

POLICY REPORT



PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TOOLKIT

**BUILDING LOCAL DEMOCRATIC ECONOMIES
THROUGH PUBLIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**



“The Progressive Public Procurement toolkit emerges as a crucial resource that not only contributes to expanding our feminist imagination on our collective economic futures but also underscores the importance of solidarity in the face of a complex polycrisis affecting many nations particularly in the Global South. If you are struggling to envision a world transformed through feminist economic principles, if you are looking for inspiring actions through mutual cooperation, and if you are interested in the promotion of economic alternatives that can be translated into policy changes, please read this.”

– FELOGENE ANUMO, Regional Director Africa, Thousand Currents

“For most of us, institutional procurement and supply chains are something we rarely, if ever, think about. But in this report, authors Louisa Valentin and Lavinia Steinfort share a powerful – indeed breakthrough – insight: that the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on goods and services each year by public entities around the world can be leveraged to redirect local economies towards more inclusive, equitable and democratic ends. Based on detailed case studies in ten low- and middle-income countries, many in the global South, the transformative power of progressive public procurement policies becomes apparent. At a time when social programs suffer under austerity across the globe, this report argues for a concerted effort to refocus existing supply chain funds in a way that is not only good for institutions, but overwhelmingly for communities – particularly those that are most disadvantaged and marginalized by market forces. Who knew that public procurement of goods and services could be a beacon of such hope and progressive change!”

– TED HOWARD, Co-founder and President Emeritus of The Democracy Collaborative

“I am delighted to hear about the publication of the Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit including case studies of cooperation between local governments and community-based organisations. Having worked in both local governments and social movements, I experience everyday how participatory management of public service involving local citizens are the most successful management experiences because the community together, is not seeking profit, but good delivery of services and dignity. I really hope that employees of local governments and politicians can read this toolkit and understand that participation leads to solidarity, transparency, accountability, and, after all the delivery of better public services.”

– RENATA C. BOULOS, Executive Coordinator at Ação Brasileira de Combate à Desigualdade

“The report gives practitioners and advocates useful tools to mobilise local resources to make business and economy work for people, communities and environment. The diversification of the case studies demonstrates that when all stakeholders take democratic and solidarity economy seriously, innovative approaches can be created to fit into different social and political contexts.”

– TIANLE CHANG, Director of Beijing Farmers' Market and Founding editor of Foodthink, China

“The Toolkit cleverly uses case studies to weave together a vision for public procurement that advances rights, gender justice, and environmental wellbeing, by placing local communities and workers at the centre of state spending. These are examples of the future we struggle for.”

– GILAD ISAACS, Executive Director at the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ)

“I wish we had the Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit when we launched our campaign to build economic democracy by assuming municipal power in Jackson, Mississippi. If we had it we would have avoided a few critical mistakes early on, and made more strategic decisions at the same time that would have enabled more profound gains in the mid and long term. I encourage anyone and everyone looking to democratize your local economy to study this work and apply its core lessons in your own context to help you build the transformative power you need.”

– KALI AKUNO, Executive Director, Cooperation Jackson

“When we think about how to promote progressive social change, let's face it, we rarely think about public procurement. But given the amount of resource that governments spend on buying goods and services, it is actually a key tool for achieving this. This Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit shows how public procurement can be used to foster such social change, strengthening partnerships with local, environmentally responsible and not-for-profit producers, improving conditions for workers, increasing community wealth and democratising public decision-making and the economy. Presenting a range of case studies from different geographies in the global North and South, this toolkit provides an overview of the most interesting progressive procurement experiences, and a source of inspiration for promoting similar social change in other contexts.”

– IOLANDA BIANCHI, Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral researcher, Urban Studies Institute of the University of Antwerp

“We absolutely need to invest public spending into regenerative economic practices that are democratically controlled and build wealth for community members. My generation has witnessed the coffers of the welfare state being drained by greedy corporations, for the obscene profit of the few. This new toolkit from the Transnational Institute is an important guide to how we can tip the scale back in favor of the many.”

– YVONNE YEN LUI, Co-Founder and Co-Director of Solidarity Research Center

In response to today's growing crises, the *Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit* introduces ten in-depth case studies and several shorter examples that showcase how local governments can use procurement to combat socio-economic injustices and environmental harm.

By working together with community-based organisations and worker-owned cooperatives, public authorities are using procurement to re-invest public money into localised value chains that enhance living standards, dignify livelihoods through creating secure jobs and improving working conditions, create solidarity and shared wealth across the rural-urban spectrum, and spur a more democratic economy through public community partnerships and popular participation. In short, progressive public procurement can provide local governments and larger public authorities with the power to reclaim control over value chains and redirect privatised profits into the hands of their local communities.

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Executive summary

Progressive public procurement, the purchase of goods, services and works by the public sector under clearly defined social criteria, is gaining traction around the world. Governments and their agencies are turning to local and more social producers and service providers for the procurement of necessary goods and services, with the aim of spending public money in a way that benefits local communities and creates wealth for the many instead of the few.

- strengthen workers' rights by procuring from democratically governed member-owned cooperatives,
- follow clear social goals to reduce existing socio-economic inequalities,
- increase citizens' and/or workers' involvement by creating mechanisms for participation, and
- re-invest public money to transform the local economy in ways that contribute to community wealth-building.

It highlights how progressive public procurement enables local authorities and communities to enhance collective and democratic ownership. This is in line with The Democracy Collaborative's work to develop community wealth-building as an action-oriented approach that seeks to change the nature and operations of the local economy through claiming direct control over its assets so that it produces lasting outcomes that work for people, place and planet.¹

Through procuring public goods and services from democratically organised cooperatives and local or minority-owned businesses, public authorities create strong links between governments and citizens — so called public community collaborations.² Building on TNI's 2021 report *Democratic and Collective Ownership of Public Goods and Services: Exploring public community collaborations*, public community collaborations or partnerships present transformative ways in which citizens are actively involved in the work of government. Participatory approaches to public procurement further strengthen workers' rights, trust in local governments, and transparency, and allow local economies to grow stronger as wealth is generated and reinvested into local communities. Through public community partnerships in public procurement, we can witness a shift from outsourcing public works to the lowest bidder on the global stage to awarding contracts to community-based enterprises, worker-owned cooperatives, family farmers, and minority-owned and women-led enterprises.

Each of the case studies presented in this toolkit provides unique tools for policy makers and procurement agents in local, regional and national governments. While the legal, social and economic context in each locality is different, we aim to highlight broader lessons that can be learned from these examples, which may serve as inspiration as to how progressive public procurement practices could be co-created and consolidated in other contexts.

The case studies are a selection of the many diverse, innovative practices that already exist around the world. This report by no means paints a complete

picture; there are probably other good practices that escaped our mapping. Instead, this preliminary research combines some highlights based on examples that were accessible to or already known by the authors, as well as practices we found in other reports.

While each case study provides valuable tools for public procurement agents, five themes resurface throughout the toolkit:

1 Local public value chains build community wealth

Procuring locally delivers added value to society, responding to the specific social and environmental concerns of a locality. It provides democratic control over value chains and reduces negative impacts on the environment. It enables authorities and residents to actively participate in community wealth-building by leveraging the purchasing power of (local) government bodies and reinvesting public money into the communities they are anchored in. Cases from Zanzibar (Tanzania), Northland (Aotearoa/New Zealand), Kerala (India) and Qali Warma (Peru) showcase the enormous benefits of building public value chains. What's more, the following themes on public collaborations, rural-urban solidarity, defending human rights and formal jobs, and popular participation can be best understood as core dimensions of community wealth-building.

2 Public community partnerships underpin a democratic economy

Creating a collaborative ecosystem consisting of public and community-based actors can resist privatisation and strengthen public collaboration. This is crucial to nurturing the social fabric and a democratic economy in which working people are increasingly in charge. Case studies from Kerala (India), Barcelona (Spain) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil) demonstrate that public-public relationships can replace the long-promoted but extractive public-private partnerships. Public community partnerships pave the way for a local economy that is democratically organised.

3 Public procurement can strengthen rural-urban solidarity

Progressive public procurement practices can re-invent rural-urban relationships that are often based on extracting wealth and resources from rural communities for the benefit of rich, urban actors. Local procurement can create shared wealth across the rural-urban spectrum. Examples from Rennes (France) and São Paulo (Brazil) highlight the benefits of formal procurement contracts between urban municipalities and rural farmers that value and support agricultural workers and their produce, generating income security and more resilient ecosystems along the way.

4 Public procurement can defend human rights and formal jobs

Democratically elected representatives of local, regional, and national governments have a responsibility to defend and promote the human rights of citizens, workers, and discriminated communities who the capitalist profit-maximising system has been exploiting. By procuring goods and services from informal workers' cooperatives as part of a pathway to establish progressive and worker-led formalisation, governments can contribute to social

security and more stable incomes for impoverished community members, as cases from Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Pune (India), Recoleta (Chile) and Zanzibar (Tanzania) show. To sustainably formalise jobs and build public capacity in-house, local governments should enter into dialogue with workers to explore if they want to be hired as formal public sector servants, with the full rights, benefits and secure employment that should entail.

5 Popular participation improves public spending policies

Citizen participation is vital to ensure communities are able to decide together how public money is spent for the benefit of all members. A wide variety of approaches are emerging to enhance participation in the tendering process, with varying degrees of citizen involvement. Examples from Peru, the Philippines, Mexico and the Dominican Republic show how engaging groups such as parents, workers and people from discriminated groups on an ongoing basis can improve transparency and strengthen people's control over public funds. Opening up spending policies to popular participation makes procurement better serve local needs and enables local authorities to earn the trust of their residents.

Governments and their agencies have control over public money; they have to decide whether to finance exploitative corporations or re-invest this money into their local communities. This report demonstrates that local public procurement can be a tool to strengthen economic democracy and contribute to community wealth-building through sourcing goods and services socially and locally. Public spending provides local governments and larger public authorities with the power to reclaim control over value chains, redirect privatised profits into the hands of their local communities, promote labour and other human rights, and support democratic enterprises. We hope that this **Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit** will inspire and assist many more communities to put this power into action.

THE CASE STUDIES: A SUMMARY

CASE STUDY 1 STRENGTHENING THE POWER OF WOMEN WORKERS THROUGH FORMAL CONTRACTS: ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

For the semi-autonomous island Zanzibar, the improvement of its waste management and recycling operations has been a crucial topic on the public policy agenda for years. In 2017, in collaboration with the Centre for Science and Environment and the Zanzibar Environmental Management Authority (ZEMA), the Zanzibar Urban Municipal Council (ZUMC) launched a pilot programme to collect segregated waste in the Shaurimoyo neighbourhood within Zanzibar City, the island's capital. An essential part of the success of the pilot was the contracting of the Shaurimoyo Waste Management Society (SWMS), a cooperative of informal waste workers, which performs waste collection, recycling and community education tasks. As well as providing informal waste workers with a more secure income and opportunities to earn extra money through the sale of recyclable materials and dried compost, this waste collection method is crucial to reduce environmental degradation. The separation of

recyclable and reusable material, including organic waste, prior to collection means the amount of waste ending up in the landfill is reduced. Women waste workers, who are predominantly involved in the collection and processing of the waste, especially benefited from the formalisation and regularisation of their incomes, which contributes to securing their livelihoods.

CASE STUDY 2 PROMOTING INDIGENOUS SMALL BUSINESSES THROUGH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: NORTHLAND, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Through a progressive public procurement initiative by New Zealand's Ministry of Māori Development, Māori-owned business Yakas Construction was awarded the contract to build six public houses in November 2021. In supporting Māori businesses through procurement, Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrates how governments can use their buying power to build community wealth, promote social development, support minority-owned businesses, and foster local economic development. As a result, several Māori businesses have achieved access to financing and formal credit, as financial institutions are more willing to grant loans to Māori businesses with government contracts. Local economies are strengthened by the inflow of capital and increase in employment opportunities. As demonstrated by the case of Yakas Construction, the collaboration between government agencies and Māori businesses also helps to improve the well-being and living standards of Māori communities through the provision of targeted, affordable housing.

CASE STUDY 3 PROCUREMENT OF LABOUR COOPERATIVE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION: KERALA, INDIA

Asia's largest and one of India's oldest labour cooperative societies, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Ltd (ULCCS), is a key contractor of the state's Public Works Department, undertaking various infrastructure construction projects, such as building roads, highways and bridges. Today, ULCCS is a worker-owned cooperative that prides itself on the generous employee benefits and good working conditions and the high-quality service provision it is known for. The cooperative consists of over 13,000 workers, of whom more than one-third are migrant workers and roughly 30 per cent are women. The state government of Kerala has granted ULCCS 'accredited agency' status. Effectively, this means that for projects below a certain cost threshold the cooperative can receive government contracts directly, without going through tendering procedures. Moreover, the state has put regulations in place to ensure that cooperatives such as ULCCS receive preferential treatment for procurement contracts compared to private construction companies.

CASE STUDY 4 COOPERATIVE PROCUREMENT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING: BARCELONA, SPAIN

Barcelona's city council has strengthened its commitments to progressive public procurement practices in recent years and developed several guidelines to incorporate environmental, social and ethical standards into public procurement contracts. To address the shortage of public housing in the city, Barcelona created an innovative procurement model, partnering with housing cooperatives that construct affordable public housing units on municipally owned land. Particular attention is given to social and environmental criteria, such as the

use of building systems with a low environmental impact, how well proposed projects fit into the neighbourhood, and to what extent members of the co-operatives participate in the construction or remodelling. In 2017, Barcelona introduced the social procurement guidelines aim to boost the cooperative and social sector, while tightening rules for private corporations competing in public tenders. One year later, municipal investment in public co-housing projects amounted to €10.6 million, yielding 134 new public housing units.

CASE STUDY 5 SOURCING PRODUCTS FROM ORGANIC AND FAMILY FARMS FOR SCHOOL MEALS: SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

São Paulo operates one of the world's largest school feeding programmes, providing around 2.3 million meals per day for over one million students within its municipal area. Since 2012, the city has used its position as a food provider for many children and adolescents to promote healthy and nutritious meals — and to support local and organic producers. By 2015, São Paulo significantly expanded its acquisition of produce from family farms, investing over R\$25 million (approximately €4,540,000.00 as of April 2023) in procurement contracts with local farmers' cooperatives for various products including orange juice, rice and bananas. The initial target for 2017 was set at 3 per cent of the total products procured, with the aim of scaling the share to 100 per cent organic products by 2026. To realise this goal, São Paulo signed a contract for the purchase of 56,376 kg of organic leafy vegetables with COOPERAPAS, the city's only cooperative that specialises in organic food, which now consists of 36 member farmers.

CASE STUDY 6 PROTECTING GROUNDWATER AND SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS THROUGH CREATIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: RENNES, FRANCE

To fight water pollution from industrial agriculture and protect its water catchment, the city of Rennes introduced an innovative procurement concept that quickly spread to neighbouring municipalities. To circumvent EU regulations that do not allow the inclusion of local production criteria in public procurement contracts, Rennes initiated the *Terres de Sources* programme, a label that certifies farmers for following agroecological production principles, thereby safeguarding local water resources. Procurement contracts were rephrased to indicate the purchasing of a service rather than a product, such as 'yoghurt that safeguards local water resources'. In this way, the municipality was able to provide incentives to farmers to switch to ecological production methods while ensuring that 20 per cent of the food supplied to local school canteens is organic and sourced locally. In 2022, 105 local food partners organised themselves into a cooperative society of collective interest to promote *Terres de Sources* products to retailers, restaurants and other outlets, involve consumers and increase the number of farms in the programme.

CASE STUDY 7 ENDING PRECARIOUS WORKING CONDITIONS BY FORMALISING CONTRACTS WITH WASTE PICKER COOPERATIVES: BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL

Belo Horizonte, the capital city of the state of Minas Gerais, has been an important leader in the formalisation of waste-picking workers, putting an end to the informal and precarious working conditions the workers were

facing. After years of dialogue between the municipality and workers, the municipality formally contracted six waste pickers' cooperatives to carry out the door-to-door collection of separated waste. This open dialogue also manifested itself in continuous collaboration between different cooperatives and the municipality. Since September 2019 the waste picker cooperatives have been collecting, sorting, and recycling waste from 55 neighbourhoods. The example of Belo Horizonte shows that continuous exchange between workers and the municipality is essential to highlight the precarious working conditions informal waste pickers face and develop joint solutions to formalise their work. In 2020 alone, waste cooperatives in Belo Horizonte recycled more than 4,000 tonnes of paper, metal, glass and plastic.

