

INTERNATIONAL **YOUTH** THINK TANK

For Democracy and Against Authoritarianism

Empowerment and Inclusion Through Radical Change

March 2023

Alice Smith, Alina Arslanova, Anastasia Hansen, Anita Sammarini, Antoan Blangev, Benedikt Schuegraf, Benjamin Galbraith, Federica Baggio, Greta Maria Grosseck, James Mottram, Jonathan Ziener, Joseph Earnshaw, Luca Guidoboni, Mahek Anil Bhatia, Nathan Collins, Olle Hansen, Ollie Gee, Rabia Turnbull, Shu Yu Lim, Silvia Papic, Sofia Marini, Vinkha Adinda Khairunnisa, and Wiktoria Morawska.

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[1. Peaceful Minds, Peaceful Societies](#)

[1.1 Recognising and Tackling Intersectional Inequalities in Health Care](#)

[1.2 Community-Based Psychosocial Support Groups](#)

[1.3 Knowledge Exchange Networks](#)

[2. Engaged Citizens, Active Communities](#)

[2.1 Regional Critical Education in Schools](#)

[2.2 Public Service Draft](#)

[2.3 Community building and association through sports](#)

[3. Rethinking Democracy](#)

[3.1 Councils for the Future](#)

[3.2 The Grant for Change](#)

[4. Common Good Economy](#)

[4.1 A New Needs Based Measurement of Well-Being](#)

[4.1.1 Community Centred Decision Making: 'Factor X'](#)

[4.1.2 Implementation Through Contributions and Benefits](#)

[Conclusions](#)

Introduction

Recognising the increasing polarisation and autocratisation, we collectively acknowledge the rising threats to the democratic process and a peaceful future. Currently, democracy is facing an array of challenges ranging from political, economic, social and environmental, threatening not only future peace but also presenting a challenge for survival. These challenges have fostered an inescapable cycle of grievances, apathy and mistrust. We therefore have decided on taking action through a provision of recommendations and proposals, organised under four themes.

Psycho-physiological needs are necessary internal precursors to ensure basic human survival, which serves as a fundamental basis for human innovation, a decent livelihood, and environmental security. Therefore, to even begin synthesising approaches to sustain democracy, we should first ensure general and mental health, which is under our first branch of proposals, “Peaceful Minds, Peaceful Societies”.

The next branch comes under the topic of “Engaged Citizens; Informed Choices”, aimed at building skills within the citizenry to contrast polarisation and increase civic engagement. People in fragmented societies suffer the consequences of inadequate political responses. This list of recommendations aims to encourage civic virtues that serve to mend societal wounds and advance democratic values.

Our proposals stress the complementarity of the internal and external dimensions of societal conflicts that alter individual well-being and local livelihoods, affecting the feasibility of policies and reforms. Indeed, inequalities and traumas foster polarisation and ungovernability, alienating the population from democratic institutions. The link between the population and politics must be reinforced through mechanisms that include a larger number of people, especially from underrepresented and discriminated groups. This is the main goal of the two proposals under the theme “Rethinking Democracy”: a citizens’ advisory assembly composed by diversified individuals with a non-political background with the aim of widening horizontal representativeness, and a non-partisan grant for marginalised people who want to run for office, promoting vertical inclusivity.

All these ideas must be grounded in a “Common Good Economy” - the last branch of our proposals - which turns away from economic growth and puts the wellbeing of people at the fore-front. The introduction of a new measurement of wellbeing goes along with a new perspective on contribution and benefits, which enables large-scale redistribution at the national and international level. Crucially, the assessment of and improved response to citizens’ needs empowers local communities and ultimately fosters trust in democratic institutions.

1. Peaceful Minds, Peaceful Societies

Across the world, staggering inequalities among marginalised groups persist, while as a global community, crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic have affected and threatened not only the health of citizens but also their mental wellbeing. Coupled with colonial and societal unequal structures, these challenges affect the values of democracy and social justice, as effective and impactful participation is hindered. Top-down leadership in response to these inequalities as well as to responses to crisis management have often been inadequate in addressing structural inequities. We thus set out to firstly assess the various challenges within health care from an intersectional perspective proposing reforms within education, research, and development which are more inclusive. Likewise, we promote practical solutions, such as remote options for those disadvantaged by distance or the promotion of free and fair health care and access thereto. The role of mental wellbeing plays a crucial role within the health sector but also to democratic participation as the stresses of (post-colonial) inequalities, pandemics, wars, and conflicts have adversely driven the loss of faith in the democratic process while trained clinical professionals and access to mental health care are limited. We thus encourage community-based psychosocial support groups, taking local and indigenous practices into account, under the helm of meaningful inclusion. Systemic changes to crisis response in particular need to be made, addressing and acknowledging the aforementioned to provide meaningful responses and support to those in need. We believe we will be able to address crisis response and bottom-up leadership through the formation of knowledge exchange networks among local grassroots organisations. These networks will enable local leaders and activists to share ideas, provide support, and respond effectively, all while promoting awareness, accountability, and individual needs to, ultimately, further the democratic process. All in all, our proposals are dedicated to human-centred approaches of physical and mental health support enveloped by local leadership and community engagement for a more equitable and inclusive society.

1.1 Recognising and Tackling Intersectional Inequalities in Health Care

Challenges: Intersectional inequalities, health care of marginalised groups

Across the globe, we witness distressing inequalities in health care along the lines of gender, race, disability, class, age, rural-urban dynamics, and sexual diversity. This is a challenge to the values of democracy and social

justice as well as to people's participation in society. In order for people to be part of a democratic society, they must be healthy: physically, mentally, and socially motivated to be active in the local community. Adopting an intersectional lens, we propose solutions that take into account the experiences of marginalised groups in health care, often overlooked in public discourse. All solutions must be adapted to the local context and be conscious of different needs depending on the region, culture, ways of communication, lifestyles, as well as power relations informing the provision of and access to health care. We therefore propose the development of two areas: education and research on health care inequalities, and the implementation of practical solutions affecting citizens (mainly in the area of diagnostics and treatment) and health care professionals.

Proposal: Revision of education, training and research and practical solutions

Recognizing and tackling intersectional inequalities in health care through the inclusion of the struggles of marginalised groups and their health care needs within Research & Development and education by increasing funding for research and development projects targeting currently insufficiently researched issues such as the recognition of non-white pain in medical treatment, while revising educational training curriculums for healthcare professionals to include health care inequalities among marginalised groups. This includes but is not limited to cultural competency and LGBTQI+ sensitivity training, and equally entails revising educational training curriculums for pupils and students to include sexual education as well as the reworking of textbooks in medical, social and legal care, taking into account different medical needs between people of diverse genders, sexual orientations, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC).

