

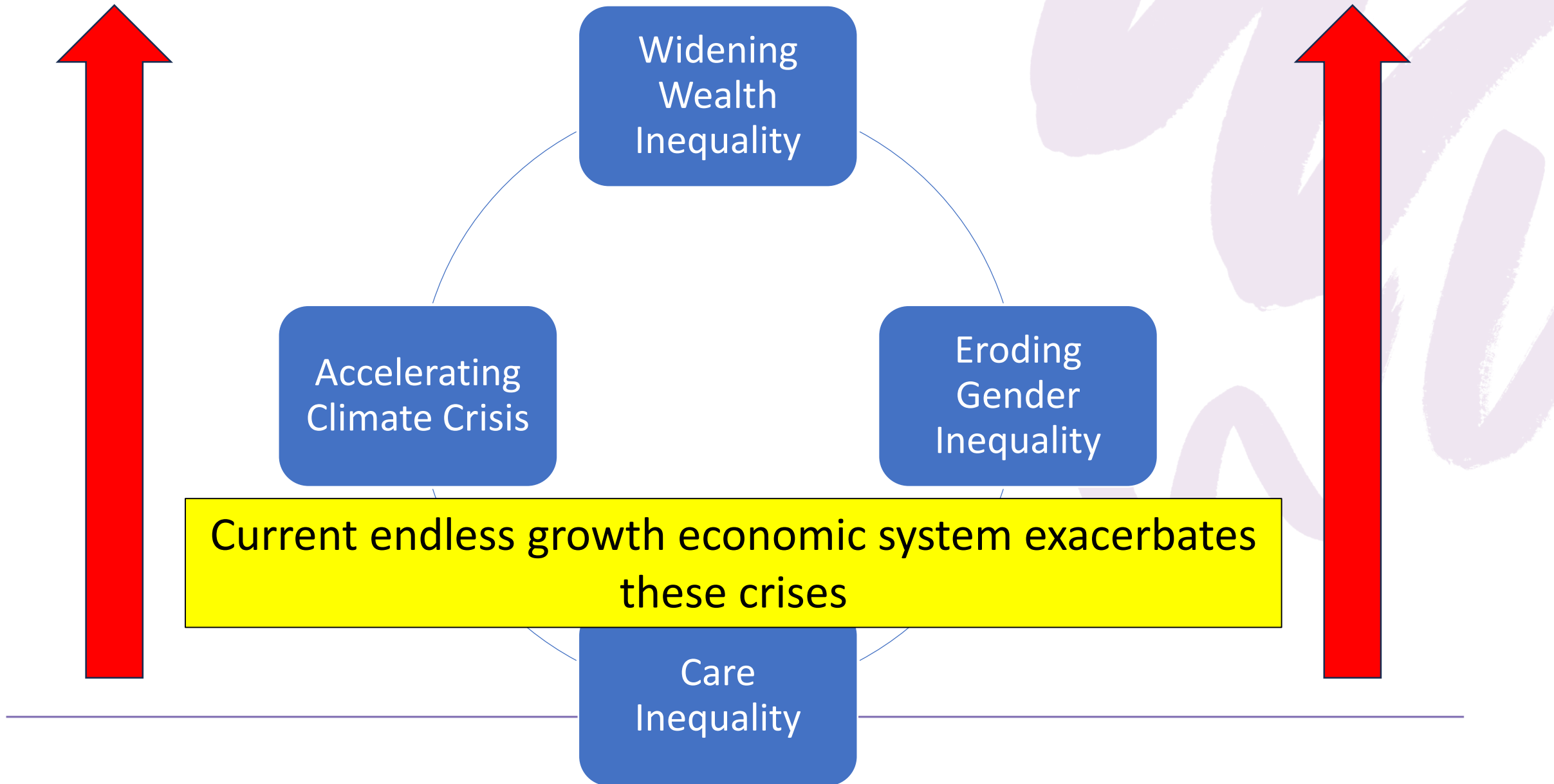
Towards Ecofeminist Reproductive Economies

