

FOOD CO-OP STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT LEAD

- Salary: £35,844.90 FTE pro rata
- Contract: 2.5 days a week temporary contract for 1 year
- Location: Tower Hamlets (various), with occasional remote working.

Based at Wen's main Shoreditch office, with possibility of working from home. Likely to spend time at other sites
- Reporting to: Just FACT Programme Manager
- To apply: Please complete an [application form](#) and [equal opportunities form](#) and send to jobs@wen.org.uk
- Deadline: 12th June 2023
- Interviews: Week commencing 19th June 2023

About the role

We are looking for someone talented at fundraising and the strategic development of community projects, with a particular interest in cooperative models and sustainable food enterprise. This exciting piece of work aims to develop a long-term solution for Food Co-ops in Tower Hamlets, which are currently funded through the [Just Food and Climate Transition Programme \(Just FACT\)](#).

There are currently 3 Food Co-ops in Tower Hamlets at key community sites; St Hilda's East Community Centre, Limehouse Town Hall and the Teviot Centre. The Food Co-ops run weekly pop-up shops to supply healthy, affordable culturally appropriate food to local communities, including fresh and nutritious fruit and vegetables.

The Co-op is a place to shop, chat and meet. It is additionally a space where people can access other projects and services, including initiatives designed to improve wellbeing, increase social networks and tackle isolation. It provides work experience, as well as training and mentoring for volunteers - the majority of whom are local women.

With the worsening cost of living crisis, more and more people are needing access to affordable food. At the same time, we need to reduce the environmental impacts of our food system and build alternatives that meet the needs of local communities. Food Co-ops are a step towards more resilient community-led local food provision in the borough.

The 3 Food Co-ops are currently solely funded through Just FACT. St Hilda's Food Co-op funding runs until October 2023, Teviot Centre's until January 2024, and Limehouse Town Hall's until April 2024. A long-term funding plan is needed to maintain the projects beyond the Just FACT funding. There is a need to think about how they are sustained, so they can keep having the impact they want. This exciting new role will work closely and collaboratively with partner organisations to explore options for continuation and the long-term sustainability of the Food Co-ops. This will include both fundraising to enable continuation in the short term and exploring income generation alternatives to create a financially viable model in the longer term.

We particularly encourage applications from People of Colour, LGBTQI+ people, people with disabilities, and those who identify as working-class/ from low-income backgrounds or who have done so in the past. This is because these groups are currently underrepresented in Wen. Where two or more candidates are judged to be of equal merit, priority may be given to a candidate who belongs to a group less represented at Wen.

Wen is committed to anti-racism and inclusive intersectional feminism which acknowledges how race, class and sexuality intersect with gender in our day-to-day lives. Wen is open to all genders and is actively working towards being a trans inclusive organisation.

Responsibilities

Fundraising and income generation

- Develop and deliver income generation and a fundraising strategy that creates diverse streams of income for the Food Co-ops
- Writing funding bids to relevant Trusts and Foundations, to generate funds that could support the continuation of Food Co-ops
- Take a participatory approach to fundraising, actively seeking input from each organisation in the network and working closely with their fundraising teams
- Explore funding from major donors and corporates that are values aligned

Co-developing business models for Food Co-ops

- Work closely with partner organisations to co-develop a strategy to make Food Co-ops less reliant on grant funding and/or self-sustaining in the longer term

- Think creatively about where projects could reduce costs or increase profits - whilst maintaining a model that has food justice and sustainability at its heart
- Scope out the potential to develop Food Co-ops into sustainable food enterprises, exploring different options for subsidising costs. Look at best practice models elsewhere for inspiration and learning
- Identifying any capacity building needs and develop these through organising training, mentoring or skill shares. Bring in experts where needed, across any relevant themes such as enterprise, finance and supply chains
- Explore the development of cooperative memberships

Network building

- Build close relationships with the 3 partner organisations, adopting a generous and participatory leadership approach, involving people every step of the way.
- Convene, chair and minute regular Food Co-op Network meetings creating a space for peer support and collaborating on delivery
- Build effective relationships with other key stakeholders such as Sustain and the Tower Hamlets Food Partnership
- Participate in wider movement building where able, connecting with networks within and outside of the borough to share learnings
- Build and expand the network of Food Co-ops if opportunities to do so come up

Development of sustainable supply chains

- Understand the potential for creating more sustainable supply chains, building out the provision of local and/or agroecological fruit and veg
- Learn from other relevant programmes that are trying to make nature and climate friendly food available to people on low incomes such as [Bridging the Gap](#), bringing that knowledge and learning into the network
- Work with partners organisations to develop solutions for redistributing food surplus

Other tasks

- You may be required to undertake other tasks relevant to the role, the Just FACT programme or the wider organisation
- Additional fundraising support for the Just FACT programme team
- Adhere to Wen's policies and procedures
- Attend Wen team meetings, collaborate with other colleagues on projects where appropriate

Person specification

Essential Experience and Knowledge

- Proven track record of successful fundraising and income generation
- Experience developing strategic plans to meet current and future needs
- Experience of developing innovative approaches to achieving change and maximising impact
- Experience of working in a coalition or partnership, building and maintaining effective strong relationships
- Experience of building or supporting networks at a community or grassroots level
- Experience of successfully organising and facilitating meetings in a participatory way
- A self-starter, who is confident with independent working and managing own workload
- A passion for taking effective climate action in the food system
- A passion for building resilient community-led food enterprises
- An understanding of the concept of a Just Transition
- Ability to produce and present written reports
- Have solid IT skills and proficient use of Microsoft Office, especially Excel
- Have a good understanding of the importance of confidentiality

Desirable Experience and Knowledge

- Developing or running a sustainable social enterprise
- Business development experience
- Understanding of supply chains
- Experience securing funds from major donors and corporate funders
- Track record of gathering monitoring and evaluation data
- Knowledge of the Tower Hamlets area/community

About the recruitment process

To apply for this role please fill in the application form and the equal opportunities form. We will be marking your application based on how you fulfill the person specification. Make sure your statement answers the points on the person specification. You may want to use the points as

subheadings in your response. You should prioritise covering the points in the person specification thoroughly above the 'flow' of your writing.

Let us know if there's any reasonable adjustments you'd like us to make in the application and interview process in view of a disability or health issue. If you have any questions about the role or the application process, please email jobs@wen.org.uk We are happy to talk over the role with you in more detail, and having questions now will not count against you in the interview.

About Wen

Wen works both in East London and nationally to support women and their communities to take environmental action. We work across a wide range of environmental issues, including building resilient and sustainable local food systems, food growing, nature based wellbeing sessions in women's refuges, our Environmenstrual campaign and our work on a UK Feminist Green New Deal.

Wen has been supporting women and communities to grow their own food, and become advocates for environmental action in Tower Hamlets, for over ten years. Wen leads the Tower Hamlets Food Partnership, bringing organisations and individuals together to build a better food system for everyone in Tower Hamlets. Members include housing providers, food charities, small businesses, schools, social enterprises, community gardeners and the council. Wen strives to take an inclusive and intersectional approach to everything we do and are actively trying to improve this through our participatory leadership model, the types of projects and campaigns we choose to work on and movement building.

Wen provides the following benefits to all employees:

- 25 days annual leave and all bank holidays, pro rata
- Pension scheme, contributing 6% of salary.
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Flexible and hybrid working available.
- Access to training and development opportunities.

For more information about Wen:

- We are online: www.wen.org.uk
- Instagram: [@Wen_UK](https://www.instagram.com/Wen_UK)
- Twitter: [@Wen_UK](https://twitter.com/Wen_UK)
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/WEN.UK1988