Practical solutions:

1. Providing free and regular testing and eliminating taxes on sanitary products (e.g., menstrual products to combat menstrual poverty);
2. Strengthening the advocacy and inclusion of medical practices that take into account biological differences between men and women or races to increase and encourage safety, in research and development (e.g., seat belts, sports harnesses, cancer detection);
3. Facilitating access and funding for health care/clinics in more rural, and ethnic areas, for example, supporting the elderly and immobile by organising and scheduling targeted care drives in rural areas with health professionals and increasing the availability of tests in places where there is limited access to clinics and doctors (e.g., in lower-income districts);
4. Empowering health care workers through the provision of a fair wage and regulations ensuring adequate break times, and increasing support for carers, taking care of children, the elderly, or people

- with health conditions or impairments, by, for example, providing a fair wage, psychological and medical assistance and training (e.g., on how to work with the body and relieve physical tension);
5. Legalising the provision of and access to information on abortions as well as facilitating access to safe and legal abortions, including quality post-abortion care.

Impact: Healthy individuals for a healthy society

Psycho-physiological needs are necessary internal precursors to ensure basic human survival, a fundamental basis for humans to thrive, innovate, and participate in society. Receiving proper health and mental health care will not only facilitate citizens' well-being overall but also serve to encourage faith and participation in the democratic process. We thus envision a fair and just society including more equitable, holistic health care for all taking the needs of diverse citizens into consideration to encourage democratic participation.

1.2 Community-Based Psychosocial Support Groups

Challenges: Crises affect mental health, lack of access to formalised clinical care

Nowadays, people are experiencing various crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic, to ongoing conflict, and climate change. Crises expose people to a huge amount of stress adversely affecting mental health, both in terms of intergenerational trauma in post-colonial societies as well as public mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and so forth. At the same time, there is a substantial lack of access to mental health care worldwide, partly due to a shortage of trained clinical professionals, leading to people suffering silently from possibly debilitating experiences. Poor mental health limits people's quality of life and participation in society and democracy. We therefore encourage local community leadership to implement community-based psychosocial support groups incorporating local and indigenous practices as a means to reaching more people in need of support.

Proposal: Community-based psychosocial support groups *incorporating local and indigenous practices*

We propose to address this important societal challenge through the establishment of community-based psychosocial support groups adapted to local contexts and taking into account local and indigenous practices. These can be focussed, for example, on themes such as grief and loss, the artistic expression of trauma, shared

concerns, or neighbourhood collectives. Community-based psychosocial support groups are facilitated by trained community members. This could include currently unused human capital such as students of psychology or social work, but also other community members wishing to undergo training to facilitate psychosocial support groups. Ultimately, community-based psychosocial support groups must be attentive to the unique objectives, goals, and needs of affected communities.

Impact: Increased access to non-formal care, strengthening empathy and societal cohesion

Scaling up community-based psychosocial support groups effectively addresses public mental health issues and increases access to non-formal care services so that no one in society is left behind. This approach, employing the potential of local communities, can also strengthen empathy and societal cohesion and support political participation through healing and empowerment. We want to stress, however, that, while mental health is an important prerequisite to societal participation, it is not only an instrument to the process of democratisation, but valuable in its own right.

1.3 Knowledge Exchange Networks

Challenges: Ineffective crisis response, disconnect between leaders and communities

We consider the way of responding to contemporary crises – such as the open attack of Russian troops on the territory of Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, the change of power in Iran – to be one of the most important challenges for democracy. Crises are and will be an inseparable part of modernity, therefore the institutional ability to respond to them, taking into account the democratic voice of the community, is of key importance. Top-down leadership has often provided inadequate solutions to crises as evidenced in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This has further alienated individuals from the actual issues at hand, making them feel like politics has failed them. Hence, we suggest the promotion of bottom-up leadership and community engagement. Political and local leaders must communicate effectively with local communities, but also build a sense of shared responsibility among all citizens.

Proposal: Establishment and promotion of knowledge exchange networks of local grassroots organisations

To strengthen bottom-up solutions and leadership, we are recommending the formation of knowledge exchange networks of local grassroots organisations. By sharing experiences and ideas of local communities, potential effective responses to crises can be scaled up to regional or even national levels. Hereby, it is crucial to facilitate communication, for example, through increased telecommunication access as well as transport into less easily accessible areas. By enabling leaders and communities to share local solutions, knowledge exchange networks can increase awareness of, and accountability to, individuals' needs, hence, furthering the democratic process. At the same time, an important goal is to support local leaders, representatives of social organisations, and community members so that they can work together meaningfully.

Practical solutions:

1. Amplification of activism and grassroots leadership through the establishment of knowledge exchange networks of grassroots-level organisations, including: sharing resources to *all* community members by exchanging contacts with each other (e.g., through a database) or jointly organised meetings to draw and learn from available knowledge(s) (e.g., on how to obtain grants, how to organise events), translating materials/resources into local, indigenous languages to open knowledge production and dissemination to up to ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural minorities;
2. Knowledge sharing by increasing telecommunication access and supporting transport for in-person meetings. This may apply to places that have limited infrastructure and/or limited access to the internet, electricity, and telecommunications network, or locations that are less easily accessible for certain people (e.g. elderly people, people without a car);
3. Fostering community engagement and participation by supporting local and regional knowledge, local activities and community meetings aimed at building bonds with the place and with the community (e.g., physical or artistic work, garbage collection, etc.), and by creating public spaces conducive to local community activity (e.g., green areas, shared work spaces);
4. Establishing legal protection of activists and grassroots organisations.

Impact: Promotion of bottom-up leadership and support of local engagement and activism

Sharing and exchanging of knowledge via networks of local grassroots organisations can lead to the scaling up of effective solutions to manage crises. Communities and leaders who have more empathy and understanding for local issues will take more effective action than could be achieved through a universal top-down approach. Leaders that are closely connected to their communities can foster overall community engagement and

participation and, by protecting grassroots organisations, activism will be amplified and may even be elevated to regional, national, or international levels, strengthening the democratic process.

Conclusion

Tackling inequalities, enhancing people's wellbeing, and sharing knowledge - our proposals call for systematic societal changes to the (mental) health care sector and greater attention to community and bottom-up development. We need to overhaul the health care system at large to convert it into a more ethical and equal operation for everyone and, thus, propose to develop social infrastructure, research, and education in a way that fosters inclusion and equitability. As peaceful minds make peaceful societies, we encourage the implementation of community-based psychosocial support groups attentive to local and indigenous practices as a core pillar of promoting individual and societal wellbeing. Lastly, we call for the establishment of knowledge exchange networks among grassroots organisations to ensure that activism is protected, community participation is valued, and bottom-up crisis response is fostered. Although some of the changes will take a generation to enact, we have set out plausible local level initiatives to promote people's overall wellbeing and active participation in democracy. Tackling social inequalities, strengthening community engagement, and putting people's wellbeing at the centre of our proposals will be paramount to fair and just societies.

