

# Seeds for Change Lancaster Co-operative Ltd

## Ethical Policy

We hold the core values of:

- Equality
- Freedom
- Solidarity
- Justice

### **We aim to enact these values by:**

1. Considering these values when deciding what work to do
2. Being a not-for-profit co-operative with equal pay and collective management
3. Recognising and challenging power dynamics and systemic oppression
4. Making training, facilitation and resources accessible to as many people as we can
5. Being accountable and open to feedback
6. Promoting co-operation and mutual aid in the wider world
7. Considering funders' ethical investment policies before applying for funding
8. Minimising our participation in systems of economic and ecological exploitation through our consumption

We don't always enact these values perfectly – it is an evolving process for us! Let us know if you have thoughts or suggestions on what we could do better.

# Implementation

## Considering these values when deciding what work we do

- Using our available resources and skills to support grassroots groups whose aims are in line with our values, ie. those campaigning for social and environmental justice
- Prioritising work that we believe will have the greatest impact towards these goals, as well as support for groups without funds or those affected by racial or class injustice
- As a minimum, not working with organisations that exist to generate private profit.

## Being a not-for-profit co-operative with equal pay and collective management

- Having a flat pay rate and flat management structure, and using consensus decision-making within our collective.
- Providing sustainable and decent livelihoods for our workers and affordable training for groups – rather than generating excessive profits for us or others.
- Paying people who do occasional freelance work for us by our own rate of pay plus benefits.
- Each taking responsibility for our own work, as well as offering each other support, for example through reviews and giving each other regular feedback. Communicating openly with each other about issues related to our work and decision making. Valuing the different skills and experience that each member brings.
- The co-op is in common ownership, meaning if it is wound up then any assets are passed on to a similar common ownership organisation, rather than being distributed amongst the members.
- As a workers' co-operative we also follow the international values and principles of co-operation.

## Recognising and challenging power dynamics and systemic oppression by

- Learning about the experiences and political analysis of people who are marginalised in ways that we are not. Reflecting on our own relationship to systemic oppression of different kinds, and sharing those experiences within the co-op. Using what we have learnt from the above to identify and work to 'unlearn' behaviours and ways of thinking of our own that replicate or fail to challenge systemic oppression.
- Recognising different ways that power and oppression play out in interactions

within the collective, between us and the people we work with, and within the groups we support. Looking for ways to shift or challenge those dynamics.

- Taking proactive steps to challenge systemic oppression in the movements that we are part of.
- Considering issues of systemic oppression in relation to the content of our trainings and resources. Looking for ways that the content we choose, or the way we present it, can challenge systemic oppression.
- Delivering our training and facilitation in ways that encourage participants to be empowered in their own learning, as well as in their activism.
- Redistributing any annual surplus we make above a 9 month reserves threshold to racial and class justice organisations.

### **Making training, facilitation and resources accessible to as many people as possible by**

- Offering free or subsidised workshops to campaign groups without funds.
- Producing free resources that are anti-copyright or published under a creative commons license.
- Inviting information from the participants in our workshops about their access requirements, and bearing these in mind when planning and delivering facilitation.
- Researching and implementing ways in which we can make our guides, trainings, facilitation and advice accessible to more people.

### **Being accountable and open to feedback by**

- Being open about our principles, skills and what we can offer.
- Asking for genuine feedback on our work (from within and beyond the collective) and taking time to reflect and make changes to how we work.
- Sticking to agreements, and where we are not able to stick to agreements, being honest about this.

### **Promoting co-operation and mutual aid in the wider world by**

- Doing work that supports groups and co-ops to function more effectively.
- Helping people build strong networks and communities.
- Supporting people to use their own power as individuals and collectively.
- Modelling and developing effective ways of non-hierarchical organising.
- Being part of the communities and movements we support.

## **Considering funders' ethical investment policies before applying for funding**

- Acknowledging that all wealth is amassed through exploitation, we will consider the current investments of funders in relation to our values
- As a minimum we will not accept money from funders with current investments in arms or fossil fuels.

## **Minimising our participation in systems of economic and environmental exploitation through our consumption by**

- Respecting workers' strikes and legitimate boycott movements.
- Where practical buying from small local suppliers, co-operatives or social enterprises, specialist alternative suppliers, or community enterprises in the global south in preference to corporate sources.
- Prioritising people who are affected by class or racial injustice for freelance work opportunities.
- Choosing services from providers with the highest ethical standards we can, (e.g. banking, phone and internet, insurance).
- Using Free / Open Source Software where practical.
- Using electricity from renewable sources wherever possible, and reducing energy use in our work environments.
- Using public transport wherever it provides a viable option, paying bike mileage to staff to encourage cycling, and not using air travel for work purposes.
- Re-using resources and sharing resources with other groups where possible. Using recycled, post consumer paper in the office and for our publicity materials. Sourcing second-hand office equipment such as furniture and computers. Recycling our waste through the most appropriate waste stream.
- Providing only vegan food, cleaning products etc. in our work environments, workshops and during other events we organise.

## **Our commitment**

The responsibility for enacting this policy lies with all members, staff and volunteers of Seeds for Change. We commit to implementing this policy to the best of our ability. Regular reviews and evaluation of the policy and improvements in practice will take place.

Policy adopted November 2017

Reviewed February 2019

Reviewed and revised July 2022