

Transition Regional Networks Guide

Working together regionally to reimagine and rebuild our world

By Transition Network team

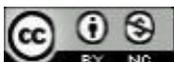


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Introduction

Transition has taken off all over the world in many different communities with different needs and cultural environments. In some of these places, Transition groups have got together to form regional hubs to coordinate across communities, in order to share, support and imagine together.

This guide is designed to show how you can benefit from being part of a regional network and introduce a great workshop that you can run with Transitioners nearby to develop a regional network in your area. This does not have to be limited to Transition groups; it can be run with any groups who have shared or related aims and objectives.



This guide is based on the great stuff that Transitioners have been doing all around the world as well as learnings from eleven workshops held in 2016 and 2017 across England in which 146 people from 84 Transition groups came together.

The workshop was based on the inspiring tools and techniques that the London and the South East groups used to develop a network that would suit their needs and resources. Over twelve months they explored what their group had energy for regionally, what they saw as being the function of the network, and how they could develop this over time.

Research:

Alongside the workshops, we (Transition Network) were really interested in researching how Transition could be more effective and impactful through people coming together at a regional level. These workshops provided a good opportunity to explore a theory of change called Strategic Niche Management, which had inspired us and which could potentially point towards new ways of helping Transition to grow and have more impact. We were very aware that many Transition groups are already stretched to the limit and that new developments should not add extra stress, but ideally provide new opportunities and support. We also wanted to share what we learned and you will find the results of this research throughout the guide.

Strategic Niche Management:

We decided to look at the theory of Strategic Niche Management to see how it might inform the development of regional networks over time. Strategic Niche Management (SNM) is a theory that looks at how the environment can be shaped in order to allow an innovation to start or thrive. If you imagine a vegetable garden, strategic niche management would look at how you prepare the environment for growing plants (by adding manure and compost) to give the plants the best opportunity to thrive. It was initially developed in the business world to work out how to increase the popularity of goods and services in order to increase profit. We were using it in a different way by focusing on Transition as a social innovation and how it could be spread through creating an environment at the workshops for it to thrive. We focused on the three principal ideas of SNM to come up with the following ways that we could create an environment that would allow innovation to occur:

- Learning about Transition by building trust and a feeling of community to share best practice and understanding the impact of our work and how our work makes change happen with other organisations.
- Bringing together Transition groups to create common language and approaches by analysing best practice, building confidence, a sense of shared identity and a cumulative view of impact across a region, looking to co-ordinate shared action in the future.
- Building a broad and active network of both Transition and non-Transition people and organisations for a wider range of points of view and experience to help us imagine how Transition can be more effective to reimagine and rebuild our world.

Why should we connect regionally?

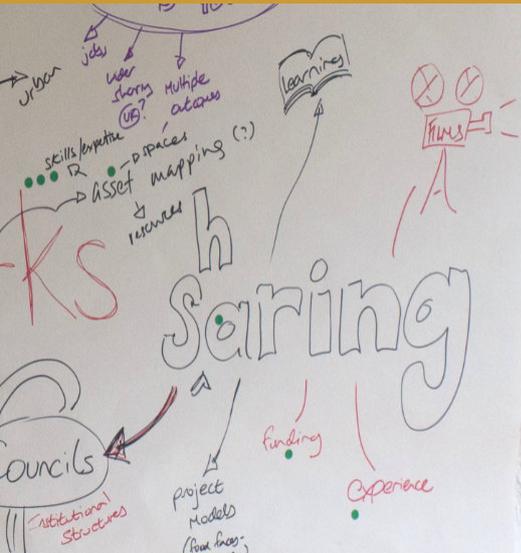
How can a regional network benefit my Transition group?

What can we do regionally that is different to our local activity?



These were the two big questions that many people had at the beginning of the workshops. Once discussions were started it didn't take participants long to use their collective intelligence to come up with lots of responses.

To share ideas, knowledge, experience and skills



A regional network enables you to share experiences, resources, values, inspiration, best practice and learning – all of which are great for helping make Transition easier and more productive. We can help each other to avoid common mistakes by hearing about other people's experiences. We can share tips and tricks on how to run our projects better. Through sharing we also build new friendships and communities based on collaboration and cooperation, which is a big part of what Transition is all about.