2. Engaged Citizens, Active Communities

The damaging effects of polarisation are felt throughout democratic societies. Polarisation is motivated by a distrust of traditional parties in favour of divisive populist figures. It not only puts the democratic process at risk by damaging the relationship between the citizens and the state, but also poisons interpersonal relationships and interactions among citizens themselves. Polarisation, which is caused by distrust, fuels more distrust, in what becomes a self-perpetuating vicious cycle.

We turned to our life experiences to devise solutions to effectively counteract democratic challenges. We found that, by constantly uniting and pursuing activities in common, we become aware of the interests we share with others. Through association, through community, people recognize the influence their behaviour has on those they interact with. This could develop a bond of reciprocal obligation both amongst each other as well as with institutions they engage with. This reciprocal obligation entails mutual trust.

Our proposals set out to encourage civic virtuous acts that are functional to the promotion of democratic values. High levels of civic engagement are correlated with greater feelings of happiness and trust.¹ We believe people's wellbeing is a product of social cooperation. Civic engagement effectively counteracts distrust by promoting a sense of mutuality by citizens towards institutions (vertical level) as well as amongst citizens themselves (horizontal level). It also addressed apathy, fueled by alienation, by way of making citizens the main characters of the democratic process.

2.1 Regional Critical Education in Schools

Challenges: polarisation, inability to listen

Critical thinking is a democratic learning process examining power relations and social inequities.² Even though some education systems include it in their curricula from a young age, critical thinking is often only introduced during secondary/academic studies. Before then, students are taught, and required to know, only one specific

¹ <https://www.thepolicycircle.org/brief/whats-whys-civic-engagement/>

² Sarah Benesch, "Critical Thinking: A Learning Process for Democracy." *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1993, pp. 545–48. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587485>. Accessed 23 Nov. 2022.

view. We strongly oppose this approach as it pushes for young citizens that do not question their reality and, consequently, do not expand their ideas beyond those they already know.

We believe that education systems require radical change. In fact, a lack of critical thought is a key element to the fuelling of polarised viewpoints as it limits one's opinions to the general sentiment. This becomes a major threat to what is at the core of democratic societies through the distrust and disregard of ideas which are different to one's own, meaning dialogue is excluded and compromise cannot be reached. This increases polarisation, endorses apathy and consolidates inequalities.

Proposal: critical thinking programmes

We propose introducing critical thinking programmes in school from the primary school level until secondary school. This will develop critical thinkers to prepare them to be able to engage and participate in a democracy.³ Our policy envisions a critical thinking class, once per week, being introduced from the very first stages of education. Inspired by critical pedagogies theories tied to social justice and democracy and by stimulating creativity through arts, music, plays etc., children would start by learning to identify and understand the existence of diversities and similarities, awakening their critical consciousness and awareness. As the students go through their education, critical race, feminist, queer, critical legal and postcolonial theories, how they interact and their contemporary influence, will be introduced. In order for the program to be efficient, the topics covered would have to be understood within circumstantial dynamics, shifting our focus from a global to local level.

Impact: critical thinkers for a conscious community

We aim at creating a safe and open environment in which teachers help and enable students to develop their own ideas. It is to support and promote not one specific view, but exposing them to various perspectives upon which they can construe their citizenship and identity.

³ Jesse Gainer, "Critical thinking: Foundational for digital literacies and democracy." *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy* 56.1 (2012): 14-17

By exposing children to different standpoints from a young age, they would grow into citizens who are able to question what they are told and taught, becoming more aware of injustices and capable of resonating with them. Allow and encourage dissent, debate and dialogue for a more understanding and conscious community. In the long run, this creates a community that is able to assess and critically analyse the facts and political concerns of the “grown-ups” world.

Recognizing major issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opposition from religious/cultural groups: Providing multilateral perspectives and critical religious education will be useful in helping young people understand that other discourses exist to make space for more multi-ethnic/ religious ideas . The aim of the proposal is to stimulate different points of view that can inspire new and personal thoughts to be shared in an open environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can it be applied globally? The policy would tie the topics and curricula to the local dimension. The focus would be directed to the history, state of politics, state of policies of a given society, excluding a ‘universal’ curriculum that would not be feasible. i.e.: The ideas discussed in European countries may not be relevant to South Asian countries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What about the teachers? From the experience of critical theory classes existing in different countries, one of the biggest issues is the possibility of reluctance, ignorance or unwillingness on part of the teachers. The positive impact could be observed in the long run, when a new community of socially aware citizens recognize the importance of providing this “destabilising” approach to teaching. Radical change does not occur overnight, therefore the policy could be introduced in specific (maybe non-governmental schools) schools before applying it at national level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding: Educational programmes require intense research and investment in time and money. There are a range of free resources and workshops that can be accessed online which prove to be a useful guide to developing critical pedagogies and critical learning programmes. A ‘resource bank’ of sorts with free material that can be accessed by schools would be an effective first step, although some sort of funding and focused research would be required to implement the policy.

2.2 Public Service Draft

Challenge: apathy, inequality, consolidation of stigmas

Our understanding of apathy is tied to the overarching indifference that belongs to many people in society. On the one hand, we consider the apathy of those who are privileged, often not involved in the more practical and concrete issues of communities and unaware of the disadvantages of trying to live day to day, the apathy of those who feel that people do not care about them or that their voice doesn't count for anything, the apathy of those who do not see the benefit of helping other people. This apathy must be countered from a young age and therefore drawing on this we recognized the need for a more empathetic society to spread understanding of how resources need to be shared and people within our communities need to be looked after through value in the democratic process.

During the Covid-19 pandemic countries across the world saw how hard people worked in roles such as nurses, carers, in supermarkets, delivering food to keep the world going. It illustrated how essential jobs and services were often the most overlooked, undervalued and very much underpaid. These roles in the provision of public services are there to support the more vulnerable in society- the elderly, those with disabilities, often those who need the most support. When being confronted with the challenges of such essential yet undervalued jobs, one learns to resonate with different realities and experiences. The values of these roles need to be spread to broader society and in turn these services need to be supported by the democratic process. Community cohesion, appreciation of democracy and understanding of inclusion comes from an increase of empathy that accumulates in the feeling of social responsibility of these roles.

