

THE ECOLOGY OF BELONGING



WEALTH AND ECOSYSTEMIC FLOURISHING

The Seven Forms of Wealth



The conditions that enable life to flourish

We understand wealth as the living conditions, relationships, capacities and resources that enable people, communities and the wider natural world to flourish.

An economy serves this wealth through the ways it organises livelihoods, care, production, exchange and stewardship. Ecological health, relationships, material security, human capacities, civic life, culture and spiritual life belong within our understanding of prosperity. Their quality and their connections shape what people and places can become.

The Seven Forms of Wealth

	Ecological Wealth Healthy ecosystems, biodiversity, fertile soils, clean air and water, and the capacity of the living world to regenerate. Ecological wealth sustains life and recognises the intrinsic worth of other species and living systems.
	Relational Wealth Care, trust, reciprocity and belonging within families, friendships, communities and organisations, together with attentive relationships with other life. This includes the quality of relationships through which support, cooperation and shared possibility emerge.
	Material and Financial Wealth Safe housing, accessible infrastructure, adequate income, economic security and the resources needed to participate in life. Its value lies in enabling dignity, choice and stewardship, with fair access and responsible use.
	Physical Wealth Physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing, learning and the capacity to act with agency. It includes time for rest, play and creativity, meaningful activity, self-expression and opportunities to develop throughout life.
	Civic Wealth Rights, justice, trustworthy institutions, public services and meaningful participation in collective decisions. It includes shared responsibility and the ability of communities to respond to challenges and care for future generations.
	Cultural Wealth Languages, heritage, traditions, arts, stories and diverse ways of knowing. It includes the freedom to sustain and renew collective identity, honour different worldviews and transmit knowledge between generations.
	Spiritual Wealth Wonder, gratitude, compassion, peace, wisdom and a sense of connection with something greater than oneself. It encompasses the inner life and the search for meaning, whether expressed through faith, contemplative practice, nature or everyday experience.

These seven forms are interdependent. Genuine progress strengthens the conditions for flourishing across the whole, with care for other life and future generations.

Understanding wealth as a living whole

The seven forms are overlapping lenses on a living whole. Ecological health shapes human health; relationships sustain learning and care; culture shapes what societies value; institutions influence how resources and opportunities are distributed. Spiritual life can deepen our sense of responsibility and participation.

Progress therefore requires attention to what is strengthened and what is depleted. Financial gains can coexist with declining trust, damaged ecosystems or cultural loss. Some losses are irreversible, and additional income cannot compensate for every form of harm. Distribution matters: aggregate gains can conceal the exclusion or impoverishment of particular communities.

The relationship with ecosystemic flourishing

The Ecosystemic Flourishing (ESF) Framework places these questions within four connected domains: Natural Environment; Circular & Regenerative Economies; Cultural Values & Identity; and Human Capacities & Potential. The seven forms of wealth offer an accessible way to explore the conditions and resources that support flourishing across these domains.

Within Human Capacities & Potential, the seven human levels - Security, Relationship, Independence, Engagement, Fulfilment, Contribution and Growth - provide a further lens on lived experience and development. The forms of wealth and the human levels serve different purposes and do not require a one-to-one correspondence.

From recognition to decisions

We are interested in how this understanding can inform community inquiry, organisational practice, public budgeting and investment. A useful starting point is to ask: **Which forms of wealth does this decision strengthen or diminish, for whom, and over what timescale?** Its effects on other life and future generations belong within that inquiry.

A community could begin by identifying what it already values, the wealth it holds and the conditions under pressure. Locally meaningful indicators could then be developed through participation, bringing quantitative evidence together with stories, lived experience and ecological knowledge. Any assessment should make uncertainty, uneven outcomes and trade-offs visible.

Such a portrait could help guide priorities and review whether spending is improving the conditions for flourishing. Financial valuation may inform some decisions, while other values need to be expressed through ecological thresholds, rights, community testimony or commitments to care. The purpose is to support sound judgement and accountable stewardship.

About the Flourish Project

The Flourish Project is a community interest company exploring how people, communities and the wider living world can flourish together. Through the Ecosystemic Flourishing (ESF) Framework and collaborative inquiries, it connects human development, culture, economies and ecological wellbeing.