

we
make
Camden

WE MAKE CAMDEN KIT REPORT: YEAR 1



& CAMDEN
GIVING



Camden

Introduction

The We Make Camden Kit was established in 2021 in partnership with Camden Giving, Camden Council and Camden's Communities, to ensure that together by 2030, Camden borough's Renewal Commission Core Missions are achieved. In order to succeed, the We Make Camden Kit provides funding, resource and skills to support residents and community organisations to bring ideas to life and run activities that make Camden a better place for everyone.

The We Make Camden Kit is a collaborative programme, supported by generous individuals, funders, and supporters who are giving time, funding, resource and skills to enable Camden communities to run projects across the borough.

We are grateful to our collective of supporters and donors who have made a contribution towards the We Make Camden Kit, to ensure we can continue getting the vital funding needed out to our communities that focus on the Core Missions below.

SNAPSHOT OF YEAR 1

12

PANELLISTS RECRUITED

88

GRANTS AWARDED

6

CONTINUATION GRANTS

£215,270

AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED

Camden's young people should have opportunities for education, happiness, health and to contribute to making Camden a better place. Our community panel want to fund projects that are designed with or by young people.



Opportunities for young people



Health and sustainability of estates

The places we live should be vibrant and contributing the health of our planet. Be that neighbours growing herbs together, community walking groups or arts projects.

Making leadership positions more accessible and inclusive to people from a wide range of backgrounds by removing traditional barriers to entry and to develop and promote modern and inclusive leadership spaces.



Diversity in positions of power



Food poverty and sustainability

Everyone deserves to eat well, and issues surrounding our food systems are becoming increasingly urgent. Our community panel want to give grants to experimental ideas, new partnerships, entrepreneurial activity and community-led activities responding to food poverty.

Our Participatory Process & Timeline

Moving quickly is critical in getting funding out to grassroots civic action because it responds to ever-evolving local needs within our communities. Because of our participatory approach, we are able to do just this. Our Trustees delegate all decisions on grant awards to our community panel, which means they can meet fortnightly at times that work for them and around other commitments - such as work, studies, childcare, recreational activities - to award grants that serve a diverse range of community initiatives and we can process grant payments rapidly. The Kit has created a unique opportunity for us to explore how local government, civil society & residents can work better together, more equally and rapidly.

This fund came at a time where communities desperately needed opportunities and spaces to reconnect, access food support, have more access to power and leadership, improve the health and sustainability of neighbourhoods and activities to empower and support young people; designed and led by local communities, where quick decisions needed to be made. Our timeline demonstrates how we set-up the We Make Camden Kit during a critical time in the midst of the pandemic and during a very uncertain and volatile time for civil society.



May 2021

Camden Giving secured funding from Camden Council to establish the We Make Camden Kit and the Community Ideas Project

June 2021

Recruited a diverse group of panellists remotely through our networks.
Set-up our Community Ideas Project governance model.

30th June & 7th July 2021

Panel attended weekly evening training sessions via Zoom to design the funding criteria for citizens and charities to apply to. Camden Giving created application forms, grant acceptance forms and guidance.

8th July 2021

Launched the We Make Camden Kit for grants up to £1,500, receiving rolling applications to the fund for 1 year.

28th July 2021

Panel's first grant meeting to make decisions on grants

29th July 2021

Camden Giving sent panel decision outcomes to successful and unsuccessful grantees.

6th August 2021

Our first We Make Camden Kit grantees were paid 100% of the grant

December 2021 - February 2022

Co-designed and launched the Food Fund for charities to apply to, recruiting additional panel members with experience of food inequality to award grants with our existing panel.

Ongoing

The panel attend fortnightly panel meetings to award grants to communities until July 2022

The panel also attend additional training sessions to supplement their existing knowledge to aid their decision-making for example participating in a session with equality consultants BRAP focussing on racially-just grantmaking. After their panel term comes to an end in June 2022, they will support with participatory reporting for the grantees they funded and support with recruiting our new panel, sharing their knowledge and wisdom with a new group of panellists in Year 2.

Participatory Decision-Making

We believe funding decisions made residents are much better informed, authentic and meaningful than decisions made on their behalf. Participatory grantmaking works with the deep knowledge that communities have, taking in to consideration millions of factors that real lives teach us. Camden Giving's approach has benefits from being informed by knowledge that traditional grant-making struggles to capture, this ultimately means that funding goes to places where it is most helpful. Camden is made up of a unique and diverse community, housing a wide range of ages, ethnicities, qualities, experiences, all contributing to creating the innovative and multicultural environment that we call home. Our grant-makers represent a wide range of voices, experiences and deep rooted knowledge of gaps in services and opportunities as well as the solutions needed to meet the Core Missions.

Camden Giving's role is to manage all the promotion of our grant programmes, supporting Camden residents and charities through tailored advice and support during their application and grantee journey, grant administration (from recruitment, publishing applications and checking over applications) and supporting the panel throughout their time with us, including providing training, payment, facilitating participatory reporting on the projects they fund and coordinating opportunities beyond their roles as panellists.

We also make sure that appropriate due-diligence is in place for all grantees, including: a robust safeguarding policy, appropriate levels of insurance, good financial management. Though we offer sector knowledge, data and insights to supplement the panels lived experience, it's critical that we do so without influencing their decisions. The community panel have complete autonomy on all of their decisions regarding designing the fund criteria and aims, grant decisions and influencing changes to the way we work.



