

Voluntary Sector Futures

CO-DESIGNING A FUTURE VISION FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
IN WALES 2030 TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC THINKING

Published by WCVA and Futurice, September 2021



futurice

**WcVA
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WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) is the national membership body for voluntary organisations in Wales. WCVA exists to enable voluntary organisations to make a bigger difference together. WCVA team members co-authored the project and this report with project partner Futurice. These team members were also responsible for leading and facilitating the project.

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- **Suzanne Iuppa** - Strategic Planning Officer at WCVA

Futurice is a technology, digital and organisational innovation agency with Nordic roots. They support organisations to co-create and build more resilient futures. Their areas of expertise include future foresight, participatory futures tools and methodologies which have been applied in this project. These team members were also responsible for leading and facilitating the project.

- **Eloise Smith-Foster** - Senior Service Designer and Futurist at Futurice
- **Tom Castle** - Strategy Principal and Futurist at Futurice

FUTURES EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to everyone who participated in this project through in-depth interviews, workshops, conversations, feedback and the ‘WCVA Futures - Wales voluntary sector community survey’ throughout May - July 2021. We hugely appreciate your time and support to make this project possible. Your invaluable contribution has directly shaped project outputs, including the seeds of change, future vision and suggested actions.

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Foreword

WCVA
CgGC

Anna Nicholl, Head of Strategy and Sector Development at WCVA

WCVA's purpose is to enable voluntary organisations in Wales to make a bigger difference together. In the upheaval of today, much of our energy must be focussed on the here and now. But it's vital that we also take time to imagine the futures we want to see. Not just to grapple with what's likely or possible, but to create positive visions for our future and plan how we can get there together.

Today's uncertainty and change makes it more important that values-based voluntary organisations are actively shaping society's future. The approaches in this report can help empower us to do this. WCVA will use the findings to think about how we can enable voluntary organisations to help achieve this future together.

John Gallanders, Chief Officer at AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham) and TSSW Representative

I am pleased to have been involved with the Futures Exercise that WCVA has commissioned from Futureice. There has probably been no better time than now to be looking at what the future will hold for the third sector in Wales and how WCVA and CVCs can address not only old challenges (pre-COVID) but also the new landscape that is shaping as a result of the pandemic.

The changing demands from the public and organisations has meant a rapid shift in the way many of our respective services and support have been provided. With so many levels of uncertainty the Futures Exercise has created a time and space to bring stakeholders together and develop free flow thinking as to how we plan for a very uncertain new 'norm'.

Our traditional values within the third sector will remain the same along with our respective commitment to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The stalwart nature of TSSW and other organisations in the past 18 months has generated a higher level of recognition for the third sector within Wales at a county, national and UK level, something we all need to capitalise on and ensure we don't retrench into a pre-pandemic mode.

The Futures Exercise has enabled the time and space to accept that there are challenges for us all to overcome that go beyond funding cycles that are often so short term they can't be used to tackle a longer-term vision. Like the Future Generations Act the third sector needs to look beyond 5-year political cycles at national and local level and truly start to commit to a longer-term vision that will address societal changes for the short, medium and crucially longer term with the third sector being firmly embedded in all levels of civil society.



Sophie Howe, Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner

Voluntary sector organisations, and the actions of local communities across Wales have an essential role to play in ensuring the well-being of generations still to come. This report sets out an engaging vision of a future where cohesive communities, volunteering and social activism are at the heart of making sure we are leaving the world a better place than we found it.



**'We hope that what Wales is doing today
the world will do tomorrow.'**

**'Action, more than words, is the hope
for our current and future generations.'**

**- Nikhil Seth (Former Head of Sustainable Development
at the United Nations) on his visit to Wales in 2015**

Photo by Monstera from pexels

Executive Summary

Facilitated by WCVA and our partner Futurice, over three months from May to July 2021 we collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders to co-design a 10-year vision for the voluntary sector in Wales.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The findings from this exercise will form part of WCVA's strategic review in 2021 and contribute directly to its strategic planning. It will also be used by the [Third Sector Support Wales partnership](#) which is reviewing its five-year business plan in 2021. This forms part of response to the Third Sector Partnership Council's Recovery report and its recommendation to review future support needs for the sector to thrive in Wales. Additionally, the intention is that this work will be useful for other organisations' strategic thinking, and provide another example of how the [Building Better Futures Toolkit](#) can be used in practice.

This project combined approaches from service design, co-design and future foresight. It placed people at the centre of the work through in-depth primary research and participatory workshops. Future foresight methodologies help people think longer term, and support the creation of more robust and resilient strategies in the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain and complex world.

KEY INSIGHTS

Project participants were associated with over 80 different organisations from diverse voluntary sector organisations across Wales, as well as the public and private sector and the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. Participants recognised Wales as diverse, with many cultures, geographies, languages, needs and lived experiences. They wanted this to be reflected in the future of the voluntary sector through better inclusion and diverse representation.

Participants articulated visions for the future that were fundamentally different from society today. There was alignment from the majority around an aspiration for Wales to become a more just, green, resilient, caring, wellbeing- and community-oriented society, where volunteering and active citizenship is central and valued.

Participants acknowledged the severe impact of the pandemic, and its potential to have a negative effect over the years to come. It has already caused multiple challenges, and led to increased inequality, financial insecurity, poor health and well-being. There was a desire to support short-term recovery in ways that lead to the longer-term vision for society and the sector. A bold 10-year vision has been produced, based primarily on participant input, that will require action and collaboration from partners across sectors.

OUTPUTS

The key outputs from this project include a summary of relevant trends in Wales for the voluntary sector to be aware of, a list of 'seeds of change' which provide insight into potential preferred and positive futures based on inspiring initiatives already happening in Wales, as well as direct input from participants.

The seeds of change were collated into one ideal but plausible guiding vision that represents the world project participants would like to see a decade from now. This vision can drive ideas and action for the voluntary sector and its partners: participatory workshops helped articulate how to work together to make the vision become reality. Participants' suggested actions are summarised towards the end of the report.

NEXT STEPS

This report aims to be a resource to inspire and learn from, as well as a spark for more exciting conversations and positive connections across the voluntary sector and beyond. A huge thank you is owed to all participants for their invaluable contributions.

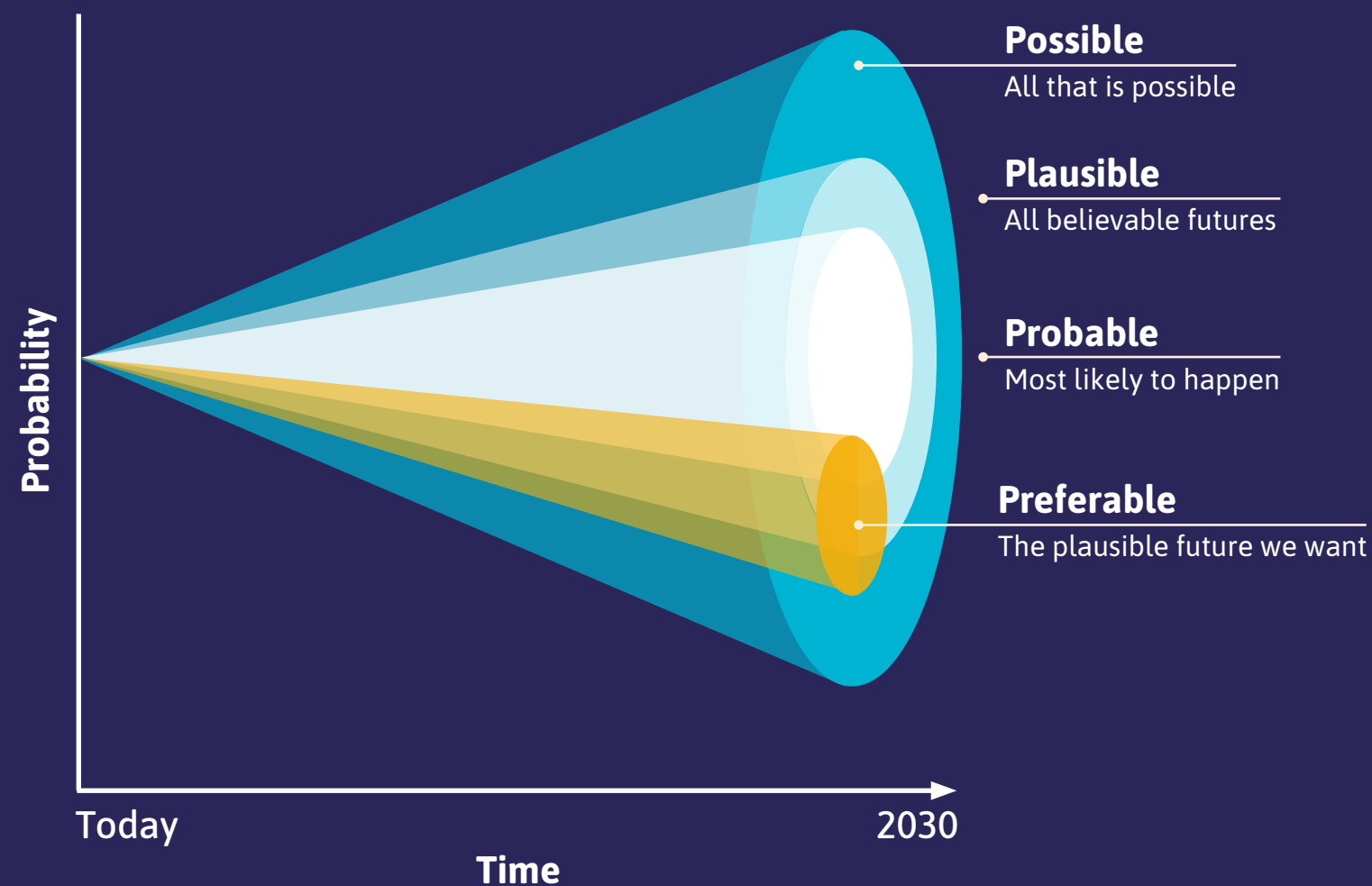


Illustration by the [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#)

1. Introduction

BACKGROUND, PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Futures Cone: Identifying preferred futures



Above: The 'futures cone' showing the spectrum of thinking around the future - from possible but less probable to highly probable future scenarios. The objective of this project was to identify the most preferable, plausible futures from the perspective of the voluntary sector in Wales. **Source:** [Futurice Lean Futures Creation Toolkit 2.0](#)

Why we carried out this work

WCVA has been working with partners to look at how voluntary organisations in Wales can help shape a better future through the COVID-19 recovery, as well as how the sector can build its resilience, adapt and thrive in the future.

