A Wales That Cares for People and Planet

About the author

Lydia Godden is the IWA's Economic Policy and Research Officer.

info@iwa.org.uk





About the IWA

We are a think tank and charity, independent of government and political parties.

By bringing together experts from all backgrounds, we conceive ambitious and informed ideas which secure political commitments to improve our democracy and economy.

We provide platforms for debate, opportunities for people to make their voices heard and agenda-setting research. We are funded by our members, our events and training sessions, and supported by trusts, foundations and other funding bodies.

About Oxfam Cymru

Oxfam Cymru believes in a radically better world, free from the injustice of poverty.

As part of the global Oxfam family, Oxfam Cymru works with partners across Wales and around the world to tackle poverty and drive change in and from Wales.

Oxfam Cymru believes that when people come together, change comes about. We're striving for a world where all of us are empowered with exactly what we need to thrive.

A Wales That Cares for People and Planet

This paper is based on a roundtable discussion convened in April 2024 by the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) supported by Oxfam Cymru and delivered in partnership with Cardiff University.

The aim of these discussions was to present and explore means through which Wales can progress towards an economy which cares for people and planet, moving beyond GDP. The event gathered intersectional feminist perspectives, academics and economists and other key experts to discuss a holistic approach that interconnects climate justice, feminist economics, financialisation of care and wellbeing economies. In doing so, our intention is to further the work of Oxfam Cymru on economic alternative approaches, learning from global approaches and exploring them in a Welsh perspective.

Background

The roundtable, which informs this paper, brought together key stakeholders including academics, economists, Welsh Government and third sector organisations examining the interconnectedness of care, climate and sustainable economics in a Welsh context (attendees are listed below). The paper outlines key positions, reflecting the key topics of the broad conversation and are therefore not representative of individual presenters' views. As such, perspectives and policy positions put forward here are directly attributable to the IWA, but not other attendees. They are, however, directly informed by the interventions of attendees at the roundtable.

The discussion began by acknowledging the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and marginalised communities and discussed alternative economic models available to Wales. The roundtable discussions were driven by three key aims. First, to bring together intersectional feminist perspectives to explore the interconnected challenges faced by women in the realm of care and climate justice. Second, to assess the impact of the financialization of the care sector, emphasising profit-driven models' role in wage disparities and resulting underinvestment in Welsh communities. And third, to collaborate with economists to critically assess the shortcomings of neoliberal economics in meeting the needs of Wales, presenting alternative economic models aligned with Oxfam's principles.

The roundtable was co-chaired by the IWA's Co-Director, Joe Rossiter and Sarah Rees, Head of Oxfam Cymru, and consisted of three hours of substantive discussion. Based on the discussion, this paper identifies recommendations and next steps that can be used for further progress on economic alternatives in Wales that address climate and gender justice. The paper builds on two arms of Oxfam's strategy, Climate Justice and Valuing Women's Work, in order to actively engage in shaping a Wales (and world) where justice and equality prevail. Oxfam Cymru's forthcoming focus involves consideration of the metrics that measure care and informal economies. Given this, the discussion aimed at assessing the limits of neoliberal and growth-focused models for Wales and devising alternative sets of metrics.

During the day, there were four provocations delivered for attendees set across two sessions. The first provocations, delivered by Oxfam GB and Oxfam International respectively, centred on the current context of care, climate justice and inequality providing perspectives on ensuring the economy better reflects what we value. The second provocations discussed alternative economic models, such as doughnut economics, and examined their potential for rollout in Wales. These two distinct discussions will form the jumping off points of this paper.

It is clear that devising a new approach to achieve a fair and sustainable economic future that prioritises well-being is complex in Wales given the devolution settlement and the reserved competencies model. While Wales has jurisdiction over elements of climate change, its limited fiscal powers inhibit its ability to effect wide scale systemic change, due to a budget which is substantially preallocated to statutory service delivery and a lack of fiscal headroom.1 The lack of public discussion between care and the green economy, as well as the lack of implementation of equalities mainstreaming in legislative frameworks result in siloed working. The paper considers this context when discussing both the challenges and the opportunities for alternative economic methods in Wales.

Key recommendations:

The following recommendations result from the conversation at the roundtable and an analysis of policy levers and actions available by the IWA as a result.

1. The Welsh Government should apply a gendered lens, embedding considerations of gender and care across policy making and implementation

- a. The Welsh government should explore a 'feminist green new deal', mainstreaming considerations of gender and care within net zero policies and just transition ambitions
- b. Embed a gendered lens with considerations for care across all policy decision-making such as transport, health and social care, and net zero
- c. Establish an Intersectional Care Policy Scorecard: a mechanism for assessing the impact of policy making decisions and initiatives on care
- 2. Welsh Government should set a new economic strategy, with a clear vision for the economy it wants to see in Wales. This strategy should:
 - a. Provide a clear set of principles for the type of economy it wants for Wales
 - b. Provide clear language on underpinning economic principles
 - c. Create a shared discourse and set of values for the public and private sector to adhere on its vision for Wales' well-being economy
 - d. Clearly challenge the ways in which established economic thinking is failing communities.
- 3. Welsh Government, alongside UK Government, should establish a broader set of economic indicators which match their ambitions for the economy
 - a. Such measures should go beyond GDP, GVA and income per household to provide a broader picture of liveability in Wales and measure care work

¹ Institute of Welsh Affairs (2022), *Fiscal*

Firepower: Effective Policy-Making in Wales.