Hi, **my name is Mujjamil** and I'm a panellist for the We Make Camden Kit.

I have recently finished my A-levels and will be going to uni in September where I will be studying Criminology.

I have lived in Camden all my life and I have seen first-hand the changes that have been implemented in our community and both positive and negative effects of said changes.

I decided to be a part of the panel because **I believe it will give organisations within Camden extra resources** to benefit anyone who needs them.

One change I want to see in Camden is better and **more efficient use of the green space**, for example in the Regents Park estate and Somers Town area there is lots of green space and open areas however I believe it hasn't always been put to good use.

I also **would like to see inclusion** for young people, BAME individuals and those who have disabilities within projects in Camden. I hope this is something project managers who apply for funding keep in mind!

I hope through my involvement in the panel **we can implement change** to benefit all resident in Camden!

We recognise the importance of valuing community panellists time, expertise and economic access and compensate them by way of a financial reimbursement of expenses they could incur, aligned within the London Living Wage, for every session they participate in. Typically grant-makers and staff working at funding organisations, including our staff at Camden Giving, are paid for their time so this addresses the power imbalance between organisational staff and community members.

The We Make Camden Panellists

The We Make Camden Kit brings together a diverse panel of community representatives living in Camden to make decisions on which projects we fund, putting power into the hands of those who understand the challenges best. The Community Panel were recruited via open recruitment and via referrals from Camden's voluntary sector organisations, schools, specialist service providers, existing panellists. All applicants attended an informal interview and were appointed to the board based on their lived experience and commitment to overcoming social divides in Camden. When recruiting to this panel we were particularly looking for people who had not found another way to hold community power. There are 12 residents on the panel, including one from Holborn; anecdotally we know that the group has lived experience of being marginalised because of race, ethnicity, gender and age. The We Make Camden panel have worked together across training sessions, co-designing the grant call-out, deciding which applicants should receive funding and carry out coffee and chat reporting. The panellists participate in around 110 hours of paid sessions across their 1-year terms.

We change the way we work to suit the needs of individuals and value being flexible in our approach around panellists personal lives. Our panellists have to juggle commitments, responsibilities and personal challenges alongside this work which can be demanding and sometimes traumatic, so it's a key pillar of our participatory approach to make sure they are supported and valued. We explore additional support they require that tackles barriers to inclusion and participation, this might be; providing equipment to bridge the digital divide, hosting panel meetings in the evening to ensure people can join after work, school, around childcare, or reimbursing payment in vouchers to ensure it doesn't impact on welfare benefits. It means we can reach residents who are often locked out of opportunities, providing a richer insight into the issues we aim to address.

The panellists are giving grants to people in their own communities, and there's a huge sense of accountability for their communities when they come together to award grants. This adds a significant sense of urgency to their work. The panellists' commitment and determination to show up and making important decisions together has been proven many times throughout the year and we believe our flexibility enables them to participate and access community power in ways they otherwise not have been able to. We've had panellists join meetings from environments and under challenged circumstances that, for traditional funders or similar positions where decision-making takes place, would not be the norm and there would not be a support structure or flexibility in place to allow them to participate.

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There are many opportunities in Camden, however these can be impacted by class divisions as access to the different platforms can be restricted to those from more marginalised groups. This gets in the way of some people being able to pursue their vision and passion as they are not given the help and support they need and it can be difficult to reach those facing hardship and life challenges.

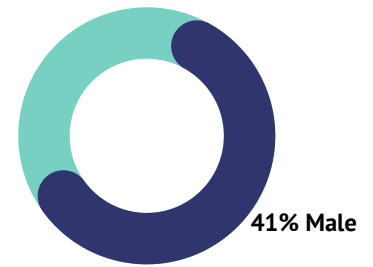
I would like to see teams built up of people with diverse lived experiences to bring great change to their local communities and it's important to encourage those on the ground to use their voice in a positive way to influence their neighbours to unite for change.

Panel Learnings so far

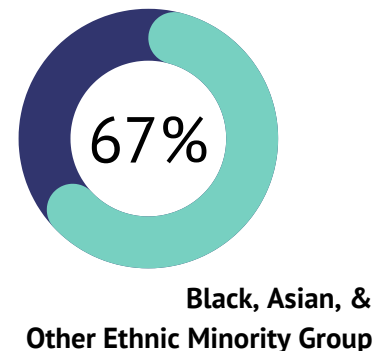
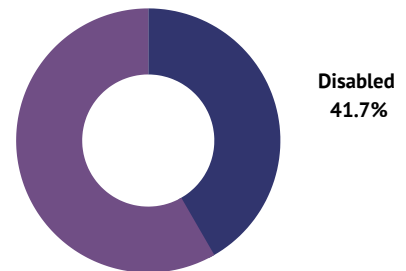
- The panel meet more regularly than any panel we've ever worked with, this has meant the commitment has been too high for some panellists and we are recruiting new panellists to replace them.
- There's more we can do to be accessible to people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments. We're working with a panellist to make changes to this.
- The panel are highly committed, undertaking outreach through their own networks and suggesting changes to the way we work with grantees. Though 51% of projects awarded are aimed at 'Opportunities for Young People' they recognise there is an underrepresentation of young people seeking funding from the kit. So we've started to do more targeted outreach with dedicated services working with young people and going to places young people meet to increase awareness of the funding and support them to apply. The panel are also actively engaging young people in their own networks to apply to run their own and we've seen a significant rise in applications from 16-25 year olds as a result.
- The panel have all been given access to an 'Action Allowance' to take action around the missions themselves, so far 2 have claimed this allowance and we know others plan to do so soon
- We also respond to the panels insights in a number of ways which has informed and evolved our approach and changes to the way we work, for example the panel raised that the financial compensation of the panellists was not reflective of the value and expertise they bring, so from next year we are increasing panel payments. They also raised concerns about giving grants to cover venue hire costs within grantees budgets, whose payments would go back to the council - primary donors of their fund - so introduced them to meet with a Councillor about rents and rates to share their concerns and provide recommendations on how they would like this to change. They also recognised gaps in certain groups applying for grants such as young people, so requested that we do more targeted outreach to engage them.

