



OUTCOMES FROM 5 YEARS OF PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING





BETTER OUTCOMES FOR CAMDEN CITIZENS

At best, most grantmakers are responding to the needs of Londoners by reviewing research and consultancy, which by its nature only captures things that have happened and varies in reliability. Grantmakers may consult with their potential or previous grantees, but this will never truly be a representation of the views and wants of London's communities.

In contrast, 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 participatory grantmaking has benefits from being informed by knowledge that traditional grantmaking struggles to capture, this ultimately means that funding goes to places where it is most helpful. This report includes examples of local knowledge that enriches participatory grantmaking.



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1. Funding under-funded leaders.

Ensuring that London's black, brown and marginalised community leaders are equitably funded is important in overcoming injustice. It also leads to immediately better outcomes for black, brown and marginalised communities because of the unique knowledge and networks that black, brown and marginalised community leaders have. At Camden Giving 70-80% of projects funded are black or minority ethnic lead, this is because participatory grantmaking decision are made by people who have experienced marginalisation and are therefore more likely to have trust in and recognise the strength of black and brown community leaders. Camden Giving have also been told by black grantees that they are more likely to apply to Camden Giving than other funders because they are a participatory funder and discrimination is less likely.



Examples of this in practice

- As an example, of the 43 grants awarded over the first three years of the Future Changemakers Fund, over 50% of these awards are recurring grants to 11 unique organisations, showing that the value and strength of these community organisations are felt by the three separate youth-led community panellists. Over half of these 11 organisations are led by lived experience leaders, Camden residents and who are from black and minority ethnic led communities. 88% of our Future Changemaker panellists identify their ethnicity with black and minority ethnic communities.
- From the coffee and chat reporting for the Equality Fund, one panellist shared that her experience on this panel allowed her to learn about her own biases and found working with black and ethnic minority peers and grantees invaluable for her learning *“As a white woman, I think I have been ignorant in realising what the BAME community are going through in terms of inequality. This experience allowed me to learn to have an open mind and listen to my fellow panellists of their journey and what they can add. I’ve learnt a lot about my white ignorance!”*

2. Funding under-funded leaders.



Too often grassroots organisations are tasked to take on navigating funding programmes and platforms that are inaccessible and not designed with them in mind. We work to make sure our grant-making is designed so it's more equitable for grassroots organisations to access funding, become more financially sustainable and less reliant on securing small grants from Camden Giving. We are able to take more risks on these smaller, vital charities because of our approach to participatory grant-making, which enables them to intercept the funding sector, use our funding to trial and test projects/solutions and use this as a catalyst for growth and/or demonstrate a track record. Because of this we have seen many grassroots organisations, who received their first ever grant through us, go onto successfully being awarded funding from larger Trusts and Foundations, businesses, institutions and develop collaborative partnerships to advance their work.

Examples of this in practice

A Camden resident and founder of Healthy Minds Healthy Bods and a COVID-19 Pathways to Employment grantee, shared with us:

“The most incredible gain from this is that we are now in talks with Camden and Islington NHS Trust over salary and resource funding. Being able to carry on providing exercise sessions was part of the crucial role in that, alongside our course work. We have worked a small mentor led project for nearly five years with clients, and to get the chance of salaries, stability, sustainability, and contracts is huge.”

Examples of this in practice

Rasheeda, a Camden resident and CEO of Urban Community Projects were awarded their first grant through Camden Giving in 2017, shared “Camden Giving believing in us 4 years ago when we had less than £9,000 annual income and had never received a grant before, now have an income of around £75,000 annually. The relationship and support we have received from the Camden Giving over the years, beyond funding, has been fantastic and has seen the development of new relationships with business partners and funders. It has helped us develop better bid-writing skills which has been invaluable for the whole organisation moving forward”



