

PARTICIPATORY GRANT GIVING DURING COVID-19

A REVIEW, JULY 2020



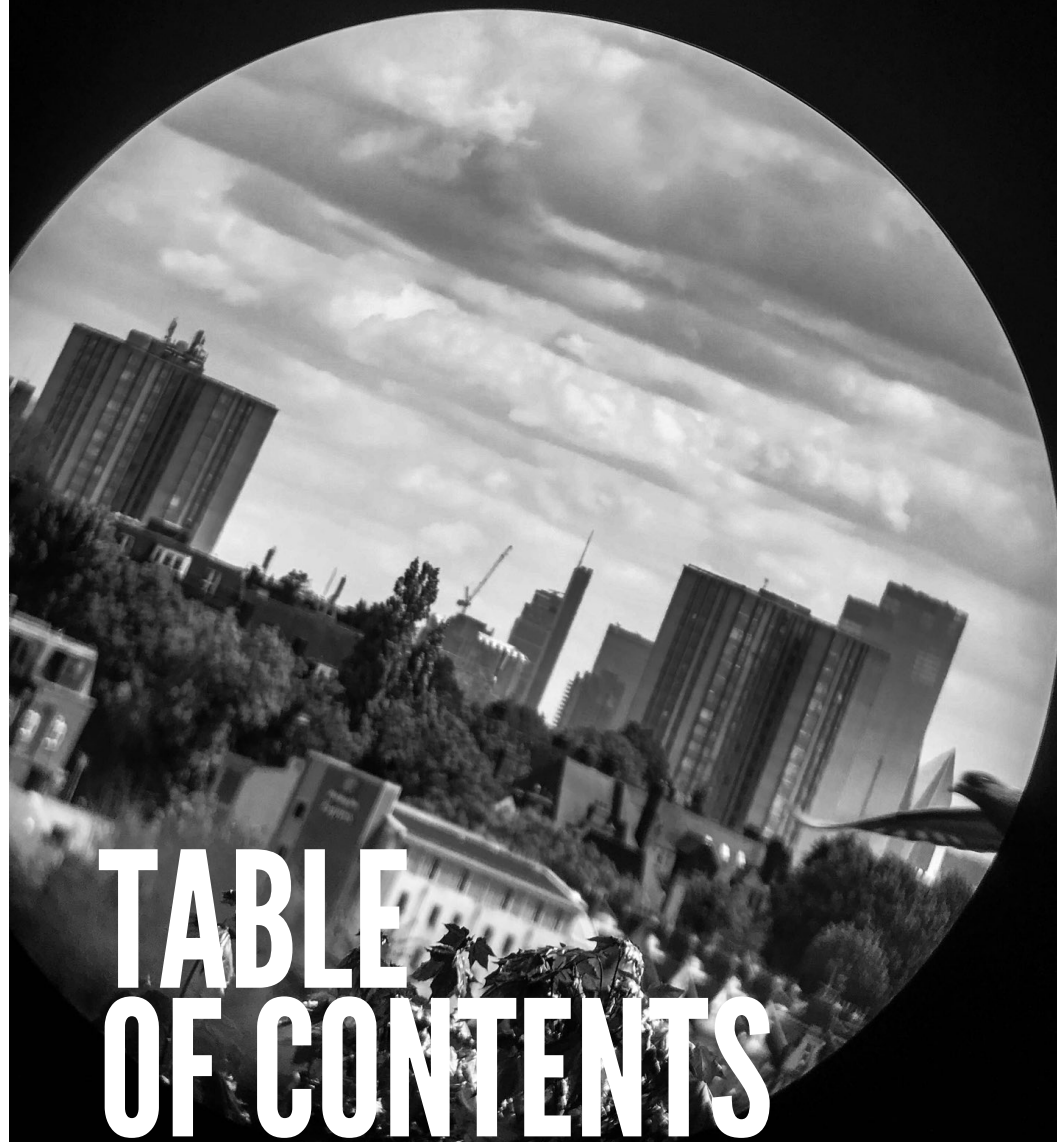


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All these photos have been taken during lockdown by young people in Camden, as part of Sir Hubert von Herkomer Arts Foundation's 'Life in Lockdown' photography project which supports young people and families living in disadvantaged situations. The project was funded by the first round of the COVID-19 emergency fund.