CASE STUDY 8 SCALING THE BENEFITS OF WASTE WORKER FORMALISATION: PUNE, INDIA

Since 2008, India's first wholly worker-owned cooperative of self-employed waste collectors has provided door-to-door waste collection for the large city of Pune, home to 3.1 million people. Born out of a pilot programme to upskill 1,500 waste pickers, the cooperative SWaCH has grown to over 3,500 members and collects waste from over 800,000 households per day. The exemplary cooperation between the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and the workers' cooperative SWaCH has served as the basis for national policy changes and as inspiration for other cities. Moreover, the issuing of ID cards to the waste pickers by the PMC has influenced the national government, prompting it to pass legislation in 2016 that requires all cities to register waste pickers, provide them with ID cards, and integrate them into formal waste management systems and decision-making.

CASE STUDY 9 INTERCULTURAL WORKERS' COOPERATIVE: RECOLETA, CHILE

In 2015, the municipality of Recoleta started acting to address the pitfalls of privatising essential public services. With municipal support, workers organised themselves in a cooperative to compete for the public tender for the cleaning of streets and public spaces. Rewarding the cooperative's efforts to prioritise workers' rights and dignity, the municipality awarded the contract to the intercultural workers' cooperative *Jatún Newén*. However, after a falling out between the cooperative and municipality in 2020, the contract was not renewed, leaving the cooperative to compete with large private corporations and offer its services to the private sector. Thus, while serving as a prime example of municipal support in the early years, the experience of *Jatún Newén* in Recoleta also highlights the dangers for workers falling back into insecure working arrangements. One way a local authority can mitigate against this would be to explore if the waste workers want to be turned into municipal employees while upholding the autonomy of the cooperative.

CASE STUDY 10 COMMUNITY-LED PURCHASING FOR SCHOOL MEALS, QALI WARMA, PERU

Initially established as a three-year pilot programme, the Qali Warma social programme has become a successful example of community-led public purchasing for public school meals throughout the whole of Peru. With procurement

committees consisting of community members, health experts, teachers and civil society representatives at the regional and municipal levels, the programme enables public collaboration and citizen oversight throughout the different stages of the procurement process. It is locally co-managed through decentralised committees that purchase goods for schools within their district, taking into account nutritional preferences and procuring goods from family farmers in the region. As a result, countless food purchasing committees came into existence, prompting national legislative changes to increase the share of family farming procurement to 30 per cent by 2024. This benefits local farmers by creating a steady demand for their products, the local community as public money is reinvested and remains in the community, and school children who are served locally grown fruit and vegetables.



Introduction

In response to today's growing crises, this report introduces ten in-depth case studies and several shorter examples that showcase how local governments can use procurement to combat socio-economic injustices and environmental harm. By working together with community-based organisations and worker-owned cooperatives, public authorities are using procurement to re-invest public money into localised value chains that enhance living standards (through more equitable access to better goods and services), dignify livelihoods (through job creation and decent wages) and spur a more democratic economy (through public community partnerships and popular participation).

WHAT IS PUBLIC PROCUREMENT?

A substantial portion of taxpayers' money is used by governments and their agencies to purchase goods, services and works from external sources to deliver basic services and invest in public infrastructure.³ This process is referred to as public procurement. In 2018, public procurement accounted for \$11 trillion, or 12 per cent of global GDP.⁴ A significant share of procurement is done by local and regional governments, who therefore have the power to use this money to transform value chains, promote labour rights, support their local economy and protect the environment.

However, since the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering⁵ in most countries during the 1980s and 1990s, subnational governments have been systematically encouraged, if not obliged, to procure goods and services from the private sector. Claiming that it will lower costs and enhance efficiency, neoliberal policies have driven local authorities to procure from large multinational corporations rather than from their local communities. The negative social, cultural, political, economic and environmental impacts that procurement from big, private corporations brings are often disregarded. At the same time, depending on profit-maximising companies tends to result in long, wasteful and untransparent supply chains. As a consequence, public wealth continues to flow out of local communities and into the hands of a rich minority of private business owners.

As democratically elected representatives of their communities, local and regional governments bear a great responsibility for ensuring the social, economic and environmental well-being of their population. Rather than resorting to procuring from multinationals that lack ties to the community and extract public money from it, governments can spend resources in a way that builds and regenerates collective wealth — social, ecological and monetary — for the communities they are part of, by procuring in their vicinity.

PROCUREMENT TOOLS IN TRANSFORMATIVE TIMES

In recent years, procurement practices that focus on cost efficiency and private profiteering while disregarding socio-environmental harms are increasingly challenged. Worldwide, governments are turning back to their localities, to

procure goods and services from community-based enterprises, worker-owned cooperatives and minority-owned local businesses. See, for example, the case studies in this toolkit from Pune (India), São Paulo (Brazil) and Northland (Aotearoa/New Zealand).⁶ Such a strategy is known as **progressive public procurement**.

Progressive public procurement allows towns, cities and regions to use procurement as a tool for democratising economic activities and ensuring public money remains within the local area.⁷ By partnering directly with local cooperatives, minority-owned businesses and citizen's collectives in the procurement process, authorities can strengthen interactions between citizens and public bodies through the co-ownership and co-governance of public resources. This report features ten case studies alongside several other examples from around the globe that show us how subnational governments are implementing progressive procurement practices for the benefits of their communities.

Procuring locally and based on clearly defined social, ecological and economic criteria enables government bodies not only to transform their local economy but also to address a series of social and environmental issues together. From sourcing food for school cafeterias, kindergartens and nursing homes, to buying supplies for hospitals, schools or local government buildings, to purchasing services such as municipal waste collection, street cleaning, recycling and infrastructure construction, public sector procurement covers a range of sectors. These different dimensions are ultimately linked together and are thus ideally coordinated under a common framework. A progressive procurement strategy allows local governments to consider the cross-sectoral spill-over effects of procuring specific goods or services from local actors rather than big, private corporations. For example, by procuring food for school cafeterias from nearby small-scale farmers and agricultural cooperatives, several interlinked dimensions are addressed simultaneously. Land can be accessed and used by community actors rather than sold off to private corporations. Small-scale farming activities tend to contribute to increasing rural-urban food sovereignty. Because small-scale farms tend to employ more people than large-scale industrial farms, they can help to combat rural depopulation and support thriving rural communities, while local production and the use of ecological farming methods reduce environmental degradation and destruction of rural landscapes. A focus on 'territorial markets,'⁸ short food supply chains and democratic governance of food systems can help to strengthen linkages between rural and urban communities, connect cities to their hinterlands and foster a sense of community stewardship for the local food system.

Following social and environmental guidelines that extend beyond financial criteria gives local government bodies opportunities to use public money to build a democratic, place-based economic development model. This is especially crucial for impoverished and formerly colonised countries, where development efforts have been undermined by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which pressure

governments towards privatisation and public spending cuts. Using public money to source locally produced goods and services can be an effective way of supporting community businesses, strengthening local value chains, increasing employment and ultimately reducing social and economic inequalities. Rather than importing goods from big foreign companies whose profits flow into the hands of wealthy individuals, often from high-income countries, community-based procurement enables municipal governments across the so-called Global South to spur recognition and dignity for racialised communities instead of perpetuating colonial extraction. By buying from small businesses owned by Indigenous people and other discriminated groups, governments can address injustice that has persisted for centuries and re-centre their local economies around values of care, community and cooperation.

Throughout the following case studies, a number of conditions which are needed for local progressive public procurement practices to thrive and persevere jump out time and again. National-level planning and coordination between different public agencies, long-term commitment, an enabling legal environment and consistent support to formalising the employment of workers are all key steps that authorities must take to ensure procurement really contributes to the democratisation of society. The toolboxes at the end of each case study unpack these conditions further.

METHODOLOGY

The ten case studies presented in this report are a selection of the examples we came across throughout our research. To systematically review potential case studies, we conducted a comprehensive scoping exercise, during which existing case studies from TNI's *Global Database of Deprivatized Public Services*⁹ and candidate applications for the *Transformative Cities Award*¹⁰ were reviewed. In addition, existing reports and external web resources were consulted, including ICLEI's Sustainable Procurement Platform and the Procura+ Network, as well as HIVOS' publications on Open Contracting, Citizen Participation and Including Women in Public Procurement in Latin America.

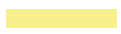
Procurement practices were considered to be progressive when they served one of the following purposes:

- a** *Reinvest public money into the local community to foster community wealth-building by procuring from local and community-based enterprises and organisations*
- b** *Strengthen workers' rights by procuring from democratically governed, member-owned cooperatives*
- c** *Follow clear social goals that aim to reduce existing socio-economic injustices on the basis of race, ethnicity, class, and locality (rural-urban inequalities) and environmental degradation*
- d** *Increase citizens' and/or workers' participation and decision-making power in public procurement by creating participatory mechanisms*

Further in-depth desk research was conducted to gather relevant documents including newspaper articles, government statements, programme evaluations and consulting reports. Where possible, contact with local actors was established to confirm the progressive procurement practices.

This toolkit by no means paints a complete picture. While more progressive cases of local public procurement exist, especially in high-income countries and within Western Europe, this report prioritises the variety of solutions that have emerged across low- and middle-income countries. Much of the existing research has focused on more affluent European and Anglo-Saxon countries.¹⁴ However, the somewhat limited availability of case studies across the so-called Global South is not a result of a lack of innovative practices, but rather a lack of research and publicity. Existing research focused on low- and middle-income countries is mainly centred around Latin America, which is therefore slightly over-represented in this report. While some research on sustainable procurement practices in East Asia exists, the analysis of these practices often focuses on environmental sustainability but lacks a more comprehensive approach to using procurement for community wealth-building; therefore, it does not meet the criteria of progressive procurement used in this research. Nonetheless, this toolkit features seven case studies and several other examples from low- and middle-income countries in order to provide valuable lessons for policy makers, civil servants and public officials by addressing key local procurement issues across these contexts, such as formalising employment of public service workers, strengthening the rights of discriminated communities, and reducing wealth extraction and corporate dependencies.

This report consists of five parts and themes: *community wealth-building*; *public community partnerships*; *rural-urban solidarity*; *human rights and formal jobs*; and *popular participation to improve local public spending policies*. While the first four parts simply centre on two or three case studies, the fifth part, on participation, is longer. Participation throughout procurement policy-making processes is less advanced than the other themes; therefore, we decided to elaborate on the development of these participation mechanisms across several procurement contexts in order to make the case that the more local and regional governments share decision-making powers with citizens, the better procurement policies serve local needs.



PART 1.
Local public
value chains
build community
wealth

Procuring goods and services locally can ensure that the services respond to the specific social and environmental concerns of a locality. It enables authorities to use their purchasing power to contribute to community wealth-building and to reinvest public money into the communities they are anchored in.¹⁵

As conveyed by Ted Howard, co-founder and President Emeritus of The Democracy Collaborative: “Community wealth-building (CWB) is an economic development model that transforms local economies based on communities having direct ownership and control of their assets. CWB nurtures and connects with grassroots community-based activities, and, together, seeks to mobilise the power of local government, the public sector and other rooted ‘anchor institutions’, such as schools and hospitals, to shape more just, equal and sustainable societies from the ground up.”¹⁶

The case studies in Part 1 show how contracting a cooperative of informal waste workers to manage waste collection in a community in Zanzibar, and using public procurement to support Māori-owned businesses in Northwood, Aotearoa/New Zealand, have had multiple impacts. In Zanzibar, workers have benefitted from a secure monthly salary and reduced stigma — and they have improved waste management, educated households, reduced pollution and increased the circularity of the island's economy. In Northwood, the new approach has improved the well-being and living standards of Māori communities, and has also incorporated Māori skills and expertise into government operations, fostering social cohesion.

Examples from Cali, Colombia; Quito, Ecuador; and Rennes, France, described elsewhere in this report, also showcase different innovative practices to localise procurement and increase the inclusion of small-scale community-based enterprises.

These cases all show that decentralised systems can create resilience and limit the power of large private corporations, and that it is possible to use public procurement to support Indigenous and other discriminated groups. By providing clear guidelines to include such groups in public procurement processes, and support to assist them through the tendering process, local and larger government bodies can act on commitments to building a more gender and racially just economy.

CASE STUDY 1 STRENGTHENING THE POWER OF WOMEN WORKERS THROUGH FORMAL CONTRACTS: ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

For the semi-autonomous island Zanzibar, the improvement of its waste management and recycling operations has been a crucial topic on the public policy agenda for years. The island generates approximately 663 tonnes of solid waste per day, but until 2017 it had no system to segregate and manage this waste. In 2017, in collaboration with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and the Zanzibar Environmental Management Authority (ZEMA), the Zanzibar Urban Municipal Council (ZUMC) launched a pilot programme to collect segregated waste in the Shaurimoyo neighbourhood within Zanzibar

City, the island's capital. An essential part of the success of the pilot was the contracting of the Shaurimoyo Waste Management Society (SWMS), a cooperative of informal waste workers, which performs waste collection, recycling and community education tasks.



Zanzibar, Tanzania. Credits: Bradclin photography
CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 via Flickr ¹⁷

SHAURIMOYO WASTE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE PILOT PROGRAMME

In January 2017, the Centre for Science and Environment, a New Delhi-based NGO, and the ZEMA signed a memorandum which laid out the plans and goals of the pilot. The project's first phase was launched in September 2017.¹⁸

Shaurimoyo is home to over 5,800 residents, in 626 households. Before the launch, SWMS had identified 200 households, with between 1,500 and 2,000 people, to participate in the first stage of the trial. These 200 households received bins and bags to separate their wet, dry and hazardous waste and, in return for doing so, were exempted from paying user fees for the service to the local authority. By 2018, the segregation rate among participating households reached 85–90 per cent, prompting the municipality to move forward with the next phase. In August 2018, the remaining 426 households were included in the programme and the number of SWMS workers allotted to the pilot was increased from eight to 16.

The SWMS workers' responsibilities include the door-to-door collection of segregated waste, transportation of waste to the composting site and the sorting and recycling of non-compostable waste, as well as door-to-door education campaigns to inform households of the importance and benefits of waste segregation. They are not formally employed by the municipality as they are organised as a cooperative. However, under the agreement between the society and municipality, the municipality directly pays a monthly salary of 80,000 Tanzanian shillings¹⁹ (€30.94 as of April 2023) to the workers instead of paying a lump sum to the cooperative, which is not formally registered as a legal entity. As well as providing a secure income to the workers, the cooperative's engagement with the municipality also contributed to the formalisation and recognition of its work. Women waste workers, who are predominantly involved in the collection, and processing of the waste, especially benefited

from the formalisation and regularisation of their incomes, which contributes to securing their livelihoods.

OUTCOMES AND REMAINING CHALLENGES

One year after the start of the pilot, in 2018, SWMS workers were collecting 30–50 kg of dry waste per week, which is separated into PET bottles and other plastics, metals, glass and paper. The segregated waste is then stored until sufficient quantities are reached to sell to wholesalers, who transfer them to mainland Tanzania.²⁰ Through these activities, waste workers can earn an additional monthly income of 18,400 Tanzanian shillings (€7.12, April 2023). Moreover, between 45 and 60 kg of wet waste per day is transferred to composting pits and resold as dried compost after the composting process is completed.²¹ The pilot site, a former dumpsite that was transformed into a processing facility and learning centre, also serves as a vegetable garden. With the help of the municipal administration, waste workers have started growing vegetables at the centre. They earn an additional 200,000 Tanzanian shillings per quarter (€77 as of April 2023) from the sale of vegetables.

As well as providing informal waste workers with a more secure income and opportunities to earn extra money through the sale of recyclable materials and dried compost, the waste collection pilot is crucial to reduce environmental degradation. As mentioned, 663 tonnes per day of municipal solid waste are generated on the island.²² With a collection efficiency of 40 to 50 per cent before the pilot, more than half of this waste was burned or haphazardly disposed of, harming the island's ecosystems. Collected municipal solid waste was disposed of at a landfill at Kibele. **The separation of recyclable and reusable material, including organic waste, prior to collection means the amount of waste ending up in the landfill is reduced.** The difficulty of disposing of non-recyclables and multi-layered packaging, which are discarded in municipal waste bins and consequently end up in the landfill, is a key remaining challenge.

Intending to make Zanzibar a zero-waste island, the municipal government took the first steps to replicate the pilot project in the Mpendae area in April 2018, when two composting pits were constructed to cater to the area's 150 houses.²³ In February 2019, the Municipal Council approved bylaws to ensure that the segregation and recycling of waste are adopted across the island.²⁴

The successful implementation and first replications of the waste collection pilot programme have shown the potential, but Zanzibar still has a lot of work to do to truly become a zero-waste island. To effectively scale the positive impact that the new waste management system has on workers and the environment, Zanzibar's municipalities need to replicate the system across the whole island and ensure sufficient public funds are allocated to increase waste collection efficiency.²⁵

Informal workers who collect, sort and recycle municipal waste are essential for the functioning of many waste systems. Yet, in the informal sector, they tend to have little security and do not receive decent wages. Local authorities

should contribute to providing greater security and benefits to waste workers while ensuring that workers' voices are heard in the process.