Examples of this in practice



We have seen Action Youth Boxing Intervention, a resident-led charity who were awarded their first grant of £10,000 in 2017, go onto successfully attract multi-year funding from National Lottery Community Fund, Camden Council and UCL. They shared; *"We hoped initially for fundraising support from Camden Giving, but their involvement, support and opening their networks has surpassed all our expectations and we consider them a real partner. Camden Giving's introduction to one of Argent's Lawyer's was invaluable as he is now a member on our advisory board to help us elevate our voice and demonstrate impact in the community, share their space for our meetings and assist with finding new premise for our clubs."*

Examples of this in practice



“Camden Giving has really given us much more support than just funding. We’ve benefitted from additional opportunities such as pitching at the Funding Network event, where we received just over £1700 in donations! Camden Giving has also been instrumental in helping us build our network by introducing us to local organisations. This, in turn, has helped us to broaden our reach, and recruit more isolated newcomers to our free English sessions, who we would not otherwise meet. We are a small, local organisation and Camden Giving really help us to maximise our impact.”

- Speak Street



3. Community reputation changes outcomes.

In a busy city, where it is very hard to promote a service, word of mouth matters. If a charity is already delivering work targeted at people making up the panel, but it's never been heard of, or worse yet, someone they know went there are told them not to go, there is little point in funding it. Turning around the trust of communities is not easy work and funding organisations that don't have trust and reach is a waste of funder money. On the flip side, there are countless organisations in Camden, that no matter who sits on a panel, there is always someone who has heard positive things about that organisation, Coram's Field, Actions Youth Boxing Intervention, Bloomsbury Football and Little Village often come up as well-respected local organisations. Participatory grant-making is more likely to fund well-regarded organisations that can deliver for communities.



Examples of this in practice

We know that positive experiences of interactions with projects can be powerful in influencing decisions at panel meetings and increasing knowledge by learning about good and experiences through direct experience of services and projects. At a recent panel meeting there was a majority vote in favour of a community garden project, which was well known by most of the panel who had positive experience of the space, and valued the wider work they were doing to tackle environmental inequalities beyond access to food. The panellists who hadn't engaged directly with this project responded positively to the feedback from their peers and voted in favour of supporting it.



Examples of this in practice

- On the other hand another community garden project, which is well established and known to the panel due to their good reputation, did not feel culturally inclusive in their approach to food accessibility for the same panel. Though they thought it was doing good work and that it is already happening well, they were not doing something new to address food inequality compared to the other one and were not serving those most in-need.
- One panellist shared “I enjoy hearing my fellow panellist's extensive knowledge on each of the organisations and it offers a sense of pride knowing that these organisations have been doing so much for Camden's residents for so long.
- “A panellist, in my opinion, is really an utter privilege - I hope many residents, even at the expense of my place- experience this life changing experience. It humbled panellists to look beyond our needs and wants through the lenses of knowing that each decision is bigger than ourselves.”

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4. Community perception changes outcomes.