To support each other



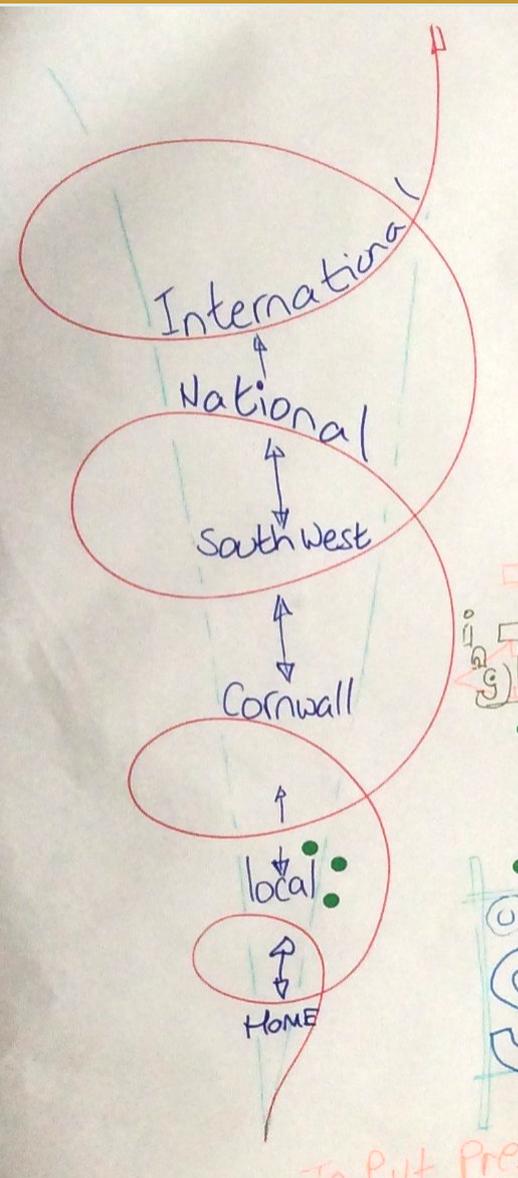
Increasing your Transition community also means you can support each other through the good as well as the difficult times. Just having a person to talk to when things are hard can be really useful; even if they are just there to hear your frustrations, you never know – they may also be able to offer some useful advice as well. It is not uncommon for Transition groups to feel overwhelmed and isolated, so being part of a wider network of fellow Transitioners can really help people to overcome the more difficult times. Sometimes all we need to relieve the pressure is someone to talk to who has similar concerns, and has experience of trying to change things for the better through Transition.

To celebrate together – building community



Celebrating together can be invigorating and can also be an opportunity to build friendships and highlight to each other what you have been doing, getting some new inspiration along the way. If you're starting a new project, having a party or showing a film, why not invite your Transition neighbours along? Or better still, arrange fun stuff together. Celebrating together is not just fun, it is also a great way to build resilience for the long term by maintaining momentum and morale.

To have more influence

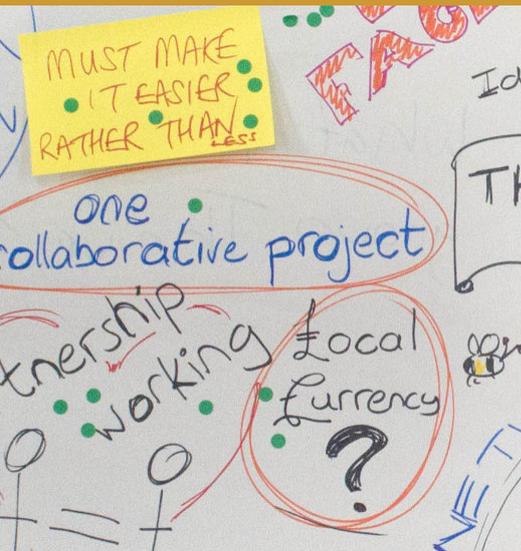


Coming together with others in your region gives you the possibility of thinking bigger than just your local community, as you can explore what Transition could achieve on a regional scale. Doing this opens up new ideas, possibilities and opportunities to scale up Transition that would not be available at the local community level. This can also benefit activity taking place locally, as activity at a regional level is often focused on how it can support local action. An additional benefit of working regionally is that you can get in contact with other groups or networks, such as permaculture groups, community-supported agriculture projects or energy schemes, who may also be working regionally, to look at how you could work with each other. It also provides an opportunity to consider how you could reach those groups that are not involved in Transition to increase the diversity of people involved. This can then increase your impact as you have wider participation from your communities, which can open up new opportunities to be influential.

Creating a shared vision for Transition in your region also establishes a cohesive voice and place for contact which can really help when attempting to collaborate with others at this level. Being able to talk from a regional perspective to Municipalities/ Local Authorities, or education and/or businesses institutions, can open up new dialogues when discussing how you could work together.

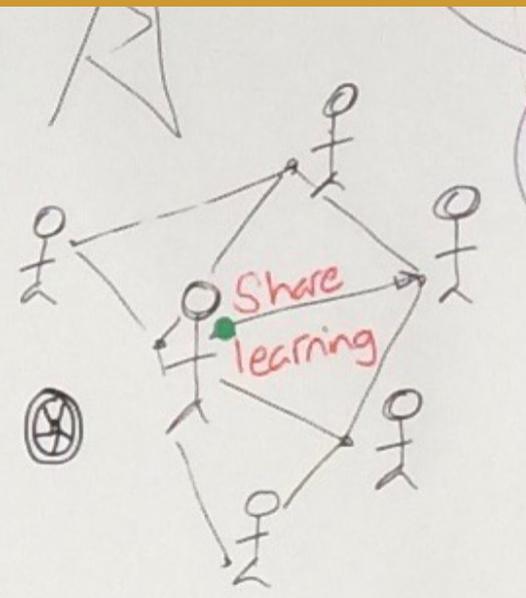
Telling stories together that cover a region can increase your impact, as you can demonstrate the diversity of activity and participants to a larger audience. Having this shared understanding of Transition in your region means that you can also speak about the bigger picture of Transition in two ways. Firstly, when speaking to your local community you can show how much wider the impact of Transition can be when many communities are doing it. Secondly, when speaking to those organisations with a larger focus, you can demonstrate the impact that Transition at a local level has for a region. For example, highlighting how many community food-growing projects there might be in your wider region can inspire people to get involved in Transition and also show the impact that this has on food production. Who wouldn't be inspired by reading about that!

