



Participatory Funding Lead & Network Weaver

(1 Year Contract)

Job description

Introduction

Farming the Future is a collaboration that brings together funders, social movement builders and the UK's agroecological food and farming sector to realise an equitable and regenerative food system that benefits both people and the planet.

We pool funds, knowledge, and networks, while questioning conventional philanthropy. We are experimenting with ways to support the movement, including and beyond funding. All our work is informed by our core values of being participatory, collaborative, responsive, accountable and relational. Find out more about us here: www.farmingthefuture.uk.

The collaborative was established in 2019. The collective has been supported by 18 different donor partners since then and has 8 current funders. Since its inception, Farming the Future has:

- Funded 113 partnerships and collaborations across a diverse range of issues around farming practices, access to the land, pathways for new entrants, influencing policy, networks of supply, local food systems and food sovereignty, research and storytelling.
- Distributed over £3.15 million in grant funding
- Supported over 140 funded partners to collaborate
- Worked in partnership with 10 Ambassadors from the movement for agroecology in the UK, developing a model for devolved decision-making (we have 6 current Ambassadors)

Diversity, equity and inclusion

We are committed to social justice, including but not limited to racial justice, gender justice and disability justice. Building and fostering fairness, equity and inclusion is central to our mission for the future of the UK's food system. We want Farming the Future to represent the diversity of the UK communities we serve and to actively remove barriers to access and opportunity.

About the Role

You will be joining a small staff team (2 part-time including this role) alongside committed and engaged donor partners and Ambassadors from the agroecology movement, and active donor partners who participate in our circles. We have a clear mission and understanding of our role in the eco-system, strong governance and decision-making processes, and are in the processes of building funding for continuation to 2030.

You will work with the Director/Philanthropy Weaver who leads on our Ops and Steering Circles and manages our relationships with donor partner sand wider philanthropy. You will have roles in our Ops and Steering Circle. You will lead our Participatory Grant Making (Resourcing) Circle which includes members of the food and farming movement (our Ambassadors) and designs and delivers funding rounds. You will develop and nurture close relationships with Farming the Future's funded partners and weave relationships with the wider food and farming movement and philanthropy, foster increased partnership and collaboration amongst members of the movement, and put in place innovative programmes of support to help grow, strengthen and connect the networks and alliances seeking to transition the UK to agroecology.

Role Details

We are looking for a **Participatory Funding Lead & Network Weaver** to join our small, dedicated team to deliver participatory funding and weave together our network of partners.

Role Details

- **Salary:** £27,000 per annum (based on a £45k FTE starting salary)
- **Pension:** 5% employer contribution
- **Leave:** 23.5 days per annum (based on 30 days annual leave plus Bank holidays pro rata)
- **Hours:** Part-time, 22.5 hours (3 days) per week (flexible working hours)
- **Location:** Home-based (with some UK travel for meetings and events)
- **Equipment and expenses:** We will provide you with a laptop, and cover any expenses in line with our expenses policy.
- **Contract:** One-year contract via the A Team Foundation (may shift to a different fiscal host in 2027)
- **Prospects:** There is a strong possibility that this contract will extend to two or more years when line-of-sight funding is confirmed later this year.
- **Start date:** We are hoping to have someone in post before July.
- **Managed by:** Bonnie Hewson, Director/Philanthropy Weaver (as Ops and Steering Circle Lead)
- **Responsible for:** No line management responsibility, but leads Resourcing circle.

Responsibilities

Key responsibilities include:

1. Resource Management: Manage our participatory grant processes:

Lead participatory resourcing circle/s to co-design and distribute funds; assessing grant applications; and managing communications for funding opportunities.

- Facilitating participatory decision-making processes, reflection sessions and feedback processes in the resourcing circle/s (using sociocracy practices)
- Supporting the design of grant rounds (next design phase in Autumn 2026): advising and facilitating Ambassadors to decide how best to use the resources secured
- Launching the grant round in spring 2027 and managing the admin and holding space for participatory decision processes.
- Holding the grant admin relationship with SCN.
- Managing Airtable data and mailing lists related to funded partners.
- Updating 360 Giving, Agroecology Coalition Tool, Kumu Maps and website with results of grant rounds.
- Developing trust-based practices and processes.

2. Relationship Building: Nurture trust-based relationships with and between grantees:

Acting as the primary contact for 10–20 active funded partnerships; supporting funded partners through calls, and ensuring their needs are reflected in our programs.

- Responding to enquiries from funded partners in a supportive and timely fashion.
- Scheduling first-year learning calls with funded partners (2025 grants) over the summer to ensure they are supported, and capturing notes on Airtable.
- Following up with any closing grants to ensure stories are told about their work.
- Holding connection and learning calls with funded partners to share learning.
- Supporting the network to connect and collaborate in creative and proactive ways that respond to emerging needs, challenges or opportunities.

3. Network Weaving: Strengthen and connect the alliances within UK agroecology and philanthropy through targeted communication.

Facilitating connections between movement members (140 organisations we have previously funded); hosting online sessions; and sharing learning via blogs, reports, case studies and speaking engagements to communicate movement's needs within

philanthropy, writing up and sharing synthesised learning from funded partner calls, and internal reflection sessions, internally and externally – using blogs, reports, videos, voice notes as appropriate.