Aleksandra Barona aged 17

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Time to reflect

Camden is a borough of inequalities and COVID-19 has exasperated these inequalities. When lockdown hit in April, members of our community found themselves in vulnerable situations, and civil society lacked much of the funding it needed to carry on delivering essential services. In March we opened an appeal to raise money to support the short term needs of civil society, with the aim to support the additional demand for services and to also cover lost income. This led to two COVID-19 emergency grant giving rounds. We were also able to continue offering our 'business as usual' grant programmes in order to carry on funding essential local grassroots organisations who do invaluable work in the community.

Despite the economic hardships being exacerbated, throughout this crisis we have seen huge community momentum. The success of our emergency appeal showed us that all sectors saw the importance of looking out for the local community. We also received many individual donations (the average amount being £100!), showing us that residents felt a sense of connection and responsibility for their borough. This time has highlighted the strength of our communities but also the huge amount of work that is still needed to reset and rebuild, and we aim to put those who might feel powerless at the centre of this process.

Put together by two volunteers, the following review is a result of a series of 12 conversations with our community of panelists, grantees and funders (businesses, local authority and individuals) about the COVID-19 emergency response. We hope that the findings are helpful to anyone who is interested in or considering using a participatory grant giving model.



ANETA HAMSRYSAK

COVID-19 Emergency Fund

During the COVID-19 crisis our usual grant-giving process had to adapt to the needs and limitations of the current situation. We needed to quickly raise and distribute money through our COVID-19 emergency fund to help members of the community most at need. We were overwhelmed by the response and donations from our community, resulting in us being able to offer **£347,691** of grants during the crisis. During the first round we offered **£150,320** to provide emergency relief to the community. The second round had more specific criteria, and we awarded **£197,371** to organisations with an average income less than 200K or organisations with a track record of offering specialised services for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Camden.

ACROSS BOTH ROUNDS:

75

ORGANISATIONS FUNDED

7

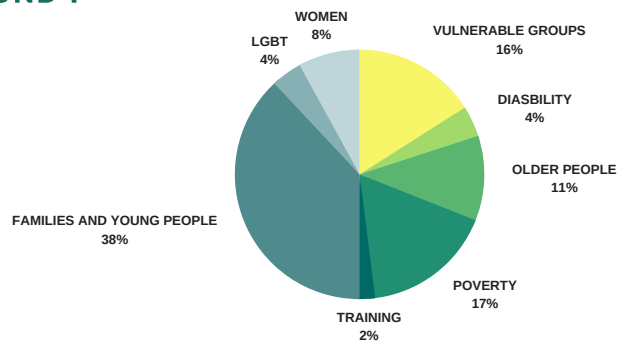
PANELISTS EMPLOYED (ALL PAID LLW)

£347,691

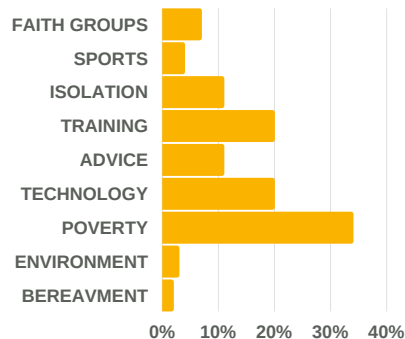
AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED

ORGANISATIONS FUNDED:

ROUND 1



ROUND 2



43%

ORGANISATIONS FUNDED FOCUS ON BAME COMMUNITIES

Business as usual

We opened all of our spring fund programmes as planned and our HS2, Future Changemakers and Kings Cross panellists continued to allocate grants during the crisis too. We decided to adapt the criteria for our 'business as usual' grants to ensure applicants were also taking into consideration the COVID-19 crisis. All together, since April, we had our busiest ever grant giving period.

1.2 M

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED

119

GRANTS GIVEN

26

PANELISTS EMPLOYED

Participatory grant-giving process during COVID-19

All decisions as to who were funded were made using participatory grant giving. The model is simple, decisions about where money goes in the community should be made by people living in that community and have knowledge of local issues and services. During the crisis our participatory funding process changed slightly to adapt to the current situation and enable us to move quickly to make money available.

