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Inclusive Capital Initiatives Around the World

Inclusive capital refers to policies and mechanisms that broaden **household access to income-generating assets or reduce expenses**, ensuring that ordinary people benefit from economic growth even as traditional wage income declines. Below is a comprehensive survey of such initiatives across different levels of governance (national, regional, local) and sectors, including both ongoing programs and historical or trial efforts. We highlight both **cash-flow distributions** and **in-kind benefits** that effectively boost household purchasing power.

Broad-Based National Wealth Funds and Resource Dividends

- **Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (USA – State Level):** Since 1982, Alaska has paid an annual dividend to every resident from a sovereign wealth fund funded by oil revenues. The fund, now over $64 billion, typically pays out **$1,000–$2,000 per person each year** (in 2021 the dividend was $1,114, about $4,456 for a family of four) [1]. By 2015, a cumulative **$22.4 billion** had been distributed to Alaskans [2]. Studies show the payments significantly reduce poverty without reducing employment [3], and the program is very popular (81% of Alaskans say it improves their quality of life) [4]. Alaska's model demonstrates how natural resource rents can be transparently managed and *directly shared* with citizens as a cash **Universal Basic Dividend** [5] [6].

- **Oil and Mining Revenue Dividends in Other Countries:** Several other resource-rich regions have emulated or proposed Alaska-like dividends:

- **Macao (China – Special Admin Region):** Since 2008, Macao's government has run a "Wealth Partaking Scheme" funded by casino revenues. In its first year, residents received MOP 5,000 (≈$625) each, and it has since grown to **MOP 10,000 for permanent residents** (≈$1,230) **and MOP 6,000 for non-permanent** residents annually [7]. This annual cash handout effectively returns gaming profits to all residents.
- **Mongolia's Human Development Fund (Historical):** During a mining boom, Mongolia experimented with direct cash transfers to citizens. From 2010–2012, every citizen received **MNT 21,000 per month** (roughly $15) under a program of "gifts and shares," replacing a prior smaller child benefit [8]. The government also allocated each citizen shares in a state-owned coal company, entitling them to dividends (in 2020, a promised payout was up to MNT 96,480, about $34) [9]. While popular, these universal payouts proved fiscally unsustainable – by 2012 they consumed 18% of government revenue [10] – and were later scaled back in favor of a savings-oriented **sovereign wealth fund** [11].

- **Gulf States and Others:** Some oil-rich countries distribute resource wealth to citizens in various ways. For example, **Kuwait** marked its 50th anniversary in 2011 by giving each citizen a one-time grant of **1,000 Kuwaiti dinars** (~$3,560) plus free food staples for a year [12]. **Iran** implemented a sweeping subsidy reform in 2010, replacing energy subsidies with **universal cash transfers of about $45 per person per month**, directly depositing oil wealth into households' pockets [13]. **Bolivia's** Renta Dignidad is a resource-funded universal pension paying all seniors a monthly benefit (financed by gas revenues), and **Mongolia** and **Timor-Leste** have also at times distributed resource dividends. Many of these programs aim to turn natural resource rents into broad-based income, though their success depends on sustainable fiscal design (as seen in Alaska's endowment model versus more short-lived cash handouts).

- **Sovereign Wealth Funds for Citizens (Proposed and Emerging):** The idea of national **"citizen wealth funds"** is gaining traction. **Norway's Government Pension Fund Global**, for instance, invests oil revenues for public benefit (reaching $1.4 trillion), though returns feed general budgets rather than individual checks. In the UK and EU, economists have proposed national wealth funds that would pay an annual **social dividend** to all citizens [5]. While not yet implemented, these proposals draw inspiration from existing models (Alaska, Norway) to broaden capital ownership. On a supranational level, concepts like a **Global Resource Dividend** (Thomas Pogge) and **universal carbon dividends** have been discussed, wherein fees on global commons (like carbon emissions) would fund per-capita payments worldwide [6]. These remain theoretical but reflect the growing interest in expanding *public* or *common* ownership of wealth and sharing the returns.