- Contribute to our Annual Report (Feb 2027), including sense making to help build an understanding of how and what we fund and why and what we have learned.
- Attending events and workshops to listen to the movement and share our approaches within philanthropy.
- Support colleagues to develop appropriate ways to bridge between the movement and philanthropy in more transparent and democratic ways e.g. through collaborative network mapping.
- Supporting colleagues with communications and storytelling in ways that help illustrate collective impact, ripple effects and make sense of complexity for different audiences.

4. Collaborative working: Work in a collaborative way as part of a collective.

Working closely with colleagues to support our operations, strategic development and communications.

- Upskilling in sociocracy facilitation
- Attending and contributing to circles, including the Ops and Steering Circle, supporting us to operate effectively and develop strategically.
- Facilitating and leading the Resourcing circle/s
- Taking part in Working Groups as needed, e.g. JEDI working group.
- Leading on Ambassador recruitment and induction.
- Supporting with Donor Partner induction as needed.
- Supporting with providing info for funding applications as needed.
- Managing and sharing data and information internally and externally in a diligent and timely fashion.
- Contributing info to the weekly update email.
- Using our tools and systems, including Airtable, Dropbox and Google Drive, Canva, Wix, Loomio, Kumu and Mural.
- Attending events and presenting at workshops about our approach.
- Helping to organise in-person meet-ups of the collective (annual retreat in the summer, and winter feast)
- Supporting with the operational transition of staff hosting to Social Change Nest in January 2027 (once the decision to continue beyond 2027 is made by the collective)

About You

We are looking for a self-motivated collaborator, who is passionate about a socially and economically just transition in the food and farming sector (including agroecology, food sovereignty and land justice).

You should:

- have some experience of **participatory resourcing processes**:
 - be comfortable with managing a budget;
 - experience of managing multiple grant relationships and responsibilities;
 - be interested in/ have experience of ways to resource networks that reduce competition e.g. participatory budgeting, support funds, flow funds;
 - have experience of developing grant+ and capacity building programmes.
- have **familiarity with the food and farming movement** we are part of:
 - existing relationships and/or experience of working within the UK food and farming sector;
 - experience of working within a network, alliance, civil society org or NGO.
 - passionate about a socially and economically just transition in the food and farming sector.
- have strong **facilitation and interpersonal skills**:
 - experience of managing multi-stakeholder relationships;
 - experience in sociocracy or consent-based decision-making will be valuable;
 - experience of designing participatory processes that engage people and where their perspectives can help shape the final result;
 - happy to coordinate decision making rather than leading it;
 - be comfortable taking different roles at different times (advisor, facilitator, decision maker, collaborator, catalyst, enabler);
 - have a high degree of emotional intelligence;
 - build relationships quickly based on integrity and trust.
- have strong **network weaving skills**:
 - be a natural connector of organisations to each other to help build fields and networks;
 - confident in designing and holding in person and online events that create genuine connection;
 - be excited to explore ways to communicate knowledge and learning democratically;
 - willing to explore, create and energise online networks to support movement connection.

- be a **confident and adaptable communicator**:
 - cognisant of the need to communicate differently to different stakeholders;
 - enjoy writing blogs and stories to share learning with different audiences (on our website and shared through LinkedIn and elsewhere);
 - comfortable with uncertainty and complex systems;
 - the capacity to use frameworks to help sense of this to draw out learnings;
 - analytical skills: able to take large amounts of information and highlight key takeaways, simplify complex information and tell impactful stories.

- excellent **collaborative team working skills**:
 - confident and self-motivated;
 - strong organisational skills with the ability to prioritise;
 - able to attend sector events (c. 1-2/month);
 - be comfortable using our systems and tools (e.g. Airtable, Canva, Wix, Kumu.io, Loomio etc);
 - can work independently and remotely with mutual accountability;
 - enjoy working collaboratively in a small supportive team;
 - some experience of working in a non-hierarchical organisation would be of benefit.

How to apply

Please send your CV and a covering letter (of no more than two sides of A4) that explains how your experience, knowledge and skills fulfil the requirements of the role to info@farmingthefuture.uk by **midnight on Sunday 22nd March**.

Please note that all applicants must be based in and hold the right to live and work in the UK to be eligible for this role.

Interviews

The interviews will take place online. Please let us know if you have any access requirements or require any reasonable adjustments. We can use Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet.

Interviews will be held **across the dates 16th, 17th, 20th, 21st, 22nd April with a small interview panel**. If you are invited to interview, we will contact you by ***the end of the working day on Thu 2nd April*** to arrange a mutually convenient time. Please let us know when you apply if any of the above dates will not be possible for you. We will send you questions, the names of your interviewers and a short task to prepare in advance if you are invited to interview.

A second round of interviews may be held in the w/c 27th April or w/c 4th May if necessary. We will provide you with feedback within two weeks of the interview and aim to make an offer w/c 11th May.

If your application is not successful and you are not invited to interview, we will endeavour to inform you as soon as possible (c 2nd April). As we are a small team, we will not be able to provide individual feedback to applicants who we do not invite for interview but you should receive an automatic response from our email to confirm receipt of your application – if you do not receive this please do follow up to ensure we have received it.

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