

NOVEMBER 2021

# A YEAR OF GIVING

Sharing what we've learnt so far



London's  
Giving

# Across London, local communities are embracing place based giving to bring about positive change.

We all have something to give – be that time, skills, expertise, connections or money. Giving schemes bring together local people, businesses, charities and other organisations to look at how to best use these assets locally to build a better borough for everyone.

This year, 16 active place based giving schemes across London generously shared their data and insights about their work and the difference this has made! London Funders is delighted to present some of the key things we've learned, to celebrate, inform and inspire others to get involved in this growing movement. **To see our 2020/21 findings in full, visit [www.londonsgiving.org.uk](http://www.londonsgiving.org.uk)**

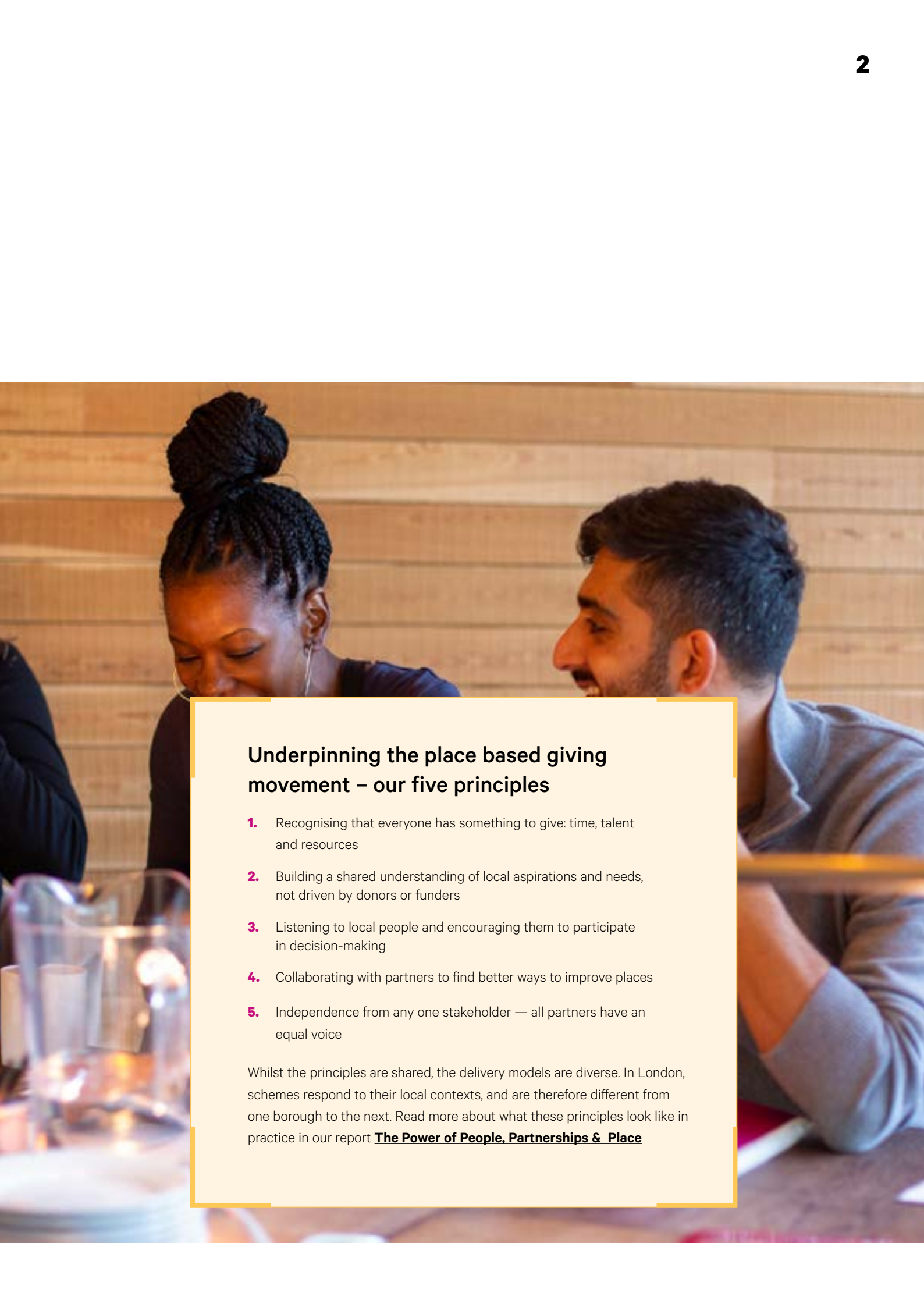


## What is place based giving?

Place based giving is all about using the power of local partnerships to bring about change. It brings together resources in a local area, and works collaboratively to think about the best way to use these. This can be through fundraising, volunteering, in-kind giving (resources besides money), grant-making, capacity building, influencing and convening.

- Understanding – building deep knowledge of the local community
- Getting – fundraising, engaging volunteers and securing in-kind support
- Giving – grant-making, time, skills and expertise
- Connecting – working in partnership, convening, fostering conversation and collaboration
- Illuminating – amplifying the voice of local people, shining a light on need and influencing change

Place based giving is led by people with commitment and local knowledge. Backed by organisations with expertise, money and assets, the movement is characterised by trust, openness and the courage to give away power and try new ways of working. Read more about place based giving in London at [www.londonsgiving.org.uk](http://www.londonsgiving.org.uk)

A photograph of a woman and a man sitting at a table, looking at something together. The woman is on the left, with her hair in a bun, and the man is on the right. They are both looking down at a table with glasses and plates. The background is a wooden wall.

## Underpinning the place based giving movement – our five principles

1. Recognising that everyone has something to give: time, talent and resources
2. Building a shared understanding of local aspirations and needs, not driven by donors or funders
3. Listening to local people and encouraging them to participate in decision-making
4. Collaborating with partners to find better ways to improve places
5. Independence from any one stakeholder — all partners have an equal voice

