



# BUILDING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

→ THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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NOVEMBER 12, 2025



# THE KOOTENAYS

## OUR REGION, OUR POTENTIAL

3.4 billion people live in rural areas worldwide.

Building thriving rural economies is a **global and local priority**.

### In the Kootenays:

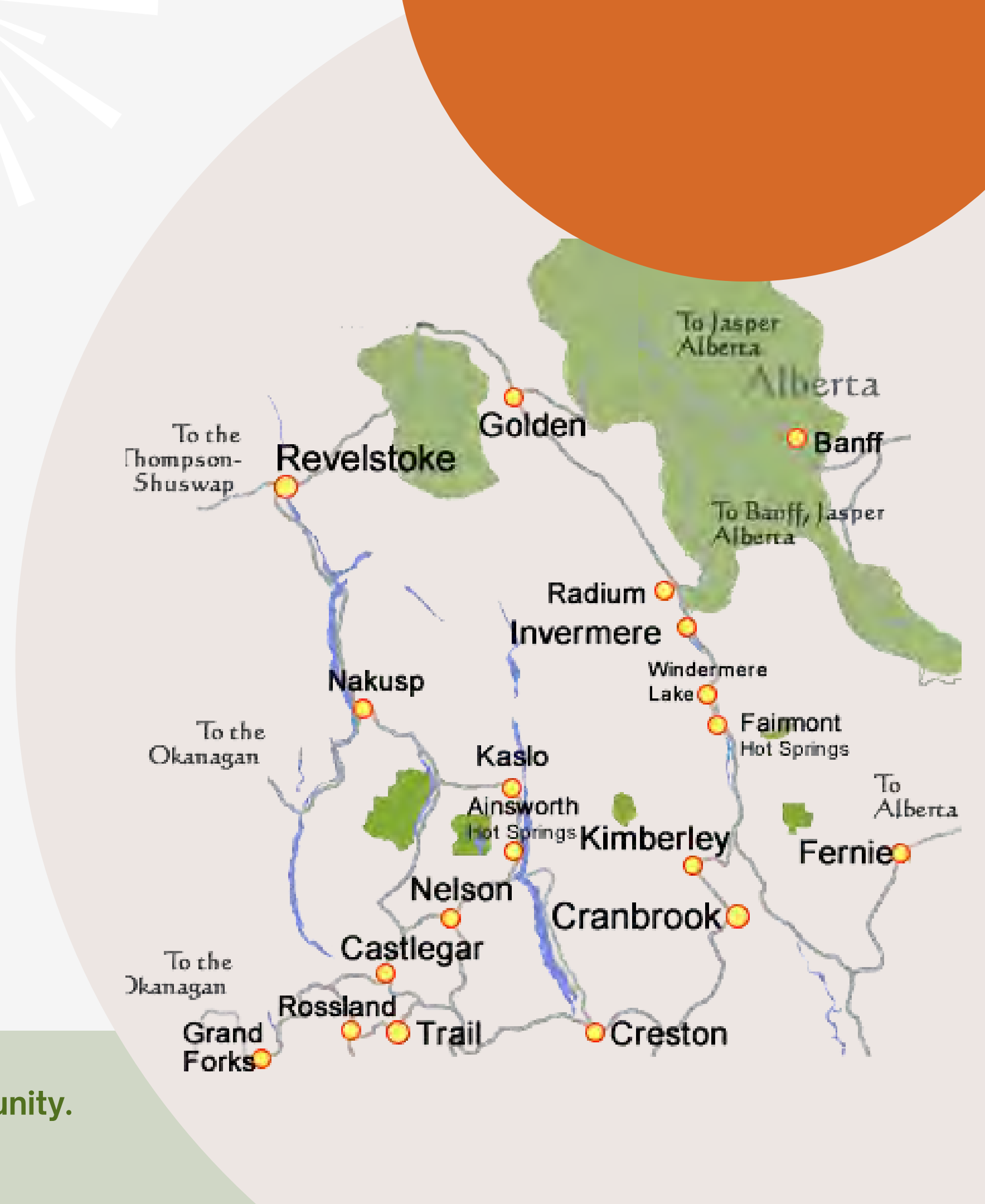
- Our economy spans health care, retail trade, construction, and more
- In the West Kootenay alone, incomes total \$5.2 billion
- We're rich in **land, people, and local pride**

### But challenges persist:

- By 2031, a **42% decrease** in workforce size
- A **39% drop** in the number of available jobs
- 35% of the remaining workforce will be retirement-aged (source)
- Economic momentum **at risk without local, community-driven solutions**



This is where **YOU** can take action create impact in your community.



# COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

## A NEW APPROACH TO LOCAL PROSPERITY

What if our economy served us, not extracted from us?

That's the idea behind Community Wealth Building (CWB): a people-first approach to economic development.

*8 Core Principles (CED Network):*

- |                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Labour > capital         | 5. Local investment |
| 2. Local ownership          | 6. Inclusive assets |
| 3. Democratic participation | 7. Place matters    |
| 4. Keep wealth circulating  | 8. Systems change   |

In rural regions, this looks like:

1. Community-owned enterprises
2. Local finance
3. Fair work
4. Local spending
5. Land used for people, not profit

# WHY RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

*Social enterprise is the tool  
and the Kootenay region is the **Field of Play**.*

The Rural Social Enterprise Manifesto invites us to **build socially-owned, place-rooted enterprises** that **respond to local challenges**, anchored in rural realities.



It emphasises:

Building from  
local assets

Inclusive  
ownership

Regeneration  
of land &  
culture

Long-term  
generational  
change



For regions like *the Kootenays*,  
social enterprise is a way to:

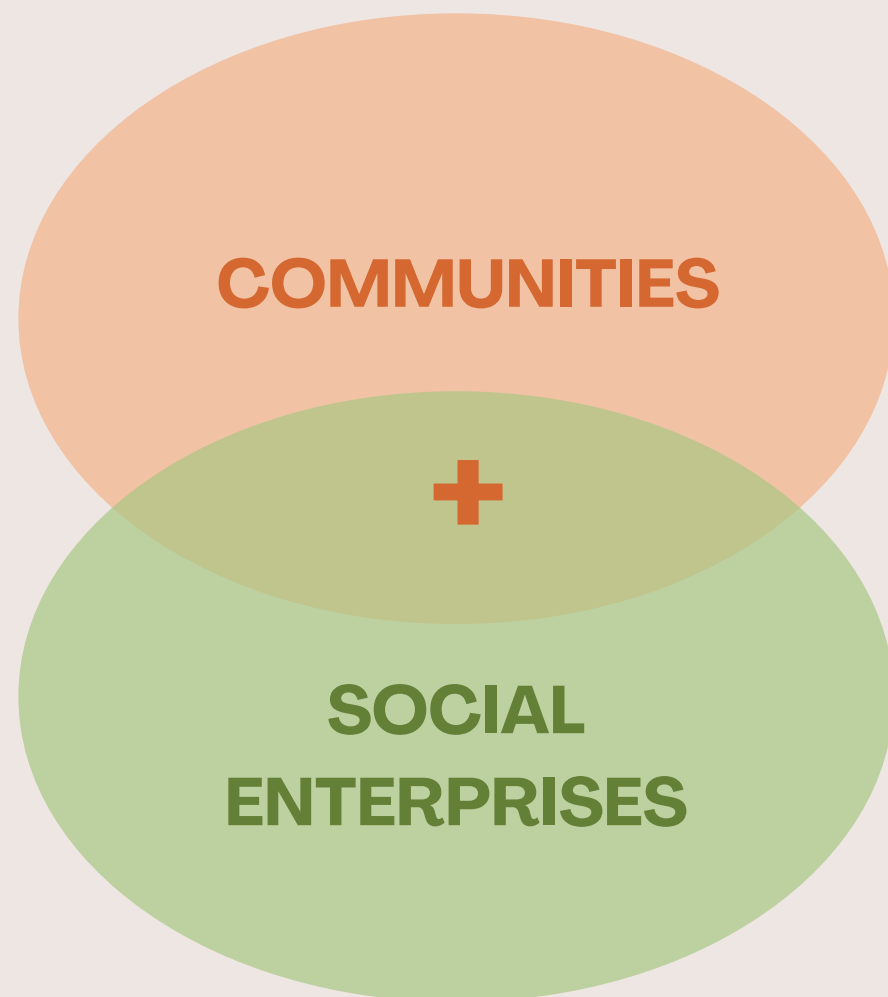
- Reclaim community sovereignty
- Build local purpose
- Keep wealth in motion.

It's *more* than  
a simple business model.



# THE CROSSOVER THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

When communities and social enterprises work together,  
the results are transformational.



