

CO-OP FOUNDATION IMPACT REPORT 2025



Foundation





CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM LAVANYA

Page 4

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Page 6

OUR CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO FUNDING

Page 8

FUNDING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Page 10

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH CO-OP LIVE

Page 13

OUR CAMPAIGN WORK

Page 16

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Page 5

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Page 7

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ROMANO LAV

Page 9

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: JESS, A YOUNG GAMECHANGER

Page 12

SHIFTING POWER TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Page 14

MEET OUR CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Page 17



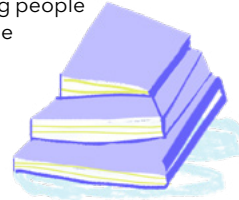
A MESSAGE FROM LAVANYA

“ AS A MEMBER OF THE FUTURE COMMUNITIES COLLECTIVE, I WORK ALONGSIDE CO-OP FOUNDATION TO SHAPE THEIR GRANT MAKING.

Funding decisions are almost always made by people with no first-hand experience of the issues they are deciding on. Young people know the issues which affect them best, yet we are rarely consulted, let alone making the decisions.

In 2025, Co-op Foundation put us in the driving seat for the second round of its Future Communities Fund. Along with handing decision-making to us, the Foundation stood with us and guided us where we needed their expertise, which supported us to exercise that responsibility confidently. We designed every aspect of the fund from the theory of change to monitoring and evaluation, and absolutely everything in between.

A personal highlight was interviewing organisations as the genuine, passionate conversations I got to have with them were a beacon of hope and the reversed power dynamic was empowering. I have developed collaborative problem solving, decision-making and most importantly prioritisation skills. As someone pursuing a career in education planning in emergencies, this experience showed me what it truly means to shift power to young people and how it can be done with grace.



Lavanya Manobharath
Member of the Future
Communities Collective



Nick Crofts
CEO, Co-op Foundation

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

**“ AS CO-OP’S CHARITY, WE’RE PROUD
TO BRING OUR CO-OPERATIVE VALUES
TO EVERYTHING WE DO.**



We know it’s tough out there for young people right now, but we’ve also seen the incredible creativity and determination young people bring when supported to make a difference in their communities.

It’s our mission to deliver funding and campaigns with and for young people. In 2025, we did just that.

With unrestricted funding, we supported organisations that are helping young people take the lead and tackle the issues that are important to them.

We funded 66 Young Gamechangers aged 10-25 who are working across the UK to make change happen in their communities.

We launched the second round of our Future Communities Fund, with our

Future Communities Collective leading on the design of the fund and making the funding decisions.

We launched our new campaign work, partnering with Alliance for Youth Justice and Transform Justice to end the unnecessary imprisonment of children.

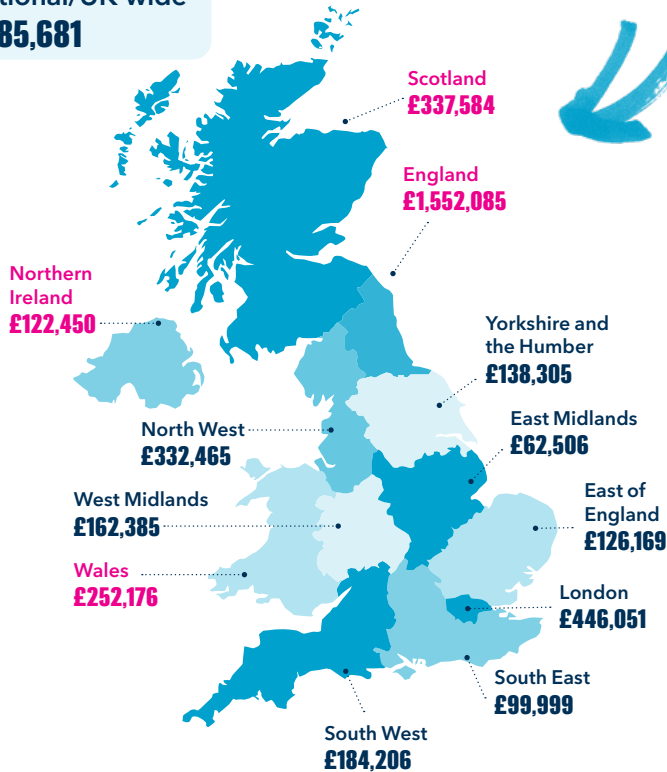
Our value as a funder is in the relationships we build. We collaborate and share learning with other funders, leading by example and encouraging others to question the status quo.

We’re proud to mobilise change in communities on issues that Co-op members care about. Together we’re stronger. Let’s build communities where everyone can thrive.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

We funded partners working across the UK:

National/UK-wide
£285,681



136

In 2025, we supported **136 partners** with **£2,765,138** of funding.

£1.9M

We supported our partners with **£1,873,160** of unrestricted funding.

£3M

We participated in collaborations with other funders, contributing **£487,223** to a total funding value of almost **£3 million**.

