

November 2022

A YEAR OF GIVING

Sharing what we've learned so far from
London's Place Based Giving network



London's
Giving

We all have something to give – be that time, skills, expertise, connections or money.

Place based 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.

Each year, place based giving schemes across London share their data and insights about their work and the difference this has made to their communitiesⁱ. London Funders is delighted to present some of the key things we've learned from the giving schemes in the past year, to celebrate, inform and inspire others to get involved in this growing movement. **To see the findings in full, visit www.londonsgiving.org.uk**

What is place based giving?

Place based giving is based on the belief that we all have something to give – whether that is time, money, skills or connections. Place based giving schemes bring together these resources in a local area, and work collaboratively to think about the best way to use these. We share three principles:

- **We connect people and foster collaboration**, bringing together residents and the public, private and voluntary sectors
- **We empower local people to take action** on the issues that affect them
- **We speak up about inequality and challenge ourselves** and our partners to do better

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**

In London, there is a vibrant network of place based giving schemes. Schemes distribute vital funds within their local communities through grant programmes, with many pioneering participatory approaches to involve the community in deciding how money is spent.

ⁱ London Funders is working with our learning partner Rocket Science to help evaluate and learn from the place based giving movement in London. Data was shared by 13 schemes across the financial year 2020/21. This work is funded by City Bridge Trust, a key supporter of place based giving in London.

No one scheme is the same, and we celebrate this diversity.

However, place based giving is about more than grant making: it is also about leveraging the many other assets within a local place and sharing this to strengthen what we do and how we do it. It is about being a platform for local voices and working inclusively to find solutions for local issues. It is about the power of collaboration: bringing new partners together to challenge, inspire and tackle inequalities within our communities.



Image credit:
Top: Islington Giving

Left: Barking and Dagenham Giving (BD Giving)



Collaborative funding to support resident-led change

Camden Giving works with Camden Council to deliver the [‘We Make Camden Kit’](#), a fund providing money and support to Camden residents and community groups who have great ideas for their communities.

Residents and community groups can apply for up to £2,000 to deliver their projects and receive support to make their ideas a success. Decisions on who receives funding are made by a panel of Camden residents from across the borough. So far, around half of the successful projects are not run by charities, but *“brilliant people cracking on with doing things to make Camden better”*. It’s funded everything from wellbeing sessions for parents and babies at a local café, to bike projects, to football coaching for young people.

For Camden Council, working in partnership with Camden Giving enables them to support resident-led change to make the borough a better place. *“Our residents are the best people to make change”*, explains Josef Thomas, from London borough of Camden. *“They have the best networks, we value lived experience, and their community knowledge informs how the council can best support them, or simply move out the way. The council has an important role to enable and empower citizen-led social action through accessing resources and removing blockers. Working alongside Camden Giving’s expertise and the citizens panels gives us the best route to do that.”*

Image credit: Camden Giving

“Our residents are the best people to make change.”

Place based giving: reaching the grassroots

Kingston Charitable Foundation (Kingston CF) supports local charities and volunteer organisations that address inequalities across Kingston upon Thames. They provide small grants on a rolling basis to local groups, many of whom are grassroots and volunteer-led.

Kingston CF spends time getting to know the local community so it can understand what’s needed and supports groups through the application process.

For grantees, this relational approach is key. *“We have no paid staff, just a small group of hard working, creative people who want to help the community”*, explains Kate Kenyon from RBKares. *“Applying for grants and understanding the system is a complex and daunting task... when we were approached by Kingston CF about applying for a grant, it was a huge help. It made different sorts of projects attainable.”*

Like other place based giving scheme, reaching very local projects who often fall under the radar of mainstream funding is part of Kingston CF’s ambition, helping them be a ‘catalyst’ for local action. *“We have carefully begun building our foundation in an agile and responsive way”*, says CEO Hicky Kingsbury.

“We’re seeking out traditionally harder to reach communities and listening to the quieter voices, building relationships and networks, in mutually supportive ways, across our whole borough.”

— CEO Hicky Kingsbury



Image credit: Kingston Charitable Foundation (Kingston CF)

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

We've highlighted a few of the key things we've learned using insights drawn from this year's data collection, undertaken by our learning partner Rocket Science, and our experience of supporting schemes first hand. To read more about the data collected, read the slide pack from Rocket Science [here](#).



Image credit: Islington Giving

1. Being an agile, flexible and trusted funder gives place based giving schemes a unique reach into the community

Local giving schemes invest in building long-term relationships with their communities. They understand the dynamics of their local place, and as funders have a degree of independence that enables them to respond quickly, often in a way that other funders might consider too 'risky'. Schemes played a pivotal role during the covid pandemic to distribute vital funds at speed. With their knowledge of local civil society groups, giving schemes in the capital helped to ensure money reached the places it could have the most impact. This year has also seen more local authorities, NHS partners, and other funders working with place based giving schemes to distribute money on their behalf, enabling them to reach organisations they might otherwise have been unable to.