Regularising the jobs of waste collectors and recognising the essential public service they provide are important steps when building a sustainable waste management model. Waste collectors often prefer to become direct municipal employees in order to receive social security benefits, health insurance, secure pensions and a living wage in line with the salaries and benefits of any other municipal employee. Part 4 of this report further elaborates on the sensitive relationships between municipalities and workers' cooperatives and measures needed to ensure the equal and dignified treatment of waste collectors around the world.

TOOLBOX 1

LOCALISED WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM

Localised waste management systems such as the one being implemented in Zanzibar bring many benefits for low- and middle-income countries, where reliance on informal waste pickers tends to be high. Informal workers can be included in the formal system more easily, and service provision that is organised at the community level can provide higher-quality services tailored to local needs. Moreover, decentralised systems can create resilience against large private corporations that tend to dominate waste collection contracts in highly centralised systems and are associated with corruption and extractive practices.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS

The comprehensive system established through the pilot addresses social and environmental aspects of waste picking together. Through formalising waste pickers' jobs, social stigma is reduced, and workers enjoy more secure and regular incomes, as well as social insurance. Separation at source and sorting of the waste greatly reduces pollution within towns and villages. The subsequent composting activities to create natural organic fertiliser improve the circularity of the island's economy and allow for the reuse of organic waste.

In addressing the interlinked dimensions of waste management, food security, public health and social security, Zanzibar's decentralised waste management model serves as an example to other local and regional governments.

CASE STUDY 2 **PROMOTING INDIGENOUS SMALL BUSINESSES THROUGH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: NORTHLAND, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND**

New Zealand's Ministry of Māori Development, Te Puni Kōkiri, has launched an innovative programme to support small and local Māori-owned businesses in the tendering process for government procurement. Through the progressive public procurement initiative, Māori-owned business Yakas Construction was awarded the contract to build six public houses in November 2021. **In supporting Māori businesses through procurement, Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrates how governments can use their buying power to foster community wealth.**



Replica of a Māori community house at the Te Puia Māori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Credits: W. Bulach, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons²⁶

A PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AGENDA

With billion-dollar budgets to spend on public procurement, national governments are in a unique position when it comes to promoting sustainable and social procurement practices. Government institutions can fight inequality by strengthening the social and economic rights of discriminated communities, for example, by procuring services from businesses owned by groups that have historically been exploited by or excluded from the formal economy.

Aotearoa/New Zealand, a country where over 17 per cent of the population belongs to the Indigenous Māori people, is taking steps to encourage local governments to invest in community wealth-building.²⁷ As part of the government's COVID-19 recovery plan, it strengthened public procurement rules, allocating a larger share of its budget to sustainable and social procurement practices.²⁸ Among those measures is a commitment to prioritising Māori-owned and operated businesses for contracts, which ensures public money benefits local communities instead of being extracted by large multinational companies.

Te Puni Kōkiri Ministry of Māori Development has set up a joint project with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment called Te Kupenga Hao Pāuaua.²⁷ Through this project, Te Puni Kōkiri supports Māori-owned businesses during the preparation and bidding process for government contracts. A business is considered to be Māori-owned if ownership by Māori is greater than 50 per cent. Tendering procedures can be especially challenging for small and minority-owned businesses, requiring substantial resources and capacity to respond to open calls and Māori-owned businesses can receive support and guidance with this. The government's target is to award 5 per cent of all procurement contracts issued by government agencies to Māori businesses. Te Puni Kōkiri is investing \$26 million (€14.5 million, as of April 2023) in building Māori business capabilities and shifting government agencies' buying practices to be more inclusive.



An annual Māori protest on Waitangi day, the national day of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Credits: Charles Brewer CC BY-SA 2.0, via Flickr³⁰

YAKAS CONSTRUCTION – MĀORI-OWNED BUSINESS PROVIDES PUBLIC HOMES

Northland-based Yakas Construction was among the Māori businesses that received support and training under the Te Kupenga Hao Pāuaua programme.³¹ The small social enterprise was set up by Martin Yakas and a single partner in 2018, with the objective of providing quality housing to Māori community members. Since then, it has expanded to 12 employees, including two women and several local young people, most of them facing structural discrimination because of their background. The company works closely with the local Māori community, as well as with the local high school, to offer young adults a chance to learn building skills and complete an apprenticeship.

Under Te Puni Kōkiri's Progressive Procurement Capability Uplift Programme, Yakas Construction was mentored by Māori business Height Project Management Limited.³² Throughout the tender process, the construction company received support with accounting, procurement guidelines and the set-up of its health and safety prequalification. In November 2021, it secured a contract to build six family-sized state homes in Kaikohe, issued by the government agency Kāinga Ora — Homes and Communities.³³ Kaikohe is a small town of approximately 4,400 residents living in 1,287 households. The majority of its population self-identified as Māori (78.4 per cent) in the last census (2018).³⁴ The median income of the town is substantially below the national average, at \$19,000 (€10,600 as of April 2023) compared to the national average of \$31,800 (€17,800 as of April 2023). The low incomes, paired with the town's young population (median age 29.2 years, Māori median age 24.8 years) and low share of full-time employment (33 per cent of the residents above 15 are employed full-time), highlight the acute need to create employment and affordable homes in the community.

The government agency Kāinga Ora is a major provider of public housing and urban development in Aotearoa/New Zealand, owning nearly 69,000 public houses. The agency is planning to deliver up to 40,000 new public, affordable homes in the next 15 years. Serving the local Māori community is an important part of Kāinga Ora's work, as waiting lists for public housing are long and many Māori people lack warm, dry homes. **To provide adequate homes to the local Māori communities, Kāinga Ora is seeking to work together with Māori businesses, who can provide tailor-made solutions to the needs of their fellow community members.**³⁵ Yakas Construction's strong ties in the local community, as well as the contributions it makes to the local economy by employing and training Māori youth, were the main reasons why the agency chose to award it the tender.

BENEFITS OF PROCURING MĀORI-OWNED BUSINESSES

As Te Puni Kōkiri's programme shows, the benefits of implementing progressive procurement practices are shared between the government, minority-owned businesses and their community.³⁶ While Māori businesses directly benefit from government contracts through the consistent cashflows they generate, wider spillover effects are also observed. For example, several Māori businesses have achieved access to financing and formal credit, as financial institutions are more willing to grant loans to Māori businesses with government contracts.³⁷ Moreover, local economies are strengthened by the inflow of capital and increase in employment opportunities. As demonstrated by the case of Yakas Construction, the collaboration between government agencies and Māori businesses also helps to improve the well-being and living standards of Māori communities through the provision of targeted, affordable housing. At the same time, including Māori businesses in government procurement allows for the transfer of Māori skills, expertise and business practices into various fields of government operations. Thus, incorporating discriminated groups into formal government procurement is a crucial step toward fostering social cohesion and strengthening Indigenous communities.

TOOLBOX 2

NATIONAL PLANNING AND PUBLIC-PUBLIC COORDINATION

The level of national planning and coordination between different public agencies is a notable success factor of Aotearoa/New Zealand's Te Kupenga Hao Pāuaua project. To address social and economic inequalities and foster the inclusion of the country's Indigenous population, a strong commitment from the national government to increase procurement from Māori businesses to at least 5 per cent is crucial. The subsequent set-up of a targeted programme with a designated budget and coordination is needed to implement the project in a decentralized manner and ensure the effectiveness of the programme at the local level.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES TO GUIDE PROCUREMENT POLICIES

Aotearoa/New Zealand's commitment to increasing Māori representation in public procurement contracts and acknowledging the value of expertise and skills stemming from its Indigenous population are important steps to address the country's colonial legacy and the systemic discrimination against its Indigenous population. The country is taking active steps to advance the social and economic rights of its Indigenous population and other discriminated groups, yet actually ensuring Indigenous participation in the design of such policies remains a major obstacle. By implementing top-down programmes, governments run the risk of imposing their own ideas about what the development of discriminated groups should look like. Instead, governments must enable and support community wealth-building on the terms and conditions set forward by the communities themselves.

PART 2.
Public community
partnerships
underpin
a democratic
economy

Creating a collaborative ecosystem consisting of public and community-based actors is key to resisting privatisation and strengthening public collaboration. This nurtures the social fabric and democratic control over the economy. Public community partnerships are viable alternatives that can, over time, replace extractive public-private purchasing partnerships. By building alliances between the public sector and community organisations, public community collaborations pave the way for a new system of cooperation and democratic economy, in which working people are increasingly in charge.

The case studies in Part 2 show how the state of Kerala in India and the city of Barcelona in Spain are using their purchasing power to build more democratic and equitable societies. Kerala has taken several steps to ensure that public wealth is protected and shared, from adjusting tendering processes to favour cooperatives, to creating a bank that offers affordable banking to agricultural cooperatives, and breaking with the central government's approach of increasing private sector participation in the agricultural sector to follow a model of collective farming. Meanwhile Barcelona is addressing the shortage of public housing in the city by making municipally owned land available and partnering with housing cooperatives to build homes.

Cooperative procurement, whereby governments contract worker-owned or citizen-owned cooperatives for the provision of goods or services, is a positive alternative to contracting private corporations, where workers often have no say in the decision-making process. The guiding principles of cooperatives are democratic governance and collective decision-making, empowering workers and citizens by strengthening their socio-economic participation. Embedding these principles into public service provision democratises local economies.

CASE STUDY 3 PROCUREMENT OF LABOUR COOPERATIVE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION: KERALA, INDIA

Asia's largest labour cooperative society, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society, Ltd (ULCCS), is a key contractor of the state's Public Works Department, undertaking various infrastructure construction projects, such as building roads, highways and bridges. Kerala's state government has put several mechanisms in place that allow local government bodies and the Public Works Department to award tenders to local cooperatives rather than large out-of-state companies.³⁸

POLITICAL CONTEXT OF KERALA

Already prior to its formation as a state in 1956, Kerala had a rich history of labour movements, characterised by active worker unions and a network of cooperatives that numbered 13,000 by 2011. Since the first state elections in 1957, two major parties have been taking turns in governing Kerala, the Left Democratic Front (LDF, a coalition of left parties), and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF). In 2021, the Left Democratic Front made history by securing re-election in the Kerala Legislative Assembly elections, the first time the state had been governed by the same alliance for two consecutive terms.

Due to the continuous decades-long communication between governments and people-led networks, an environment in which the government values and supports cooperative models emerged.³⁹ This was strengthened by a UDF-led government order passed in 2003, which recommends that local governments should give preferential treatment to labour cooperatives in public procurement processes. Under the alternating leadership of LDF and UDF, state and local governments have been contracting labour cooperatives, especially for infrastructure procurement.

URALUNGAL LABOUR CONTRACT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

Initially formed in 1917 by a group of 14 young daily wage labourers from marginalised sections of Kerala's society, the Kerala Atmavidya Sangham was formally registered as a cooperative in 1925, and received the name by which it is known today, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Ltd.⁴⁰

Today, ULCCS is a worker-owned cooperative that prides itself on the generous employee benefits and good working conditions and the high-quality service provision it is known for.⁴¹ The cooperative consists of over 13,000 workers, of whom more than one-third are migrant workers and roughly 30 per cent are women.⁴² Its main focus is construction projects initiated by government agencies, such as building roads and bridges, but in recent years, ULCCS has expanded into other fields, including the IT and arts and crafts sectors. To date, it has completed more than 7,500 projects, with roughly 85 per cent of its completed and ongoing projects being for the Public Works Department.

ULCCS PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

ULCCS' reputation as a high-quality construction service provider has had several benefits when it comes to securing public procurement contracts. The state government of Kerala has granted ULCCS 'accredited agency' status. **Effectively, this means that for projects below a certain cost threshold, the cooperative can receive government contracts directly, without going through tendering procedures.** The cooperative has accredited agency status with several departments, including the Tourism Department, Labour Department, Co-operative Department, Finance Department and the local self-government, or Panchayati Raj, institutions. Moreover, the state has put regulations in place to ensure that cooperatives such as ULCCS receive preferential treatment for procurement contracts compared to private construction companies. One of these measures is a so-called flexible bidding price, through which a project can be awarded to the cooperative even if its bid price is up to 10 per cent higher than that of a private contractor.

Thanks to such mechanisms, Kerala's Public Works Department and other government agencies have been awarding a significant share of contracts to ULCCS. In 2009, the Kerala Tourism Department appointed ULCCS as an executing agency for its projects and entrusted the cooperative with the management of the Sargaalaya arts and crafts village. The village was established to provide a platform where local artisans from over 20 small villages can showcase their skills and crafts. ULCCS was contracted for an initial ten years to run and manage Sargaalaya's operations since 2012.

Among the major construction projects awarded to ULCCS by the Public Works Department is the construction of a 5.1 km stretch of the Kozhikode highway bypass in 2016.⁴³ The Rs. 1.4 billion project (€16 million, as of April 2023) was crucial in improving the local road system and resolving traffic congestion to reduce travel time. The biggest public works project awarded to ULCCS is the construction of a major road in the Malappuram district, with a procurement contract worth Rs. 450 crores (€50 million, as of April 2023).⁴⁴

FURTHER COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT IN KERALA

Kerala's institutional environment and its history of cooperative engagement by workers and citizens have created an active network of people-led initiatives. The Government of Kerala has recently set up a state-wide cooperative bank, the Kerala State Co-operative Bank.⁴⁵ Thirteen district-level banks and one state-level bank were merged into a single entity, which offers traditional banking services at an affordable cost and serves the members of the Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies.



The Kerala State Co-operative Agricultural and Rural Development Bank, Kerala, India.
Credits: Akash Dominic, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons⁴⁶

In 2019, Kerala's state government decided to break with the central government's course of promoting the contract farming model, which increases private sector participation in the agricultural sector, to follow a model of collective farming.⁴⁷ Kerala's agricultural minister, Sunil Kumar, highlighted that the state had strong political opposition to the central government's contract farming policy and instead aimed to support community networks and farmers' cooperatives to reduce poverty and empower local women farmers.⁴⁸

Under the state's Kudumbashree project, a women's empowerment programme initiated by the LDF government in 1998,⁴⁹ more than 320,000 women have organised themselves into almost 59,500 agricultural collectives.⁵⁰

TOOLBOX 3

COOPERATIVES AS CORE CONTRACTORS

By granting ULCCS ‘accredited agency’ status, the state government and its departments have set a precedent for contracting cooperatives before private corporations for infrastructure works. By bypassing tendering procedures, government agencies can directly award contracts to the cooperative, without ULCCS having to compete against large private firms for every contract — a process that often leaves cooperatives at a disadvantage. The ‘accredited agency’ status represents a strategic tool that can be used to replace so-called ‘public-private partnerships’ with a public-community collaboration between the public authorities and democratically governed and collectively owned cooperatives.

DIVERSITY OF CONTRACTS

The range of services offered by ULCCS and its sheer size have allowed the cooperative to secure a diverse portfolio of contracts with Kerala’s public sector. From infrastructure construction contracts to management contracts, the cooperative is equipped to handle the state’s diverse demands, which simultaneously strengthens their partnership and reduces the need for private actors on the state’s part. Ultimately, this means that more public money is re-invested into the community, rather than extracted by private multinational corporations.

DIVERGING FROM NATIONAL POLICIES

Kerala’s longstanding commitment to working with cooperatives and building a network of cooperative service provision stands in stark contrast to the approach the central Indian government has pursued in recent years. In contrast to the growing dependency on the private sector and the increase in public-private partnerships throughout the country, Kerala has maintained a public pathway for local development that particularly strengthens the socio-economic position of women and low-income households. Local and regional governments are well equipped to respond to the local challenges they face with unique solutions, even if these are not in line with national politics. Leveraging this knowledge to set up programmes that promote public-public collaboration, such as Kerala’s Kudumbashree project, has proven a successful strategy.

CASE STUDY 4 COOPERATIVE PROCUREMENT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING: BARCELONA, SPAIN

Barcelona's city council has strengthened its commitments to progressive public procurement practices in recent years and developed several guidelines to incorporate environmental, social and ethical standards into public procurement contracts. To address the shortage of public housing in the city, Barcelona created an innovative procurement model, partnering with housing cooperatives that construct co-housing units on municipally owned land. **The unique contracting system effectively mitigates against Barcelona's housing crisis through the provision of additional public housing while building community wealth for local citizens by ensuring public land is used for the direct benefit of Barcelona's citizens.**



An assembly of the anti-austerity movement in Barcelona, Spain.