Whilst the principles are shared, the delivery models are diverse. In London, schemes respond to their local contexts, and are therefore different from one borough to the next. Read more about what these principles look like in practice in our report [\*\*The Power of People, Partnerships & Place\*\*](#)

# What has the past year told us about the impact of place based giving?

We've highlighted a few of the key things we've learned using insights drawn from the evaluation and our experience of supporting schemes first hand. To see the full breakdown of data captured, read our slide show [here](#).



## 1. Collaboration is key

We often say that place based giving's biggest prize is not grants distributed, but the added value of the collaboration and trust that place based giving schemes create – testing and sharing new approaches which can help achieve social change. The past year has demonstrated the key role giving schemes play as 'connectors and conveners', with partnership work accelerating in many areas. Many schemes worked with their local councils to co-ordinate emergency responses during the pandemic. Others were able to extend their links to local microbusinesses and grow their community networks in order to strengthen recovery efforts. The trust that schemes had already built up with local partners enabled collaboration to flourish.

*“A joined up offer across the borough wouldn't have happened if we hadn't been involved, and there would have been a lot more duplication and confusion”.*

## 2. Giving schemes provide critical financial support to their communities

During the pandemic, schemes responded to an upswing in local giving in many parts of the city. They engaged new donors, finding new ways to leverage funds from local business and residents. In 2020/21, schemes distributed over £7.9m in grants, in addition to over £300k of in-kind support including laptops and data packs during lockdown. Funding also reached need beyond just the immediate covid response, with money also supporting work to tackle isolation, poverty and promote civic action among many other areas.

*“It gave us a real call to action...it focused everyone's attention on their own community, many of our donors give nationally or internationally but suddenly they were keen to understand what was going on locally”.*

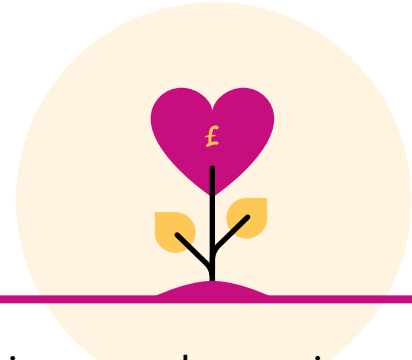


In 2020/21, schemes distributed **over £7.9m** in grants and over **£300k of in-kind support** including laptops and data packs

### 3. Giving schemes bring unique understanding of where funding can have most impact

Because of their community connections, schemes have local knowledge and insights into how and where to target funding. This year schemes invested in over 860 community organisations who often fall under the radar of other funders. Many schemes have become a trusted 'go-to' partner for other funders who want to increase their reach to local grassroots groups.