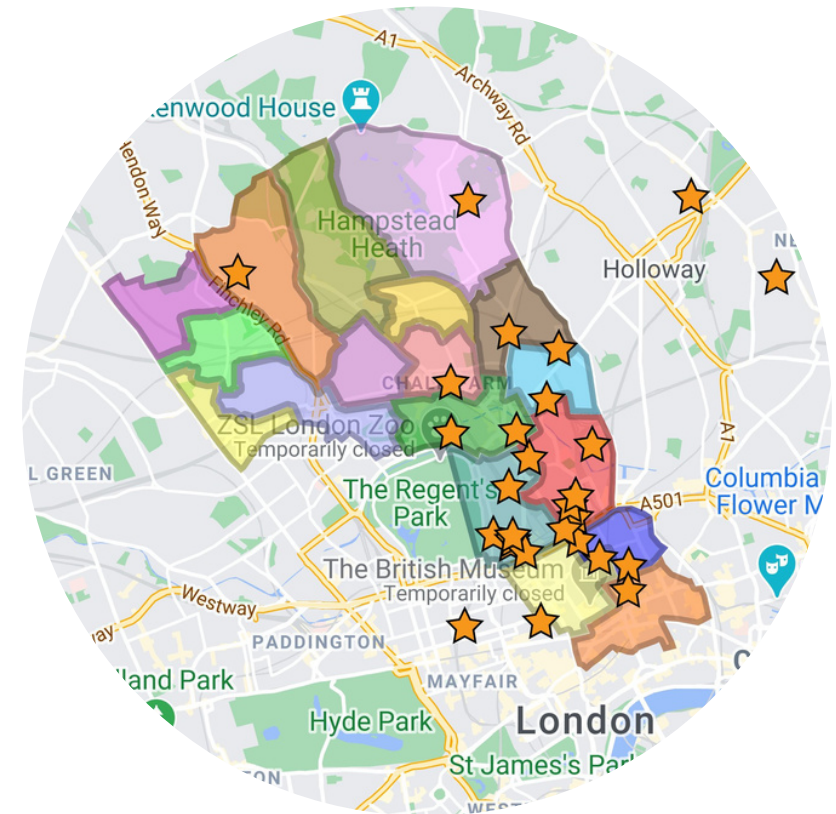
Camden Giving received an application from a youth service planning to deliver a solid programme to support youth safety, it had a track record of working with young people in the borough and was expanding to work with those more at risk of violence. The decision went before a panel of young people with experience of high-risk situations and the panel immediately raised concerns that the youth service was working with a uniformed group, they quickly identified that this would not be something those in risky situations would even consider attending because of the reputation uniforms carry with them.

Examples of this in practice

Their knowledge on very niche, specialist areas alongside experience of the intersections of inequality and barriers, which may not typically be held by traditional grant-makers, is a key asset to participatory grant-making. One community panel received an application for a project that on the surface, seemed well thought through and impactful, but was quickly turned down by the panel. The organisation wanted to deliver a workshop for black and ethnic minority women from Camden at a venue outside of London to increase their understanding of what it is to be a Magistrate and the application process; because BAME groups are heavily under-represented in these roles. However, the panel shared that the best place to learn about being a Magistrate is actually in London and within a court setting itself, so it's local to the community. The funds could be invested better into covering expenses, providing lunch and learning resources, rather than on venue and travel hire. They also recognised that there are underlying systemic barriers to address, because being a Magistrate is a voluntary position, and for lower socio-economic BAME residents (a high proportion in Camden) it doesn't work for those with childcare, second jobs and other commitments. In addition employers can often not give them paid time off work to attend court, as many of these residents work in vocational, inflexible roles, which means they'd lose vital income.

5. Perceptions of accessibility matter.

Community panellists will often look at the location of a charity and imagine their journey to the charity. Panellists have often raised concerns about the ability of a target group to cross a busy road, even when it is nearby. Similar concerns have been raised by young people who say that a charity's location requires them to walk through any area that is perceived as unsafe by young people. We know from Somali community members that services delivered in the Kings Cross development were excluding Somali mothers because there was a perception that the Kings Cross development "wasn't for them".



Examples of this in practice

DEVELOPING AND USING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THIS PANEL WAS IMPORTANT. WE RECOGNISED THAT LARGER CHARITIES ARE VITAL BUT DON'T NEED THE FUNDING TO MAKE SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR DISABLED RESIDENTS COMPARED TO GRASSROOTS SMALLER ORGANISATIONS

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FUND PANELLIST

Examples of this in practice

One charity applying to the Inclusive Fund (which existed to enable disabled residents to access mainstream services in Camden) wanted to run a project to encourage disabled residents become more travel independent and provide training in bicycle safety. But they had not considered the basic requirements for participation for communities they aimed to support – that disabled residents travelling across Camden to get to their project was too far for many to travel to, as they had a fixed location where the project took place, and did not go to where the need was. There were also costs they hadn't factored in either such as cab fares, specialist transport hire or how residents would travel to the project safely in the first place. This was not a local charity who were scaling up the project from other London Boroughs to Camden, but the panel thought they should spend more time getting to know who they aim to support and their needs.