Credits: Andrea Ciambra from Palermo, Italy, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons⁵¹

INTRODUCING THE COOPERATIVE HOUSING MODEL

As one of the founding members of the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (*Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*), Barcelona's mayor, Ada Colau, has put addressing the city's housing shortage high up on the political agenda. To address this shortage, the city council proposed a public cooperative housing model in 2015 as a tool to boost affordable housing and strengthen community ties.⁵² The city council set up the Cooperative Housing Committee, a working group within the Barcelona Social Housing Board, which oversees the development of the public co-housing model in Barcelona.

Although the design is similar to the private co-housing models that exist in many European cities, Barcelona's model differentiates itself through the core concept of public ownership.⁵³ Whereas private co-housing models are based on the premise that members buy into a cooperative which then acquires a plot of land where the co-housing project is developed, Barcelona is using publicly owned plots of land for the development of co-housing units.

Rather than selling off public land for the development of co-housing projects, the city council is awarding public tenders to housing cooperatives for the development of the physical housing infrastructure.

During the tender period, which usually lasts for 75 years, the cooperative and its members hold the right to live in the housing they build. After the tender period expires, these rights will transfer back to the municipality, which could continue to use the building for social housing purposes. Through these agreements, public land remains public while new communal housing is being developed by cooperatives.

Barcelona launched two pilot projects in 2015 to test out the new model.⁵⁴ The first two housing cooperatives to join the initiative were Sostre Cívic and La Borda, who built 33 dwellings on two separate municipal plots. Following the success of the pilot projects, the city council put four sites out to tender for co-housing projects in November 2016.⁵⁵ The tender process is in line with the social and environmental public procurement procedures that the city council promotes. To ensure democratic ownership and governance, participation in the tender process is restricted to cooperatives that improve access to housing. Particular attention is given to social and environmental criteria, such as the use of building systems with a low environmental impact, how well proposed projects fit into the neighbourhood and to what extent members of the cooperatives participate in the construction or remodelling.

By 2018, municipal investment in public co-housing projects amounted to €10.6 million, yielding 134 new public housing units. In 2020, three additional sites were awarded for cooperative housing development in a second public tender process.⁵⁶ 102 new cooperative homes will be constructed on the three sites, increasing the public housing stock by adding 269 new public homes on ten municipal plots.

In a city like Barcelona, where property prices are constantly on the rise and rental prices have been increasing sharply, public co-housing models can provide an important alternative for many people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for social housing in Barcelona accelerated. To act on the increasing demand, Barcelona decided to create an alliance between the city council and the most significant cooperative housing organisations in the city, known as the ESAL Agreement.⁵⁷ The city council aims to create 1,000 new flats through this alliance, adding to the housing development contracts issued via public tender. The alliance was signed solely by non-profit actors in Barcelona's local housing sector, including the Association of Social Housing Managers (GHS),⁵⁸ the Social and Solidarity Economy Network (XES),⁵⁹ the Federation of Housing Cooperatives,⁶⁰ and the Coordinator of Social Housing Foundations.⁶¹ Through the agreement, the city council hopes to reduce the time taken in awarding tenders to address the social housing crisis faster⁶². **In a first step, 13 municipal sites will be made available to build 419 new flats; 60 per cent of the flats will be rented out, with a third of these being reserved for young people and five per cent for people with intellectual disabilities.**⁶³ The remaining 40 per cent will include co-housing initiatives for the elderly and people with disabilities. Under the alliance, the right to use is increased to 99 years.

COMMITMENT TO PROGRESSIVE PROCUREMENT

The 2015 municipal elections in Barcelona marked a notable change in leadership. After securing 11 seats, the citizen platform Barcelona en Comú (Barcelona in Common, BComú) took over the governance of the commune, instating Barcelona's first female mayor, Ada Colau. Under the BComú-led government, the city council quickly took action to transform Barcelona's operations and transition to an economy based on shared wealth and social solidarity. Among the major changes is the city council's decision to change the way it spends over €1 billion every year.⁶⁴ The council adopted innovative regulations on public procurement in 2016, passed several municipal decrees and developed procurement guidelines and instructions that aim at supporting community wealth-building and safeguarding labour rights and human rights along the supply chain.⁶⁵



Barcelona en Comú on the night of the 2015 municipal election, Barcelona, Spain.
Credits: Barcelona En Comú, CC BY-SA 2.0 via flickr⁶⁶

A major step to promote the city's sustainable procurement agenda and incorporate the practices into official municipal procedures was the introduction of Mayoral Decree S1/D/2017-1271, of 24 April 2017, on Sustainable Public Procurement.⁶⁷ According to the decree, all future public procurement undertaken by the city council must be in agreement with the city's sustainable development agenda and fulfil the social and environmental procurement standards set out in the corresponding guides. **The social procurement guidelines aim to boost Barcelona's cooperative and social sector, while tightening rules for private corporations competing in public tenders.** Big corporations applying for tenders are required to comply with stricter transparency regulations regarding wages and costs. Moreover, they must buy a certain percentage of goods and services from the cooperative and social sectors. With these measures, the city council hopes to award a larger share of procurement contracts to cooperatives, small and medium-sized local enterprises, and social enterprises, rewarding companies that demonstrate social conscience. To further improve the city council's sustainable procurement practices, a new annual plan, the 2022 Sustainable Public Procurement Objectives Plan, was approved, incorporating special provisions for contracting unemployed people and companies headed by women.⁶⁸ The plan aims to increase cultural diversity in procurement contracts and fight unwanted part-time employment among women.

HOW PROGRESSIVE IS BARCELONA'S PROCUREMENT?

Although the city council has adopted comprehensive regulations to incorporate social and sustainable procurement practices in public transactions, a 2020 report by the European Network of Corporate Observatories (ENCO) shows that in 2017, Barcelona's procurement contracts still largely benefited a small number of private corporations.⁶⁹ Among over 5,000 suppliers, five companies, four of which are large multinationals, represent 49 per cent of all council procurement. Moreover, 20 per cent of the contracts awarded by the municipal group benefited multinational corporations or multinational groups which have been accused of violations of human rights or environmental destruction by civil society.

While the figures reported by ENCO are concerning, the council has implemented several tools to improve the quality of over 54,062 annual procurement contracts, worth €1.34 billion. To monitor the progress of implementing public procurement guidelines in contracts, the city council conducted a comparative study, the 2020 Sustainable Public Procurement Report, which showed that by 2020, 92 per cent of the tendering contracts signed by Barcelona City Council's Municipal Group incorporated sustainable public procurement measures to some degree.⁷⁰ This represents a notable upward trend, and is four points higher compared to the previous year. Moreover, the city council has set up a Public Procurement Board, composed of 21 entities, that monitors its procurement activities.⁷¹ **The board represents a diverse group of stake- and rightsholders, including three trade unions, eleven business organisations, nine third-sector organisations, three social organisations and five environmental entities.** While these are important steps, drastic measures are still necessary to shift the power balance in the procurement sector away from big corporations and towards community-based organisations.⁷²

In setting out clear guidelines for environmental and social measures in public procurement, Barcelona has taken an important step to incorporate social justice goals and the social solidarity economy through public spending. The city's commitment to providing public housing in collaboration with housing co-operatives makes Barcelona the first city in Spain to host co-housing initiatives on municipal land, providing an example to other cities around the world on how to use community wealth-building measures such as public procurement to address the needs of local citizens.

TOOLBOX 4

KEEPING LAND IN PUBLIC HANDS

The level of national planning and coordination between different public agencies is a notable success factor of Aotearoa/New Zealand's Te Kupenga Hao Pāuaua project. To address social and economic inequalities and foster the inclusion of the country's Indigenous population, a strong commitment from the national government to increase procurement from Māori businesses to at least 5 per cent is crucial. The subsequent set-up of a targeted programme with a designated budget and coordination is needed to implement the project in a decentralized manner and ensure the effectiveness of the programme at the local level.

BUILDING PUBLIC ALLIANCES

Aotearoa/New Zealand's commitment to increasing Māori representation in public procurement contracts and acknowledging the value of expertise and skills stemming from its Indigenous population are important steps to address the country's colonial legacy and the systemic discrimination against its Indigenous population. The country is taking active steps to advance the social and economic rights of its Indigenous population and other discriminated groups, yet actually ensuring Indigenous participation in the design of such policies remains a major obstacle. By implementing top-down programmes, governments run the risk of imposing their own ideas about what the development of discriminated groups should look like. Instead, governments must enable and support community wealth-building on the terms and conditions set forward by the communities themselves.

TIGHTENING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RULES

By setting out clear guidelines for future procurement contracts, Barcelona sets an example for other local governments. On the one hand, the city council introduced clear ethical, social and environmental criteria for future procurement that stimulate procurement from community-based enterprises and cooperatives. At the same time, the rules for for-profit companies and large corporations were tightened, sending strong signals to private corporations that human and labour rights abuses along the supply chain will not be tolerated.

PART 3.
Public
procurement
can strengthen
rural-urban
solidarity

Too often, relationships between rural and urban areas are characterised by the extraction of resources from rural areas for the benefit of rich urban communities. Progressive procurement practices can turn this around by creating shared wealth across the rural-urban spectrum, rather than reinforcing extractive systems that concentrate wealth and resources in the hands of the urban rich. Formal procurement contracts between urban municipalities and people working in rural areas can ensure benefits to both sides, with high quality produce for urban citizens, income security for the suppliers and the potential to sustain resilient ecosystems.

This section looks at how two municipalities — São Paulo in Brazil and Rennes in France — have used their position as purchasers of food for school meals to support local farmers and producers and to promote environmentally preferable farming methods, while providing healthy and nutritious meals to children.

In both cases, they have worked to overcome regulatory barriers. The city of São Paulo rewrote local bylaws to allow the cooperative to sell produce directly to customers at organic fairs in municipal parks. Rennes found a way to get around obstructive EU regulations by rephrasing contracts to be about purchasing a service rather than a product. In doing so, they provided an incentive to farmers to switch to ecological production methods, helping to reduce the pollution of local waterways by agricultural chemicals.

These cases demonstrate the importance of prolonged commitment to progressive procurement. They show how collaboration can create an alternative to the extractive capitalist food system, but it needs real work to ensure an enabling legal environment and infrastructure.

CASE STUDY 5 SOURCING PRODUCTS FROM ORGANIC AND FAMILY FARMS FOR SCHOOL MEALS: SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

In Brazil's largest city, São Paulo, the provision of nutritious meals at municipal schools has been high on the public agenda in recent years. São Paulo operates one of the world's largest school feeding programmes, providing around 2.3 million meals per day for over one million students within its municipal area.⁷³ Since 2012, the city has used its position to promote healthy and nutritious meals for children and adolescents — and to support local and organic producers.

PROCURING FROM LOCAL FAMILY FARMERS

In Brazil, family farmers account for approximately 70 per cent of food production.⁷⁴ However, despite being such a crucial part of the country's food system, they often face high competition from commercial agriculture, posing severe challenges to their livelihoods. To support family farmers and local agricultural production, Brazil introduced Federal Law 11,947 in 2009. According to the law, 30 per cent of the funding provided by the federal government for the purchase of food by municipal departments must be invested in procuring products from family farming. In São Paulo, CODAE [*Coordenadoria de Alimentação Escolar*, School Feeding Coordination], part of the Municipal Department

of Education, is responsible for the technical, administrative and financial management of the city's school feeding programme. CODAE carried out its first direct acquisition of regional produce from local family farmers in 2012.⁷⁵ The contract for parboiled rice, worth R\$564,000 (approximately €100,000 as at April 2023), awarded to the family farmer's cooperative COANA/PR, set the precedent for cooperation with over a dozen local farmers' cooperatives for the procurement of fresh and locally produced ingredients.



Carnival in São Paulo, Brazil.
Credits: Romerito Pontes, CC BY 2.0⁷⁶

By 2015, São Paulo significantly expanded its acquisition of family farming products, investing over R\$25 million (approximately €4,540,000 as of April 2023) in procurement contracts with local farmers' cooperatives for various products including orange juice, rice and bananas.⁷⁷ The municipality took another crucial step in 2016 when it decided to gradually increase the share of organic products procured for school meals (Decree 56,913 of April 5, 2016).⁷⁸ The initial target for 2017 was set at 3 per cent of the total products procured, with the aim of scaling the share to 100 per cent organic products by 2026. To realise this goal, São Paulo signed a contract for the purchase of 56,376 kg of organic leafy vegetables with the only cooperative in the city that specialises in organic food, COOPERAPAS (*Cooperativa Agroecológica dos Produtores Rurais e Água Limpa da Região Sul de São Paulo*, Agroecological Cooperative of Rural Producers and Clean Water of the South Region of São Paulo).⁷⁹

COOPERAPAS

COOPERAPAS was born during a time of rapid changes in the political environment of São Paulo. One of the most influential policies was the Clean Agricultural Programme created by the São Paulo municipality in 2010.⁸⁰ The programme aimed to transform the city into the first South American municipality that produces goods using 100 per cent organic agriculture. Being able



Barcelona en Comú on the night of the 2015 municipal election, Barcelona, Spain.
Credits: Barcelona En Comú, CC BY-SA 2.0 via flickr⁸¹

to switch from ‘conventional’ agricultural production methods to agroecological farming practices was one of the key objectives uniting COOPERAPAS founders and motivating them to found the cooperative in 2011. Several of the founding members, local family farmers from the southern area of São Paulo, had previously worked on agricultural projects together and stayed in touch. Talks about organising as a cooperative to strengthen the commercialisation of their produce intensified, resulting in the decision to organise themselves into a member-owned cooperative.

Today, the cooperative has 36 member farmers who use agroecological and organic farming methods, without monoculture, chemicals or pesticides.⁸² Their activities are mainly focused in the southern area of São Paulo, where two Environmental Protection Areas — Capivari-Monos (created in 2004) and Bororé Colônia (2006) — provide the farmers with minimally polluted fields.⁸³ As well as promoting organic production methods, COOPERAPAS emphasises the importance of supporting and strengthening small family farmers, as well as women farmers. Strengthening the position of women and of the local farmer community to increase their bargaining power and political influence is a major focus of the cooperative and its founding member and president, Váleria Macoratti.⁸⁴

FOUNDING AND EARLY STRUGGLES

From the start, the cooperative received strong support from the municipality of São Paulo, which viewed it as highly beneficial to promote organic agricultural production and local employment. The municipality allowed the farmers to participate in state-wide and federal programmes such as the Programme for Acquisition of Food and the National School Feeding Programme.

City Hall supported the cooperative's founding, especially by providing expert support in the form of a lawyer and an accountant to help with bureaucratic matters, free of charge. In addition, the cooperative received an anonymous donation of R\$2,000 (approximately €365), sufficient to sustain its early operations.⁸⁵ Despite the shift in public policy in favour of organic production, COOPERAPAS members experienced difficulties in marketing and selling their products in the early years of the cooperative, as demand for organic goods was still low and spaces to sell their products were lacking.

To overcome these challenges, the cooperative started to organise organic fairs in municipal parks such as Burle Marx Park, where it sold directly to local customers. However, as the sale of products at such fairs was not allowed, the municipality urged COOPERAPAS to shut down the fairs. COOPERAPAS started a social media campaign, using the hashtag #afeirafica (meaning 'the fairs stay'), to influence the municipal policies governing public spaces and street fairs.⁸⁶ The campaign had success in 2014, when the municipality issued decree 55,434, allowing the installation of organic and agroecological fairs in municipally owned recreation spaces.⁸⁷ In 2015, COOPERAPAS started its commercial sales, and it reached a major milestone in 2018 when it signed a purchasing agreement with CODAE to provide food for the school feeding programme. The agreement secured COOPERAPAS farmers a reliable revenue stream. After overcoming several challenges, COOPERAPAS managed to turn a profitable income and started 2018 debt free for the first time.

Since the beginning, the cooperation between COOPERAPAS and the municipality of São Paulo has been far more than just as seller and buyer. Cooperative members have been invited to participate in policy discussions and thus shaped sustainability and agricultural policies in São Paulo. And CODAE lets the cooperative use its premises for its monthly member meetings and general meetings.⁸⁸

TOOLBOX 5

PROLONGED MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT

For over ten years, the municipality of São Paulo has procured goods from local family farmers. Such consistency has several benefits, as it allows the municipality to continuously improve and increase its procurement network while providing reliability and stability to local family farmers. São Paulo's commitment reaches beyond the requirements set out by Brazil's national government. Setting clear goals enables the municipality to cooperate with local actors, such as family farmers' cooperatives, to shape more participatory and sustainable agriculture policies.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Municipal commitment can create an environment in which collective initiatives such as family farmers' cooperatives can flourish. In São Paulo, cooperatives benefit from the legal framework which requires the municipality to procure from cooperatives. Moreover, the Environmental Protection Areas established in the early 2000s enabled COOPERAPAS to easily transition to organic farming methods. The political environment in favour of cooperatives ultimately creates a support system beyond formal procurement relationships, enabling farmers to sell their goods at organic fairs and allowing cooperatives to use public buildings for meetings. As the difficulties COOPERAPAS experienced in their early days show, having a space to sell products and connect with local community members is crucial to increase awareness of alternative farming methods and their benefits for the environment, the quality of products and the farmers. As entities governing public spaces, municipalities can enable the setup of such sites by providing the necessary infrastructure and creating a legal framework allowing for the commercial sale of cooperative products at municipally owned spaces.

