

# Seeds for Change Lancaster Co-operative Ltd

## Ethical Policy

Our ethics come from an ecological perspective as well as a human one. We hold these core values for human beings, other species and the ecosystems we are part of:

- Equality
- Freedom
- Solidarity
- Justice
- Empowerment

As a workers' co-operative we also follow the international values and principles of co-operation. (Link to these on website)

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

1. Considering these values when deciding what work to do
2. Promoting co-operation and mutual aid to the wider world
3. Working non-hierarchically and co-operatively within our collective
4. Recognising and addressing power dynamics in our everyday interactions
5. Being honest, accountable and open to feedback
6. Making training, facilitation and resources accessible to as many people as we can
7. Being not-for profit
8. Minimising our participation in systems of economic exploitation
9. Reducing our ecological footprint, the amount of resources we consume and pollution we create
10. Not exploiting other animals

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 to do**

- Supporting groups whose aims are in line with our values – for example, groups campaigning against injustice or building positive alternatives.
- Prioritising the groups where we think we can have the greatest impact towards these ideals
- As a minimum, we won't work with groups that have a significant negative impact, or that exist primarily to generate private profit.

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

- Doing work that supports co-ops and non-hierarchical collectives 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.

### **Working non-hierarchically and co-operatively within our collective by**

- Using consensus decision-making within our collective and adopting a flat management structure
- Each taking responsibility for our own work, as well as offering each other support, for example through reviews and giving each other regular feedback.
- Learning from each other and from people outside collective
- Communicating openly with each other about issues related to our work and decision making
- Offering a flat rate of pay
- Valuing the different skills and experience that each member brings

### **Recognising and addressing power dynamics in our everyday interactions by**

- Learning about the experiences of others in relation to structural inequality
- Reflecting on our own relationship to social power structures, and sharing those reflections within our own co-op

- Identifying and working to 'unlearn' behaviours of our own that replicate structural inequality
- Recognising different ways that power plays out in interactions within the collective, between us and the people we work with, and within the groups we support. Looking for ways to enable more people to have more power within those interactions

Delivering our training and facilitation in ways that encourage participants to be empowered in their own learning, as well as in their activism.

### **Being honest and accountable 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.

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

- Inviting information from the participants in our workshops about their access needs, 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.
- Producing resources that are anti-copyright or published under a creative commons license.

### **Being not-for profit through**

- Providing sustainable and decent livelihoods for our workers and affordable training/facilitation – rather than generating excessive profits for us/others.
- Paying ourselves what we need to live a low-impact lifestyle, rather than extracting the maximum amount of pay.
- Using surplus to support groups who can't afford to pay.
- Having an asset lock in our articles of association, meaning the co-operative is in common ownership. If the co-op is wound up, then any assets are passed on to a similar common ownership organisation, rather than being distributed amongst the members

## **Minimising our participation in systems of economic exploitation through**

- 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
- Respecting reputable boycott movements
- Buying food that is sustainably produced
- 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

## **Reducing our ecological footprint, the amount of resources we consume and pollution we create by**

- Re-using paper, ink cartridges and all other appropriate resources;
- Sharing resources where practicable with other groups;
- Using recycled, post consumer paper in office and for our publicity materials;
- Powering our activities with electricity from renewable sources wherever possible;
- Reducing energy use in our work environments;
- Paying bike mileage to staff to encourage cycling;
- Using public transport wherever it provides a viable option;
- Not using air travel;
- Using ecological cleaning products;
- Sourcing second-hand office equipment such as furniture and computers;
- Recycling our waste through the most appropriate waste stream.

## **Not exploiting other animals by**

- 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