Facilitated by our partner Futurice over 3 months, members of the voluntary, public and private sector have contributed to the co-design of a 10-year vision for the voluntary sector in Wales. This vision aims to represent and summarise the ambitions, aspirations and hopes of these diverse groups as one cohesive North Star the voluntary sector and others can orient towards.

The findings from this exercise will form part of WCVA's 2021 strategic review and contribute directly to strategic planning. The aim is for it to be useful to the wider sector and the [Third Sector Support Wales partnership](#) which is also reviewing its five-year business plan in 2021.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

This project combined approaches from service design, co-design and future foresight.^{1 2} In order to ensure the seeds of change, future vision and suggested actions support the variety of experiences and aspirations across the voluntary sector; participatory methodologies were used throughout to include as many diverse points of view as possible in the process, generation of ideas, design and feedback on outputs.

FUTURE FORESIGHT

A core focus for the project was to align with the seven well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of [Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).^{3 4} The Act and work of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has been a key reference to inform the project. In addition, the design approach was undertaken with a systemic and society-centred lens,^{5 6} using design justice principles as a guide.⁷ These include, for example, valuing everyone as an expert in their own lived experience, sharing knowledge and tools and aiming for community-led outcomes.

The future foresight work carried out during this project was heavily influenced by three main schools of thought:

- **Futures Literacy** - a UNESCO approach which promotes the ability to identify changes in the present and perceive future implications.⁸
- **Strategic Foresight** - a structured approach for long-term decision making by challenging underlying assumptions and considering alternative futures.⁹
- **Explorative Futures** - a human-centred approach to materialising alternative future visions to support critical reflection and innovation.

Collectively these future foresight tools represent the most widely used methods to help individuals, communities and organisations navigate an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. They are an established and increasingly widely used set of tools which help create more robust and resilient strategies around the world at local and national levels.

APPLYING THE BUILDING BETTER FUTURES COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

The [Building Better Futures Toolkit](#) developed by WCVA and the School for International Futures (SOIF) was adapted and combined with [Futurice’s Lean Futures Creation \(LFC\) Toolkit](#) and methods for the project. The community toolkit approach was followed, completing each module in turn, whilst integrating additional methods such as desktop research, interviews, personal survey responses and wider discussion.

MODULE 1: CREATING A POTENTIAL FUTURE LANDSCAPE

The objective of this module is to explore trends and extrapolate an expansive set of potential futures to promote discussion around what a plausible, preferred future might look like.

A set of 54 seeds of change was generated through secondary research and a series of collaborative exercises with voluntary sector participants. These statements represent a range of ideas based on something that is already happening and points to a positive future, but are not yet well known or widespread. The futures wheel activity built on this by again taking a collaborative approach, engaging a range of stakeholders. A futures wheel offers a framework to explore how seeds might grow over time towards 2030 and create positive impact.

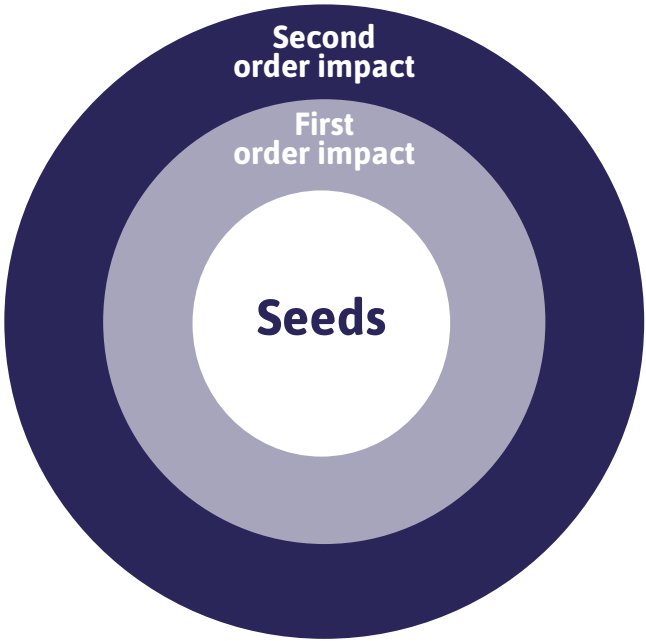
The end result of this was a variety of inspiring, co-created future impacts which provide a rich source of insight into the potential futures that participants from the sector desire.

Seed title: locally grown food

Description: Locally grown food is accessible and integrated into both urban and rural areas. Food is produced by many well connected, small scale businesses, charities and grassroots groups. This has led to higher carbon capture, food security and healthier, more connected communities.

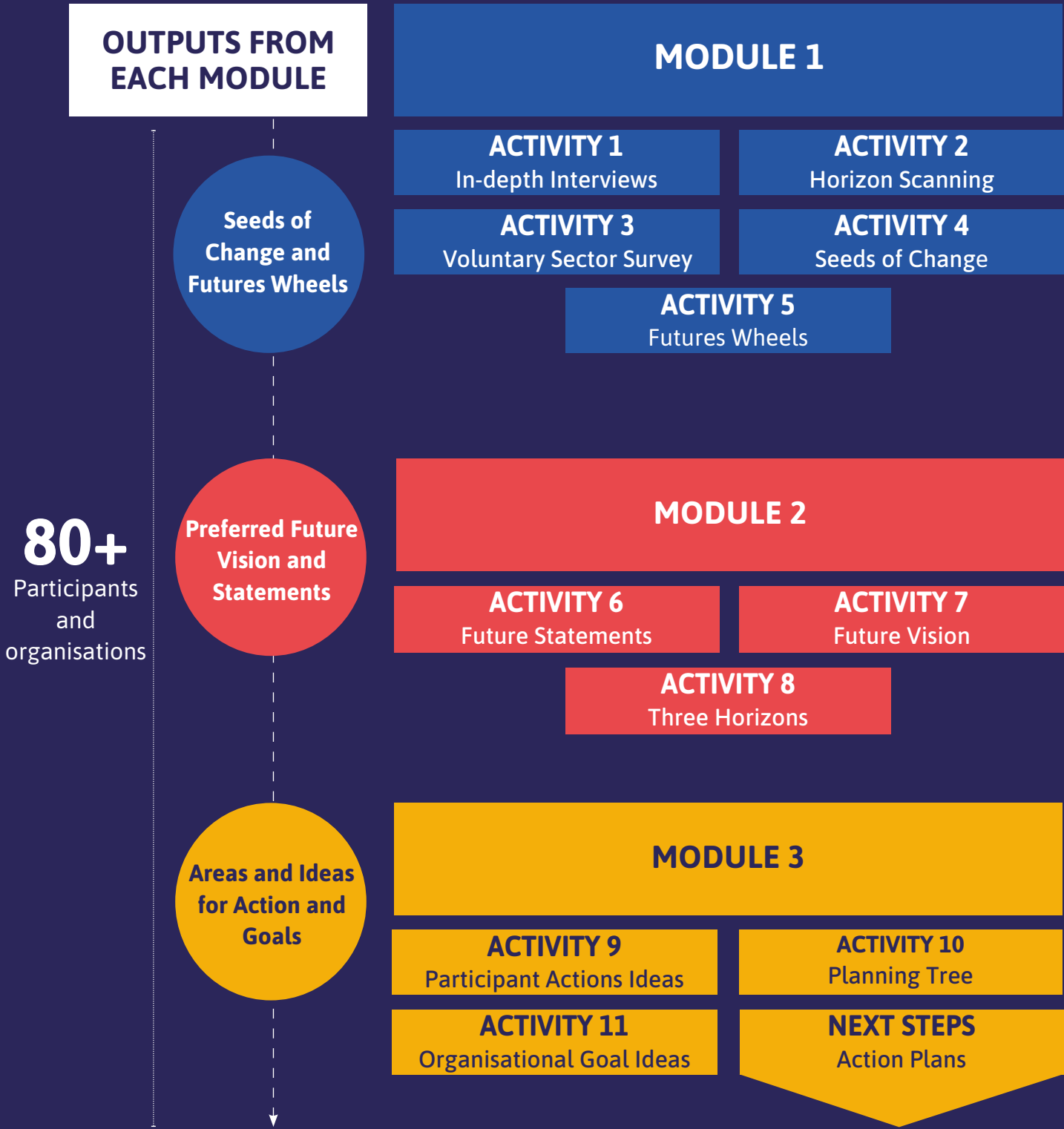
Inspiration sources: Workshop input, [WWE](#), [Social Farms & Gardens](#), [Monmouthshire Food Development Action Plan](#)

Above: Example of a Seed of Change



Above: Example of Futures Wheel

PROJECT PROCESS: COMBINING THE BUILDING BETTER FUTURES TOOLKIT WITH FUTURICE METHODS TO ACHIEVE BOTH DEPTH AND BREADTH OF RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATION



Above: The Toolkit Activities, their modules and outputs. Both of these toolkits are free and accessible online for anyone to download and use:

[Click here for the WCVA and SOIF - Building Better Futures Toolkit.](#)

[Click here for the Futurice - Lean Futures Creation 2.0 Toolkit](#)

MODULE 2: CREATING A ROADMAP TO A SHARED PREFERRED FUTURE

Module 2 took the broad set of futures articulated through the futures wheels and consolidated them into a single shared vision of the preferred future, with a range of ideas for how that future might be achieved.

This involved extracting all the outputs from the futures wheels and clustering these into themes and an overall articulation of the world they described. Through a series of reviews and revisions this was iterated into one final preferred vision and future statements in this report.

As a final step, a set of collaborators from across the voluntary sector, alongside a small number of members from the public and private sector, including the Future Generations Commissioner’s office, collaborated on an activity called ‘The Three Horizons’. They co-designed a roadmap of actions which could build a bridge between the present and the preferred future.

MODULE 3: PLANNING FOR THE PREFERRED FUTURE

The third module is focused on starting to think about creating an action plan specifically for WCVA and TSSW to move towards the preferred future.

