



**2024 | ANNUAL
ICMA | CONFERENCE**

SEPTEMBER 21-25 | PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Tackling Poverty: Community Wealth Building & Financial Literacy

Zamaria Ball Georgia Southern MPA Student

The Issue

- Poverty is a multifaceted issue that affects many communities worldwide, including Statesboro, GA.
- Addressing this problem can lead to a more equitable society
- Research shows that community wealth building and financial literacy can assist individuals suffering from these actions.
 - An organization of leading advanced industrial countries, has ranked the United States worst among surveyed nations in its level of inequality, highest in poverty, lowest in life expectancy, highest in infant mortality, and highest in obesity (Dubb, S, 2016)
- The strategy of community wealth building involves leveraging existing funds from public and nonprofit anchor institutions like hospitals, universities, and museums. (Dubb, S, 2016)

Importance of Community Wealth Building + Financial Literacy

- Community wealth building is an approach to economic development that emphasizes local, democratic, and shared ownership and control of community asset.
- Financial literacy involves equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their finances effectively, including budgeting, saving, investing, and managing debt.
- Poverty is perpetuated by limited economic opportunities, financial exclusion, and lack of access to financial resources and knowledge. Focusing on CWB and financial literacy, we address the root causes, promoting a more equitable society where all individuals have the tools and opportunities to improve their financial well-being.

Evidence

- Dubb (2016) shows that community wealth building, through local ownership and democratic control, strengthens economic stability and resilience.
- Chicago's community wealth building program focuses on these similar goals. The program has led to increased local employment, higher wages, neighborhood stabilization, enhanced community and household wealth, and greater civic engagement.



Evidence

- Cleveland's Evergreen Cooperative is an initiative that created a network of worker owned cooperative providing jobs in low income neighborhoods.
 - Increased income stability for employees, reinvestment of profits into the community, and enhanced local economic activity.
- Preston Model in the UK redirects public spending to local businesses, cooperatives, and community enterprises.
 - Reduced unemployment, increased local business growth, and strengthened community control over economic resources.



Evidence

- Financial literacy programs in low income communities lead to improved financial behaviors, such as increased savings, reduced debt, and better financial planning.
 - Kenya's YouthSave program provided financial education to young people, resulting in increased savings rates and better financial planning.
 - Brazil's Financial Literacy Initiative resulted in improved financial decision making among low income families.



Connection to Statesboro

- Statesboro, GA has a higher poverty rate than the national average.
- Challenges include lack of affordable housing, limited access to financial services, and a shortage of well paying jobs.



2024 | **ANNUAL**
ICMA | **CONFERENCE**
SEPTEMBER 21-25 | PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Execution

- Engagement: Survey's, focus groups, and public meetings to gather information from residents, community leaders, and business owners.
- The success of Community Wealth building and financial literacy programs in Chicago, Cleveland, and other communities shows these strategies are effective.
- Adapting proven models to fit the unique needs of Statesboro, will allow the program to address root causes of poverty and promote sustainable economic development.

Existing Programs & Resources

- **BIG Entrepreneurial Center**
 - The BIG Center in Statesboro supports local entrepreneurs by providing resources, training, and mentorship.
 - BIG can facilitate the establishment of worker cooperative and other community based economic initiatives by providing essential resources and support in financial literacy.
- **Banks and Financial Institutions**
 - Local banks are crucial for providing the necessary capital for small business and community projects.
 - Partnering with the banks to develop accessible loan products and catering education on the loan process. In addition, banks collaborate in offering financial literacy workshops to complement the CWB initiatives.



Comparative Analysis: Other Communities Approach

- Universal Basic Income (UBI) Experiments
 - Oakland, CA
 - Provided low income families with a guaranteed monthly income without strings attached.
 - Recipients used funds to improve their quality of life, including purchasing healthier food, paying medical expenses, and reducing debt
 - Patterson, New Jersey
 - Implemented a UBI pilot providing participants with a lump sum of money.
 - Contrary to concerns, most participants used the funds for essential needs and investments in their future, such as education in healthcare.
- UBI Experiments demonstrate that direct financial support can lead to positive outcomes without fostering dependency.

Implementation Strategy

- Establish a Nonprofit or Create a program with an already established non profit organization.
- Secure Initial Funding: Applying for grants, seeking private donations, and secure in-kind contributions.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, banks, The BIG Entrepreneurial Center, and community organizations.
- Start by implementing pilot projects for worker cooperatives and financial literacy workshops to test and refine approach.
- Expand successful pilot program and ensuring continuous community engagement and feedback.
- Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress, measure outcomes, and make necessary adjustments.

Reason to Implement

- Community Control: By ensuring that community members have control over economic resources leads to greater empowerment and sustainable development.
- Integrated Approach: By combining direct financial support (like UBI) with community wealth building and financial literacy education can address both immediate needs and long term financial stability.
- Partnerships: Successful programs strengthen community partnerships between government, private sector, and community organizations.



2024 | **ANNUAL**
ICMA | **CONFERENCE**
SEPTEMBER 21-25 | PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

References

Dubb, S. (2016). Community wealth building forms: What they are and how to use them at the local level. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 30(2), 141–152. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2015.0074>

Chicago Community Wealth Building Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from [Chicago CWB Program](#)

Williams, R., Crooks, V. A., Stajduhar, K. I., Allan, B., & Cohen, J. (2006). Barriers to accessing the Compassionate Care Benefit. *Healthcare Policy Journal*.

Greenaway, D. (2005). Amending definitions for the Compassionate Care Benefit. *Federal Government Report*.

Armstrong, P., & O'Grady, E. (2004). Evaluating the Compassionate Care Benefit. *Health Council of Canada*.