CASE STUDY 6 PROTECTING GROUNDWATER AND SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS THROUGH CREATIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT: RENNES, FRANCE

To fight water pollution from industrial agriculture and protect its water catchment, the city of Rennes introduced an innovative procurement concept that quickly spread to neighbouring municipalities. **To circumvent EU regulations that do not allow the inclusion of local production criteria in public procurement contracts, Rennes initiated the *Terres de Sources* programme, a label that certifies farmers for following agroecological production principles and thereby safeguarding local water resources.** Procurement contracts were rephrased to be purchasing a service rather than a product, such as 'yoghurt that safeguards local water resources'. In this way, the municipality was able to provide incentives to farmers to switch to ecological production methods while ensuring that 20 per cent of the food supplied to local school canteens is organic and sourced locally.⁸⁹

WATER POLLUTION AND ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE

With over 340,000 inhabitants, Rennes is the largest city in Brittany. The wider Rennes metropolitan area includes 75 municipalities, which cooperate in strong regional partnerships, most notably between Fougères, Rennes and Brocéliande, representing a combined population of over 600,000. Water pollution is high across the whole area and nitrates and pesticides from industrial agriculture are often found in local waterways.⁹⁰ The pollution was a major motivating factor for local municipalities, including Rennes, to take management of the water system back into municipal hands. In 2015, 56 municipalities in the Eau du Bassin Rennais area took water into public management. Rennes went one step further and also re-municipalised the water-distribution system.



A street in Rennes, France. Credits: Madras91, CC BY 2.0⁹¹

As agricultural chemicals including pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics were the main sources of water pollution in the catchment areas, where over 2,000 farms are located, the municipality of Rennes sought to encourage farmers to switch to ecological production methods to reduce this pollution at its source. However, the initial idea of promoting ecological production through procurement contracts with local farmers encountered difficulties, as current EU regulations prohibit local production clauses in product-procurement contracts.

The city therefore launched the innovative *Terres de Sources* programme (Land of Springs) in 2012, in partnership with a collective of local authorities in the area (*Collectivité Eau du Bassin Rennais*, Collective of municipalities in the Eau du Bassin region).⁹² Through the programme, farmers in local water catchment areas receive support to switch to ecological agricultural production, and can compete for specially designed procurement contracts that are rephrased to apply to a service rather than a product. **By creating these contracts to procure organic and locally produced goods for school canteens, the municipality of Rennes ensured stable demand for such goods and thus created strong incentives for farmers to switch to ecological production.**

PROCUREMENT OF TERRES DE SOURCES FARMERS

In 2015, the city of Rennes launched the first experimental public market through an interactive online platform that directly connects producers and procuring agents. This was specifically designed to connect tender-awarding municipalities with producers in the *Terres de Sources* programme. It opens when the municipalities collectively launch their tenders, facilitating the award process, and includes online information materials as well as an informative webinar.⁹³ The first public contract was awarded to three producers: one dairy producer and two pig breeders. The contracts were set up for a duration of three years, procuring the products for the supply of school canteens within the municipality.⁹⁴ When the second public market was launched in 2017, both the number of participating producers and the number of municipalities increased. Twenty farmers producing under the *Terres de Sources* programme secured four-year contracts with fifteen municipalities.⁹⁵ The range of products diversified to include pork, beef, sheep, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, beverages and cereals, to supply 11,000 school cafeteria meals per day. To continue the successful collaboration between *Terres de Sources* farmers and municipalities in the Eau du Bassin area, a third public market was launched in the summer of 2022.⁹⁶ In April 2023, 88 farmers were contracted by 71 public authorities under new three-year contracts, thus ensuring the safeguarding of water resources into the future.⁹⁷

DEVELOPING THE TERRES DE SOURCES LABEL

To promote the sale of *Terres de Sources* farmers' produce beyond public procurement contracts, the *Terres de Sources* label was created in 2017. The label certifies farmers that meet *Terres de Sources* standards and promotes the sale of certified goods at local supermarkets. To promote the goods and raise awareness of the benefits of agroecological production methods, *Terres de Sources* also launched an educational campaign targeting consumers.

In 2022, 105 local food partners,⁹⁸ including producers, processors, local authorities, consumer and environmental protection associations, employees and financial partners organised themselves into a cooperative society of collective interest (Société Coopérative d'intérêt collectif, SCIC).⁹⁹ The role of the cooperative society is to label *Terres de Sources* farms and their products, promote their sale at retailers, restaurants and other outlets, involve consumers and increase the number of farms in the programme.

The *Terres de Sources* labelling programme received a substantial boost in 2019 when it was awarded a €20.6 million grant from the National Territories of Innovation and Great Ambition programme.¹⁰⁰ The grant will be paid out over the upcoming years, until 2028, and is aimed at supporting farmers and the development of new local sectors. *Terres de Sources* aims to commit 750 farms to the programme by the end of 2028.

BENEFITS OF THE TERRES DE SOURCES PROGRAMME

The *Terres de Sources* programme and label simultaneously benefit local water resources and the surrounding communities. The programme targets both organic and conventional farmers to change their agricultural practices. **By promoting the production of agricultural goods without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, water pollution is reduced at the source. This also lowers the cost of water treatment and the amount of purifying chemicals used to clean the water.** Moreover, the procurement contracts create stable demand for the products and thus a secure income for farmers. At the same time, local synergies are strengthened through the sourcing of local products, and school children receive meals made from local and organic products (at least 20 per cent organic products in the city of Rennes).¹⁰¹



A local market in Rennes, France.
Credits: Jerry H., CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 via Flickr ¹⁰²

TOOLBOX 6

COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC MARKET

By setting up a collaborative public market through which municipalities can procure goods from *Terres de Sources* certified farmers, the Eau de Bassin municipalities have created an alternative to extractive capitalist food markets. Public procurement is used as a tool to support local value chains and connect social and environmental issues. The increasing adoption of this new collaborative public market system allows for a broader cultural shift towards social values and practices by the local population, such as purchasing *Terres de Sources* goods at local stores.

CREATIVE STRATEGY TO CIRCUMVENT EU LEGISLATION

To circumvent EU legislation which prohibits the inclusion of public production contracts, Rennes devised a creative strategy that allows farmers to sell a service rather than a good. Farmers that use ecological farming practices benefit from the programme and can subsequently sell their goods as a service: products that protect local water resources. In contrast to goods, procurement contracts for services may be subject to local criteria. Finding such a workaround and building an extended system of public procurement shows the commitment and collaborative effort of the municipalities and farmers to build a local economy based on ecological and social criteria. This serves as an example to municipalities struggling to shift procurement contracts away from multinationals towards community-based actors. At the same time, since this EU loophole could be closed, the Rennes case study demonstrates the importance of collective political action in the long-term to remove regulatory and policy barriers that impede progressive public procurement.

PART 4.
Public
procurement
can defend
human rights
and formal jobs

In impoverished and formerly colonised countries, reliance on the informal economy remains particularly high, with essential public services often being carried out by informally and insecurely employed individuals rather than by the public sector. One of these essential services is the collection, sorting and recycling of waste. Informal waste pickers are exposed to highly precarious working conditions, unstable salaries, health risks and a lack of social insurance.

In collecting, sorting and recycling municipal solid waste, waste pickers provide an essential public service that significantly contributes to enhancing public health and sanitation, as well as reducing environmental degradation, by reducing the amount of landfill and promoting resource circulation. Despite these important contributions, waste picking is not recognised as a formal occupation in many countries, resulting in waste pickers performing their jobs under precarious working conditions.¹⁰³ Among the most vulnerable groups of waste pickers are women and children, who are often involved in recycling and waste management activities and face social stigma and discrimination for their work.

Excluded from the municipal waste management system, individual waste pickers have little bargaining power and virtually no opportunity to compete with the waste collection services provided by private companies. Their earnings are volatile and derived from selling the recyclable materials they have collected and sorted to larger recycling companies. To increase their bargaining power, and gain formal recognition for the work they perform, waste pickers all over the world are organising into member-owned collectives. These cooperatives can enable workers to transition from the informal to formal economy. According to the International Labour Organisation, organising as a collective enables workers to advocate for being integrated into a municipality's formal waste management chain.¹⁰⁴

Democratically elected officials have a duty to defend the rights of citizens, workers and discriminated communities. By procuring goods and services such as the collection, sorting and recycling of waste from informal workers' cooperatives as part of a pathway to establish progressive formalisation, governments can create a stable income and social security for impoverished community members. On the other hand, when municipalities resort to informal work that pays poverty wages to keep down the costs of public sector labour, informal workers get locked into poverty and everyone loses.¹⁰⁵

As the example of Zanzibar illustrated (Case study 1), public procurement has proven to be an effective tool to support the formalisation of waste-picking activities, most prominently through procuring services from waste pickers' cooperatives at the local level. Benefits range from better waste handling and higher and more stable salaries to improved public health and reduced environmental degradation.

Part 4 includes three case studies where municipal authorities contracted cooperatives to provide waste collection and cleaning services. This led to improvements in the workers' pay and job security, as well as improving public

health and sanitation in the cities. Yet in one case, despite having actively supported the cooperative to establish itself and go through the tendering process, the municipality failed to renew the contract.

In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and Pune, India, waste collection was carried out informally by workers who were subject to poor working conditions and stigmatisation. In Recoleta, Chile, street cleaning was outsourced to a private company under a public procurement agreement. By formalising contracts, the three municipalities greatly improved working conditions for the formerly precarious workers. In Pune, the success of the partnership prompted the national government to pass legislation in 2016 that requires all cities to register waste pickers, provide them with ID cards and integrate them into formal waste management systems and decision making. In Brazil, too, waste picking is now formally recognised as a profession and an essential service.

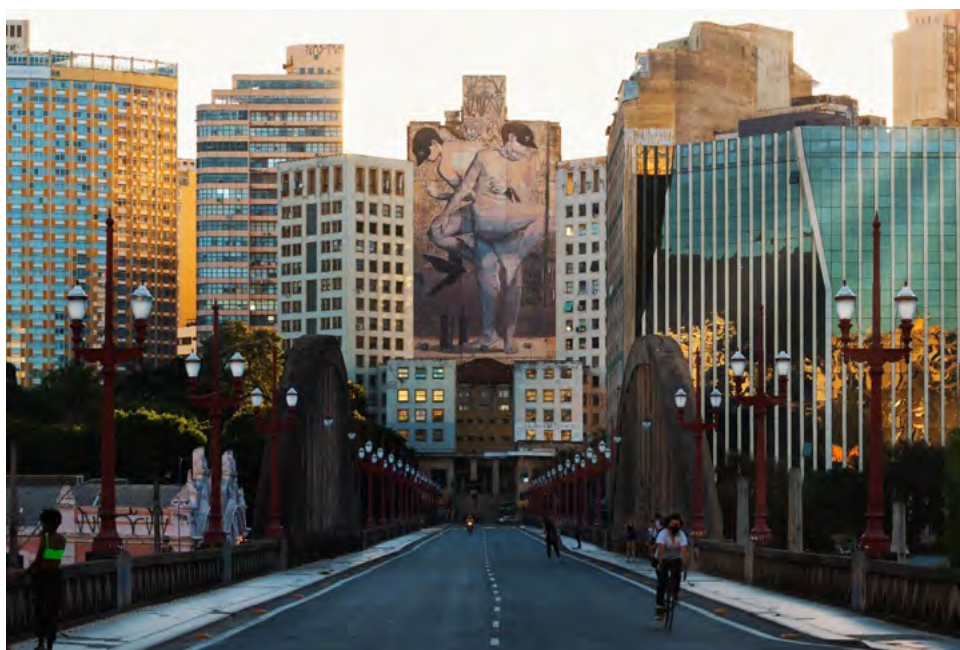
However, the examples of Recoleta and Valparaíso highlight the dangers for workers of falling back into insecure working arrangements if their work is not formally incorporated in the public sector by making them municipal employees.

These examples show that procuring from cooperatives is a step in the right direction. But to sustainably formalise jobs and build public capacity in-house, local governments should enter into dialogue with workers to explore if they want to be hired as formal public sector servants, with the full rights, benefits and secure employment that should entail. TNI and Public Services International, the global union federation of public services workers, among others, call this strategy of bringing a public service, and the workers who run it, in-house: (re)municipalisation. Remunicipalisation refers to when local or regional public authorities reclaim a public service from the private sector. Municipalisation is about creating a new public service that did not exist before. By the summer of 2023, the Public Futures database of cases where privatisation has ended had identified 94 waste remunicipalisations alongside five newly created municipal waste services.¹⁰⁶

As acknowledged in the UN Habitat's World Cities Report 2022: 'Government must revision their relationship between the private sector and civil society, with special attention to underrepresented groups to co-create strategies such as re-municipalization, community-led finance and forms of co-production of urban services... Re-municipalization is not mere change in ownership. Rather it is a new form of urban governance that reflects collective aspirations for social and environmental justice and the democratic management of public services.'¹⁰⁷

CASE STUDY 7 **ENDING PRECARIOUS WORKING CONDITIONS BY FORMALISING CONTRACTS WITH WASTE PICKER COOPERATIVES: BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL**

Belo Horizonte, the capital city of the state of Minas Gerais, has been an important leader in the formalisation of waste-picking workers, putting an end to the informal and precarious working conditions the workers were facing. After years of dialogue between the municipality and workers, the municipality formally contracted six waste pickers' cooperatives to perform the door-to-door collection of separated waste.¹⁰⁸ Since September 2019 the cooperatives have been collecting, sorting and recycling waste from 55 neighbourhoods. The example of Belo Horizonte shows that open dialogue between workers and the municipality is essential to highlight the precarious working conditions informal waste pickers face and develop joint solutions to formalise their work.



Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Credits: Magno Dias CC BY-ND 2.0, via Flickr¹⁰⁹

INFORMAL WASTE WORKERS' STRUGGLE IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, over 280,000 people engage in waste-picking activities. Approximately 87 per cent of these workers operate in Brazil's informal economy.¹¹⁰ At the municipal and state levels, workers' cooperatives have played a key role in making workers' struggles visible and representing the voice of waste pickers in dialogue with public authorities. Among the cooperatives that played a major role in shaping local public policy in the 1990s is the Association of Collectors of Paper, Cardboard, and Reusable Material (ASMARE) in Belo Horizonte. Formed in 1990, ASMARE is legally registered as an association and functions internally as a cooperative. ASMARE has been fighting for the recognition of waste pickers and the right to earn a living from their activities. The first partnership between ASMARE and the municipal agency responsible for the management of urban cleaning services and waste collection (*Superintendência de Limpeza Urbana, SLU*), was reached in 1993,¹¹¹ when ASMARE was assigned responsibility for collecting

and recycling paper.¹¹² In turn, SLU provided the waste collectors working in the streets with uniforms, tickets for transport and warehouses for the collection, sorting, disposal and recycling of the waste.¹¹³ The resulting system improved working conditions, pay and job security for the informal workers.

As a result of the open dialogue at the municipal and state levels, Brazil officially included waste picking as a profession in the Brazilian Occupancy Classification in 2001. The role of waste pickers in collecting and recycling materials is further outlined in Federal Law 12,305 on the National Policy of Solid Waste, approved in 2010, making Brazil one of the few countries across the so-called Global South to formally recognise waste picking as an occupation and essential service.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN WASTE PICKERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF BELO HORIZONTE

In September 2019, after many years of dialogue between the informal waste collectors of Belo Horizonte and the city, the municipality awarded contracts for the collection of separated waste to six local workers' cooperatives and associations.¹¹⁴ The process was facilitated by the formation of several associations and cooperatives and the set-up of a Municipal Waste and Citizenship Forum in 2003 to open dialogue on public policy and solid waste management.¹¹⁵ Throughout the tendering process, several waste pickers' cooperatives were supported by the Central Cooperative Solidarity Network of Workers of Recyclable Materials of Minas Gerais (Redesol MG),¹¹⁶ which was established in 2010 as a result of the discussions in the Municipal Waste and Citizenship Forum.¹¹⁷ Four of the six cooperatives contracted by the Belo Horizonte municipality are affiliated with Redesol MG. The network represents over 200 workers, organised in 14 cooperatives of 10 to 40 members, who engage in the collection, sorting and/or processing of recyclables throughout the state.



Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Credits: Casa Fora do Eixo Minas, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Flickr¹¹⁸

The contracting of informal workers' cooperatives to provide public services in Belo Horizonte is a major achievement for the cooperatives, symbolising recognition of their work and the formalisation of their jobs. SLU issued the tender contracts in 2019 and provides the cooperatives with six compactor trucks to carry out door-to-door collection. SLU carries out the planning of municipal waste management, provides critical infrastructure to the cooperatives by renting, building and renovating sheds for the sorting of waste and performs regular inspections of the service provided by the cooperatives. In September 2022, SLU announced that due to the successful implementation of the door-to-door collection services and an increase in demand for the service, the collection would be extended to eight more neighbourhoods, serving a total of 55 neighbourhoods in the city.¹¹⁹ In combination with the extension of the collection zones, the cooperative workers carried out information campaigns to educate households about recycling and collection procedures.

Belo Horizonte's waste management system is one of the most organised in any Brazilian city. The rigorous implementation and constant improvements to the system bring substantial benefits to the urban and natural environment. In 2020 alone, waste cooperatives in Belo Horizonte recycled more than 4,000 tonnes of paper, metal, glass and plastic.¹²⁰ Moreover, the city inaugurated a biogas plant in 2017, which is owned by the private company Asja Brazil.¹²¹ Through the anaerobic digestion process, the organic fraction of municipal waste is turned into biogas, which is captured and used to generate electricity, saving over one million tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year. The electricity produced is distributed to a wide range of consumers in Belo Horizonte by the private company CEMIG. To ensure that the recycling operations carried out by Asja Brazil and CEMIG benefit the Belo Horizonte community, part of the income generated by the sale of the electric power is reverted to the municipality. While this agreement allows for part of the profits to be reinvested into the community, the benefits of converting biogas from municipal waste into energy could be even greater if the biogas plant was publicly owned and electricity was distributed through a public energy company to ensure democratic control throughout all decision-making processes.

BEYOND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The open dialogue between workers' cooperatives and the municipality resulted not only in waste pickers' cooperatives winning contracts but also manifested itself in continuous collaboration between different cooperatives and the municipality. In 2002, after ASMARE created a network with several other waste workers' cooperatives, the demand for childcare services by female informal waste workers was discussed during a local assembly of waste pickers.¹²³ Encouraged by the local government and supported by two NGOs, a childcare centre was set up to meet female waste workers' need for affordable childcare services.¹²⁴ As a result of the dialogue between the city government and ASMARE, and the growing responsibilities of municipalities to provide early childhood development services, the municipality took over the management and financing of the centre and eventually incorporated it into the municipal system of early childhood development centres in 2004.

TOOLBOX 7

FORMALISATION OF PRECARIOUS WORKERS

The formalisation of waste pickers and other workers in the informal economy who face precarious working conditions and a lack of social insurance is a significant success. When cities contract waste pickers' cooperatives, workers receive a secure income, pensions, and health and social insurance. Adequate equipment and safety precautions further contribute to improving the health of waste pickers. At the same time, municipalities can ensure that streets are kept clean, reducing pollution in cities and ultimately improving public health. Where waste picking is not recognised as a formal occupation, formalisation through public contracting and public employment can contribute significantly to creating dignified working conditions for waste pickers.

PUBLIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH DIALOGUE

Open and continuous dialogue has proven essential for the collaboration between the Belo Horizonte municipality and local waste worker cooperatives. Creating pathways for communication on a level playing field is essential to identify and adequately address the needs of precarious workers. Citizen forums, such as the one held by ASMARE workers, can enhance workers' collective bargaining power. Local governments must listen to workers and citizens and take their concerns, needs and demands seriously, for example, when they demand to become public sector workers.

SUPPORT BEYOND PUBLIC TENDER

While the formalisation of waste pickers' jobs is a key achievement of Belo Horizonte, it is worth highlighting the municipality's support beyond the contractual obligations specified in the tender. Belo Horizonte stepped up to engage with waste pickers long before workers' cooperatives were formally contracted. Working together with ASMARE, the municipality supports women waste pickers' need for reliable childcare by providing a public childcare centre, for example.

CASE STUDY 8 SCALING THE BENEFITS OF WASTE WORKER FORMALISATION: PUNE, INDIA

Since 2008, India's first wholly worker-owned cooperative of self-employed waste collectors has provided door-to-door waste collection for the large city of Pune, home to 3.1 million people.¹²⁵ Born out of a pilot programme to upskill 1,500 waste pickers, the cooperative SWaCH has grown to more than 3,500 members and collects the waste of over 800,000 households per day. The exemplary cooperation between the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and the workers' cooperative SWaCH has served as the basis for national policy changes and as inspiration for other cities, such as Bangalore, which has replicated elements of the SWaCH waste management model.¹²⁶



Laximi road in Pune, India.

Credits: Stephanie Booth CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 via Flickr¹²⁷

SWaCH: SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND HANDLING COOPERATIVE

In 2005, the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP, Paper Glass Tin Pickers) trade union set out to train 1,500 informal waste pickers in the door-to-door collection of municipal waste in a joint pilot project with the Pune Municipal Corporation. Despite the existence of national policies mandating household waste separation and door-to-door collection since 2000, waste collection in Pune was poorly organised and virtually no separation of waste at source existed.¹²⁸ Only 7 per cent of households were covered by door-to-door collection services. Residents disposed of their waste in a single container, which informal waste pickers had to search through for recyclables to sell for little money. **The lack of a waste management and recycling system led to unsafe and unsanitary working conditions for waste pickers, as well as high levels of pollution and public health concerns in the city. The KKPKP pilot programme proved highly successful in addressing these problems and improving the livelihoods and working**

conditions of hundreds of precarious waste pickers.¹²⁹ Out of this initial pilot, the SWaCH Workers' Cooperative was born in 2007 as India's first wholly worker-owned cooperative of self-employed waste collectors. In recent years, SWaCH has extended its services to collect e-waste and old clothes. Since 2012, the cooperative has been authorised to collect and process electronic waste and has set up collection bins in private and public institutions.

Today, SwaCH has over 3,500 members. The cooperative prides itself on its democratic governance process, which is led by a board that consists of founding members and representatives from local waste worker groups, the *Pratinidhis*. *Pratinidhis* are directly elected by the waste workers and have a high degree of autonomy for self-governance.¹³⁰ This allows for de-centralised and consultative decision-making processes and enables workers to influence decision-making at higher levels through their representatives.

BUILDING A LASTING PUBLIC-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP

After the notable success of the 2005 pilot programme, the PMC offered SWaCH a five-year contract for the door-to-door collection of household waste in 2008.¹³¹ Under the agreement, SWaCH was tasked with extending its collection to over 50 per cent of Pune, while the PMC supplies equipment and provides funds for administrative staff time and health benefits. Moreover, the PMC issues identity cards to SWaCH members, which grant them access to several social benefits, including interest-free loans and educational support for their children. While PMC covers the costs of equipment and other benefits, SWaCH collects fees directly from households and commercial clients. In 2022, the monthly fee for waste collection was Rs 80 for households and Rs 160 for commercial properties (approximately €0.88 and €1.78 per month as of April 2023).

According to SWaCH, they save the municipality Rs. 200 million (approximately €2.2 million) per year in waste-handling costs alone. External estimates have placed the municipal savings even higher, at up to Rs. 900 million (approximately €10 million) annually, considering labour, processing and transportation costs. After SWaCH's initial contract expired in 2013, negotiations over delayed health benefit payments and equipment initially halted the renewal of the contract between PMC and the cooperative. However, when the second agreement was signed in 2016, PMC agreed to repay the total sum owed to the cooperative and provide additional equipment, health insurance and educational support. The contract was subsequently renewed for an additional year at the end of 2020 and extended for another five years in November 2022.¹³²

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and educational support. The contract was subsequently renewed for an additional year at the end of 2020 and extended for another five years in November 2022.¹³⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SWACH'S ACTIVITIES

Waste is a significant source of pollution, contributing to climate change and ozone pollution, especially when disposed of improperly. In the absence of waste management and recycling systems, a vast majority of recyclable waste ends up in landfills or is burned and thus contributes to air pollution and public health hazards. Through recycling at the source, the amount of waste sent to landfills can be significantly reduced. SWaCH collects over 850 tonnes of municipal solid waste per day, of which roughly 150 tonnes are recycled, and an additional 130 tonnes are turned into compost.¹³⁵ The cooperative has developed extensive composting operations, turning wet waste into natural fertiliser. Pune has further established de-centralised bio-mechanisation for the processing and composting of organic waste.¹³⁶ SWaCH's recycling operations significantly reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere each year.¹³⁷ Paper recycling alone prevents the felling of over 350,000 trees, saving 130,000 tonnes of CO₂. Meanwhile, 29,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent are avoided through anaerobic digestion of biodegradable material.



Segregated waste collection in Pune, India. Credits: Tho-Ge, Pixabay license, via Pixabay¹³⁸

SCALING SWACH'S IMPACT

The success of SWaCH's model in formalising waste-picking jobs and scaling up its operations from 1,500 to over 3,500 workers who serve 70 per cent of Pune and collect waste from 800,000 households has caught nationwide and international attention. The successful cooperation between the municipal government and the cooperative in the form of a prolonged public community partnership that extends beyond financial contracting serves as an example for other cities, such as Bangalore. Moreover, the issuing of ID cards¹³⁹ to waste pickers by the

PMC has influenced the national government, prompting it to pass legislation in 2016 that requires all cities to register waste pickers, provide them with ID cards and integrate them into formal waste management systems and decision-making. SWaCH was a finalist candidate in the World Resources Institute's 2018–2019 Prize for Cities Award.¹⁴⁰

TOOLBOX 8

FORMALISATION AND BEYOND

The formalisation of waste pickers is an important issue for many impoverished localities. The Pune Municipal Corporation has gone beyond the mere formalisation of jobs to integrate previously excluded citizens into the social fabric of the city. By issuing ID cards to all waste workers, the PMC set a nationwide example and enabled workers, the overwhelming majority of whom belong to traditionally discriminated caste groups, to better access the social benefits and privileges accorded routinely to other citizens, including access to financial credit, education and social security. To build resilient local economies and address existing inequalities, the collaboration between public bodies, cooperatives and citizens must go beyond the formal dimensions of work and encompass all aspects of social life.

COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Worldwide, privatisation of basic public services, such as waste management, remains heavily promoted, with advocates promising increased efficiency and cost reductions. Local governments often outsource such services and enter into partnerships with the private sector in the hope of resolving existing problems easily. Instead of opting for a so-called public-private partnership, the PMC was committed from the start to looking for a solution to the city's waste problems within their own community. From setting up the first pilot programme, offering SWaCH an initial five-year service contract and overcoming issues that arose after the end of this first contract to consistently renewing the public-community partnership, PMC has proven its commitment to working with its local waste-picker community in good and challenging times. The resulting benefits are undeniable and provide a clear lesson: open and continuous dialogue with community actors leads to the development of tailored solutions and the improvement of living standards, public health and community well-being.

CASE STUDY 9 INTERCULTURAL WORKERS' COOPERATIVE: RECOLETA, CHILE

In 2015, the municipality of Recoleta started acting to address the pitfalls of privatising essential public services. With municipal support, workers organised themselves in a cooperative to compete for the public tender for the cleaning of streets and public spaces. Rewarding the cooperative's efforts to prioritise workers' rights and dignity, the municipality awarded the contract to the intercultural workers' cooperative Jatún Newén. In doing so, the city actively contributed to breaking the exploitative structures of privatisation, while protecting precarious workers. However, after a falling out between the cooperative and municipality in 2020, the cooperative's contract was not renewed, leaving it to compete with large private corporations and offer its services to the private sector.¹⁴¹ **Thus, while serving as a prime example of municipal support in the early years, the experience of Jatún Newén in Recoleta also highlights the danger of workers falling back into insecure working arrangements. One way a local authority can mitigate against this is to explore if the workers want to become municipal employees, while upholding the autonomy of the cooperative.**



Comuna Recoleta, Santiago, Chile.
Credits: Daniela Snow CC BY 2.0 via Flickr¹⁴²

PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES FROM THE WORKERS' COOPERATIVE

After decades of promotion of neoliberalism in Chile, many essential public services have been outsourced to private, profit-driven corporations. Privatisation has taken its toll on the quality of the services provided while placing workers in precarious working conditions with low salaries. Recoleta, a municipality within Greater Santiago, followed a similar trajectory until a political turnaround in 2012, when Communist Party member Daniel Jadue was elected mayor. Under Jadue, municipal politics focuses on participatory governance, support for local cooperatives and the improvement of municipal services. Jadue has been re-elected twice, and is currently serving his third term until 2024. During their first years in office, Jadue and his city council, almost exclusively made up of

Communist Party members, implemented several projects to rebuild public ownership and overcome neoliberal structures, including setting up a popular pharmacy, opening the Open University of Recoleta and building public housing through the 'people's real estate agency'. In 2016, the city revised its procurement practices for contracting workers to clean streets and public spaces.

Until 2015, street cleaning in Recoleta was outsourced to the private company Servitrans under a public procurement agreement.¹⁴³ However the quality of the cleaning service was low and provision unreliable due to regular interruptions. When Servitrans employees made the municipality aware of the precarious working conditions they were facing, the municipality stepped up to support them. In line with Mayor Jadue's election manifesto, the municipality supported the formation of a worker-owned cooperative in 2015, intending to award the public tender for street cleaning to the cooperative in 2016.

JATÚN NEWÉN WORKERS' COOPERATIVE

The worker-owned cooperative Jatún Newén was founded for the specific purpose of competing for the public tender for the cleaning and maintenance of streets and public spaces in Recoleta. It consists of many former Servitrans workers who had experienced precarious working conditions and low pay. Therefore, equality and fair treatment are among the cooperative's core values, creating a system in which work is respected, dignified and rewarded with a commensurate salary. The cooperative consists of 85 worker members of various nationalities, many of them migrant workers from Peru, Ecuador and Colombia.¹⁴⁴ As Chile's first intercultural workers cooperative, Jatún Newén is committed to fostering social and inclusive development by improving the collective living standards of its workers, especially focusing on advocating for the rights of migrant workers. **According to the cooperative's president, Freddy Flores, a key idea behind setting up the cooperative was to reduce public money spent on procurement through large private companies and instead create a system in which community members receive a fair salary and profits remain within the community.** Under the contract with the municipality, Jatún Newén workers' salaries doubled.¹⁴⁵

Although the cooperative received active support from the municipality in the early stages, taking part in the public tender process for the street cleaning contract posed a significant challenge to the young cooperative.¹⁴ Participation in the tender required proof of sufficient monetary resources, a requirement which the cooperative struggled to meet. However, Jatún Newén was able to secure sufficient funds through member resources and a loan from a savings and credit cooperative. It successfully competed in the public tendering process in 2016 and was awarded an initial contract for two years, worth 1,600 million Chilean pesos (€1.8 million as at April 2023). The contract between Jatún Newén and the Municipality of Recoleta was subsequently extended until the end of 2021.¹⁴⁷ For 2019 and 2020, the municipality additionally contracted Jatún Newén for the maintenance of green spaces within the city.

Despite the financial difficulties the cooperative faced in its early days, its operations turned profitable within just a few years, allowing Jatún Newén to acquire

several assets by 2020, such as trucks, a compactor and several smaller machines. Using funds provided by the Technical Cooperation Service, Sercotech, an affiliate of the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism, the cooperative invested in new software and developed a Waste Management Unit in 2020, further expanding its services.¹⁴⁸ The purpose of the Waste Management Unit is to promote a circular economy model and pass on its sustainable approach to other private and public organisations. It now offers services such as conducting a comprehensive waste analysis, developing customised waste management plans and delivering analytical reports on waste treatment to public bodies and private companies. However, the municipality is no longer using this service.

CHALLENGES AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

After several years of successful operations, the cooperative faced significant hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to a court case in which the company Camo, which rents machinery and equipment to Jatún Newén, sued the cooperative for not paying rental fees in 2020, the cooperative's accounts were frozen. Consequently, the cooperative was unable to pay workers' salaries for three months. While the municipality of Recoleta legally appears as a joint debtor of Jatún Newén, it did not assume responsibility for the payment of the salary and taxes, causing strikes in front of the municipality in January 2021.¹⁴⁹ The struggles were resolved shortly after when the embargo on Jatún Newén's funds was lifted. However, workers feared that the municipality might discontinue the contract with the cooperative, as they had been threatened with retaliation by municipal officials during the strike. The municipality indicated that the cooperative would continue its operations as usual, and no fines would be raised.¹⁵⁰ Yet, following the expiry of Jatún Newén's contract, no new tender was launched and the cooperation between municipality and cooperative ended.

