

## Conclusion

# (Re)municipalisation is redefining public ownership

Noting the inadequacy of national and multilateral policies to tackle the climate crisis and widening inequality, a growing network of progressive municipalities has developed its own policies and measures to do so. (Re)municipalisation is one of the key strategies to address the challenges of our time, including pandemics such as Covid-19 which has made people realise that medical staff, caregivers, cleaners, waste collectors, water and energy workers keep our societies alive. Privatisation is such an ill-advised policy because these are the very services that tend to be outsourced first. Cities are well-positioned to reverse the tide and prioritise public health and well-being, to explore democratic models for public services and their management, and to advance innovative economic models that build community wealth and create decent jobs. This conclusion highlights key findings from collaborative research on the 1,408 compiled cases<sup>1</sup> and from the 15 individual chapters.

## (Re)municipalisation works where privatisation has failed

Motivations for remunicipalisation are diverse, but often include a need to recover from a failed privatisation. Our research confirms the extent to which privatisation has missed the mark on delivering vital public services for all and economic efficiencies.

### *Controlling costs for users and local authorities*

Cost is not the only consideration when deciding to remunicipalise a public service, but it is obviously one of the deciding factors. For decades,

privatisation, PPPs and outsourcing have been sold to officials, politicians and the public as being more 'efficient' than traditional public services, and providing better value for money. Our research convincingly disproves these claims. We found at least 245 cases where remunicipalisation either aimed to cut or had effectively reduced the cost of providing services. Furthermore, in at least 264 cases, municipal companies planned or had already managed to boost public investment in services and infrastructure.

There are five basic reasons why privatised services are generally more expensive down the line:

1. Corporations must generate profits and pay dividends to their shareholders and any parent company.
2. Privatisation brings extra layers of complexity and cost, including paying high fees to the consultants and lawyers who design the contracts.
3. Public authorities lose control over the costs of running the service (private operators tend to outsource some of the work to other companies, often within the same corporate group and often at high cost).
4. Private operators lack a long-term vision when it comes to financial management.
5. Public bodies typically pay lower interest rates on loans than private entities, which can help finance infrastructure needs for instance.

By contrast, with public ownership of services, tax revenues and any revenue generated from user fees can be invested directly in the service and in pursuing broader social and environmental goals. Many examples of this are featured in this book, from the well-known case of Paris (Chapter 2) to that of Taber in Canada (Chapter 3). Another concrete story gathered as part of the list of cases is from the capital of South Korea, Seoul, which created two new city-owned companies in order to hire cleaning workers for the Seoul Metro. The city's total related expenses

decreased 5 per cent despite the higher labour costs, simply because it no longer had to pay the management fee and 10 per cent value-added tax to private companies.

### ***Redressing degraded working conditions, creating decent jobs***

When private operators come in to reduce expenses, the first line items they look at are labour costs. By cutting jobs, eroding working conditions and undermining collective bargaining, privatisation is a powerful driver of precarious work. This is a problem not only for impoverished workers, their families and local communities, but also for users because service quality and access decline.

In contrast, there are many examples of remunicipalisation and insourcing where local councils have saved money while improving working conditions and/or pay. Since 2011, London's Islington Council has taken back contracts worth about £380 million in cleaning, building and grounds maintenance, and waste management services. The move has meant better pay and working conditions for 1,200 frontline employees, and generated savings of about £14 million (Chapter 6). Another success story for workers is that of Kragerø, Norway, where remunicipalisation of waste management has led to a 14 per cent reduction in fees for residents, while delivering an increase in workers' wages and pensions (Chapter 1).

### ***Avoiding major economic risk***

This book lists 26 cases of remunicipalisation involving bankruptcies of private operators. The 2018 collapse of Carillion, a company specialising in outsourcing contracts and privatised infrastructure, jeopardised 420 'private finance initiative' projects as well as the future of 18,000 employees in the UK (Chapter 6). In Denmark, 'free choice' policies introduced mandatory competition in elder care, but a large number of private companies collapsed (Chapter 4). In Norway, the bankruptcy

of waste management company RenoNorden would have stranded 137 municipalities if the union had not anticipated its economic difficulties and worked with local officials to remunicipalise the services (Chapter 1).