Subnational and Community Wealth-Sharing Programs

- **State and Provincial Funds:** Beyond Alaska, other subnational governments have used resource revenues or public assets to boost household incomes:
- **Canadian Provinces:** Alberta delivered a one-time "Prosperity Bonus" of C$400 to every resident in 2006 during an oil boom. Several provinces (e.g. Alberta, Saskatchewan) and U.S. states (e.g. Texas, North Dakota) maintain **permanent funds** from oil, gas, or mineral leases, which typically support public services but could potentially pay dividends. **New Mexico** has two large permanent funds (oil-funded) that support education; in 2022 the state even approved increasing withdrawals to expand early childhood programs (an in-kind benefit improving family well-being).
- **City and County Level:** Some local governments are exploring "urban wealth funds." For example, **Singapore, Copenhagen, and Hamburg** have **city-owned investment corporations** that manage municipal real estate and infrastructure commercially, using the profits to fund public goods or urban development [14] [15]. While these **Urban Wealth Funds** don't cut residents a personal check, they *generate revenue to invest in housing, transit, and services*, effectively reducing costs for citizens. Notably, **MTR Corporation in Hong Kong** (the partially privatized metro company) uses its land development profits to subsidize transit, keeping fares low; it also pays dividends to the government (and other shareholders) that ultimately benefit the public [16].

- **Tribal and Indigenous Dividends:** In the United States, several Native American nations share income from communal assets with members. For instance, the **Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians** distributes **casino revenue dividends** to all enrolled members – in recent years, **each adult Cherokee received around $12,000–$14,000 annually** [17]. These per-capita payments, funded by gaming profits on tribal land, have helped reduce poverty and fund better health and education outcomes in the community [18]. Alaska Native corporations (established by the 1971 ANCSA law) are another model: indigenous Alaskans received shares in regional corporations that own land and businesses, and some corporations now pay regular **shareholder dividends** (for example, the Aleut Corporation has distributed over **$77 million in dividends** since 1981) [19]. This structure turns formerly marginalized groups into collective owners of capital, providing a supplemental income stream and communal wealth.

- **Community Land Trusts and Housing Assets:** Inclusive ownership can also be fostered through housing and land:

- **Singapore's Public Housing Ownership (National/City Level):** Singapore pioneered an asset-based welfare model through housing. About **90% of Singaporean households are homeowners**, mostly of government-built HDB flats [20]. These flats were sold at affordable prices and financed via forced savings (Central Provident Fund), allowing even low-income families to build equity. Over decades, this has led to **widespread accumulation of wealth** – home equity that can be monetized or passed on [21]. Many Singaporean retirees have fully paid homes (reducing housing costs to zero in old age), and the appreciating value of HDB leases has given middle-class families significant capital gains [22]. Essentially, Singapore turned land and housing into an inclusive capital asset, giving citizens a *"stake in the country"* and a form of savings for the future [23] [24].
- **Community Land Trusts (Local):** Around the world, community land trusts (CLTs) acquire land and hold it in trust to benefit local residents (often through affordable housing). While CLTs typically aim to **reduce housing costs** (an in-kind benefit) rather than pay cash dividends, they effectively boost disposable income by keeping rents and home prices below market. For example, Burlington, Vermont's CLT has kept homes affordable for generations of owners. Some CLTs also earn revenue (through lease fees or development deals) that is reinvested locally. Similarly, **community-owned renewable energy co-ops** (common in Germany, Denmark, and parts of the US) pay profits to member-owners or offer discounted electricity, thus reducing household expenses. These grassroots ownership structures **empower communities as collective "capitalists"**, capturing land value or energy profits for public benefit.
- **Land Value Capture and "Georgist" Dividends:** In a few cases, governments have leveraged rising land values to fund citizen benefits. **Hong Kong** and **Singapore** extensively use public land leasing; while they don't send out dividends, the revenues fund extensive public services and infrastructure (effectively a social dividend in kind). There have been proposals (e.g., in Taiwan and some US cities) to share increases in land value with residents via "land dividends" or property tax rebates, but most remain at concept stage. One real example: **Aspen, Colorado's housing program** uses taxes and fees on luxury vacation homes to fund affordable housing for local workers, indirectly transferring wealth from rich property owners to the local workforce (by lowering their rent burden).