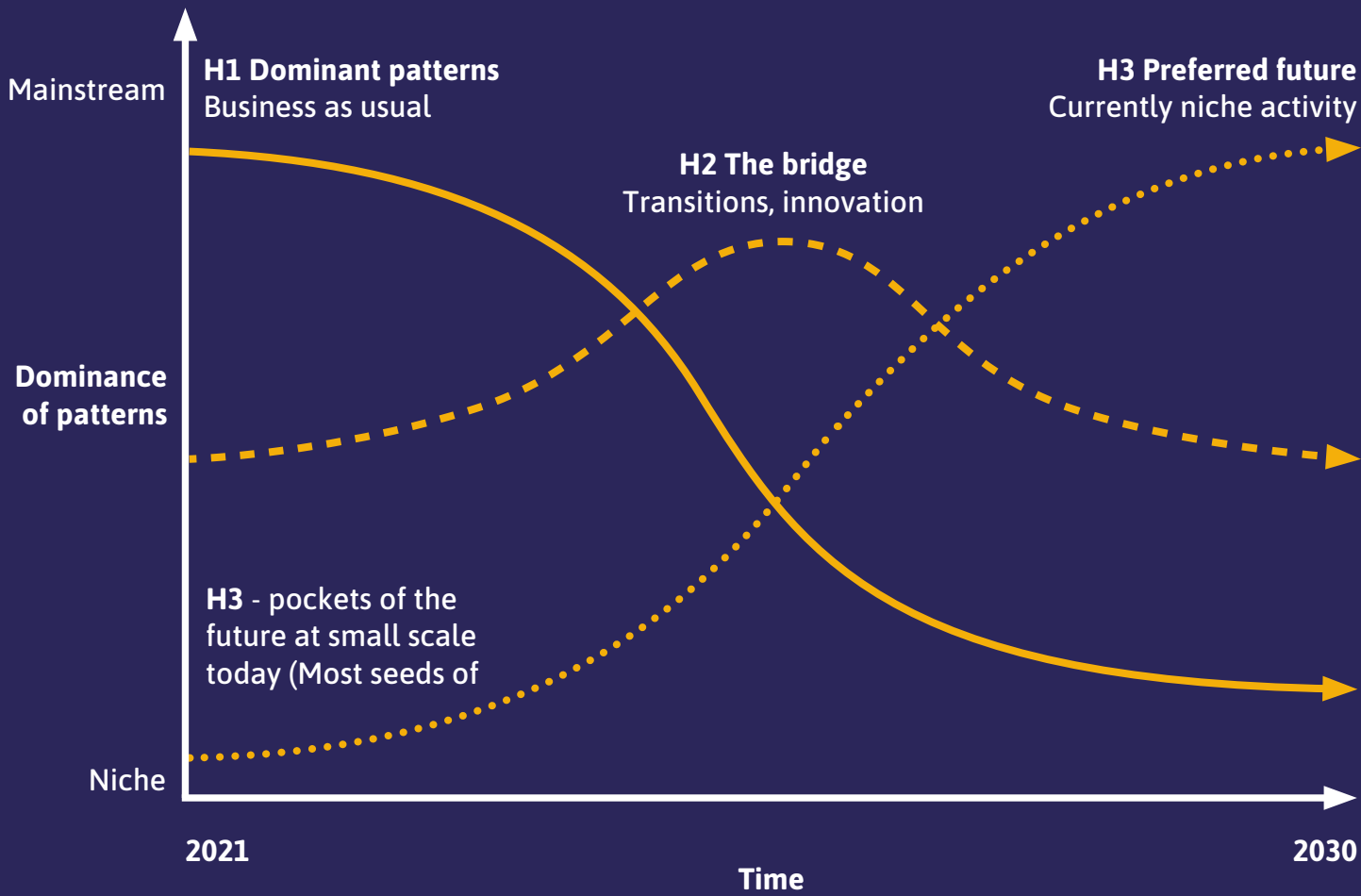
During this stage, a series of ‘Planning Tree’ workshops were undertaken with representatives of WCVA and TSSW to specifically consider what actions and goals these organisations could take to support the whole sector. This work will feed into the wider strategic planning both are currently undertaking.

TERMINOLOGY DEFINITIONS

- **Community:** used to describe a group of people who are bound together by some common thread. They may all live in a geographical location, or they may share an interest, faith or ethnicity or other common characteristic (eg the deaf community).¹⁰
- **Voluntary sector or third sector:** people come together voluntarily, not for money or because the law tells them to, but because they want to make a difference.^{11 12}
- **Resilience:** the ability of an organisation to prepare for, respond to, and adapt to change and crisis, enabling it to survive and thrive in the long term.¹³
- **Participants:** people who contributed to the project in one of the following ways: in-depth interviews, remote participatory workshops, community survey or as a project collaborator.
- **Protected characteristics:** People with protected characteristics as defined by the [Equality and Human rights Commission](#).¹⁴

The three horizons method

BUILDING BRIDGES FROM THE PRESENT TO THE PREFERRED FUTURE



What are the three horizons?

- H1 - Horizon 1:** Examples of mainstream, business as usual activities include businesses donating to voluntary organisations in a ‘donor’ to ‘recipient’ model.
- H2 -Horizon 2:** Examples of transitional activities include organisations investing in staff wellbeing and mental health or anti-racism education.
- H3 - Horizon 3:** Examples of niche activities that represent pockets of the future include local organisations providing a living wage and shorter, flexible work week to enable better health, accessibility of roles and the time for active citizenship.

2. Research insight

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH INSIGHT



Photo by mentatdgt from Pexels

Secondary research summary

The project started by interweaving both primary and secondary research approaches to horizon scanning. Horizon scanning is a method for systematically imagining the future in order to better plan a response.¹⁵

RESEARCH APPROACH AND KEY FINDINGS

This research involved using wide range of sources to identify trends and weak signals about the future of Wales and the voluntary sector: Media, social media, arts and culture, academic and scientific publications, trend reports and WCVA's own resources and research. Each of the identified trend areas have implications for the future of the voluntary sector into the next decade, and were therefore transformed into seeds of change to provoke discussion and encourage longer-term thinking when working towards the future vision.

The horizon scanning trend and weak signal findings have been categorised using the PESTLE framework; although there is overlap, they are grouped based on whether they are most relevant to politics, economics, society, technology and innovation, legislation or the environment. Below is a brief summary of the main megatrends and themes that emerged:



Politics: Green infrastructure, sustainability and addressing inequality appear to be more highly prioritised in Wales based on new Welsh Government and the Senedd plans.^{16 17 18 19 20} Political tensions have been arising relating to devolution eg the post-Brexit funding and immigration policy set by Westminster.^{21 22}



Environment: There is a growing awareness, social conscience and pressure on all sectors and Government to act on the climate and ecological crises.^{23 24 25 26 27 28} Especially as Wales plans for pandemic recovery and risks to Wales, such as increased flooding, become evident.^{29 30 31 32}



Society: The pandemic exacerbated inequalities, and significantly impacted both physical and mental health.^{33 34 35 36} Despite these challenges and many needing to stop work or volunteering, a high number started volunteering for the first time eg furloughed young people.³⁷ There was also a surge of awareness and visibility around cultural initiatives and action for climate and social justice, for instance BLM (Black Lives Matter).^{38 39 40 41 42}



Technology and innovation: New technologies, digital projects and entrepreneurial initiatives are taking place to support the transition to a more participatory and circular economy.^{43 44 45 46} There is drive to use creativity and innovation to address societal challenges, create a progressive Wales and reinvigorate rural areas.^{47 48 49 50 51 52}



Legislation: There is increased interest in establishing preventative, green and just policies and legislation that tackle current challenges whilst supporting the wellbeing of future generations.^{53 54 55} For instance, piloting UBI (universal basic income) for carers and increasing the diversity of representation in school curriculums.^{56 57 58}



Economics: Charities, hospitality, manufacturing and other sectors have been hit hard in the pandemic financially, with many jobs lost.^{59 60} There are initiatives in Wales to build back better by investing in green jobs, upskilling and education.^{61 62 63} A shift towards hybrid, flexible working for some sectors and increasing advocacy for a wellbeing economy will likely disrupt conventional business models and create new opportunities, especially for social entrepreneurs or value-driven organisations (including the voluntary sector).^{64 65 66 67 68 69}

Primary research summary

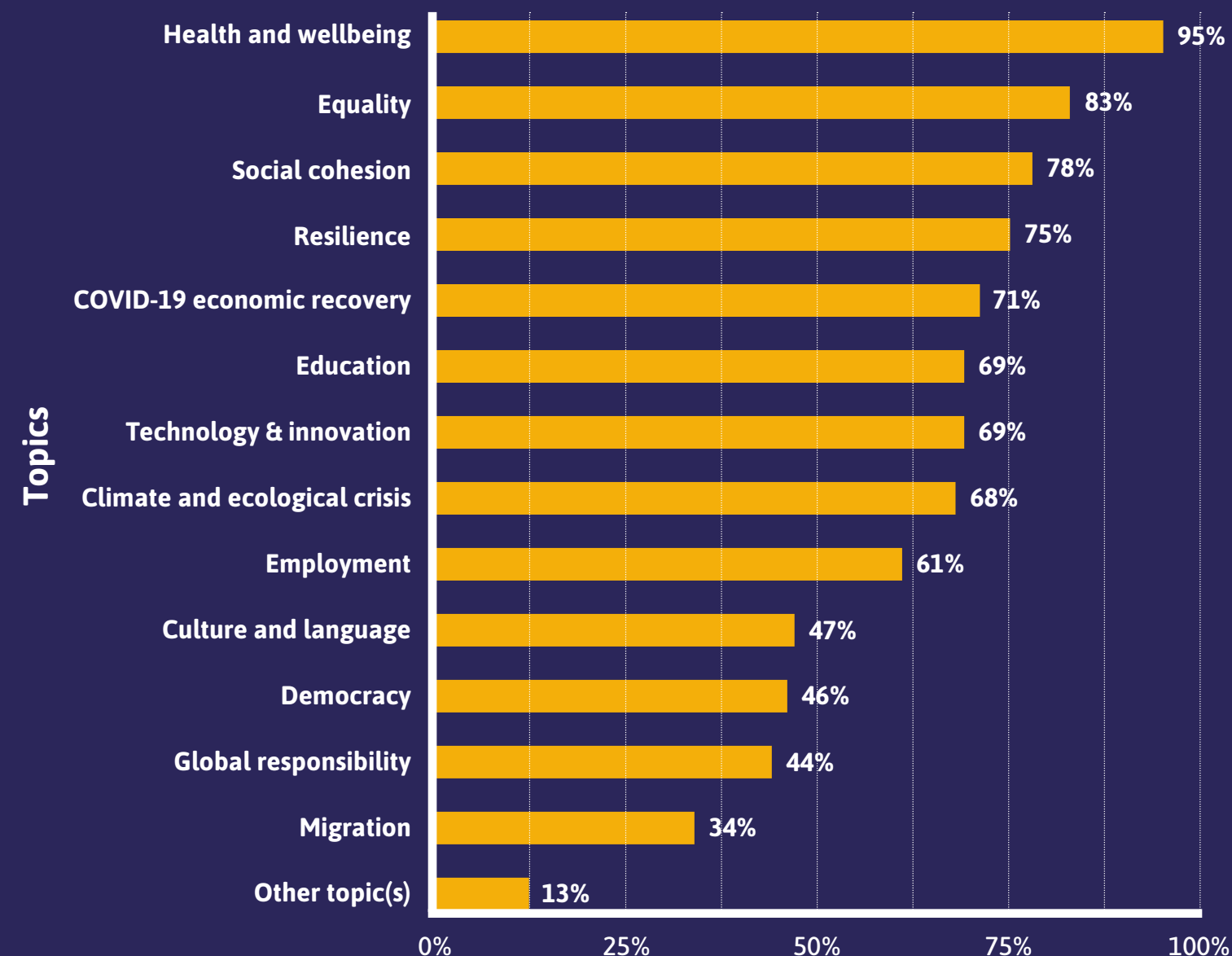
The primary research revealed critical challenges and important opportunities in the voluntary sector that its members are keen to build on for the benefit of the sector and society in general. The focal areas research participants highlighted as most important to them set the foundations for seeds of change and the future world vision.