The We Make Camden Panel self-identified as the following:

59% Female



Non-Disabled
58.3%



These are just a number of ways we work equally together to learn, improve access, inclusion and equitability with the panel and for communities they support through their role.

We will continue working with the year 1 panellists beyond the end of their term to support new panellists by sharing their learnings and knowledge at upcoming training sessions in Summer 2022.

Pathways to Power: Panellists

Participatory grantmaking builds power, connectivity and networks within communities. The value of the process is as important as the outcomes of the grants. So we work with panels beyond their roles as community panellists so they can truly benefit from a rapidly changing city.

We identify individual needs for money, connection and well-being, exploring new opportunities that enable them to gain individualised support and access to other forms of political, economic and community power.

One way we typically work is to identify pathways for panellists to access further grant-making opportunities beyond Camden Giving, to make room for other residents to hold decision-making powers. 6 of the We Make Camden Panel we're already involved with Camden Giving in some capacity before their role as community panellist for the kit, including individuals from our Young Euston Voices programme, Inclusive Fund Panellists, and former grantees. But these panellists have direct insights into the Camden Mission aims and represent under-represented voices and experiences that we might otherwise not have been able to recruit, and provided a longer-term access to leadership and financial participation.

The Participatory Grant-Making model is gaining traction across the globe. But more locally, many funders working in London, including London Funders, Botnar Foundation, BBC Children In Need and National Lottery Community Fund to name a few, are seeking our panellists knowledge to learn about the practicalities of our participatory grant-making approach, to enhance their grant-making and work better together with residents experiencing challenges they exist to tackle through their funding. So we try and connect our We Make Camden Panel to paid opportunities with other grant-giving organisations to apply their skills and share learning on, but we ensure it's done in a non-tokenistic, dignified way. For example, one of our panellists was paid to participate in a panel discussion with ACF about the importance and impact of participatory grant-making on Asylum, refugee and immigrant communities.



The panel also feel a shared sense of connectivity and empowerment to support one another, there's a desire to signpost each other to opportunities, data and activities they might not otherwise have heard about. The We Make Camden community panel are very active in their WhatsApp group with signposting each other to opportunities, events, courses and data they know others might benefit from. Their signposting includes things like accessing funding, community choirs and fencing classes, presenting with confidence workshops, access to space, International Womens Day crafting, greening and arts workshops, and event to external datasets that can supplement their decision making.

We have also engaged the panel in other paid opportunities that they've identified as a priority for them to enhance their economic participation, such as sharing job opportunities tailored to their needs.

One panellist who wanted to be involved in choir sessions as a way to connect to others over a shared interest, so we connected them directly with various choirs, including some of our grantees, across Camden which they explored as a result.

We also shared our policy templates for one panellist who recently became a Trustee at an arts charity, so they had an existing resource to support them in their role without having to spend a significant amount of their own time to research and create new policies.

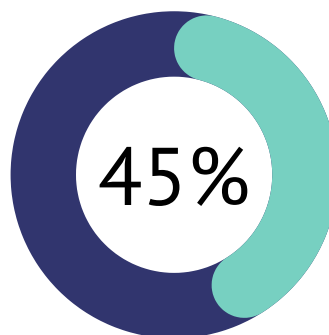
The Community Ideas Project

It's impossible to achieve these missions without whole community participation. So Camden Giving work to empower and support Camden residents, beyond the work with our panellists, so that they can access funding from The Kit and have the resources to run their own projects for their neighbours and peers. This is our first ever funding programme where the panel meet fortnightly to award grants on a rolling basis and award grants to individual citizens. It's proved to be a successful model for empowering and enabling grassroots action to take place all over the borough rapidly, bringing new ideas and pilot projects led by residents to life. But we know that after receiving funding residents often need a high level of support to bring a project to fruition. This is how the Community Ideas Project was born and is the critical mechanism that enables us to provide grant funding to individuals to take their ideas and bring them to life.

This is the first time we've set-up a fund that enables individuals to access grant funding, so we had to ensure we had a process in place to make this possible. We set up the Community Ideas Project as a Community Interest Company (independent from Camden Giving) with a separate bank account, governing model and insurance, as a way to hold grant funding awarded by the We Make Camden Panel, to be able to distribute grants to individual residents to run their projects, without needing to be affiliated with a registered charity.

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In participating in the application process and its subsequent meetings we have found the process very positive. Communication between us and members of your team has been prompt. Everybody on the council side has been enthusiastic and genuinely excited about what we are trying to achieve which has been very uplifting. We've felt the support with our project and believe any additional help will be provided if we ask!