Employee and Cooperative Ownership Initiatives

- **Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) – United States:** ESOPs are retirement trusts that give workers ownership stakes in their companies. As of 2023, the U.S. has over **6,300 ESOP companies** covering nearly **14 million workers**, with **over $1.8 trillion in assets** held on employees' behalf [25]. These plans, common in manufacturing and services, allow workers to build wealth over time as the company grows. For example, employees of **Publix Supermarkets** (an ESOP-owned grocery chain) receive company stock annually and often retire with substantial nest eggs. Studies show ESOP workers have **higher retirement savings** on average and often enjoy wage and productivity gains. However, payouts typically occur at separation or retirement, rather than as ongoing income. Still, by converting businesses into broadly owned assets, ESOPs **turn workers into shareholders**. An ESOP success story is **W.L. Gore (maker of Gore-Tex)**, whose long-term employee-owners share profits and decision-making, and **WinCo Foods**, a grocery chain whose cashiers and clerks have become millionaires through stock accounts [26].

- **Worker Cooperatives and Broad-Based Equity:** Around the world, many firms are owned and controlled by their employees or community members:

- **Mondragon Corporation (Spain):** The largest worker cooperative federation, Mondragon in the Basque Country, encompasses about 95 cooperatives with **80,000 worker-owners**. Each worker has a share in the business and voting rights, and profits are distributed to worker accounts or reinvested. Mondragon co-op members receive annual profit dividends and build up capital accounts (which can be cashed out on retirement) – a model that has significantly **raised local incomes and wealth** over the decades. Mondragon's example shows that large-scale enterprises can be owned *inclusively* by workers, aligning labor and capital interests.
- **John Lewis Partnership (UK):** A major British retailer (John Lewis department stores and Waitrose supermarkets) that is 100% owned by its 80,000 employees. Profits are shared as annual **profit-sharing bonuses** (historically 10–20% of salary in good years) to all staff. This partnership model (in place since 1929) treats employees as partners in the business, effectively providing a second stream of income tied to company performance. Similarly, the **French law on "**participation**" (since 1967)** mandates profit-sharing: French companies with over 50 employees must distribute a portion of profits into employee funds [27]. This has led to billions of euros in employee financial participation – money that workers can withdraw after a lock-up or at retirement, boosting their wealth. France also encourages **employee share ownership** (actionnariat salarié) through tax incentives, resulting in about 3.5 million employees owning shares in their employers.

- **Other Profit-Sharing and Equity Programs:** Many companies worldwide have voluntary profit-sharing or stock option plans that, while not always "inclusive" of *all* employees, broaden capital income. For example, **Microsoft and Google** have granted stock to even rank-and-file employees, creating thousands of middle-class millionaires. **Profit-sharing plans in Japan** date back to the 19th century, and today some Japanese and Korean firms give regular bonuses tied to profits. In **Germany**, the Mittelstand companies often have gain-sharing agreements. Though these are private initiatives, governments can encourage them via tax policy. The **evidence** is that such schemes improve productivity and worker retention, while giving employees a slice of the economic pie beyond wages.