- b. Data collection must match policy ambition - regular collection of data to analyse what policies are working and what aren't
- c. Undertake a consultation exercise to consider wellbeing economy aligned alternative measures.
- 4. Welsh Government should establish a working group to explore alternative economic models and their practical implementation, which:
 - a. Should be part of an ongoing collaboration with private, public and third sectors, building on Welsh Government's social partnership approach
 - Should go beyond theory to practice - hearing from bottom-up solutions at community level which have led to wellbeing and foundational economic benefits
 - c. Involves the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner as a key stakeholder in bringing together the public sector and establishing a long term policy lens.
- 5. Funding arrangements at all layers of government should ensure the delivery, rollout and implementation of policies which promote well-being, underpinned by sustainable finance models and delivered in partnership with the private and third sectors
 - a. Utilising Shared Prosperity Funds (and subsequent schemes) and increased joint working between the Welsh Government, Corporate Joint

Committee's (CJC's), and businesses in Wales to finance the rollout of successful pilots

- b. Increased funding for the third sector to ease the negative impacts of competitive funding processes that stifle forward thinking
- c. Increased collaboration and joint working on policy and research where third sector organisations have similar areas of research to strengthen their collective voice
- d. Welsh Government should establish a 'Manifesto for Wales' Well-being economy' delivered in coalition with third sector organisations to influence ahead of Senedd elections in 2026
- e. All CJCs and local authorities in Wales to sign up to the Race to Zero initiative to accelerate the shift to net zero.

Participants

1	Anam Parvez [speaker]	Head of Research	Oxfam
2	Helen Lucocq [speaker]	Head of Strategy and Policy	Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
3	Erinch Sahan [speaker]	Business and Enterprise lead	Doughnut Economics Action Lab
4	Leah Payud [speaker]	Portfolio Manager	Oxfam Philippines
5	Hayley Richards	Head of Programme Development and Policy	Welsh Centre for International Affairs
6	Kate Young	Director	All Wales Forum of Parents & Carers
7	Amanda Davies	Head of Foundational Economy Health & Social Care	Welsh Government
8	Dawn Lyle	Director and Co-Founder	4theRegion & Wellbeing Economy Alliance Wales
9	Sam Ward	Head of Climate Cymru	Climate Cymru
10	Dr Karolina Rucinska	Sustainability Strategist	Cynnal Cymru
11	Camille Lovgreen	Sustainability Adviser	Cynnal Cymru
12	Duncan Fisher	Director	Our Food 1200
13	Christine Boston	Director	Sustrans Cymru
14	Sherilyn MacGregor	Professor of Environmental Politics	Manchester University
15	Joe Rossiter	Co-Director, Policy and External Affairs	Institute of Welsh Affairs
16	Sarah Rees	Head of Oxfam Cymru	Oxfam Cymru
17	Dr Hade Turkmen	Policy and Advocacy Adviser	Oxfam Cymru
18	Dr Alison Parken	Lecturer in Management, Employment and Organisation	Cardiff University
19	Dr Sara MacBride-Stewart	Reader in Health Medicine and Society	Cardiff University
20	Marine Furet [observer]	Media, Communications and Engagement Officer	Institute of Welsh Affairs

Session 1: Care, climate and inequality

The first provocations of the day focussed on the current context of care, climate justice and inequality, outlining the urgent need to consider alternative economic frameworks which better reflect human values.

The provocation identified that globally we are experiencing a worsening 'polycrisis' of issues at play, where multiple crises such as widening disparities in wealth and inequality, the climate crisis and gender inequality are inextricably bound together, creating compounded effects. This sustained period of polycrisis is caused and exacerbated by the dominant neoliberal economic model and its focus on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), valuing economic growth above all else.

The current economic model has driven the polycrisis due to its extractive, profit-driven, neocolonial and patriarchal nature that reduces society to the economy, reduces the economy to the market, and systematically reduces women and care work to the 'maintenance' economy. As much of the caring work takes place within the private sphere of the home the care economy is frequently undervalued, pushing women deeper into time and income poverty.² Among policymakers, organisations, feminist economists and movements there is growing consensus that GDP is not fit for purpose as the pre-eminent economic metric.³ From this lens, the provocation outlined the fundamental limitations of

neoliberalism and GDP-centric measures that further entrench the polycrisis, drawing on Oxfam's paper '*Radical Pathways Beyond GDP*'.⁴

Importantly, the provocation identified that GDP is not simply an economic metric but a reflection of a patriarchal value system, confusing 'wellbeing for all' with high productivity levels and has become deeply ingrained in ways of working and leading institutions such as the G7 relying on this approach. Furthermore, de-growth scholars also agree that to tackle the polycrisis we must move beyond GDP as a policy objective with many critics publishing work on limitations for decades. Economic growth, as narrowly defined as GDP, is unfit for purpose as a sole metric for managing an economy.

The provocation outlined that the core problem of neoliberalism lies in the narrow focus on GDP as the primary indicator of economic and social progress.⁵ This approach perpetuates the pervasive belief that unlimited GDP growth is essential for achieving broader political goals like equality, wellbeing, and poverty eradication. However, GDP fails to account for the quality of economic activity, its distribution, or its impact on ecological and social wellbeing. For example, environmental pollution events like oil spills can increase GDP, through the economic output of activities required to clean them up, despite wider global and social harms. Examples such as this clearly display the need to go beyond GDP when analysing the performance of economies, and when designing policy interventions to improve outcomes.

² <u>Oxfam (2020), *Time to care Unpaid and*</u> <u>underpaid care work and the global inequality</u> <u>crisis.</u>

³ Oxfam (2023), Radical Pathways Beyond GDP: Why and how we need to pursue feminist and decolonial alternatives urgently.

Crucially, GDP has limited effect as a single metric and does not capture unpaid care, disproportionately affecting women who predominantly perform this labour. This is particularly impactful in the context of Wales' economy whereby in 2019 an estimated 96% of care was unpaid.⁶ Therefore, care is a hidden subsidy to the economy.⁷

Critically, this affects which policies are prioritised. The issue of public care provision is particularly relevant in Wales, where just 18% of unpaid carers are eligible for allowance.⁸ Meanwhile, industries like oil and gas are heavily subsidised by the UK Government. Public care provision is sorely lacking, exacerbating inequalities with unequal maternity pay and the high cost of childcare set against ongoing investment in fossil fuel sectors.

Examining care, gender and inequality in the UK we find that the past decade of austerity measures have worsened socioeconomic conditions, leading to decreased life expectancy among women in most deprived areas.⁹ Furthermore, austerity measures have led to significant cuts to local government budgets that serve to undermine efforts to promote climate action and reduce carbon emissions such as home efficiency upgrades and retrofit of housing, therefore exacerbating climate breakdown.¹⁰

The reliance on GDP-centric measures perpetuates a colonial legacy of extraction and inequality whereby high income countries and households are responsible for 92% of climate emissions while the effects are felt most harshly in the global south. In this way, colonial history and extraction heavily underpins neoliberal economics.