Of the 88 We Make Camden grants awarded, almost half of these are supporting individual residents

The Community Ideas Project provides flexible but vital infrastructure support to help the projects succeed. This includes:

- High level 121 support advising residents (and groups of residents) to apply to Camden Giving for funding.
- Receiving funding into The Community Ideas Project bank account and then covering residents' expenses and the costs of their ideas
- Providing safeguarding training, templates, DBS and insurance for events and activities where necessary, and ensuring Camden residents are well-informed about the procedures they need in place.
- Supporting high levels of safeguarding and health and safety guidance for community projects, including carrying out DBS checks for relevant events and activities.
- Advising individuals on overcoming obstacles
- Active outreach to raise awareness about the opportunity
- Ideation sessions to determine which project and mission to apply for
- Support with filling out online application forms and alternative ways to apply, particularly for individuals with additional needs
- Support to create budget templates
- Contact doesn't drop off after an individual is funded, after supporting them with due diligence we then link them in with connections they need e.g. space, council buddying support, specialist volunteering.



Citizen Participation

We anticipated there would be significant demand from Camden citizens seeking funding for community projects, so we recruited Yasmin, our Community Ideas Project Lead, to manage this. Yasmin's relatable knowledge and experience of what communities need to equitably access grants to run projects, from her experience as both a former Future Changemakers panellist and Camden resident, is instrumental in making the We Make Camden Kit the success we see today.

Yasmin is the first point of contact for many citizens seeking funding through the kit. This might be setting up 121 chats with them to talk through their initial ideas, help them to focus and refine them so it's more manageable, realistic and easier to turn into a grant application. Where there is a barrier to writing a funding bid, she supports them to overcome this. For example, Yasmin has met with applicants that prefer to speak Somali and she's been able to translate for them, turning their ideas into a plan to bring to the panel. One grantee regularly communicates in Somali and Yasmin has supported her to come back and apply for a continuation grant.

She also interviewed an applicant, who wasn't able to use our online application form, reading over each question in the application form and directly inputting a verbatim account of their answers so that their application could be considered by the panel. The resident successfully awarded a grant through Yasmin's support. Yasmin spoke at a Community Champions virtual event with disability charity Elfrida Rathbone attended by disabled residents, one citizen found out that she could apply for funding for her work. She needed additional support to apply for funding, so Yasmin visited Elfrida to help her plan her project and write up her application. She was subsequently successfully funded for 'The Real Food Project'.

She's set-up a Council buddying system with the notion that if residents have identified specific needs or challenges, they are connected with someone from the council to help: unlock barriers and problem solve; provide practical resources i.e. project plans, social media templates; provide their own knowledge and guidance from working in Camden; accesses information and support from specific council services; introductions to voluntary community organisations; support with expanding projects, establishing clear and appropriate next steps. Currently there are **6 residents** buddied up with another 2 more in progress. This includes support with volunteer management, reviewing their project plan, budgeting and thinking about the sustainability of projects in the long term.



Yasmin, Community Ideas Project Lead

So far, Yasmin has ran **23 outreach sessions** to ensure that residents know that this opportunity exists, but also enables us to reach cold spots were not funding - geographically, by type of activity, by type of group or protected characteristic. Examples include a pop-up at Chalcots Estate, visit to Somali Community Centre, attending the Think & Do Social Action week drop in, speaking to residents at Zad Cafe. We work with referral partners who can help us reach underfunded communities we're not yet reaching such as young people through Corams, disabled residents with Elfrida Rathbone, via various Community Centres.

There are often lots more 1:1 chats off the back of these events and we've seen a correlation between the outreach sessions and tailored support provided and the rise in the number of citizen applications the panel receive afterwards. Of these outreach sessions alone, **11 residents** went onto successfully being awarded a grant after Yasmin provided additional support with their application. Of the total **36 citizen grants**, she has provided tailored advice and support to **28 of the residents**, two of which have received continuation grants from the panel. She is also currently supporting a further **17 citizens** to apply through 121 chats including a digital drop-in with KCBNA to engage young people to apply.

Reflections: Community Ideas Project

Year one of the We Make Camden Kit has only reinforced the importance of putting trust in the knowledge of our community members; giving them agency, autonomy and a platform to make decisions that are best for their neighbourhood, which we can see reflected in the diverse projects supported highlighted further on in the report. The fact these projects are funded by a panel of community representatives who understand where the gaps are and what is needed to meet the missions is such an important element to this participatory grant-making approach. It ensures that the unique, creative and hyper-local knowledge of our citizens can be brought together for Camden's communities to participate in community-based social action.

We know that citizen projects can often take longer to get started because of many factors, these include but aren't limited to:

- setting up bank account for the first time;
- working out if or how paying them into personal bank accounts affects welfare and finding alternative solutions to payments;
- coordinating safeguarding training, DBS checks and Public Liability Insurance - paid for by Camden Giving - around their availabilities and support needs;
- requiring further project development support from idea to launch for example, getting flyers designed and marketing materials sent, engaging communities they want to support, recruiting volunteers or sourcing extra support and resource to run activities;
- finding spaces that fit within their budget such as delivery space, creative spaces, event space, meeting rooms.

But we work flexibly to change and adapt the way we work, to ensure that everyone can benefit from the We Make Camden Kit thanks to Yasmin's time, knowledge and creative problem solving.