Bankruptcies and corporate collapses reveal the truth behind privatisation's alleged service efficiency and innovation: the facts show that many privatisation deals are economically unviable. Typically, outsourcing contracts and PPPs are specifically designed to prioritise profits and dividends over service quality. When the profits dry up or fail to materialise, corporations and investors just walk away, abandoning the workers and the people who rely on the service.

Another illustration of privatisation's economic failures is the unwillingness of private operators to deliver services in unprofitable areas or communities and for user groups who cannot afford to pay or are more expensive to serve. Take the case of Africa where private waste companies tend to operate in the wealthiest neighbourhoods of large cities, excluding the vast majority of the population (Chapter 5). In the US, major telecommunication companies were not interested in serving rural areas, smaller municipalities and low-income communities. Local governments and community-owned companies stepped in and developed high-speed broadband Internet infrastructure in many areas where corporations were not interested in operating (Chapter 9).

## The broader benefits of (re)municipalisation

(Re)municipalisation is much more than a reaction to the failures of privatised service provision; beyond pragmatism, it is about guaranteeing and promoting basic rights, and serving the needs of everyone – as all public services are meant to do. Our research demonstrates that remunicipalisation – and even more so municipalisation, that is, the creation of brand new public services – are driven by a positive public interest ethos. This book uncovers even more than that: in many

cases, (re)municipalisation drives wider positive changes in the social, environmental and economic areas. It promotes the health and well-being of all, including workers; it helps to build resilient local economies and makes them less dependent on large corporations; and it is in many cases an important building block for a genuine climate transition. As exemplified by the concept of ‘community wealth building’, a term coined by the US-based The Democracy Collaborative and used in the UK’s context as well, municipalities and other anchor institutions can use procurement and investment decisions strategically to secure ecological and equitable economic development.

### *Upholding and promoting human rights*

The 2018 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights found that widespread privatisation of public services and infrastructure is systematically eliminating human rights protections and further marginalising people who are living in poverty.<sup>2</sup> The report looks at the human rights implications of privatisation in the criminal justice system, social services, water, sanitation, electricity, health care, transport and education. UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston criticises the absence of human rights criteria in most privatisation agreements, which rarely include monitoring the impact that privatisation has on the most vulnerable people.

(Re)municipalisation can be an antidote to this erosion of human rights. The global list informing these pages found 138 cases where defending human rights was a clear policy objective of (re)municipalisation, with many examples of concrete measures put in place to achieve this goal. In Chapter 2, the author from the Paris public water company stresses that its mission goes beyond mere pipe connection. *Eau de Paris* is committed to defending the human right to water for all, for instance by maintaining and expanding a network of public drinking water fountains across the city that provide water access for the most vulnerable population, including refugees.

In Chile, perhaps the country where neoliberalism is most deeply embedded, the municipality of Recoleta has swam against the current. It considers housing, education and access to medicine as human rights and has created municipal services to provide them to poor citizens (Chapter 8). Chapter 7 also presents initiatives that aim to guarantee health and social care for vulnerable groups in Selangor state, Malaysia.

### *Protecting public health and well-being*

Today, the healthcare sector is facing ever-growing pressure to privatise, including through outsourcing and competitive tenders. Profit-making service providers are enjoying a blooming market thanks to liberalisation driven largely by international trade and investment agreements. Research demonstrates there is a much better and viable alternative, however. As shown by the Covid-19 crisis that was still unfolding as this book was going to press, the healthcare systems that are publicly owned, democratically controlled and well-funded – from Costa Rica and Uruguay to South Korea to Norway – are much better equipped to deal with the sudden upsurge in patients.

