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## MEMBER

# Coventry Agroecological Living Lab

**Living Lab** CALL | United Kingdom

Coventry is part of the West Midlands metropolitan county governed by the West Midlands Combined Authority, located in central England. It has a population of 345,000 with 1 in 5 people living below the poverty line and is highly urban, but with over 3,000 allotments and other land where food is grown. The Coventry Agroecological Living Lab is an urban and peri-urban LL comprising small commercial growers, other small businesses, community initiatives and a local charity.

These are:

- 5 Acre Community Farm (CSA)
- Cogs (local sustainable retailer incl. local veg.)
- Coventry University Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (research centre at the university which initiated the LL)
- Coventry University Grounds team (includes food growing in city centre)
- Coventry City Council
- Feeding Coventry (community led 'social supermarket')
- Food Union (council allotment initiative)
- Garden Organic (local based national organic horticulture charity)
- The Pod (community café)
- Team Springboard (CSA providing horticultural skills to young people)

Organisational: to share knowledge and skills and to improve local connections.  
 Practical: to grow a wider variety of crops, to cope better with climate change and to improve soil and human health.

## Short background information

Through spring and summer 2023, Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience held a series of workshops in and around Coventry City to provide a forum for small agroecological food producers and growers in the city to meet share information/ideas. This led to the establishment of the CALL.

## Funding structure

During 2022-2023, there was limited funding from the AE4EU European project but there has not been any further external funding for the living lab. Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience has continued to support CALL with limited staff time and inclusion in further funding proposals.

## Activities

- Participation in a common crop trial
- Seed and crop swaps between participants
- 3 collaborative workshops
- Training in experimental design
- Engagement with City Council
- Exploration of further funding options e.g. soil health or plastic pollution in cities





CALL's first year. Source: Judith Conroy and Ulrich Schmutz

## Methods, stakeholder engagements and tools

Face to face meetings, visits made by participants to each other's initiatives/ growing spaces. Email communications.

## Achievements

- Created and renewed existing relationships between organisations
- In 2023, participants took place in common crop trial
- Established mechanism for surplus crops to go to social supermarket

## Further information

Information on the AE4EU website about [CALL Living Labs \(LL\) and Research Infrastructures - AE4EU](#)

An academic journal paper with other agroecological living labs in Italy and Netherlands is submitted and currently in review.

## Contact

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