We try and change the way we work to enable residents to still access funding. For example we know that some residents in receipt of benefits are severely impacted by receiving income into their personal bank accounts, so we find alternative ways to process their grants so it doesn't have a negative implication on their personal income. The support is tailored and flexible to meet their individual needs but might include paying them in vouchers, or the Community Ideas Project to hold the grant and purchase items on their behalf using their grant funds, for example.

We also know once a grant has been awarded there can be challenges with delivering projects for the first time. So Yasmin brings the citizens requests for connections that they need to deliver their projects more easily to weekly team meetings, with the wider Camden Giving team, where we work collaboratively to find solutions together. We support them to unlock and access assets and knowledge to enhance their work, opening networks to support with project delivery, coordinating space for them, linking into volunteers and access to courses. Due to the high level of 1:1 support, Yasmin really gets to know our grantees, their needs and their personal interests. Because of this, she is also able to share opportunities that they are suited to outside of their project work as part of our Empowering Connections work.



Voices from our Citizen Grantees

Citizen-led projects that are funded by their neighbours and peers who trust them to run projects without having barriers they would face applying for funding elsewhere - such as needing a 'track record', having a formal governance model or organisation bank account and being completely new to grant-writing - opens up more equitable access to grants and wraparound support. It simultaneously improves social mobility, confidence, and improves their prospects of attracting additional funding to scale-up and continue their activities which we have already seen in the first year of We Make Camden.

One resident grantee, Roseangela, received £1,500 to deliver a series of holistic therapy workshops for women to help them to regain their confidence and self esteem and improve wellbeing in a calm, informal environment. She has delivered motivational talks alongside short demonstrations on holistic techniques that helps them with relaxation such as reflexology hand reflexology, meditation, and personal styling.

But before she could get started, Roseangela needed further support to be able to deliver her project, which included designing and producing marketing materials such as leaflets, as well as securing a space to deliver the project from. These were both vital assets to ensure other Camden residents knew about the project and having somewhere safe and accessible to deliver it from for the women-only workshops. But equally, like many citizen grantees, she had a gap in her skills-set preventing her from create engaging leaflets and lacked the networks to access free space.

This is where Yasmin intervened to ensure she could deliver on her grant, by seeking out support from our networks to bridge this gap. We introduced her to British Land and Old Diorama Arts Centre who have both provided her with free space for her sessions. We also introduced her to a fashion designer who wanted to take part in a workshop around empowering women through fashion as a volunteer. Yasmin also supported with writing application form and provided 1:1 canva training session so that she could produce her own leaflets for her sessions (based on a template created by the council via their buddying system).



“

The support and the kindness from you all at Camden giving is so valuable to me, I was a bit stuck because I did not know how to start, not having a place and being not so good at using the computers and social media. I am so happy that you all like my small project.

For someone like me who has never done anything like this it is a big challenge, especially doing it alone. But the support of all the people I have met so far is amazing. They are supportive, helpful, really listen to you. They are always ready to help and direct you to the best of their knowledge and encourage you. Once, I met them in person and they made me feel welcome and at ease. I am expressing gratitude to Camden giving. And Camden.

I have loved the whole process starting with the creation of the project and organising the workshop. I thank the lovely borough of Camden who gives the possibility to people like me with limited resources to develop ideas. As well as Camden giving' staff who are fabulous. Thank you to Old Diorama for accepting and welcoming, me in their lovely studios. I have had the pleasure to meet up with Rose at Regents Place as well and she has offered me a place from where I can deliver my workshops and help with my leaflets.

Reflections: Community Ideas Project Lead

We know there's more to be done to ensure there are longer-term changes to break down barriers and upskill citizens to lead their own projects. Our Community Ideas Project Lead Yasmin shares more about what is needed to further shift powers for sustainable and meaningful change in the funding sector, and beyond.

1) THE PRESSURES OF TIME AND KNOWLEDGE

Many people pursue social action initiatives on top of their everyday lives and responsibilities and in most occasions, on a voluntary basis. Although being very stretched for time they still make the time to run community projects are fuelled by their passion for doing good. This doesn't leave much room for research into funding opportunities, and even less room for growth, training sessions and fundraising support. Running on passion alone is not sustainable.

It's really important that we simplify the application process and provide 1:1 support where we can, especially for those that don't have experience with funding processes. When Camden citizens are funded through the Kit they also receive support with safeguarding, insurance, DBS checks and finding the right connections, freeing up more of their time for the important work they're doing on the ground.

Running on passion alone is not sustainable. It's really important that we simplify the application process and provide 1:1 support where we can.

2) BUILDING TRUST AND EMBRACING FLEXIBILITY

The work being done by those at the heart of community projects is often informed by personal experiences of the greatest inequalities. For individuals and organisations that are all too familiar with systemic failures, it is vital that we work to be different. We need more opportunities that allow people to be flexible, whether this means applying to cover the unglamorous core costs that make their projects possible, or adapting the delivery of their projects to respond to the issues and being trusted to do so.

Embracing a flexible spirit will encourage people to have more confidence in funders. This is even more crucial during a global pandemic where financial hits and the physical and mental health challenges have been harder than ever.

3) CHANGE BEYOND FUNDERS

Community leaders who are vulnerable to burnout or worse should not have to navigate a world that's littered with inequalities. Someone who is keen to run a community project shouldn't have to worry about a grant payment affecting their benefits schedule. Wanting to do good shouldn't compromise a person's health and wellbeing. People are at a disadvantage from the outset and underlying issues within social and economic systems need to be addressed.

