

# Don't Give Them Bread: A Cooperative Plan for the Future ©

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‘The Greatest good is in communion with others.’ Durkheim

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## Executive Summary

In these key points below, we outline the main features of what we are aiming to achieve and the main reasons that support the approach we are taking.

- The greatest challenges of our time threaten our species and our planet. *Quid Remedium?* We do what our species has always done to survive, we cooperate (Harari, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2022).
- The concept of polycrisis (Morin & Kern, 1999) refers to the mutually exacerbating relatedness of contemporary problems. It is inefficient, demoralising and even counterproductive to address problems in an unsystematic manner.
- Economic Democracy releases human creativity, serving as the pivotal point, a point of maximum leverage, offering the greatest potential to solve the multitude of problems plaguing our lives, from the merely annoying, to the catastrophic.
- Democracy is essential for quality assurance within a society.
- Economic Democracy is the only mechanism that we have to connect production decisions with people's needs, in a manner that cannot be distorted, corrupted or subverted.
- Decision-making around the entire process of production of goods and services, not only distribution, is crucial to human well-being. If we do not produce appropriate goods and services, it makes little sense to discuss distribution, equitable or otherwise.
- True sovereignty lies in production and consumption. It is only fitting that these irreducible interests of human beings become the fundamental organizing principles of society, forming the bedrock of a genuinely democratic society.

- Cooperatives are the institutional form of Economic Democracy. Ultimately what they produce, are lives worth living.
- Cooperatives stimulate greater motivation, because people are choosing for themselves, the aims they are working towards, and in turn they choose more noble aims, than merely serving the profit motive (Weber, Unterrainer & Höge, 2020; Autin *et al*, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Spear & Thomas, 1997).
- Organisations that are democratically run have proven themselves more able to produce public goods, merit goods and positive social impacts, reducing moral hazard and negative externalities (United Nations, 2014; Novković, Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2012; Spear & Thomas, 1997:466; Perotin, 2018; Arzeni, 2007:4).
- Political Democracy cannot survive without Economic Democracy.
- The way to return governments to democracy, is to establish democracy within the organisations that influence and control governments.
- Democratic procedures provide the means to resist hostile capture of organisations, corruption and predatory value extraction.
- Economic Democracy structures a democratic mechanism into the heart of economic activity, to produce outcomes that more closely align with the needs of people and the planet.
- Alienation in the workplace will be eliminated by work designs which provide Balanced Job Complexes, in which all roles equitably empower workers to make significant decisions and foster the development of a wide range of competencies, at different levels of complexity and desirability (Albert, *et al*. 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022).
- Alienation is most able to be reduced in the Cooperatives envisaged in this plan because it operationalises the three sources of human happiness (Pink, 2010; Autin *et al*, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008):
  1. Self-management delivers autonomy;
  2. Balanced Job Complexes develop mastery and;
  3. Economic Democracy provides the opportunity to design work that can provide meaning and purpose.
- Our plan is to establish a strategic organisation that will transfer organisations from private or public ownership into cooperatives which would be democratically run by workers, and consumers/ service users or through universal membership.
- What makes this proposal unique, is that donations would be in the form of organisations, to be transferred into cooperatives. Hence the strategic

organisation will be termed *Don't Give Them Bread*, because doners will be donating the entire bakery.

- The beneficiaries rather than the doners will decide for themselves how their needs will best be met.
- Releasing people's potential and maximising productivity requires employee financial ownership and real participation in decisions (Summers & Hyman, 2005: 52; Logue & Yates 2005).
- The project is situated not only in changing the lives of its immediate participants but within the larger scale of developing organisations which can buttress the social organisation of democracy itself.
- The project focuses on developing the social architecture which extensive research has shown provides the basis of human happiness and fulfilment (Pink, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008) and indeed, provides the basis for human survival (Harari, 2016, 2018, 2022).

## The Rationale

### **Aspirations: How to Make a Difference**

The greatest challenges of our time threaten our species and our planet. *Quid Remedium?* We do what our species has always done to survive, we cooperate (Harari, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2022).

Imagine if the best of human ingenuity was focused on solving problems, rather than walking by, or being stifled by the effects, or worse, being manipulated into exploiting them. As Brené Brown beautifully expressed it: 'We don't have to do all of it alone. We were never meant to.' Economic Democracy provides the means to structure cooperation into decision-making about what we produce, how we produce it, and how the produce is distributed. It provides the means to marshal the best of our abilities, from the greatest number of people. The greatest opportunities to contribute to problem solving are provided, they are built into the structure, rather than arriving or not, on an *ad hoc* basis.

We can, and must, develop democratic economic and social relationships that further our collective and individual interests. The current development of Artificial Intelligence makes economic democratisation both urgent and imperative (Stahl, 2024; Kasy, 2023; Acemoglu & Johnson, 2023). Cooperation is the reason that our species dominates the planet and is not yet extinct (Harari, 2015; Bowles & Gintis, 2011) and it is the best prospect for our continued survival (Harari, 2016, 2018, 2022).

The concept of polycrisis (Morin & Kern, 1999) is now widely accepted (Tooze, 2023). It draws our attention to the mutually exacerbating relatedness of contemporary problems. It is inefficient, demoralising and even counterproductive to address problems in an unsystematic manner. It risks merely moving the problems

around (Albert, 2024: 19). Rather than addressing problems one by one, ignoring the interconnections between them, Economic Democracy serves as the pivotal point, a point of maximum leverage, offering the greatest potential to solve the multitude of problems plaguing our lives, from the merely annoying, to the catastrophic. It clears from the field, the biases of vested interests. It summons the best within us, and calls upon us to serve our own best interests, as judged by our own assessments. But what does Economic Democracy entail? How can it be translated into practical structures?

Historically, the bases of power, have shifted from physical or military strength, to accident of birth, to possession of scarce skills, to geographical location, to gameship, to gerrymandered position, and finally, to the more rational struggling towards democracy. Where should power properly lie? Development involves two aspects: production and consumption. It is only fitting that these fundamental, irreducible interests of human beings become the fundamental organizing principles of society. This is where true sovereignty lies and forms the bedrock of a genuinely democratic society. Political democracy is not merely a travesty, although it has regrettably devolved into one, it acts as a precursor to a future society built on genuine democratic principles.

Economic Democracy and economic justice lean together in the same direction, towards human fulfilment. Cooperatives are the institutional form of Economic Democracy. Ultimately what they produce, are lives worth living.

### **Why We Need Democracy**

Democracy is essential for quality assurance within a society. It serves as the feedback loop through which a society learns about itself. A society that fails to learn about its own shortcomings cannot effectively help itself. Without a clear understanding of the problems, they cannot be adequately addressed. This is why oligarchy is not sustainable.

A society without democracy is akin to an individual without a conscience—it becomes psychopathic. Why do such societies fail? Because, like psychopaths, they lack the ability to feel or sense. They cannot accurately diagnose their ailments and therefore cannot heal themselves. They struggle to relate to individuals because they lack knowledge and understanding of them. They lack judgment, due to a lack of empathy. Such societies cannot truly elevate humanity, only manipulate it as an exploitable tool fashioning the invisible suit for the Emperor's vanity.

Production decisions are adrift from human needs, and no fictioning about the hidden hand of the market can connect them. The hidden hand is the power of what money can buy and bribe, while the hands of the poor are underutilised, unfulfilled and empty. We produce infinite supplies of cruel unneeded means of destruction, while immense needs for sustenance, health and shelter, remain unmet. Voracious non-productive financialisation colonises vast economic resources that could be deployed to improve mortality and quality of life. Economic Democracy is the only mechanism that we have to connect production decisions with people's needs, in a manner that cannot be distorted, corrupted or subverted. It provides the setting where everyone gets to benefit from the best that each of us can produce. Insofar as we have democracy, we meet our needs. Where there is a lack of democracy, diverse needs remain unmet.

## **Why the Workplace must be Democratic**

To create is to be human. Our capacity for productivity and creativity is the fundamental essence of our being. Being alive means interacting with our environment and effecting change. Work not only yields tangible products but also shapes the individuals carrying out the work (Graeber, 2006). Through work we change the world and the world changes us. This process begins from the moment of our conception and continues to infinity. We are born to become.

Creativity inherently involves problem-solving, yet the confines of traditional employment stifle the world's creative potential. It is no wonder that we find ourselves in the current state of affairs. Einstein working as a Patent Clerk, is the metaphor for wasted talent, but it was not entirely a waste of time, work exposed him to patents that would have stimulated his creativity and problem-solving skills. Work provides education and development throughout life, but if it is at a mediocre level, our capacity to develop as humans is stunted. One who is employed to produce widgets, becomes defined as a widget producer, limiting their access to their boundless creative capacity.

Reducing us to mere employees is to suppress our humanity. The more specialized the division of labour becomes, the more our creativity and fulfilment as human beings are stifled. Individuals find themselves unable to express their true selves as they are compelled to conform to limited roles, leading them to gradually lose, or never really develop, their sense of identity. The question of "Who am I?" is met with infinite potential until one steps through the doors of the workplace, at which point people are categorised within the narrow limits of the specified role within the division of labour. One becomes categorised, a tinker, tailor, soldier or spy.

While it is commonly advocated to "follow your dreams," the reality for many employees is that they exist within a system where they are expected to pursue someone else's aspirations, serve another's purpose, and contribute to someone else's benefit, to serve interests not of their choosing and often, not in their interests.

Too often, employees are made to labour under psychopathic bosses (Klaas, 2021; Babiak & Hare, 2006). The career most likely to be occupied by a psychopath is CEO (Dutton, 2012). We are suffering an epidemic of corporate destruction wreaked by psychopathic senior management (Boddy, 2011). Meta analysis of the Dark Triad (DT) personality traits- Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy- demonstrates that they are linked to counterproductivity and reductions in the quality of job performance, unless counteracted (O'Boyle, *et al*, 2011). Psychopathy adversely impacts individuals, the organisation itself and externalises adverse impacts as social costs in the form of environmental damage, consumer harms, unnecessary layoffs and increased taxation burdens (Boddy, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2010, 2011; Sutton, 2007).

People's emotional repertoires become warped and underdeveloped. Lives are often tainted with unacknowledged envy, leading to unhealthy competition that fractures our sense of belonging, community and intimacy. Though it is often thought that competition drives the best outcomes, there is contrary evidence that intrinsic motivations will stimulate the highest levels of genuine commitment to work of

quality (Hennessey & Amabile, 1998; Pink, 2010; Stewart, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008).