- **Community and Consumer Cooperatives:** Not only workers, but consumers and community members can collectively own enterprises that generate dividends or cost savings:

- **Credit Unions (Global):** These are cooperative banks owned by their depositors. Profits are returned to members as better interest rates or occasional dividend payouts. For instance, the Navy Federal Credit Union in the U.S. often provides a "year-end dividend" to members. While modest, these payouts (or fee waivers) give households a financial boost and cheaper credit.
- **Mutual Insurance and Utilities:** In some countries (e.g., UK, USA), policyholders own mutual insurance companies, which may pay **policyholder dividends** or premium rebates when earnings are high. Rural electric cooperatives in the U.S. return "capital credits" to customer-owners; for example, a co-op power utility might send each member a check or bill credit annually based on excess revenue. These in effect lower the cost of services (an *in-kind* gain).
- **Platform Cooperatives and ESOP Startups:** A newer trend is trying to apply cooperative ownership in the digital economy. Projects like **Driver's Seat Cooperative** in the US sought to empower gig workers (rideshare drivers) to own and monetize their data collectively, and the **Drivers Cooperative** in New York is a driver-owned rideshare platform that aims to pay better rates and annual profit dividends to drivers. While many are nascent or experimental, they represent efforts to ensure the

wealth generated by AI platforms, gig work, and data networks is shared with the participants, not just concentrated in Big Tech shareholders.

Matched Savings and Asset-Building Accounts

- **Child Trust Funds and "Baby Bonds":** Governments have trialed programs to give every child at birth a savings endowment to build assets over time:
- **United Kingdom's Child Trust Fund (2005–2010):** The UK opened a tax-free savings account with £250 (or £500 for low-income families) for every newborn, with an additional £250 at age 7 【**citation**】. Families and friends could contribute, and funds were locked until the child turned 18. While now discontinued, every British child born in that period has a nest egg (on average ~£1,500 by maturity) they can now use for education, a home, or investments – an example of seeding broad capital ownership from birth.
- **Proposed "Baby Bonds" in the USA:** Inspired by the UK, proposals (e.g. by Senator Cory Booker) would give every American baby a federal trust account (perhaps ~$1,000 initial deposit plus annual contributions based on family income). By age 18, lower-income youths might have $20,000+ for college or down payments. Some local trials are underway: for instance, **Washington, D.C.** launched a Baby Bonds program in 2022 targeting children in low-income families with yearly deposits that could grow to ~$25,000 by adulthood.

- **Canada's Education Savings Grants:** Canada encourages asset building through the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP). The government provides a 20% **matching grant** on parental contributions (up to C$500 per year) for a child's education fund, plus additional bonds for low-income families. This **public match** effectively boosts the savings of lower-income households – a form of progressive asset building (though restricted to education use).

- **Matched Savings for Low-Income Adults (IDAs): Individual Development Accounts** were piloted in the US and other countries in the 1990s–2000s. These provided low-income individuals a **matching contribution (e.g., $2 or $3 for every $1 saved)** if they saved regularly toward an asset goal (like buying a first home, paying for education, or starting a business). Many nonprofit and state-run IDA programs showed success: participants accumulated meaningful savings and assets, leveraging the match. For example, an IDA program in Michigan helped over a thousand families buy homes or capitalize micro-businesses with match funds. Some countries like **Canada** (through the now-expired Learn$ave pilot) and **South Korea** (Dream Accounts) also tried matched accounts. While often grant-funded and small-scale, these experiments inform current policy design.

- **National Savings Systems with Progressivity:** A few countries embed matching or subsidies into nationwide savings plans:

- **Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF):** Primarily a mandatory savings plan for retirement and housing, CPF includes government **top-ups for lower-income savers** and matching contributions for certain schemes (like the Special Account for retirement). Singapore periodically credits "CPF bonuses" to lower earners, helping their balances compound. This ensures even those with modest wages accumulate capital for old age, supplemented by the state.
- **U.S. Saver's Credit and 401(k) Matches:** The U.S. offers a Saver's Tax Credit (up to $1,000) to low-income workers who contribute to retirement accounts, effectively a partial match, though non-refundable. Some have proposed converting it to a direct matching deposit for more impact.

Separately, many employers match 401(k) contributions (e.g., $0.50 per $1 up to 6% of pay), which is private sector driven but results in billions of dollars of extra wealth for employees each year. The U.S. government's short-lived **myRA** (2014–2017) provided a simple starter retirement account, and recent proposals advocate **"Automatic IRAs" with matching credits** to boost participation among those without employer plans.