DESIRE FOR A FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT SOCIETAL STRUCTURE

Participants were asked 'What would your ideal vision for the voluntary sector in Wales be in 10 years?' They described a world that is fundamentally different from today. There was alignment from the majority around an aspiration for Wales to become a more just, green, caring, wellbeing- and community-oriented society, with respect for difference and where volunteering and active citizenship is central and valued.

There was a shared recognition that Wales is diverse with many cultures, geographies, languages, needs and lived experiences. There was ambition for this to be reflected in the voluntary sector through better inclusion and representation of the people and communities being served. The barriers that are faced in accessing support, in particular for grassroots organisations, were highlighted.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS: TOPICS RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANT VOTES FOR TOPIC AS HIGH OR HIGHEST IMPORTANCE FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR TO BE FOCUSING ON OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS



Percentage of votes as 'high' or 'highest' importance

Percentage = number of survey participants who ranked the topic 4-5 out of 5 in terms of importance where 1 = lowest importance, 3=medium, 4=high, 5=highest importance.

Important note on interpreting results: Participants could comment about the reasons for their choice. The majority highlighted these topics as connected or interdependent, and didn't think they should be tackled in silos eg social cohesion being critical for resilience, wellbeing and survival on the planet to take one example.

A number of research participants expressed the desire for funding processes to be more transparent, accountable and equitable. There were a huge variety of other aspirations for the future, which have been captured through seeds of change ([see chapter 4](#)).

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS' MOST FREQUENTLY USED WORDS FOR DESCRIBING THEIR IDEAL VISION FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN 2030



Above: Words analysed were taken from the survey question ‘What would your vision of an ideal future for the voluntary sector in Wales look like in 10 years and why?’ Word size defined by frequency of use by survey participants. Frequently used connecting words that don’t provide insight have been removed eg ‘it’, ‘and’, ‘sector’.

‘[An ideal future would look and feel like] active citizens helping each other, random acts of kindness, sustainable and inclusive voluntary and community groups in every community, people caring about the environment.’

‘Everyone having an equal voice in what happens in their communities, with services that are delivered by social value organisations and co-produced with people who receive them, long-term investment in the sector, not having to fight for recognition.’

- Sue Leonard, CVC Chief Officer, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, survey participant, June 2021



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels

3. Seeds of change

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, LEGISLATIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SEEDS BASED ON RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATION



Photo by Katerina Holmes from Pexels

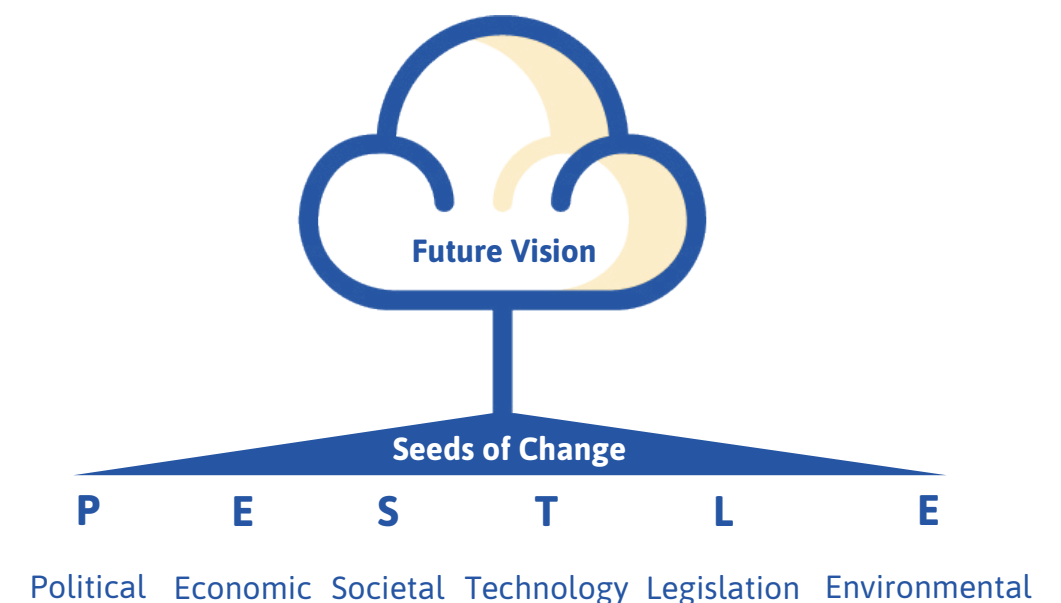
What are seeds of change?

‘Seeds are likely not widespread nor well-known. They can be social initiatives, new technologies, economic tools, or social-ecological projects, or organisations, movements or new ways of acting that appear to be contributing to the creation of a future that is just, prosperous, and sustainable.’ - [Seeds of Good Anthropocenes](#)⁷⁰

HOW DID WE USE THEM?

Participants explored existing seeds based on secondary research, as well as helped create new seeds based on their lived experience and aspirations. The seeds prompted people to think about future possibilities, and articulate their ambitions for Wales and the voluntary sector. Please consider the seeds an open source starting point i.e. you may use or add to them with your community and organisation to facilitate discussion, visioning or other work.

The seeds are divided based on the PESTLE model (Politics, economics, society, technology and innovation, legislation and environment) to support categorisation and ensure broad coverage of different topics and societal focal areas.



Sources for seeds of change: Secondary research, voluntary sector survey, in-depth interviews and workshops. People associated with 80+ organisations from across Wales contributed.

3.1 Political

SEEDS OF CHANGE

‘When we look at vision setting we need to all be at that table, to reflect not only the diverse communities but the community of Wales.’

- Faith Walker, Executive Director of Friends of Cymru Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia C.I.C., Managing Director of FW Consultancy, workshop participant, June 2021