The *World Economic Forum* (2021) reports that record numbers of people are leaving their jobs. The *World Health Organization* (2019) found that “Time pressure, lack of control over work tasks, long working hours, shift work, lack of support and moral injury are important risk factors for occupational stress, burnout and fatigue among health workers.” *Pew Research* (2023) reports that 67% of Americans are well satisfied with their relationship with their co-workers and 62% with their relationship with their managers, 51% are well satisfied with the day-to-day tasks at work, 49% with the benefits their employer provides, 44% with the opportunities for training/developing new skills, 34% with how much they are paid and 33% with their opportunities for promotion at work. Gallup, reports that worldwide, only 13% of employees are ‘engaged’ at work (Crabtree, 2013).

In theory, economic organisations can be run by anyone who supplies one or more, of the factors of production, those who supply the land/ capital, labour, raw materials or enterprise (Dow, 2018). They can theoretically, also be run by the consumers, by service users, by anyone who is impacted by the production process. On occasion they have been run by anyone with power to seize or requisition. The decisions can be made in a way that is democratic or autocratic. Power can be distributed hierarchically or heterarchically. The division of labour can be specialised or provide for complex distributions of tasks. Production can serve or diminish the producers and consumers. Products can enrich our quality of life or destroy us. The distribution of the produce can be concentrated among the few or shared by the many. Continuum stretch between each of these binary poles. Political democracy has failed to address many of these vectors, focusing only on distribution, the endpoint of production, whereas the entire process is crucial to human well-being.

For the last century or so, the dominant organisations have been run by the owners of capital as autocracies, but more and more our eyes are spanning broader horizons. Organisations can nurture our abilities, or extinguish our humanity. This plan contributes to the process whereby we build organisations with more thought and deeper agency so that they might better serve our needs.

### **Political Democracy Cannot Survive Without Economic Democracy**

The need for Economic Democracy is crucial. Indeed it needs to be the fundamental organising principle of economic activity at all levels. The American Founding Fathers were undoubtedly committed to combating and preventing tyranny, authoritarianism, despotism, and similar oppressions. They rightly believed that dividing and balancing power was the way to achieve this. However, their efforts fell short. Democracy is undermined by economic inequality (Gilens, 2012; Gilens & Page, 2014, 2017; Page, Bartels & Seawright, 2013; Hacker & Pierson, 2011). Moreover, economic inequality is increasing at an exponential rate and along with it, it brings political inequality that increasingly replaces democracy with oligarchy (Piketty, 2017; Reich, 2020b). Political democracy has been increasingly undermined by oligarchy to the point where it has become little more than a thin veil of theatre, with puppeteers pulling the strings of real power.

The Founding Fathers endowed a democracy that was limited to the political sphere, where it cannot sustain itself. It is a castle in the air without foundations in the real. The numerous legislative actions in the US aimed at restricting voter rights are evidence of this. American academics have sent five letters to Congress, expressing concern about the state of American democracy (One Hundred Scholars of Democracy, 2021). Democracy is in grave danger (Runciman, 2018; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; Parker, 2018; Klaas, 2016; Munshi, 2017; Homer-Dixon, 2021). Rigging of elections is becoming increasingly commonplace (Cheeseman & Klaas, 2018). It is widely accepted that at least since the *Citizens United* and *Speechnow.org* legal precedents, which sanctioned unequal financialisation of politics, political democracy is a threadbare shield for Oligarchy (Kuhner, 2014; Formisano, 2017; Whitehouse, 2017; Gerdes, 2014; Street, 2011; Lessig, 2011; Palast, 2012). Unless the underlying economic structures of society are democratic, political democracy will not survive.

Economic Democracy provides both the cultural and structural elements that can work against these adverse influences. Furthermore, economic organisations exert the greatest influence over governments. They do not vote, though through lobbying, they exert far more influence than voters. Currently they are displacing democracy with Oligarchy. The way to return governments to democracy, is to establish democracy within the organisations that influence and control governments.

### **The Strengths of Cooperatives**

The *Ownership Effect Inquiry* Chaired by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted determined that Workers Ownership was, “A Compelling Solution” because it: “offers a meaningful response to our many fundamental economic challenges, and does so by starting with a focus on the value and experience of the individual at work. It builds outwards from that nucleus to shepherd the creation of dynamic, successful firms that, together, drive a robust – and genuinely inclusive – national economy.” (2018:7).

The history of The *International Labour Organisation* (ILO) and Cooperatives has been covered by Sanchez Bajo (2019). The ILO is the agency in the *United Nations* responsible for advancing social and economic justice by setting international labour standards. The ILO’s *Decent Work Agenda* is charged with delivering on the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*. From its inception in 1919, the ILO was committed to supporting Cooperatives. In 1920 it was mandated to work with Cooperatives and Article 12 of the ILO constitution states that it shall work with Cooperatives. Right from the beginning, the organisation has had a unit specifically dedicated to cooperatives, currently known as the Cooperatives Unit. In 2002 it announced the *Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)*. In 2003 the United Nations, promulgated *Guidelines Aimed at Creating a Supportive Environment for the Development of Cooperatives, 2001, 2002* and the *United Nations General Assembly* declared 2012 as the *International Year of Cooperatives*. All of which indicates the high esteem in which the cooperative organisational form is held.

Numerous examples of successful cooperatives include *Mondragon* (Spain), *Dairy Farmers* (Australia), *COOP* (UK), *The Union Credit Union* (USA), *Canadian University Press*, *Edeka Zentrale AG & Co KG* (Germany), *EnerCoop* (France), *Mitre*



10 (New Zealand), *United Farmers of Alberta* and *Coop Norden* (Scandinavia). Many of these organisations were established, and are supported, by trade unions.

Cooperatives provide a broadly based politically palatable basis for the delivery of public and merit goods that can fill in the gaps when markets fail and public services are being squeezed. If well designed, they are likely to garner support because they have a more ethical and sympathetic presentation. Insofar as they act in the public interest, the public has an interest in supporting them. *NBIM* (2023a, b, c) for example, has taken a global role in opposing demerit goods, tackling climate change, supporting social benefits and opposing environmental harm. Cooperatives have more freedom to move to address market failures because they are not limited to the profit motive. Participation “ensures better, fairer and non-exploitative services,” avoiding moral hazard (Spear & Thomas, 1997:466).

Because members control what activity Cooperatives will undertake, they will only undertake the activities for which the members have a high level of motivation. This means that from the outset, there is commitment to the project. Due to this high level of commitment, quality assurance is not a burden. As workers generate the Cooperative’s capital from their own savings and collectively participate in the organisation’s economic success, they are sensitive to the quality of each other’s work (Dow, 2003 Hansmann, 1990b, Levin & Tadelis, 2005 in Wuisman & Mannan, 2016:493). Supervision and surveillance costs are therefore minimised. Mikami (2003) and Alessandrini & Messori (2016) are among the many sources in the literature which argue that Labour Managed Firms are more efficient because they don't need to spend as much time on worker monitoring and surveillance.

Democratic procedures provide the means to resist capture, corruption and predatory value extraction. The *Simple Useful Trust* reported to *The Ownership Effect Inquiry* (2018) that Workers Ownership “is inherently transparent.” Widespread participatory democracy inevitably provides for transparency of decision making which has the positive effects of creating accountability and providing protection against corruption.

From differing political perspectives, Economic Democracy can be seen as a form of capitalism, or an alternative to it. Both major political parties in the UK have supported Economic Democracy, both in their programmes and in economic subsidies to projects (Hillard & Coates, 1991:138-9) and cooperatives were supported by the British Empire as a development strategy (Rhodes, 2012). The *Nuttal Review* “provides a framework for promoting Employee Ownership and moving it into the mainstream of the economy” (2012: 1.22). Three recommendations of note are that The *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*, should:

- “promote Employee Ownership as a business succession solution”, with external stakeholders (Recommendation H, p38).
- “promote the Business Finance Partnership to funds that support Employee Ownership and target employee owed companies.” (Recommendation I, p38).
- Co-operatives UK, and the Insolvency Service, “should assess the scope for a pilot scheme, running from 2013, to test the potential for employee buy outs as a solution in relevant business rescue situations. (Recommendation J, p39).

Economic Democracy provides the opportunity for a greater alignment between role and expertise than is provided by Capital ownership. So long as they are based on equal opportunities for training and development, there are no reasons in principle for qualifiers not being attached to candidacies for election.

It is easier to identify and respond appropriately to the inefficiencies of ‘B\*\*\*S\*\*\* Jobs’ and other forms of wasted productivity in Cooperatives (Graeber, 2019) because ‘no jobs losses’ are likely to be guaranteed. Levin (2023) has collected evidence that Worker Cooperatives address the problems of unemployment and flagging productivity. Navara (2009) has collated extensive empirical evidence that Cooperatives play ‘a significant role in retaining employment, often because this is the reason that they were created, and they have retained a solidarity amongst workers that is committed to protecting one another’s employment’.

It has been shown that “a system of producer cooperatives offers a wealth of advantages, including the potential for efficiency gains, the eradication of unemployment and the end of exploitation” (Jossa, 2014). Many workers Cooperatives have saved jobs in communities that would otherwise have suffered serious consequences from plant closures (Bradley & Gelb, 1980, 1983). Does this mean that Cooperatives produce more ‘B\*\*\* S\*\*\* jobs’? On the contrary, they tend to replace them with socially useful jobs and with more leisure time for workers.

They often pay more than the minimum wage, offer better working conditions (Wuisman & Mannan, 2016) and provide more egalitarian income distribution (Jossa, 2011; Perotin, 2018; Spear & Thomas, 1997:466). Inequality is reduced in Labour Managed Firms because the wage differentials are narrowed. The profits and benefits of technological developments are redeemed by workers rather than by a small number of investors in KMFs.

In the US, The *National Center for Employee Ownership* (2017) reports that among the sampled workers, all ages 28 to 34, worker owners have 92% higher median household wealth and 33% higher income, compared to workers who do not own the firms in which they work. This research also reported that Employee-owners are much more likely to have access to an array of benefits at work, including flexible work schedules, retirement plans, parental leave, tuition reimbursement and childcare benefits.

