

Application Pack: Community Action Intern September 2022

Thank you for your interest in this role which is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and the Tudor Trust. In this Application Pack you will find:

1. An introduction to CLASS and the Community Savers network
2. A Role Profile
3. Guidance notes for filling in the application form

Please note that the application form is a separate file that requires downloading or can also be requested by emailing recruitment@class-uk.com. The application form contains an Equal Opportunities monitoring form which is optional to complete and will be removed from your application before shortlisting.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Thursday 13 October 2022**.

Please return completed applications to: recruitment@class-uk.com.

If you have not heard from us within four weeks of the closing date for applications, please assume that on this occasion your application has not been successful.

Interviews will take place in Manchester with shortlisted candidates on **Thursday 20 October 2022**.

Good luck with your application!

1. Introduction to CLASS and the Community Savers network

Community Savers is a network of women-led savings groups which bring communities together to share ideas, experiences and strategies for reducing poverty in their neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Community Savers leaders have been learning from the approaches of a women-led movement called Shack/Slum Dwellers International since 2016.

Each of the member groups in the network is its own independent organisation with committee members who form the network leadership. Community Savers leaders work in alliance with CLASS but the groups and network leaders plan and make decisions independently of CLASS and other supporters and partners.

Savings: Savings is about trust and creates a glue that keeps people coming together. When a savings scheme begins, it is usually among an informally connected group of women who already know each other and want to try it out, or an

existing group interested in new ideas. They begin holding weekly savings meetings. By saving small amounts together at the same time they build trust and financial resilience but also mutual aid and confidence. When women meet, they share problems which promotes health and wellbeing. If anyone is missing, the group gets in touch to make sure they are okay. Over time, members recognise that many women have the same problems and some of these are linked to gaps in services or community assets. Members also share ideas for positive action and making money work for them collectively. Examples from existing groups include markets, food cooperatives, co-financing community space renovations, trips away for families or children, and fundraising or consultation events.

Women-led: Savings is open to anyone but the approach appeals the most to women who are often the ones managing household finances and the ones involved in community action. These ideas first began circulating in Greater Manchester after a series of exchanges between South African and Kenyan SDI activists whose membership is 85% women.

Savings-based organising is about ensuring that low-income women - who are often the most active at a community level but have limited influence over local decision-making - are able to come together to advance their own interests and those of their households and wider community. In some savings movements, members also believe that women are more reliable when handling money!

Learning exchanges and collective voice: Savings groups work together to think about what is available and what is missing in their area with regard for a diversity of women and families. They look for what is already there and seek to work with and build on those strengths, and to network initiatives together for a stronger local and united voice.

Savings groups also build up an awareness about common experiences and challenges between people living in low-income areas through learning exchanges with groups in their own and other similar neighbourhoods. New savings groups also emerge after learning exchanges with existing savings groups. Savings-based organising is strongly rooted in communities teaching and learning from each other on the basis of their own experiences.

Savings groups continue to network with each other, eventually neighbourhood-wide and city-wide networks of groups emerge and groups begin to form alliances with key agencies and professionals who can work with them to advance their interests. Capacity emerges for resident-led (and particularly women-led) neighbourhood planning and developments which have local ownership and work well for low-income women and families. These developments contribute to poverty reduction.

The Role of CLASS

CLASS is a small charity with an annual turnover of approximately £150,000 and we will have a team of three staff members by April 2022. We are currently seeking to expand our volunteer and student placement opportunities. CLASS is governed by a board of seven trustees including two representatives from the Community Savers leadership and the Director of SDI Kenya.

Based on the SDI model, professional support agencies like CLASS perform five key roles. We recently reviewed and confirmed these as holding true for the processes underway within the Community Savers-CLASS alliance. These are:

- Raising money
- Partnerships: Building relationships that open constructive partnerships for communities and acting as translator between formal/professional and informal/community perspectives and ways of working
- Documenting and communicating learning and achievements: creating space for groups to learn from what they are doing and build on it; capturing learning by documenting and writing about it; supporting groups to write and speak about it; attracting new audiences; creating platforms for amplifying community voice and demonstrating the value of community-led and co-productive approaches.
- Technical assistance: listening to community needs and then providing technical assistance or identifying and bringing in technical assistance.
- Strategic facilitation: working with groups and the network leadership to create space for reflection and learning, and for strategizing on how to advance the priorities of their communities and the network.

For further information about our alliance and activities try the 'News' and 'Watch' sections of our website: www.communitysavers.net.

Miles Platting Community and Age Friendly Network - MP-CAN!

