

# Co-operative Assistance Network Limited

## curriculum vitae

1989

CAN is launched. Its [mission](#) is: “**to assist the development of co-operatives and social enterprises**”. Essex County Council enter into a contract with CAN to provide Co-operative Development Services.

1990

Training for people aiming to establish new social enterprises is set up with an adult community college. This collaborative approach is repeated regularly with colleges, business and technology centres.

1991

CAN starts **developing and piloting new accredited training** - the Co-operative Certificate of Business Administration.

1992

CAN launches a programmes to enable women considering return to work to examine options or challenge the “glass ceiling”.

1993

CAN carries out its first project with disabled people to create employment opportunities - CAN begins work with [social firms](#).

1994

CAN provides consultancy to a **worker buy-out** of a manufacturing business, beginning CAN's [work on buyouts](#) and succession planning.

1995

A **study** identifies support needs and potential for growth of a local social enterprise sector. A **bid** to the (then) dti brings funding for development of innovative training addressing these.

1996

CAN and Suffolk County Council collaborate to launch SUCCESS (Suffolk Co-operative and Community Enterprise Support Service). A conference is sold out, within months new enterprises are launched.

1997

[Housing co-operatives](#) in Brighton commission a [training package](#) on democratic management of housing co-operatives. CAN is part of the team which originates and pilots the “**Training For Growth**” programme for small enterprises addressing growth and change management.

1998

CAN carries out a [feasibility study](#) and [business planning](#) exercise for a Regeneration Partnership for the establishment of a craft-workers co-operative. CAN are consultants in the set up of East Anglia Food Link, increasing involvement in rural issues and sustainable agriculture.

1999

[Greenwich CDA](#) becomes CAN's one hundredth customer as CAN takes on delivery of part of their social enterprise start-up project. CAN is part of a trans-European partnership to develop training for set up of 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

CAN provides **business planning** and management systems consultancy to Greenwich Credit Union, one of the first to achieve registration with the (then) FSA.

2002

CAN launches the **Social Enterprise Start-Up Programme**, accredited by the Open College Network (OCN), to empower social entrepreneurs to establish sustainable enterprises.

2003

CAN is founder member of the first consortium of co-operative development bodies in the UK.

2004

CAN carries out **research and analysis** to produce a policy recommendation for a Social Enterprise Support Delivery System for the West of England.

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. Community Development Workers and local champions in Southampton receive **Introduction to Social Enterprise Development** Training to enable them to recognise potential for social enterprise development and work with local groups through the early stages of the development process. Business Link commission CAN to deliver **support** to social enterprises in Dorset.

2006

A 4-day variant of the **Social Enterprise Start Up training programme** is delivered to clients across Dorset, Hampshire, and Isle of Wight, with Master Classes in **Funding & Investment Acquisition** and **Social Accounting**. With partner organisations, CAN delivers training and consultancy to social enterprises funded by South East England Development Agency and European Social Fund, re-funded for the following two years.

2007

CAN is engaged by **Co-operatives UK** to work on production of the **Worker Co-operative Code of Good Governance**. CAN provide **professional development training** piloting the OCN accredited Co-operative and **Social Enterprise Development Worker Training Programme**.

2008

CAN provides development assistance to co-operatives across the South East through a project funded by the Co-operative Group bringing a

glowing report from the external assessor and helping to develop a model of high productivity, low cost service provision. CAN develops a training programme to assist people with moderate and severe learning difficulties participate in business governance and management decisions. **Governance Training** programmes in London receive standing ovations from paying participants.

2009

CAN becomes a key component of the delivery system as the Co-operative Enterprise Hub is launched. CAN develop **Quality Systems and Quality Auditing** function for delivery [consortia](#).

2010

CAN moves into **Direct Provision of Services** such as [Company Secretary services](#), [accounting](#), [preparation of year end accounts](#), [personnel administration](#) and representation at Industrial Tribunal.

2011

CAN becomes an **Open Source** organisation and begins release of its tools to other Co-operative Development Bodies and to publish information papers through its web site.

2012

**Alternative Energy Co-operatives** benefit from CAN research into VAT issues, clawing back tens of thousands in taxes.

2013

CAN becomes a [Credit Union Development Body](#) providing a full range of support services to Credit Unions. Agreement with chartered accountants delivers **expert auditing service** for Co-operative Societies and Community Benefit Societies. **Financial projection tools** for [alternative energy co-operatives](#) are developed.

2014

CAN is contracted to **research the resources and links and author the advice and guidance content** of the new [Social Business Wales](#) web site.

2015

CAN begins delivery of [training](#) and [consultancy](#) services to enable social enterprises to **expand** and enhance their services and **source investment** within the framework of the Big Potential programme and for voluntary sector infrastructure organisations to develop within the framework of the Big Assist Programme. CAN is accepted as a **Technical Support Provider** for the [Community Economic Development Programme](#), undertakes a development project in Great Yarmouth and works with social enterprises utilising Big Potential funding to undertake **step-change** to become **funding-ready** including work on developing **social accounts to record social outputs and calculate and report social impact**.

2016

CAN is approved as **Preferred Providers** to Co-operatives UK for [The Hive Business Support Programme](#). CAN is appointed **Consultant**

**Organisation** to 3-year, £11m [Social Business Wales](#) support programme.

2017

CAN provides consultancy to a Local Authority on **employee involvement strategies**. CAN becomes an accredited provider of consultancy services under the **Bright Ideas Programme** working with start-up Community Businesses to develop plans, acquire funding and benefit from Community Asset Transfers of buildings and land. One particular client acquires £1.26M in grant finance.

2018

CAN becomes consultants to several **Community Led Housing** Initiatives and **Community Land Trusts** helping to develop innovative approaches to the provision of affordable homes.

CAN provides support to a cohort of social enterprises receiving funding from the **Reach Fund** to improve their **investment readiness**.

2019

CAN team member becomes accredited [Community Shares](#) Practitioner and CAN begins work supporting [Community Share Issues](#).

2020

CAN develops and delivers on-line versions of some of its [training programmes](#) to keep services flowing despite the pandemic.

2021

CAN was called in to support the development of a [community share](#) offer for Zion Community Art Space to purchase the building that it was leasing.

2022

CAN team member becomes accredited [Community Led Housing](#) Advisor.

CAN [launches](#) a **subscription-based method of buying** in the range of CAN services to provide security of supply and budgeting certainty for its client enterprises. Crowdfunding platform.

Fundsurfer [described](#) working with CAN on its first **community share offer**, raising funds for Stoke Croft Land Trust, as a “brilliant experience”.

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