To run joint projects



Coming together can enable shared projects that are easier to run together, have more impact and cover a wider area. This can also bring in more resources that would not be available at a community level. In the UK there have been several community energy schemes that would not have been feasible at a local community level, but were when they covered a larger area. Simpler things that can be done regionally include; showing the same film around a region meaning you can publicise it together; running themed events at the same time to showcase the impact you're having. Scaling up to this level also raises the possibility of creating jobs and livelihoods, as projects can potentially secure more support and income.

Harvesting learnings



Meeting with others in your region means you can also reflect together on what has supported / hindered your work at the local level. There will be people in your network with a wealth of experience and knowledge from being involved in Transition for many years. This can really help your groups to be more effective moving forward.

Is it the right time to do this?

After hearing all the benefits that can come from a regional network, we wouldn't be telling the whole story if we didn't make clear that it will require effort and work in the initial stages to set up. This may not be the right time for you or your group to undertake this type of regional activity, which is fine. But if this is of interest to you, most importantly, don't do it on your own. Ask around Transitioners you know in your region to build momentum before tackling the workshop. If you're not sure, then exploring the worth of a regional network together during a workshop can help answer the question: "Is it the right time to put energy into a regional network?"

How to setup a regional network

We have developed a one-day workshop, that you can run with groups in your region, that is based on learning from the actual development of regional networks in England. This workshop is a really great way to begin the conversation, and the work, of building a regional network. We realise that this might be too much for some groups, so the following section outlines some easier, less intensive ways you can begin to develop a regional network. You may find, after trying some of these out, that you would like to run the full workshop. Networks can develop organically if you have people who are willing to experiment and offer their energy in order to make it happen; that said, we believe the workshop can really help you with the first steps in setting up a regional network. The choice is yours.



Designing a regional network - one day workshop

The aim of the workshop is for your group and other groups in the region to come together and develop the foundations for a regional network based on your own unique needs and wants. The workshop allows you to:

- Find out what's going on locally and be hugely energised by the diversity of activity!
- Get to know people better, how they got involved, what motivates them and what their expertise is.
- Explore how Transition groups thrive and common barriers to carrying out Transition, as well as exploring those connections that your groups already have outside of the Transition Movement in order to gain some common understanding.
- Define together what a regional network could do in your area. There are no assumptions here – you have seen some of the themes that came up in existing workshops in the previous section – these may not be the things that are important to your region and it is very likely that you will come up with your own.
- Enable everyone present to share the skills, experience, knowledge or support they could offer to others on a more personal level, and what they would like to get out of a regional network – we called this what people can “give” and what they would like to “gain”.
- Define the next achievable steps to make a regional network a reality, as this is going to require some effort on behalf of everyone involved.



We closed the workshops by asking participants what they might tell others who didn't come. There was an overwhelming sense of motivation and being part of a wider community of Transitioners (and other groups) who have a lot of expertise and experience beyond that which is held in local projects.

Workshop resources & guide

To run the 6.5 hour full day workshop you'll need some resources.

A space/room, refreshments, lots of flipcharts and pens, and a commitment by Transitioners to attend! The workshop is quite intensive, so do consider the needs of Transitioners in your region and how best to adapt the structure to make it as effective as possible.



We have produced a detailed facilitator guide for the workshop which you can download here: <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/regional-networks-workshop-facilitation-guide/>

We found it useful to have at least two facilitators. Why? To share the work of preparing the workshop, as well sharing leadership throughout the day. This helps you to manage energy and allow a change of voice and approach which is refreshing for those attending and allows one facilitator to lead while the other supports. It can be helpful to get someone from outside your groups to facilitate if possible, so everyone in your region can participate. If this is not possible you could ask people in your network if they have facilitation skills and experience. It is possible for people without experience to run the workshop, but this may require more planning and possibly more patience from participants.

Quick ways to start, build and maintain a regional network

If you have decided not to do the workshop, there are other ways to begin to establish a regional network. These involve less intensive work, but will mean that you have less focused time building the relationships and foundations that help to create a shared vision and understanding of each others skills and experiences. This can build up as you go along, but will happen at a different pace.



This section also includes activities that you could try out, case studies that show what other groups have done and links to resources you may find useful to help you build and maintain your regional network. These suggestions are here to inspire you, but we are sure you can also come up with your own ideas on what to do, so focus on those areas that your region has energy for. What is most crucial is how to connect and communicate with each other, a subject we shall now explore in more detail.

Staying connected / building the foundations

Regional networks rely on staying connected because as a network is only as strong as its connections between individuals and groups. Staying connected means that you can find out what others are doing, ask for help, plan together and support each other. Being connected enables you to communicate and build relationships with each other; essentially, your communication creates your network. The following ideas outline how you can establish ways of staying connected.

Activity: Deciding together how to stay in touch

Finding the best ways to stay connected is essential for new networks to emerge. How you do this is up to you and the people around you! Thinking about the following together is really important:

- How regularly you should meet (establishing a rhythm to the network makes it easier for people to start to bring energy into the wider group and access the group effectively).
- What skills people in the region already have that could help facilitate the process of building governance structures and network tools to suit your region.
- How you should stay connected – there are many ways to do this, but what is most important is that you choose a way that is easy and people will use.
 - Discuss the methods that people already use to stay connected and see if those will work for you.
 - People may already have accounts on certain online platforms, so they will know how to use them.
 - To be inclusive, it may be necessary for you to, you use more than one method of communication, for example email and a Facebook group.