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26th May 2026

- We live in a time of polycrisis – wealth inequality, gender inequality, climate crisis, care inequality
 - Existing economic system worsens this polycrisis – so how do we change it?
 - Centring the provision of care – defined beyond interpersonal care work as life sustaining and interspecies activity – is key to tackling polycrisis
 - We propose framing this provision of care through ecofeminist economics and the realisation of reproductive justice
 - The concrete example we use to illustrate this is realising the UN Right to a Clean, Healthy & Sustainable Environment
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Living in a Time of Polycrisis



Current Economic System

- Environmentally unsustainable;
 - Is creating further wealth inequalities;
 - Does not recognise the value of care (people and planet) despite being reliant on it to function;
 - Improperly recognises the value of nature in a detrimental way (nature is valuable when it's cut down or destroyed as materials for commodities, not when it provides clean air, water, pollination) which worsens the climate crisis.
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The Alternative: Care-full Economies

*“Fairer and more equal societies are more resilient to climate impacts and are more likely to adopt progressive transformative policies. **Prioritisation of wellbeing and equity in development and climate policy** could bolster the democratic social contract in support of transformation, including improved quality of life, decent work and **the value of care.**”*

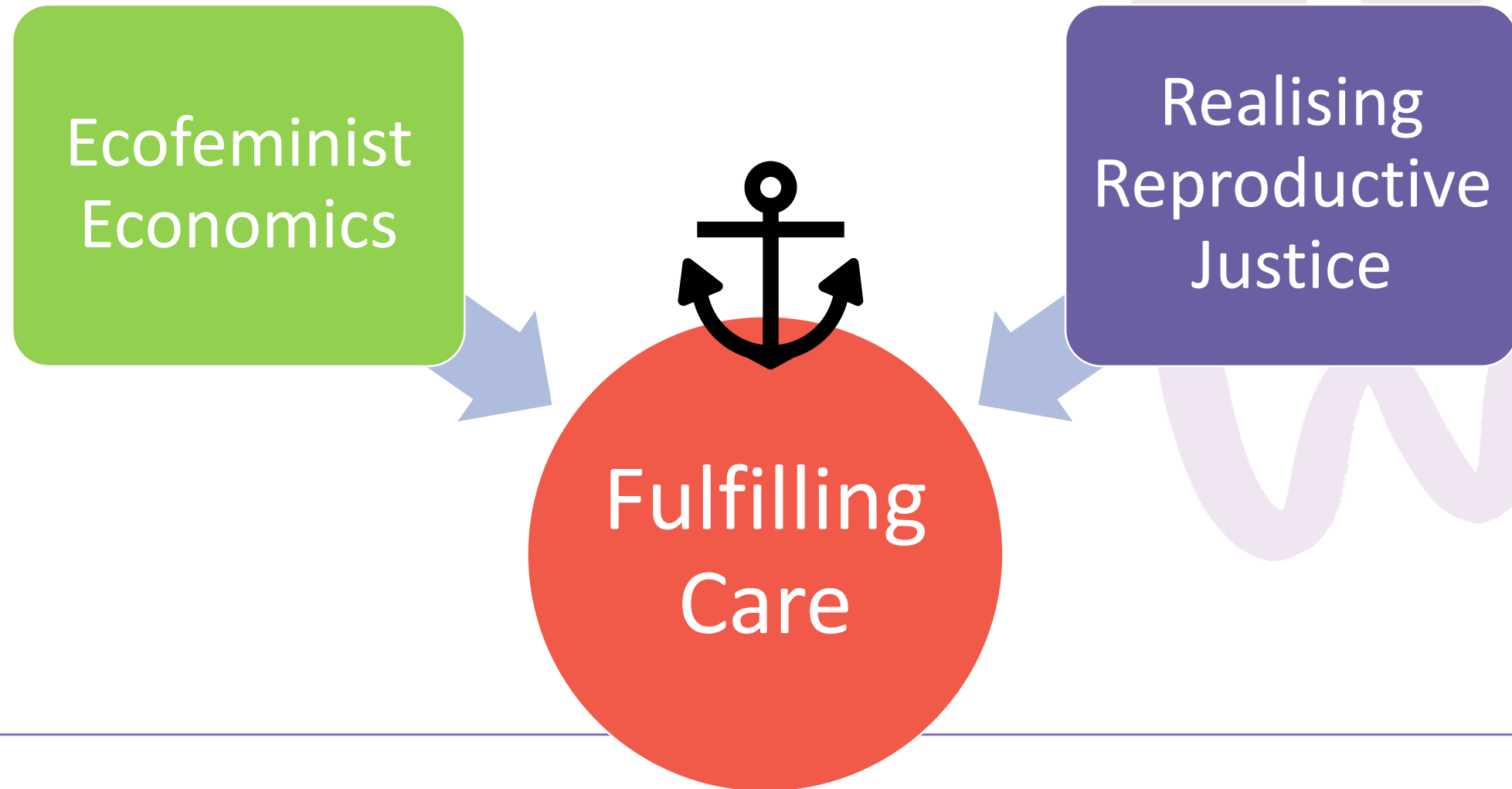
Ireland's Climate Change Assessment Synthesis Report - Environmental
Protection Agency (2023)