Proposal: compulsory paid community work providing public services

We wish to counter apathy by fostering empathy in a compulsory work scheme for 16-25 year olds to have paid employment in providing public services. The areas of work providing public services in and around the local community would include but not be restricted to services such as healthcare, policing, homelessness, and maintenance. This would take place for 2 years as a sufficient time to foster community bonds from the age of 16 and work alongside education systems in country specific contexts. This would be paid at a standardised wage.

The decision of the job role appropriate to the student will be at the discretion of a newly appointed position who is situated at schools but is strongly connected to the local councils and community. This position will be ingrained deeply within pastoral services within education systems to have a deep understanding of students. An increased responsibility and pay would be given to the mentors who work alongside the students within the public service organisations increasing self worth of those working within organisations. The scope of the proposal is facilitated by the creation of a regional organisation board that could coordinate with other regional boards who on the national and then regional level can share practice/ understanding.

Impact: community cohesion, democratic value appreciation, inclusive society

The purpose will be to inculcate respect and responsibility in adolescents to foster awareness and create an inclusive community which would be achieved while obtaining useful life experience through the exposure of students to environments they would not necessarily encounter otherwise. The broader impact of this proposal will be the fostering of empathy and countering of apathy. A byproduct of this will be a greater connection between community and local education services and a strengthening of the public service workforce.

- 1) Introducing students into the workforce creates an understanding of what work needs to go in to making democracies an ideal place to live. Furthermore, being involved in the provision of public services exposes young people to vulnerable sectors of society giving a feeling of self-worth and appreciation of the public services which are provided by modern democracies.
- 2) Facilitating interaction by working alongside an undervalued but key workforce within existing work hierarchies transcends age, social-economic, racial, ethnic, and gendered boundaries, creating community and empathy through work relationships
- 3) Exposing young people to vulnerable groups within society who are impacted most by democratic decisions, creating empathy
- 4) Appreciation of non/"less" academically skilled workforce making a more inclusive society.

Recognizing major issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compulsory element <p>Apathy and disinterest are rapidly eroding democracies. Introducing radical policies from a young age would increase the younger generations' civic responsibility and awareness. Its compulsory nature would be justified when considering the scheme is incorporated within the education system and made specifically student and context appropriate. What's more the paid element will give students an understanding of money.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limits of age: <p>The policy is envisioned to target secondary school students, beginning with 16 year olds. The idea behind this is to counter apathy from the root. Nonetheless, the policy would have to be flexible enough to adapt case-to-case, taking into consideration country specific education systems, wage policies etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What work to be included? / Which student carries out what work? <p>In practice, a new role would have to be established in schools in order to facilitate the connection between the education system (school, college, university) and the community and public good which needs to be provided. Moreover, they necessarily would have to take up a supervisory role to assist students throughout their community work engagements. As we acknowledge the complexities and sensitivities of the areas involved (specifically work with the elderly, mental health care services, hospital porting, community policing, public maintenance, social services support etc.), attention should be drawn to their specificities, for example, work with children would have to tackle issues of attachment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does it fit into the workload of school education? <p>In countries like Germany, which is a great example of an active community, students are allowed to work a maximum of 20 hours a week, while successfully following their education. Thus, it is not necessary that pupils will be obliged to work every day or do an excessive amount of time. The proposal is flexible in that regard and allows people to take into consideration weekends or afternoons, as the most important thing remains dedication to something that matters. Consequently, contribution to society could be dispersed in a couple of 2-3 hour shifts, as the main focus is boosting community cohesion by tackling indifference.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding <p>We feel that this issue is positively correlated with the previous one. How? The excessive workload that already is implemented in the school curriculum limits the number of hours that adolescents can work. This flexibility on the other hand allows employers (government institutions, private companies, NGOs etc) to cover a standardised wage, which is significantly smaller than the one of full-time workers. Firms or</p>

institutions participate in preparing future generations to be a beneficial part of society at a low cost, while young people obtain unmatched experience along with a financial stimulus that keeps them on track. Both parties get to share the moral high ground at a reasonable price - a bit of time and money.

2.3 Community building and association through sports

Challenge: distrust on two levels: a vertical one (citizens- institutions) and a horizontal one (amongst citizens themselves).

Proposal: sports as a glue for community building

Sports is a transversal means of aggregation, especially for the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups. This proposal is based on the formula “palestre popolari” (“the people’s gyms”) in Italy, promoting sports by the people for the people as a right everyone is entitled to beyond social categories and regardless of sex, age, national origins, and physical abilities. Twofold action:

1. Stepping in to guarantee accessibility to sports by creating venues, facilities, and courses that are either totally free or reduced fee (you pay as much as you can). Focus on group sports. Creating popular, state-funded sports associations that are not subjected to market volatility and prices.
2. Foraging grassroot sports associations already in place by providing funding given that these comply with requirements – non-discrimination upon entry, etc.

The proposal interests peripheral, marginalised areas. The target is any and all people in the community (youngsters to elders) wishing to partake in sports, providing an opportunity for different age groups to interact.

Impact: community building, association, physical activity.

Sports as a tool for community building and association is implemented in Sweden. For example, the Gothia Cup, the world’s biggest soccer cup for youth, has community building as a foundational idea. We are taking the best of this and elevating it to achieve the goal of building trust within the community by means of association. The proposal sets out to address a need (for community, a sense of belonging, physical activity) that becomes a state-given right by encouraging civic virtuous behaviours directly and indirectly.

Recognizing major issues

- **Funding**

The money argument is worth mentioning, but it is not a cause to dismiss our proposal. A same argument may be made about prisons, which shelter individuals from all walks of life yet are nonetheless subsidised. Why don't we reduce criminality before the courtroom and the prison walls by allowing people to participate in various forms of physical activities that will unite people on the axis of passion? In order to make our point, we will use one of the most heinous crimes, war. Back in 1914, at the height of the First World War, the adversaries agreed to a one-day truce on Mount Christmas by playing football. Even the most harsh critic is capable of observing a moment of silence in appreciation of the majesty of the example. Sports is, no doubt, functional towards community building and an area worth investing in for itself and the cascade of positive social effects it generates.

Conclusion

The word democracy comes from the Greek words '*demos*', meaning people, and '*kratos*' meaning power. In a fragmented society torn by distrust and cynical apathy, our initiatives, based on the concept of democracy, restore power to the people by having them develop a bond of reciprocal obligation. Such obligation is felt by citizens towards one another, as well as towards the institutions they interact with, and compels them to act in the safeguarding of the community as a whole. Inevitably, our suggestions will have to face a number of challenges - such as lack of specificity, and inefficiency – that, to the eyes of some, will have them fail. However, in the process of developing the recommendations, we have effectively demonstrated how these very criticisms have to be tackled, in the cause of the common good. If we, a handful of strangers and completely different people, succeeded in a spontaneous outburst of ideas, disagreements, and a race against time, then others will inevitably triumph as well. Our proposals establish a culture of developing the democratic muscles that, in their service to society, allow us to call ourselves free people. We must work towards establishing a safe community, and we can do this by pushing for critical thinking and guaranteeing a sense of responsibility.

