

Report on the Future of Regional Economic Development in Scotland

Micaela Mazzei, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

“The Future of Regional Economic Development in Scotland,” brought together academics, policymakers and practitioners to explore how entrepreneurship, innovation and Community Wealth Building (CWB) can contribute to addressing persistent regional inequalities across Scotland. The event drew 37 participants and provided a forum to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Scotland’s diverse regional economies.

The symposium aimed to encourage more integrated thinking about regional economic development by bringing together perspectives on CWB, entrepreneurship, innovation and commercialisation. Particular emphasis was placed on understanding why entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems thrive in some regions while others continue to face challenges associated with demographic change, institutional capacity and post-industrial restructuring. The event also sought to support the development of more place-sensitive approaches that can contribute to equitable and resilient regional futures.

The programme included two substantive sessions and a panel discussion. Session 1 focused on Community Wealth Building in Scotland, featuring contributions from the Scottish Government, the Yunus Centre at GCU and Scotland’s Rural College. Presentations explored CWB policy and practice, approaches to evaluating CWB, and evidence on business engagement with CWB in Scotland’s Highlands and Islands.

Session 2 focused on entrepreneurship, innovation and regional development, examining issues including government venture capital funds, entrepreneurial ecosystems in peripheral Scotland, green regional revitalisation, and the challenges faced by rural businesses seeking to grow, pivot or transfer ownership.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion on the future of Scotland, featuring Des McNulty and Norin Arshed.

The event provided an opportunity for participants to exchange research, policy and practical perspectives, strengthen connections across sectors, and consider how different forms of

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is standing in a meeting room, pointing with a wooden stick at a large presentation screen. The screen displays a slide titled "WEB Pillars" with a central diagram and several surrounding text boxes. The room has a wooden door on the left, a patterned carpet, and a blue storage bin in the background.