MP-CAN is an action-focused network of residents and community groups who are passionate about Miles Platting past, present and future.

The overarching aim of the network is 'to make Miles Platting and the surrounding area an even better place to live, age, and bring up children'.

Miles Platting Community Network formed in 2019, following discussions among local community groups about how residents did not fully understand local developments that were taking place across the neighbourhood and were anxious about what might happen next.

Local groups, including the Age Friendly Partnership Board, were also discussing the challenges of information sharing and collective working across different groups and different sections of the community, and expressed a desire to think collectively about positive initiatives that they could develop in the area.

A meeting was held in September 2019 to establish whether there was interest in forming a community network where representatives from different community groups in the area could come together, share ideas, and make collective plans. There was significant interest, and Miles Platting Community Network was formed.

Members spent the next 18 months consulting local residents about priorities and developing a vision and action plan (organising around the pandemic and on Zoom).

Then, in July 2021, MPCN merged with the Age Friendly Neighbourhoods Board, becoming: Miles Platting Community and Age Friendly Network: MP-CAN!

The MP-CAN vision includes:

- A new social club: where the community can meet and socialise and bring together diverse groups across the area
- Access to housing for future generations: with an emphasis on increasing the availability of housing for social rent; and ensuring housing is age-friendly and family-friendly including opportunities to downsize and upsize
- A climate-friendly neighbourhood: with an emphasis on protecting and improving green spaces, creating 'high-quality' green spaces which provide habitats for wildlife
- Community-building: Activities taking place that build trust and positive social relations between different social groups across the whole neighbourhood and which ensure Miles Platting remains an age-friendly neighbourhood
- Inclusion in decision-making: promoting good communication about local developments, transparently managed development processes, and meaningful influence for residents over decisions about their neighbourhood.

2. Application Guidance Notes

Please read through these notes before completing the application form.

You need to download and complete the application form which is a separate word document available for download at www.communitysavers.net/work-with-us

You need to submit the application form together with a 2-page CV.

Your CV provides us with an overall sense of you as an applicant. **You will be assessed and scored primarily on the personal statement** which you are asked to provide within the application form.

You are advised to read this Application Pack thoroughly and access the links to further information that we have provided. This will enable you to research the work we do at CLASS and Community Savers thoroughly before applying. The information you need can all be accessed on our website.

When you write your personal statement remember to:

- Tell us about any previous experience you have of carrying out similar duties and responsibilities to those we outline in the below Role Profile.
- Give us examples of how you meet the experience, skills and qualities criteria specified in the below Role Profile.
- Tell us about any transferable skills or experience you think you have that will equip you well for this role in the absence of the direct experience criteria we outline below.

3. Role Profile: Community Action Intern

Community Led Action and Savings Support (CLASS) is trialling a Community Action Internship from 1 November 2022 – 30 April 2024.

Role:	Community Action Intern
Salary:	£21,322 (pro rata)
Working commitment:	0.2% FTE
Duration:	Fixed term for 18 months
Location:	Working from home or in community settings in Greater Manchester
Reporting to:	CLASS Director

Purpose of role: To develop skills in community development/community action and to support the development of the Community Savers network, with a particular focus on Miles Platting Community and Age Friendly Network.

Main duties and responsibilities

CLASS will aim to ensure you gain a mix of experience during your internship and there will be different priorities at different times throughout. Your duties are likely to include:

- Organising meetings ensuring relevant participants are informed and available
- Taking minutes at community meetings and sharing these in appropriate formats
- Developing the skills to facilitate meetings and events, perhaps taking on lead responsibility for a particular action group over time
- Supporting community leaders to improve their ICT skills in support of their community action and volunteering
- Taking photos or making films to capture and celebrate community action
- Editing and contributing content to community group websites including the Community Savers website

Experience, skills and qualities you will need

- Some experience of working with or supporting community/volunteer groups
- Some experience of taking notes or minutes at meetings or events
- Some experience of using social media to celebrate activities or events
- Excellent information and communication technology skills
- A good standard of spoken and written English
- Good interpersonal skills: the ability to listen actively, communicate clearly and build compassionate relationships with people from diverse backgrounds
- A commitment to principles of equality and social justice

Support and training

You will be given a full induction into CLASS and the Community Savers network and the context for working with communities who may have experienced long-term social, economic, political and spatial disadvantage.

You will be supported through a one hour per month supervision meeting and a small team reflective practice day on a quarterly basis. These sessions will create space for you to reflect on what has gone well, challenges and questions. They will be a chance to reflect on what you have learned, identify new directions, and problem-solving complex challenges or situations.

Skills-based training courses may be accessed where funding allows.

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