*“One big thing that has come out is being able to demonstrate we are a really agile, responsive, accessible funder and we do have reach where other funders and infrastructure don’t”.*



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### 4. Giving schemes are shifting power, and amplifying the voice of local people

Place based giving provides a platform for local voices. Schemes work inclusively to find solutions for local issues, and opportunities to shift power in the way both they and others operate. This year, more schemes have embraced participatory principles as they seek create more equitable ways of working. They continue to bring diverse voices into decision-making processes, and pioneer new ways of involving local people and supporting them to lead change in their own communities. This might be through participatory grant making, like in [Camden](#) or Harrow, or Barking and Dagenham’s new [Closed Collective model](#). With the learning from this way of working, Giving schemes are keen to challenge others to do the same in their local place.

*“What is our role in shaping how philanthropy works, how developers work, how we leverage that trust we are building? I would consider it a failure if giving schemes became the front runners of doing participatory work and are not able to then influence the broader politics about what it means to work in a place”.*



# How can we build a strong network of place based giving schemes in the future?

We believe place based giving has huge potential to bring people together to tackle the issues that matter most to them in one of the most unequal cities in the world. This way of tackling social action acknowledges that the stubborn issues of poverty and inequality facing London cannot be solved by one sector of society alone.

The past year has seen the growth of place based giving in the capital, but each scheme has also faced huge challenges. Activities such as volunteering have suffered because of the pandemic, and the pace of change has left little time for long term planning. Some schemes reported a downturn in corporate supporters as businesses faced their own pressures during the crisis.

**However, there are many opportunities to put schemes on a firm footing for the future:**

**1. The funding community can invest in the growth of place based giving:**

the approach takes time and patience. The wider funding community can invest in the growth of place based giving by contributing to the core costs of running place based giving schemes, enhancing sustainability and impact. We also encourage other funders to devolve some of their grant making to local schemes so they reach parts of the community that are traditionally under-funded, and work with them to co-design and align their programmes.

**2. Local schemes should continue to challenge the local system:**

schemes are finding new ways to work more equitably, and challenge the structural inequalities in their communities. Over the next year, exploring different participatory approaches to grant funding and decision-making has the potential to enable more people who have experienced marginalisation to access funding and advocate for changes in their borough.



### 3. Invite others to help test and embed the principles of place based giving:

the areas we live are constantly changing, and with that come new partners and opportunities. Strengthening collaboration through working with the ‘unusual suspects’ can help build trust and opportunities for future initiatives. Together they can test new ways of working and take risks, while staying true to the underlying principles of local giving.

### 4. Create a stronger community within the corporate sector to champion and grow place based giving:

the business and the corporate sector have connections to the places they live and work that can not only enhance place based giving, but also benefit the business and its workforce. This might be through funding, pro bono support, connections, volunteering or mentoring schemes. If you are a business that wants to get involved in place based giving, get in touch.

### 5. Put place based giving at the heart of the covid recovery agenda:

there is potential to better link place based giving into local investment strategies and other programmes which aim to stimulate recovery. Local Authorities can support place based giving as part of local funding and philanthropy strategies. National government should build on the legacy of its work on place based giving<sup>ii</sup> and recognise the role it can play in building stronger communities as part of the recovery and the levelling up agenda.



<sup>ii</sup> The government invested in six schemes across England as part of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Growing Place based Giving programme. Funding of £100,000 was provided over 18 months alongside a support programme from CAF.

## Join the Movement!

London Funders is working to secure a sustainable legacy for place based giving in London and beyond. If you are a funder, community group, local authority or other organisation who wants to be involved in place based giving, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us at [info@londonfunders.org.uk](mailto:info@londonfunders.org.uk) to see how you can be part of our growing network.

The London's Giving team provides tailored advice and guidance to schemes, and brings the network together for opportunities to learn and collaborate. Find out more about [how we can support you](#).



London's  
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