In Valparaíso, another Chilean municipality, something similar happened. Cleaning workers for the private corporation FEZA escaped precarious working conditions and low salaries by organising themselves into a cooperative to participate in the public tendering process for local street cleaning. In 2018, the cooperative won the contract and provided the public service for three years. However, after a falling out with the mayor, municipal support for the cooperative dwindled, and the cooperative was left to compete with large multinationals specialised in competing for public contracts.¹⁵¹ Left without a contract in December 2021, the cooperative's workers now lack a secure income.

The struggles of these waste cooperatives and the loss of the contracts that provided their main income highlight the risks associated with partnerships between municipalities and cooperatives. While self-governed workers' cooperatives can succeed in promoting workers' rights and can use their autonomy to develop new technologies, a withdrawal of municipal support can endanger their sustainability. **An important tool to ensure democratic and transparent financial management and accountability, as well as to secure workers' rights and wages, is the incorporation of the service within the municipality and the direct employment of municipal cleaning workers.**

TOOLBOX 9

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP TO REVERSE NEOLIBERAL POLICIES

The commitment of Daniel Jadue's administration to reversing the neoliberal policies that have scarred Chile's social and economic system for decades and instead building an economy based on cooperation is a key force driving cooperative development in Recoleta. The municipality has stepped up to support several public projects, including the establishment of a popular pharmacy and the Open University of Recoleta. Municipal support made the set-up of the workers' cooperative Jatún Newén possible, ending the extractive working conditions faced by cleaning workers. However, the sudden withdrawal of municipal support from the cooperative is a cause for concern and highlights the importance of ensuring long-term support and job security.


COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

As the first intercultural workers' cooperative, Jatún Newén, set a precedent in Recoleta, showing that empowered workers can create effective self-management structures and transform their experiences of precarious work into a culture of care, valuing each other's contributions and defending dignified work. The autonomy that Jatún Newén workers obtained through self-governance enabled the cooperative to invest in new technologies and develop beyond its traditional services.

THE CASE FOR DIRECT EMPLOYMENT

Despite the benefits of self-governance and autonomy that allowed the Jatún Newén workers to develop their cooperative, the financial troubles the cooperative experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of workers if municipal support is not consistent. Direct employment of cleaning workers by the municipality can reduce the uncertainties of competing for new contracts every two years that led to the discontinuation of the public-cooperative partnership. Moreover, workers that provide an essential public service in keeping roads and public spaces clean should enjoy the same benefits as municipal employees. This can be done by either turning the cleaning workers into public service workers or alternatively, including in the call for tenders a requirement that the employment conditions meet or exceed the public service standard. To support workers in their drive for innovation and service improvement, municipalities should find ways of providing space for workers to voice their ideas through participatory, bottom-up processes.

**PART 5.
Popular
participation
improves
public spending
policies**



Social justice, environmental responsibility and community wealth-building are essential cornerstones of emerging progressive public procurement strategies. While municipalities and public bodies are rightly focusing on how they can ensure that public money spent on procurement is reinvested into local communities, another important aspect of progressive procurement policies is the involvement of these very communities. Participatory approaches to public procurement are growing in popularity in various countries around the globe. They show in many unique ways how citizens, workers and communities can benefit from participating in decision-making and oversight processes to strengthen citizen participation, workers' rights, trust in local governments and transparency.

This section contains a case study from Qali Warma, Peru, and examples from Abra, the Philippines; Quito, Ecuador; Cali, Colombia; Mexico and the Dominican Republic. These show how engaging groups such as parents, workers and people from discriminated groups on an ongoing basis can improve transparency and strengthen people's control over public funds. Opening up spending policies to popular participation makes procurement better serve local needs and enables local authorities to earn the trust of their residents.

WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENTS INCLUDE CITIZENS IN THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCESS?

As the case studies from Recoleta, Belo Horizonte, Zanzibar and Northland demonstrate, a commitment to progressive procurement can lead to the inclusion of socially and economically discriminated groups in the formal economy. While such practices can increase employment and visibility among discriminated groups, racialised minorities, migrants, impoverished households and people living in rural areas often remain excluded from formal decision-making processes. Public investment and targeted policies are key to achieving improvements in the living conditions and well-being of vulnerable groups, who are harmed the most if public service provision is hampered through inefficient procurement. By providing these residents with an opportunity to voice their concerns and take part in the public procurement process, local governments and affected communities can work together and build community wealth where it is most needed.¹⁵²

The inclusion of discriminated communities, especially Indigenous groups, in procurement processes falls within the broader international human rights framework of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).¹⁵³ Based on the collective right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples, FPIC was developed as a standard that supplements that right by giving Indigenous people the power to decide over the governance of their lands and resources on their own terms, with transparency of information and without pressure from governments and private interest groups. Since the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas identifies some parallel rights, especially in relation to participation in decision-making processes, such standards could potentially be extended to public procurement. Citizen participation is an essential tool to guarantee that local communities have the power to decide together how their collective resources are used for

the benefit of all community members. This also enables citizens to address place-based needs, such as through awarding tenders to locally owned small businesses and community-based organisations, and investing public money where it is needed most.

Opening up procurement procedures to citizens further helps to build trust between governments and communities. Especially in regions where corruption is historically high and trust in public bodies is therefore low, transparent tendering processes and the involvement of citizens in the selection and awarding of tenders can help rebuild trust in public institutions.

BOX 1

GRASSROOTS GROUP MONITORS PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, ABRA, PHILIPPINES

The small town of Abra in the Philippines has long struggled with poverty, poor infrastructure and corrupt local officials. Much-needed infrastructure projects took well beyond the intended period for completion and in several instances, projects were reported as completed although their execution by the contracted construction companies had barely begun or not started at all.

Taking matters into their own hands, a group of local teachers and community members organised themselves to raise local citizens' awareness of corruption in public procurement processes.¹⁵⁴ In 1987 the group formed the local grassroots organisation Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG) to monitor the implementation of public infrastructure projects. Through citizen audits and effective monitoring, CCAGG exposed irregularities in local infrastructure construction projects, and created evidence-based reports on the corrupt public tendering mechanisms that allowed faulty reporting of the projects' status. This citizen monitoring ultimately reduced corruption in the region and led to the removal of corrupt officials from their positions. Between 1987 and 2006, CCAGG volunteers monitored over 600 infrastructure projects worth P300 million (approximately €4.9 million as of June 2023) and contributed to a change in the mindset and behaviour of the local population from accepting corruption to guarding and monitoring how public money is spent.¹⁵⁵

INVOLVING CITIZENS IN PROCUREMENT PROCESSES

Citizens' involvement in the procurement process can have many different facets and can happen at various stages throughout the process. Public procurement can generally be separated into four different stages: **the planning phase, the publication of the tender, the selection of suppliers and awarding of the tender and the implementation phase.**¹⁵⁶ Citizens' involvement throughout all four stages is desirable to ensure both

the transparency of the processes and the empowerment of citizens to shape procurement outcomes from the start.

Around the world, a multitude of innovative approaches exist, initiated by national and local governments, citizen groups and civil society organisations, that aim to improve citizen participation throughout these stages. They have varying degrees of citizen involvement, ranging from purely observational functions to co-decision-making in the award of public tenders. Public oversight committees, integrity pacts, public hearings, and platforms monitoring public expenditure can be important tools to enhance transparency within public procurement and monitor public spending. They provide citizens with a platform to engage with public institutions, for example, by posing questions about the tender process during the tendering stage. Moreover, citizens can hold public bodies accountable by monitoring awarded tenders and public spending through the use of e-procurement platforms. While these are important functions, these approaches still fall short of giving citizens structural decision-making power over public spending.¹⁵⁷

An alternative approach, commonly known as *community-led procurement*, allows citizens to become co-decision-makers, not just observers, during the tender, award and implementation stages.¹⁵⁸ Community-led procurement strategies incorporate citizens into the various stages of procurement, for example, by appointing citizens to public purchasing committees. This bottom-up approach empowers citizens to take control of decision-making processes while providing them with tools to monitor public purchases, allowing for greater inclusion of citizens than purely observational approaches. For example, through the creation of purchasing committees for the procurement of school meals in Peru (case study 10), parents are given decision-making power over goods procured for meals provided at their children's schools. This gives them an active role in public procurement and enables them to monitor and influence public spending.

TAKING CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL THROUGH PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Participatory budgets are a well-known tool to increase citizen participation in decision-making about public spending. While procurement can be part of such an approach, participatory budgeting represents a broader form of citizen empowerment and co-decision-making over public money.¹⁵⁹ Participatory budgets exist in several cities across the world, including Porto Alegre (Brazil), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Medellín (Colombia),¹⁶⁰ Villa El Salvador (Peru), New York City (US), Jakarta (Indonesia) and Delhi (India), and have proven effective tools to increase participation and democratic decision-making in the public sector.¹⁶¹ Local governments have to allocate a set share of their annual budget for participatory budgeting. Through a process of consultation and dialogue between the community and local government, citizens can define their local investment priorities. The bottom-up decision-making process allows the public to allocate financial resources to projects deemed important for the community that may include, but are not limited to, public procurement.

CASE STUDY 10 COMMUNITY-LED PURCHASING FOR SCHOOL MEALS, QALI WARMA, PERU

Initially established as a three-year pilot programme, the Qali Warma social programme has become a successful example of community-led public purchasing for public school meals throughout the whole of Peru.¹⁶² Organised as a mixed-management model, with procurement committees consisting of community members, health experts, teachers and civil society representatives at the regional and municipal levels, the programme enables public collaboration and citizen oversight throughout the different stages of the procurement process. The co-management of procurement is organised at the local level through decentralised committees that purchase goods for schools within their districts. Local purchasing committees can take into account nutritional preferences and procure goods from family farmers within the region. Many food purchasing committees at the municipal level have begun to procure from family farmers, prompting national legislative changes to increase the share of family farming procurement to 30 per cent by 2024. This benefits local farmers by creating a steady demand for their products, the local community as public money is reinvested and remains in the community and school children who are served locally grown fruit and vegetables.



Launch of the Qali Warma project in 2012.
Credits: Presidencia Perú, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, via Flickr¹⁶³

HOW IT STARTED

The purpose of the National School Feeding Programme, Qali Warma, is to provide food to students in public schools, specifically focusing on early childhood and primary education. The programme is part of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis), which was set up in 2011.¹⁶⁴ At the start of its operations, Midis evaluated the five social programmes assigned to it, including the National Food Assistance Programme. The evaluation showed that the programme faced several problems, including insufficient and non-inclusive coverage, inconsistency and a lack of clear goals. Consequently, Midis

created the Qali Warma programme in 2012, which started operations in 2013 to solve the problem of inadequate food consumption by children attending public schools. Peru, like many Latin American countries, struggles with the double-edged problem of obesity and malnutrition among school-aged children. The Qali Warma programme was designed to provide a high-quality, sustainable and healthy food service that is appropriate for the local consumption habits of school children. A core purpose was also to engage with the local community through a co-management model, creating a programme that is nationally coordinated by Midis but operationally decentralised at the regional and local levels.

In the early years, citizen participation was limited due to a lack of incentives and awareness of the programme. Several measures were implemented in 2015 to strengthen and institutionalise participation. Among these was the creation of a Directory of Social Actors interested in oversight, which goes beyond involving only parents of school children to address different groups of local citizens. It includes members from community-based organisations, parents' associations, community leaders, members of the local authorities and volunteers from other local groups interested in monitoring the implementation of the programme.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, to strengthen citizen participation, a training programme was designed and implemented for the Directory and a protocol was developed for citizen oversight procedures. In 2016, roughly 300 citizen watchdogs (also referred to as citizen observers) were accredited to participate in 116 purchasing committees. As a result, Midis notes a significant increase in the activity of the citizen observers, measured by the number of alerts issued on procurement cases.¹⁶⁶ Between 2015 and 2017, the number of alerts more than doubled, with citizen watchdogs flagging 4,746 critical issues on 730 cases in 2017, compared to 2,039 alerts on 414 cases in 2015, the year before the training program was first implemented. The programme continues to certify social actors to this day to ensure that local communities remain involved and represented in the programme.¹⁶⁷

QALI WARMA'S CO-MANAGEMENT MODEL

Qali Warma has a decentralised design. Regional units are responsible for the execution, monitoring and supervision of the programme's activities. Within each territorial unit, purchasing committees supervise the procurement and management of meals at local public schools. The purchasing committees consist of two sub-committees: a procurement committee responsible for supplier selection and financial transactions, and a school food committee, which manages the preparation and distribution of food to the schools and monitors its quality.

The purchasing committees consist of representatives from local governments, health networks, governors, and parents from public schools in the respective area. The purchasing committees are viewed as legal entities, allowing them to contract services and purchase materials and supplies. They have the autonomy to make decisions within the framework of regulations approved by Midis and the central Qali Warma administration. The members of the purchasing committee change every year to ensure the integrity of the

committee's decisions and prevent them from interacting with suppliers or engaging in practices that could lead to conflicts of interest.

Since 2019, the purchasing process has been carried out through an electronic platform, guaranteeing transparency, security, reliability and accessibility to potential suppliers and citizens.¹⁶⁸ Procurement committee members are trained in the use of the platform to ensure a smooth transition and increase the effectiveness of the procurement process. This process consists of five consecutive phases which must be carried out within a 25-day timeframe. In the first step, the purchasing committee administers and distributes the notice of the basis for selection, which is agreed upon by the members of the committee. In the second and third steps, suppliers formulate and submit their proposals. The fourth step is for committee members to evaluate these. In the final step, the purchasing committee selects the winning supplier and a one-year purchasing agreement is signed by the corresponding parties. The process allows the purchasing committee to co-decide and co-administer the process, while the school food committee participates in the evaluation of the planning and implementation of the programme within the schools. In October 2022, the 116 purchasing committees launched the fourth electronic purchasing process for the Qali Warma programme.¹⁶⁹ In 2023, the evaluation phase is being livestreamed on the Qali Warma web portal to enhance transparency and social control for the general public.



Qali Warma in the Huando district, 2016.

Credits: Presidencia Perú, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, via Flickr¹⁷⁰

TOWARDS PROCURING LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCTS FROM FAMILY FARMING

In Peru, small-scale family farmers represent 97 per cent of the agricultural production units, supplying roughly 80 per cent of food to Peruvian homes, and are thus essential for the country's food security. For several years, regional school food procurement committees of the Qali Warma programme

have recognised the importance of family farmers for providing healthy, locally grown food. Dozens of municipalities are relying on contracts with family farmers for their public purchases. For example, since 2016, Huancayo Province¹⁷¹ has been procuring over 3,000 kg of vegetables per week from almost 60 local family farmers to contribute to meals for 13,000 schoolchildren every day.¹⁷² 114 new family farming producers joined as suppliers in the Junín region in 2019.¹⁷³ Qali Warma procurement committees from the municipalities of Maynas, Belén, Chachapoyas, Chota, Huata, Coata, El Ingenio, and Llipata, the provinces of Huancavelica and Rioja, and the regions of Ayacucho and Áncash are all procuring products from family farmers or have committed to doing so in the next purchase round.¹⁷⁴ **Qali Warma is therefore supporting precarious small-scale farmers through sustained purchasing agreements that generate regular incomes, while ensuring that school pupils are receiving high-quality, healthy and fresh food.**

Since 2021, Midis has officially promoted the purchase of food from family farming for the school feeding programme.¹⁷⁵ To further institutionalise the public procurement of family farming products, Peru's Minister of Agrarian Development and Irrigation launched the COMPRAGRO State Purchase System in June 2021, which aims to increase the share of food procured from small-scale family farmers.¹⁷⁶ According to law 31071, by 2024, 30 per cent of procured food must come from family farmers.¹⁷⁷ **Food purchases from family farmers from Midis' social programmes alone could reach up to 600 million Peruvian soles (€143 million as at April 2023) annually, providing an important source of income.**



A family farm, Ollantaytambo, Peru.
Credits: Kevin Bovard, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, via flickr ¹⁷⁸

TOOLBOX 10

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Through a Directory of Social Actors, the Qali Warma programme anchors citizen participation as a core feature of the programme. The legal standing of purchasing committees and the de-centralised design enable them to make decisions autonomously, which reduces bureaucracy and allows committees to take local circumstances into account when making decisions. This co-procurement model serves as an example for municipalities when it comes to school food procurement but can also be transferred to other sectors where local governments need to procure goods.

Active citizen participation is vital for the success of co-management and co-decision-making models. In its early days, the programme struggled with low engagement due to a lack of awareness and interest in the programme. Through the training of 300 citizen watchdogs and the creation of a Directory of Social Actors, the government effectively increased participation. This highlights the value of effective engagement strategies and the importance of informing citizens about opportunities for meaningful dialogue and participation.