Remunicipalisation and municipalisation in the health sector have clear public health benefits, especially for the most vulnerable families. Examples include the remunicipalised emergency ambulance services in Southern Denmark (Chapter 4), which hired all former employees and an additional 100 new emergency medical technicians under better working conditions; this contributed to improving quality of the service and health outcomes while the operational costs were reduced by 15 per cent.

Another significant example is found in the municipality of Binalonan, Pangasinan in the Philippines (Chapter 7) where diverse social services are provided based on the vision of ensuring ‘that [people who have] the least in life have the most in law’, with clear positive health outcomes. Overall, the global list compiled for this book includes at least 142 cases of

newly created or remunicipalised public services that did enhance or were expected to enhance public health and provide harm reduction services<sup>3</sup>.

### ***Securing better conditions for workers***

(Re)municipalisation can translate into better conditions for service workers. The global list of (re)municipalisation documents at least 158 cases where conditions did or were foreseen to improve for workers, including pay, occupational health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, freedom of speech and worker participation in decision-making. The presence and role of unions in campaigns and all along the transition process often prove critical to the achievement of such outcomes. As evidenced in these pages, providing quality employment and improving workers' conditions while valuing their knowledge and experience about how services should be organised and operated go hand-in-hand with building economically efficient public services that are accessible to all (Chapter 12). It is no coincidence that workers and their unions are often at the forefront of remunicipalisation efforts.

In addition, remunicipalisation is often linked to the formalisation or integration of informal workers into public operators or co-operative structures, effectively realising their human rights and offering better employment conditions. Chapter 5 by Vera Wegmann on the waste sector in Africa provides several interesting examples in that regard. In Egypt, privatisation of waste management in the country's three largest cities deprived the Zabaleen community of their livelihood and translated into a significant drop in recycling rates. A much more promising model is to build public waste management services based on integrating informal waste workers and their experiences, given they are often very effective at reducing waste.

### ***Building community wealth and local economies***

Reclaiming and creating publicly owned services in sectors such as waste, food, cleaning and telecommunication can be a game changer from an economic perspective. When a public utility is democratically controlled, it is far more likely than a private corporation to reinvest its profits back into the community and to 'localise' the economy.

For example, through public procurement, local governments can contract worker co-operatives to keep their cities clean (Valparaíso, Chile) or partner with local farmers to protect the groundwater and sell organic food in public school cafeterias (Rennes, France). There are 297 cases in the global list of (re)municipalisation that did or were expected to contribute to community wealth building and to sustaining the local economy. Some of these (re)municipalisations enabled using locally abundant natural resources more wisely, while others created meaningful local jobs for residents and new, more sustainable business activities.

Together, the chapters in this collection give numerous examples of how (re)municipalisation contributes to community wealth building. For instance, as described in Chapter 6, Stoke City Council in the UK insourced its housing maintenance work in 2018, increasing workers' pay by £1,000 per year, and improving productivity and quality of service. The council then created an arms-length trading company to bid for other work, which last year produced a surplus of over £4 million for the city, and a proactive procurement policy means that over 80 per cent of materials are purchased locally. The dozens of municipal broadband Internet services established in cities across the United States, a story told in Chapter 9, represent a successful process of community wealth building too. One of the primary motivations for establishing a municipal broadband network is access and affordability, but benefits go beyond that, creating employment opportunities, increasing economic activity and improving quality of life by advancing access to health care and education.



### ***Tackling the climate crisis***

Municipalities and public authorities have the ability to prioritise long-term ecological concerns over short-term financial considerations. Tackling the climate crisis, for example by switching to renewable energy and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, was a key reason to (re)municipalise a public service in at least 119 of total compiled cases. The majority of these cases are from the energy sector, for which the number of (re)municipalisations increased by almost 20 per cent between 2017 and 2019 to reach 374 cases. Chapter 15 by Lavinia Steinfort discusses the current role and the strong potential of cities and communities in driving the energy transition through (re)municipalisation and in doing away with a dependency on extractive private corporations, and highlights the obstacles related to national and supranational strategies still focused on liberalisation and privatisation.