2. Collaboration is the anchor of place based giving

We continue to learn how critical it is to have multi-sector representation in the governance of schemes, and the input of different partners to help steer their strategic direction. It takes continued efforts to build new alliances, forge new relationships and keep partnerships alive so that place based giving can thrive. The pressures of the past few years and focus on covid has left less time for engagement work. However, in the past year, schemes have collaborated with over 580 community groups, 157 large corporates, 115 SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and 769 micro businesses. This is in addition to hundreds of local residents who have been engaged in working groups, as resident panellists or via local events.



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"We're small and flexible and can take the risks they can't."

3. Place based giving is a space to challenge, test and learn about doing things differently

This year schemes have done more to explore how the concepts of participation and power shape their work and how they can influence the wider system. We've seen more schemes explore participatory approaches, putting local residents at the heart of designing programmes and deciding where money should go. This year, we've also seen exciting developments including the launch of Barking and Dagenham Giving's Community Endowment Fund; the launch of One Southwark, a new giving scheme which aims to transform the lives of young people in the borough; and a partnership of four schemes who are launching a new initiative to create systemic change in the funding world.



Image credit: Kensington & Chelsea Foundation

In the last financial year, schemes distributed **£5m in grants to their local communities**, in addition to over £0.5m of in-kind support and volunteer hours.

4. Impact means more than money

In the last financial year, schemes distributed £5m in grants to their local communities, in addition to over £0.5m of in-kind support and volunteer hours. In the past five years, this brings the total of grants distributed to over £26.1m – an amount which is even more significant given the pace at which these schemes were established and their modest size. But impact is much more than the number of grants made – and schemes are keen to stress that it's *how* they work with others which really matters. Schemes have pointed out that the impact on community cohesion, connection and collaboration are hugely important, as well as the influence they are having on other organisations and institutions. *"It's a big risk that money becomes the focal point on impact, it doesn't represent the breadth of the work that comes out of a place based giving scheme."* This year we've explored other ways to understand the value and impact of place based giving schemes, but there is much more to learn.

"It's a big risk that money becomes the focal point on impact, it doesn't represent the breadth of the work that comes out of a place based giving scheme."





Collaborating to challenge the system

One Southwark was launched in January 2022, with the ambition of transforming lives and opportunities for young people in the borough.

One Southwark believes place based giving should challenge existing practice and systems. It is driven by a coalition of 10 community stakeholders, representing businesses, housing associations, funders, statutory agencies, and charities. As Will Cole, Director of One Southwark says, “the Coalition believes the status quo can be challenged to make Southwark a fairer place. They play a pivotal role - a central cog to the system we are trying to build as they are using their resources, connections and influence to instigate change.” As well as bringing their contacts and networks, Coalition members help bring other parts of the community on board and advocate for the wider changes needed so that young people in the borough get a better deal.

Image credit: One Southwark

Ashley Richardson, who works at Peabody Housing Association, has chaired the Coalition through its first year. She says the vast experience and range of perspectives among the group has been key to developing a shared vision about what can be achieved.

“There is plenty of passion and drive surrounding issues that we are facing, but that passion and drive needs to be transformed into tangible action to make an impact. To build a future that recognizes the issues that we’re facing, everybody has to be involved - corporates, stakeholders, and organisations all play a part in understanding the potential to change in an efficient, resourceful, and respectful way.”

“The Coalition believes the status quo can be challenged to make Southwark a fairer place.”

— Will Cole, Director of One Southwark

Collaborating with businesses to improve our places

This year we’ve seen more collaboration with businesses of all sizes. Collaboration is based on more than funding – it’s about bringing cross-sector partners together to challenge, inspire and think about how to do things differently.

For businesses, place based giving provides a route to connect with local people and community groups, enhancing their knowledge of the places in which they operate. But collaboration also brings new relationships and mutually beneficial programmes into fruition. This year we’ve seen more businesses become strategic partners for giving schemes, host community events, and amplify local issues to a wider audience.

Building these alliances takes time, but there are huge advantages for both sides. Natalie Tickle, Head of Programmes at Heart of the City – a responsible business charity supporting SMEs – says that place based giving is a natural fit for businesses looking to make a difference. “Many small and medium sized businesses are keen to support their local communities but they don’t know where to start. Heart of the City directs them to place based giving schemes as experts in local issues and the local charity and community sector. We’ve seen amazing things happen when businesses start supporting their local community by giving not just money but their skills and expertise to make positive change.”

“Many small and medium sized businesses are keen to support their local communities but they don’t know where to start.”

— Natalie Tickle, Head of Programmes at Heart of the City



Image credit: Lewisham Local

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

As we reported in last year’s report, there have been significant challenges as a result of the pandemic. As one giving scheme said, “communities are being battered by permanent crisis”. In responding to this, longer term planning has for many been put on hold.