Cooperatives are more progressive regarding equal opportunities for women, ethnic groups and people with disabilities concerning wages, recruitment and promotion (Spear & Thomas, 1997:466). A study by Mukolo, Brisco & Salim (2006) of 105 adults with learning disabilities working in eight social enterprises in the UK and Ireland showed that there was a link between workplace democracy and the enhanced quality of life that resulted from social integration, manifested in numerous areas of life.

The cheap price of labour that has pertained since the 1970s has meant that technological development has been under incentivised (Srnicsek & Williams, 2015:112), whereas in Collectives, whether profits are reinvested into capital or increased wages, increased leisure, or some other form of expenditure, would be

decided democratically. If capitalisation is selected, it is likely that collectivization results in a more egalitarian distribution of the benefits of technology, in line with the more egalitarian distribution of income that has been shown to pertain to mutualization.

Owen (2011) has drawn on a range of literature which argues that the full benefits of increased productivity that follow from multi skilling and the delegation of decision making rights are not currently being achieved in Capital owned firms. Managers under-delegate because they fear losing bargaining power in relation to their subordinates. This is a problem that can be solved by Labour Managed Firms with appropriate work design because the distinction between worker and manager can be designed out - they are 'one and the same' - and so do not need to undermine themselves.

According to Bartlett, *et al* (1992) Cooperatives in North-Central Italy “apparently have higher productivity, more labour intensive production methods, lower income differentials, and a more tranquil industrial relations environment than the private firms.” In a study of British firms, DeVaro & Kurtulus (2006) found that firms in which there was a high level of worker financial participation benefited from higher financial performance, product quality and higher labour productivity. Evidence from Dow (2018), Defourney, Estrin and Jones (1985a, 1985b), Jones and Svejnar (1985) and Estrin, Jones and Svejnar (1987) shows that “worker participation in firm decision-making increases productivity” Spitzberg (2020) argues with supportive evidence, that in the cooperative sector, ‘better products are built faster,’ if members are more engaged in the process.

A study by Mirabel (2021) discovered that worker buyouts were more successful than newly created Worker Owned Firms, even if the pre-existing firm had been in difficulty. The study provides evidence that forming Worker Cooperatives from pre-existing firms, even those in difficulty, is a viable form of entrepreneurship.

*Employee Ownership Wales* (2023) reports that Employee Ownership is the fastest growing form of business ownership in the UK because it is more profitable and has increased productivity, higher levels of innovation and more economic resilience.

An empirical study by Defourney, Estrin, & Jones in 1985 on the effects of workers' participation on enterprise performance in French Cooperatives found that “ Value added is found to be an increasing function of participation in profits, in collective membership and in ownership, even when a wide assortment of enterprise specific and environmental factors are taken into account. This finding is very robust, surviving tests between alternative specifications of technology, for reverse causality, for simultaneous equation bias and for multicollinearity.” At that stage though, “The typical productivity effect from participation, however, [wa]s small, around 5% of output.”

More recently though, Eurofound (2019) found that Cooperatives provided good work/ life balance, skills development, job satisfaction, democratic governance, job security and a supportive working environment. Cooperatives deploy the sorts of human resources practises that lead to high performance and high productivity, such as job security, mutual gains, effective communication structures, generating

employee engagement, skills utilisation and greater task discretion, employee involvement in task-related decision-making and investing in workforce skills. After approaching 34 companies of which 17 responded, Bhatti & Qureshi (2007) found that worker participation increased productivity. Over 100 studies across many countries indicate that Employee Ownership is generally linked to better productivity, pay, job stability, and firm survival (Kruse, 2016). While the effects vary across institutional settings, the overall effect is found to be positive. Examining the productivity effects of worker participation in Producer Cooperatives in western economies, Estrin, Jones, & Svejnar, (1987) determined that “The positive effects are found most uniformly with respect to profit sharing and, to a slightly lesser extent, individual capital (share) ownership and participation in decision-making by workers.”

In 2018, the *Ownership Effect Inquiry* chaired by Baroness Bowles produced a report titled *The Ownership Dividend: The Economic Case for Employee Ownership*. The Inquiry found an “irrefutable consistency in outcomes reported,” including that Employee Owned firms, “Typically achieve greater levels of productivity and efficiency than Non Employee Owned firms.”

The *Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce* in Quebec found that overall, the survival rates of co-operatives exceed the rate for the private sector (Bond *et al*, 2000) and based on a comprehensive data set from Portugal, Monteiro & Stewart (2015), conclude that Cooperatives have “a more productive labour force” and “a markedly higher probability of survival than capitalist enterprises.”

There is “strong empirical evidence” that Cooperatives are “resilient and in some industries have proven to be more resistant to failure than conventionally organised firms.” (Arando *et al*, 2010:11; in Wuisman & Mannan, 2016:493; Sanchez Bajo & Roelants, 2011). Historically and recently, Cooperatives have thrived in times of crisis (Birchall, 2013; Birchall, & Ketilson, 2009).

They attempt to insulate their members from market shocks to a greater degree than Capital Owned Firms by, for instance, lowering earnings per member-worker rather than declaring redundancies (Pencavel, Pistaferri & Schivardi, 2006 in Wuisman & Mannan, 2016). The social banking sector- otherwise known as ‘Stakeholder banks’- has the “propensity to smooth their lending cycles” which “suggests that their presence in the economy has the potential to reduce credit supply volatility.” (Ferri, Kalmi & Kerola, 2014).

Cooperatives aim to “balance diverse goals such as job and income security, democratic control and participation, safety and health at the workplace, profit sharing and patronage dividends, and concern for the communities” (Logue & Yates, 2005). Because they are not fixated on the profit motive, Cooperatives are more able to produce public goods, merit goods and positive social impacts and to reduce negative externalities (Perotin, 2018). Cooperatives “typically deliver a combination of economic and social returns to their member owners and the community at large” (Logue & Yates, 2005).

Autonomy, mastery, and purpose are the basis of happiness (Pink, 2010; Stewart, 2013; Autin *et al*, 2022) and psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci,

Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008) and they are most likely to be achieved in Cooperatives. Workers who control their own workplace are able to create meaningful work, producing an environment which reduces their alienation and increases their happiness (Jossa, 2014a; Whitehorn, 1974; O'Donohue & Nelson, 2014). The well-being deriving from the psychological satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness correlates with the extent to which the organisations within which they worked provided Total Participation Management (Mika, Stocki & Bożek, 2013). Similarly, Gallie *et al* (2017) established that direct participation was linked to employees' organisational commitment, job satisfaction and affective psychological well-being. Levels of substance abuse, self harm, exogeneous depression and other harms are therefore likely to be minimised.

A study by Shantz *et al* (2015) demonstrated that alienation occurred when there was a lack of task variety and the tasks were not connected in a meaningful way around a sense of purpose. The study "also revealed that an employee who is alienated is more likely to behave in a deviant way and under-perform at work relative to those who are not alienated." The Key Dimensions of meaningful Work are: "Broader purpose at work, serving some greater good or prosocial goals (the intrinsic value of work beyond the person in question). And self-realization as a sense of autonomy, authenticity and self-expression at work (the intrinsic value of work for the person in question)." (Martela & Pessi, 2018). There appear to be complementarities between multiskilling and Participatory decision making (Owan, 2011). Furthermore, Olivella (2006) found multiskilling to be practical and affordable.

Alienation is most able to be reduced in the Cooperatives envisaged in this plan because:

1. Self-management delivers autonomy;
2. Balanced Job Complexes develop mastery and;
3. Economic Democracy provides the opportunity to design work that can provide meaning and purpose.

Workers Cooperatives are well motivated to ensure good standards of Occupational Health & Safety, reducing the burden of ill health on the workers themselves, the organisation and upon the welfare state. Berry & Bell (2018) found that Worker Cooperatives provide opportunities for economic empowerment and for impoverished and marginalized workers to be protected against hazards in the workplace.

Consumer Cooperatives are motivated to ensure high levels of quality assurance for the products and services they produce, because product and service quality is their *raison d'etre*. Workers are themselves also consumers, and it was demonstrated by the *Lucas Aerospace* experiment, that when workers have a free choice about what products they wish to produce, they choose products which are socially useful and not those which are harmful (Jackson *et al* 2012). As Dave White (2020) contends, in the face of imminent ecocide, never has a transformation of production along the lines supported by the *Lucas Aerospace* workers, been more needed.

The distinction between workers and bosses is broken down, so that resources are not wasted on industrial relations problems. A combination of Group incentive pay, empowerment of workers and a positive workplace culture, reduces voluntary turnover and raises return on equity (Blasi, Freeman, & Kruse, 2011).

A meta-analysis encompassing 60 studies conducted by Weber, Unterrainer & Höge (2020) indicated that “the more employees participate directly in strategic and tactical organisational decisions, the more they individually exhibit value-based commitment, job involvement, and job satisfaction and the more they experience a supportive climate.” Economic Democracy, engenders, more rights for workers, and more prosperity for the economy as a whole (Bua, A. 2018; Cumbers, 2018; Cumbers *et al* 2020; Cumbers *et al*, 2023; UK Research and Innovation, 2018).

Participatory democracy provides mechanisms within Cooperatives to remove harmful psychopathic management which Babiak & Hare (2006); Dutton (2012); Boddy (2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2010, 2011); Sutton (2007, 2011) and O'Boyle, *et al* (2011) have shown, is all too common in capital managed firms, adversely impacting individuals, the organisation itself and more broadly as social costs in the form of environmental damage, consumer harms, unnecessary layoffs and increased taxation burdens.

Cooperatives are a more sustainable form of business (Bibby, 2014) and are able to play a decisive role in sustainable rural development (Ovcharenko *et al*, 2022; Dana *et al*, 2023), providing sustainable and inclusive growth (Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016). Cooperatives work in all 17 domains of the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) (ILO, ICA, 2015). Among many actors, including the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the International Co-operative Alliance, there is a widely held consensus that “the cooperative enterprise is the type of organization that best meets all dimensions of reducing poverty and exclusion” (ILO, ICA, 2015). More than 15 papers to the expert group meeting on the 2030 *United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development* addressed the role that cooperatives can play in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and as a result, the 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* recognized the contributions of cooperatives and called on them to work together with other sectors of the international community towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals (*United Nations*, 2015).

Though Cooperatives differ in their positive impacts, they are at the heart of the Economy for the Common Good (ECG) model of Social Transformation, “when their purpose is to transform the existing economic relations and break the existing distribution channels (or ownership structures) that cause negative externalities, social injustice and unethical practices. These are the proactive cooperatives” (Novkovic, 2019). However, Cooperatives are inherently transformative due to their radical structures and purpose (Novković & Šimleša, 2023a).