There are other ways in which (re)municipalisation contributes to tackling the climate emergency, beyond setting up or reclaiming energy providers. By retrofitting public and residential buildings, municipalities can significantly reduce their energy use, and make energy more affordable for everyone. The recent remunicipalisations of public transport in the Dutch cities of Rotterdam and The Hague have enabled them to partially replace the fleet with electric buses. In another case, the French city of Briançon remunicipalised its waste services in 2013 and reduced the amount of waste produced by 33 per cent; it is committed to achieving 'zero waste' in the coming years. Rennes, France showcases another ambitious way of integrating water management, supporting local agriculture and providing quality food for school children. The city launched a programme to help farmers switch to organic methods as a way to prevent water pollution at the source. Simultaneously, the initiative has created local demand for the farmers' produce by linking up with school canteens in the wider Rennes area and by creating a brand new label under the *Terre de Sources* label that facilitates commercial sales of the sustainably produced food in local supermarkets.

Both the impacts of the climate crisis and municipal responses to it can differ widely from one geographical context to another. The Philippines epitomises how the global South has been on the frontline of the climate crisis for a long time. The local governments across the country have created climate schools to help farmers and fishing communities better address the impacts of extreme weather events and other climate-related hazards that are threatening their incomes and livelihoods. By learning how to monitor weather changes and how to adjust agricultural practices accordingly, students of the Siargao climate school have already managed to improve local rice production (Chapter 7).

## **(Re)municipalisation is an opportunity to build democratic public ownership**

Public ownership is not democratic and efficient by default. As it can happen in private sector companies, the public sector can be captured by bureaucracy and inefficiency, by vested interests, by corruption or authoritarian rulers. Building strong, high-quality public services requires new forms of public ownership through which residents can directly and indirectly participate in democratic decision-making.

### ***Establishing democratic control***

Positive changes brought about by (re)municipalisation range from increased accountability and transparency mechanisms and information disclosure to establishing participatory governance as observed for water services in Grenoble and Paris. Representatives of workers and users sitting on the decision-making body of a public entity are key to improve governance and expand the meaning of public ownership. In Denmark, the law enables public companies to reserve one-third of board seats for worker representatives. Research for this book identified 149 cases where (re)municipalisation resulted or was foreseen to result in improved democratic control and public ownership.

Some cases go further, enhancing representation mechanisms with the creation of more spaces for users to interact with public companies such as people's observatories and assemblies. Terrassa, Catalonia is one of the most advanced experiments to co-govern common resources (Chapter 10) through the establishment of the Terrassa Water Observatory, an autonomous body affiliated with the city council that enables citizens to consult, advise, deliberate, make proposals and conduct research on water management in the municipality.

Public ownership can also take the form of a collaboration with grassroots citizens' organisations and users' or workers' co-operatives, or take the form of co-ownership shared between a public authority and a not-for-profit association. In Wolfhagen, Germany the co-operative that helped fund the town's wind turbines owns a quarter of the public energy company, with two seats on the board (Chapter 15).

There are many other examples of public authorities working with non-profits and co-operatives. These collaborations and partnerships help reinvent the culture of public institutions. Across Spain, proactive cities are choosing co-operative energy retailers such as Som Energia, GoiEner and EnergÉtica over large private companies. In the UK, the City of Plymouth and its residents established the Plymouth Energy Community in 2013, a member-owned community benefit organisation whose profits are reinvested into the community. However, while the involvement of local workers' co-operatives in the delivery of public services can be a progressive way to enhance community participation in public service delivery and promote local decent employment, caution is warranted to ensure that this does not become a way to shortcut costs and lock informal and co-operative workers into low wages.