This is all about enabling a group to connect and access each other in the easiest way possible in order to work together. As a first step, why not set up a regional Facebook group to easily share activity and events? Or perhaps you have the skills and time to be the initial keeper of the email list and organise the next meeting, which could be online? Some groups such as the Transition Cornwall Network have set up a forum for contacting each other and for discussing topics, as well as a shared calendar. This helps to create a routine so that people will stay connected and keep the conversation going.

Activity: Roles and themes of a regional network

If you're coming together regionally you need to know why you are doing this and what you hope to achieve. A very simple way of figuring this out is just to meet up with others and have a chat about what you could do in your region, using this guide – especially the “Why should we connect regionally?” section – to start a discussion on what you could be doing. If you decide to proceed this way make sure someone takes notes and shares them with the people present through your agreed communication channels (see above). This exercise is a very scaled-down version of the “roles and themes of a regional network” activity in the one-day “Designing a regional network” workshop, which goes into this subject in much more detail. You can find guide here: <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/regional-networks-workshop-facilitation-guide/>

Case study: Co-facilitating meetings – London

In London, they decided to co-facilitate their next meeting regional hub meeting face to face in the centre of town to work through what it was they wanted to get out of the Hub. In holding that meeting, they simply declared themselves as a practising Hub without worrying too much about governance or what that meant. This was really empowering as they all trusted that they would do it right and it has led to more action and get-togethers, some of which you can read more about later on. People shared ideas and experiences, which immediately led to relationships being made based on activity. In turn, this meant that they improved what and how they communicated online because they knew each other – networks are all about relationships between individuals as much as between groups. A number of participants visited more Transition events, AGMs or projects outside of the regional network meetings, which increased the number of people involved.

Case study: South West regional meetup

The Designing A Regional Network one day workshop was held in Bristol in 2017 which brought together many groups from the South West to explore the benefits of meeting and organising regionally. At the end of the session Angela Raffle and Transition Bristol took on the task of arranging another get together in 2018, which admirably they made happen.

In 2018 thirty people from the South West met up in Frome for a day together to find out what was going on in other groups and to support each other to come up with solutions to any problems they were having. The Frome hosts led an inspiring tour of projects that are flourishing from repair cafes, housing schemes, elders schemes, skate parks to community energy projects. Frome also has the Independents for Frome initiative which was started in 2015 and resulted in all 17 seats on the Town Council being held by non-party-political candidates. This has helped change the town for the better by giving local people more say in how their Town Council operates.

After the tour people gathered at Edventure Frome in a wonderful converted mill for shared lunch, preceded by a ‘micro-open-space’ to set intentions for lunchtime conversations. There was plenty of time for them to chat and make new relationships. In the afternoon they undertook U lab mini coaching circle where people got into groups of four, people took a turn as ‘case giver’ to gain fresh insight into an issue they were facing, while the other three acted as ‘consultants’ reflecting back to the case-giver what they felt and imagined as they listened to them. This helped the person to reflect on the problem rather than coming up with a solution for them. This was a really useful process and people got a lot out of it as well as from the day in general.

This day showed what can happen when a few people initiate a get together. While this does take effort, if everyone is willing to help it can be easily done and is great for building relationships and a network in your region.

Transition Network Resources

“Virtual teams” guide: Ideas and information on how to work together virtually.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/virtual-teams-guide/>

“How groups develop” info sheet: All new groups including regional networks tend to go through a series of stages when they are developing.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/groups-develop-infosheet/>

Sharing ideas, knowledge, experience and skills

Regional networks are a great way to learn from each other, gain understanding and learn new ways of doing things. They also provide an opportunity to build relationships between members and local communities.

Activity: Finding out what everyone is doing

One way to support each other practically is to make visible all the activity going on in your region so that you can learn from each other. For example, there might be groups who have held repair cafes, so have lots of experience of what to do and what not to do when running one. If this is the case in your network, you can learn from each other and help make new projects really effective as well as avoiding common mistakes. Supporting each other means that projects can be easier to run and have more impact, and this is a simple way to increase local knowledge and build up skills and experience in your network. A great way to learn from each other is to go and visit events and projects; this can make a nice day out where you meet other people doing Transition in their local community.

A simple way to find out what people have achieved in their local community is to get a big sheet of paper and ask each group to write on Post-it notes what they have done, making sure they include their group name. You can move these around and cluster the similar ones together, which will show you where you have a concentration of expertise and interests, as well as the projects that are unique to your region. Doing this highlights all the experience in the room, can inspire new group and regional project ideas, and also act as an opportunity to think about shared project ideas based on similar interests. You could also do the same again, this time asking people to write down the skills and experience they have as individuals that they could offer to others. For example, you might have people who are designers, or great with social media, and so on. Once you have done this you should write it up and share it with the group for future reference.

Case study: REconomy LIFT event

The London and the South East hub organised and ran an event called REconomyLIFT – Local Innovation For Transition with REconomy Project. This event brought together Transitioners from across London and the South East to share their experience of activity that is re-imagining local economies.