**Social enterprises** ground solutions in local realities. They know the land, the people, the challenges.

**Communities** bring lived experience, trust, and shared purpose.

*Together*, they co-create systems that redistribute power, resources, and opportunity, **especially in rural areas, where gaps in health, food, housing, and jobs are real.**



# STORIES OF PLACE, PURPOSE & POSSIBILITY

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PARTNER?

When a **community backs a social enterprise**, and that enterprise gives back, the ripple effects are **transformative**.

## TODAY, WE'LL LOOK AT FOUR STORIES:

- Stella's Circle (St. Johns, NL)
- Creston Valley Community Hub (Creston, BC)
- Artscape (Toronto, ON)
- The Yellow Barn (Abbotsford, BC)







STORY 1:

# STELLA'S CIRCLE *ST. JOHNS, NL*

## CREATING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Stella's Circle is a community organization that operates a network of **wrap-around support, services and social enterprises** to help adults facing complex barriers live **full, dignified lives**.

### THEIR MISSION:

Champion growth and transformation through housing, mental health, and employment services.

### THE PROBLEMS THEY ADDRESS:

Multiple barriers (addiction, homelessness, unemployment, and more)

STORY 1:

# STELLA'S CIRCLE *ST. JOHNS, NL*

They have successfully created a **connected ecosystem** that restores dignity and independence and **builds community wealth** in the process.

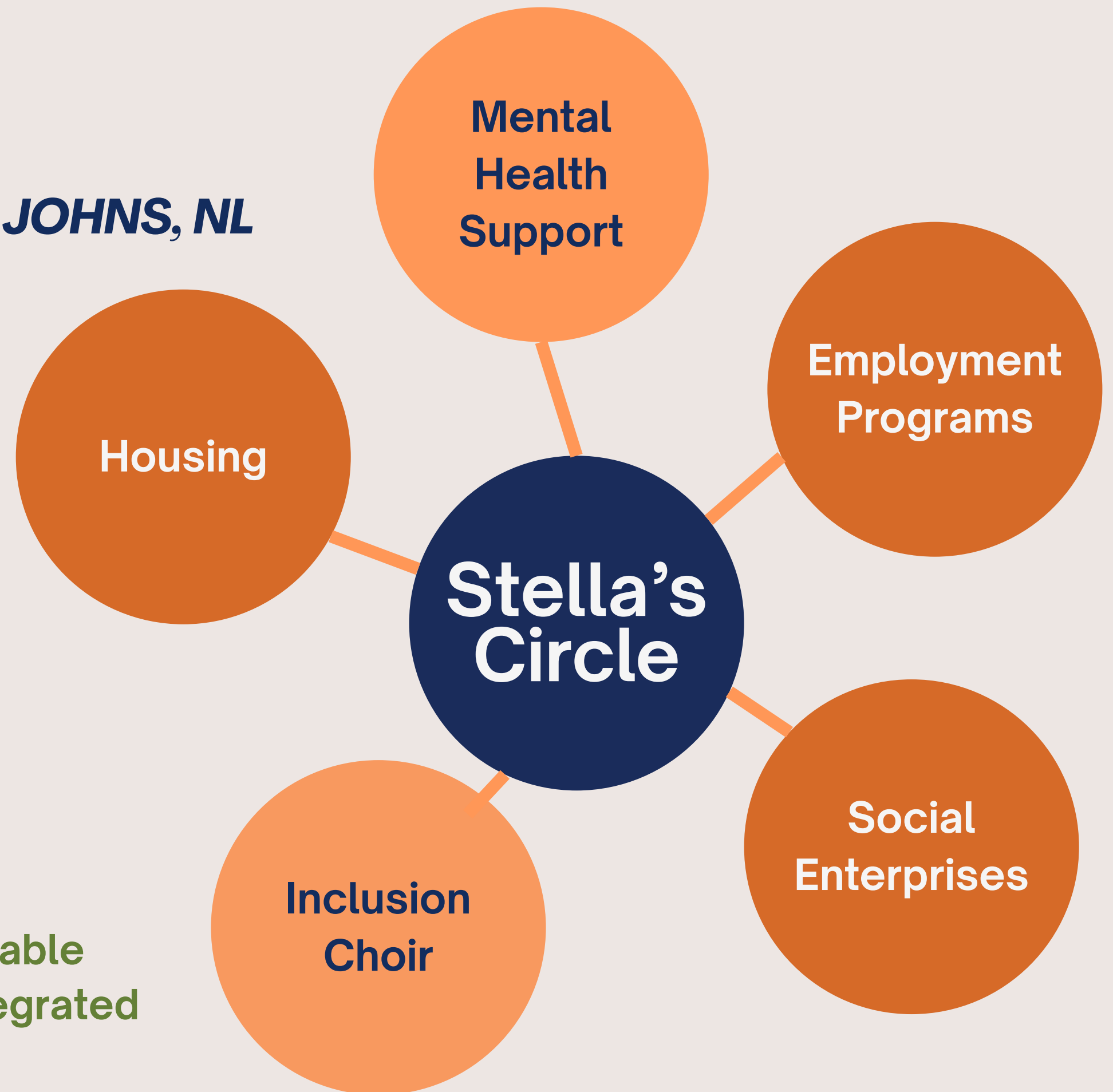
Reflects the Community Wealth Building principles: *local investment, fair work, inclusive assets, place-based systems*