In Capital Owned Firms, not all costs of production are captured in the price of the good or service (Helbling, 2023). Many costs are therefore not paid for by the direct consumers or producers, but are ‘externalised’ onto third parties. Such items are referred to as demerit goods and services. Environmental harms are a prime example of this. It can be argued that the main *raison d’être* of Cooperatives is to create organisations which will ‘internalize the externalities’ (Hjerpe, 1997).

There is clear evidence of Cooperatives prioritising ethical practice (Stearse *et al*, 2015). Cooperatives have played an important role in delivering public goods, merit

goods and ethical goods and services (Spear & Thomas, 1997:466). Social Funds such as *Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM)* are particularly committed to the kinds of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) values that are represented and furthered, by Cooperatives (*NBIM*, 2023a, b, c), for example, *NBIM* stands opposed to companies that “fail to set a net zero emissions target, overpay their top leaders, or do not have sufficiently diverse boards.” (Wigglesworth, 2022) and they place investment embargoes on firms that produce demerit goods such as nuclear arms and cluster bombs (2023c).

The paradoxical term ‘resource curse’ has been coined to describe “the adverse effects of a country's natural resource wealth on its economic, social, or political well-being” (Ross, 2015). The democratic methods of Cooperatives, operating as Sovereign Wealth funds provide an obvious successful means of preventing the curse. The Alaskan and Norwegian experiences provide spectacularly successful examples (Wigglesworth, 2022; *NBIM*, 2023b; Bruenig, M. 2018b). Cornée, Kalmi & Szafarz (2015) found that asset growth rates are significantly higher in Social Enterprises. It could be argued that they could be made even more successful if the democratic quotient was increased.

A report commissioned by *Cooperatives UK* found that:

- “Worker co-operatives are larger than conventional businesses and not necessarily less capital intensive
- Worker co-operatives survive at least as long as other businesses and have more stable employment
- Worker cooperatives are more productive than conventional businesses, with staff working “better and smarter” and production organised more efficiently
- Worker co-operatives retain a larger share of their profits than other business models
- Executive and non-executive pay differentials are much narrower in worker co-operatives than other firms” (Perotin, 2018).

### **Cooperatives Worldwide: The Numbers**

*United Nations Global Census on Co-operatives* (2014) showed that:

- ‘Overall there are 2.6 Million Cooperatives which have over 1 Billion memberships and clients.
- Their combined asset base is US\$19.6 trillion.
- The global cooperative economy is larger than France’s economy and places right behind Germany’s economy as the 5th largest economic unit if it were a united country.
- Cooperatives employ 12.6 Million Employees, roughly 0.2% of the world’s population (not including data from the 982,400 agricultural cooperatives in China).
- US\$20 Trillion in Cooperative Assets generate US\$3 trillion in Annual Revenue.

- Cooperative economic activity comprises 20% of the Gross Domestic Product in New Zealand, 18% in The Netherlands, 18% in France and 14% in Finland.
- 1 in every 6 people on average in the world has membership, or is a client of a Cooperative.'
- 'Worldwide, cooperatives are the second biggest banking network, serving 870 million people. 45 per cent of their branches are in rural areas, compared with an average of 26 per cent for all banks' (Birchall, 2013: 49).

### **UK Cooperatives: The Numbers**

- There are 5,450 co-operative enterprises in the UK.
- Turnover of the UK co-operative sector is £33 billion pa.
- These enterprises are owned by 12.8 million members.
- There are more member owners of Co-operatives than individual shareholders investing in the stock market.' (*Cooperatives UK*, 2012)

### **Concepts and Definitions**

The concepts and definitions that are operationalized here, take as their starting point the definitions of the *International Labour Organisation* (ILO), which is a branch of the *United Nations*, and the *International Cooperative Alliance* (ICA). They are then strongly influenced by the work of Albert, *et al.* (2002), Albert (2004), Albert (2021), Albert & Hahnel, (1991), Albert & Hahnel (2017) and Hahnel (2022), and more broadly by other research in the field. Not all firms that are called Cooperatives operating in the world will meet these definitions, but these definitions have been chosen for the Cooperatives that are envisaged in this plan.

#### ***Cooperatives***

In the literature, Cooperatives are also at times referred to as Social Enterprises, or the social economy. Some types of Cooperatives are referred to as Producer Cooperatives, Workers Cooperatives, Member Owned Business, Labour Managed Firms or Labour Owned Firms.

The definition proposed to the *United Nations*, by the *International Cooperative Alliance* (ICA) on 2-4 June, 2021 reads: "The term cooperative means an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (Henry, 2021:3), to be understood as entities based on the cooperative values which the cooperative principles put into practice.

Logue & Yates (2005) state that a combination of employee financial ownership with real participation in decision making is necessary to improve labour productivity and other aspects of business performance. Summers & Hyman (2005: 52) warn that financial participation appears to exert an effect on employee orientations and behaviour, but only if a genuine 'ownership effect' has been established. Logue &



Yates (2005) also argue that the combination of Employee Ownership and participation generates “collateral benefits in terms of social participation and living standards.”

The term “Cooperative” which is used in the literature that is cited, has been defined by authors in diverse ways, however, the Cooperatives which are proposed in the current plan, are firms that are owned and controlled through participatory democracy by the workers that work within them; and/or the consumers that use their products or services; or “universally” by all the citizens within a nation. The definition of Cooperatives, and the values and principles of the ILO/ICA, are taken as a basis for the current proposal, with the following emphasis and refinements:

- Governance of the Cooperatives will be through Participatory Democracy, with voting weight proportional to the impact of the decision.
- Participatory Democracy will apply at all levels of the organisation and will prioritise Participatory Budgeting.
- Work designs will endow Balanced Job Complexes.
- Economic reward will be commensurate with sacrifice or effort, as assessed by 360 degree peer review.

### ***Ownership***

Ownership is defined here as ‘the possession of two rights: the right to control the firm and the right to appropriate the firm's net earnings’ (Hansmann, 1990b: 1156).

### ***Economic Democracy***

Economic Democracy is defined here as Participatory Democracy in the economic sphere, that is, in spaces where the production of goods and services, involving more than one person, takes place.

### ***Participatory Democracy***

The terms Participatory Democracy, Economic Democracy and Self-Management are often used interchangeably in the broader literature in the field.

One of the early classic studies on participation established the concept of ‘Total Participation Management,’ (Coch & French, 1948), anything less was thought to be ineffective in producing substantial changes in productivity. This particular study was criticised on methodological grounds by Gardner (1977), but a large body of work validating the thesis and operationalizing the theory has been produced, supporting the view that in order to increase organizational effectiveness, an entire set of psychological and structural conditions must be satisfied (Novković, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021; Novkovic & Miner, 2015; Novković, Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2010; Novković, Miner, McMahan, 2023, 2023b; Novković, Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2012; Novković & Šimleša, 2023; Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2012; Novković, Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2012; Stocki, Prokopowicz & Zmuda, 2010; Stocki, Prokopowicz & Novkovic, 2012 and; Mika, Stocki, & Božek, 2013; Sandstrom *et al*, 2014). Research by (Park, 2012) also counsels that in order to maximise performance, participation should include both decision making and financial rewards.

Thus, the statement by The *International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)* (2021), that “participation must permeate all organizational and operational aspects of cooperatives”, is strongly evidence based. They also counsel that “new secure techniques, digital platforms etc., must be used to allow for a more effective participation and debates and vote taking might be replaced with consensus finding through deliberation, which might be a more adequate mode in a people-centered organization.” (Henry, 2021).

On what basis is the legitimacy of participation in decision making established? Or to phrase the question somewhat differently, who has standing to legitimately participate in decisions? In terms of furthering economic justice, it is important that the right to participate in decision making is spread as broadly as possible, on the other hand, not so broadly that one person's decision making could be obviated by another person who may not be as affected by the decision. Also, there are some practicalities involved in ensuring that democracy does not become discredited by perceptions that it could undermine productivity. For these reasons, the proposal by Albert, *et al.* (2002), Albert (2004), Albert (2021), Albert & Hahnel, (1991), Albert & Hahnel (2017) and Hahnel (2022) seems eminently practical. Therefore in accordance with this counsel, Participatory Democracy is defined here as a system of governance in the firm or entity, in which individual decision making power is proportion to the degree one is affected by a decision.

### ***Qualifiers***

In a democracy which seeks to meet technocratic and or meritocratic aims, requirements for credentials can be placed on either voters or on candidates for election. These credentials are termed qualifiers. They may take the form of educational achievements, types of experience, proof of knowledge or demonstrated skills. In this plan, the placement of relevant qualifiers on candidates for election rather than on voters is supported. So long as there is equality of opportunity to obtain qualifiers, they are not intrinsically anti democratic.

### ***Mutualization***

Mutualization is a set of processes which transforms an organisation into a Cooperative. It is a legal and social transformation of the organisation and in this plan, it involves establishing all the features of Participatory Democracy, Economic justice and Balanced Job Complexes that are intrinsic to the plan.

### ***Universal membership of a Cooperative***

This means membership of a cooperative by all citizens of a country.

### ***Balanced Job Complexes***

These are work designs in which the activities are balanced for empowerment, competency development and desirability (Albert, *et al.* 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022). Balanced Job Complexes are seen as essential, for two reasons. First, just as education is essential for political democracy to function effectively, Balanced Job Complexes are prerequisite if all workers are to gain the necessary knowledge, skills development and empowerment to meaningfully participate in Economic Democracy. Second, equity in the distribution of desirable, competency developing and empowering activities is an essential part of economic justice.

### ***Economic Justice***

Economic justice is fair reward for effort (Sandstrom, 2014) assessed through 360° peer review. It occurs on at least three levels in Cooperatives:

- Economic reward is commensurate with sacrifice, or effort. Remuneration for work is assessed according to effort as judged by other workers in the firm who are in the position to make the relevant observations.
- Work activities are distributed according to Balanced Job Complexes, so that all workers have a similarly rewarding allocation of desirable, competency developing and empowering activities.
- The price that consumers pay to purchase goods or services produced by the Cooperative is determined democratically by the Cooperative.

### **Abbreviations**

LMFs are Labour Managed Firms. KMFs are Capital Managed Firms.

