

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

COMMUNITY SAVERS & CLASS



Community Savers is a network of women-led and place-based community associations and neighbourhood networks which works in alliance with a support agency called Community Led Action and Savings Support (CLASS). CLASS was set up and is co-governed by leaders from across the Community Savers network. Please visit communitysavers.net for more information about our work.

1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Change from a 'manufacturing' economy to a 'services' and 'information' economy has changed the character of our communities.

Party politics hasn't worked for us. Voluntary sector focused on 'services' more than 'collective action'...top-down 'professional' solutions.

Women are critical change-makers but also mothers, carers, survivors, workers, pickers-up of the pieces ...often overworked, underpaid & isolated in small pockets of community action.

Historical disadvantage in access to influence over resources, information and decision-making.

Private corporations with lots of power and motivated by profit-making over the wellbeing of people and environment.

Top-down interventions by external actors including "regeneration" which results in "gentrification."

- Changing these power relations requires that women involved in community action are supported to form strong, networked associations.
- Working together we can develop women-led and community-driven solutions that work for women, families, older people - and for our planet.
- Over time, we have the relationships and potential to join forces with community leaders nationally and even globally for a stronger community involvement in urban programmes and policy across the world!



3 ACTION

Majority women-led savings groups with income generation and wellbeing projects.

Precedent-setting projects and partnerships.

Community-led learning exchanges.

Public advocacy on community priorities & participation in programme & policy design.

Neighbourhood networks doing community-led data gathering, mapping and visioning.



2 INPUTS

Time and expertise of grassroots leaders.

Community-professional partnerships (public agencies, universities, supporters and champions).

Financial resources.

Community Savers - CLASS alliance.

Community-led learning exchanges.

Technical expertise (consultancy, pro-bono partnerships, voluntary supporters).



4 OUTCOMES

SHORT-TERM >>> LONG-TERM

MEMBER HOUSEHOLD AND GROUP OUTCOMES

Members/households have more savings, less debt, more resilience to financial shocks.

Members/households have improved mental & physical health.

Groups have increased income for community benefit.

Leaders have increased skills, employment and personal development opportunities.

Groups & households have increased access to community facilities.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTCOMES

More people are working together within neighbourhood-based, resident-led networks with ambitious, successful agendas.

Community groups are nurturing local activities, highlighting/addressing immediate needs, strengthening relationships between residents.

More diverse, low-income women are in community leadership roles developing local interventions.

Communities are making plans for their local areas, in partnership with local government and other stakeholders, which are implemented.

Leaders are confident to take their governance skills into broader spaces.

LOCAL AUTHORITY/CITY-REGIONAL OUTCOMES

More women from diverse and low-income backgrounds are in leadership positions guiding city/city-regional interventions.

Less class-based discrimination because residents are supported to articulate needs, demonstrate expertise & build relationships with key agencies.

Public interventions are more effective due to learning from bottom-up and community-led alternatives.

Public agencies have a more inclusive approach to allocating public funds, and the use, management, and development of public land.

Urban policy is more effective due to increased grassroots participation.

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL OUTCOMES

Community Savers leaders from multiple cities govern the network, share learning, and hold each other and CLASS accountable.

Public agencies have a more inclusive approach to managing services and allocating public funds.

Urban/public policy is more effective due to increased grassroots participation and learning from community-led alternatives.

Urban programmes draw on bottom-up principles and initiatives for more effective use of poverty reduction funding.

Leaders from low-income areas of cities across the Global South and North have amplified voice through joint advocacy on global urban challenges.



5 LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Future generations of women are less likely to live in poverty.

More equal access to resources, services and good infrastructure across different kinds of neighbourhood.

Human and planetary well-being are the strongest concerns shaping urban and public policy making.