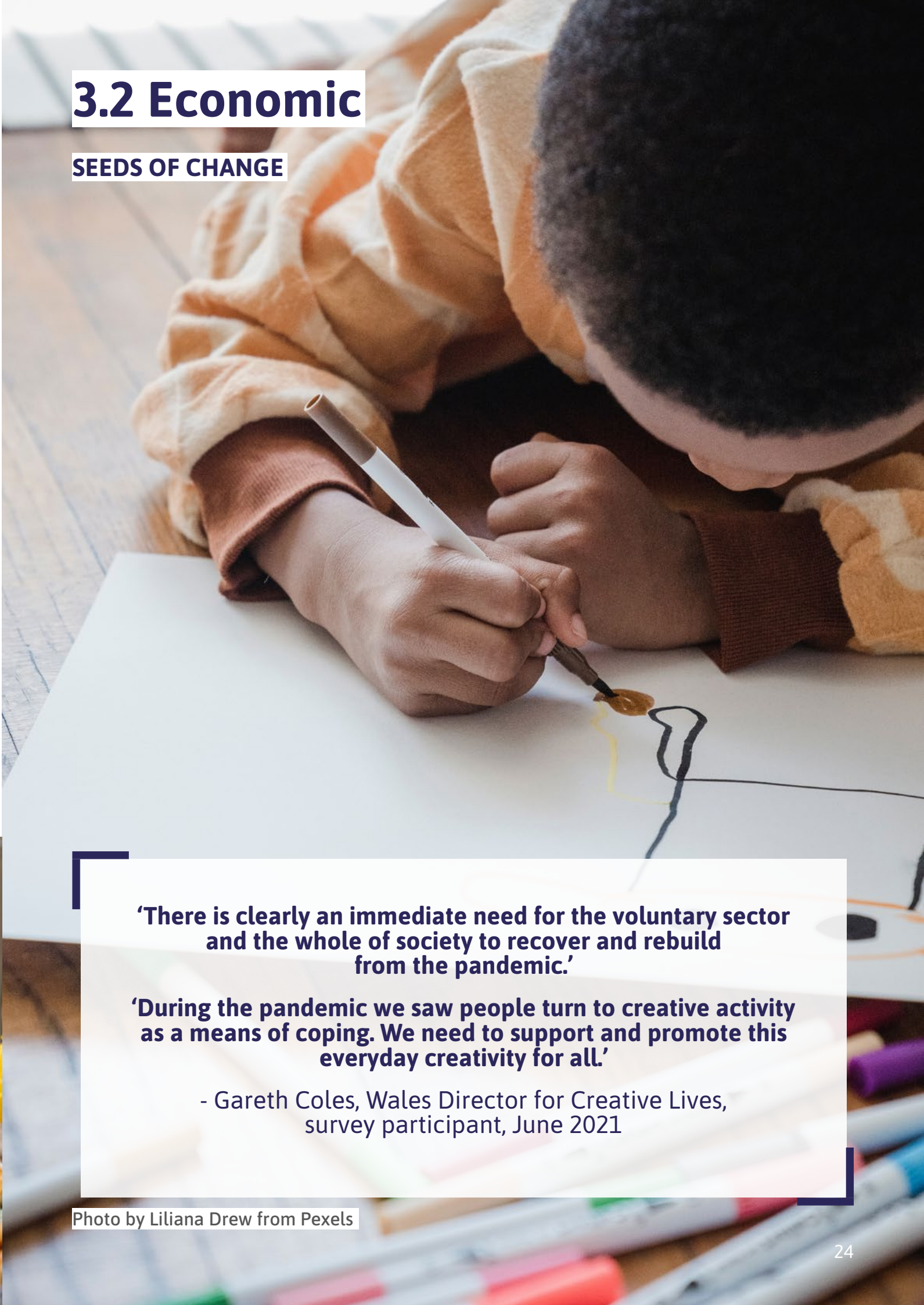
Photo by RF_._studio from Pexels

Seed Title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Young people leading	Young people are empowered to lead with compassion across communities, to support creation of new systems, structures and ways of working for the future. The Welsh Youth Parliament has co-produced educational programmes, employment opportunities and Government policies. This includes for instance, a national living wage to make roles more accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Survey input• Anthem• Cynnal Cymru• Future Generations Leadership Academy• G7 Youth Summit• Youth Parliament Senedd
Post-pandemic recovery	The post-pandemic recovery is ongoing, but local communities took lessons learned forward. For instance, education, technology training, improved communication and partnerships started in the pandemic have grown. Voluntary organisations built on community connections post-pandemic and learned how to harness the energy of new volunteers in a variety of flexible roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey input• Community Foundation Wales• WCPP (Wales Centre for Public Policy), WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) and WCVA• Y Lab
Time to care	Wales has an established Universal Basic Income and a shorter working week which provides security, time for care and voluntary work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Generations Commissioner for Wales• New Economics Foundation• State of Wales• Wales Online
Encouraging entrepreneurs	Free online colleges offer accredited qualifications linked to the economic needs of Wales. Crowdfunded micro-loans are available with minimal interest which include business skills training for entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview input• Bangor University• EYST (Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales) Seeds of Change (WCVA project)• Y Dref Werdd

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Business leading country	Wales is internationally recognised as a top location for entrepreneurs and new business due to Government support, access to skills, resources and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview input• Antur Stiniog• Daily Post• Down to Earth• Trade and Invest Wales
Young people supported at work	Security, upskilling and quality of work is guaranteed for young people. They are have agency in their role and are encouraged to be creative in the workplace. A positive start that impacts their future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview input• Anthem Wales• Bangor University• Wales Millennium Centre
Wellbeing economy	Wales has a wellbeing economy, where wellbeing is the measure of the nation's success rather than GDP. This is part of a progressive national identity and international partnership of like-minded nations eg Iceland, New Zealand and Scotland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Future Generations Commissioner for Wales• Oxfam Cymru• Platform• WEALL (Wellbeing Economy Alliance)• WCVA

3.2 Economic

SEEDS OF CHANGE



...A wellbeing economy



Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

‘There is clearly an immediate need for the voluntary sector and the whole of society to recover and rebuild from the pandemic.’

‘During the pandemic we saw people turn to creative activity as a means of coping. We need to support and promote this everyday creativity for all.’

- Gareth Coles, Wales Director for Creative Lives, survey participant, June 2021

Photo by Liliana Drew from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Purposeful work opportunities	Thanks to free internet, affordable education and funded upskilling for green jobs (eg for renewable energy roles etc.), Wales is able to retain and support local talent both in rural and urban areas. People can work remotely for local or international organisations. They are well connected to communities they identify with, even if physically far away. Young people see a future with a range of opportunities to be in purposeful work or volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey input • Workshop input • Bangor University • Bevan Foundation • Future Commissioner for Wales • Flatten the Curve Podcast • Indycube • Mentor Môn • New Economics Foundation • Welsh Government
Local and circular businesses	Industries have relocalised, whilst maintaining international connection and inspiration. More businesses in Wales have well developed direct to customer distribution systems that mean the customer gets locally sourced, circular economy goods (eg reused bikes, fresh, local produce) and the business gets much better margins. Most are owned and run as social enterprises, stewardship companies or co-ops by locals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Banc Cambria • Drosi Bikes • Greenstream Flooring CIC • Mentor Môn • Partneriaeth Ogwen • reSource CIC • WCVA seeds of change project (based on Seeds of Good Anthropocenes) • Y Dref Werdd
Growing people and diverse leadership	There is well governed and funded support for staff development and diverse leadership. The voluntary sector is well resourced with a network of both allies and critical friends, appropriately skilled and trained people in both paid and voluntary roles, and opportunities for growth. Training examples include EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) and anti-racism eg bias, hate-crime and de-escalation training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Survey input • Workshop input • Hub Cymru Africa • BLM Wales • Race Council Cymru (RCC)

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Rewarding care	The role of unpaid carers or volunteers is rewarded eg providing free leisure and hospitality service access to carers. Support for carers includes training, mental health support, respite and bereavement services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care at Flintshire • Diverse Cymru • Senedd Research, Senedd Cymru • Tempo Time Credits
Financial security for those in need	Those in need are provided with cash to use as they see fit on their own terms, rather than having predetermined access to specific services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age UK • Shelter Cymru • Welsh Government
An accessible and adaptable voluntary sector	Real living wage, support for parents and carers (such as childcare funding) means the voluntary sector is representative of the communities it serves. All levels are accessible, with diverse views and experience, including in Senior Management and Boards. Voluntary services are more adaptable, creative and responsive to the diverse needs of the people they service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Survey input • Workshop input • 1st Catchays Al-Huda Scout Group • All Wales People First • Cynnal Cymru • Day Nurseries • Race Council Cymru (RCC)



3.3 Society and community

SEEDS OF CHANGE

‘Our young people, asylum seekers and refugees are the future of Wales. We must create an environment where individuals can nurture their talents, fuel their passion and blossom into the fullest forms of themselves to contribute towards the society.’

- Debanjali Bhattacharjee, Team Member for BAME Helpline Wales, EYST (Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team, workshop participant, June 2021)



Photo by Ivan Samkov from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Educating the next generation	Education plays a key role in shaping active citizenship and respect for difference from an early age. There is support in the public and private spheres (eg schools, families) to learn about ethics, values and interpersonal skills. Equality, inclusion and diversity is embedded into the curriculum, with authentic representation of diverse points of view and people with protected characteristics. ⁷¹ Young people are confident about self-identity, how they can contribute to their community and future generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• BLM Wales• Children’s Commissioner for Wales• Diverse Cymru• EYST Seeds of Change (WCVA project)• Nurseryworld• Welsh Government
Equality and honest dialogue	There are dialogue days, citizens’ assemblies and other spaces created within civic life (eg schools, work, local government, on and offline public forums) for listening to diverse voices, and to enable honest, two way dialogue about ideas, barriers and how to overcome them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Autism Hidden Voices• EYST Seeds of Change• Citizen’s Assemblies, devolution20.wales• Scouts Cymru• Y Tŷ Gwyrdd
Grassroots led strategies	Grassroots organisations are highly valued for their close connection with different communities’ needs. They form a bridge connecting larger institutions or voluntary organisations with people on the ground. There is high mutual trust and key decisions are made in partnership between larger and grassroots organisations. This ensures diverse points of view are involved and influential right from the start of discussion or strategic planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• NWAMI/The CCE (Networking for World Awareness of Multicultural Integration)• NYCA (Newport Yemeni Community Association)• EYST• RCC
Sanctuary and dignity for all	Anyone in need is provided with a home and sanctuary where they feel safe, welcome and can live in dignity. This includes both emotional and practical support, for example secure accommodation to those who are at risk of abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• BAWSO (Black Association of Women Step Out)• Care and Repair Cymru• Community Furniture Aid (CFA)• Ministry of Furniture• MIND

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
An equitable and anti-racist Wales	Welsh Government and the Senedd, in collaboration with other sectors, is closer to the shared commitment of making Wales an equitable, anti-racist country. Organisations are structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions to provide equitable opportunities for all on an individual, organisational and systemic level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Survey participants • Senedd Research • Welsh Government • Welsh Government • Zero Racism Wales
Flexible and relevant communication	Dialogue across the voluntary and other sectors is dynamic and inclusive. Organisations are educated in appropriate forms of communication for different groups - from word of mouth to visual methods to digital channels. Accessible information formats are easy to request and quickly provided eg large print, easy read, audio, Braille, and/or community languages via digital or physical channels such as post.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Survey input • Workshop input • 1st Catchays Al-Huda Scout Group • Diverse Cymru • GOFOD3 • LGBTQYMRU
Flourishing, accessible arts and culture	Everyone has access to creativity, culture and events which happen regularly both on and offline. There is celebration and recognition of all the cultures of Wales. Through flourishing arts and culture people embrace difference, build inclusive communities, think differently and exercise their citizenship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop participation • Citizen Network • Creative Lives • Glitter Cymru • NWAMI / The CCE • Pride Cymru • Taking Flight Theatre
Resilient Communities	Resilience is supported by volunteers connecting and organising around community strengths and shared goals eg geography, faith, language, culture etc. to address challenges such as climate and ecological repair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey respondent • Community Foundation Wales • Co-production Network for Wales • Hub Cymru Africa • IFEES/Ecolslam • Mentor Môn • Renew Wales • Y Dref Werdd



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...An equitable country

Photo by Karina Thomson from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Multilingual Wales	Organisations work seamlessly across Welsh, other languages and forms of communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Input • Workshop input • LGBTQYMRU
Welcoming civic spaces	Civic spaces on and offline are inclusive and create a sense of belonging. For instance, public spaces like streets and parks are designed to ensure they don't present barriers and are accessible for all. Civic gathering places, from town halls and schools to squares, pubs and events are designed to help everyone to feel safe, welcome and heard. This includes places especially for young people and children, such as playgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Cymru • Glitter Cymru • Make Space for Girls • MeToo • Miss Tilley's • Pembrokeshire FRAME • Race Council Cymru (RCC)
Healing society and community	Mental health and wellbeing of many is on the rise, thanks to strong investment since the pandemic. Those in need and/or disproportionately impacted by the pandemic have been supported with free bereavement, grief, trauma and healing related services embedded within communities. Health, wellbeing, and social care service support is integrated, holistic, and tailored for the needs of diverse communities across Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Diverse Cymru • Home Start Cymru • MeToo • MIND • New Local • Platform
An accessible society	Special equipment is available to anyone who needs it so everyone can live and work with dignity and independence. This extends to support for agile working practices. Workplaces are flexible and inclusive with part time or hybrid working options (workplace, home or remote working) available for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC • Diverse Cymru • Indycube • Ministry of Furniture, Social Firms Wales • Miss Tilley's • RNID (Action on Hearing Loss)