To address these issues, alternatives are urgently needed to facilitate the transition to a new economic model that prioritises wellbeing and supports a radically more equal, sustainable and feminist world in the present, while offering redress for historical damage and inequalities. For instance, New Zealand has adopted a wellbeing framework rooted in Indigenous values,¹¹ while Wales has initiated the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, though its implementation falls short, particularly in recognising the importance of care.¹²

Effective alternatives to GDP-centric measures should capture all forms of economic activity, including unpaid work, and assess their impact on inequality and wellbeing. They must centre the voices of marginalised communities in Wales and globally, particularly women and Indigenous peoples, in both their development and implementation. Such a shift requires a systems change approach challenging the dominant narrative of

⁶ <u>Senedd Cymru (2019), Caring for our future</u> <u>An inquiry into the impact of the Social</u> <u>Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in</u> <u>relation to carers.</u>

⁷ Oxfam (2023), Radical Pathways Beyond GDP: Why and how we need to pursue feminist and decolonial alternatives urgently

⁸ <u>Carers Trust Wales, N.d., Unpaid Carers in</u> <u>Wales and access to financial and statutory</u> <u>support, p.5</u>

⁹ Oxfam (2022), The Assault of Austerity: How prevailing economic policy choices are a form of gender-based violence.

¹⁰ Fetzer, T and I Feld (2024), 'DP18894 Performative State Capacity and Climate (In)Action'.

¹¹<u>New Zealand Government (2019), *The Wellbeing Budget.*</u>

¹² Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2015), *The Well-being of Future Generations* (Wales) Act.

GDP growth and fostering consensus on feminist and decolonial approaches.

In order to dislodge GDP from its dominant position it is crucial to critically challenge dominant narratives on the universal positivity of GDP growth, especially where there is ample evidence to show how trickle down economics has failed communities. While there are ongoing efforts towards alternative measures, there's a pressing need to accelerate progress and advocate for change given the urgency of domestic and global challenges.

Care, climate justice, gender dimensions - a Global South perspective

The second provocation explored the realities of care, climate justice and gender dimensions with a perspective from the Global South with insights from the Philippines.

The provocation outlined the impacts of the climate crisis in the Philippines, and how this is interconnected with understandings of gender justice and disparities between the global North and South. While the Philippines is classified as a middle to low-income country, the World Risk Index (WRI) 2023 put the Philippines as the most-disaster-prone country in the world, with a huge risk from typhoons and earthquakes due to location in the Circum-pacific Typhoon belt.¹³

The devastating impact of events like Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 highlight the collapse of essential services, and basic resources such as clean water, and create a high reliance and dependence on external partners¹⁴. However, due to the ongoing impacts of the climate crisis, such disasters have become increasingly devastating and frequent, alongside weather events like typhoons, with a significant threat to life impacting even more small island communities, already at risk of rising sea levels. The impacts of the climate crisis are disproportionately felt in the global south, despite such countries not being responsible for causing climate breakdown.¹⁵

Recent data from the UN snapshot 2023 outlines the continued risk of impact from multiple hazards with changing weather patterns and conflict affecting more than 13.7 million people in the Philippines.¹⁶ The provocation highlighted the gendered impact of climate change in the Philippines, whereby, the brunt of such hazards are frequently borne by the most marginalised in the Global South, especially women and those most economically disadvantaged.

Women, especially, face disproportionate challenges linked to climate events due to the increased burden of unpaid care work. The 2021 national household care survey from Oxfam Philippines reveals that in the midst of a pandemic, the time spent by women on care work increased to 13 hours a day compared to only eight hours for men.¹⁷ Women also spend many hours multitasking care work alongside other

 ¹⁴ Oxfam (2013), TYPHOON HAIYAN The response so far and vital lessons for the Philippines recovery.
 ¹⁵ Oxfam UK (2023), FIGHTING FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE AFTERMATH OF TYPHOON HAIYAN.
 ¹⁶UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2024), PHILIPPINES 2023 Significant Natural Hazards and Conflicts Snapshot.

¹⁷ <u>Sobritchea, C et al. (2021), WOMEN'S</u> <u>ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND CARE</u> (WE-CARE) THE 2021 NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD CARE SURVEY.

¹³Bradshaw et al. (2023), World Risk Report 2023.

responsibilities as caring is unequally distributed.

This inequitable distribution of care responsibilities limits women's opportunities for education and participation in other activities of their choosing, particularly within the public sphere. Furthermore, the cycle of inequality perpetuates domestic violence and reinforces time and income poverty, necessitating urgent action to address these intersecting challenges. Therefore, the provocation highlighted the need for such caring work to be seen as valuable labour, and to address the systemic issues of normative and traditionally held gender roles within society that subscribe caring responsibilities to women and girls, contributing to the unequal distribution of care work.

The provocation outlined Oxfam Philippines' Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care) programme which aims to confront unpaid care work as a gender equality issue. The programme is working to achieve systemic change in gender roles in society that negatively impact women by incorporating a range of stakeholders, ensuring that community groups, governments, development practitioners and the private sector work together to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.¹⁸

While infrastructure is required to support women, wider work to tackle climate and gender justice in relation to caring responsibilities requires social norms change. The WE-Care programme engages and works with men to highlight the positive gender deviance on gender norms concerning care work.¹⁹ The programme initiates change through the 5Rs framework by *recognising*, *reducing* and *redistributing* care work, ensuring those who perform unpaid care are *represented* in policy decisions about it and finally are *rewarded* for their care work.²⁰ The provocation ultimately underscored the importance of holding both individuals and governments accountable for addressing unpaid care work, highlighting the lack of comprehensive programs to tackle care in governments across the world, alongside the lack of data on the issue globally.