**This encourages us to ask:**

“What if we didn't try to fix just *one* issue, but designed a system that **connects many**?”



We can use their story as a **rural-transferable blueprint**: even if smaller in scale, the integrated mindset is replicable in the Kootenays.







STORY 2:

# CRESTON VALLEY CRESTON, BC

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

The Creston Valley Community Hub is a community-led social enterprise designed to bring together **workspaces, services, and programs under one roof**, creating a central space for connection, collaboration, and rural resilience.

### THEIR MISSION:

To create a shared space where people, services, and opportunities come together to **strengthen the rural economy and improve community life**.

### THE PROBLEMS THEY ADDRESS:

- Gaps in rural infrastructure and local services
- Isolation of workers, youth, and nonprofits
- Lack of accessible space for collaboration and enterprise

STORY 2:

# CRESTON VALLEY

The **Hub** provides the physical infrastructure for work, childcare, and recreation.

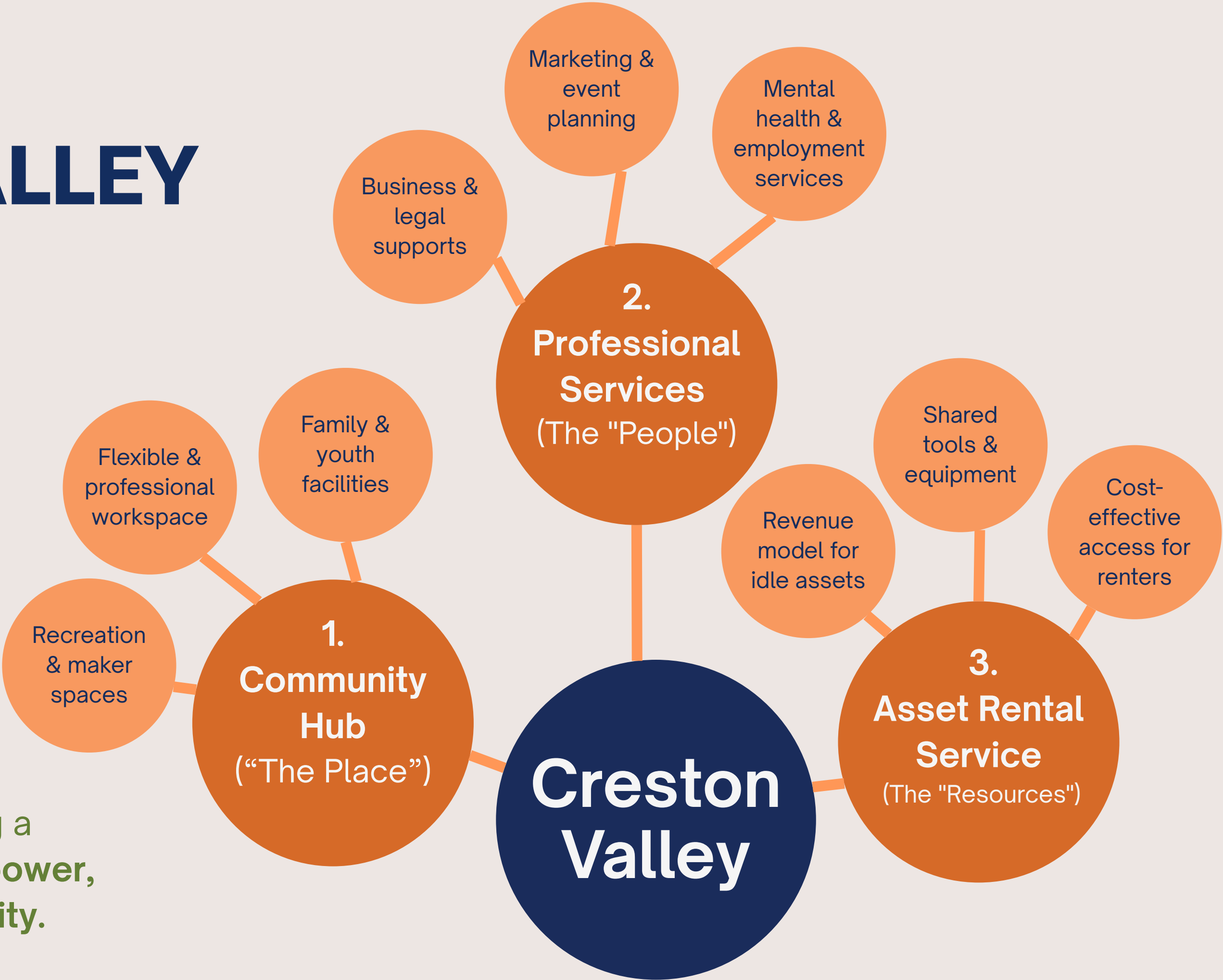
The **Professional Services** offering provides the human resource support.