One cross-cutting concern analysed in Chapter 14 regards the realisation of the full potential of such democratised services, which may call for transforming the state itself. Hilary Wainwright argues that the UK's

non-transparent hierarchical structure undermines efforts to rebuild public services. Uruguay's democratic constitution enshrining public services and the right to water as a public good offers an inspiring way forward.

### ***Engaging and learning from workers***

Alliances of trade unions and civil society organisations have led numerous fights against privatisation to victory. In Lagos, Nigeria a unions-communities-NGOs alliance built a shared, citizen-focused vision and common strategies to reform the state water company, as an alternative to privatisation. Likewise, when workers are a driving force of (re)municipalisation, they often influence positively the design of the new public services by promoting public interest values and objectives. In Norway, the municipal workers' union *Fagforbundet* developed a successful remunicipalisation strategy following the massive bankruptcy of RenoNorden, which affected 137 municipalities' waste collection services (Chapter 1), turning the situation into an opportunity to bring services back in house and to grow membership. *Fagforbundet* teams recruited workers of the private company – many of them migrants with temporary contracts – prior to remunicipalisation. They successfully built up solidarity with non-union workers during the transition.

In Chapter 12, Daria Cibrario identifies some lessons learned from trade union experience to help plan ahead for successful remunicipalisation, which necessarily involves and affects the workers who operate the service. The labour dimension exemplifies that every remunicipalisation case is unique due to local and national regulations that affect workers' employment terms and conditions. Based on the experience of members from the trade union federation Public Services International, she recommends reaching out early to all affected workers and supporting them throughout the process, as well as ensuring cooperation between national union federations and their local branches. She also stresses

that it is essential to open a negotiation table with local authorities for all service workers as soon as possible to ensure a fair private-to-public transition.

Hilary Wainwright also insists that democratic public management must recognise the value of the knowledge and know-how of every citizen, services user and worker, and involve them in public sector management and strategy (Chapter 14). This requires a profound cultural shift in the public sector itself. She also provocatively argues that ‘workers on the board’ is necessary but insufficient, as it does not automatically bring about change in the balance of power between management and workers.

Chapter 1 from Norway provides one concrete way to integrate workers’ ideas. Nina Monsen and Bjørn Pettersen unpack the practice of ‘local tripartite cooperation’ that exists in more than half of the country’s municipalities, through which politicians, local authorities and trade unions work constructively to create a culture of dialogue that promotes finding the best local solutions to the specific challenges facing the municipality. The Fagforbundet union finds that, through this approach, workers, civil society and other voices too often unheard are given a platform to engage in constructive dialogue with local authorities and service managers to share ideas and proposals.

### *Enabling ecofeminist public services*

Ecofeminist public services put care for people and the planet front and centre. Private operators’ pursuit of profits tends to worsen already existing injustices, destroy ecosystems and harm vulnerable residents who are more reliant on public services, a disproportionate number of whom are women.

Privatisation often leads to service rate hikes, compromising access to services; to make matters worse, when austerity measures cut subsidies

they make child care, elder and other types of care unaffordable. This work tends to fall to women because the division of labour that underpins our economic model is deeply gendered and racialised. Not only do women still perform the majority of the un(der)paid care and domestic work, much of this work is also outsourced to women of colour. In addition, there is a high concentration of women working in the public care, cleaning and education sectors, and they bear the brunt when these sectors are privatised. Reversing privatisation and rebuilding public services can increase accessibility but public ownership in itself is no guarantee for gender justice.

An ecofeminist approach implies profound transformation, enabling deeper levels of democratisation with public services run from the bottom-up and with care for human and non-human life. Hence, we need to feminise how politics is done.<sup>4</sup> This means that politicians and public administrators must not only listen to residents but also include them on a permanent basis in policy and decision-making processes (Chapters 2, 6, 10, 14 and 15). It should involve new mechanisms through which marginalised groups can gain real power to ensure that public services improve people's everyday life.