The key calls to action to address the climate and care nexus are:

- 1. Value care work as foundational to a climate-just society
- 2. Develop and implement policy frameworks the integrate care and climate strategies
- 3. Invest in the creation of green jobs within the care sectors
- 4. Ensure care infrastructure is climate resilient
- 5. Invest in labour saving domestic technologies that simultaneously mitigate climate change
- 6. Increase access to climate information services
- 7. Include caregivers in debates and decision-making processes regarding climate action
- Invest research in Analysing the impacts of climate change on the amount conditions and distribution of care²¹

¹⁸Oxfam (2017). Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care): Overview 2017.

¹⁹ Oxfam, N.D. WE-Care Programme.

²⁰ <u>MacGregor et al (2022), Caring in a</u> <u>changing climate: Centering care work in</u> <u>climate action. Oxfam Research Backgrounder</u> series.

²¹ Information from Oxfam presentation - further information available here

Discussion

The provocations each set the tone for a conversation of exploring in more detail the current interconnected issues of tackling care, climate, and gender both in the UK and globally.

One key area of discussion and learning following the provocations was around the need for community driven engagement to drive a campaign to systemically change long-held traditional gendered assumptions in society. The WE-Care campaign had to operate within strongly held gender norms across communities and government in the Philippines and highlighted the need for novel and sensitive engagement, working with men to stimulate and lead to systems change of transforming gender roles.

The WE-Care campaign can provide useful learning in the importance of novel approaches to engagement in achieving systemic change in gender roles. As there was initially little engagement with the government of the Philippines, this led to an approach to build engagement from the bottom, the community level, working with leaders to champion the work, before engaging with local government to grow the reach of the campaign. This community driven approach has succeeded and there are now strong working relationships across all of the local governments who are adopting the We-Care ordinance/ framework. It is clear that such bottom-up, community driven approaches could be an effective tool for challenging gender norms around care work in Wales and the wider UK.

The discussion also considered how we may achieve a globally responsible Wales (one of the Well-being goals of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales) and the need to consider the wellbeing of migrant Philippines workers who play a vital role in the paid care economy in Wales²². Care work is only considered as important when it can be monetised via tax. Therefore, this has led to Women leaving the Philippines providing care work in the UK to send money back to the Philippines.

Here it was agreed that there is a need to recognise diversity of relations among paid and unpaid carers given the greater occupational risks and asymmetries of power that create global care chains that fall on poorer women in the Global South. The resulting reality means there is a Global South care exodus based on colonial power imbalances where economically marginalised women from the Global South work in the Global North, resulting in the unmet care needs in the Global South.

Looking at the care crisis within Wales, data collection and analysis was a key area of consideration. Participants strongly agreed that carers are often overburdened with survey requests, often asking the same questions. Instead the discussion looked at what alternative options there are in Wales to utilise a central database to collect data on care and gender in Wales.

There is much policy learning from Scotland where wellbeing indicators are now being used to assess the wellbeing of children and young people and it was considered how Wales could employ similar indicators perhaps utilising the national census to record some of this data.²³ Beyond data collection, it was agreed that analysis of data must be

 ²² Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, N.D. A Globally Responsible Wales,
 ²³ Scottish Government (2022), Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) - Statutory Guidance
 <u>Assessment of Wellbeing 2022.</u>

intersectional, with a gendered lens employed to gain a deeper understanding on a number of issues such as care, family and children that are interconnected to gender.

Finally, participants considered what countries are applying wellbeing economy frameworks to measure care, what Wales can learn from these examples and how a time use metric could be used. In the Netherlands, a Monitor of Well-being provides a balanced and coherent set of reliable and timely indicators to support public debates from the perspective of well-being.24 It also includes a consideration of wellbeing elsewhere, factoring in the pressure that the Netherlands puts on other countries which links to the previous considerations of global power imbalances in transfers of care from the Global South.²⁵

Furthermore, Wales could learn from the bottom up approach to capture wellbeing at the local level in the Netherlands, or from New Zealand's example of rooting their wellbeing framework in Maori perspectives to understand how wellbeing is framed from a communities perspective.

Fundamentally, it was highlighted that while Wales can learn from other nations applying wellbeing economy frameworks to measure care, these approaches will remain at the periphery while GDPcentric measures remain the dominant metric. Therefore, there was an agreed need to dismantle GDP which should not be perceived as radical but urgently required through increased Wales-specific research and focus that illuminates the flaws of GDP metrics and neoliberal economics within Wales.

In conclusion, the first substantive discussion focused on the interconnectedness of care, climate and gender and the need to tackle these with an intersectional approach. We heard from the current realities of the care crisis in Wales and the Philippines, emphasising the global imbalance that while the Global North has caused the climate crisis, the impacts overwhelmingly fall on the global South, disproportionately impacting women and care work. Therefore, there is an evident need to consider wider power imbalances of care as we push for a globally responsible Wales. Fundamentally, we explored how neoliberal economics and GDP-centric measures are deeply embedded in colonial and patriarchal values that are heavily extractive. All participants agreed that the current economic model is not fit for purpose but in finding a new economic alternative, it is equally important to dismantle GDP, undermining neoliberalism by highlighting its evident failure to achieve a fair and sustainable economy in Wales.

Session 2: Care and climate: the Wales we want to achieve

Having identified and outlined a number of key issues, the second session of the day focussed on exploring where Wales can go next through looking at the future role of Welsh businesses and national parks within an alternative economic model in Wales.

The first provocation in this session focused on the role of businesses in transforming the economy of Wales. Alternative economic models such as Doughnut economics theorised by Kate Raworth, have gained traction internationally. The 'Doughnut' concept

 ²⁴ Horlings and Smits (2019). Measuring Well-being and Sustainability in the Netherlands: the first Monitor of Well-being.
 ²⁵ Horlings and Smits (2019). Measuring Well-being and Sustainability in the Netherlands: the first Monitor of Well-being.

consists of two concentric rings: a social foundation, ensuring that no one falls short of life's everyday essentials, alongside an ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not overshoot the planetary boundaries.²⁶ social equity and environmental sustainability.