The **Asset Rental** model provides a mechanism for sharing resources.

The entire model is a **vehicle for deep, sustained collaboration.**



Creston Valley is creating a platform for **community power, partnership, and possibility.**







STORY 3:

# ARTSCAPE *TORONTO, ON*

## FOUNDATION FOR CREATIVITY & COLLABORATION

Artscape is a not-profit social enterprise that re-develops underused buildings into **affordable, vibrant cultural hubs**.

They work with artists, nonprofits, developers, and governments to **anchor creativity in community**, turning buildings into engines for social, cultural, and economic renewal.

### THEIR MISSION:

Create affordable spaces where artists and communities thrive together.

### THE PROBLEMS THEY ADDRESS:

- Artist displacement
- Underused buildings
- Lack of inclusive creative spaces



STORY 3:

# ARTSCAPE *TORONTO, ON*

## Artscape illustrates:

- **Just land use:** Space used for public and cultural good
- **Inclusive enterprise:** Artists and communities co-own outcomes
- **Fair work:** Stable income and platforms for marginalized creatives
- **Community-rooted investment:** Cultural capital as economic driver

## This encourages us to ask:

What unused buildings or spaces in the **Kootenays** could become **platforms for community ownership and creative enterprise?**



Artscape is a system that could be scaled to rural regions through co-op art spaces, local culture hubs, and reclaimed land use.





STORY 4:

# THE YELLOW BARN ABBOTSFORD, BC

## ROOTED IN PLACE, SERVING COMMUNITY

The Yellow Barn is a produce store, cafe, and social enterprise located in Abbotsford. It acts as a **central meeting place for the community, promotes local food, and employs local residents**, and supports relief & development worldwide.

### THEIR MISSION:

Support rural vibrancy through food, hospitality, and shared gathering space.

### THE PROBLEMS THEY ADDRESS:

- Lack of central community spaces in rural/suburban transition zones
- Need for local employment and farm-to-table visibility
- Growing disconnect between producers and consumers in rural corridors



STORY 4:

# THE YELLOW BARN

They've created a **trusted, place-based enterprise** that nourishes the community, economically, socially, and culturally.

Their work reflects the Community Wealth Building principles:

- Local investment
- Fair work
- Inclusive enterprise
- Place-based infrastructure

**This reminds us:**



Community social enterprise **doesn't need to be complex to be powerful**. Sometimes, it's a farmstand, a kitchen, and a few local jobs, grounded in the place it serves.





# WHAT THESE STORIES TEACH US

When communities and social enterprises come together:



*Now, lets bring more of this to the Kootenay region!*





Innovate  
for Impact

Community  
Futures East Kootenay

IMPACT  
TOOLBOX

# WHAT KOOTENAY COLLABORATION COULD SPARK

Imagine a **network of social enterprises across the Kootenays.**

For example...

- Forestry plus community-owned biomass enterprise
- Youth-led tourism venture rooted in Indigenous and local culture
- Community-owned coop for local food processing & supply
- Shared procurement model that keeps local dollars local