Panel Recruitment

Staff reached out to individuals who had previously been on our panels. All these panelists had been living through the hardships caused by COVID-19 in the local area. They were already trained and experienced, which meant we were able to move quickly. Our panelists are always paid London Living Wage.

Open Fund to Applicants

The aim of the first round of funding was to provide financial support to services in Camden under threat from the COVID-19 outbreak. The criteria was loose, covering 4 key areas, to make sure the money was available to address the local need. A close deadline was set so the money could reach services quickly.

Money Awarded

The money was quickly awarded to the successful applicants. Staff made sure to keep in contact with grantees and to offer feedback to those who were unsuccessful.

Fundraising - Emergency Appeal

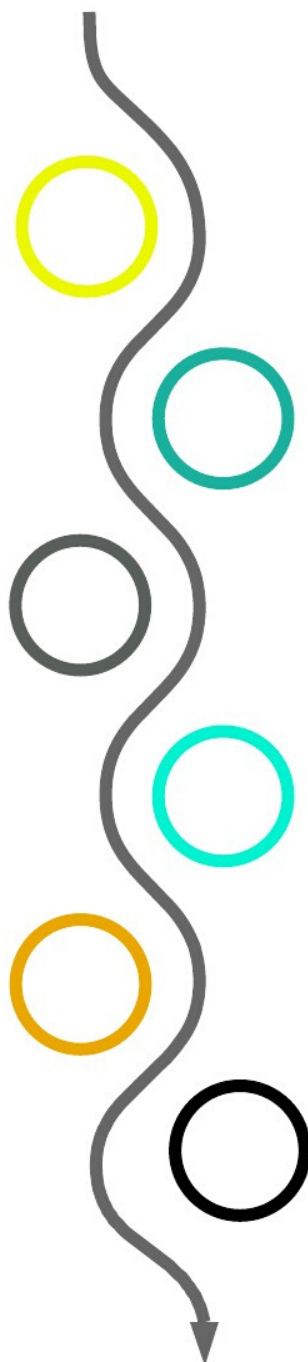
Staff put together an emergency appeal for donations. They reached out to businesses and local authority who had been supporters in the past, and also to individuals living in the local area. Staff explored more innovative fundraising methods, relevant to the current situation.

Review of Applications

After the deadline, trustees delegated the decision making to the panel. The panel members came together to review the applications via video chat. They shared their opinions and decided on outcomes.

Reflect and Repeat

Camden Giving reflected on the applications and the specific needs in the area. Staff decided to continue fundraising for second round of grant giving with a more select criteria. The Future Changemakers Panel also decided to change the focus of their youth fund to COVID-19 related issues.



10 things we were told by our funders, community panels and grantees

1

They felt valued and safe during the process

Panel members have said that the staff at Camden Giving facilitated a safe online space with ground rules where they felt safe and valued.

2

Funding grassroots organisations is essential

Funders, grantees and panel members alike expressed the importance of giving money directly to the community in a times of crisis.

3

Funders trust Camden Giving as experts in the community

Camden Giving has a strong reputation in the community as being experts in whats happening in the community, with a strong grass routes presence. They were willing to give up control to make sure money goes to those most at need.

4

The community knows what's best for the community

Members of our community expressed commitment to the participatory grant-making model. During COVID-19 it is even more important that we hear the voices of those who are being most affected.

5

Panelists felt empowered to continue to change their community

Members of the panel said being involved in local decisions made them feel empowered to continue to improve services in their area.

6

COVID-19 has highlighted local inequalities

COVID-19 has been a moment of solidarity, but it has also shown the stark inequalities within our community and highlighted those most at risk.

7

Good training pays off

All panel members attend a training session before sitting on the panel. Panel members reported that the training was extremely helpful in making them feel comfortable and at ease in the role.

8

The application process was simple and quick

Grantees expressed that the application process was simple and enabled them to explain their projects without having to answer too many questions.