3. Rethinking Democracy

In today's world we must go beyond the political status-quo, and our politicians' short-term visions. But how do we best resolve this? We propose the establishment of citizens' assemblies, entitled 'Councils for the Future', that would bridge the gap between institutions and citizens. These advisory panels, constituted of a representative sample of society, would draw in individuals through a blended approach of mandatory and voluntary association. This would empower local communities, whilst enabling political flexibility for the government to best act upon the citizen feedback. The reports that would be produced by such councils would serve to influence policy direction, and would specifically tackle long-term problems that concern the citizenry. Furthermore, widening the base of political participation is possible also through granting access to political institutions to people with lesser socioeconomic possibilities. We propose the creation of a grant for those people who want to get their voice heard, but do not have enough time or resources. A government grant as such would be dependent on the applicant's net income and a predetermined number of signatures, according to other predetermined criteria. The future of political collaboration is rooted in an involvement initiative that would lead the way towards citizens assemblies within the long-term. These two proposals support one another, paving a way to long-term, equitable political growth.

3.1 Councils for the Future

At the moment many people feel a growing gap between politicians and citizens. Advisory citizen's assemblies could help re-establish trust and re-focus politics on citizen's long-term concerns. Empowering citizens to formally voice their views on policies and how policies touch upon their long-term concerns could enable citizens to cherish democracy again. It could also help bring citizens together – citizens that rarely interact in societies increasingly polarised. Voicing people in citizen's assemblies could re-awaken people's interests in politics – which possibly leads them to become more politically informed and personally engaged in politics.

Challenges: political apathy, mistrust, polarisation, unequal political representation

In a world of declining democracy and rising political polarisation, a complex interplay of socio-economic, political, and cultural factors result in inadequate representation of various groups of citizens in politics. While political inclusion is vital to sustain democracy, systemic and legal barriers to political participation persist at

all levels, resulting in challenges relating to the capacity of governments to respond to people's different needs. To overcome unequal opportunities for political participation and make citizen's long-term concerns heard in policymaking circles, we must open up to new forms of political participation. That is why we need Councils for the Future.

Proposal: non-partisan citizens' councils led by underrepresented members of society

We propose the establishment of citizens' assemblies, entitled 'Councils for the Future', to bridge the gap between institutions and citizens. The Councils would operate predominantly on a local level and should represent society's diversity. Therefore the choice of Council participants would be partly based on demographic factors. Social groups that are underrepresented in politics at the moment, like people of younger age, women, unemployed people (especially in the ages 40-60), elderly people, non-binary people or indigenous peoples, would then be favoured. Bringing these diverse groups together in the Councils could rebuild intra-societal trust and understanding, and combat the feeling of being left behind that is often experienced by members of these groups. While these groups are prioritised, the Councils should be accessible for every person that wants to be part of it – under the condition that the applicant is not already engaged in politics. Thus, people can also access the Councils if they do not meet the demographic criteria. However, it is necessary for admission that the applicant is not yet engaged in politics because admitting people who are already heavily engaged in political parties or other organisations risks that these individuals would dominate a Council's work and it would run counter to the goal of the Council which is primarily to voice those who have been marginalised.

Practical solutions:

1. The Councils for the Future would attract people on a local level who then get the opportunity to debate issues chosen by the Council's participants.
 - The chosen applicants would participate in the local Councils for one year and meet on a weekly basis.
 - The results of the local Council meetings would be aggregated in advisory reports that would then be sent to local and regional political bodies.
 - These reports would be shared with the broader citizenry in social media and in town halls and city squares, to inspire people who may engage themselves in another Council round and to show that others than the populists are voicing people.

2. In addition to local Councils for the Future, a National Council for the Future could be established that would coordinate and manage communication between the local Councils.
 - The National Council for the Future would organise annual Council meetings which would draw in randomly selected participants from local Councils.
 - These annual meetings would produce annually published citizen's advisory reports for the future that synthesise the issues and solutions addressed by the local Councils.
 - These reports would be targeted at national politicians and governmental bodies. National ministers would be required to attend the annual presentations of the advisory reports. Enabling selected citizens to shape national political debates via the National Council for the Future could empower them even more than merely giving them a voice in local political matters.

Impact: better political representation of citizen's long-term concerns

In the Councils, citizens would get the opportunity to be active in politics without the burdensome responsibilities that accompany a usual politician's life. As the participants would not need to be elected again, the advice they would provide would probably be more focused on their own experiences and opinions, rather than what could be the most popular opinion. This could lead to better policies and higher trust in democracy.

3.2 The Grant for Change

Being a political candidate is hard work. You need a lot of skills, must be well-known and you need loads of money. As we want everybody to be able to become a member of a parliament, local- or regional council, we need a pool of money to support candidates that lack the above resources. The idea of our grant is to support marginalised people to cross the preliminary stage to get into politics.

Challenges: vertical inequality, socioeconomic discrimination, political underrepresentation, polarisation

Constraints posed upon people with financial burdens continue to limit the means through which individuals are able to interact with both local and national political systems. With the increasing tendency for governments to extend the periods of time during which elections take place, this establishes a profound economic cost upon representatives, regardless of political affiliation, that they must compensate for using their own economic

resources. Due to the systemic economic differences prevalent within society, these restrictions to participation particularly affect marginalised groups. Given that the responsibility of care is often located upon women, and that the capacity for involvement amongst working classes within politics is constrained by the balancing between sustaining oneself and active participation, a troubling precedent is set in which only certain demographics can continually participate in political campaigns. This leaves us with a condition in which certain groups become apathetic to the overall conditions in their country, believing their role to be negligible in supporting a secure state that works to their benefit. In many countries, people's trust in the government is decreasing. For example, according to the Pew Research Center's 'global attitudes survey', in 2019 only 49 of the respondents thought that the state is run for the benefit of all the people. Astoundingly, 64 percent of the respondents believed that elected officials do not care about what people like them think⁴.

The current system is predicated upon allying oneself to political parties to get elected, as these are the only bodies that can provide some form of limited funding. This is problematic, as one becomes wholly dependent upon an ideological institution to sustain democracy, which hinders constructive dissent from taking place due to the chokehold the parties have over the candidates that can run for them during elections. Given the economic costs of running, without the support of parties, it is particularly challenging for new individuals to break through into politics. Overall, the consequence of this is that diversity within parliament is throttled, which hinders the motivation for new individuals to enter into politics. This obviously leads to the question: how can we resolve the financial hurdle that prevents the representation of voices within democratic systems? Diversity matters in our politics and a lack of that prevents progressive political ambition.