- **Matched Homeownership Savings:** In **France**, the Plan Épargne Logement (PEL) is a housing savings plan where the government historically provided a savings bonus interest if you eventually used the funds for a home purchase, functioning as a de facto match. Many countries' affordable housing programs (like **IDA-like grants for down payments** or sweat-equity programs) effectively turn savings or labor into asset ownership with subsidies.

- **Universal "Capital Accounts" (Conceptual):** Some economists suggest creating **Universal Capital Accounts** for all citizens to deposit various asset-building transfers. For example, one proposal is a **"Capital Access Account"** for every citizen, automatically funded by default contributions (from payroll or even from sources like data dividends) and **progressively matched by government** 【0†✎**placeholder**】. The UK's short-lived **Lifetime ISA** (which gives a 25% government bonus on savings up to £4,000/year for first home or retirement) is a smaller-scale version of this idea, aligning public subsidies to encourage personal asset growth.

Monetizing Personal Data and Likeness Rights

As the digital economy expands, new approaches aim to give individuals **property-like rights over their personal data, images, and other intangible assets**, so that companies must compensate people for using them. While still emerging, these efforts could create **new income streams** for households:

- **Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Rights – Sports:** A landmark change occurred in U.S. college sports in 2021: the NCAA lifted its ban on student-athletes monetizing their name, image, and likeness. In the first year, college athletes earned an estimated **$917 million from NIL deals** (e.g. endorsements, licensing their image for video games, etc.) [28]. This policy shift effectively turned a previously locked asset (a person's athletic reputation and image) into an income source for thousands of young people. While top stars earn the most, even lesser-known athletes can now get local sponsorships – a form of broader capital for their personal "brand." Outside sports, **influencers** on YouTube or Instagram similarly earn money from their likeness/content, but the NIL rule change is unique in being a *policy-driven* expansion of publicity rights to a whole class of people.

- **Publicity and Personality Rights – Legal Protections:** Many jurisdictions recognize an individual's right of publicity or personality, which prevents unauthorized commercial use of one's name, face, or voice. Strengthening these rights can deter exploitation and ensure firms **license individuals' likenesses**. For example, several U.S. states (California, New York, etc.) have statutes that allow anyone – not just celebrities – to sue for damages if a business uses their image without consent (e.g., in advertising). In the EU, data protection laws and image rights require consent for using someone's identifiable likeness in many contexts. While for most people this doesn't translate to regular income, for a minority it does: *e.g.*, models, actors, and now even ordinary folks whose photos go viral can demand licensing fees. The rise of **deepfakes** and AI-generated media has prompted calls for even stronger control rights. For instance, a proposed law might require advertisers to obtain a **license to digitally re-create a person's face or voice**, potentially paying individuals or their estates. These measures ensure that if AI or companies profit from *your* identity, you are entitled to a share (or at least the ability to say no).

- **Data Dividends and Data Trusts:** Personal data (web browsing, purchase history, sensor data from wearables, etc.) is often called the "new oil," but individual raw data points are not very valuable in isolation. The value emerges when data is aggregated and analyzed at scale. To give people a cut of this value, some governments and startups are exploring **collective data monetization**:

- **Data Cooperatives:** These are organizations where individuals pool their data and negotiate its use. For example, **MIDATA.coop in Switzerland** and **Salus Coop in Spain** are health data cooperatives that let people donate or license their medical data for research on their own terms [29] . **Driver's Seat (US)** was a cooperative where gig drivers pooled driving data to sell insights to cities and improve their earnings [30] . By banding together, members increase their bargaining power – a data co-op can demand higher compensation or better privacy protections from data buyers than an individual could. While many data co-ops focus on social good (research, urban planning) rather than cash payouts, they lay the groundwork for **"data unions"** that could return monetary value to members.
- **Default Bargaining Agents:** An emerging idea is for governments to authorize unions or nonprofits to act as **agents on behalf of citizens to license data**. For example, a national **data trust** could negotiate with big tech companies for fair payment whenever citizen data is used for AI training or targeted advertising. Rather than micro-payments (fractions of a cent per user), the trust would collect a lump sum and distribute it periodically to members. This is analogous to how collective management organizations collect royalties for musicians (see next section). Though still nascent, California's Governor in 2019 floated the idea of a **"data dividend"** whereby tech companies would pay users for the data they collect – effectively a statewide negotiation for compensation from platforms like Facebook. No large-scale data dividend has launched yet, but the conversation continues as public awareness of data value grows.
- **Personal Data Stores with Revenue Sharing:** Some tech initiatives allow individuals to *own and sell* their data directly. For instance, browser apps like **Brave** let users opt into viewing ads in exchange for a cryptocurrency reward; other startups enable users to sell their anonymized browsing data or genomic data in marketplaces. These have had limited adoption, partly because the hassle and micropayment nature make it less appealing. The more promising route may be **collective solutions or government policy** that automatically funnels data-generated wealth back to citizens (similar to how Alaska funnels oil wealth). For example, if a government charges AI companies a fee for using the population's medical records or social media data (in aggregate), those fees could go into a **citizens' fund** that pays out a data dividend in *ordinary money* 【0†✎**placeholder**】 .

In summary, while monetizing personal data/likeness is not yet a major income source for most households, legal and institutional innovations are pushing in that direction. They seek to **expand what people own in the digital economy** – from one's face and voice to one's clicks and biometric data – and to ensure individuals or communities share in the profits derived from those assets, rather than being uncompensated suppliers of "free" raw material.

Collective IP and Royalty Systems for Creators (and a Future AI Levy)

Intellectual property regimes provide another lever for inclusive capital by enabling creators (and sometimes the public at large) to earn income from their creations or cultural assets:

- **Collective Royalties in Music and Media:** The creative arts have long used collective mechanisms to ensure even small contributors get paid:
- **Performing Rights Organizations:** In music, songwriters and composers rarely negotiate directly with each radio station or bar that plays their music. Instead, organizations like **ASCAP and BMI (USA)**, **PRS (UK)**, etc. **license music in bulk** and then distribute royalties. A cafe pays a blanket fee to ASCAP, which ASCAP then divvies up to thousands of artists based on usage data. This system means *every* artist – not just superstars – gets some income when their work is used commercially. Similar collective management exists for reproduction rights (mechanical royalties on CDs/streams) and for public performance of films, etc. These **collective rights organizations (CROs)** have ensured that many creators earn a modest but steady cash flow from their past works, essentially **turning intellectual labor into a capital-like passive income**.
- **Private Copying Levies:** Over 40 countries impose levies on blank media or devices to compensate content creators for private copying. For example, **Canada** charges a small levy on blank CDs and has considered extending it to iPods/MP3 players; **Germany, France, and others** levy fees on computer equipment, smartphones, or storage media. The revenue (hundreds of millions of dollars/euros annually in larger countries) is funneled to collective agencies which then **distribute the funds to authors, musicians, filmmakers, etc.** according to agreed formulas [31] [32]. In Canada, the private copy levy (on blank music media) has distributed over **100 million CAD** to rights-holders as of 2007 [33]. While this doesn't pay the general public, it is an example of *collectively monetizing an otherwise uncompensated use* and redirecting funds to a broad base of rights owners – often including many small artists who wouldn't have the ability to collect on their own.
- **Statutory Licenses and Mandatory Royalties:** In some cases, governments set up compulsory licensing with fixed fees – ensuring access to works for users and payment for creators. For instance, **U.S. copyright law** has a compulsory license for making cover songs (anyone can cover a song by paying a set royalty, currently 9.1¢ per copy) [34]. Similarly, **radio stations in the U.S. have a statutory rate they pay for song performance** (through PROs), and services like internet radio pay statutory royalties to labels and performers via SoundExchange. These mechanisms mean creators earn money whenever their work is used at scale, without blocking use (*pro-market but equitable*).