## **The Plan**

### **What is to be Done?**

The plan benefits from critiques of the current charity model (Brecher, 2017; Editors, 2019; Gridharadas, 2019; Reich, 2020a). Most notably, Anand Giridharadas in *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, argues that philanthropy tends to serve the interests of the donors rather than the recipients. It is often used by the wealthy to avoid paying their fair share of taxes and to maintain their power and privilege. It is used to co-opt and silence dissent, and to promote a false narrative of progress. He cites the accurate Bahá'í perception that “social change is not a project that one group carries out for the benefit of another.”

Citing research by Isham *et al* (1995), Hjerppe (1997) reports that “An increasing number of development practitioners agree that the participation of the intended beneficiaries improves project performance” (Isham, Narayan and Pritchett, 1995). Participatory governance improves service provision, enhances decision-making, and assists organisations to achieve their objectives (Wellens & Jegers, 2011). The effects of participatory democracy on productivity, commitment and wellbeing are now well documented (Bartling, Fehr & Herz, 2014; Bó, Foster & Putterman, 2010).

Therefore the plan is to establish a strategic organisation that will transfer organisations from private or public ownership into cooperatives which would be democratically run by workers, consumers, service users or through universal membership. The beneficiaries rather than the donors will decide for themselves how their needs will best be met. What makes this proposal unique, is that donations would be in the form of organisations, to be transferred into cooperatives. Hence the strategic organisation will be termed *Don't Give Them Bread*, because donors will be donating the entire bakery.

## **Aims**

It is essential that we establish a strategic organisation to accelerate our ability to address serious social problems and produce positive social impacts by developing organisations that:

- make participatory democratic decisions involving workers, consumers, service users or universal decision making, concerning what is to be produced, how it is to be produced and how the produce is to be distributed.
- can better achieve pro social outcomes.
- provide for more fulfilling work experiences for workers and higher quality goods and services for consumers.

## **Objectives**

- To develop a strategic organisation which will facilitate the transitioning of public and private entities into Workers and/or Consumers Cooperatives or into cooperatives with ‘universal membership’.
- To promote the practical experience of Economic Democracy by structuring a democratic mechanism into the heart of economic activity, to produce economic outcomes that more closely align with the needs of people and the planet.
- To eliminate alienation in the workplace by implementing work designs which provide Balanced Job Complexes, thereby ensuring that all roles equitably empower workers to make significant decisions and foster the development of a wide range of competencies, at different levels of complexity and desirability (Albert, *et al.* 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022).

## **Key Principles of Economic Democracy**

- If we truly want to enhance lives, we must improve the opportunities available to individuals.
- The wellbeing of individuals is immensely affected by context, and particularly by the context in which they spend their working lives (Martela, & Pessi, 2018).
- Work design has a powerful influence on motivation and well-being (Gagné, & Panaccio, 2014; Mika, Stocki & Božek, 2013; Pink, 2010; Ryan, & Deci, 2000; Deci *et al.*, 2001).
- Democracy is an essential component of human needs, particularly in the economic sector, because it is the most effective means of ensuring that human needs are met.
- Economic Democracy must be established as the central organizing principle of society, forming a secure foundation for political democracy.

- True democratic sovereignty resides in production and consumption.
- Involving people in decision-making processes is the most effective way to safeguard their interests. Without democracy, exploitation becomes inevitable (Albert, *et al.* 2002).
- Production not only shapes goods, but also moulds human nature (Graeber, 2006).
- The most potent interventions are at the level of production, not at the level of distribution (Wolff, 2012; Rawles in O’Neil, 2008, 2022). If we do not produce appropriate goods and services, it makes little sense to discuss distribution, equal or otherwise.
- Real fulfilment comes from creation, not from consumption (Pink, 2010; Martela & Pessi, 2018; Autin et al, 2022; Martela, Ryan & Steger, 2017; Martela & Pessi, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008).
- It is crucial that we urgently place very significant means of production under democratic control to prevent, if possible, a situation where technological advancements surpass human oversight (Ludik, 2021). This is the imminent crisis posed by Artificial Intelligence.
- Participatory democracy should prioritise participatory budgeting within the organisations and should campaign for its adoption in the regulatory and governmental context.
- All technological and procedural means necessary should be applied to ensure electoral integrity in all elections (Henry, 2021; Dragonchain 2020).
- Work design should prioritise job enrichment, competency development and Economic Democracy by the inclusion into each role of a wide diversity of tasks and decisions, at differing levels of complexity, desirability and potential for empowerment, creating Balanced Job Complexes (Albert, *et al.* 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022).
- Work remuneration should be assessed through 360° peer review of work contribution (Albert, *et al.* 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022).
- As assessed through skills audits, Cooperatives should provide education and training to their members, linked to participatory decision making and to the technical-economic skills required to perform the work of the organisation (*International Cooperative Alliance*, 2015).

- Economic Democracy is the most powerful tool to address broad-based social issues.
- The way to return governments to democracy, is to establish democracy within the organisations that influence and control governments.
- Workers ownership with “real participation in decision making” are the two critical components with which to unleash enhanced productivity (Logue & Yates, 2005).
- Each of us benefits, when all of us benefit (Cumbers, 2018; Cumbers *et al*, 2020, 2023; UK Research and Innovation, 2018).
- Those who are most affected by the decision, should have a greater influence on the decision (Albert *et al* 2002).

## **The Scope**

The scope of the project is international, commencing in at least three major anglophone countries, the first of which will be The United Kingdom.

## **Who will benefit?**

The workers, consumers, service users or universal members who will become the owners of the organisations formed by DGTB will benefit from the project, economically and socially. They will participate in an exciting ground-breaking social experiment that fundamentally changes the way we organise our economic activity, involving decisions about how we determine what products and services we produce, how we produce them and how they are distributed.

The project is committed to so much more than the reduction of economic deprivation and inequality. In connecting production decisions with human needs, consumers, producers and others, benefit from the democratic input. Consumer participants gain input that can steer production decisions into the types and qualities of products or services, more in the direction of their requirements. Worker participants gain meaningful rewarding work, that is subject to their own democratic control. Universal members are able to influence decisions in ways that ensure more socially useful goods and services are provided, and negative externalities minimised.

Overall, because people are more able to meet their own needs, their dependence on state services is reduced and their potential to contribute socially is increased. The fiscal benefits therefore extend beyond the range of the immediate participants and accrue to all taxpayers.

Cooperatives have a good record in reducing the negative, and increasing the positive, externalities that follow from business decisions. When compared with Capital Owned firms, they are less likely to be limited to the singular objective of profit maximisation and are more likely to achieve positive social outcomes such as reduced unemployment, better material reward for workers, subsidisation of pro social production and less harmful environmental impacts (United Nations, 2014; Novković, Prokopowicz & Stocki, 2012). Research for the OECD found that “the social

economy plays a growing role in OECD countries in tackling the problems of socio-economic exclusion and poverty and in fostering active citizenship and solidarity together with democratic participation”; that it has the potential to contribute to sustainable development and more resilient and better performing economies; and that “social entrepreneurship is a key component of any strategy aimed at making our societies more entrepreneurial, innovative and competitive.” (Arzeni, 2007:4).

Donors benefit by finding a fitting legacy for the organisations that they have developed. Donors’ succession planning achieves the highest level of meaningfulness, because entrepreneurs have the satisfaction of knowing that their life’s work is being given to the best hands which can possibly receive the gift. The gift will be cared for by the best knowledge that consensual action is capable of producing and therefore the gift will benefit humanity to the greatest possible extent.

Most importantly, this project is situated not only in changing the lives of its immediate participants but within the larger scale of developing organisations which can buttress the social organisation of democracy itself. The project focuses on developing the social architecture which extensive research has shown provides the basis of human happiness and fulfilment (Pink, 2010; Stewart, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci, *et al* 2008) and indeed, provides the basis for human survival (Harari, 2016, 2018, 2022).

## **Structure**

One of the following could be selected as an appropriate structure of governance for the organisation: Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Community Interest Company, Community Benefit Society, Cooperative Society, Friendly Society.

Cooperatives UK (2020) provides model rules for: Consortium Co-operative Society Model, Consortia Co-operative Company Limited by Guarantee Model, Multi-stakeholder Co-operative Society Model, Multi-stakeholder Co-operative Company Limited by Guarantee, Worker Co-operative Society Model, Worker Co-operative Company Limited by Guarantee, Worker Co-operative Company Limited by Shares Model, Community Benefit Society Model, Charitable Community Benefit Society Model, and the Co-operative Community Interest Company Limited by Shares Model.

The British government has produced Guidance on how to implement Employee Ownership and has provided model Articles of Incorporation for Employee Owned firms (*Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*, 2013). The *Democracy at Work Institute* (2018) has produced, *A Small Business Toolkit for Transitioning to Employee Ownership*.

The new model rules for legal entities provide templates “in reframing business norms so that corporate citizenship either limits or replaces property rights as the basis of membership. Philosophically this represents a shift away from financial capital as primary, to financial capital as only one form of investment. The recognition of customers, producers and employees as investors (through their trading, producing and labour contributions) is a paradigm shift in business thinking” (Ridley-Duff, 2012: 115).

In Wales, the legal framework is currently in flux as the *Law Commission* has been invited by the Treasury “to undertake two projects to review the legal frameworks governing co-operatives and community benefit societies, and friendly societies. The Commission has been asked to consider whether the current statute law which governs these organisations is fitting to their nature and needs, and whether the current form of regulation is proportionate (*Law Commission, 2023*).

Depending on the structure taken by DGTB, it may be able to benefit from the recent UK legislation protecting Cooperatives against predatory asset appropriation and degeneration away from their objectives. Under the *Co-operatives, Mutuals and Friendly Societies Act, 2023*, DGBT may be able to adopt an “asset lock” to ensure that resources assembled for the greater good, are protected, and the mutual model preserved into the future.

Though committed to democracy, DGTB can embed technocratic knowledge into its organisational structure by forming a Board in which individuals are qualified in the specific skills and expertise required by the organisations’ portfolios. It is anticipated that there will be no distinction between the Board and the executive. All members of the Board will play an active role in the organisations’ work.

The role of forming the strategic organisation will be undertaken by Dr Lynne Wrennall, who will be the founding Managing Director and who will be responsible for the continuing establishment of the strategic organisation.

All other Directors will be an Executive Director of a specific portfolio and the Board as a totality will have oversight of all the portfolios. Each portfolio will petition the Board for resources. Selection of Directors will be on the basis of the skills set and expertise that each brings to contribute to the essential portfolios of the organisation.

