

Future-Ready Society Conference

Peers, Places and Platforms – the Future of Empowered Communities

Ideas for Community Empowerment

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“How come we don’t think of celebrating our children’s birthdays at our local CCs?”

Community Centres | Social Services

- We have functionally segregated our spaces:
 - ‘Fun’ stuff in CCs
 - ‘Sad’ stuff in SSAs
- Unintended consequences of separate spaces:
 - ‘Inconsequential recreation’ at CCs
 - Stigmatised space of SSAs (Community is not in the social service space unless invited for very specific volunteering purposes)
- What do we miss out?



Harnessing hobbyist energies purposefully to meet community needs

- Responding to climate change - Energy saving workshops, urban farming, repair workshops, textiles refashion etc. ('Remakeries')
- Meeting local community needs - knitting club making blankets for local hospital; sewing club making toothbrush holder out of old advertising banners for school children (See Common Unity, NZ).
- Lots of possibilities: Don't go to the gym, come help move house for disadvantaged families?

Community Centres 2.0?

- Integrated community space that acts as a receptacle for all of life's joys and sorrows (birthdays, weddings, funerals) - recreation, social services, community-led businesses, ground-up initiatives etc.
- Sure, provide professional social services – but what if we put doctors and lawyers together with social workers?
- Businesses can be tenants but prioritise community-led enterprises that employ residents or meet local needs.
- Scottish even have 'Community Asset Transfers' but we can find some middle ground to facilitate ownership.

Community Development Trusts

- In SG, we are familiar with social enterprises.
 - Typically specialise in a product / service and will try to grow or move operations to where there is economic opportunity.
- CDTs are like a place-based social enterprise; but run by the local community to respond to local needs (Can be CLG or Society).
 - Rooted to a locality and therefore, only ever grows its economic activity to an appropriate size.

Form CDTs supported by CDCs?

- What if we form micro-CDTs that are owned and led by residents of a neighbourhood?
- CDCs are regionally focused and have the mandate to connect and build capacity of communities across 5 districts.
- What if CDCs supported local CDTs to invest in services, programmes or businesses that meet micro-level local needs?
- Local CDTs can even pool resources by raising funds through 'community shares'.

Community Planning Partnerships | Participation Requests

- **Community Planning Partnerships** - Public bodies working together with local communities to design and deliver better services. Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans.

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>

- **Participation Requests** – A way for people to have their say about what improvements they would like to see made to public services they use. By making a participation request, a community body (or group of people in a community) can ask to start a discussion with organisations in charge of public services, such as hospitals, schools and transport, about how to improve these services.

<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/community-empowerment-scotland-act/participation-requests-faq#a1>

Social Stock Exchange | Community Shares

- A platform that lists ready-to-implement solutions so that pathways are built to multiple type of funders to pool support (institutional funders, high-net-worth individuals, crowd funding etc). Can be structured in terms of loans, grants or shares.
 - e.g. <https://www.bettervest.com/en>
- Local communities can invest small amounts in a community-owned business serving their neighbourhood, e.g. a parent-led after school care centre.
 - e.g. <https://communityshares.co.uk/>

Community Learning Exchange

- Small pockets of accessible funding (est. \$1k-3k) that SSAs, NPOs and community groups can apply to organise learning journeys or seminars to share knowledge with one another.
- E.g. It can pay the honorarium of an overseas expert to share some insights at virtual seminar on a solution they are thinking about implementing.
- E.g. It can pay for hosting, venue and refreshments for a local site visit.
- The administrator of the Scottish Community Learning Exchange impressed upon us the great value of such peer learning, mutual exchange and relationships cultivated through very small sums of money.

<https://scottishcommunityalliance.org.uk/community-learning-exchange/>

Community Expo



- Large-scale (biennial?) Non-Profit / Community / Voluntary Sector Expo.
- Like Trade Expos
- The exhibitors can include social enterprises, ground ups, community arts, civic tech etc.
- Programming can be added – speakers, performances.

Possible Purposes of Community Expo

1. **Volunteer recruitment**; VIA, service-learning opportunities for students.
2. **Fundraising and development**, donor recruitment, engage potential investors.
3. **Career fair** – for those considering entering the sector or mid-career switch.
4. NPOs themselves will benefit from **networking** and discovering what their peers are doing.

Participatory Budgeting

- Residents in a local community developing ideas, deliberating and then deciding on the use of the public budget.
- Sharing power is not a zero-sum game—if I share power, I lose power—but a generative one that creates capacity and legitimacy that were not there before. It activates different parts of the community to tackle issues and develop initiatives that were not possible before.

Roving Community Innovation Lab

- This seeks to encourage residents to start ground-up initiatives through a roving lab to the heartlands—through pop-up exhibitions that feature already actionable ideas complete with playbooks.
- Facilitators also collect new ideas and share with other neighbourhoods as they move from place to place.

Summary

1. Community Centres 2.0
2. Community Development Trusts
3. Community Planning Partnerships | Participation Requests
4. Social Stock Exchange | Community Shares
5. Community Learning Exchange
6. Community Expo
7. Participatory Budgeting
8. Roving Community Innovation Lab

General Insights

- Third sector commonly regarded as the ‘cost centre’ but community can be the site of serious economic activity.
- When economic activity is subsidiary to and in service of community needs, it only ever grows to an appropriate size; there is no growth imperative that tends towards over-exploitation (of people or planet).

Thank You