



**Co-operative Councils**  
Innovation Network

## **ENERGY**

South East London Community Energy working with Greenwich Council

# A co-operative way to generate, use and share energy

In 2014 a group of people living in South-East London came together with a common vision of a greener future. Their aim was to generate electricity that was not only renewable but also affordable and owned and controlled by the people who use it. In just three years, volunteers behind the South East London Community Energy co-operative (Selce) have made considerable strides towards making their vision a reality.

So far, Selce has raised £350,000 from community investors to install solar arrays on seven local primary schools. This creates a virtuous circle: partner schools benefit from cheaper electricity; community investors receive 4% annual interest; and Selce ploughs back any surplus into its pioneering projects to reduce fuel poverty.

Eradicating fuel poverty is at the heart of Selce's vision: we cannot move towards a sustainable future if some people are left behind. About 10 per cent of households in the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich are currently affected by fuel poverty. Selce has helped over 1,500 vulnerable people to avoid having to make the choice between heating and eating in the 4 years since it was formed.

Friendly "energy cafes" with a better understanding of how to reduce their bills and keep warm and well in winter. Training workshops have up-skilled over 400 frontline workers enabling them to identify fuel poverty to support their clients. Last year we teamed up with staff from a group of children's centres in Woolwich and Charlton (Greenwich) to enable parents to be energy advisors. So far, "Parent Champions" have helped 200 households make vital saving in energy bills and also to reduce carbon emissions. Thanks to a partnership with councils across SE London and RetrofitWorks (a cooperative of energy efficiency contractors), Selce are helping 80 people access grant funding for efficiency improvements including loft and cavity wall insulation and draught-proofing. Selce's Solar Roller is a portable solar powered sound system that folds neatly into a trailer. The Solar Roller not only provides clean, fume-free power for community



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events. It comes with Selce's 'Watts About You?' roadshow that enables Selce to have important conversations with the community about how energy is generated, used and shared

This year SELCE won Community Energy England's "Energy Saving" award. Judges were impressed by the range and innovation of our work and their commitment to continual reflection and improvement. Selce will continue to spread a bit of sunshine wherever they go.

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