The event was co-produced by Richard Couldrey (Transition Town Tooting and the London Hub) and Jo Taylor (REconomy Project). They were both passionate about the event being co-designed with Transitioners who were likely to attend, so content was informed by the six themes of the London Hub – share, support, be part of a bigger picture, celebrate, communicate, and structure and organise. It was also informed by 40 replies to a questionnaire that was sent to likely participants. The event had a context-setting introductory talk followed by a morning session of sharing experiences about REconomy activities across the region from community-owned renewable energy projects to Crystal Palace Food Market, to community-supported agriculture veg box schemes and groups taking over buildings. In the afternoon there were skills workshops covering six areas including business planning, legal structures and building local partnerships.

Case study: REconomy LIFT event cont..

Seventy-five people came from all across the region and there was loads of experience-sharing and skills-teaching with useful resources made available. It was a great opportunity for people to meet face-to-face and connect. In the middle of the day there was a mapping exercise to see where people were based, which showed that event had reached lots of people from the region. This also provided an opportunity to celebrate everyone who had made the journey! They even made a video of the event: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8bbZI_rDdU&t=4s

The organisers have the following tips for people wanting to do a similar event.

“It was a lot of work to put together, but the generosity of the contributors in giving their time for free was a massive boost – I would say that this needs to be a primary focus if you are to organise such an event. Approach it professionally, put together a timetable and a realistic budget, think about who it’s for and how you’re going to persuade people to come along! Engage with people who can support the event either as volunteers or in paid positions. Emphasise that there is more to gain from being involved than money; volunteers could learn a lot from contributing to the organisation of this kind of event. Finally, save some energy for the follow-up! From celebrating the event itself after it has finished, to thanking people for attending, and sharing resources.”



Transition Network Resources

Planning and putting on events: A guide to help you successfully run events. <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/planning-putting-events-guide/>

Open space event: Open space could be a great way to share knowledge and experience by giving everyone an opportunity to highlight areas they would like help with. <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/run-open-space-events-guide/>

Supporting each other

Working in isolation can be really challenging for groups. Linking up with others can open up possibilities for new relationships and mutual support. Nearly all of us need support at some point when doing Transition, be it of the practical or the emotional kind. It can be great if there are people nearby who have a shared understanding of what you are doing and who can offer support through difficult and even easy times. Having access to any kind of support can make your group more resilient and able to deal with the challenges that you can face doing Transition, while being supported by others doing Transition can bring a deeper level of understanding to the issues you're dealing with.

Activity: Twinning

Why not twin with another Transition initiative? It was proposed in a London Hub meeting that Transition groups should “twin” or link up for peer support, mutual celebration and future projects. As a result of this, Transition Town Tooting twinned with Transition Town Kingston (TTK) which led to Nic Fearon-Low, TTK's co-chair, coming to speak about TTK and recent projects at Tooting Green Drinks (where people meet up and discuss green issues). Sharing simple stories about your initiative with another group is a great way to create possibilities for the future and learn from each other.

Activity: Thrives and barriers exercise

This exercise is also in the one-day “Designing a regional network” workshop. This activity helps you to identify what enables and what stops your group from thriving through gaining an overview of the common experiences you share. It's really simple: all you need is two big pieces of paper for every three people in your group and lots of sticky notes (Post-its) and a room to meet in. To run the exercise, split into groups of three, ideally made up of people from different Transition groups, and give each group two big sheets of paper and lots of sticky notes. Explain that for the next hour, you will spend thirty minutes writing on the sticky notes your responses to each of the following questions, placing them on the large piece of paper:

What helps your group to thrive?

What are the barriers to being successful?

It is great to spend the first five minutes doing this in silence, in order to capture lots of thoughts without getting into conversation on a specific topic. Then spend the remaining twenty-five minutes discussing everyone's responses. It can be useful to group together any factors that are common to several people or tick ones that you agree with. Do this for both questions then come back together and share with the other groups what has come up. You can take it in turns looking at everyone's sheets and discussing what you see, and it can be useful to identify which factors are common to each group and which ones are unique. Doing this may highlight specific support needs that others in the group could help with, as well as producing great ideas on what you could do to help your groups thrive.

Case study: Herefordshire Green Network

In late November 2009, more than 100 local people gathered in the city of Hereford. The discussion that took place that day marked the beginning of a network of communication, friendship and activism that continues today. Herefordshire Green Network (originally Herefordshire in Transition Alliance) is an evolving association of environmental and Transition groups, organisations and businesses across Herefordshire and the Marches. Of the 40+ organisations, approximately half have been members of the network from its advent.

For almost a decade they have provided each other with a continued source of support: incubating local projects, sharing best practice and getting complex projects up and running. But perhaps the most extraordinary thing they have managed to do is to continue to meet and work together regularly.

There are a number of stories they can tell about why the network has continued to function and grow. One of these stories is about how over the years key individuals have shared their facilitation skills, vision and inspiration with the group – developing an ethos of profoundly respectful relationships that are supportive, warm, energetic and kind. Another story is about a few core people who have been belligerently determined to continue. This is flock mentality... putting in the hours even when it seems that no one else has the energy.