At the national level, a potential Welsh Doughnut model would provide a social floor below which no one in Wales should



Figure 1: *The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (Kate Raworth 2015)*²⁷

The provocation stated that the Welsh economy currently fails both thresholds of the doughnut economics theory, overshooting planetary boundaries and falling short on life's basics with around 30% of children in Wales living in poverty.²⁸ Businesses play a crucial role in transforming the economy by shifting from a model focused solely on profit extraction to one that prioritises both fall and begin the process of identifying which environmental boundaries might be useful for incorporation into a Welsh national analysis.²⁹ The provocation stated that to pivot the Welsh economy towards a more sustainable and equitable path, businesses can play a key role, adopt existing practices such as agroecology, regenerative methods, fair taxation, and fair recruitment.

Examples such as Patagonia's ownership structure³⁰, Richer Sounds' employee ownership model³¹, and Fair BnB's retention of benefits within the local community showcase innovative

<u>shareholder.</u> ³¹ Richer Sounds

²⁶ Doughnut Economics Action Lab, N.D. Embedded Economy SVG & customisation tool.

 ²⁷ <u>University of Cambridge (2015), Doughnut</u> economics: An interview with Kate Raworth.
 ²⁸Children's Commissioner for Wales, N.D. Child Poverty.

 ²⁹Swaffield and Egan (2020), THE WELSH
 <u>DOUGHNUT 2020 A framework for</u>
 <u>environmental sustainability and social justice</u>.
 ³⁰ Chouinard (2022), Earth is now our only

³¹ <u>Richer Sounds (2022), *The Richer Way Our culture explained.*</u>

approaches already in practice.³² Currently, such examples of fair and sustainable business models remain at the margins with the key problem facing Wales being how do we transform the broader economy that remains stuck in a twentieth century design of value extraction.

The provocation asserts that it is possible and necessary to design business models differently in Wales. This involves addressing key questions around purpose, networks, governance, ownership, and finance. By reimagining these elements, the provocation stated that businesses can unlock transformative potential and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable economy. The Welsh context of the doughnut adds an additional layer of locality and relevance, emphasising the need to consider regional dynamics in economic transformation efforts.

Indeed, Wales has a long tradition of collectivism and mutual aid as home to the cooperative movement in the 1840's and the birthplace of the NHS, a concept based on the coalminers collective medical aid society in South Wales.33 We can both look ahead at new business models that centre on wellbeing, and build upon Wales' tradition of doing business differently. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act aims to improve public service delivery and well-being in Wales.³⁴ Meanwhile, trade union membership is now a national wellbeing indicator of Wales³⁵. These are positive initiatives and speak to evidence of a

³² Fairbnb.coop.' N.D. Fairbnb.coop is a disruptive innovation.

 ³³ Welsh Government (2019), Report of the Welsh Co-operative and Mutuals Commission.
 ³⁴ Welsh Government (2023), Social

Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) <u>Act.</u>

³⁵ Welsh Government (2022). Wellbeing of Wales: national indicators. broader conception of business value which can be built upon in Wales. Importantly, Wales faces a key constraint in transforming its economy due to the devolution settlement, with a weak fiscal framework and its reserved powers model. Furthermore, Wales' economy is to a large part locked within the wider UK economy. Despite this. Welsh businesses are commonly characterised as small to medium in size and are often locally owned and based in communities. Therefore, there is an opportunity to advance more sustainable and fair business models given the potential impact on the local economy across Welsh communities.

Furthermore, the legacy of foreign direct investment of global enterprises into Wales following the deindustrialisation of the 1980's was typically characterised by low wage, low skill, temporary work. The IWA's own research analyses the role of trade unions in helping to rebalance the economy and support middle to low income earners achieve fairer working conditions³⁶. A knock-on effect of neoliberalism and globalised trade, this has left a negative impact on the low quality employment opportunities available in Wales. Therefore, the context and impact of former extractive industries and the failure of neoliberal economic models to deliver a fair and sustainable economy to Wales necessitate looking to new models for economic development.

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and doughnut economics

The second provocation of the session focussed on applying a doughnut economics lens to policy development and implementation at Bannau Brycheiniog

<u>³⁶ Institute of Welsh Affairs (2023), Beyond</u> <u>Social Partnership? Devolved Levers to</u> <u>Support Trade Unions in Wales.</u>

National Park. The provocation highlighted the need to value time and how policies such as a four-day week can have positive impacts and help Wales achieve the fundamental elements of the doughnut economics theory.

The provocation began stating that in Wales, we limit our potential not by ability but perception of what is acceptable within a policy sphere, meaning policy is often short-term and siloed. Instead, the provocation encourages us to look at policy through the lens of a 'doughnut' to consider long term, regenerative and non-hierarchical policy choices. The provocation outlined the national parks, 'National Park Doughnut', outlining their approach to apply a doughnut framework to policy development across all areas of the national park.³⁷

In this way, applying a doughnut lens disrupts the current picture-perfect image of the Park and invites people to understand a deeper set of systemic challenges, not focussing on how national parks look but how they function. For example, this requires policy makers to take into account the broader adverse carbon footprint of the park concerning its yearly influx of visitors.

Moreover, it highlights areas identified by multiple deprivation indices surrounding the national park, revealing concealed areas of significant wealth disparity and income inequality, particularly within the agricultural industry. For instance, an estimated rate 37.3 per 10,000 households are homeless housed in temporary accommodation across the National Park while 17% of rural households are in fuel poverty³⁸. Although tourism plays a pivotal role in employment, it results in seasonal, low-wage work that often reinforces gender disparities. The existing market-driven model has worsened the housing crisis, prompting many young individuals to relocate from the region. Therefore, the provocation explained how these wider factors have driven a shift across all areas of policy within the national park to enable a just and rural transition led by a doughnut economics policy framework.

The provocation highlighted the need to reevaluate the concept of time and emphasised the potential for transformative change within systems. Drawing from Donella Meadows' ideas, it highlights various intervention points that exist within a system³⁹. However, true systems change requires a fundamental shift in the system's goals, values, and culture, creating opportunities for systemic transformation. On the individual level, the provocation highlighted how time poverty and wellbeing are interlinked with gendered impacts on achieving a work-life balance.