However, the new ideas, programmes, and partnerships which are coming out of the network shows the strong position place based giving schemes are in. There is a growing interest in community wealth building and other approaches which can challenge how funding is put back into our local areas and help reconnect us to the places and spaces where we live and work. We’d urge partners across the private, funding and public sectors to consider how place based giving can be part of future investment strategies and local philanthropy initiatives.



Image credit: Kensington & Chelsea Foundation and S&E

This year we’ve worked with boroughs who are new to the network, helping them develop their business case and taking the first steps to establishing a scheme. This year also saw the launch of a new strategic development funding programme from City Bridge Trust, which will help enhance the capacity of place based giving across the capital.

Interested in place based giving? Here are some of the ways you can be involved:

- 1. **If you are a funder within the statutory or independent funding community**, placed based giving schemes can amplify your impact and help you reach parts of the community you can’t access alone:
 - **consider devolving some of your grant making to local schemes** so they reach parts of the community that are traditionally under-funded and which might be harder for you to reach. Over the past year, NHS, the National Lottery Community Fund, local authorities and other trusts and foundations are among the funders who’ve partnered in this way to distribute funds as part of their response to covid-19 and more recently with the cost of living crisis
 - **work in partnership to co-design or align your funding programmes**, to help reduce duplication and target any gaps locally
 - **contribute to the core costs** of a place based giving scheme to help grow these local networks and increase their impact for London’s communities

2. If you’re a SME or business (whatever your size), now is the time to be involved in place based giving!

Businesses have connections that can not only enhance place based giving, but also benefit the business and its workforce:

- **If you are a business, getting involved with place based giving scheme can enhance your connections** to the communities you work in, as well as contribute to your CSR objectives. Opportunities might be through funding, pro bono support, connections, or mentoring schemes. If you are a business that wants to get involved in place based giving, [get in touch](#)
- **SMEs are hugely important allies at a local level**, and as the cost of living crisis continue to hit Londoners, there is renewed focus on how we can collectively do more to support each other. Working with your local place based giving scheme can help extend your reach into your local community as well as link you into valuable local networks. There are many opportunities to develop mutually beneficial partnerships – if you’d like to find out more, [get in touch](#)



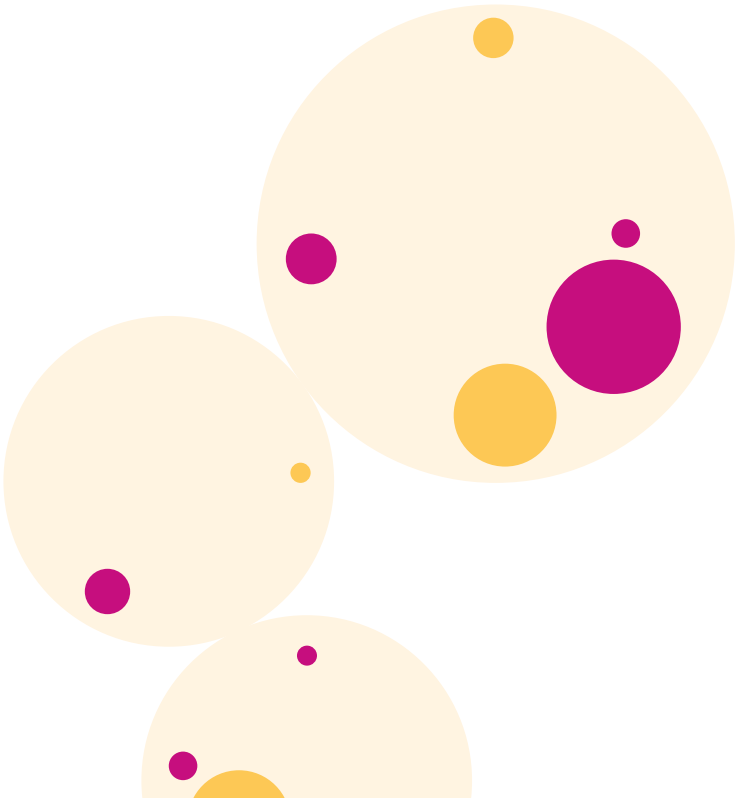
Image credit: Islington Giving

“Communities are being battered by permanent crisis.”

3. If you don’t have a scheme but would like to explore setting one up take up our offer of support.

You might work at a local authority, funder, or civil society organisation. We can support you to build up your initial ideas and partnerships to get a giving scheme off the ground

- 4. **For those interested in wider learning about place based giving**, check out [our latest resources](#) and publications. The areas we live are constantly changing, with new relationships, connections and pressures all impacting on the way we think about ‘place’. As a network we want to learn about how to increase our reach, test new ways of working and take risks, while staying true to the underlying principles of local giving. If you’d like to be part of this journey, we’d love to hear from you!



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, contact us at 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](#).



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