9

Panelists were keen to support those left out of Govt. funding

Panelists wanted to make up for gaps in Government funding and made sure to prioritise those who may have fallen through the cracks.

10

Young people are worried about their future

The young people in our community say they are worried about what COVID-19 will mean for their future in terms of employment and services available to them.

5 ways the participatory grant giving model works differently

1

Whole community involvement

The emergency response involved input from all sectors of the community, whether it was donations, voluntary support or becoming a member of the panel.

2

Empowers those traditionally left out of decision making

Instead of just involving those with lots of power, the nature of our panel recruitment and outreach aims to involve those who may have not been given many opportunities in decision making.

3

Trustees deligate decision to panel

Unlike many grant makers, our trustees devolved their decision making power to a panel of Camden residents for each fund. Our panel members reflect the diversity and different experiences in the community.

4

Transparent, democratic decision making

At the panel meeting, panellists discuss each application and judge it against set criteria. Unsuccessful applicants are given thorough and immediate feedback.

5

Grantees feel they are judged on their local impact

Grantees expressed that the nature of participatory funding meant that instead of being judged just on their ability to complete a form, they felt like they were also being judged on their proven contribution to the local community,



5 things we have learnt during the crisis

1

Funders thought it was more essential than ever to give directly to the community

During this crisis we learnt that funders feel that participatory funding enables them to make sure they are being responsive to the actual needs in the community they operate within.

3

Demand for funding has increased

Our community panels were faced with difficult decisions and were unable to support some much needed work. As we go forward we want to work with applicants who are committed to Camden but struggling to access funding to ensure the experience is as dignified and painless as possible.

2

A strong social media presence is essential

During this time we have managed to utilise our social media account to reach out to individuals for donations and keep members of the community up to date with what we are doing. We saw a huge amount of individual donations, showing that even in hard times people were looking beyond their individual needs.

4

People with low levels of power feel increasingly powerless

Members of our community expressed that COVID-19 uncovered feelings of powerlessness and being unable to control their lives. Young people in particular felt there were fewer ways they could influence positive change.

5

Having a specific criteria is helpful

For our first COVID funding round we had a multitude of applications. We learnt that a more specific criteria is helpful where possible, as it allows the panel to channel money directly in to organisations working with those most in need.



Lewis Hamsryszak, age:10

Voices from our community

Camden is made up of a unique and diverse community. A community housing a wide range of ages, ethnicities, and qualities, all contributing to creating the innovative and multicultural environment that we call home. Our community is Camden Giving and without the support and dedication from local residents, grassroots organisations and supporting business/local authority the COVID-19 emergency response would not have been possible. Here's what they had to say.

Panelists



YASMIN FARAH
FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS
PANEL

"The Future ChangeMakers panel is unique because we are speaking from our own experiences, which I think just makes us that little bit more aware of the issues that are important because often it's a friend that has gone through something or a family member or sometimes even yourself. I think this is the best way to address issues, by talking to the people that are actually facing them. I feel like we do a good job of covering a wide scope of issues because we're such a diverse panel of people from all over Camden"

"Camden Giving has moved fast, swiftly, and made it so pain free for organisations to receive the funds needed in order to get emergency support out to those who require it most! Their timing and ability to move with speed during this crisis has been amazing. Working with them has been a breath of fresh air! At a time where I felt like a lone wolf trying to do something that either didn't exist or that people generally weren't interested in, I came to realise that there's a whole army of organisations doing similar things or projects that will benefit the community, its truly been an eye opening experience"