...Workplaces are flexible and inclusive

Photo by Eren Li from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
The benefits of volunteering are recognised	The benefits of volunteering for society, health and wellbeing are widely recognised. Improved communication and collaboration in the pandemic has enabled volunteering to be sustained and better integrated in health and social care provision across Wales. The positive impact of volunteering in any area on recipients, staff, the system and on volunteers themselves is evidenced and widely understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's for Voluntary Services • Helpforce Cymru • Social Value Cymru • Tempo Time Credits • Volunteering Matters • WCPP (Wales Centre for Public Policy) • WCVA
Connected communities	People who move to a new area are met with a diverse and community-led 'welcome group'. People learn about different perspectives and cultures, engaging in discussion and newcomers get to know local people. The welcome groups connect newcomers to resources and relevant grassroots services if they are in need of support - for communication, interpretation, filling in paperwork etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • BAME Helpline Wales • Iberian and Latin American Association in Wales • Y Ty Gwyrdd
Community based care	Preventative health and social care are delivered locally. This happens through hubs of self-managed teams, including trained volunteers from within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpforce Cymru • WCVA Seeds of Change Project (based on an article by The Guardian)
Working better together	There are regular 'idea days' where cross-sector organisations come together to think about tackling common challenges in a mutually beneficial way, rather than duplicating work or competing. Funding is locally-led, sustainable and based on making a real difference. It supports longer term collaboration, innovation and resilience building. Like an ecosystem, relationships, flows of people, skills, assets and resources are prioritised based on need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Survey input • Workshop input • EYST Seeds of Change • COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK • Co-production Network for Wales • GOFOD3 • Social Value Cymru • Together for Change Pembrokeshire • Y Lab



...Cross-sector idea days

Photo by Jopwell from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
An inclusive civic society	People with protected characteristics are not only respected and included in civic life, but highly valued contributors or mentors. Thanks to more age ranges and diverse groups having the time to volunteer, intergenerational learning and socialising is commonplace (eg local food growing, skill exchanges etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Miss Tilley's • Learn Together Cymru, Volunteering Matters • Y Tŷ Gwyrdd • Aber Food Surplus
Community-led decision making	Everyone has a voice in what happens in their communities, with services co-produced by people who are impacted by them. A community-run online forum allows residents to develop and share new ideas, voice complaints, and submit proposals on anything from healthcare to infrastructure to the council and local decision makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Survey participants • C3SC • EYST Seeds of Change (WCVA project) based on Seeds of Good Anthropocenes • Flintshire VC
Recognition and positive narratives	The voluntary sector has clear, accessible communication with the public on and offline. The sector is good at sharing positive stories about volunteers' work and impact. There is open recognition of the value and benefits of volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey input • Workshop input • CVS (Council's for Voluntary Services) • Miss Tilley's • Volunteering Matters
Volunteering is a part of civic life	Volunteering is part of the national curriculum, everyone has an opportunity to volunteer. Volunteering opportunities are available for all no matter their experience, skills, capacity or available time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey input • Dewis Cymru • Youth Volunteering and Welsh Schools, WCVA
Accountable and adaptable cross-sector partnerships	All sectors work in partnership in order to respond to needs of communities and undertake effective co-production and co-delivery. More fluid and transparent infrastructure enables both adaptability and accountability eg there is commitment to fund impactful grassroots organisations and transparency on the way voluntary sector organisations are funded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewee input • Survey input • BLM Wales • Co-production Network for Wales • Hub Cymru Africa • Together for Change Pembrokeshire



3.4 Technology and innovation

SEEDS OF CHANGE

‘Digitalisation is exciting. It allows connection that wasn’t possible before and offers support for isolation and vulnerability, but it shouldn’t replace face-to-face communication. The voluntary sector is exceptional at meaningful connection.’

- Kate Young, Director at the All Wales Forum for Parents and Carers, project interviewee, June 2021

Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to references
Tech for good	Wales has a strong digital economy, with the voluntary sector utilising data collaboratively to help prioritise both local and national needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Data Cymru • TSSW • WCVA
Inclusive digital delivery	More public and civil services are delivered digitally - online or via automation. Due to citizen participation, these services are high quality and attuned to the needs of the people they are aimed at.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Digital Communities Wales • Flintshire VC
Social digital	By taking advantage of the adaptability enabled by remote technologies, alongside in person support, public and voluntary organisations have bridged the digital divide in communities. Essential services are more flexible and inclusive to a range of needs eg children, carers or people who can't leave their home can participate remotely in events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview input • Workshop input • Pride Cymru • Scouts Cymru • Welsh Government
Community-owned infrastructure	Key infrastructure projects are community owned or designed with local people. For instance, there are hydro power centres, zero carbon, low impact houses, biodiversity sites and solar farms along the coast of Wales - reinvigorating coastal economies and livelihoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Partneriaeth Ogwen • The Guardian • Ty'n Llan • Wales Online • Ynni Ogwen
Driving a circular economy	As part of a drive to transition Wales to an equitable, circular and carbon negative economy, microchips are used to track and manage recycling, as well as other supply chains, across Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Post • reSource CIC • Smile Plastics • Welsh Government
Sustainable agriculture	Drones, sensors and data, precision and vertical farming are used to increase efficiency and sustainability of agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Post • Daily Post
Smart rural	New green technologies, digital infrastructure and entrepreneurial initiatives in rural Wales has reinvigorated many areas. There are thriving, innovative and regenerative tourism and rural living conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangor University • Cardiff University • Mentor Môn • Wales Rural Observatory



...Circular supply chains and low impact houses

Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels

3.5 Legislation

SEEDS OF CHANGE

‘Partnerships are increasingly important in the sector. What is the role of civil society in building back better? How to persuade Government that civil society has useful contributions on policy and reposition the sector as a solution provider to gnarly policies?’

- Vicky Browning interviewee, CEO at ACEVO, (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations), interviewee, June 2021

Photo by Shengpengpeng Cai on Unsplash

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Voluntary sector as Partner to Government and the Senedd	The voluntary sector is no longer considered ‘third sector’ but a respected partner and policy advisor to Government, the Senedd and public sector bodies, that has a genuine role in shaping legislation or solutions to better respond to citizen’s needs. Each sector is trusted as having expertise in their respective fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewee input• Survey input• Workshop input• ACEVO• North Wales Local Resilience Forum
Social prescribing	Social prescribing is embedded. The public recognises the value of the voluntary sector and understands how they can both contribute to and fulfil their social, health and practical needs through its services. This is inclusive of both larger and grassroots, community organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• MIND• Primary Care One• University of South Wales
Rebuilding our Commons	A commons-based approach is in place for shared resources such as water and public space to manage it sustainably for the wellbeing of all, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• EYST Seeds of Change (WCVA project) based on Seeds of a Good Anthropocenes• Renew Wales• Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Tax leverage for volunteering	Due to the increased influence and recognition of the voluntary sector, the Government applies taxes as a tool to support capacity and resources. For instance, there are tax breaks for companies than provide work time for staff to volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Brewin Dolphin
UK wide partnerships	The voluntary sector has strong relationships with public and voluntary organisations across the UK. Organisations take the lead where their strengths lie. Strategic alliances support and ensure learning, and create a clear understanding of local and national needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Survey input• WCVA• NICVA, SCVO, WCVA• Y Lab



3.6 Environmental

SEEDS OF CHANGE

‘I don’t think the topics are mutually exclusive - eg recovering from the pandemic, climate change, wellbeing and equality need to be tackled together... A positive future would include communities organising, co-operatively owning and running assets for themselves.’

- Tamsin Stirling, Freelancer and Trustee on the Board of the Bevan Foundation, survey participant, June 2021

Photo by Allan Mas from Pexels

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Nature and wellbeing	The community owns or manages local nature - creating opportunities for recreation, learning, biodiversity and work. Safe and accessible rewilded parks allow people to improve their health and wellbeing, as well support ecological and spiritual development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• WCVA Seeds of Change (based on seeds of good anthropocenes)• Beyond Greenspace• Down to Earth• Linc Cymru• Lais y Goedwig
Localising energy and reducing cost	Communities and local institutions (eg schools) produce their own green energy for households and business, owning energy production systems and storage, generating income and reducing energy costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Partneriaeth Ogwen• WCVA Seeds of Change (based on Green Alliance)
Community ownership and income	Many public buildings are owned by the community and generate income or opportunities for participation. Empty high street shops are repurposed based on societal needs eg as climate emergency centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• WCVA Seeds of Change• Plunkett Foundation• Pub is the hub• The Guardian• Wales Co-operative Centre
Green and healthy living	Everyone in the community has access to clean air, nature, sustainable and affordable transport, powered by renewable energy. Active travel is encouraged with easy access bike schemes and walkable cities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• WCVA Seeds of Change project (based on The Big Lemon)• Cynnal Cymru• Drosi Bikes• River Simple• Transport for Wales• Welsh Government
Healing nature and ourselves	A nature recovery action plan, increased protected sites like national parks and nature partnerships engages residents, communities and businesses to define actions for a healthy biodiverse and nature-rich Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop input• Daily Post• Friends of Mangam Park• Renew Wales• Wales Biodiversity Partnership

Seed title	Description	Sources and links to online references
Community sharing	Every community has a library of things where people can borrow things they don't own, donate things they don't use, and learn DIY or sustainable skills from residents eg food growing, clothes repair etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benthyg Cymru • EYST Seeds of Change (WCVA project) • reSource CIC
Just transition to regenerative practices	Farmers are supported to upskill, train and transition to regenerative practices eg Regenerative ocean farming of kelp on the coast to help revive ecosystems with food production methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Economics Foundation • WCVA Seeds of Change project, based on Seeds of Good Anthropocenes
A long-term response to multiple crises	Climate and COVID-19 recovery community responses are intertwined, bridging short-term and long-term solutions. Sectors collaborate to rebuild a green economy, in a way that addresses the climate and nature emergencies, increases economic equality within society and enhances wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey input • COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK • Down to Earth • North Wales Local Resilience Forum • The National • The Trussel Trust
Locally grown food	Locally grown food is accessible and integrated into both urban and rural areas. Food is produced by many well connected, small scale businesses, charities and grassroots groups. This has led to higher carbon capture, food security and healthier, more connected communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop input • Farm Garden • Monmouthshire County Council • WWF (World Wildlife Fund)



...Community-owned land

Photo by Zen Chung from Pexels



...Clean air and green transport

Photo by KBO Bike on Unsplash

4. Future vision for 2030

**CO-DESIGNED WITH PROJECT PARTICIPANTS
FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN WALES IN 2030**



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APPROACH TO CO-DESIGNING THE FUTURE VISION

The future vision has been shaped by the seeds of change, survey and feedback in participatory workshops. The vision is expansive, to include the contributions of everyone who participated in one place.