In addition to a lack of diversity, parties themselves prevent representational democracy from functioning. For instance, top-down led parties prohibit the democratic process within the party. New and aspiring politicians may be neglected for older people that have been part of the party for a longer time and to whom party funding is directed. Furthermore, as parties strive to reach unanimity within the party, this restricts multiplicity and thus politicians with alternative proposals lose their opportunity to campaign. As a result, party structures are not inclusive to new and young aspiring politicians. However, the grant for change can counter this limiting party structure and allows aspiring politicians to circumvent party processes and form their personal political programme. The grant for change offers inspiration and incentives for change both on the party-level and for individuals through its funding.

Proposal: a financial grant for political involvement

⁴ See:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/27/democratic-rights-popular-globally-but-commitment-to-them-not-always-strong/>
[23.11.2022].

We propose the Grant for Change to fund candidates with fewer financial resources. The grant works as shown in figure 1. First, people apply and give evidence of their financial situation and the number of signatures they have gathered. The signatures are necessary to make sure that funding is given only to people who are really willing to run for parliament and have a certain support base to start with. Thus, our grant does not automatically give every individual the chance to get into politics, but only those who put a significant effort into garnering political support. The grant serves to enhance political participation and diversity in politics, irrespective of political views. The anonymous applications are checked by a digital system which in certain instances is complemented by a committee evaluating applicants. The chosen applicants receive money for campaign financing and for living costs.

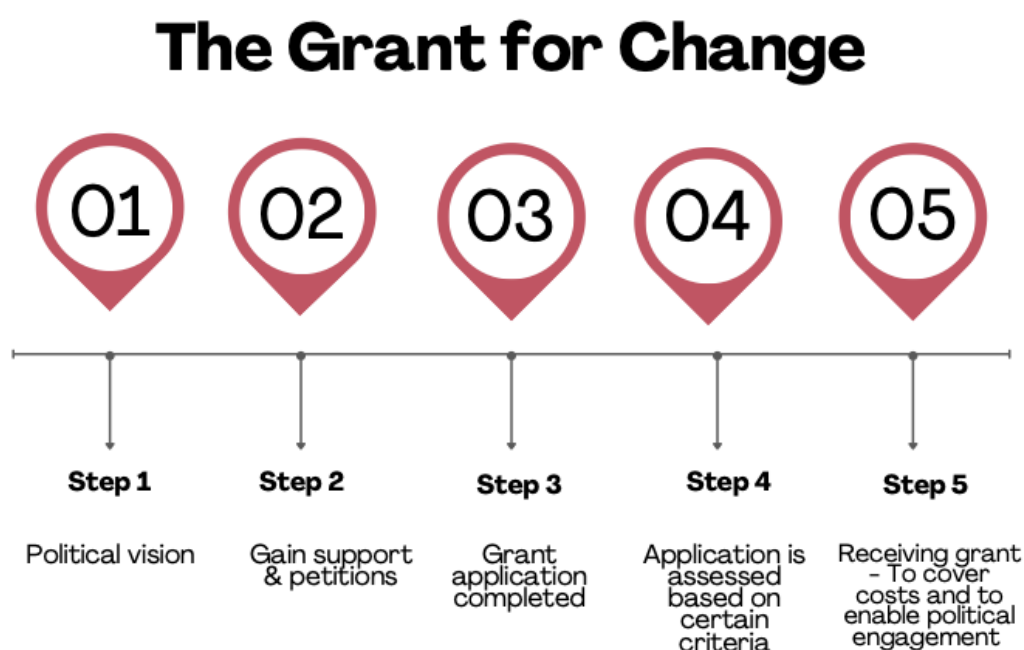


Figure 1: The process for receiving the grant.

Impact: innovating political party structures via enhanced diversity

The grant system gives people the opportunity to get into a parliament or a local or regional council. It gives people the freedom to openly speak their minds because they are not dependent on somebody for support. Without the economic barriers, getting access to politics becomes easier. If more people get the chance to become a member of parliament or a council, there will be more innovative, diverse and fresh ideas in parliament. Fresh ideas lead to better policies and laws because more perspectives are considered. When individuals of demographic groups that are currently not involved in politics get involved, whole demographic

groups will feel more satisfied and represented as their needs are more deeply and accurately addressed in the parliament. Thus, democracy is strengthened. More people will get interested in politics because it will no longer be something only for privileged people with no worries about money but something that is open for everybody and responsive to everybody – irrespective of economic factors. Lastly, the grant could catalyse innovation among the political parties by circumventing the ingrained party structure.

Conclusion

While these two proposals could positively impact democratic participation, there are many potential obstacles that require a country-specific assessment and adaptation. The Councils for the Future could significantly contribute to empowering citizens and giving long-term considerations more weight, but it is not necessarily given that chosen citizens would have a mind that is focused on long-term issues as opposed to short-term considerations, such as cheaper bills. However, we expect that their role as guardians of the future would encourage long-term thinking among chosen individuals, and the organisation of these assemblies would need a facilitation to bring together the immediate needs of people and broader long-term approaches, while contrasting short-termism. Similarly, the Grant for Change gives more people the opportunity to get into politics, but to be truly effective there must be a highly precise formulation of the process to collect the fundings and to provide the Grant to those citizens who actually need it (e.g., by instituting an executive board and appointing a supervising authority, with proper checks and balances). Thus, these innovations could contribute to aligning policies to citizen's long-term concerns, empowering them, encouraging a greater diversity in political perspectives, and helping to rebuild trust in democratic institutions. These would also ensure that people have the freedom to speak their mind to policymakers and in parliaments because they are not dependent on somebody's goodwill. Easier access to politics means that more people become interested in politics. More perspectives in parliament means better laws, because laws should reflect and take into consideration all groups of people to be truly effective and fair, strengthening our democracy.

4. Common Good Economy

We live in a society that believes growth to be the pinnacle of human achievement yet this interminable striving for economic growth has instead poisoned our society with severe social, environmental and economic issues. Unlimited growth destroys limited systems, exacerbating undemocratic sentiment and inequality. Productivism and consumerism have been contributing to the deterioration of democracy by enhancing differences among individuals, ruthlessly depleting resources.