Herefordshire Green Network

Perhaps the most important story is about stories themselves. In their quarterly meetings they always devote some time to what they call a 'Round Table'. Here they each take a few minutes to give 'headlines' about their recent work or preoccupations. These are stories of practical encounters and opportunities, a sharing of real-life issues, containing disappointment and inspiration in equal measure. Telling their stories has become a shorthand system to support and enable replicability of their projects, while simultaneously enabling every voice in the room to be heard and their individual contributions valued.

In terms of the way others might replicate this, our learning would suggest that this is predominantly about celebrating each other and our work. It is about making time for just sitting and chatting ... and sharing our stories.

Transition Network Resources

Stress busting: A short exercise that helps people to uncover what it is that causes them stress and how these stresses could be addressed.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/become-stress-busting-experts-inner-transition-activity/>

Group and personal sustainability: A quick exercise you can do to reflect on your current level of commitment to Transition and if this is sustainable.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/group-personal-sustainability-inner-transition-activity/>

Celebrating together

Transition can sometimes feel really challenging because we are addressing what can seem like huge issues. This is where picking the moments to celebrate together is a great way to assemble face-to-face and prove that it's more of a party than a protest march.

Activity: Go-round

This is really simple: next time you meet as a regional network, start the meeting with a simple go-round asking people to introduce themselves and their Transition group and share one thing that they're most proud of in their Transition work. It's a simple way to empower the group and celebrate the diversity of activity in your region where everything shared is valued.

Activity: Joint celebration

Another really simple activity. Pick a time to have a joint celebration of your Transition work, where you can come together in one place to hear from each other about what you have been doing. This doesn't have to be complicated; you can just arrange to meet in a park with some food, and ask people to bring along something that represents a thing they are proud of achieving recently. The key thing is to get together and have fun, in as easy a way as possible.

Case study: Annual Celebratory Extravaganza

Transition Town Tooting decided to refresh their Annual General Meeting to really celebrate what they had done over the past year and what they were looking forward to in the next year. There was a simple focus on highlighting all the projects they had done to give them a chance to give thanks to the project leaders, helpers and participants and gain a holistic view of all of their activities. Critically, this reinvention to an "Annual Celebratory Extravaganza" or ACE gave them perspective on all the partnerships and collaborations they had developed to increase diversity, and reach to affect greater change. Transition Town Tooting had worked with a huge range of partners including Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS), Gatton Primary School, other community groups such as Balham and Tooting Community Association (BATCA) and even their local MP. Many of these partners came along to the ACE and together they celebrated these relationships, enabling attendees to see their part in a bigger picture, and made the serious fun of collective action feel more like a party than a protest march.

Transition Network Resources

Annual celebration: Coming together annually to celebrate all the achievements that have happened in your region can be a great motivator, as well as an opportunity to build on your relationships. <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/putting-annual-celebration-guide/>

Action reflection cycle: Understanding how to implement the action reflection cycle to make you more effective. <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/action-reflection-cycle-inner-transition-guide/>

Having more influence

Acting together regionally can open up opportunities for larger-scale influence. Adding together all the projects that Transition groups are implementing in a region can tell a powerful story of change that individual actions alone sometimes can't. Relating stories of Transition on a larger scale can help you to convince, advocate, persuade, fundraise, enable, build confidence and create possibilities for larger-scale action based on Transition principles.

Activity: Keynote listeners

A keynote listener is different to a keynote speaker in that they are there to listen to the discussion, which creates a subtle shift in power where your group is the important voice in the room. The keynote listeners should be allowed to share thoughts, if appropriate, but only after the main discussion has been undertaken. You could do this at the start of your regional network development where you invite other friendly organisations in early to your meetings as keynote listeners to help you define the purpose of your regional network. This will build your confidence as well as provide opportunities to build relationships for the future. You can also use these keynote listeners when discussing a specific regional issue, for example inviting the regional municipality representative to listen to your views on food or transport in the region.

Case study: Transition Liverpool Symposiums



Transition Liverpool ran several symposiums about a range of topics including alternative economics, sustainable living and local food amongst others. These events were city focused and brought together a range of groups and individuals we were interested in creating positive social change. In 2016 they ran the symposium 'Radical Shift: Building sustainable futures for a devolved Liverpool city region' with the aim of strengthening networks devoted to environmental and social justice and to create a shared vision of what a sustainable devolved Liverpool City region could look like. This resulted in a people's plan for Liverpool. In 2017 they ran another symposium called 'Just Do It! - Taking action towards a more sustainable and enriching city' where they invited people to consider the next steps needed to move towards a cleaner, healthier,

fairer city as well as celebrating the ways they were already doing this. They invited those new to Transition and long term Transitioners to attend this day of informative and interactive talks, workshops and activities. The aim of these events has been to bring people together to share ideas and inspirations on how grassroots communities can change their city to benefit the people and the planet. They believe that through acting together they can be the solution and have more influence on what is happening in their city.

Transition Network Resources

How to build networks: More tips on building networks based at a local level.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/build-networks-guide/>

How to create partnerships: Learn how to create effective partnerships.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/create-partnerships-guide/>

Big list: This activity enables you to think about how and who to engage with

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/big-list-activity/>

Running joint projects

Imagine if the skills, experiences and passions of a wider pool of Transitioners could be brought together to design a project that needs a larger scale! The dedicated few in your group would become the powerful many and enable magic to happen. If you are connected up with other groups in your region you can share project ideas, potentially run larger projects together, and coordinate your work to have more of an impact and save money.