Including diverse points of view has been central to the process. It's important to acknowledge there are many plural and differing future visions which are welcome. The intention is for this to be a springboard to support more visioning, conversations and actions that will positively impact the future.



'Health and wellbeing, climate change and education [should be prioritised] as this was what came out of the manifesto young people wrote at the beginning of 2021.'

'Policies in relation to digital spaces and places, environmental conservation and circular economy [will be the most relevant trends to the voluntary sector over the coming decade].'

- Daniel Townsend, Youth Work Manager for Youth Cymru, survey participant, June 2021

Photo by Alexandr Podvalny from Pexels

Vision for the voluntary sector in Wales 2030

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS' PREFERRED FUTURE VISION

The role of the voluntary sector and civic society is valued by, and connected to, all other societal sectors. A combination of environmental, social, political and economic change have resulted in significant challenges and re-shaping in the voluntary sector. Continued disruptions are increasingly addressed through collaborations which blur the boundaries between business, public and voluntary sectors. An improvement in the standard of living for most, combined with a focus on wellbeing and a movement toward the sharing economy have resulted in many more people offering their skills and knowledge to the voluntary sector.

The voluntary sector is embedded, represents multi-cultural Wales, and is more bottom-up and grassroots led. People are able to engage in projects easily through a range of global and community platforms and are able to quickly access the physical, financial and information-sharing tools they need to deliver high impact initiatives in their communities – both locally and virtually.



Illustration courtesy of the [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#)
Icons by [Futurice](#)

Vision themes for the voluntary sector in Wales 2030

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS' PREFERRED FUTURE VISION



A. Together, we are empowered to face changes. Things can be unpredictable due to shifting global trends, complex economic, social and political change alongside addressing climate and ecological recovery. We will help each other in our communities by having the right tools to fix problems, and by changing the way we work to support our future vision as one.



B. Our world is in our hands. The parks and buildings we enjoy, the skills we share and our stories and cultures — we can pool all these together to make a neighbourhood where everyone belongs. We design and deliver our essential services in close teamwork with the Government, public and private sectors, and the framework for that teamwork identifies the voluntary sector as an essential partner. We own some of our community spaces and we have a say in how they are run.



C. In Wales, everyone has enough. Everyone has access to education, food, healthcare, housing and opportunities for making the most of our skills. As our essential needs are met, we have more time and energy to get involved in community life and volunteering.



D. Digital technology is a good suite of tools, to build relationships and networks. The internet, social media and messaging platforms can connect us all to share information and skills. They are tools which can keep our links going strong, at home in our communities and at work with partners. These tools allow us to collaborate at a regional, national and international level.



E. Wales makes you feel well. Wales is a good place to be born, go to school, grow up, work and run a business. There is wonderful countryside to enjoy and good opportunities to make a living without 'life in the fast lane.' People are treated fairly and with respect which leads to healthy lives. Welsh culture is celebrated by all, whilst respecting and valuing all the cultures that make Wales. Our society is outward-looking, embracing our multicultural roots, our neighbours, and learning from what other countries are achieving for wellbeing.



F. We have new partnerships. We work together to solve problems, and sometimes form previously unlikely alliances, or use ways to work that have not been tried before. This includes new ways to raise funds for the services we want, as well as sharing people's valuable time and skills.



G. Knowledge from everywhere. We are the experts in our own communities and if we don't know something, we can quickly ask someone who does. We can talk over the internet with someone in a different country about a social challenge, and come up with solutions. Being able to share knowledge across regions and across the country helps us to share solutions that work.



H. More ways to create wealth. The right services in our neighbourhoods are funded in different ways. We invest money, receive grants from other charities or businesses that admire our work, or are paid by our partners for things we do very well, all in addition to being given sustainable funds by the Government.



I. Our Future is our children and young people. We provide good education, family support and exciting opportunities for our children and young people to develop self-esteem, leadership and entrepreneurial skills. The fields of sport, arts and culture, environmental stewardship, technology and communications all offer opportunities for youth to develop their talents through play, work, training and volunteering. There are well-paid opportunities for young people to build their careers within the voluntary sector, and be change-makers as well as have a great sense of belonging and aspiration.



J. In Wales, we take time to listen. Citizen engagement provides guidance for service creation but also the tools for delivery. Practical work is always followed by time to reflect, adjust and refine the narrative for the next round of work delivered within the voluntary sector. This listening takes time whilst building relationships, and functions to increase understanding between communities and agencies. It is resourced properly because it is a highly-valued component of measuring success and forms part of our long-term strategic planning.

5. Participant action ideas

ACTION IDEAS TO BRING THE FUTURE VISION TO LIFE



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THE THREE HORIZONS METHOD

This activity explored the preferred future vision statements in a participatory workshop to identify a set of action ideas to help work towards the preferred future. The aim was to start building bridges collectively from 'where we are' to 'where we want to be'.

The following statements are ideas for actions the voluntary sector in Wales can take to achieve the co-designed 10-year vision. The workshop included representation of larger voluntary organisations, diverse grassroots organisations, the office of the Future Generations Commissioner, Charity Commission, the public and private sector, as well as a WCVA sister organisation SCVO.

PARTICIPANT ACTION IDEAS

Six main areas were highlighted by participants for the voluntary sector to take action:

- A. Support inclusion and fairness of access to technology and help overcome the digital divide
- B. Redefine what success means and how social impact and value is measured
- C. Grow local, international and cross-sector collaboration that raises the voluntary sector profile and builds on a positive narrative
- D. Support genuine co-production and co-delivery of community-centric infrastructure
- E. Empower individuals and communities to be self-sufficient
- F. Learn and build on what worked effectively for the voluntary sector and communities in the pandemic, to strengthen the voluntary sector and wider society

These have been expanded upon below, to include additional detail about ideas for suggested actions:

A. To support fairness of access to technology and help overcome the digital divide the voluntary sector can...

- **Educate to improve lives:** Educate people on how technology can be applied to improve people's lives and respond to diverse needs eg to support access, neurodiversity, fill in educational gaps, reduce social isolation etc.
- **Enable participation:** Use volunteers to contribute to upskilling and showing people how to use digital tools so they can participate in civic projects eg citizen's assemblies.



Photo by Eliott Reyna on Unsplash

B. To redefine what success means and how social impact and value is measured the voluntary sector can...

- **Take the lead:** In defining what success means using measures of social value and wider wellbeing that places short and long-term impact for people, community and society at the heart. For instance, wellbeing or stories of lived experience as a means of measuring success.
- **Share and advocate best practice:** By making it easier to measure how the voluntary sector is contributing to society and providing return on investment eg showing how to measure against the Future Commissioner's well-being goals and influencing the way the Welsh Government defines and measures success.

C. To support local, international and cross-sector collaboration that raises the voluntary sector profile and builds on a positive narrative the voluntary sector can...

- **Reach out to the private sector:** Send invitations to publicly minded members of the private sector for exciting collaborations that drive their business and voluntary services.
- **Share best practices internationally:** Amplify the positive achievements and stories of the sector so they are recognised. Encourage international allegiances and networking to help identify common challenges, share and realise good ideas.
- **Build on recognition of the voluntary sector to increase influence and funds:** Encourage the Government to see the voluntary sector as a valued, expert partner by evidencing and networking around sector expertise eg proven return on investment in the pandemic, communities, health and wellbeing. Aim to reduce barriers to funding and partnerships, especially supporting diverse grassroots organisations.

D. To support genuine collaboration, co-production and co-delivery of community-centric infrastructure the voluntary sector can...

- **Share within our communities:** Enhance resource and asset sharing within the community via a hub to enable more varied use eg library of things, school or community centre.
- **Local, flexible sources of wealth:** Encourage collaboration and dialogue between leaders at every level of society, in order to co-deliver services that work for people and generate new sources of localised wealth.
- **Recognise the value of diverse grassroots voluntary organisations and support them:** Approach and involve diverse grassroots organisations in decision-making in the way that works for them, for instance interpretation, word of mouth etc. Support them through transparent, accessible, accountable and equitable funding processes.

- **Increase inclusion and representation of communities we serve:** Take action to increase diverse representation and lived experience across the different levels of voluntary organisations including Senior Management and Boards of Trustees. Expand networks to include critical friends and create environments where diverse points of view are empowered ie welcomed, listened to and their input acted upon.

E. To empower individuals and communities to be self-sufficient the voluntary sector can...

- **Help everyone feel safe and welcome:** Support the creation of a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing Wales where everyone can flourish into their best selves and contribute their skills eg through developing belonging infrastructure.
- **Increase transparency and access:** Provide communities with support to access knowledge, skills and training so they become more resilient whilst reaching their goals. Share information transparently so the right tools are accessible at the right time.
- **Shift power to communities:** Develop infrastructure that puts more power in the hands of communities, enables wealth and resources to be channelled flexibly to where it's most needed eg away from unsuccessful initiatives and towards grassroots organisations that are having the most impact.

F. To learn and build on what worked well for the voluntary sector and communities in the pandemic, in a way that strengthens the voluntary sector and wider society the voluntary sector can...

- **Review and learn:** From what worked well in the pandemic for the voluntary sector, build on strengths; community spirit, the improved technology use and communication between partners, strengthening partnerships formed and/or harnessing the energy of new volunteers.
- **Evidence return on investment in the voluntary sector:** During the pandemic the voluntary sector proved its value. Develop clear evidence for return on investment in the sectors' highly impactful, localised support - not only for individuals, but for families, communities and society.
- **Build sector confidence and position:** The voluntary sector can be confident that it has shown its worth during the pandemic, it has been flexible and proactive. It's in a good place to challenge preconceptions of other sectors and its role in relation to Government, as an expert partner or solutions provider for instance.

6. Next steps and getting involved

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THE VISION A REALITY



Photo by Yan Krukov from Pexels

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Throughout this journey we’ve been asked about how individuals and organisations can help with this work, get involved and have an impact on the future. Please view this report as a resource to inspire, inform and start more exciting initiatives across communities.