Democracy has long been associated with rapid economic growth and development. During the 20th century, as democratic societies in their modern form began to emerge, there were some enormously positive developments as a result. Living conditions improved, leading to greater emancipation and empowerment of the social body. Yet, this progression has pushed humanity towards prioritising increased production and consumption through the reinforcement of neoliberal policies focused on economic growth, measured purely by indicators such as GDP, which has rapidly exacerbated socio-economic issues. As a result, social cohesion is undermined by increasing polarisation and inefficiently addressed welfare policies. Scarce access to healthcare and education together with many other emerging factors upon which well-being is dependent, keep shattering people's trust and loyalty regarding the viability of democratic institutions. With this in mind, there is a need to reconceptualize current economic structures by not viewing GDP-measured economic success as a determinant of prosperity and instead placing well-being at the forefront of development. Bridging social and economic differences between different layers of society can be reached through enhanced well-being whereby individuals are not exposed to the multitude of struggles caused by ineffectively functioning public institutions and the constant pressure of perpetual production. On top of that, in a politically active society, democracy forms an essential aspect of well-being in allowing individuals to manifest their involvement in a community through active participation thus overcoming the feeling of disconnection.

To achieve this, we must incorporate elements of the degrowth model in analytical frameworks, as a revolutionary alternative to the current system. Essentially, degrowth implies shifting away from treating growth using merely economic metrics like GDP and placing importance on social and environmental factors. The objectives thus are shifted towards ensuring social well-being which in turn will contribute to overall prosperity.

4.1 A New Needs Based Measurement of Well-Being

Challenges: Production-centric society, political and social alienation, physical and mental health inequality

Proposal: A new model for measuring value

We developed an econometric model which aims at formulating a new measurement of value within an alternative economic framework. This analysis will enable policy-makers to periodically evaluate individuals' well-being and monitor the impact of economic policy proposals in relation to this.

For the purpose of this model, data would be collected regionally through surveys every six months and respondents would be asked to answer a number of questions to quantify well-being. The regression serves both a positive and normative purpose, estimating on the one hand welfare discrepancies across various societal groups and, on the other, it serves as a basis to advise governments on effective fiscal policy.

The estimated regression model is the following:

$$wellbeing_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 age_{it} + \beta_2 gender_{it} + \beta_3 race + \beta_4 income_{it} + \beta_5 income_{it}^2 + \beta_5 inequality_{it} + \gamma X' + \xi Y'$$

Where wellbeing is an aggregate measure of the individuals' welfare estimated by merging more specific disaggregated variables. Variables measuring respondents' wellbeing include a set of indicators that will then be aggregated in the final index.

The variables age, gender, and race were introduced in the model to capture wellbeing differentials across society. However, there is potential for flexibility, for example including factors such as employed/unemployed or citizen/migrant.

Gender is a binary variable assuming value 1 if the individual is female and 0 otherwise, therefore, β_2 coefficient quantifies how wellbeing is higher or lower for females compared to males. The same reasoning applies to coefficients β_1 and β_3 which instead capture wellbeing differential across different ethnicities and age classes.

To include nonlinear returns to income on wellbeing, both *income* and *income*² were included in the model. This has been done specifically to capture the Easterlin Paradox, the idea that, past a certain point, wealth has a negative correlation with happiness. This is thus captured by coefficients β_4 and β_5 which measure how once a certain level of income is met, individuals reach a “satiation point” and income no longer has a positive correlation with happiness levels. As a consequence, we are expecting to find positive and negative estimates for β_4 and β_5 respectively. The variable inequality was introduced in the regression to capture the impact that inequality has on wellbeing and is calculated as the difference between an individual’s income and the average income of the richest decile of the distribution.

Factor X is fundamental to the normative purpose of the model, it is a matrix containing variables for all the services we aim at directing our public spending towards, including education, safety, health, transportation, social welfare and environment.

Factor Y is a matrix containing well-being measurements, variables expressing individuals’ perceptions of economic sufficiency and stability, access to education, physical and mental health, safety and the environmental situation in their region or country.

4.1.1 Community Centred Decision Making: ‘Factor X’

Challenges: Democratic Alienation

Proposal: Decision making through direct democracy

In order to express the functionality of our measurement system, it is necessary to explain the practical basis of Factor ‘X’ as well as examples that serve to demonstrate the viability of such a proposal.

Fundamentally, factor ‘X’ is a form of direct democracy through a regular feedback loop, that ascertains the specific needs and desires, essentially the priorities, of the population relative to various spending areas. It would be done through a regular, regional survey that would suggest a variety of spending areas, asking the population to quantify each proposal in terms of importance to them in relation to wellbeing on a numerical scale. This allows a non-linear ranking system thus allowing for the prioritisation of multiple interlinked areas whilst also avoiding a situation whereby important factors are completely ignored out of a feeling that certain areas should necessarily be given low scores to contrast high scores in other areas.

The survey will be organised into five main sections:

- Economic sufficiency and stability
 - To what extent are your basic survival needs met?
 - Does your current financial situation hinder your overall prosperity?
- Access to Education
 - Do you consider your access to education to be challenging or scarce?
 - Does your access to education affect your satisfaction with life?
- Physical and Mental Health
 - Do you feel there are barriers to healthcare access?
 - Does this lack of access result in a poorer quality of life?
- Environmental situation
 - Does the current environmental situation in your region concern you?
 - To what extent do these concerns negatively affect your well being?
- Safety
 - Do you feel safe in the area/ neighbourhood you live in?
 - Does this sense of (un)safety affect your well being?

This would be distributed by regional authorities, allowing for specific local issues and priorities that may otherwise be forgotten in a large-scale system, thus empowering individuals and localities. Furthering the practical aspect of this proposal, this would be neither monetarily compensated nor mandatory. Instead, it would focus on the principle of procedural fairness, that the demos are more receptive to policies, even those they don't agree with, when they feel they have a say in the process and can therefore feel the tangible action of democracy. This would also give greater democratic legitimacy to taxation and spending decisions. Often, we confine our conception of government democracy to the election of political figures and how this gives them legitimacy; however, democratic principles can, and should, be applied elsewhere, in this case legitimising spending and tax.

A practical example to demonstrate the viability of such a system, is the Internet-based participatory planning system implemented in Kabul between 2019 and 2021. This system used digital surveys to ascertain the opinion of citizens in regards to infrastructure decisions and to directly involve the needs and opinions of the local population in the issues that affected them the most. During the period from 2019 to the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 2021, this system saw opinions from over 15,000 different citizens providing 75,000 different opinions, informing over 300 decisions. Whilst this system, an attempt to engender democratic ideals and build

democratic culture in Kabul, is under threat from the Taliban takeover and equally has its limitations regarding digital access, as a preliminary concept it is impressive, therefore demonstrating the viability of such a system on an expanded scale. Since its inception, various other cities have attempted similar systems, most notably Paris' participatory budget system which has seen great success in expanding people's voices in governance.