ADAM KHALID
COVID-EMERGENCY PANEL



Grantees

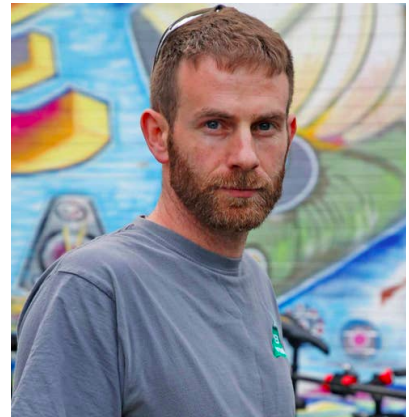


AMY HAGEMANN

EDITH NEVILLE PRIMARY
SCHOOL

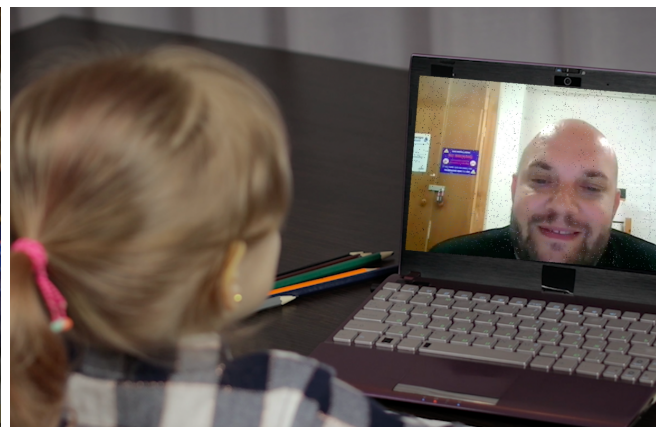
"We'd been unsuccessful for funding the previous month and so were really close to losing all hope, but Camden Giving were really positive and encouraged me to put forward the bid! Working with Camden Giving was really speedy and the turnaround was so quick. We put in the bid and then within a couple of weeks the money was in the bank and we were able to send out tech within three days."

"The process was very straightforward and quick, I think if anything they were chasing me to say they wanted to pay the funds into our account! It was quite refreshing because there was another organisation we'd dealt with who were quite big and were just completely swamped during this time, it took them about 8 weeks to get back to us and when they did we were unsuccessful. But with Camden Giving I was notified within two or three days. It felt as though you were being judged on your impact within the borough rather than your ability to write a funding bid."



TONY QUINN

YES OUTDOORS



<https://yesoutdoors.co.uk/>

Funders



SHAPARAK RAHIMI
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER -
LENDLEASE

“Lendlease really values the research and outreach that Camden Giving does, speaking directly to local people and organisations that work with some of the most disadvantaged groups in the borough and sharing the insights that come from those conversations. I always learn something new when speaking to colleagues from Camden Giving, and it helps me better understand the real challenges that people are facing, and the perspectives that local charities and grassroots organisations have on those issues.”

"It felt like Camden Giving was really buttoned up with their response to the COVID-19 crisis, and you can see the value of them being so close to the ground by the impact of their microgrants to small organisations.

We hope to enable local partners through our work with Camden Giving, and do some really innovative work on the ground - we fully expect to learn a lot from the process, and be ambassadors for this kind of participatory approach."



ZOE STERN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEAD
GOOGLE

"I think Camden Giving's model is a good way of getting money into grassroots communities quite quickly, the model is based on being able to demonstrate what the need is and how it can be responded to, and there's plenty of need in Camden.

It's always incredible to see the level of local knowledge and insight that people involved with Camden Giving bring to the table, I think it helps to shift the power dynamic a little bit. "



ROSIE THARP
COMMUNITY PARTNER
CAMDEN COUNCIL



The COVID-19 emergency response was only made possible by the support and dedication from so many. We wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone involved

DONORS:

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION
ARGENT
JAMES THORNTON DAF
VITOL
REBECCA HASHAW FAMILY FOUNDATION
LENDLEASE & PARTNERS
GOOGLE
AND MANY KIND INDIVIDUALS



PANELISTS:

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND

HAROUN AL-GONED
RANYA LAMANI
HILLARY BAUER
TAMARA JAMAL
ABD ALMOUSTAFA
ADAM KHALID
BEA FURRE

FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS

ABDISAMED ABDI
ABUBAKAR MOHAMED
ANISAH RAHMAN
HAROUN AL-GONED
HICHAM KEROM DAVY
JAMEEUL REMON MIAH
JIMMY LEE-GRAIN
KAHEYLLA JAUAD-LAFAYETTE
KAMERUN WASIM MIAH
LEANNE JAUAD-SEQUEIRA
RAZAN MOHAMED
RIMA MOHAMED
SAID TAHIR
YASMIN FARAH

