



London Creative Labs (LCL)

www.londoncreativelabs.com

REconomy Project

Mission

Addressing unemployment & worklessness in disadvantaged communities through a community-powered approach to employment & enterprise that creates local jobs for local people.

Is there a link with Transition?

Yes, Transition Town Brixton (TTB). Mamading Ceesay was involved in the following TTB subgroups: Brixton Pound, and Business & Economy. Sofia was involved in the Community Shop. LCL has delivered training & support to TTB and its members. LCL itself was setup as an initiative entirely independently of TTB.

Your product or service – how much does it help improve resilience in your local community or elsewhere?

Many cities have neighbourhoods with high levels of unemployment & social exclusion. The Social Startup Labs programme is an ecosystem approach to enterprise & work creation using underused assets like vacant spaces & talents of the excluded to enable deghettoisation. The centrepiece of our programme, Social Startup Labs, are a series of intense workshops where a range of neighbourhood stakeholders match underused assets with un(der)met needs in order to discover enterprise opportunities. The resulting Social Startups can be incubated with training, coaching & seed funding over months to become trading enterprises creating value for paying customers, paid employment for the excluded & tax revenue for local government.

To empower the excluded to fully participate in the Labs, we offer Skills Camps. This is a course delivered over several weeks - using a peer to peer career coaching approach - to build confidence, improve interpersonal skills & discover transferable skills, while building supportive relationships with peers. Camps graduates are more active in the Labs & better engaged with the job market.

The above services are generally delivered as part of a programme on a commissioned basis. Previous participants have gone onto employment or into vocational training; demonstrated positive behaviour change; positive changes in how they thought & felt; had improvements in interpersonal relationships. Our services have changed peoples' lives & can transform neighbourhoods by instilling a culture of entrepreneurship. Brixton is our test-bed, prior to scaling and/or replication.

Employees

Core team is 3 people, 2 are currently volunteering on full time basis and 1 part time.

Are you in profit? If not, when do you anticipate being so? How long have you been trading?

Turnover in year ending 31st March 2012 was £159,200. It was almost entirely grant funding. We envision being commissioned to deliver services by local authorities and housing associations & eventually developing a social investment model for scaling/replicating on a sustainable basis. Our first trading activity was in 2010.

What is your company structure and why did you choose it?

Charitable company limited by guarantee. Being a registered charity was a condition of funding from JP Morgan. Despite being a charity, we've always intended to be a social business that puts purpose before profit. Based on work commissioned by local authorities & housing associations, we will operate a trading arm that will fund the charitable activities.

Since we are working to change the system as a whole, taking on functions that usually would be seen as the remit of government, some work will always be funded through charitable means & eventually social investment, and other work will be financed through delivering value to the market place. Thus our social enterprise will always operate in tandem as a charity with a for-profit arm.

What about financial sustainability? Are you trading or part-trading without money?

Initial funding of approximately £6000 was through a peerfund (pre-crowdfunding), then self-funded through debt. We were then commissioned to conduct various community consultations by Lambeth Council, the local strategic partnership Lambeth First and the London Community Foundation. We then raised nearly £160K from JP Morgan and the Mayor of London to deliver first major programme in 2012. We are currently working on strategy and fundraising and the business model is still in development.

Are you looking to build more common wealth & ownership and is priority your profit sharing and/or community benefits versus more traditional investor returns?

The emerging model has an emphasis on social investment in locally owned and operated enterprises for community benefit.

Localisation – are you sourcing, distributing and interacting locally?

We use local talent in many cases from the very community we are helping. We also make use of local resources that would otherwise be underused or wasted altogether.

Climate impacts – negative, beneficial or neutral?

Neutral. As things ramp up, creating local jobs for local people will be beneficial in terms of transport-related climate impacts.

Anything else you want to share with us?

Sofia Bustamante was named a London Leader by the London Sustainable Development Commission and won the People's Vote in Ogunte's Women's Social Leadership Awards 2013.

In 2012, we trained 67 mostly unemployed & disadvantaged local people to be career coaches in the community via Skills Camps. We also facilitated the instigation of 19 social startups locally via Social Startup Labs.

The logo for London Creative Labs features the text "LONDON CREATIVE LABS" in a white, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a horizontal, brush-stroke style graphic that is a vibrant orange-red color with a textured, slightly irregular edge, resembling a paint stroke or a torn piece of paper.

LONDON CREATIVE LABS