### *Fostering public-public cooperation*

Remunicipalisation can be a very uneven battle. Local public authorities and communities have far fewer resources than big corporations, and the latter are often backed by international institutions, national governments and a variety of 'experts' and consultants, as explained in Chapter 9 about the French water sector. Olivier Petitjean goes on to argue that the only force that could counter-balance an environment so hostile to remunicipalisation is collaboration among public actors. Local, national and international cooperation among public operators is key to shifting the balance of power. Both institutionalised and informal public-public cooperation have been critical to the growth of the (re)municipalisation

movement – not only defensively as a way to overcome obstacles, but also proactively by helping to build better public services.

Milo Fiasconaro, in Chapter 13, focuses on the asymmetry of knowledge between private and public actors in the water sector but also highlights the fundamentally different motivation and utilisation of knowledge by both types of actors. According to Aqua Publica Europea's experiences, public-public partnerships are a useful and essential tool for public actors to improve their capacity to address current and future challenges in water resources management. The knowledge generated and shared through public collaboration will remain in the public domain and contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. Public-public cooperation and partnerships is now emerging in new sectors such as energy and telecommunication. Such partnerships are also critical to extending public services to communities or areas that the private sector has been unwilling or unable to serve, such as rural regions, low-income neighbourhoods and disinvested communities, as illustrated by the extension of community-owned broadband Internet infrastructure to small and rural towns in the US.

## Moving forward

(Re)municipalisation is a powerful political strategy to push back privatisation and a promising alternative to move beyond the extractive economy in general. It is true that most national governments are failing to tackle extreme inequality and the ecological crisis, yet many cities are stepping up to tackle these challenges and improve the livelihoods of their residents. That being said, collective local actions alone cannot solve systemic problems. Alexander Panes Pinto from Chile rightly argues in Chapter 8 that the experiences of local governments risk becoming mere corrections to the neoliberal model to fill essential services gaps where private companies have pulled out if these initiatives are not informed by the current debate on Chile's political economy. As a case in point,

right-wing local governments in that country are also creating so-called popular pharmacies but they never question the privately controlled medicine market and the private health system as such. He concludes that progressive local initiatives are insufficient; Chile needs political proposals to transform the health system as a whole.

Nevertheless, courageous progressive municipalities are not waiting for top-down changes and are prioritising the needs of the most marginalised people in our society, including migrants, people with disabilities and low-income families, among others. For instance, the constitution of Mexico City adopted in February 2017 gives its authorities full responsibility to provide waste services free of charge, prohibiting privatisation and outsourcing, and enshrining mutual recognition between the municipality and labour unions.<sup>5</sup> We see this as a strategic pathway to mounting collective pressure on national and supranational governments.

These cities and citizen movements are increasingly designated as 'municipalist'. While the municipalist movement could adopt diverse strategies depending on local context and need, it unanimously recognises public services including water, energy, housing and health care as central issues. The global municipalist movement met for the first time at the 'Fearless Cities Summit' in Barcelona in June 2017, at the invitation of *Barcelona En Comú*. Today, the Fearless Cities network connects 77 cities that are standing up to defend human rights, democracy and the common good.<sup>6</sup> It is not a coincidence that de-privatisation of public services is one of their key strategies. They see de-privatisation as a way to expand citizenship by sharing decision-making powers and opening up ownership models to representatives from user groups, workers, civil society and research institutions.

Many of the cases presented in this book are at odds with the mainstream portrayal of public ownership as top-down, bureaucratic and oblivious of



the realities on the ground. Quite the opposite, they are pioneering public service innovations that are building democratic public ownership models for the twenty-first century. Municipal initiatives from the participatory mechanisms of citizen observatories to public-community ownership models and genuine worker engagement can inspire a broader, country-wide vision. These collective, bottom-up experiences at the local level are already improving people's lives; they are also a powerful foundation to push for the democratisation of public ownership at all levels, and especially nationally.