Note to reader: We provide grants directly and work with delivery partners to provide onward grant making. The map above shows the funding paid out to grantees directly by us and indirectly through our delivery partners. The figures above do not include support and delivery costs paid to our delivery partners in 2025.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Our 2022-27 strategy was shaped by young people's vision for their future communities. In 2025, we funded organisations and young people working across our four strategic priorities:

34%

of our funding supported **diverse, equitable and inclusive communities.**

65%

of our funding supported **youth activism and shared power.**

13%

of our funding supported **sustainable communities.**

14%

of our funding supported **safer communities.**

As Co-op's charity, we fund partners who are delivering change on issues that Co-op members care about. In 2025, our funding aligned with Co-op's Social Value strategy:

13%

of our funding supported access to a sustainable future.

36%

of our funding supported access to peace of mind and wellbeing.

53%

of our funding supported access to opportunity.

Note to reader: Many of our grants contribute to more than one strategic priority or Social Value outcome. This analysis captures the cross-cutting nature of our funding, showing how projects often deliver benefits across multiple priorities.

OUR CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO FUNDING

For us, how we fund is just as important as what we fund. The young people and organisations we fund know their communities best and how to address the challenges they face. We listen, learn and support them in open and trusting partnerships. We provide flexible funding, so our partners have the freedom to adapt to changing needs.



It's been very much like we've been trusted to go with the needs of the young people that we're supporting and the community that we're embedded in and know best."

Funded partner

Where possible, we provide multi-year unrestricted funding. Our funded partners tell us how transformational this type of funding is for organisations and the young people they work with.



Having a pot of unrestricted money available means that when a youth voice group comes up with an idea, we can respond to it. It means that we can work at the pace of young people, follow their aspirations and validate their choices."

Funded partner



£1.9M

In 2025, we supported our partners with **£1,873,160** of unrestricted funding.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ROMANO LAV

Romano Lav are a Roma community organisation and charity based in Govanhill, Glasgow. They are steered and shaped by Roma young people, who identify the needs of their community and lead on decision-making to provide solutions. Through the first round of our Future Communities Fund, we awarded a five-year unrestricted grant of **£97,500** to support Romano Lav to develop their youth leadership opportunities.




“

Multi-year unrestricted funding is like gold dust and it's just so useful, especially for small staffed, grassroots organisations that are responding in real time to real-world situations.”

Toni Bruce, Project Coordinator at Romano Lav



FUNDING YOUTH LEADERSHIP



Young people have the ideas, creativity and determination to help tackle the issues they face. We fund young people and youth-led organisations across the UK who are leading change in their communities.



62

In 2025, we funded **62** youth-led organisations with a total of **£927,290**

38

We funded **38** individual young people with a total of **£380,144**

OUR FUNDS SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUNG GAMECHANGERS FUND

£1,183,707

The Young Gamechangers Fund is a £4.5 million partnership fund with the #iwill fund, Co-op and Co-op Live that supports young activists, campaigners and social entrepreneurs aged 10-25 across the UK. In 2025, we funded **66** Young Gamechangers - **ten** individual young people and **56** youth-led organisations.

FUNDING FUTURES PROGRAMME

£258,890

The Funding Futures Programme is joint funded with UnLtd, who also deliver the fund. It supports 16-30 year olds with great ideas for solutions to tackle financial exclusion in their communities. In 2025, we funded **25** young social entrepreneurs.

ROOTS & ROUTES FUND

£80,000

The Roots & Routes Fund is a collaborative fund between Co-op Foundation, Blagrove Trust, Energy Saving Trust Foundation, OVO Foundation and Impatience Earth. In 2025, a pilot of the fund supported **three** young changemakers and **six** youth-led organisations based in England working to improve climate justice. Following the pilot, we plan to scale this across the UK.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: JESS, FOUNDER OF THE SHIFT

Jess is founder of her project The Shift and was awarded £19,230 through the Young Gamechangers Fund. The project puts students' voices at the forefront of the conversation on tackling sexual violence on university campuses. Right now, Jess is leading new research in partnership with the University of Manchester Students' Union and the Resist Rape Culture Society to hear directly from students and lobby the university for change.

“

It's all well and good wanting to make change but if that change is designed by someone who's 10, 20, 30 years out of university they have no idea the reality that young people are facing right now. That's why my project focuses on co-creation, working directly with students to hear their voices and working with them throughout the whole project to make sure that what we're fighting for reflects their reality.”

Jess Freitas, 25, founder of The Shift



EVERY YEAR CO-OP LIVE DONATES £1 MILLION TO SUPPORT OUR WORK



We'd like to say a big thank you to Co-op Live! We're proud to be the venue's official charity partner and of what we achieved together in 2025. The annual **£1 million donation** is part of Co-op Live's long-term commitment to using live entertainment as a force for good. As a venue built on values, Co-op Live is committed to ensuring the venue delivers social impact as well as world-class entertainment. In 2025, we showed what 'Gigs that Give Back' can achieve - with Co-op Live's support **we funded 66 Young Gamechangers across the UK.**



The venue expanded its commitment to supporting our Young Gamechangers through using mushrooms grown by **FungALL** - one of our Young Gamechangers - on special pizzas served at the Co-op Kitchen during Billie Eilish's run of shows last July.