Four Directors for each portfolio would probably be an ideal number, so that the role would not be onerous for Directors who would presumably have large responsibilities in other areas, yet it would be uncrowded enough so that lines of responsibility and accountability could be cleanly drawn.

***The portfolios are:***

1. Research and Development to support the work of *DGTB* and liaison with Local, National and International governments and third sector organisations, including Grant seeking; lobbying for contextual benefits and concessions; negotiating with government on offering welfare beneficiaries the opportunity to convert their welfare benefits into positions in the Cooperatives along the lines of the Capitalising of Unemployment Benefit schemes in Italy, Belgium and Spain; with other populations who may be recruited as members of the cooperatives; to elicit taxation benefits, subsidies and other forms of support.
2. Publicity and Marketing for the Recruitment and Intake of organisations for transitioning to Cooperatives.
3. Restructuring of organisations into a cooperative format.
4. Support, Mentoring, training and advisement for the new Cooperatives.



### ***The Requisite Skills and Expertise to Contribute to the Portfolios***

Specific skills include:

Commercial/ Organisational Law.

Sociology of work and organisations.

Support for Startups/ Entrepreneurship.

Business as philanthropy.

Work Design.

Operations Management.

Building an enlightened Corporate Culture.

Sales and Marketing.

Accounting.

Total Quality Improvement.

Building Workers/ Consumer Cooperatives.

The practical structures of Participatory and Economic Democracy.

Networking and Partnerships.

Social Capital enterprise.

Grant Writing and fundraising.

Political and governmental liaison.

Additionally, all Board members need to have generic People Management skills in the areas of emotional intelligence, communication, empathy, growth mindset, motivation, creativity, initiative, mentoring, negotiation, conflict resolution, giving feedback and self-awareness.

Multilingual communication would also be valued.

### **The Challenges allegedly faced by Cooperatives and how they might be addressed**

The productivity of Labour Managed Firms compared to Capital Managed Firms has been extensively studied in the literature. However, many studies have examined firms which are only partially labour controlled, making the isolating of variables extremely difficult. The level and extent of labour control, and especially, in relation to the level and extent of remuneration and other rewards flowing to labour, need to be accounted into the analysis as well as a consideration of why the schemes were introduced. Insofar as they are lacking this minimal level of complexity they are considered “flawed” (Ben-Ner, & Jones, 1995). Moreover, the detail of the democratic structures is often also severely lacking, not distinguishing between the tokenism of merely electing a member of the Board of Directors, and genuine forms of empowerment through enlightened work designs and participatory democracy.

Conte & Tannenbaum (1978) ask of Employee-owned Companies, ‘Is the Difference Measurable?’ They found tentatively that Workers ownership was associated with a more positive attitude towards work. The Employee Owned companies that were studied appeared to be more profitable than Capital Owned firms, but to have an impact on profitability, the worker's stake needed to be considerable. The evidence base on Cooperatives and productivity that was subsequently produced tended to cohere around Logue & Yates’ (2005) finding that Employee Ownership and real participation in decision making are both necessary to substantially increase productivity. Therefore, the challenge is in ensuring that the quotient and detail of participatory democracy is sufficiently high to release people's potential.

Two early and somewhat similar critiques of democratic firms arising from Neoclassical economics were that, according to the Ward–Domar–Vanek model, democratic firms are alleged to suffer from the ‘perverse supply response,’ and according to the Furubotin- Pejovich effect, a branch of the ‘under-investment thesis,’ ‘horizon effects’ arise. The first alleges that Members will reduce their number so that the average revenue of each will be increased even though this may be disadvantageous to the firm. The second alleges that older members will be reluctant to invest in capital for the firm because for them, it will be an expense that they will not have the time to either benefit from, or to depreciate.

A study of self managing firms in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 80s by Prasnikar, Svejnar, Mihaljek & Prasnikar (1994) found no evidence of the sort of perverse economic behaviour predicted by the Ward–Domar–Vanek model. The Sertel-Dow Model has also thoroughly dispatched the Ward–Domar–Vanek model, on theoretical, econometric and substantial empirical grounds (Dow, 1986, 2003, 2012; Sertel, 1982; 1986, 1987; Neary, 1988; and Putterman, 2008).

The under-investment thesis has been thoroughly undercut in the literature for example by Maietta & Sena (2008) and McCain (1977). Fakhfakh, Pérotin & Gago, (2009) found that “contrary to received wisdom, descriptive statistics indicate that workers’ cooperatives are not always smaller or less capitalized than conventional firms and grow at least as fast as conventional firms” in all the industries they studied. A Systematic Review of the literature by Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, (2021: 969-970) showed that despite earlier expectations from Neoclassicism, nowadays, based on empirical studies into efficiency, “there is no evidence to support the claim” that Investor Owned Firms are more efficient than Cooperative enterprises.

Novković (2012:296-7) has critiqued the Neoclassical theory of Cooperatives as “inadequate at best over the last fifty years.” The “assumed self-centered behaviour of co-op members lead to a misspecification of the model and misguided policy proposals to correct presumed inefficiencies.” These economic models were dealing with pecuniary incentives based on assumptions of egoistic behaviour, and did not recognise that Co-operatives balanced their economic and social goals.

The critiques of Cooperatives by the Neoclassical model of economics obviously lack overall validity. Nevertheless, there is a reasonable concern that situations may arise where a minority of the Cooperative's owners could allegedly benefit themselves at the expense of the interests of all the other owners and sacrifice the Cooperatives’ broader social objectives. This could particularly occur where current owners could enrich themselves at the cost of future owners. It is somewhat similar to the phenomenon of ‘state capture’ that occurs in relation to governmental entities described by Whitehouse (2017) and Monbiot (2001) and ‘Predatory Value Extraction’ that dis-enriches capital controlled firms (Lazonick & Jang-Sup, 2020; Koudehia & Esfahanian, 2022). However, these are problems which could arise with any type of organisation, as Ellerman (2020) has pointed out. Contrary to the Neoclassical view that democratic organisations are uniquely vulnerable to capture and other predatory behaviours, it is likely that democratic organisations would be better at protecting themselves against exploitation than would authoritarian firms, because the authoritarians would be perfectly placed to make decisions in their own interests and impose them upon the organisation. Ellerman (2020) outlines several

proposals which can better protect cooperatives, many of which lean in the direction of increasing democracy, such as rank choice voting, which would make it harder for a minority to dominate everyone else. It can logically be asserted that the more democratic the organisation, the better protected it will be against exploitative behaviours. Proportional representation, secret ballots, fair and equal access to voting, equal distribution of resources for campaigning, transparency and authenticity in voting through blockchain (Dragonchain 2020) can all contribute to election integrity, thereby making capture more difficult.

Recent legislative changes in the UK have also provided better protections for Cooperatives against appropriation of the society's assets for purposes that are not in accordance with their objectives. Under the *Co-operatives, Mutuals and Friendly Societies Act, 2023*, the Treasury may make regulations allowing Cooperatives to set up an 'asset lock' which ensures that their collective resources, in many cases built up over many generations and several centuries by members who sought the greater good in perpetuity, are not appropriated by those who may be motivated by the desire for short term personal gain.

Related to the expectation that democratic firms suffer from the 'perverse supply response', implicit in the Ward–Domar–Vanek model, the belief arose that “a wider extension of employee-managed firms in Western market economies is limited by three financially related internal obstacles”, namely that employees are: “relatively poor, risk-averse and opportunistic.” (Engberg, 1990). Because the members are likely to be less wealthy than other capital owners, it is not unreasonable to think that they may be risk averse. However, since there are likely to be larger numbers of workers or consumers invested in a Cooperative, than there would be capital investors in a Capital Owned Firm, it is likely that the risk per person in a Cooperative is far less than in a Capital Owned Firm. Also, confidence can be built by training and by building a strong workplace culture.

It was a common refrain in the earlier literature that Cooperatives may be hampered by small size, particularly since this makes it more difficult to defray risk through diversification. Because in LMF's capital has not been pre supplied, it is not part of the inherent structure of the firm. Capital may be more difficult to obtain, and more expensive. Difficulties in gaining access to capital are often cited in the literature. “Findings include evidence that cooperatives have a relatively inelastic short-run supply and a higher marginal cost of capital, despite fully transferable property rights.” (Berman & Berman, 1989).

However, over time as more Cooperatives develop, they are able to amalgamate and thus achieve economies of scale (Pokharel, *et al*, 2020). Dell (2018) has also contested the common allegations that Labour Managed Firms tend to be smaller and less capitalised. Similarly, these allegations are refuted by Perotin (2018). Hillary (2006) emphasises the importance of networks among cooperatives to facilitate their sustainability. Over the last few decades since the Neoclassical critiques of cooperatives emerged, considerable governmental support has developed across the political spectrum (Chaves Avila & Luis Monzón, 2018; Hillard & Coates, 1991:138-9; *The Nuttal Review*, 2012; All Party Parliamentary Group on Employee Ownership, 2011). To the extent that Cooperatives face challenges in gaining capital, difficulties are being diminished by the provision of governmental grants and loans.

Also significant is the growth of the social banking sector which has specialist knowledge on how to financially support Cooperatives (Cornée, Jegers, & Szafarz, 2022; Cornée, Kalmi & Szafarz, 2015a, 2015b; 2022; Ferri, Kalmi & Kerola, 2014) because many Social Banks are Cooperatives themselves. Furthermore there is widespread support for the development of Sovereign Wealth Funds or Social Investment Funds, which “attempt to build an institution for collective wealth and control over investment”, (Parker, 2018; Roberts & Lawrence, 2018; Hanson & Lonergan, 2017; Thomas, 2022), some of which have become immensely wealthy and powerful. The Norwegian fund, *Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM)*, is worth \$1.3 trillion (Wigglesworth, 2022) and owns an average of 1.5% of all listed firms on the planet (NBIM, 2023a, b).