Beyond Interpersonal Care Work

“... a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.”

(Fisher and Tronto, 1990, p. 40)

Care-full Ecofeminist Reproductive Economies



Reproductive Justice (RJ)

- RJ = The human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and **parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.**
 - The core rights under RJ are:
 - The right to have a child
 - The right to not have a child
 - The right to parent in a safe, healthy, and sustainable community
 - In this understanding, the environment goes hand in hand with bodily autonomy and is a core factor tackling crises and moving toward a more just future
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Reproductive Justice (RJ)

- Right to parent in safe, sustainable communities → Housing, income, healthcare, community and the environment.
 - Reproductive justice can connect **care, the environment, and economic transformation, by:**
 - Highlighting, as mentioned before, that we live in a time of **polycrisis** — wealth inequality, gender inequality, climate breakdown, and care inequality reinforce one another
 - Our current economic system deepens these crises by devaluing the labour and conditions that sustain life → we need to bring care to the centre on economic considerations, mobilising a feminist lens in order to do so
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Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminist thought that uses gender to analyse relationships/dynamics between humans and the environment, particularly **relating the oppression of women to the oppression of nature:**

Ecofeminism recognises that gender, social and environmental issues cannot be seen as separate – these issues are intersectional and interconnected, and the same system is responsible for the issues in all three groups.

Four Key Pillars to Ecofeminist Thinking

- The reduction of all things into mere resources to be optimized or used following the Scientific Revolution.
 - The rise of patriarchal religions and their establishment of gender hierarchies, as well as the denial of immanent divinity.
 - The introduction of oppressive dualisms, particularly the division between the 'human world' and the 'natural world'.
 - Capitalism and its need for the exploitation, destruction and instrumentalisation of animals, earth and people for the sole purpose of creating wealth.
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Ecofeminist Analysis of Economics

- Nature and care work in existing economic reality:
 - Both essential to our survival
 - Taken for granted, seen as infinitely available to prop-up existing system
 - Under/improperly valued – the destruction of nature for profit is its ‘value’; its provision of clean air, water, pollination are not valued
 - Patriarchal capitalism as a dual force which oppresses, exploits and uses violence against both women and the environment for its own profit, inclusive of care work/reproductive labour.
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The Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

- The United Nations (UN) declared that all people have a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in 2022
 - Although the right itself is not legally binding, many countries will take human rights like these and make them constitutionally or legally binding in their own law
 - The UN hopes that this right can help communities, environmental activists and Indigenous groups challenge companies and their own countries when they fail to protect the environment, and help people take climate action
 - The right to a healthy environment is a prerequisite for many existing human rights
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What does this right cover?

- A safe climate
 - Clean air
 - Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Healthy and sustainable food
 - Safe and sufficient water
 - Non-toxic environments
 - Procedural rights: access to information, public participation and access to justice.
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SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

End of Mission Statement at the conclusion of the country visit to Ireland

**Astrid Puentes Riaño, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy
and sustainable environment
February 9 - 20, 2026**

“Economic revenue must not come at the expense of protecting the environment and human rights, especially with severe climate change, biodiversity loss and toxic pollution harms already impacting people, as recent floods in Dublin evidence,” she said.