NATIONAL PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Qali Warma is a national programme, created and overseen by the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, yet its decentralised structure means it is firmly based in and administered by local communities. Regional procurement committees consisting of community members, health experts, teachers, and civil society representatives enable citizen input and oversight throughout the different stages of the procurement process.

Qali Warma is an example of how progressive and participatory procurement practices can be scaled across a nation. It has lessons for countries all around the world, especially in places where national school feeding programmes already exist and improvements can be implemented without disrupting service delivery.

GOOD PRACTICE IN INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PROCUREMENT

Around the globe, an array of good practices are emerging to enhance participation in public procurement and include citizens and small and community-based enterprises, such as family farmers, and women- and minority-owned businesses, in the tendering process. While some are as advanced as Peru's Qali Warma programme, others could be improved with respect to their participatory characteristics. Clear guidelines for citizen participation should be part and parcel of institutionalising progressive procurement practices. This section discusses various participatory structures that have been set up by local and national governments to enhance transparency and participation in public procurement processes.

INSTITUTIONALISING CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: EXAMPLES FROM MEXICO AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Mexico uses an innovative tool to combat corruption in public procurement and increase public trust and accountability, the so-called Social Witnesses. The tool was developed by Transparency International in the 1990s and has been used in Mexico since 2001.

Social Witnesses are tasked with monitoring the tendering stage of public procurement processes and proposing strategies to improve transparency, impartiality and compliance with the legal framework.¹⁷⁹ The main role of Social Witnesses in Mexican public procurement processes is the provision of oversight to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the tendering process. This includes making observations throughout the process, documenting any irregularities and passing on recommendations to public bodies to improve the procurement process and decrease corruption or collusion. The participation of Social Witnesses in public tendering processes above a certain threshold (\$22.7 million in 2014, roughly €21 million as of June 2023) has been required by the Federal Mexican Government since 2004. In 2009, the Social Witnesses programme was formalised as an official tool for citizen participation and incorporated into the Federal Law of Public Sector Purchases, Leases and Services (LAASSP) and the Law of Public Works and Services.¹⁸⁰ Social Witnesses are appointed by the authorities under Article 26 of LAASSP, either through direct appointment or through selection committees. Any physical or legal person representing civil society can submit their application to be a Social Witness to the Institute of Transparency.¹⁸¹ The Ministry of Public Administration keeps a registry of approved Social Witnesses, which can be individual citizens or civil society organisations. Social Witnesses are appointed both at the federal and state level by all Mexican states to ensure both federal and regional-level monitoring of public procurement. As of December 2022, 45 Social Witnesses were registered at the federal level with the Ministry of Public Function (seven civil society organisations and 38 individuals). At the state level, the number of Social Witnesses and appointment mechanisms vary, but a general upward trend can be observed, most

notably in the State of Mexico. The number of Social Witnesses registered with the Social Witness Registration Committee of the State of Mexico increased from five witnesses in 2005 to 23 by December 2022, consisting of seven organisations and 16 individuals.¹⁸² Social Witnesses receive a one-year contract which may be extended by an additional year up to a maximum service of four years. While they serve as Social Witnesses, individuals receive remuneration from the state based on the annual minimum wage. **According to an OECD-World Bank Institute study, participation of Social Witnesses in procurement processes of the Federal Electricity Commission created savings of \$26 million in public money in 2006 and increased the number of bidders by over 50 per cent.**¹⁸³

The Dominican Republic introduced so-called Citizen Oversight Committees (*Comisiones de Veeduría Ciudadana*, CVC) in 2013 as a mechanism for supervising public spending.¹⁸⁴ The CVCs were initiated by the central government and are sponsored by the Presidential Ministry, thus enjoying high political support. While they allow citizen participation and increase public attention to procurement procedures, participation is restricted through the selection process: the CVCs consist of five to seven 'ethically trustworthy citizens, recognised as role models in their respective professions' who are invited by the president of the country to participate.¹⁸⁵ The CVCs were institutionalised in June 2014, under Decree 188, which formalised the institutional guidelines and defined the role of CVCs as observing, overseeing and monitoring the purchasing, and contracting process carried out by the institutions they are integrated into. In 2014, CVCs supervised approximately 70 per cent of the country's procurement budget, equivalent to \$67 billion Dominican Pesos (€1.1 billion as of June 2023).¹⁸⁶ At the time of writing this report, there are CVCs in 23 Dominican ministries and institutions, according to the Presidential Ministry's website.¹⁸⁷ **During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government set up a special Citizen Oversight Committee to coordinate the electronic procurement process of emergency purchases, which are inherently more susceptible to corruption allegations due to the direct award mechanisms.**

The introduction of citizen monitoring tools in Mexico and the Dominican Republic has substantially increased transparency and participation in the public procurement process by citizens and local tenderers. However, despite the institutionalisation of the mechanisms in national law in the two countries, there is still room for improving the tools to enhance the participatory aspects, increase the agency of citizens and ultimately transform them into co-decision-making mechanisms, enabling citizens to shape procurement processes rather than simply watch over them.

In both countries, participation in the public monitoring processes is limited to citizens and civil society groups specifically invited and recruited by public bodies, creating a relatively exclusionary system. To enhance participation, these systems must be opened up to broader segments of society, to reflect not only the opinion of expert witnesses, but also of those that are affected by specific procurement contracts, with special focus on people from discriminated groups.

In its current state, the function of social witnesses and citizen oversight committees is limited to observing the selection of suppliers and the dutiful execution of the tendering phase. Where these committees are already instated, the next step should be to expand their oversight and monitoring activities along social and environmental criteria. Furthermore, increasing the autonomy and influence of the committees can contribute to moving towards social procurement practices, as the Qali Warma programme shows. These are important aspects to consider to effectively transform the existing mechanisms and move beyond citizen monitoring of public purchases to co-decision-making on how public money is spent.

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The inclusion of women's and minority-owned enterprises in public procurement is crucial to building community-based wealth and promoting social and economic inclusion based on feminist principles of solidarity and care. Inclusive Metropolitan Fairs in Quito, Ecuador, provide an example of how public authorities can increase the visibility of minority-owned enterprises throughout the public procurement process.

BOX 2

INCLUSIVE METROPOLITAN FAIRS IN QUITO, ECUADOR

To encourage the participation of artisanal, micro and small producers of goods and services in public procurement, the Metropolitan Economic Promotion Agency of the Municipality of Quito, CONQUITO, introduced so-called inclusive metropolitan fairs (*ferias metropolitanas inclusivas*) in 2011. The trade fairs are a formal tool within Ecuador's national public procurement process, designed to enhance economic inclusion in the award of public contracts.¹⁸⁸ The concept of inclusive trade fairs is defined in Article 132 of the Organisational Act on the People's Economy and Solidarity as a key measure to promote the 'popular solidarity economy'. The fairs offer small business owners the opportunity to present their goods and services to municipal entities and provide them with a formal offer, which is evaluated at the end of the fair and used as a basis for contracting suppliers subsequently.¹⁸⁹ To ensure transparency, each award process is monitored, and the results of the metropolitan fairs are presented in public reports.

In 2015, Ecuador introduced an additional tool to enhance inclusion in public procurement, in the form of an Inclusive Dynamic Catalogue.¹⁹⁰ The aim of this Catalogue is to move towards a direct procurement system that guarantees the inclusion and exclusive participation of popular solidarity economy actors. The new system has unlocked a significant share of the public budget for such actors.¹⁹¹ Within two years, between 2015 and 2017, Quito's budget for procuring from small producers increased five-fold. However, at the same time, participation and contracting through metropolitan fairs decreased, as a shift to the direct award model was seen. By 2017, almost 95 per cent of contracting of small and artisanal producers took place through the Inclusive Dynamic Catalogue, with the remaining five per cent being awarded at inclusive metropolitan fairs.

INCLUSIVE WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN PROCUREMENT: EXAMPLES FROM COLOMBIA AND CHILE

Several countries have measures to enhance women's participation in their public procurement processes. For example, since 2018, Colombia's Socially Responsible Public Purchasing Guide¹⁹² has increased female employment by compelling suppliers to increase the share of women in their workforce.¹⁹³ The country also hosted a supplier's fair and conference in 2020 to promote the inclusion of women-owned businesses in the bidding phase of public tenders.

The municipality of Cali, in the west of Colombia, has taken the implementation of the Socially Responsible Public Purchasing Guide seriously, putting a strong emphasis on responsible supply chains and developing its own guidelines to increase women's participation.¹⁹⁴ The municipality has developed

regulations to ensure that at least 10 per cent of public procurement contracts go to businesses owned by precarious groups, such as women and Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities. The municipality classifies contracts as socially responsible if at least 10 per cent of the employees executing the contract are female breadwinners. To ensure the guidelines are implemented, the municipality holds mandatory social inclusion meetings during the tender process where potential suppliers meet with the mayor's office to negotiate the terms of the contract, such as the number of female household heads that must be employed.

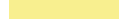
While Colombia's Socially Responsible Purchasing guide is an important step to increasing women's participation, the lack of disaggregated data showing which roles women play in businesses limits the extent of its implementation. Since 2020, Colombia has taken the first steps to improve gender-disaggregated data.¹⁹⁵

Chile has set up an automatic certification system for businesses owned by women in order to tackle this problem. The Sello Mujer certification seal is granted to companies that have at least 50 per cent women's ownership or whose legal representative is a woman.¹⁹⁶ The seal clearly distinguishes women-led companies supplying goods and services to the state. To further support women's participation in public procurement, Chile offers targeted training programmes for women. And Chile's public e-procurement platform *Chile Compras* provides clear and accessible information on participation in public procurement processes for women-owned businesses. The country also uses a direct treatment clause, which means that women-led companies are given preference in express purchases, so that there is no requirement for a formal tender. In cases where tendering is required, women-led businesses are assigned extra points in the evaluation process.

The Dominican Republic goes one step further by mandating the inclusion of women in public procurement with a women-centred policy.¹⁹⁷ This policy includes two notable measures. Firstly, a legal provision mandates purchasing units to favour women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises, and secondly, there is a legal requirement to mark women-led or majority-owned businesses in the Single Registry of Providers. This requirement increases the visibility of women-owned businesses and improves the identification and tracking of them during the tender process, which can ultimately lead to greater inclusion of women-owned businesses in public tender awards.

Tenders are awarded through two mechanisms. A set share of the procurement budget is reserved for contracts with women-owned businesses. And a project lottery levels the playing field for enterprises owned by discriminated groups by placing all competitors on equal footing, regardless of their business size. Together, these two mechanisms provide a comprehensive system to increase the participation and award of tenders to women-owned enterprises. Consequently, marginalised groups, such as women business owners, should have equal opportunities to win public tenders.

Complementary to these formal procedures, women are also supported through specific training programmes and face-to-face meetings at procurement fairs.¹⁹⁸ This combination creates an enabling policy environment with distinct aspects to increase gender equality and inclusion in public procurement.



Conclusion

Supported by ten case studies from around the world, this report has put forward an undeniable argument: progressive public procurement is a viable alternative to sourcing from private and multinational corporations. Injustices associated with the long and non-transparent supply chains of multinational corporations, such as the potential disregard for labour and other human rights and environmental harm, can be replaced with knowledge that producing goods and services locally and with participation from workers and users benefits collective well-being.

The case studies are followed by practical tools that show what the key success factors for the implementation of a progressive public procurement strategy look like. What is ultimately necessary is a shift in how we shape socio-economic relations and the values on which these are based, nurturing care, cooperation and the creation of community-based wealth. These are the underlying pillars of procurement practices that successfully strengthen and democratise local economies, creating transparent, participatory approaches to co-produce flourishing public futures.

While each of the case studies presented has unique features we can draw from, several themes, tools and enabling factors emerge across the geographical and sectoral diversity, providing us with five common threads:

1 LOCAL PUBLIC VALUE CHAINS BUILD COMMUNITY WEALTH

Throughout the case studies featured in this report, the enormous benefits of strengthening public value chains have become apparent. Whether it is through procuring locally and organically grown fruits and vegetables for school canteens (São Paulo [Brazil], Rennes [France] and Qali Warma [Peru]) or contracting local businesses and cooperatives for infrastructure construction projects tailored to local needs (Northland [Aotearoa/New Zealand] and Kerala [India]), local public value chains generate community wealth. What's more, the following threads on public collaborations, rural-urban solidarity, defending human rights and formal jobs, and popular participation can be best understood as core dimensions of community wealth-building.

2 PUBLIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS UNDERPIN A DEMOCRATIC ECONOMY

Creating a collaborative ecosystem to resist the forces of privatisation and strengthen public-community support has been a key success factor to many of the cases in this report. This is core to nurturing the social fabric and a democratic economy in which working people are increasingly in charge. Long-term, meaningful relationships can exceed the formal obligations defined through procurement contracts: the network of cooperatives in Kerala (India), the newly forged public-public housing alliance in Barcelona (Spain), and the jointly established childcare centre in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) bear witness to this. Strong public-community collaborations can facilitate the economic capacities needed to build local markets capable of winning and servicing procurement contracts. Such partnerships can progressively replace the long-promoted extractive

public-private partnerships that are pushed by neoliberal policies and can pave the way for local economies that are truly democratic and collaborative.

3 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CAN STRENGTHEN RURAL-URBAN SOLIDARITY

In capitalist economies, rural-urban relationships have been characterised by the extraction of wealth and resources from rural communities by the urban sphere. Progressive public procurement can re-invent this relationship and replace extraction with shared wealth generation across the rural-urban spectrum. As examples from Rennes (France) and São Paulo (Brazil) highlight, formal procurement contracts between urban municipalities and rural farmers can generate income security and show appreciation for agricultural workers and their products. These socio-economic exchanges contribute to supporting more resilient ecosystems, especially in the case of organic farming, and enhancing solidarity between rural and urban populations, as the cultivation of these public goods are of common interest to all residents.

4 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CAN DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS AND FORMAL JOBS


As democratically elected representatives of the public, local, regional and national governments have a responsibility to protect and promote the rights of citizens, workers and discriminated communities that the capitalist profit-maximising system seeks to exploit. Instead of contracting big private corporations, governments can use public procurement as a direct tool to strengthen the labour rights of and self-governance among workers. By procuring from informal workers' cooperatives (Pune [India], Zanzibar [Tanzania], and Belo Horizonte [Brazil]), Indigenous and women's-owned businesses (Northland [Aotearoa/New Zealand], Cali [Colombia], Recoleta [Chile], and the Dominican Republic), and family farmers (Qali Warma [Peru] and São Paulo [Brazil]) and upholding public sector labour standards, governments can create a more stable income and social security for its more precarious residents. When it comes to public services such as waste collection, procurement needs to be a stepping stone for public authorities to turn these workers into formal civil servants, build public capacity in-house and promote dignified employment more widely.

5 POPULAR PARTICIPATION IMPROVES PUBLIC SPENDING POLICIES

Citizen participation in public procurement processes is vital to guarantee that local communities are able to decide together how public money is spent for the benefit of all community members. A wide variety of approaches are emerging to enhance participation in the tendering process. These have varying degrees of citizen involvement, ranging from purely observatory functions to co-decision-making in the award of public tenders. Examples from Peru, the Philippines, Mexico and the Dominican Republic show how involving groups such as parents, workers and people from discriminated groups can improve transparency,

make procurement better serve local needs and increase people's agency and trust in public institutions. Monitoring tools provide citizens with a platform to engage with public institutions and hold them to account. However, while these are important functions, such tools fall short of giving citizens structural decision-making power over public spending. An alternative approach, commonly known as community-led procurement, sees citizens as co-decision-makers rather than merely observers.

To reclaim democratic public control over the production of common goods to enable public service provision, public bodies must recognise and assert the power they have. Governments and their agencies have control over public money; they have to decide whether to finance exploitative corporations or re-invest this money into their local communities. They have the capacity to transform value chains, promote labour and other human rights and support democratic enterprises. This can strengthen the local economy in ways that contribute to community wealth and environmental protection. **Progressive public procurement** is the tool that translates this power into concrete actions, enabling governments to consistently work together with community organisations to build and expand economic democracy from the ground up.



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In response to today's growing crises, the Progressive Public Procurement Toolkit introduces ten in-depth case studies and several shorter examples that showcase how local governments can use procurement to combat socio-economic injustices and environmental harm.

By working together with community-based organisations and worker-owned cooperatives, public authorities are using procurement to re-invest public money into localised value chains that enhance living standards, dignify livelihoods through creating secure jobs and improving working conditions, create solidarity and shared wealth across the rural-urban spectrum, and spur a more democratic economy through public community partnerships and popular participation. In short, progressive public procurement can provide local governments and larger public authorities with the power to reclaim control over value chains and redirect privatised profits into the hands of their local communities.

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