Three highly innovative means of financing for funds have been outlined in Lansley, McCann & Schifferes (2018) and Srnicek & Berry (2018). Currently, Sovereign Wealth Funds operating in the UK, enjoy immunity of corporate taxes on property and businesses (Parker & McDougall, 2023). Although Britain does not have its own Sovereign Wealth Fund yet, Cooperatives operating in Britain can avail themselves of other funds. These funds are now quite plentiful and it seems likely, especially with the imminence of AI, that they will become even more widespread, because they are seen as the basis for a Universal Basic Income that may be necessitated by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The effective operation of Cooperatives also faces obstacles such as the lack of a common culture, decision-making norms, and a proper mix of skills. The development of legal, organizational, and financial expertise has historically lagged behind that of Capital Owned firms, but this gap is narrowing as specialized expertise grows (Ridley-Duff, 2012), particularly through international entities, such as the *International Labour Organisation* and the *United Nations* (Henrÿ, 2021). At the national level, significant governmental support has been developing, particularly in Europe (Chaves Avila & Luis Monzón, 2018; Benstead & Heneghan, 2022). The British government has produced Guidance on how to implement Employee Ownership and has provided model Articles of Incorporation for Employee Owned firms (*Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*, 2013). The *Democracy at Work institute* (2018) has produced, *A Small Business Toolkit for Transitioning to Employee Ownership*.

Macro culture has tended to place less confidence in Cooperatives than in Capital Owned Enterprises, although this is also something that is being addressed over time. The *International Year of Cooperatives* declared by the United Nations in 2012 was the type of initiative that can be helpful.

Michels’ ‘Iron law of Oligarchy’ has been refuted and effective ways of preventing the growth of Oligarchy within organisations have been developed (Diefenbach, 2018). These are based on deconstructing specialised divisions of labour. Balanced Job Complexes which are work designs which include a roughly equal amount of desirable, developmental and empowering tasks within all jobs, that have been built into the plan outlined in this paper are designed to prevent the re-emergence of Oligarchy in Cooperatives.

Motivation is another concern that has been raised in the literature, with arguments made that equal pay dulls incentives. Even in Cooperatives, where remuneration to workers is commensurate with effort/ability, if it arises that the median workers' output is less than the mean, Cooperatives may vote in a redistributive schedule and this is said to result in a dulling of incentives (Kremer, 1997). However, like many critiques of incentives in worker cooperatives, the assertion rests on outdated ideas about motivation and of what drives engagement. It is now well established that once basic needs are met, the three elements of true motivation are autonomy, mastery, and purpose (Pink, 2010; Autin, et al, 2022). Citing Gagné & Deci (2005), the *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development* (CIPD) (2023) states that "One of the most established influences on motivation is autonomy or self-determination – that is, being empowered to shape one's job makes it more meaningful and enjoyable." They also cite the *CIPD Good Work Index* finding that "job complexity (how stimulating, interesting and novel one's work is) is most closely related to enthusiasm and effort."

A related concern is raised by Burdin (2016), which claims that since worker-managed firms have a more compressed compensation structure than conventional firms, high-ability members are more likely than other members to leave. As with the previous challenge, the application of more contemporary awareness of motivation and engagement, is able to ensure that good staff are retained. *Employee Ownership Wales* (2023) reports that Cooperatives in the UK are better able to attract and retain "quality staff" than other organisations.

The 'free rider' or 'shirking' problem has been much discussed in the literature. However, it seems likely that this also could occur in any type of organisation, but is less likely to occur where workers have chosen for themselves, the production, the working conditions and the type of work that they will undertake. Alchian & Demsetz (1972), argue that provision of ownership rights to workers engenders work effort and peer pressure by aligning employee and owner interests. Hanson Schlachter & Prushinskaya (2021) found that, "Workplace democracy benefits firms in terms of recruitment, retention, and reduced shirking."

Furthermore, the scale on which shirking could harm Cooperatives is infinitesimal when compared to the scale of predatory value extraction that has dis-enriched Capital Controlled firms (Lazonick & Jang-Sup, 2020; Koudehia & Esfahanian, 2022). In the plan proposed here, any propensity for the 'free rider' problem to develop is undercut by the initiatives proposed by Albert, *et al.* (2002), Albert (2004), Albert (2021), Albert & Hahnel, (1991), Albert & Hahnel (2017) and Hahnel (2022) including the use of Balanced Job Complexes, which ensures that all jobs have a roughly equal amount of desirable, developmental and empowering tasks within them, and remuneration on the basis of effort or sacrifice, assessed through 360° peer review.

Although the impact on workers of Cooperatives "is generally positive, mostly because of the establishment of democratic control, better working conditions and job security," the benefits may be limited "where social inequalities that disadvantage women and people of color are replicated in the cooperative", and by the external "logic of capitalist production for exchange." (Kaswan, 2019). The findings on inequality in Cooperatives along the lines of gender, ethnicity and disability have generally been promising (Spear & Thomas, 1997:466; Mukolo, Brisco & Salim

2006), but the first sector wide study of employee owned organisations in the United States (Reibstein & Hanson Schlachter, 2023), produced some disappointing results.

Though the study found “no evidence of wage gaps by gender, race or immigration status within worker cooperatives, with job type, tenure and worker ownership status instead explaining within-firm variation in pay”, it did document, “sector-wide disparities in material and non-material outcomes by gender, race and immigration status, reflecting differences in individual-level human capital and job characteristics as well as widespread occupational segregation and homophily.” The explanations for the inequalities here, do run along the lines that Kaswan (2019) was concerned about, namely, the likely impact of external socioeconomic structures. However, these types of disparities can be deconstructed.

Protections against inequalities can be provided in the Governing documents for the Cooperative, Codes of Practice, Job Descriptions, policy, training and compliance reporting. There is evidence collated in (Kaswan, 2019:24) that establishing “more egalitarian distributions of income and wealth, intentionally challenging gendered divisions of labor, and establishing distributed decision-making can make a difference” (Meyers 2011; Miller 2012; Sobering 2016). Specifically, the implementation of Balanced Job Complexes and remuneration for effort (Albert, *et al.* 2002; Albert, 2004; Albert, 2021; Albert & Hahnel, 1991; Albert & Hahnel, 2017; and Hahnel, 2022) promoted in this plan, are expected to be decisive.

The extent to which the economic context is supportive, neutral or obstructive to the work of the Cooperative, is the subject of political analysis in the literature. Whether Cooperatives would function best in a market, planned or networked economy is open to much debate (Dow, 2012; Drèze, 1993; Ivanovski, 2012; Bruenig, M. 2018; Gunn, 2000; Coutinho, 2016), however the position that is taken here, is that for now, Cooperatives can support themselves through their own networks, social funds and social banking and that state support through grants, tax incentives and other programmes can be beneficial.

Nevertheless, (Kaswan, 2019) has asserted further, that the interests of workers in Worker Cooperatives and the wider interests of the community, cannot be fully aligned, “as long as the two essential economic functions of production and consumption continue to be analytically separated, no true alignment of interests—real happiness—can be assured.” *Quid Remedium?* At least two solutions are available. In one, Cooperatives are composed of workers and consumers whose shared votes in their totalities, are equal to one another, tempered by the principle promoted by Albert & Hahnel (2002:8) that “decision-making power should be in proportion to the degree one is affected by a decision.” In the other, there is “a participatory planning procedure in which councils and federations of workers and consumers propose and revise their own activities under rules designed to guarantee outcomes that are both efficient and equitable.” (Albert & Hahnel, 2002:8). The remedy proposed in this plan, is for the former to apply in the short run, working towards a basis for building the latter in the long run.

When Workers Cooperatives fail, it can be due to the type of factors that would destroy any organisation, such as under-capitalization, excessive costs, inadequate marketing, poor customer service and so on, but failure can be due to problems

specific to Worker Cooperatives for example, if the Cooperative is very successful, workers may be tempted to sell out their ownership stake, resulting in the organisation reverting to the private Capital Ownership model (Lindenfeld & Wynn, 2022).

Workers Cooperatives allegedly may degenerate to where they are indistinguishable from KMFs, operating merely as profit seeking enterprises (Cheney, 1999; Gutierrez-Johnson, & Whyte William, 1982) and if they are very successful, they can demutualise entirely. There is a significant body of literature challenging the degeneration thesis, for example an empirical study by Langmead (2017) supported previous empirical literature which had argued “that ongoing processes of individual-collective alignment, understood as central to the practice of democracy, help cooperatives to: balance varying and conflicting needs and aims; challenge the assumption underpinning the degeneration thesis; and transform degenerative “risks” into creative and productive spaces where new meanings and practices can be formed.” Empirical work by Dean (2019) also produced evidence that was contrary to the thesis.

Cooperatives may have less political power than large Capital Owned firms. Debate exists on whether this can be resolved by forming Multistakeholder Cooperatives which include Capital Owned Firms, as proposed by Spear, Cornforth & Aiken (2009:256). Some negative experience with this model has led critics to propose multi stakeholder cooperatives that do not include large capital only stakeholders (*MSIntegrity* 2023a, b). ‘Co-creating’ involving consumer cooperatives and Capital Managed Firms may lead to co-option rather than the genuine empowerment of the consumer cooperative (Bonsu & Darmody, 2008) and single stake cooperatives have been thought to be at risk of degenerating into the sort of short sighted rentierism that characterises Capital Owned Firms. Ajates (2021) has outlined a variety of tactics that may prevent co-option, such as weighted voting and organising conviviality events. Novkovic (2020) however, has argued for multi stakeholder firms involving workers, the precariat, consumers and other groups with whom interests are shared and alliances may be formed. In the *FairShares* model, proponents advocate issuing a separate class of shares depending on membership type (Riddley-Duff, 2014). This may be one of those matters that needs to be resolved on a case by case basis.

Decisions around the balancing of social and financial goals can be difficult and may lead to conflict (Spear, Cornforth & Aiken, 2009:258). To some extent, this is perhaps inevitable in Cooperatives that are working effectively in terms of their objectives. The solution is to ensure that members are well trained in negotiation, de-escalation and conflict resolution and prioritise the forming of consensus.

Ensuring that the firm’s democracy remains vibrant and does not degenerate into Oligarchy is a particularly serious challenge which goes to the heart of what it means to be a Cooperative (Spear, Cornforth & Aiken, 2009:256). The refinements developed by Albert, *et al.* (2002), Albert (2004), Albert (2021), Albert & Hahnel, (1991), Albert & Hahnel (2017) and Hahnel (2022) including the use of Balanced Job Complexes, which ensure that all jobs have a roughly equal amount of desirable, developmental and empowering tasks within them, were developed precisely to address this issue and therefore are considered critical to the plan proposed here. The need for the full bevy of measures guaranteeing electoral integrity is relevant here.

Also, the importance of developing a joyful work environment cannot be underestimated in building member engagement.