Towards (Eco)feminist Care-full Economies

- Our argument is that polycrisis is not only an environmental problem; it is a crisis of how economies value life.
 - *A care-full economy would therefore mean:*
 - **Recentring care** as life-sustaining work: interpersonal, ecological, collective and interspecies.
 - **Moving beyond market-led responses** towards public, universal and redistributive systems that sustain wellbeing.
 - **Embedding reproductive justice**, so that people and communities have the material, social and environmental conditions needed to live, care and flourish.
 - **Realising the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** not as a narrow legal entitlement, but as a practical demand for care, repair, public provision and ecological responsibility.
 - To respond to polycrisis, we need more than greener markets. We need economies organised around the conditions that make life possible → care, sustainability, public provisions of childcare, and RJ.
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Towards (Eco)feminist Care-full Economies

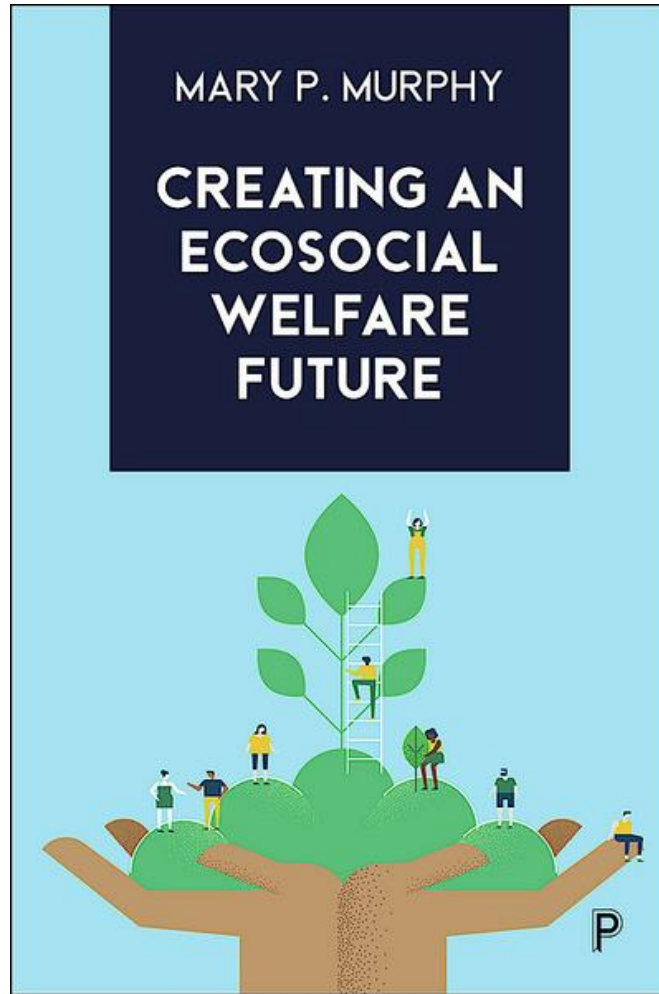
- Economic systems must centre the essential work of caring for people and caring for nature.
 - Economic indicators must capture the work of the household economy; the natural economy; and the volunteer economy.
 - Progress should be measured towards making the provision of care easier, more gender-balanced and accessible to all.
 - Endless growth is unsustainable for people and planet – economies must become more local and circular.
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Towards (Eco)feminist Care-full Economies

- Economies can enable care through the provision of:
 - Decent jobs in care
 - Time policies with objectives such as reducing working time
 - Diverse income support policies ranging from universal basic income to various forms of participation or care incomes

This can also allow for care of the environment to be better resourced via time and appropriate valuation

What could care-full economies look like?



- Built on the values we want for our future: reciprocity, collective freedoms, wellbeing, sustainability
- **Universal Basic Services**: all citizens/residents receive unconditional access to a range of free, basic, public services, funded by taxes and provided by a government or public institution.
- **Participation Income**: income for socially valuable activities outside of traditional employment. This could include engaging in education, caring for children/the elderly, tending to community gardens, creating art – any and all activities which contribute positively to sustainability and community.

Thank you!