Examples of this in practice

Another organisation successfully awarded a grant in the same fund had considered this as part of their costs. They provided dedicated transport to get older disabled residents to and from the community centre to ensure they were accessing it safely and didn't have to worry about paying for travel to be included in a services, which they felt helped to reduce isolation and improved wellness of this group. This was a well-respected Camden-based charity who knows the needs of their local community and Beneficiaries well.



6. Community expectations change and are hard to predict.

During lockdown Camden Giving started a programme of rapid participatory grantmaking, grants were awarded quickly to charities who faced funding challenges or who were delivering covid relief services. Camden Giving staff expected communities to place a greater emphasis on urgent basic relief and whilst these were supported, the emphasis on valuing arts and culture activities in the borough was strong.



Examples of this in practice

Of the 75 grants awarded over both April and June rounds of the COVID-19 fund, 33% of these were focussed on ensuring communities had access to arts and culture focussed activities to increase connectivity, physical and mental wellness and reduce isolation during the pandemic. These were often provided alongside relief support, such as: lunch packages delivered to the doorstep to enjoy with a virtual theatre performance; a Library outreach service with books delivered to people's homes curated by an in-house librarian along with access to advice by a registered nurse and food parcels; and home-based nature activities for households with no gardens to access nature who qualify with free-school meal status, those in single parent households and those visiting local food banks.



7. Influencing.

We know that, to overcome local inequality, we can't do the work alone. We have seen businesses, funders and local government, who hold significant power in Camden, devolve decision-making powers, increase participatory and democratic approaches and adopt learnings from Camden Giving. We've seen that they are better targeting their efforts on key issues and have an increased local impact for local resident and communities through our interactions.



Examples of this in practice

Camden Council have delegated funding through Camden Giving across a number of grant programmes, from Future Changemakers fund to our COVID-19 Emergency response, because they acknowledge that there is often a lack of trust between civil society organisations and local government officials, know that we can reach communities who are underfunded more effectively and that we can move funding and resources to grassroots organisations much quicker. Most recently we have also seen an increased desire for them to work in a more participatory, collaborative way to devolve grant funding to those furthest from accessing funding, including granting funds to individual citizens through the We Make Camden Kit; of which 45% of grants of £1500 have been awarded to Camden citizens. One resident told us *“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. There is some volunteers from businesses that are now interested in taking part to my workshops, like the photographer and a fashion designer and Regents Place who have offered me a place from where I can deliver my workshops and help with my leaflets.”*

Examples of this in practice

We have recruited an group of former panellists as freelance Participatory Grant-makers, after an increase in demand for our advice and knowledge from funders and grant-giving organisations. The advisors offer both a practical and values driven introduction to Participatory Grant-making, which guides and encourages other funders to consider participatory approaches. The advisors support them through a series of 121 sessions that help them make the decision if adopting PGM is right for them, and if so to make informed decisions about their approach. So far they've worked with 8 external organisations to advise them on adopting this approach, including Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow Giving, Lewisham Local, Islington Giving, National Lottery, Wildlife Trust and International charity Foundation Botnar who use AI and digital to improve the wellbeing of children.

4 Future Changemaker panellists sat on the cross-borough London youth panel for BBC Children in Need awarding grants to youth services across London after we shared our knowledge on participatory grant-making approaches with young residents.

Examples of this in practice

One of our panellists was also paid to participate on a panel discussion with ACF about the importance and impact, of participatory grant-making on Asylum, refugee and immigrant communities.



Through sharing local knowledge, The Francis Crick Institute are opening their community chest grant-making panel to local community members and we've seen an increase in the number of first-time grant recipients access their funding, from Camden United, Little Village and Action Youth Boxing Intervention. One former panellist is now involved on their panel sharing: "I'm now on a funding panel at the Francis Crick Institute because of everything I learnt with you, I'm able to lead the panel and ask relevant questions".