The provocation highlighted while juggling a career, child raising responsibilities and everyday life women are forced to make quick choices that lead to poorer health outcomes due to time poverty, such as opting for ultra processed fast food, saving time but bringing a long term negative impact on our environment and health. Therefore, there is a need for systems to change not only in the way that we value care, but the way we value and use our time in the modern world.

³⁷ Bannau Brycheiniog, N.D. Mission Led Approach.

³⁸ Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (2023). Monitoring our Social Foundation –

Considering the socioeconomic state of the National Park in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

³⁹ <u>Donella Meadows (1999), Leverage Points:</u> <u>Places to Intervene in a System.</u>

Alternatives, such as a four-day week, supported by a universal basic income of guaranteed financial support would provide the social foundation that doughnut economics necessitates. In addition, with more free time available people can make more sustainable choices for people and the planet. The provocation argues that valuing our time in this way could offer us room to deliver the radical and just rural transition that Wales needs with impacts on the nature of care.

Furthermore, the provocation also outlined the impact of novel and sustainable policy ideas such as the beetroot bond, a universal community food bond that calls for a monthly dividend to spend on fresh, local food produce. Given the essential role of food sources within wellbeing, the policy could empower local food systems and provide alternative solutions to the ongoing and flawed subsidy farming system in Wales. Within a broader focus of the 'doughnut' lens, such 'radical' policies are seen as an effective, sustainable and circular way to build and run our economy.

Discussion and priority areas for action

The discussion following session two explored a number of key challenges, alongside areas for action going forward. This session aimed to allow participants to also explore the themes of the first session, identifying barriers and enablers to change.

Participants came to some conclusions and made suggestions on further action in Wales to tackle the interconnected challenges of care and climate while progressing towards alternative economic models. These discussions have been summarised into the following sections and express an overview of the points raised.

Transformative economic change

A key area of discussion following session two arose around the impact of progressive policies, such as a four-day week in Wales and their broader impact. Building on from the second provocations discussion of beetroot bonds, we heard of the possibility of trialling similar initiatives in Wales such as the 'Alexandra Rose' vouchers.⁴⁰ These have been used in pilot schemes in Glasgow whereby vouchers are provided to be used on specific items such as fresh fruit and vegetables. However, there was some pushback to this initiative being implemented without wider systemic change of Wales' current economic model.

While participants supported such policies and novel pilot schemes currently operating in Wales, such as the Basic Income Care Leavers pilot, there was a challenge raised by some that these policies operating without broader systems change of the Welsh economy will not have the transformative impact required.⁴¹ Here participants referred back to the first provocation in session one regarding the need to replace GDP with a more inclusive metric and broader economic model that values unpaid care work and wellbeing. To achieve lasting impact, progressive policies must operate within a broader move towards systems change of the Welsh economy, novel policies alone will not be enough to deliver the change required.

Importantly, the discussion addressed the constraints of the fiscal and economic realities policy makers, the Welsh

 ⁴⁰Alexandra Rose Charity, N.D. Glasgow.
 ⁴¹ Welsh Government (2022), Basic income pilot for care leavers: overview of the scheme.

Government, and organisations face in Wales. The extent to which Wales can truly transform its economy or invest in new approaches is heavily constrained due to a weak budgetary capacity, a lack of powers on key devolved areas such as the welfare system, and the reality that the Welsh economy is heavily embedded and attached to a wider UK economy that fully embraces neoliberal economics and a GDP centric outlook. Therefore, considering such restraints is important as we try to move to new economic models and approaches rooted in wellbeing.

Despite this, it is clear that the Welsh Government shows appetite for alternative economic approaches. The ongoing Basic Income Care Leavers pilot, established in 2022 shows the Welsh Government heading in a different direction of travel to the current UK Government on welfare reforms.⁴² Indeed, the pilot will deliver world-leading evidence and research on the impacts of basic income. Furthermore, in recent years, the Welsh Government has adopted the foundational economy approach, focussing on the provision of everyday universal basics like food, housing, health services and transport within planetary limits.⁴³ It is within this culture for change that there is scope to influence and call for more transformative economic models.

There was concern raised by some that the term 'care' has become systemised, aspiring for a 'Caring wales' has faced resistance and deemed a patronising term as 'care' has been reduced to a mere role rather than a communal function within the current economy. Therefore, participants argued there was a need to mainstream transformative economic methods which also necessitates recognising the intrinsic value of care in the economy.

Concern here was raised by one participant who warned of the further financialisation of care. While it is important to highlight the value of care in the economy, it is equally vital to the care sector from market-driven privatisation and financialisation. In this way, resisting market-driven transformations is also essential alongside exploring alternatives to prevent issues like greenwashing, where corporations with poor human rights records co-opt sustainability efforts. Therefore, participants agreed a feminist green new deal, intertwining gender and climate justice, emerges as a holistic approach to combat these challenges and prioritise community well-being over profit motives.

'Pilotitis' and the public policy landscape in Wales

A key area of focus centred around the term 'piliotitis' that was coined by participants referring to the landscape of public policy in Wales whereby many successful pilot schemes operate, generate insights and impact, but are subsequently not implemented. There was broad consensus among participants that a number of policy solutions to the key challenges Wales faces are already known but are not implemented.

While the use of pilots can play an important role to provide evidence to support alternative economic models, showing that viable alternatives to neoliberalism exist and bring positive wider returns beyond GDP-centric measures, there was an agreed consensus

⁴² <u>Autonomy (2024), The Welsh basic income</u> <u>pilot for care leavers: a look at the first interim</u> <u>results.</u>

⁴³ Foundational Economy (2023), *What is the foundational economy*?

that we must go beyond endless pilots and see a rollout of policies across Wales.

Clearly, funding constraints and limited devolved powers impact the Welsh Government's ability to rollout successful pilot schemes across Wales. Furthermore, the discussion addressed how a lack of access to finance and limited time are leading contributors towards so-called pilotistis and barriers to implementation across Wales. Participants noted that when working on contracted projects and pilots, a large amount of time is spent trying to apply for annual funding rounds to extend the project's lifetime. Going further, one participant noted that the public sector is a big budget holder in Wales but inadvertently creates huge competition in the third sector through bid processes resulting in disconnected organisations often working towards the same goals.

