



Based in the Openshaw area of Manchester, **Manchester Settlement** offers housing, community and childcare services with the goal of **creating cycles of community change**. Chief Executive **Adrian Ball** shares insight from his experience co-producing urban governance as part of the **Jam and Justice Action Research Collective**.

What did you hope Jam and Justice would offer for you and your work at Manchester Settlement?

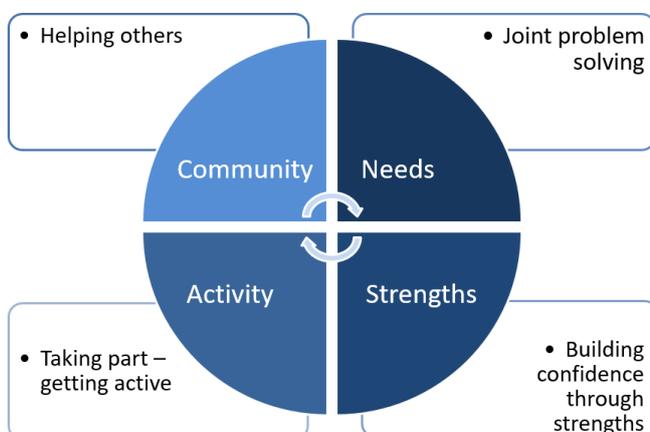
When I applied to join the ARC, I did it without knowing what the pathway was, investing in my own professional development in an exploratory way. I always saw it as a broad opportunity for myself and my services. The pathway was not all led for me, so I was able to adapt it to my needs, to fit my learning and development style.

<< Contribution to continuing personal and professional development.

Has Jam and Justice influenced the work of Manchester Settlement? How?

When I interviewed for the Chief Executive post four years ago, I referred to the burden of being a list of services rather than having a coherent identity. That affects the ability for the organisation to understand itself, for others to get what it is and buy into it, and to decide what services we should provide—what funding we should seek. I had found the problem, but not the solution.

In the last six months, when called upon to tell Manchester Settlement's story, I've begun to identify and speak about what we do as a model for creating cycles of community change.



Manchester Settlement: Creating Cycles of Change

I'm using a new model (*see right*) to talk with staff, with investors, and with the board. In a way, it's nothing. All the ingredients were there already. We've got foundations, relationships. So I can tell people it's not about doing something differently but getting better at what we do. Modelling what we're about in terms of cycles of community change helps co-production land in a way that's relevant to us.

<< New models have been developed that have led to changes or benefits.

I often explain our cycles of change with the example of housing work. We provide supported accommodation for young care leavers and, increasingly, young people in the asylum system. They come to us with needs, and we aim to problem-solve together to meet those. We also seek out their strengths, so we can build confidence. We enrol them in activities, to help them connect with other people. Eventually, and this can take months or years, we get them to a place where they can offer help to others and serve the community. Maybe it is only the last step that people would traditionally recognise as co-production, but to me it's a cycle. And it's a cycle that's helping us decide what services to bid for and how.

So what's the connection to Jam and Justice? How exactly did the research help?

Exploring the depths of what co-production might mean, the different flavours of that, with colleagues in Jam and Justice allowed me to set a new way of thinking. The way we worked as a team, the way that those relationships developed, added value to my working. They've helped me to model what we're about as well, and given me the confidence to push that to the forefront when I'm talking to people about what we're about. Rather than only being confident to say 'we do service A, B, and C'.

There was a bit of a lightbulb moment for me, recognising how we decided the focus of our action research. The projects had appeared in spaces that were not defined by anybody else. That was significant to me, because so much of my work had been defined by the objectives, statutory requirements, outcomes, that someone else wants me to achieve. In Jam and Justice, I found all my experiences that I've had and am having valued. We don't have that free space, that space to boundary span. *The projects were occurring in "uncorrupted space"*.

It's helped me to think about where we [at Manchester Settlement] can minimise the restrictions that are put on us. That sounds like the impossible, but it's not: There've been examples where in bidding, I might have been historically tempted to say, "We will do 'a, b, c, d, e, f, and g'." Now I am saying, "*We don't know what we're going to do. We're going to get to that point, or something like that point, but because of the way that we're working we don't know exactly what's going to happen and it may twist and turn, etc.*" And I've been funded for a few projects where my application has been more like that. I've got confidence now, to be more open-ended in my bidding for work.

<< New processes have been adopted through consultancy or training that draws on research.

And how does that change influence service delivery?

It is enabling, because I've not specified what indicators that I'm guessing at before the project starts. So there's not someone monitoring me against all those indicators, whether the indicators chosen are right or wrong. There's much more flexibility and freedom within the outcomes that I will be held accountable to.

Without traditional indicators, what do you do to measure impact?

The goal is to use "Most Significant Change" across all our services. It's a method we were introduced to during a youth work project with researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, to put a framework around non-metric outcomes. We ask people to tell us what the most significant change has been for them as a result of what they have done with us, and we compare and reflect on the answers to make sure we are learning from what's said.

Annual spend



£750 000



30 staff members



3,600 volunteer hours



childcare
housing
community
anchor