A further issue concerns the baseline organisation that is selected for mutualization, not only may this factor bias research, suggesting a necessary caution in reviewing research findings, but also there is the concern that the wrong types of organisations might be selected. This is not to say that firms that are failing in one way or another cannot be made productive if changed into cooperative ownership, it is however to acknowledge the complexities that may accompany the diversity of organisations that may be considered for mutualization.

Because of the dependence of some Cooperatives on funding from Sovereign Wealth Funds and given the vast amounts of wealth that these funds administer, it is particularly important that they are governed meticulously by principles and procedures that are in accordance with Participatory Democracy (Cummine, 2016). Otherwise they are at risk of falling prey to the rentierism and Predatory Value Extraction that befalls Capital Managed Firms (Okpanachi & Tremblay, 2021; Lazonick & Jang-Sup, 2020). The Libyan fund for example, was subject to extensive looting by fraudster Wall St Hedge Fund banksters (Croft, 2023).

In regard to Consumer Cooperatives, it can be difficult to decide who is a consumer. Some potential members may not be interested in being involved. Some claims on membership may be spurious or nefarious. What about people who are too poor to buy necessary products and services, and so would be, but are not yet, consumers? One way around these problems is to make membership universal (Stout, Belinfanti & Gramitto, 2019) and this may be appropriate with Sovereign Wealth Funds that control vast swathes of wealth, but the matter is more difficult for smaller organisations. The options probably vary along a spectrum from completely open and voluntary to restricted by need. The options are however, made more feasible by modern technological democratic tools.

### **Strengthening Prospects and Reducing Risks for the Success of DGTB**

1. The Executive Director model, linked to democratic selection among those who are technocratically qualified, maximises the benefits of democracy and technocracy. Compared to the capital owning model, where Directors are selected based on capital ownership, the model adopted in this plan ensures that the appropriate skill set and expertise is brought into the organisation to the greatest extent possible.
2. Four Executive Directors will be responsible for each portfolio.
3. One portfolio will be dedicated to Research & Development liaison, and to liaison with Local, National and International governments and third sector organisations, covering Grant seeking, lobbying for contextual benefits and concessions, legislative reform, taxation benefits, subsidies and other forms of support.
4. At all times an 'Action Needed' procedure will be in place, so that any person may give feedback to the Public Officer.



5. A Code of Practice will apply to all the Directors and staff.
6. A regime of continuous improvement will apply. All activities, tasks and procedures will be reviewed to see whether they are necessary, and if so, can they be improved upon.
7. A technique called Total Activities Analysis involving a systematic review of the main activities in the organisation, examining who should play what part in carrying them out, will contribute to Quality Assurance (Harris, 1993 in Cornforth, 2004).
8. Elections will simultaneously consist of paper votes and electronic voting using blockchain and any other technological and procedural means available, to ensure electoral integrity (Dragonchain 2020).
9. Fully participatory democratic decision making, which is and of itself, a form of 360 degrees Quality Assurance, will be in place.
10. An asset lock will be constitutionalized in the Articles of Incorporation, preventing predatory value extraction and other forms of ‘degeneration’ away from the organisational objectives.
11. These examples of initiatives in other countries compiled by Chaves Avila & Luis Monzón (2018), provide examples of the sorts of innovative support to Cooperatives that governments can provide:
  - The Capitalising of unemployment benefit scheme in Italy, Belgium and Spain provided for unemployment benefits to be converted into capital for cooperatives.
  - A percentage tax designation mechanism to finance social entities (Italy and Hungary).
  - Lotteries and games as a financial scheme: the cases of ONCE and RAY (Spain and Finland).
  - Social wealth Funds (Italy).
  - The *Social Investment Package (SIP)*, an initiative launched by the European Commission in 2013 includes the *European Social Fund* which facilitates the transfer and upscaling of innovative solutions to societal challenges in the fields of employment, education, skills and social inclusion.
  - The French ‘Hamon’ *Law on the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) of 2014*. Solidarity based firms are those which provide for:
    - the pursuit of a purpose of social utility or of general interest;
    - democratic governance, involving the company's stakeholders;
    - the reinvestment of the majority of profits into the operation of the company to ensure its maintenance and development.
 These firms are able to set up employee savings funds to invest in the SSE, which benefit from substantial reductions in taxation. The statutory provisions

“grant a right for workers to create transitional co-operative societies as a vehicle for a worker buy-out, allowing employees a majority vote in decision making, without immediately having the capital to purchase a majority share” (Benstead & Heneghan, 2022).

- Measures focusing on business support (consultancy, networking, incubators, mentoring, etc.):’

### **The Value that is added by DGTB in Reducing Risks and Strengthening the Collectives’ Prospects for Success**

1. The service is focused on transferring organisations through mutualization and providing the expertise to potentiate their success. Throughout the journey, before and after becoming collectives, expert support will be provided by DGTB. The providers of the service will have many years experience in furthering the development of their own organisations and in mentoring and supporting Startups, as well as having specialist experience of mutualization, all of which would be very relevant to the Cooperatives that DGTB is developing.
2. DGTB will play a strategic role, actively seeking to form cooperatives which can support one another, e.g. through vertical and horizontal integration. (Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021:974)
3. Cooperatives will be linked into networks of support with one another and with social banks.
4. One portfolio of DGTB is fully committed to liaison with Local, National and International governments and third sector organisations, to negotiate support for the Collectives sector in general and specifically for the collectives that DGTB is developing. This will cover Grant seeking and lobbying for taxation reforms, subsidies, capitalisation and international trade support, streamlining of regulation and other programmic support.
5. In the Cooperatives that it develops, DGTB will be fully promoting the model in which member ownership and democratic control are equally weighted. The evidence presented here, is that member ownership and control, when equally prioritised, maximise the potential for releasing human productivity. The *International Labour Organisation*, the *Nuttall Review* (2012) and the *All Party Parliamentary Group on Employee Ownership* (2008) are among the eminent sources which emphasise the need for both.

### **Stages of Development**

In broad terms the stages of development of DGTB are as follows:

- Stage 1:
- Attract seed funding.
  - Preparation of the Business Plan.
  - Setting up the strategic organisation.
  - Recruit the Directors.

Stage 2: The campaign to attract donations of organisations.

Stage 3: Intake of transitional organisations.

Stage 4: Restructuring of organisations into a cooperative format.

Stage 5: Support and advisement for the new organisations.

Stage 6: Liaison with, and Grant seeking from, Governments, Crowdfunding and third Sector organisations. Lobbying for tax concessions and other support.

### **How can this project be assisted?**

*Don't Give Them Bread* will work with donations of organisations. However, it will require seed funding and support in its early stages. All forms of assistance will be gratefully received. These could consist of:

1. Cash donations to our upcoming Crowdfunding appeal.
2. Sending an email mailout informing people about the project and explaining how they may support the project. The text above can be used for the mailout, citing attribution.
3. Along similar lines to the mailout, articles on the project can be distributed in newsletters, through social media or other formats.
4. Provision of expertise in Commercial and Charity Law, Political and governmental liaison, support for Startups/ Entrepreneurship, Business as philanthropy, Building Cooperatives and Grant Writing.
5. Visiting or Honorary academic attachments for the organisers of *DGTB* which would provide access to Legal, Humanities and Social Sciences databases and other library resources.
6. Video equipment and associated production and editing software to produce videos for use in fundraising, marketing and publicity.
7. Conduct a fundraising activity, perhaps using social media, to raise funds for the project.
8. Propose organisations which will be transformed into Cooperatives.
9. Any other forms of assistance to progress the project.

### **Recommendations**

1. There is considerable literature that has been amassed in the Literature Review, that focuses on why some Cooperatives succeed while others fail. This literature should be the subject of its own focused Systematic Review.
2. A Business Plan for *DGTB* should be prepared.
3. A Crowdfunding campaign should be established, to launch *DGTB*.

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*Compiled by Dr Lynne Wrennall*

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### **Critiques of traditional forms of Charity**

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Re-Imagining Work - Dave Coplin.

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<https://www.thersa.org/video/animates/2013/09/rsa-animate---re-imagining-work>

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## **Relevant UK Legislation**

*Charities Act 2022.*

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*Co-operative Development Agency and Industrial Development Act 1984.*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/57/introduction>

*Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1893-2021*

*Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965- Repealed.* From 1 August 2014 it was repealed and replaced by the consolidating [Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014](#).

‘What the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 does

The CCBS Act:

- replaces the ‘industrial and provident society’ legal form with two new legal forms:
  - co-operative society
  - community benefit society

Industrial and provident societies remain registered but are now deemed 'pre-commencement societies' (generally referred to as 'registered societies').

The CCBS Act also:

- consolidates previous industrial and provident society legislation including:



- Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965
- Friendly and Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1968
- Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2003'

Financial Conduct Authority 2016 *Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014*, 08/06/2016

<https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/registered-societies-introduction/co-operative-community-benefit-societies-act-2014>

*Co-operatives, Mutuals and Friendly Societies Act, 2023*

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/23/enacted>

To be a charity an organisation must have exclusively charitable purposes (i.e. a charity cannot have some purposes which are charitable and others which are not). The Charities Act 2006 lists thirteen charitable 'heads' under which a charity can operate. These are:

1. The prevention or relief of poverty
2. The advancement of education
3. The advancement of religion
4. The advancement of health or the saving of lives
5. The advancement of citizenship or community development
6. The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science
7. The advancement of amateur sport
8. The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity
9. The advancement of environmental protection or improvement
10. The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage
11. The advancement of animal welfare
12. The promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown, or of the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services
13. Any other purposes currently recognised as charitable and any new charitable purposes which are similar to another charitable purpose

To be 'charitable' under the meaning of the Act, the purposes of the charity must fall under one of the categories listed above. They must also, though, be demonstrated as being 'for the public benefit' (this is sometimes known as 'the public benefit test'). In particular, there are two key principles of public benefit:

- There must be an identifiable benefit or benefits
- The benefit(s) must be to the public, or section of the public

It is up to the charity to show explicitly that its activities fall under one or more of the heads listed above, *and* that they are being pursued for the public benefit in line with the requirements of the Act.

The 2006 Act also provides that charities whose turnover is under £5000 per annum need not register with the [Charity Commission](#), in order to cut administration costs for small charities (previously, this threshold was set at £1000). Such charities are instead regulated by [HMRC](#).

[The Charity Commission](#)

[The Charities Act 2006 - full text](#)

[HMRC](#)

[The Companies Act 2006](#)

[CIC and other legislation](#)

[Charitable companies](#)

[Charitable solutions](#)