- **Public Lending Right (PLR):** Some countries (e.g. UK, Canada, Australia, much of Europe) have a PLR fund that pays authors when their books are lent out by public libraries. The government allocates funds which are distributed to authors based on how frequently their books are borrowed. This is another creative way that a *public good (free libraries)* is coupled with a reward to the creators – giving even midlist authors a small annual income for contributing to national culture.

- **Modernizing IP for Generative AI – Proposed Levies:** With AI models now training on billions of images, texts, and songs (often without explicit permission), there are calls to create a **compensatory mechanism for creators and the public**:

- **Training Data Royalties:** One idea is a **statutory "AI training levy"**: AI developers would pay a fee (or a percentage of revenue) into a collective fund for the use of large datasets that include copyrighted works or even human personal data. This could be administered by collecting societies and distributed to rightsholders whose works (or whose personal images/words) were used in training, perhaps based on audited usage in the AI's outputs. While not yet law, this concept is analogous to the music levy systems above. It would convert a diffuse harm ("AI copied my artwork/style") into a monetized claim – *turning uncompensated training usage into a new income stream* for creators at large. **Music industry precedents:** Already, platforms that use music pay blanket licenses – e.g. Spotify and YouTube have revenue-sharing deals. An AI equivalent might be a **universal license for datasets**.

- **Collective Licensing for Digital Platforms:** Beyond AI, many countries are experimenting with collective bargaining in the digital realm. Australia passed a law requiring Google/Facebook to negotiate payments to news organizations for using their content. In Europe, new rights make news snippets and images licensable when used by aggregators. These effectively create *inclusive income* for an entire sector (journalism) from tech platforms' revenue. Extending this approach, one could imagine **default data licensing** where, say, all citizens are regarded to have licensed certain anonymized personal data for tech innovation *in exchange for* an annual societal royalty (possibly paid into a public fund or used to finance public digital infrastructure).
- **"Citizens' Fund" from AI and Digital Economy Rents:** Tying together the above, experts propose that as AI and big data concentrate wealth in a few chokepoints (e.g., data center operators, cloud platforms, IP holders), governments should **harvest part of those rents via ordinary tools** – fees, levies, taxes – and **channel the proceeds into broad-based funds【0†✎placeholder】**. For example, a **spectrum auction** (for 5G wireless) yields billions; some of that could endow a national citizens' fund (as 5G is part of the digital commons). A **carbon tax or data use tax** could similarly feed a trust. The key idea is to use *"old economy" legal pipes – permits, taxes, royalties* – to capture *"new economy" value and share it*. We see hints of this in:
  - **Carbon Dividends:** Canada's federal **Climate Action Incentive** returns carbon tax revenue to households as quarterly checks. In 2024–25, a family of four in Ontario will receive about **C$976/year** (and up to C$1,800 in provinces with higher carbon fees) [35] . This ensures revenue from pricing carbon – essentially rent on the atmospheric commons – is given back equally, benefiting especially those with smaller carbon footprints (often lower-income households). Similarly, Switzerland redistributes a portion of its CO_2 levy to all residents via health insurance rebates.
  - **Urban Congestion and Resource Fees:** Some cities charge congestion fees or collect high parking revenues and then **earmark the funds for residents** (for example, by improving public transit or reducing local taxes). This indirectly raises disposable income. One can envision, say, a city imposing a fee on private commercial use of **municipal data or fiber network bandwidth** and using it to fund a dividend for residents or free WiFi – converting a digital rent into inclusive benefit.

In-Kind Benefits and Subsidy Reforms that Increase Household Income

Inclusive capital is not only about direct cash or assets; providing free or subsidized essential goods can **functionally increase household income** by cutting expenses:

- **Universal Healthcare and Education:** When a government funds healthcare or college for all, families save thousands of dollars, which can be seen as an *effective income boost*. For example, countries with free college (Germany, Nordic nations) or student grant systems enable young adults to start careers with little debt, translating into higher net worth over time compared to peers in high-tuition countries. **Cuba's free housing** (with nominal rents) and **Sri Lanka's free education and healthcare** are often cited as improving equity by removing major costs from household budgets, akin to an in-kind social dividend.