In a world where the problems are so deeply rooted, how can the most un-heard voices in our communities be the ones steering the change?



Food To Change Fund

We know that not everyone in Camden has the access, facilities or security to eat well every day. Thousands of people in Camden experience moderate or high levels of food insecurity. People from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds, people living with a disability and lone parents are more likely to experience the food poverty that goes along with this due to societal inequality, lack of opportunities, and low paid work.

Our existing panellists wanted to change that, so we set-up an extension to the existing We Make Camden Kit in Winter 2021 as the 'Food To Change Fund' to support community organisations involved in tackling food inaccessibility, to deliver food poverty services plus wraparound support to make longer term change in residents' lives.

This was only possible with help from people in our community who understand these deep-rooted challenges and we recognised there was a gap in our existing panels direct knowledge of food inequality. So we recruited an additional 5 residents to the We Make Camden Kit to support us with designing the Food Fund criteria and application form questions using their own experiences.

The existing panel members and the new panellists met to work through this together over a series of training sessions, where external guests from the Food Poverty Alliance also joined to provide data on wider food inequality challenges in Camden, that helped to supplement their own knowledge and assist in their decision making.

They designed the Food To Change Fund call-out which focussed on awarding grants of up to £7,500 for charities and social enterprises. The funds provided an opportunity to test new ideas or support organisations to take the 'next step on' from what they currently do. The fund was based on the theme of 'wraparound support' – this was intentionally broad because of the diversity of needs from within a diverse groups across the communities experiencing food inaccessibility.

They also created a set of 7 principles to guide those seeking funding in their missions to tackle food inequality.

1

Food should be culturally appropriate for Camden's diverse communities

Services should be responsive to the cultures and traditions of people who use them.

2

Ensure dignity, respect and choice

We believe that people should be trusted to know what they need and they should never feel "handed down to".

3

Uphold a "money first" approach

We know it's not always possible for people to have money instead of emergency food. But where possible people are supported to have enough money to eat well everyday.

4

Be guided by resident voices and underpin action with strong communication

There are lots of ways that resident voices can underpin a project, be that a resident steering group or a project that is run by residents.

Successful projects will have a plan to let people know about their work and they'll consider digital and non-digital communication methods.

5

Use food as a social connector for good in order to access wider support

Alongside food, organisations should offer other services that build resilience, this could include providing cooking equipment, soft skills, providing recipes, building friendships, sharing information on wider support, intergenerational connection, building confidence or giving people the information they need to move away from food poverty.

6

Prioritise food that is nutritious

Healthy food should be available, but not compromising the importance of dignity and choice.

7

Monitor data and measure impact

The panel are looking for impactful projects that make good use of data.

Food To Change Fund Grants

Urban Community Projects: £6,535

Urban Community Projects are a grassroots charity who provide employment support, financial education training, and workshops to deter young people from getting involved in knife and gang crime. They also tackle food inequality through their resident-led mobile foodbank which empowers people to work together resolving issues and barriers they are faced with.

Their Food to Change Fund grant will provide 28 children from families experiencing challenges with everyday access to food from Edith Neville School through healthy lunch packs for 36 weeks. The foodbank has been working with Afghan refugees and are recruiting 27 Afghan parents into paid roles to help them run the foodbank, gaining hands on work experience through sorting food, packing food parcels, delivering lunch packs, promoting the food bank locally and helping to increase donations and referrals. Urban Community Project are partnering with the Somers Town Job hub who will also provide 1:1 weekly support to help them find long term employment.



Working with service users, volunteers, children and parents they will provide an eco-system of food and wraparound support that specifically targets key issues that lead people into food poverty, to help them out of poverty. The wrap around model includes 1:1 employment sessions and benefits advice that truly empowers people, increasing their earning potential giving them the skills, tools to be able to buy food for themselves.

17

GRANTS AWARDED

£112,000

AMOUNT AWARDED

3

FOOD TO CHANGE GRANTEES ALSO
HOLDING WE MAKE CAMDEN GRANTS

Castlehaven Community Association: £6,930

Urban Community Projects are a grassroots charity who provide employment support, financial education training, and workshops to deter young people from getting involved in knife and gang crime. They also tackle food inequality through their resident-led mobile foodbank which empowers people to work together resolving issues and barriers they are faced with.

Their Food to Change Fund grant will fund their project GROWF which will provide 300 residents to access training to learn about growing their own food collectively, and at home, so they feel less dependent on food service provision and can supplement their diets with healthy fresh plant-based food, by providing:

- 25 local people interested in collective food growing into a decision-making Action Team including Somali women
- 20 training workshops focussed on gardening, home-growing, cooking, preserving
- Tools, protective gear, PPE, starter seed kits, growing medium, cob oven
- The allocation/preparation/planting of outdoor food-growing plots
- A seasonal planting/maintenance schedule
- Seed/cutting collection for propagation & creating a community edible plant bank
- Harvesting, food sharing, multi-ethnic recipes, food preparation and tasting events
- The promotion of home food-growing by distributing 75 home-growing starter packss

Mission 1: Food Poverty & Sustainability

5 Grants

Citizens: 3

Organisations: 2

Somali Women's Support Group: £3,000

Somali Women's Support Group is a citizen grantee supported by the Community Ideas Project. The project is run for and by Somali women which aimed to re-educate Somali women about the healthy way of eating they used to know back home, but due to food inequality as well as other intersectional challenges such as social isolation and health inequalities, they no longer cook in this way. They grant enabled them to support a group of 48 Somali women to come together, cook and share recipes for healthy eating. It also helped overcome isolation and grief experienced as a result of coronavirus. The community suffered a lot of bereavement during the pandemic and the women do not have spaces to come together. They are often stuck at home caring for the children, sick and elderly in multi-generational households. Poor eating habits has become a comfort for dealing with the mental health challenges they face.



