



Solidarity Matters Pilot April – October 2019 Evaluation

JANUARY 2020

Executive Summary

“Large-scale problems do not require large-scale solutions; they require small-scale solutions within a large-scale framework.” *David Fleming, author of Lean Logic*

As the scale of the existential challenges we face grows, many are wondering how to spread and accelerate positive changes already underway at different levels within communities and movements all over the world. Often localised and contextualised in nature, is there a framework within which these many small-scale solutions can begin to impact at a systems level?

All change begins with people, and they are at the heart of what needs to spread and accelerate. By focusing on activists and change agents rather than the issues they are working on, we have successfully piloted an approach to fostering qualitatively different relationships that could enable solidarity and collaborations across difference.

Although this was a small pilot (involving 11 people from five continents over six months), we had the opportunity to work with participants to co-create and develop a second phase of iterations based on learning from the pilot. The feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences of those involved in the pilot pointed to key elements that seem important to enabling solidarity across difference:

- Hosting of informal but safe spaces, allowing open exploration of values and experience
- Diversity of participants, ensuring different experiences and perspectives are heard, valued and explored
- Awareness, analysis and practice around the role of power and privilege as an enabler and blocker of change
- Rooting the process of exploration in values rather than issues
- Creating space for being and emergence, balancing this with the more familiar mode of doing and task-focus
- Timetabling regular sessions sustained over a period of time with a small group able to break-out into smaller groups
- Creating the time for participants to apply learning and reflect on the experience individually and collectively

Crucially the pilot tested and established the opportunity offered by online hosting. Well supported with empathetic and experienced facilitators, the process demonstrated that it is possible to promote solidarity between people who never meet each other physically.

The pilot suggests that future Solidarity Matters programmes have a particular role to play in supporting the relational and conversational aspects of activists and change makers that is not always possible within a ‘doing’ environment. Taking this and other learnings into account phase 2 is underway further promoting solidarity between activists and change makers working in a range of settings.