

Why Economic Health Matters for Socially Connected Communities

March 2024

The Issue

Our current economic system is built primarily around monetary exchange and promotes economic growth at all costs. It's exacerbating our experiences of social isolation and loneliness. In truth, we are the economy. Our skills, labor (paid and unpaid), spending, volunteering, exchanges, contributions, innovation, votes, and advocacy truly power our economy and the thriving families and communities we desire. It's vital that we see how a wellbeing economy supports economic health and socially connected communities.

Webinar Summary & Highlights

Subject matter experts, Elizabeth Garlow, Senior Fellow at New America, and Amanda Janoo, Economics & Policy Lead at Wellbeing Alliance, discussed a wellbeing economy which offers a new paradigm for community health leaders and is an important part of a socially connected community.

- The **Five Core Principles of a wellbeing economy** are fairness, nature, participation, dignity, and connection. Mutual aid, volunteering, gift-based exchange, and indigenous economies are examples of local strategies that help strengthen social connection.
- **Shared prosperity** will not happen in a divided economy with growing wage and job inequalities. Instead, we need to embrace new values that are responsive to our needs and voices, including community and connection.
- Expressions of **democratic ownership and governance** are deeply tied with enhancing social connection.
- **"Commoning"** is a term to describe resources held in common - like community spaces for gathering - and the act of caring for them together. This practice could help support a gift- and care-based economy that can strengthen social health.

Access and share the webinar [recording](#) and [slide deck](#).

Resources

Guides

[Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide](#), Wellbeing Economy Alliance

[Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities](#), Community Economies Institute

Articles & Reports

[Every New Mom in this U.S. City is Now Getting Cash Aid for a Year](#), NPR, March 2024

[What the Surgeon General Missed About America's Loneliness Epidemic](#), Newsweek, May 2023

[The Invisible Heart: Postgrowth economy as care](#), blog, May 2023

[Defining and conceptualizing the commercial determinants of health](#), The Lancet, April 2023

[We Are the Economy](#), Medium, June 2022

[Mental Health Challenges Related to Neoliberal Capitalism in the United States](#), Community Mental Health Journal, May 2021

[Local Economy Preservation Funds: A Plan to Save Local Businesses and Create Broad Prosperity](#), Next City, May 2020

[Keeping Wealth Local: Shared Ownership and Wealth Control for Rural Communities](#), Wealth Creation in Rural America project of the Ford Foundation

Videos

[The Wellbeing Economy is Possible](#), Wellbeing Economy Alliance

[The Loneliness Pandemic: How Society's Dependence on Money is Leaving us Alone and Disconnected](#), Sustainable Human

Books

[Humankind: A Hopeful History](#), Rutger Bregman

[The Inner Level: How More Equal Societies Reduce Stress, Restore Sanity and Improve Everyone's Wellbeing](#), Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

[Wealth Supremacy: How the Extractive Economy and the Biased Rules of Capitalism Drive Today's Crises](#), Marjorie Kelly

[What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets](#), Michael Sandel

Healthy Places by Design builds and supports a movement to advance action that results in more socially connected and equitable communities.

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