KX FUND

ABEDA AHMED
ADAM SERES
HODA NUR
JASMINE KING
LEO MIRANI
MARYAM SUFI
RAFAT SAID
WENDE ROSERIE
XIANSHUANG ZHANG

HS2 FUND

GREG WARD
DANNY BEALES
RANYA LAMANI
HILLARY BAUER
LOYAS MIAH

GRANTEES:

COVID EMERGENCY FUND ROUND 1
Abbey Community Centre
Bengali Workers Association
Camden Carers Centre
Clean Break
Coram's Fields
Holborn Community Association
Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre
Kentish Town City Farm
Kentish Town Community Centre
Khulisa
Latin American House
Little Village
London Irish Centre
North London Cares
NW5 Community Play Project
Opening Doors
RAaW Foundation
Sir Hubert Von Herkomer Arts Foundation
Somers Town Community Association
Songhaven
St. Pancras Way Tenants and Residents Association
STORE Schools & Projects CIC
The Voices of England's Lane
The Whitefield Charity SK Corporation (Soup Kitchen London) -
The Winchester Project
Unity Works Social Enterprises
Urban Community Projects
Urban Outdoors London
YES Outdoors

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND ROUND 2

Acland Burghley School Trust
African Health Forum (AHF)
African Physical Training Organisation (APTO)
Al-Rahman Mosque and Education Centre
Bloomsbury Football Foundation
Bereavement Service
Carlton Primary School
Cooperation Kentish Town
Doorstep Homeless Families Project
EAZY INNOVATIONS C.I.C.
Edith Neville Primary School and Family Centre
First Step Action
Fleet Primary School
Girlguiding St Pancras
Hands On Hand Out
Heath Hands
Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre
in2scienceUK
Ingestre Community Centre
Kentish Town Improvement Fund
King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association (KCBNA)
Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society
Martsang Kagyu London Buddhist Centre
Mitzvah Day
NW5 Community Play Project (NW5 Project)
PASCAL THEATRE COMPANY
Pro Touch SA CIC
Qalam Education Resource Centre Ltd
QCCA (Queen's Crescent Community Association)
Regent High School
Samuel Lithgow Youth Centre (SLYC)
Somali Community Centre
Somali Community Conversation
Starting Out Charity Kindness Offensive
St Patricks Catholic Primary School
SYDRC

The Kids Network
The Kosmos Centre (formally Camden Cypriot Women's Org)
The Lighthouse London Community Trust
The Swiss Church in London
The Third Age Project
Training Link
True Access
West Hampstead Covid-19 Community Response Group in partnership with FoodCycle.
West Hampstead Women's Centre
YourBikeProject

HS2 CAMDEN FUND

C4WS Winter Night Shelter - Shelter Coordination
My Future Mentoring Support in Camden
Euston Street Population Wellbeing Project
Clarkson Row and Mornington Place Greening
Community Activity Hub: Active Lives, Active Minds!
#FightTogether- Bringing young women and girls together to fight inactivity, loneliness and self doubt
Change Up Project
Songhaven At Home
Volunteering at Camley Street
Training Link Adult Literacy Project and Drop-in session
Camden Mobile Food Bank
Bike Project
Job Hub Links
3 Starts Limited

FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS

Action Youth Boxing Intervention
Coram's Fields
Project 10/10
Pro Touch SA CIC
QCCA (Queen's Crescent Community Association)
SIR HUBERT VON HERKOMER ARTS FOUNDATION
SMALL GREEN SHOOTS
Somali Youth Development Resource Centre
STORE Schools and Projects CIC
The h.club Creative Foundation
The Sapphire Foundation (Trading as The Sapphire Community Group)
Unloc (in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College + Visionnaires)
YourBikeProject CIC

KX FUND

Action Youth Boxing Intervention
Arts 4 Dementia
Bloomsbury Football Foundation
British Somali Community Centre
C4WS Homeless Project
Calthorpe Community Garden
Coram's Fields
King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association (KCBNA)
North London Cares
Platform Cricket (THYSF)
Sankofa Storytelling Arts
SMALL GREEN SHOOTS
STORE Schools and Projects CIC
Third Age Project
Urban Outdoors London
Women@thewell