

# The CAN c.v.

**1989**

CAN is launched. The mission is “to assist the development of co-operatives and social enterprises”. Upon the recommendation of Essex Co-operative Development Agency, Essex County Council enter into a contract with CAN to provide **co-operative development services** in the county.

**1990**

The first **training** programme for people aiming to establish new enterprises is set up in collaboration with an adult community college. This collaborative approach is to be repeated regularly with colleges, business centres and technology centres in the future.

**1991**

CAN start a continuing theme assisting **development and piloting of new training** course -the (then) BTEC -accredited Co-operative Certificate of Business Administration.

**1992**

CAN launch programmes to enable **women** considering a return to work to examine their options and for women already in work to challenge the “glass ceiling” and enter management roles.

**1993**

CAN carries out its first projects working with **disabled people** to create employment opportunities - experience built upon in future as CAN becomes involved in setting up social firms.

**1994**

CAN are consultants in a successful worker buy-out of a failing manufacturing business, the beginning of a strand of CAN activity in work on **buyouts and succession** issues in business.

**1995**

The first **study identifying support needs and potential** for growth of a local social enterprise sector is carried out. A **funding bid** to the (then) dti brings forward funding for development of an innovative training programme addressing these needs.

**1996**

CAN and Suffolk County Council collaborate to launch SUCCESS (Suffolk Co-operative and Community Enterprise Support Service).

The launch **conference** is a sell-out. Within months a range of new co-operative and community enterprises are launched in the county.

**1997**

**Housing co-operatives** in Brighton commission a training package on **democratic management** of housing co-operatives. CAN is part of the team of six co-operatives which originates and pilots the “Training For Growth” programme to address the needs of small enterprises addressing **growth and change**.

**1998**

CAN carry out a **feasibility study** and business planning exercise on behalf of the a Regeneration Partnership that results in the establishment of a craft-workers co-operative. This marks the beginning of increasing CAN involvement with **regeneration projects**. CAN are consultants in the setting up of East Anglia Food Link. This triggers an increasing involvement in **rural issues** such as the setting up of **sustainable agriculture** projects and local food .

**1999**

Greenwich CDA become CAN’s one hundredth customer when CAN takes on delivery of a part of their **social enterprise start-up** project. CAN is part of a partnership from across Europe to develop a training and support resource for people establishing **social firms** (Social Enterprise Employment Development)..

**2000**

CAN develops the **Credit Union** variant of the Co-operative Certificate of Business Administration and pilots it as part of a successful project to establish a new Credit Union in Hertfordshire.

**2001**

On behalf of Social Firms UK, CAN facilitate the development of regional social firm support organisation Social Firms Eastern Region, and obtain its first project funding. CAN are business planning and management systems consultants to Greenwich Waterfront Credit Union, one of the first to achieve registration with the Financial Services Authority.

**2002**

CAN develops a training and support package to build the capacity of community groups to have “**funding ready**” financial

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administration and management. CAN launch the **Social Enterprise Start-Up Programme**, to empower social entrepreneurs to establish sustainable social enterprises.

## 2003

CAN are founder members of South-East Co-operative Support, a support organisation for co-operative development in the south-eastern region. The Social Enterprise Start-Up Programme is accredited by **Open College Network**.

## 2004

CAN completes a Feasibility Study into the provision of a Social Enterprise Business Incubator in West Howe, Bournemouth. CAN completes research and analysis to produce a **policy recommendation** for a Social Enterprise Support Delivery System for West of England Social Enterprise Group.

## 2005

**Mapping** exercises establish the extent and nature of the social economy in South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset. A **Development Needs Analysis** of the Bristol Co-operative Sector is carried out. Using this benchmark study, CAN analyses and outlines how an “excellent service” can be created to meet these needs. New training courses are developed and piloted to assist **Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisations** as they “change up” to assist their clients to become more enterprising, or establish social enterprises. Community Development Workers and local champions in Southampton receive **training to recognise potential for social enterprise development** and work with local groups through the early stages of the development process. Business Link and Co-operative Group commission CAN to deliver support to new-start co-operatives and social enterprises in Dorset.

## 2006

A 4-day variant of the Social Enterprise Start Up training programme is delivered to clients of **Business Link** in numerous locations across Dorset, Hampshire, and Isle of Wight. The acclaimed 4-day course is supplemented with **Master Classes** in Funding & Investment Acquisition and Social Accounting. As a member of South East Co-operative Support, CAN delivers management and governance training and support to Co-operatives in the South East

of England. The work is commissioned by Co-operatives South East and funded by South East England Development Agency and European Social Fund.

## 2007

Business advisers and call staff working for Business Links in the South East attend CAN's **Introduction to Social Enterprise** training. CAN and fellow worker co-operative Ealing Business Services collaborate to launch the **Trading Up Initiative** to provide a one-stop consultancy and training service for the Voluntary and Community Sector moving into Enterprising activity, and draws on the wealth of experience both organisations have in the field. CAN is engaged by Co-operatives UK to work on production of the Worker Co-operative **Code of Good Governance**.

## 2008

CAN provide development assistance to co-operatives across the South East through a project funded by the Co-operative Fund bringing a glowing report from the external assessor and helping to develop a model of high productivity, low cost service provision. CAN is amongst the founding membership of Regional Service Delivery organisations Co-operative Gateway East of England and South West Co-operative Support and of Regional representative networks Co-operatives London and Co-operatives East, the latter contracting CAN to provide their **Secretariat Services**. CAN develop a training programme to assist people with **moderate and severe learning difficulties** to participate in business governance and management decisions. **Governance Training** programmes in London receive standing ovations from paying participants. After a journey of nineteen years CAN reaches its target of generating the majority of its work and revenue from orders placed by individual co-operatives and social enterprises (rather than from delivery of funded projects) indicating that **when co-operatives and social enterprises can make their own choice they are likely to choose CAN**. CAN assists these enterprises with issues such as **negotiations** with landlords, obtaining **investment**, overhauling **policies and procedures**, developing their **HRD** function, new **marketing initiatives**, **mentoring** of key workers, financial and business **planning**, management **team building** and **problem solving**.