Community Anchors: A Co-operative Recovery

End of Programme Report
15 January 2021

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Theory of Change

- Community Wealth Building in the UK has focused on policy-level change (e.g. procurement), and local authorities have only offered limited or no investment in co-operative development
- There's a misperception that policy changes will stimulate co-operative development
- 'Community readiness' is overestimated and fails to recognise the levels of investment needed in what we describe as 'democratic business skills, culture, and infrastructure'
- Community Wealth Building and co-operative development is currently passive and not targeted to the needs of particular and 'minoritised' communities

Theory of Change

- Co-operative development is almost exclusively focused on 'technical' support, which excludes those with low or no exposure to co-operatives
- There is an urgent need to invest in the 'pipeline' for co-operatives, and 'pre-technical' development activities can stimulate cultural awareness and interest in broader audiences
- A 'community anchor' model can support existing social service organisations to develop a co-operative development function
- 'Community anchors' can effectively use 'in-reach' engagement strategies unlike external bodies

Theory of Change

- Locally embedded anchors can also share knowledge and practices through culturally appropriate approaches
- 'Language justice' – the right to communicate in the language you feel most comfortable - impacts access to co-operatives
- For co-operative development to be effective in 'marginalised' communities, it should account for personal and group development, not only business support
- Even if we lack relevant and practical examples of UK co-operatives in BAME, ex-offenders, young adults, and disability, there is access to viable models in the international movement

Methodology
A mix of instruction and peer learning

- Co-production – multi-stakeholder approach to programme design
- Webinars – two-hour sessions with a course leader
- Study Circles – one-hour peer-to-peer sessions to reflect
- Mentoring – flexible one-to-one support
- Worksheets – learning templates to support participants to engage with the course content

Six week programme

2 November	Community education & co-operative development in marginalised communities	Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance
9 November	*Community organising & Food co-operatives*	Cooperation Town
16 November	*Worker co-operative development in immigrant communities*	Center for Family Life

23 November	*Co-operative Culture: Building Healthy Cultures*	Outlandish
30 November	*How Co-operatives Work: Legal and Funding Models*	Co-ops UK & Co-operative and Social Enterprise (Leicester)
7 December	*Graduation & Next Steps*	Stir to Action, Preston City Council, & Preston Co-op Development Network

Community Anchors: A Co-operative Recovery

Programme recruitment

Stir to Action worked in collaboration with the Preston Model BAME advisory group as the main programme referral partner:

- Councillor Nweeda Khan
- John Peter Wainwright
- Ishmail Karolia

"Thanks for all of your hard, productive, and successful work with many of the local BAME organisations. The programme you have led/ facilitated and the progress/outcomes you have achieved have far exceeded our expectations."

Cohort

- Preston Windrush Generation and Descendants UK
- Preston Black History Group
- BAPS Hindu Mandir
- Student Xpress
- Preston United Youth Development Programme
- Pukar Disability Centre
- Kreative (interpretation & translation) Productions
- Lancashire Syrian Resettlement Programme

Baseline Surveys
Co-production

To understand the starting positions and progress of our Community Anchors before and during the programme, we created simple baseline surveys.

46% None at all – but I am eager to learn
54% Limited - basic grasp of co-operatives

Baseline Surveys
Mid-programme

What is your understanding and confidence around the co-operative model?

0% I'm still unclear as to what a co-op actually is
44% I've got a basic understanding of co-ops
56% I've got a good grasp of the co-op model and could explain some of the benefits to my team or local community

Baseline Surveys
Mid-programme

What is your current interest and engagement with co-operatives?

22% I could imagine exploring the co-operative model for initiatives I am involved in, over the next 3-6 months

46% I could imagine being involved in a co-operative initiative in the next 3-6 months

32% I could imagine leading a co-operative initiative in the next 6-12 months

Baseline Surveys
End-of-programme

I would like to join any more future 'taster' sessions about co-operatives to continue my learning journey? **91%** Yes **9%** No

My understanding of co-operatives is sufficient for me to advance into project work in 2021? **91%** Yes **9%** No

I would be interested in joining an monthly meet-up with the Community Anchors from January to June 2021? **80%** Yes **20%** No

Baseline Surveys
End-of-programme

I'm interested in being part of a pilot project next year if there's funding to support my participation **100%** Yes **0%** No

I have an idea for a co-operative project that I'd like advice on? **90%** Yes **10%** No

Participant responses

"My plans for 2021 are for four or five of my young adults to get off the dole and be involved in setting up a co-operative enterprise." **Omar Khan, Preston United Youth Development**

"This programme has changed my perception of co-ops. I didn't know they could be led by immigrant women!" **Neetal Parekh, BAPS Hindi Mandir**

"I'm ready to get cracking with implementation." **Zul Hussain, Fishwick Rangers**

Outputs

Handbook. A printed handbook featuring nine pages of resources, including the six week programme, worksheets, a primer on co-operatives, a cohort contact page, and development pipeline tool, and a study visit guide. [Download here](#).