Going further, the discussion also highlighted that the current funding landscape often means third sector organisations and policymakers are time poor, spending much of their operational capacity fighting to keep their organisations going and tackle the immediate problems Wales faces. This often means that there is limited space and time available to discuss and generate ideas, working collaboratively with others to consider broader systemic change.

In addressing this issue, one participant suggested the potential use of UK Government's Shared Prosperity Funds and joint working between the Welsh Government, Corporate Joint Committees, and businesses in Wales to provide finance to further the rollout of successful policy in Wales. It was agreed by participants that where third sector organisations are working on similar areas of research with broad agreement on recommendations, a useful approach could be to work together to strengthen their collective voice.

There was also a discussion of how care is devalued and a broader lack of gendered perspectives within policy mean womens caring needs are rarely considered. Participants agreed that we need to apply an intersectional 'care lens' and embed this across policy in Wales where policy decisions take into consideration the needs of both paid and unpaid carers. There are some examples of broader thinking happening within policy. For example, Llwybr Newydd:Wales Transport Strategy is not aimed at simply commuting people to economic centres or commuting to work with a focus on growing the economy.⁴⁴ Instead, for the first time there is consideration and understanding for the varied journeys that are important, including lateral care journeys women need to make.

Furthermore, one participant suggested that the Welsh Government should establish an Intersectional Care Policy Scorecard. This would provide a mechanism for assessing the impact of policy making decisions across a range of policy areas, such as healthcare, transport, and education, and their resulting impacts on care. A similar initiative, a 'Feminist Scorecard' is biannually published in collaboration by Women's Equality Network Wales and Oxfam Cymru to track the Welsh Government's progress on gender equality and hold them to account.⁴⁵

This is an example of how policy can embed wellbeing and start to move in the

⁴⁴ <u>Welsh Government, 2021, *Llwybr Newydd -</u> <u>Wales Transport</u>.</u>*

⁴⁵ Women's Equality Network Wales and Oxfam Cymru (2022) FEMINIST SCORECARD 2022 Tracking Welsh Government action to advance women's rights and gender equality.

right direction. - transport policy is in line with wellbeing. Therefore, participants agreed that care needs to be intersectional and embedded within policy areas in which we strive for systems change.

The Role of Business

Following on from the second session's provocation, participants explored what the future role of Welsh businesses could be in shaping a new economic model. Despite the current shortcomings of business, particularly large corporations, there is potential for change, exemplified by the emergence of social enterprises and employee-owned businesses. For example, ethical clothing company Patagonia has announced that earth is their only stakeholder, committing to sustainability through all business practices.⁴⁶

We heard that these business models are currently kept at the periphery with a perception that large businesses continue the 'serious' work, driving the economy. Therefore, participants discussed the need to create disruptive alternatives that challenge traditional business norms and drive meaningful transformation. However, caution is warranted against co-option, necessitating genuine structural and procedural changes within businesses is crucial to prevent such occurrences and avoid the creation of a 'corporate doughnut' being co-opted.

It was identified that there is a large role of advocacy for the Welsh Government in this space to utilise public procurement and access to finance as an incentive. Currently in Wales, public procurement tends to exclude rather than support small social enterprises. Reforms to tax policy are needed to favour businesses that are employee-owned, aiming to redistribute power away from financial capital and towards other stakeholders. This shift in economic structure is essential to reshape the economy and fundamentally transform power relations, prioritising broader societal interests over financial gains.

Through our discussions a lack of childcare was underscored as a significant barrier for parents, most often mothers, endeavouring to establish businesses. One participant shared a personal experience, noting that while the Welsh government offers childcare support to aid women in taking courses to initiate businesses, there's a lack of ongoing support to sustain those businesses limiting mothers' role in Wales' economy.

It was recognised that while the Well-being of Future Generations Act has an impactful role operating as a sustainability framework measure, considerations of sustainability and future generations are often not embedded within businesses. Instead they are considered as an add-on with additional reporting for businesses. Participants also found that the Welsh Government relay contradictory messaging surrounding the vision for a Welsh economy. There remains a large focus on growth, perceiving the most 'successful' Welsh businesses as those that export and grow, which is largely at odds with reducing carbon emissions and ensuring a globally responsible Wales. Here, it was recommended that the Welsh Government remove contradictory neoliberal language and logic out of its discourse across policy but especially regarding care.

Messaging new economic alternatives

Throughout discussions surrounding novel policies from the four-day week, to transformative economic alternatives

⁴⁶ Chouinard (2022), Earth is now our only shareholder.

based on a wellbeing economy, a key consideration and concern shared by participants was regarding the need to get the messaging of policies correct. The ongoing culture war narratives across UK politics alongside the backlash to the Welsh Government's 20mph speed limit policy shows that while policies may protect citizens and lead to improved health outcomes, they may still be controversial and perceived negatively if not communicated carefully.⁴⁷ A paradigm shift is required in new economic thinking but subsequent policies may receive backlash if we do not engage communities.

We heard from participants that work by Foundation Alliance Wales on public perceptions towards a wellbeing economy versus the current consumer economy have been positive⁴⁸. While these terms are new to many people, when explained in an accessible format can build understanding and help to explain new economic models and how they will deliver a fairer future for people and the planet. However, it is important to recognise that this will not be easy as the current value-mechanism in our economy today doesn't reflect this approach. Challenging these values will take leadership across communities and within government even when public support is limited, tough choices are required from politicians who may receive backlash.49 Participants agreed to build trust, consent and popularity towards new economic alternatives.

The discussion highlighted a potential positive role of citizens assemblies within

decision making in Wales. These could be utilised to 'test' ideas to counter possible culture war challenges. However, one challenge in response to this suggestion was the need for the resulting evidence and feedback to effectively input into decision making as this has not always followed on from citizen assemblies. Beyond this, there could be scope to engage citizens in an ongoing role in implementation of policy to feedback and help inform improved delivery. Greater spaces to facilitate discussion, storytelling and engagement are required to counter the ongoing polarising nature of culture war rhetoric.