In the United States, numerous cities are advocating for locally owned and controlled energy and banking services. Since 2019, the youth-led Sunrise Movement, various trade unions and ex-presidential candidate for the Democrats Bernie Sanders have been calling for a national Green New Deal that centres around public ownership of energy and finance. The Covid-19 outbreak further increased the urgency and necessity of these calls. When municipalities team up with social movements, they can reset a whole country's political agenda. Other examples include the alliance in South Africa that is calling for transforming Eskom, one of the biggest electricity companies in the world and currently a failing public utility, into a fully public and people-serving utility.<sup>7</sup> The 2019 UK Labour Party platform illustrates the type of national support and policy framework that allows local governments to reclaim public services by insourcing and rebuilding their capacity to provide local services directly.<sup>8</sup>

Given austerity measures following the 2008 financial crisis have slashed municipal and national budgets, it is of utmost importance to transform how public resources are spent. As the Covid-19 pandemic has proven, public services are the backbone of our society but they need sufficient funding if they are to rise up to the task in times of crisis. Governments across the globe have adopted plans to protect workers and companies, bail out industries and support economic recovery after the fallout. Some have pledged to increase public spending in the health sector, but there

should be safeguards to ensure that this money actually benefits public services, and is not used to promote further PPPs and other forms of private sector involvement. Public investment must be directed towards strengthening public services, based on democratic public ownership models, and towards social and environmental objectives such as tackling the climate crisis and caring for the most vulnerable.

As Thomas Marois points out in a recent report published by TNI, worldwide public finance institutions have US\$73 trillion in assets, with over half in the hands of public banks.<sup>9</sup> This is equivalent to 93 per cent of global gross domestic product. In the current model, most of this public finance is used to absorb risk by guaranteeing the profits of private investors – at a high public cost. It would be much more effective if national and municipal governments were to cut out these big private intermediaries and invest these public funds directly to build public healthcare systems and other essential infrastructure. Combining direct public investments with much-needed progressive tax systems could nurture territorial solidarity by making universal public services a reality.

This book demonstrates that when public services are publicly owned and democratically organised they can effectively strengthen community wealth and the local economy. It is time to demand democratic public ownership at all levels and call for universal access to public services so that all people can lead dignified and prosperous lives. As racism, fascism and the far-right are on the rise, offering viable systemic solutions that work for people and for the planet can significantly help rebuild our societies and economies on a basis of solidarity and cooperation. Our public future lies in hope, not fear, and rests in the hands of communities, not corporations.

## Endnotes

- 1 The global list of (re)municipalisation consisted of 1,408 cases by the end of October 2019. The database is available at: <https://futureispublic.org/remunicipalisation-global-database/>. An interactive database is under construction in collaboration with the University of Glasgow. It will be accessible through the above link in the near future. Additional cases and information will be added to this new database as they are collected.
- 2 United Nations, Seventy-third session, Agenda item 74 (b) Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Extreme poverty and human rights. 26 September 2018. <https://undocs.org/A/73/396>
- 3 Harm reduction refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim to minimise negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws. It focuses on positive change and on working with people without stigma and discrimination, or requiring that they stop using drugs as a precondition for support.
- 4 Roth, L. and Shea Baird, K. (2019) 'Municipalism and the Feminization of Politics', Roarmag (6). <https://roarmag.org/magazine/municipalism-feminization-urban-politics/>
- 5 'To ensure sustainable waste services, we must value waste workers and make sure they are in decent jobs', Daria Cibrario cited in 'Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2018'. <http://www.2030spotlight.org>
- 6 <http://fearlesscities.com/en>
- 7 Eskom research reference group (2018) 'Our power: achieving a just energy transition for South Africa'. <https://www.new-eskom.org/>
- 8 <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Democratising-Local-Public-Services.pdf>
- 9 Marois, T. (2019) 'Public banking on the future we want', in Public Finance for the Future We Want. TNI. <https://www.tni.org/en/publicfinance>