4.1.2 Implementation Through Contributions and Benefits

Challenges: Inequality of Opportunity, Democratic Alienation

Proposal: Universal Basic Income, Devolved, Democratic Budgeting

This normative goal would be realised through a radically new approach to spending and taxes. Yet there is a prior question of framing that needs to be addressed. In the common imagination, both that of the most and least economically advantaged in society, taxation is often viewed as a punishment, imposed upon the populous and misused to favour the powerful. Equally, spending, and especially the concept of benefits, has been misconstrued as a hand out for those who are reluctant to contribute to society. These conceptions have come into being as the result of divisive, authoritarian ideology championing an extreme individualism that pits communities against each other. As a counter, our proposal seeks to reframe spending and taxes through the lens of contributions and welfare, in which citizens get a greater say as to how it is spent. This would imply that taxation, rather than being a punishment, is an opportunity for those most fortunate in society to easily contribute. Rather than taking away from the individual, it is giving to society. Equally, spending and benefits, reframed as welfare would recentre the purpose of government spending as being fundamental for the well-being of the populace, removing the stigma and embarrassment surrounding users of the benefits system, the material reality directing the culture.

This is founded on a universal basic income to provide a minimum economic capacity for all people within a nation. A system centred around capital accumulation and incessant production views citizens as economic units; their value determined by that which they produce economically. This ignores the value we bring to a society outside of our traditionally productive capacities. As such, within the context of a common good economy, a universal basic income is necessary to ensure freedom for all people to explore and pursue their own and their community's well-being, whilst diversifying their democratic culture, without the constant pressure brought about by a production-centric system. This allows the most vulnerable individuals in our society, those who are not necessarily capable of adhering to the strict standard of what is traditionally

productive, to thrive. The 'universal' aspect of universal basic income serves to combat the stigma that exists in traditional welfare models; as everyone would benefit from such a policy. This is the material manifestation of the cultural shift which would bring society together around the tenant of a universal basic income. Essentially, a universal basic income allows us to act as human beings, as opposed to merely productive beings, enslaved to a fundamentally discriminatory system.

Ultimately this would serve to strengthen procedural fairness, the principle by which, even if there is not universal agreement on decisions, the fact that there has been a tangible input process ensures greater satisfaction and acceptance of policy, even amongst those who disagree thereby tackling disaffection, and creating a perceptible link between contribution and welfare.

Of course, to talk of contribution and welfare necessitates a consideration of the practicalities of how such welfare proposals should be financed. This is neither a new consideration, and more importantly, nor a radical one. Widespread, new welfare policies have been rapidly implemented before, this in reference to the post-war period and the heavy implementation of Keynesian economics to address a welfare crisis. Ultimately, this proposal is founded on the need to tackle a welfare crisis of our own. As such, a variety of radical contribution measures are necessary to fund both a Universal Basic Income and feedback-based spending measures. This would be necessarily multifaceted, requiring an overhaul of conventional contemporary taxation systems, no single tax measure sufficing to properly fund these proposals.

In this regard, it would include a radical progressive taxation, beginning at the point beyond Universal Basic Income as this would negate the need for tax-free income on the first portion of wages. This would seek to tax high wages at a high rate in order to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to contribute as much as possible to society with ease. Alongside this, a sizable wealth tax, ensuring that inherited wealth cannot lead to societal inequality and marginalisation. Furthermore, there would need to be a resolution to both capital gains and tax havens to ensure that contributions would be equitable and enforceable across all sectors of society and income streams as well as unavoidable. Furthermore, by taxing capital gains effectively, tax havens would be directly combatted, something that could be further regulated by improving transparency on international financial transactions. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list of potential measures, the general concept of radical taxation is essential to follow this proposal.

Conclusion

The shift towards a common good economy is fundamentally a long term proposal. Whilst it is actionable now, it is likely that it would face some push back, given that it is a radical change from the existing economic and societal orthodoxy of prioritisation. Furthermore, there are questions of regional and cultural specificity that must be asked if such proposals are to be implemented in the most effective manner possible. Yet, this collection of proposals allows groups to begin the transition to a more equitable society. The measurement system acts as a foundational reshifting of what a society prioritises in an adoptable and quantifiable package which would then open the way for the survey system to put this priority into practice through the contributions and benefits framework. Essentially, the concept of a common good economy acts as a package of proposals to shift societal norms towards a more human friendly system. Whilst this is a large-scale and challenging proposal, current developments are promising. Some regional governments have already begun to implement citizen-directed procedures in their planning and spending processes, procedures which have so far been received overwhelmingly well. Furthermore, the values espoused in the common good economy approach are becoming more and more mainstream, especially in youth circles, helping to create an impetus for further direct democracy in the name of human values. Essentially, whilst this is a radically new proposal, it is also a product of the time, and of current trends. It aims to provide a practical basis for directing the energy of the moment into feasible proposals which will, if the will is there, strengthen and update democracy for a new generation.

Conclusions

Inclusive mental and physiological health care serve as precursors to healthy citizens eligible to engage socially and participate in the democratic process. Through policies and proposals directly catered to the local and diverse needs, and the formation of bottom-up leadership networks, not only can citizen's needs be acknowledged and advocated for but also can faith within the democratic process be restored as active participation is encouraged and incorporated. Enveloped by proposals likewise calling for social inclusion, diversifying education while encouraging civic virtuous acts functional to democratic values with the aim of increasing perceptions of happiness and trust through a product of social cooperation to eliminate concerns of mistrust. The Councils for the Future as guardians of the longevity of such aims, serves to support citizen's long-term concerns, empower citizens, encourage that a greater diversity in political perspectives is heard, and help rebuild citizen's trust in democracy, while the Grant for Change enables access into politics while ensuring the voices of citizens be represented in parliament. Nonetheless, all these reforms might not have the intended outcomes, if we do not innovate the ways in which we understand and realise economic growth, which calls for the prioritisation of the impacts on people and the environment.

Overall, re-building communities by breaking cycles of grievances, educating voters and politicians, redistributing wealth, improving transparency are the pillars of the suggested courses of action that all governments should take into account to make politics more accessible, inclusive and sustainable, while protecting the people's wellbeing. The feasibility of these policies and proposals varies according to the socioeconomic conditions and the political culture of a country, therefore requiring diversified approaches. If implemented, the successfulness of the proposed reforms must be embedded in a deeper understanding of the context, the nature and the polyhedricism of states, nations, and communities. In conclusion, these alone cannot be considered a panacea for the current crises faced by the global population, but an unavoidable starting point to oppose the tide of authoritarianism.