Centring communities and bottom-up initiatives

Following the discussion for enhanced community engagement and understanding of new economic alternatives, participants highlighted the interconnected need to stop referring to communities as *a* stakeholder and centre them as *the* stakeholder. In this way, a new economic alternative would rebalance power to the local community level, recognising that many of the solutions to our ongoing problems lie at the grassroots community level. Communities can be empowered to, and already across Wales, are beginning to understand their own local economic needs, and shape their own economic future from the bottom-up.

A series of social enterprises and community ownership models have emerged across north Wales, largely as a response to the failure of the state and wider neoliberal economics to meet the needs of people.⁵⁰ Instead, communities are taking the power back and instigating

⁴⁷ <u>Senedd Research (2024). The latest on</u> <u>20mph speed limits.</u>

⁴⁸ Foundational Alliance Wales (2024), *Report* on community research findings in the three slate valleys.

⁴⁹ <u>Santori (2023), Careocracy or isocracy? A</u> <u>feminist alternative to the neoliberal</u> <u>meritocratic discourse.</u>

⁵⁰ Institute of Welsh Affairs (2024), IWA Analysis: Building from the Bottom: Delivering wellbeing and resilience through community ownership.

the change they want to see locally. This also has the potential for positive gendered impacts when decision making is held at the community level where services can be adapted to fit the needs of families, becoming more accessible. For example, a community in Gwynedd took their pub into community ownership and have transformed the space into a pub and restaurant suitable for families with an additional community hub space for the wider community events.⁵¹

The discussion outlined that communities understand their own needs, and capacity, power and investment need to be released to the community level. The key barrier here is that our current economic model does not centre or value communities but is driven by what the market needs, instead choices are driven by the market conditions. This demands that we explore mechanisms to devolve power and amend processes to give communities a great say. The Race to Zero initiative was highlighted by participants as an example of community initiative that centres marginal voices.52 Race to Zero is a global campaign rallying non-state actors to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030. 53 One key suggestion was for all Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and local authorities in Wales to join Race to Zero.

Participants agreed that community consultations are frequently done for and not with communities, followed with separate decision making that excludes the community. One example of enhanced community participation could be explored within the creation of development plans which sets out a local authority's policies and proposals for land use in their area. These plans go through huge amounts of scrutiny but rarely engage feedback or engagement with the community who should be key stakeholders. As development planning is wholly devolved to the Welsh Government there was an agreed need to grasp the devolved mechanisms available and ensure communities are major stakeholders within their local communities.

A key way forward identified in the discussion was that community based solutions remain at the periphery and require scaling up and supported with adequate funding and policy reforms to grow the sector. A potential role for the office of the Future Generations Commissioner's Office here was to conduct this work and gather evidence from communities in Wales to present to Ministers and Government officials so we may be able to connect community based bottom-up solutions with more systematic investment across Wales, importantly sharing solutions.

Participants also addressed the need for enhanced community provision of care and activist care to facilitate removing care from the market. Given future inequalities likely mean populations will have worse health inequalities, this burden will heavily fall on women. In efforts to transform our economy, resisting the privatisation and financialisation of care was discussed as a key concern. Participants expressed the need to reclaim the provision of care from the private sector that is failing to deliver and explore community care, and activist care that views care as an act of

⁵¹ Ty'n Llan, N.D. Our Story.

⁵² <u>United Nations Framework Convention on</u> <u>Climate Change, Climate champions. N.D.</u> <u>Race to Zero.</u>

⁵³ <u>United Nations Framework Convention on</u> <u>Climate Change, Climate champions, N.D.</u> <u>Race to Zero.</u>

citizenship.⁵⁴ Therefore, supporting community asset building is a first step in ensuring communities have capacity to provide care alongside the required social licensing models that would ensure care was licensed at the activist level. If taken, these steps, alongside broader moves to a wellbeing economy could have transformative impacts in tackling the climate and care crisis we face in Wales.

Manifesto for alternative economic models

A key theme that emerged throughout our discussions was the need to develop a manifesto for alternative economic models based on wellbeing frameworks. Given the limitations outlined in discussions such as organisations with shared values working in silos or in competition, alternative economic approaches repeatedly dismissed and kept in the periphery and the need to scale up alternative community-led solutions, participants agreed that a manifesto could be a useful collective output to drive change in Wales, advancing the concept of a well being economy.

Learning from the discussion and other devolved nations such as Scotland where improved wellbeing metrics are measuring care, the next steps involve uniting voices from this discussion and engaging a broader coalition to define what constitutes a wellbeing economy, potentially through the creation of a Wellbeing manifesto by working in coalition. One approach could involve leveraging new institutions, such as Corporate Joint Committee's, to influence the transition towards a new economy. Collectively, ahead of the Senedd election in 2026, a collective vision and a portfolio of positive examples to guide this transition effectively could represent a powerful next step.

Furthermore, education remains a key opportunity for fostering a wellbeing economy. Within the Welsh curriculum, participants agreed that incorporating systems thinking into and introducing elements of radical citizenship could inspire active engagement with societal and democratic issues, learning about political systems and protest. Such calls for action could be within a wellbeing manifesto for Wales' future economy.

The second discussion explored a number of key topics including Wales's policy landscape and funding constraints, the role of sustainable business in Wales' future economy, the importance of striving for new economic alternatives that value care work and the need to centre communities and learn from bottom-up solutions to Wales' many challenges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the substantive and informed discussions that were fed into by a range of experts, policy professionals and academics have informed this paper and its policy recommendations. The paper and its recommendations form the next step in an ongoing process towards an economy for Wales which puts people and planet at its heart.

⁵⁴Lampredi (2023), Activist care: acts of care as acts of citizenship.

Contact Us

Contact Oxfam Cymru

- **(**) **0300 200 1269**
- ⊠ oxfamcymru@oxfam.org.uk
- Hastings House
 Unit 3.2 Fitzalan Court
 Cardiff
 CF24 OBL

- www.oxfam.org.uk
- OxfamCymru
- Oxfam

www

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in

Contact the IWA

- **(C)** 02920 484387
- ⊠ info@iwa.org.uk
- sbarc|spark
 Maindy Road
 Cardiff
 CF24 4HQ



- **V** IWA_Wales
- in Institute of Welsh Affairs







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