Activity: Joint events

Why not do a joint movie showing or celebration with another group? Transition Town Berkhamsted and Transition in Kings did a joint showing of the film *Demain* (Tomorrow in English) in April 2017 and sold out a hall of 100 seats. They found pooling resources meant that what they had went much further, and the skills base between the two groups meant the showing was sold out.

TIK
www.transitioninkings.org

Transition Network.org

TRANSITION TOWN Berkhamsted
www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk

PRESENTS

TOMORROW

A FILM BY
CYRIL DION & MÉLANIE LAURENT

19TH APRIL, 2017

Berkhamsted Civic Centre
DOORS 19:00 – 22:00
(FILM STARTS AT 19:30)

Tickets available at:
<http://bit.ly/TMRWtickets>

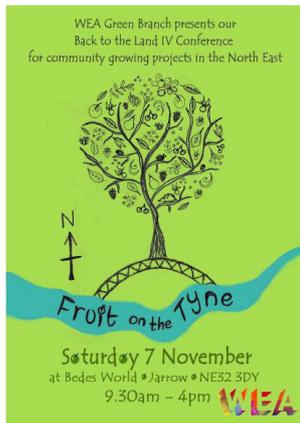
£7 **Concession £4**

WHAT DO YOU THINK TOMORROW SHOULD LOOK LIKE?

Activity: Having fun together

Having fun together can also be a great opportunity to come together in one place to hear from each other about what you have been doing. This doesn't have to be complicated; you can just arrange to meet in a park with some food, and ask people to bring along something that represents a thing they are proud of achieving recently. The key thing is to get together and have fun, in as easy a way as possible.

Case study: North East conferences



For many years green groups in the North East have networked and shared information and ideas. In the mid-noughties until 2012 this took the form of annual Transition Town regional gatherings. They brought together existing Transition Town groups and those who were thinking of starting a group, as well as other environmental groups and individuals working at a community level. At the same time the North East Permaculture Network was emerging, so there was a lot of overlap, with people interested in both organisations. For the facilitators of the gathering it was important that everyone should feel included, regardless of the label they chose to work under. These were successful gatherings, with about sixty participants.

In 2011 the Workers' Educational Association North East Green Branch was formed, and it made sense to move the annual gathering under the umbrella of the Green Branch as it had a stable organisational structure, with robust accounting procedures and greater ability to fundraise (The regional Transition Town network was a loose collective, and fundraising had to be done through Transition Durham or Transition Newcastle). There were also new volunteers prepared to help.

The gatherings continued to have a similar structure, taking place from 10am to 4pm, offering a free vegetarian lunch, with presentations, sharing of learning, open-space workshops and time to get to know each other. The only difference was a greater focus on a topic, e.g. sustainable food systems or community energy. This focus provided a space for new project ideas and future work to emerge. For example, the Green Branch is now trialling a food hub, support for which came out of one of our conferences. For information on WEA conferences and a guide to organising your own, check out: <https://weagreenbranch.org.uk/resources/>



However, things continually evolve in the world of regional networks, and due to the time constraints of Green Branch volunteers they didn't organise a gathering in 2017. The mantle has now been passed on to the North East Permaculture Network, who have organised an annual gathering in July for the past two years. One of the key organisers of this was co-facilitator of the original regional Transition Town gatherings.

Not to be missed out of the story is Newcastle Community Green Festival: founded in 1995 and running for nearly twenty years. 10,000 people attending over a weekend, this event underpinned environmental networking in the North East, providing opportunities for people to meet, work together and build friendships.

Alongside the gatherings people stay connected through a Google group moderated by two volunteers. This allows anyone who is part of the group to post information they think others would be interested in; learning opportunities, jobs, new projects looking for participants, etc. and has been immensely valuable.

Transition Network Resources

Developing practical projects: How to develop and run practical projects.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/developing-practical-projects-guide/>

Planning and putting on events: A guide to help you successfully run events.

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/planning-putting-events-guide/>

Task process relationship: Why you need to focus on tasks, as well as processes to achieve them, in order to make a project successful. <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/task-process-relationship-inner-transition-guide/>

General tips for sustaining a regional network

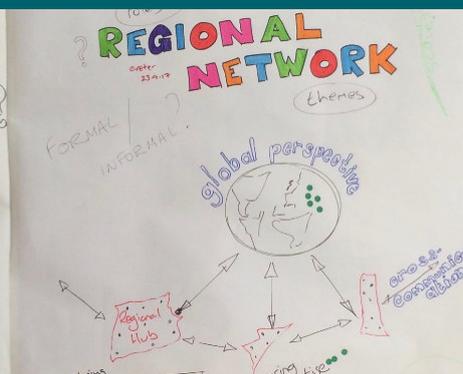
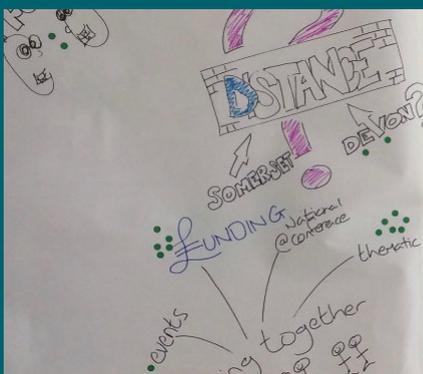
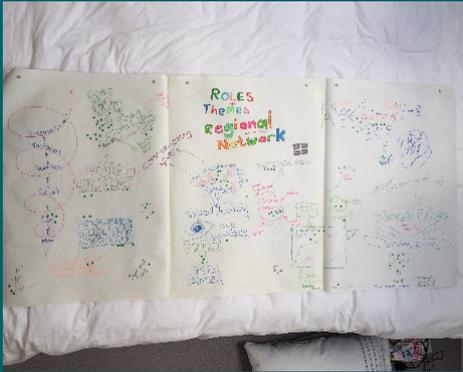
It can be useful to have at least one person as a regional network champion who keeps the momentum going. Take time to agree together what the themes and roles of your regional network are. It is very important to get broad agreement amongst your groups of what you are doing, as this makes it much more likely that you will succeed.

