

WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- Seaweed farming provides a means of transitioning the economies of rural coastal communities to a more sustainable income by supplementing fishing and seasonal tourism industries as well as creating a new plant-based seafood processing and retail sector.
- Current seaweed and IMTA farms are on a pilot scale, however, the creation of needed infrastructure for seaweed/IMTA farms on a commercial scale will have an impact on the environmental and social landscape of coastal communities, which is currently unknown in the UK.
- The seaweed/IMTA sector would benefit from widened participation, which can only be achieved through actions to reduce barriers to entry, particularly for women, people of colour, people without marine biology training, and people without access to large investment funds.
- Seaweed is a fast-growing marine species that can be cultivated with negligible land use and resource inputs and can be used for animal feed, bioplastic, biofuel, fibre and plant-based foods, however there is a lack of public awareness around these applications.

Challenges

Problem	Impact
Seafarmers have limited time, resources and capability to develop strong and meaningful relationships within the local community.	Poor relationships can lead to seafarmers having licenses delayed and/or refused by local authorities.
Limited understanding of short, medium and long-term environmental and social impacts of seaweed/IMTA infrastructure in specific sites.	Coastal community stakeholders do not have the information or assurances needed to make a social investment in seaweed aquaculture.
Economic, social and knowledge-based barriers to entry within the sector.	Limited talent pool, pipeline, and growth potential for the sector.
Publics do not know about or understand the benefits of seaweed and IMT aquaculture.	limited market potential for seafarmers, and low public support for critical conservationist work.

Solution

PEBL's community engagement framework responds to these challenges through a community-specific engagement strategy, a series of national creative and educational activities within schools and community groups, and a model for a community-led creative activity.

Our aim is to facilitate and develop relationships between sea farmers and communities, to achieve social investment in seaweed and IMTA, to open up the sector for widened participation, to increase the market for seaweed and IMTA, and to increase support for ocean conservation generally.

HOW WE CAN DO THIS

We have designed three strands of activity to meet these challenges:

1. **Bespoke community-based engagement for specific seafarms**
2. **Coastal Citizens Project (schools, colleges and community groups)**
3. **Facilitating Community cultivation spaces: ad hoc events and workshop**

1. **Bespoke community-based engagement for specific sea-farms (12 months +)**

- Map stakeholders associated with a specific farm
- Make initial contact and facilitate initial discussion about the proposed sea-farm
- Document and report findings from initial engagement
- Respond to stakeholder groups and facilitate feedback
- Facilitate method for ongoing dialogue
- Check in with stakeholders and seafarmer at follow-up intervals

2. **Coastal Citizens Project (schools, colleges and community groups) (throughout one term, school year or sequence of weeks)**

PEBL provide teaching packs and local volunteer support, including sessions plans for weekly activities that educate about the ocean and its relevance to food, wellbeing, wildlife and climate change.

3. **Facilitating community cultivation spaces: ad hoc events and workshops (PEBL facility, Penmon Point, Anglesey)**

- Community-led events and workshops at PEBL facility
- Initial consultation with local groups has led to a plan for activities including: artist workshops, talks about ecology, spoken word evenings, theatre shows
- PEBL can provide a model framework for other aquaculture sites looking to develop similar links within communities.



OUR SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Dani Abulhawa & Christian Berger

- 15+ years of applied community facilitation experience
- 15+ years working with qualitative methods including community-based research, practice-as-research, field-based observation, interviewing, questionnaires, focus groups
- Experienced in coding results manually and using software (NVivo)
- Human-centred design training for community development
- Fully conversant with ethical processes and risk assessment
- Published authors (academic and popular sources) with experience of disseminating research to broad audiences – in written, visual and verbal forms
- Experienced organisers of events – nationally and internationally
- Experience liaising with marine and environmental agencies, local councils and neighbourhood officers, academia, industry, and charitable NGO sector
- Successful grant writers
- Safeguarding level 2 qualification, DBS and emergency first-aid at work qualifications

