities

	<p>The food procurement guidelines for Ghana's feeding programme recommend that caterer source at least 80% of their food items from local farmers within the community, district, region, or national level, with a preference for the nearest food markets.</p> <p>However, there are doubts about the extent to which these guidelines are followed. Research by Sulemana et al. (2013) in northern Ghana found that caterers were not purchasing any food items from local farmers, calling into question the programme's effectiveness in promoting local food production. This highlights a gap between policy intentions and actual implementation, suggesting a need for better monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with procurement guidelines and to enhance the programme's impact on local agricultural development.</p> <p>Key success factors in Ghana's Community Wealth Building activities include: improved rates of school enrolment and retention; food transfers to poorer households and reduction of domestic expenditures for those households; improved access to food and availability of local produce and stimulation of local economies; appropriate monitoring to ensure guidelines are being followed.</p> <p>For more information visit Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies (dcp-3.org)</p>
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9 Conclusions and key learning for Scotland

57. This Policy Spotlight has briefly reviewed examples of Community Wealth Building initiatives in North America, Europe, Australia and Africa, as part of wider research to explore the opportunities and challenges of this approach in rural and island contexts. The examples are diverse, with some focusing on labour market equality, some on changing procurement approaches and some on increasing the number of cooperative organisations, in order to deliver different objectives whether that be regional equity, increased wellbeing or poverty reduction.
58. As some of the examples reviewed demonstrate, Community Wealth Building principles are historic features of some localities, such as the emphasis on an inclusive economy through cooperative businesses in Tanzania and northern Italy. Others are more recently launched interventions that are grounded in Community

Wealth Building principles but do not have a long history of implementing similar targeted approaches (such as the initiatives in Australia). All of them, in different ways, demonstrate the resilience of communities and the ways in which alternative forms of economy can be created.

59. There is evidence that the outcomes from some of the recent Community Wealth Building initiatives are grounded in prerequisites such as well-developed infrastructure, an ability to respond to changing circumstances, and horizontal relationships across different industries and stakeholders. Some of these characteristics may not be present, or well-developed, in all rural and island communities. However, rural and island areas may exhibit considerable strengths in terms of encouragement and engagement from local grassroots initiatives in designing and delivering initiatives for example, or in terms of a commitment to local procurement where possible, that can improve the likelihood of success. The evidence presented here suggests that many of the initiatives could be successful in both rural and urban settings, including (a) food-related support targeted at low-income households or local education institutions that can benefit students, communities and local economies alike; or (b) encouraging diversity in forms of business ownership.
60. Although there are important differences between the examples reviewed, a number of success factors can be identified which are common to at least some of the approaches and initiatives. These can form useful learning for Scotland and include:
 - Supportive and facilitative national legislation and other support including funding (if appropriate).
 - Building on existing strengths, assets and interests (for example, a history of cooperatives or of informal seed exchanges).
 - Good working relationships ‘vertically’ between different levels of government, national, regional and local and ‘horizontally’ through strong networks between all stakeholders at the local level, including anchor organisations and communities.
 - Long-term commitment from anchor organisations and other stakeholder partners.
 - Ongoing support for communities and/or businesses (of all different types) to build capacity and empower and enable them to fully engage in, and ideally lead, Community Wealth Building activities.
 - An openness to ‘do things differently’ (for example a commitment to supporting those who are disadvantaged to re-enter the labour market) and identifying ‘champions’ to lead change.
 - Clear goals which can be effectively evaluated, and consistent data gathering (relating to the full range of outputs and outcomes) to do so.

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