

# Seeding our Future:



## Resilience and wisdom to stay happy in the years ahead

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. **INTRODUCTION:** The present is already so uncertain and demanding that most of us don't want to consider the future. But surely the pressures and changes we face now are likely to continue, and increase? The aim of the Seeding our Future project is to evolve and share ways that individuals, communities and public service providers in the UK can grow their resilience skills and wisdom to thrive and adapt to meet future pressures positively. A distinctive aspect of our approach is using time in Nature as a catalyst, helping people to open to new ideas and learn from the resilience of ecosystems.
2. **BACKGROUND:** Seeding our Future (SOF) is a non-profit initiative, started in 2017. The founder and main funder is Alan Heeks, a social entrepreneur and writer (see [www.alanheeks.com](http://www.alanheeks.com)). We are collaborating informally with Westminster Centre for Resilience, Hazel Hill Trust and other organisations. Alan has been exploring resilience for many years: he has led numerous workshops on this theme, and set up Hazel Hill Wood, a 70-acre conservation woodland and residential centre showing how to learn resilience from natural ecosystems (see [www.hazelhill.org.uk](http://www.hazelhill.org.uk)).
3. **PROJECT AIMS:** the overall aims can be summed up in three phases:
  - a. **Future Scanning:** Gather research on the global and UK outlook to the year 2050, to understand both challenging and positive trends likely to impact the UK in the next 10-15 years. This phase is largely complete.
  - b. **Pilot Test and Gather Knowhow:** We are focusing on two project areas, described below. For each of these, we are working with partner organisations to pilot test approaches, assess the benefits, and explore how best to share this with client groups. This is the current stage of the project.
  - c. **Propagation:** By late 2019 we hope to have validated material and processes which we aim to share as widely as possible via partner organisations and our own website. We will make our material available free of charge, and are currently seeking rollout partners.
4. **PILOT PROGRAMMES:** During 2018 and 2019 we are running and evaluating pilot events for two projects, aiming to have proof of concept leading to rollout during 2020:
  - A. **Front-Line Futures:** The capacity of front-line public services is crucial to everyone's wellbeing: these include the NHS, local authority functions, and parts of the voluntary sector. Currently we

are seeing a severe upturn in burnout and staff turnover in many areas, alongside rising demand and shrinking resources.

In 2018-19 we are running several pilot programmes, including residential workshops at Hazel Hill Wood on resilience for health professionals such as hospital doctors, GP's, mental health professionals and managers, led by a joint team from Hazel Hill Trust and Westminster Centre for Resilience. Initial evaluation has been very positive.

For more information on programmes and progress, see

<http://www.hazelhill.org.uk/woodland-resilience-immersions/>

**B. Future Conversations:** Research shows that most people prefer avoidance and denial to engaging with the future outlook. The aim of this project is to offer knowhow and facilitation to help members and organisers in disadvantaged communities to explore the upsides and downsides of the next 10-20 years, and raise their skills and confidence to enjoy the years ahead, drawing on natural resilience, deep ecology and other methods. The format is a series of facilitated conversations, covering individual/family issues, global concerns especially climate change, and community needs. We have started pilot programmes of 6-8 sessions in four locations: two in London, one in East Midlands, one near Glasgow. These should be completed by July 2019. For more info, see website below.

**5. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:** Partners are a central element of our strategy for this project, and we welcome approaches from other potential partner organisations. Those already involved include:

- **Westminster Centre for Resilience:** A leading expert in resilience research and training for public and private sectors, and strengths in evaluation of such work: part of Westminster University, London.
- **Hazel Hill Trust:** Alan Heeks is Chair of this registered charity which runs Hazel Hill Wood, a 70-acre conservation woodland and education centre near Salisbury, which Alan also founded, and which has proved a valuable setting for resilience programmes.
- **Schumacher Institute:** This non-profit think tank and research network headquartered in Bristol is our lead partner, with many years' experience in exploring futures issues.
- **Hawkwood College: Centre for Future Thinking:** Are hosting an open workshop led by Seeding our Future, October 15-16 2018, with Alan and others from SOF team.
- **Community Co Labs:** an international network of organisers and facilitators working with community regeneration projects.

**6. CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you are interested in help, partnership, or staying informed, contact Alan Heeks: [data@workingvision.com](mailto:data@workingvision.com) or 07976 602787

[www.futuresscanning.org](http://www.futuresscanning.org)