- **Food and Energy Subsidies (Reformed to Cash):** Some nations prefer subsidizing necessities (food, fuel) at below-market prices. While not "capital," it increases real income. However, blanket subsidies can be regressive and fiscally draining. A modern approach is to convert subsidies to targeted or universal cash transfers – as Iran did in 2010, removing cheap gasoline and instead giving every citizen ~$45/month [13]. Though inflation eroded some gains, poorer families benefited overall and had more choice in spending. Similarly, **Egypt** and **Jordan** have, in recent years, replaced some food subsidies with cash stipends to families. These are more **redistributive income supports** than asset-building, but they illustrate how *monetizing a public resource* (the government's budgetary capacity or commodity endowments) and handing it to citizens can raise household welfare.
- **Universal Basic Income (UBI) Trials:** While distinct from "capital" per se, UBI pilots deserve mention. Finland's 2017–2018 experiment paid unemployed individuals a basic income and found improvements in well-being. In **Namibia** and **India**, small-scale UBI trials in villages led to better nutrition and small business creation. **GiveDirectly's** ongoing UBI experiment in Kenya is providing a whole village with a basic stipend for 12+ years, testing long-term effects on poverty reduction. If funded by broad-based revenue (like a tax on robots or land), a UBI could be seen as every citizen getting a share of national output. The difference from a social wealth fund dividend is that UBI typically spends current income, whereas a fund dividend spends investment returns – but both aim to **delink basic income from having a formal job**. No country has a truly universal, unconditional basic income yet, but several (Mongolia, Alaska, Macau as noted) have come close via resource dividends. These experiments reinforce evidence that **putting even modest cash in people's hands has outsized social benefits**, and if financed by capturing economic rents, it can be done without distorting markets.

Conclusion: Multiple Levers, One Goal – Broadening Prosperity in a Post-Labor Economy

Across these examples, a common theme emerges: **expanding what people can own or enjoy, beyond labor income.** Whether it's shares of a sovereign wealth fund, dividends from community-owned assets, matched savings that build a personal nest egg, or stronger rights over one's data and creative works, each lever increases the share of economic output flowing to households in an equitable way. Crucially, these approaches *operate within market systems* – they use ordinary currency and legal frameworks, not speculative new tokens or central planning. They **harness existing institutions (trusts, co-ops, funds, IP laws)** to redistribute income in ways that *align incentives* and promote stability:

- Households gain financial security and **purchasing power in the national currency** they need for daily life – be it via dividends, reduced bills, or asset appreciation.
- Markets gain participants with a stake in capital and **residual claims on productivity** (e.g. as shareholders or co-op members), preserving incentives for innovation and efficient investment.
- Societies become more resilient and equal, as broad-based asset ownership **shrinks wealth gaps** and provides a buffer against job disruptions by technology.

From Alaska to Singapore, from Cherokee country to European co-determination, the evidence shows these ideas *work*. The Alaska Permanent Fund has operated for 40+ years, **reducing poverty and inequality** [3]; Singapore's housing scheme turned a nation of renters into owners within a generation [24]; employee-owned firms in the US are **more productive and survive longer**, benefiting workers and communities [26]. Even smaller programs, like IDA savings matches or tribal dividends, have transformed lives by enabling education, homeownership, and entrepreneurship.

As we face a future where AI and automation could concentrate wealth even further, scaling up these inclusive capital models will be critical. The playbook is already written in these diverse experiments. By **broadening capital ownership, reinvesting economic rents into public hands, and making saving/reinvestment effortless for citizens**, we can ensure that the next era of growth truly "lifts all boats." The right instinct – as the question suggests – is indeed to expand the capital bucket for households *in the money they actually use*. The tools to do so are at our disposal, from plain-old sovereign wealth funds to cutting-edge data trusts. Now it's a matter of political will to implement and integrate these levers for a more inclusive and prosperous world.

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