The funding meant they could access a kitchen space and resources for cooking and eating communally. This project empowered women to learn about fruits and vegetables that they did not know about before, and how to cook them. They had the chance to cook recipes without as many carbohydrates and sugar and learn recipes for alternative healthy cooking. They learnt there was more appetite from the community to come together more often and have secured a further grant to continue this important work for women to participate in on a weekly basis, where they'll prepare communal meals that they can take home to their families.

“

It was very special for us to have access to a space where we could come together in a space for an informal chat, relax, signpost to other services and activities, cook and share together really useful.

We have also been able to share our recipes in Somali language in the Somali Community Kitchen YouTube channel set up and run by one of our members. It has 1.5K subscribers!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeUkFn8fm4KcLt3NpSiSfEg>

The Sherriff Centre: £1,500

The Sherriff Centre ran 'The Growth Project' which supported 30 residents with access to their free food store, to reduce food poverty, food waste and be a direct, non referral provision that anyone in need can access. The funding provided emergency food and household parcels for their clients who use their free food store. They identified a need to offer bespoke food/household item parcels to first time users of the store who may be in crisis and need immediate provisions and wish to provide these. Most of the food is supplied by either local business to reduce food waste or donations from the community. They also provided additional support services, for example access to the debt advice service they run.



Mission 2: Opportunities for Young People

Social Notes: £1,500

35 Grants
Citizens: 13
Organisations: 22



Social Notes is a citizen grantee supported by the Community Ideas Project. The three young Camden residents who founded Social Notes will create an inclusive and affordable space for 30 residents across Camden to create music, regardless of their background. As young musicians & creatives who have experience of challenges in the industry, knowing extremely talented musicians who have never had access to affordable local music studios in Camden, they want to make a change. This includes providing equitable access to studio space for £5 an hour. This funding enabled Social Notes to provide:

- An opportunity for progressive collaboration between Camden borough's young residents.
- A safe hub in which cultivates creativity and its own social community, improving the wellbeing and lives of all participants.
- A space to cater to the immense amount of musical talent within the area; particularly for thriving creatives whom are struggling to find affordable spaces to produce their music.

“
Personally I've struggled with a lot of self doubt, not seeing myself in positive places, so to be able to build this from nothing has done wonders for my self esteem.

Matt - We Make Camden Kit Citizen Grantee

we make Camden CAMDEN GIVING

“

“Over the 5 years of creating and producing rap, me and my friends just bounced from bedroom studio to bedroom studio. It held us back. I know lots of immensely talented creatives who did not have an affordable place to let free and do their thing. This space seemed like it could be a haven for that, that's what we are about.”

You can read more about Social Notes in the We Make Camden blog here www.wemakecamden.org.uk/2022/02/02/social-notes-music-for-one-and-all/

Futsal Stars Foundation: £3,000

The Futsal Stars Foundation have been awarded two separate grants by the We Make Camden Panel. Their first grant supported 25 young people who face barriers into physical sport activities, including those in receipt of free school meals, from low income backgrounds, the BAME community, and disabled young people, to access the October futsal half-term camp and football coaching. They carried out small group sessions at the end of the camp to evaluate the impact of our project on mental and physical well-being. An example of feedback to show it was a great achievement for social cohesion was when the aunt of one young person, who has autism, commented how he blended in perfectly with the other young people. The fact that the young people maintained attendance throughout camp was also evidence for this and that they enjoyed the programme. They were also successful in attracting our target groups, those from the BAME community (more than 1 in 2) and those from low-income backgrounds or where parents were on benefits (all participants). The success of this project means they've been awarded a further £1,500 grant to expand on this to more young people with a focus on Fitness Education Camps.



“

It was also beautiful to witness how the young people grew in confidence; at the start they were quiet and shy and towards the end they were all very talkative, open and making new friends!

Mission 3: Diversity in Positions of Power

12 Grants
Citizens: 9

Organisations: 3

Some String Different: £3,000

Some String Different is a citizen grantee supported by the Community Ideas Project. Yasmin met Stephanie at the Camden Inspire event in September 2020 and they met after to discuss her project ideas, supported with writing her application form. Stephanie has now created a mobile workstation where she teaches string animation techniques, and she has held workshops in Camden. The grant was used to pilot a series of workshops for residents via their own portable animation station (as seen in the photo above). The participants shadowed an artist creating animations using string and they were upskilled to learn this technique themselves in a fun, educational way to make their own string characters. These were turned into animations and created into their own merchandise from tote bags to t-shirts. They recognised there are a lot of people who are capable and have potential, but not often given the opportunity to access creative careers, so with Some String Different they wanted to share their experiences, empower and inspire communities who may not otherwise engage in this opportunity. Stephanie has now been awarded a second grant to continue the Stage two of the SomeStringDifferent Project is to adapt the string station into a shadow puppet booth and a mini screening film clips theatre a multi purpose portable station.