Don’t be afraid to take the lead on suggested actions. If you aren’t sure where to start, here are a few ideas based on organisation and interest:

I am interested in...	I’m in the voluntary sector	I’m in the public sector	I’m in the private sector / other sector
...providing input or feedback	Reach out with feedback or ideas about the report content and/or project process. We’d love to hear from you! Contact: WCVA policy team about the ‘Futures Exercise’ at help@wcva.cymru		
...how my organisation can help and/or get involved	A. Spread the word and seed ideas! Share this report with your community, networks or organisation so you can discuss it. B. Connect. The seeds of change are based on real ideas and initiatives happening now. If you see a seed you’d like to learn from, grow or connect to then take a look at the sources. Reach out and start a conversation with the relevant organisation. C. Strategic thinking. Before your organisation’s next strategy meeting, request participants read this report and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What parts of the future vision, seeds or suggested actions resonate against our vision and mission? Is there anything we’d add?• Which suggested actions could we contribute to and how?• What additional actions could be missing that we could take?• Are there any resources or networks we could connect to? D. Start making a plan so you can act on your ideas. Reach out and let us know so we can keep dialogue going.		

I am interested in...	I’m in the voluntary sector	I’m in the public sector	I’m in the private sector / other sector
...how my organisation can help and/or get involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner up. Identify the public and private sector organisation(s) that most align with your aims and values.• Collaborate. Reach out and initiate a discussion about how you could collaborate around your common goals to support one of the actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on what the vision and actions mean for your context. Identify initiatives in your organisation that could support the future vision or actions outlined.• Reach out to related voluntary organisations and let them know, discuss how you could collaborate. <p>Consider the role you could play in increasing active citizenship and volunteering. Eg provide paid time, reduce employees work time, lobby on behalf of the voluntary sector, provide funding, collaborate around a shared goal, exchange skills or support upskilling etc.</p> <p>Reach out to grassroots voluntary organisations in your local community. Learn about their challenges, ideas and goals. Listen and see if your organisation can collaborate with or support them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on what the vision and actions mean for your context. Identify the voluntary organisation(s) that most align with your aims and values.• Reach out and discuss how you could collaborate around your common goals to support one of the actions.
...the process, tools and methods	A. Download the toolkits. For more background about the process or to experiment with the tools and methods yourself, the toolkits provide facilitation guidelines and templates for groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Click here for WCVA & SOIF ‘Building Better Futures Toolkit’• Click here for Futurice ‘Lean Futures Creation Toolkit 2.0’ B. Learn from others. Read these blogs and listen to the podcasts about other communities in Wales who have used the Building Better Futures Toolkit to learn more about how you could use it locally. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Click to read: Better Futures Community Foresight Project blog C. Talk to us. Reach out for a first chat about how these futures thinking tools and methods could help your organisation or community. WCVA policy team about the ‘Futures Exercise’ at help@wcva.cymru and Futurice UK about the ‘WCVA Futures Exercise’ at co-create@futurice.co.uk		

NEXT STEPS TO BRING THE VISION TO LIFE

WCVA and TSSW members will now use the project outputs to inform their strategic planning, identify opportunities to support the voluntary sector and contribute to reaching the shared future vision over the next 5 years, in line with their own role and mission.

We hope the report will also be useful to other organisations to support their own strategic thinking and provide another example of how the Building Better Futures Toolkit can be used in practice.



Photo by Sora Shimazaki from Pexels

7. Acknowledgements

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS PROJECT



Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

We really appreciate the time, openness and thorough feedback from everyone involved. Your input has been an invaluable contribution to this work, and we look forward to building on the conversations, learnings and positive connections in future.

PARTICIPANTS

- **WCVA Futures - Wales voluntary sector community survey, June-July 2021:** Project and report content is based on survey contributions from employees of over 50 different organisations in various roles including Senior staff and board members from a diverse range of voluntary sector perspectives and locations across Wales. A note that participants represented their own individual views rather than speaking on behalf of their organisation.
- Participatory Workshop Series, May - July 2021
- 6 In-depth interviews, May-June 2021

KEY COLLABORATORS

The WCVA Senior Management Team provided feedback at key points in the project and will be utilising this report to inform the WCVA 5 year strategy review in 2021.

- Matthew Brown, Director of Operations, WCVA
- John Gallanders, Chief Officer, AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham)
- Chris Lines, Communications, PR Consultant and Non-Executive Director, WCVA
- Ruth Marks, Chief Executive, WCVA
- Sara Selleck, Assistant Director of Operations and Marketing, WCVA
- Judith Stone, Assistant Director, WCVA

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

- Illustrations courtesy of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
- Taylor Edmonds, Poet in Residence for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe
- Matthew Edwards, Report Proofreader, Futurice
- Hannah Rawlinson, Report Proofreader, Futurice

Closing Reflections - Reconsidering Future

We cannot look to the future without acknowledging and holding space for the present. The pandemic has been and continues to be an incredibly challenging period, especially for those who have been disproportionately affected. Effort, collaboration and support from across society will be needed to achieve both recovery and a better future.

We'd like to thank [Taylor Edmonds](#), Poet in Residence for [the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#), Sophie Howe, for capturing the experience of this time alongside a hopeful vision in her poem entitled 'Reconsidering Future'.

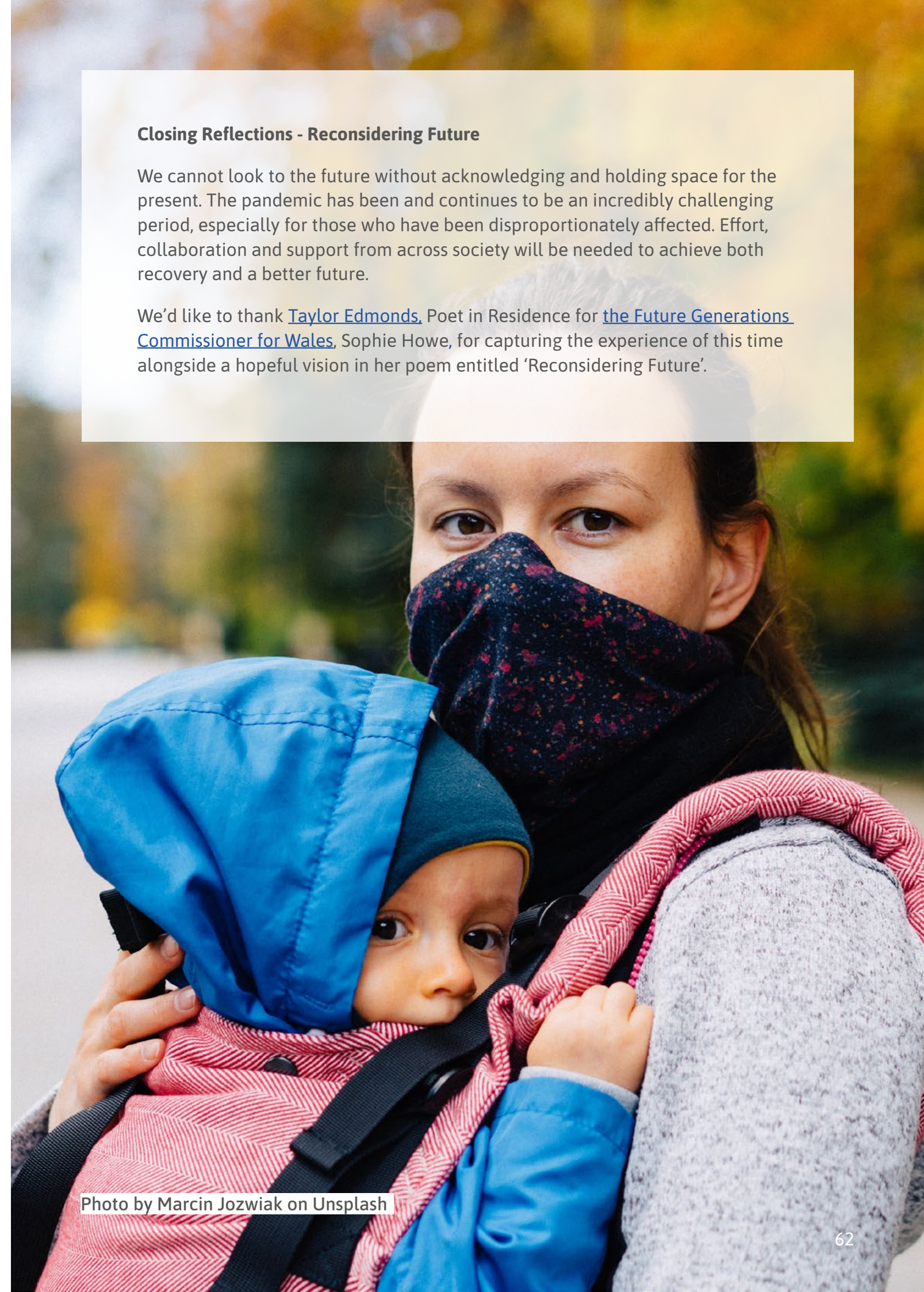


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Reconsidering Future

Let's rewrite the story.

In this version, your mother doesn't take a second job,
no 50-hour week and empty seat at the table.

Without the weight of night shifts on her back
she goes to college, starts to dream
of soil-stained hands, a community garden,
of reading stories to the sleepy rhythm of your breath.

Your next-door neighbour lives.

His body lighter, he starts to paint, fills the walls
with hues of watercolour. The haunting
eviction and red-lettered final warnings
never come through the letterbox.

His children know only how to be children,
full-bellied, planning a trip to space,
to build a secret den in the treetops.

Photo by Monstera from Pexels

What kind of home is Wales

when a third of young people are living in poverty?

Let's change the narrative, break the cycle

while our toes are curled at the brink.

Reverse queues for food banks,

end job insecurity, rising unemployment,

homelessness, the long wait for welfare

cheques that barely make ends meet.

We may fail and stumble,

but imagine a country

where everyone is paid enough to truly live.

Without the fear of losing it all,

who could you become?

Freedom to imagine, experiment, move

with purpose, defined by more

than a job title, possessions, productivity.

When we own our bodies,

I want you to just lay here in the grass

and breathe.

- Taylor Edmonds, Poet in Residence for the Future
Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe

[Link to poem reading](#)

Photo by Chang Hsien on Unsplash

8. Endnotes



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