Monthly Meetups. Established partnership with UClan and an agreement for a member of their staff team (Alina Belousova) to host a monthly one-hour meetup for the 'community anchors' on the programme from January to June 2021. This meetup will support their further development, creating a peer network, project updates, funding opportunities, and contact with the wider co-operative sector in Preston.

Resource Translation. In January 2021, we commissioned two translation projects, with funding support from Co-operatives UK and the OSF Cooperatives project. Working with community anchors, we've translated a written and visual resource on co-operatives into Urdu and Gujarati to reach South Asian communities in Preston and Lancashire.

Pilots. After a successful funding bid to the Co-op Group, there is now funding to launch six food buying co-ops, with consultancy support from Cooperation Town, and funding for coordination by three Community Anchors from the programme. We are currently selecting from Expressions of Interest with an expected start date in March 2021.

Pipeline Development Tool. See next page.

Pipeline Development Tool

Even with ambitions to support co-operative development, it's difficult to know where to start.

Stir to Action's development tool shows the different stages, offering suggestions for the 'primary activities' that can support meaningful outcomes.

The following example is designed for the 'community anchors' in Preston.

Community Anchors
Co-op Development Pipeline

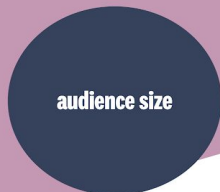**A practical tool for community organisations building a democratic economy**

STIR to ACTION

Preston City Council

Low **Commitment** High

AWARENESS	INTEREST	DECISION	ACTION	AFTERCARE
Baseline Survey	Case Studies	Business Support	Business Registration	Contact Support
Email Marketing	Start-up Guides	Feasibility Grants	Seed Investment	Workspace
Resource Translation	Public Events			
Taster Sessions	Regular Meetups	Study Circles	Pilots	Peer Networks
Primer Resources	Workshops	Further Training	Accelerators	Mentoring
Community Outreach	Study Visits			

audience size

Pre-technical **Technical**

Reflections

- Despite national lockdown, we had full retention of the 'frontline' organisations that started the programme
- Frontline organisations see the value of co-operative development as part of their core social services
- The 'community anchor' model and 'in-reach' strategies are far more effective than external bodies 'parachuting' into communities
- Policy changes are passive and will be unexploited if not supported by development programmes

Reflections

- Co-operative development is successful when local authorities recognise the importance of investing in awareness (stage one) and interest (stage two) activities, not just technical support
- This programme – *Community Anchors: A Co-operative Recovery* – is adaptable for other target audiences, such as ex-offenders and young adults.
- Co-operatives are intuitive to 'minoritised' communities
- Immigrant resettlement programmes are a really useful framework in which to plug-in co-operative development support

Reflections

- Stir to Action's 'development tool' offers consultancy opportunities to local authorities to create a delivery and fundraising strategy that ensures their investments are more likely to be effective in the long-term
- Finally, while local authorities should continue to change procurement strategies and public sector behaviour, it's vital they work in partnership with organisations that can offer democratic business experience

Budget

Stir to Action - Headline information

- **Contract value:** £15,000 inc VAT

- **Project time commitment:** 30 days

- **Day rate:** £500 inc VAT

Budget

Stir to Action - Activity Breakdown

- **Programme preparation:** 8 days
- **Programme delivery:** 10 days
- **Development and funding pathways**: 4 days
- **Resources:** 5 days
- **Evaluation & next steps:** 3 days

[Click here for full breakdown of budget and activities](.).

Budget

Council partner

- Engagement meetings with relevant officers to:

  – Introduce the objective of a 'cooperative recovery programme' for community anchors
  – Scope out the local landscape of community organisations
  – Agree where, within that landscape, to target the programme.

  2-3 days

Budget

Council partner

- Programme administration

  - Defining roles
  - Application pathways
  - Messaging / Framing
  - Co-design

  3 days

Budget
Council partner

- Programme participation

  - Join programme webinars as part of both staff training and engaging with local organisations

  2-3 days

Budget

Council partner

- Evaluation session and next steps

  - Partner evaluation of programme and participants
  - Planning session on next steps for community anchor development

  1 day

Contact

Stir to Action Programme manager

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