“

The participants who attended the workshops we're from diverse backgrounds, many with no experience of design and creating something for themselves "The taster I did went down well - the group were residents from the hostel, a mixed group who have experienced some challenges such as substance misuse, mental-health issues and abuse." They had complete autonomy over the theme for the animations "It was their choice and they decided on WHAT THEY LIKE. I guided them throughout, a couple of them said they couldn't draw, but the point of doing this workshop was to show they could given the chance and encouragement. It's not about highly polished draftmanship so I managed to persuade those who had doubts and they came up with the goods!"

Hello Beautiful Foundation: £1,500

Hello Beautiful Foundation empower the cancer community and homeless people in the borough of Camden to gain access to free organic plant based food packs and organic juice they otherwise wouldn't have access to. But they also run educational activities on the health benefits of eating wholefoods for those who cannot find healthy alternatives, so this service is vital for their wellbeing and connection to community experiencing similar journeys. As a Black and Female founded charity, also a cancer survivor with first hand experience in healing from this approach, it helps build trust and relatability with the community they aim to support. It is important for them to create more equitable access to diversity of food provision and education through targeted conversations with minority ethnic groups, as well as an increase in younger patients from 21-40 years old.



Mission 4: Health & Sustainability of Estates

16 Grants
Citizens: 10
Organisations: 6

Transition Kentish Town: £1,500

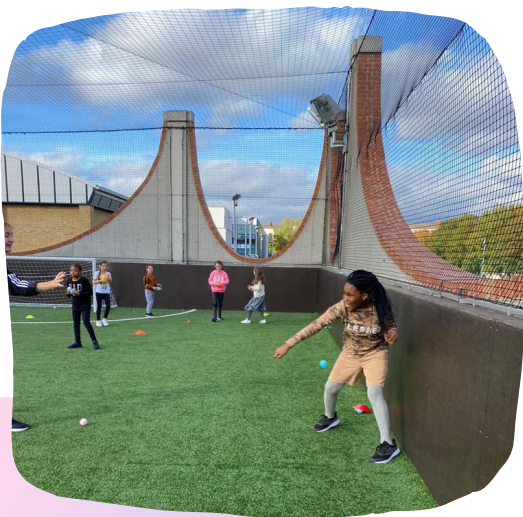
Transition Kentish Town are a collective group of residents and grass roots activist-volunteers, initiating and partnering on a range of activities and pop ups across borough, from their local base of Transition Kentish Town. They have been awarded a citizen grant to run activities to improve local biodiversity, human well-being and enjoyment and care of nature in the city; bringing human-care and nature-care together.

They aim to increase a sense of neighbourliness and community education through 6 workshops and seasonal celebrations in partnership with Camden Forest, Camden Bee Line, Think & Do to distribute free tree whips and wildflower seeds; share learning about planting, sowing and continuing plant care; celebrating Nature's seasons and growing cycles together; growing a network of Camden Nature in the City guardians.

They will also create resources to circulate to schools, housing estates, residents' associations, community and faith groups so that it can be applied in hyper-local, micro environments.



The Screen Film Community: £1,500



The Screen Film Community ran their 'Somers Town Fit & Food Boot Camp' for young people on the Somers Town Estate - a community which has one of the highest childhood poverty rates in the UK but is often overlooked as these areas have been gentrified and there's a significant lack of access to physical activity.

The project enabled 35 young people living on the estate to improve their physical activity and their knowledge of healthy food through daily fitness and nutrition boot camp during half term; a time when many families can't always afford paid opportunities for their children to engage in, or even access regular food provision because they usually access free school meals. It was led by fellow Somers Town resident who has direct contact with the young people on the estate and direct experience of the inequalities young people here face.

Because of the success and increased demand of their first grant, they were awarded a further grant under the Mission 'Opportunities for Young People', providing self-defence classes for girls and young women in Camden.

“

Many young people had not engaged in physical activity much, especially due to lockdown, so the project opened up young people to becoming more fit. They were very sad when it finished and them and their parents keep asking for when its going to start again!

What's Next: Year 2

Following the early success of Year 1 of the We Make Camden Kit, we will sustain support to citizens and small civil society organisations to lead community projects that achieve Camden's Renewal Missions. We'll bring new knowledge and ideas in to the work, by recruiting and training a new community panel, but we will keep the existing community panel involved through an alumni programme. We'll work with partner organisations to extend the reach of the We make Camden Kit to people who face additional barriers to receiving funding.

We will continue to support existing grantees and residents to evolve and sustain their projects if this is what they need support with. Camden Giving runs 2 other funds per year, all of which residents could apply to if their projects go on to become set-up as Community Interest Companies or Charities:

- The Equality Fund: Unrestricted grants of £30,000 over 2 years supporting small organisations working for equality. This is funded by Camden Businesses
- The Future Changemakers Fund: Grants of up to £10,000 for projects helping make Camden a safe place for young people. This is currently funded by Camden businesses, foundations and individuals.

Year 1 Costs: £420,435

£83,435 - Core costs to set up the Community Ideas Project

£30,000 - Core cost contribution for Camden Giving overheads

£112,000 - Restricted Grants to the Food Fund

£195,000 - Restricted Grants to We Make Camden grantees (inclusive of £10,000 from Shaftesbury)

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE WE MAKE CAMDEN KIT!

The benefits of community-led decision making

1

Whole community involvement

Our approach requires 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 delegate 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,