Other things that make it easier to sustain are:

- Having simple ways to communicate – find the easiest, most accessible way to do this, for example, a Facebook group, rather than creating the burden of a monthly newsletter
- Only introduce formal structures if they're needed – keep it simple
- Being aware of people's capacity to engage; a regional network should not be a huge drain on people's time and resources
- Not overstretching yourselves or over promising things you can't deliver
- Devolve down as much responsibility as possible, so groups do the work
- Sharing out the responsibilities so the network becomes easier to run, and doesn't rely on just one person
- Facilitating conversation – not everyone needs to do everything
- Ensuring the network is relevant by reflecting regularly on how it benefits your groups; if it doesn't, then make changes to it
- Enabling people, once you have a shared purpose, to follow their energy and create a positive environment for ideas to emerge
- Feeding back and reflecting regularly
- Coming together and have fun!

Imagine a future community of communities

What would the Transition Movement look like if every group was linked regionally and each region was linked together? What could we achieve together?



At an individual level:

- **Imagine a network of individuals**, based in communities, connected in order to:
 - Share projects across the region.
 - Build relationships and make personal introductions.
 - Share and combine skills to take on regional-scale projects like regional currencies or community-supported agriculture.
- **Imagine a community of communities**, able to tell a story of community action across a region; able to connect with regional politics and to make change happen; able to show evidence of change on a regional scale.
- **Imagine connecting richly with the skills and passions of young people** on an inspiring scale, and attracting the next generation of Transitioners through empowerment. We can do this! We can showcase what's possible locally by revealing what's happening regionally.
- **Imagine collaborating with people outside of Transition**, in other regional organisations, made possible by defining what Transition is regionally. What a great way to create more opportunities for reaching different people!
- **Imagine needing help and being able to ask for it from a much larger group of people**. It becomes possible to reach expertise on diverse topics. Problem with your group? Challenging people? Starting something new and need advice on the first steps? A regional network could enable you to get help from people who aren't too far away.
- **Imagine gathering, once a year, with Transition folks from across your region**. Getting together is so much better with more people! Sharing food, stories, working on regional activity face-to-face and sharing progress or outcomes of your projects can all add energy to your group and provide you with inspiration for the year ahead..

At a project level:

- **Imagine the impact of collective action** – a regionally agreed day to enact change. Imagine connecting with schools, businesses and communities to make the global local and inspire individuals by showing what's possible when we come together.
- **Imagine the projects that could be run when thinking about a region**. How about launching a local currency across the region to increase the diversity of users and businesses that could join in? Or transport – how do we get around a region? Imagine the choices we could make collectively to transform regional transport?

At an infrastructure level:

- **Imagine fundraising together**, pooling resources and skills and evidencing greater impact by reaching a network of communities. Creating more opportunities for jobs and increased resources to benefit local groups.
- **Imagine shared resources that are regionally relevant** – toolkit or templates, handy tips, project plans, governance practices. Imagine a library accessible to all, drawn from Transitioners from the local region. Communities work on trust, celebration and knowing people, and the regional scale creates opportunities to build relationships both face-to-face and online.
- **Imagine creating a way of organising that includes everyone**, and serves your local projects. From decision-making to getting on with tasks to having a laugh – regional networks really can be serious fun and need to give value back to local groups to be worthwhile.

Good luck

We hope that this guide is useful and inspires you to connect with your Transition neighbours, make new friendships, learn from each other, support each other and most importantly have fun and enjoy yourselves together.



More information:

Regional Networks one day workshop guide

All you need to run the one day workshop with groups in your region

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/regional-networks-workshop-facilitation-guide/>

Transition Regional Networks Project Website

Website about the project that led to this guide.

<http://trnuk.org>

Transition Network Website

Find out more about the Transition Movement and its stories, access support resources, find out about training and much more.

<https://transitionnetwork.org>

Regional networks in Belgium.

Blogpost about regional networks in Belgium and why they setup a regional hub

<https://transitionnetwork.org/news-and-blog/josue-dusoulier-asks-why-not-use-a-regional-support-team-as-a-strategy-for-scaling-up/>

Unlocking networks

A hub for social movement-makers, community managers and local group leaders to unlock the power of successful peer networks.

<https://www.unlockingnetworks.org>

Strategic Niche Management

There is lots of information on Strategic Niche Management on the internet – just do an internet search to find out more.

Transition Hub London and South East

Facebook page of the Transition hub for London and South East

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/transitionsoutheast/>