This initiative brought together young talent, sustainable food innovation and live music under one roof.



SHIFTING POWER TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth voice is at the heart of our work. We believe that young people should not only have a seat at the table but should hold power in the decisions that impact their future. That's why we set up our [Future Communities Collective](#), a group of young people who work alongside us to shape and guide our work.

[Watch our short film](#), co-created with the members of the Collective.



WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE

In 2025, we took our work with young people a step further. The Future Communities Collective led on the design of the second round of our Future Communities Fund and made the decisions on which organisations to support. The **£1.75m** fund is supporting organisations that are helping young people with experience of the justice system to reconnect with their communities. The Future Communities Collective worked alongside young people from Leaders Unlocked, whose lived experience of the justice system shaped the development of this fund.



Working with young people is invigorating, their diverse views and different perspectives bring renewed passion and energy to any grant-making activity. It may feel intimidating at the start, but I can wholeheartedly say it's the most rewarding way of working."

Louise Snelders,
Head of Funding and Partnerships
at Co-op Foundation

“

Being a part of the Future Communities Collective has given me the opportunity to break into the grant-making sector. Our work isn't tokenistic and I feel like not only a collaborator but a shaper and changemaker. The Collective has elevated my voice as a neurodiverse person, allowed me to make life-long friends and spend every meeting learning and growing.”

Phoebe Teasdale, member of the Future Communities Collective



OUR CAMPAIGN WORK

Our campaign work helps break down the barriers that prevent us from building fairer and safer communities, strengthens our funding programmes and drives long-lasting systemic change.

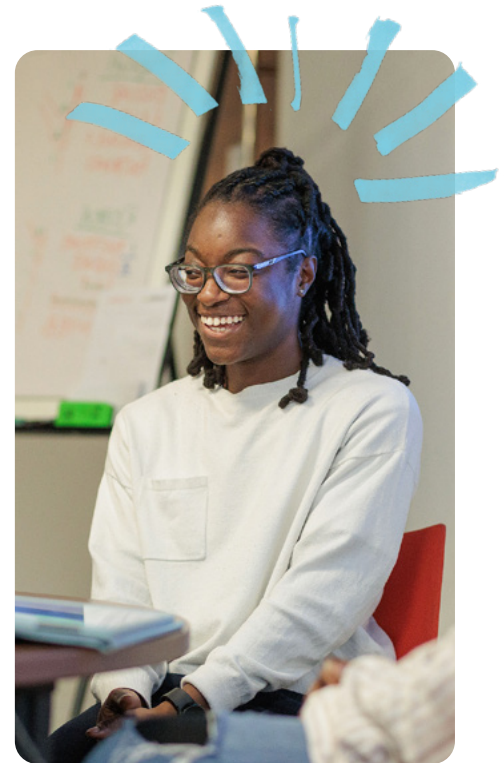
This year, we launched our new campaign focus: **ending the unnecessary imprisonment of children.**

We spent months listening to young people who have been in contact with the youth justice system and organisations that have supported them. We looked for ways we could add value to work already being delivered to reform youth justice.

Custody should only be used as a last resort, but our conversations showed that in England and Wales, this continues not to be the case. As a result, vulnerable children are needlessly exposed to environments that are unstable, unsafe and harmful. Custodial settings are preventing us from creating safe communities where every child can truly thrive. We wanted to do something to change that.

That's why over the next three years we are partnering with Alliance for Youth Justice and Transform Justice to call for an end to the unnecessary imprisonment of children.

Our campaign efforts align with and enhance work already being delivered across Co-op to create safer communities for our colleagues and member owners, particularly the [Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities campaign](#).



MEET OUR CAMPAIGN PARTNERS



TRANSFORM JUSTICE

Transform Justice's vision is a fair, open and compassionate justice system. They look towards a future in which there is less crime and fewer people come into contact with the justice system. They believe that evidence about what works to reduce crime and prevent reoffending should be at the heart of policy decisions and embedded in practice by those working in the criminal justice sector.

We are working with Transform Justice to amplify their efforts in calling for an end to unnecessary use of remand for children.



ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

Alliance for Youth Justice brings together over 80 organisations, advocating for and with children to drive positive change in youth justice in England and Wales.

Their approach is underpinned by social justice, children's rights and a focus on positive long-term outcomes that enable children to reach their full potential.

We are working with Alliance for Youth Justice to build on their work to ensure custody is genuinely used as a last resort for children.





Dominic Kendal-Ward
Co-op Secretary and
General Counsel

In 2025, Co-op Foundation once again showed what true co-operation looks like, championing youth voices and backing the bold ideas that are helping to make communities fairer, safer and more sustainable.

I'm incredibly proud that as Co-op's charity, the Foundation is supporting young people and organisations who are driving positive change in our communities, helping us to add value for our member owners every day.

Together, we're building communities fit for the future, with young people leading the way."



GET IN TOUCH

 www.coopfoundation.org.uk

 Co-op Foundation

 [coop_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/coop_foundation)



Foundation