Examples of this in practice



We also know that, beyond participatory grant-making, we are influencing global businesses to shift their approaches to community consultation projects, to ensure they are putting residents at the heart of decision-making about changes that affect them directly, empowering them to elevate their voice and access roles they otherwise might not access. A partnership with UCL, Camden Council and Lendlease, to understand what Euston communities need to prosper while major regeneration projects are underway, enabled us to pay 24 Euston residents to influence decisions of key stakeholders in Euston's redevelopment plan. UCL are now working with an East London cohort of 'Euston Voices' adopting a model and partnership reflective of our pilot.



Examples of this in practice

In addition, Google recently approached us to advise them on how to implement a participatory model to community engagement, because they had gaps in their knowledge and didn't have the community knowledge or networks that we have to do this work well. From our experience and learnings from the Euston Voices partnership, we influenced Google to adopt their original proposal for a similar community engagement exercise, to ensure they were paying 9 Kings Cross residents a fair wage, working in a non-tokenistic way, providing pipelines for residents and enacting on short-term priorities. We have already seen that they are engaging with residents' ideas, opening up opportunities to them such as linking them into their Google Digital Garage workshops and providing regular updates on progress for how the group have influenced their decisions.



Examples of this in practice

We've also seen businesses adopt better employability approaches through our pilot Youth Employment Programme. We worked in partnership with Regents Place and Camden's Youth Offending Service who have both since created better pipelines for young residents at risk of youth offending into quality employment. Camdens Youth Offending Service are now running their own youth employment project from the learnings from our partnership, including paying young people to access placements with Camden businesses. A Youth Offending Service Career Advisor, explored: "We're supporting one young man in December to access a paid placement with KX business Vertex (as they didn't have a mechanism to pay him) which means he can access a wage and skills for employment. But he is the brother of one of the young men we supported back on our pilot programme last year! Because of his positive experience, he referred his brother to this opportunity".

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Examples of this in practice

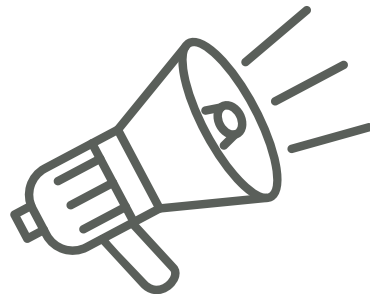
One young woman gained further employment with Regents Place and is now in training again to pursue her career in sports coaching facilitation.

We were told an inspirational story of how she was given responsibilities that improved her confidence and gave her a sense of purpose again. In less than 12 months since starting the Programme, she has gone on to re-enrol in education, taken on voluntary work and completed a fixed term paid role (back at Regent's Place) before being honoured as one of the 12 Hero's of Camden in a exhibition at Kings Cross in December 2020, All during a pandemic!



Examples of this in practice

- We have seen better access to employment, skills development and increased confidence for residents coming onto our non-grant programmes, with referrals across programmes we've run. Such as a Euston Voices group member who has now gained employment with Regents Place, after our successful pilot with them in 2019, within their estates team.
- We also advised Hat Trick – an independent production and distribution company who have donated to our Equality Fund programme – on how to create more equitable apprenticeship programmes for young local residents to access careers in the creative sector, which they've factored into their recruitment approach and recently recruited two young Camden residents into roles.
- Camden Council's Community Improvement District about how the future of high streets are designed using participatory models of engagement and designed for communities in mind.



BETTER OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES

Participatory grantmaking builds power, connectivity and networks with in communities. The value of the process is as important as the outcomes of the grants.



1. Communities signposting.

We've all heard “there’s nothing for young people to do here”, then look at the number of youth projects running and scratch our heads. By funding with the people you aim to benefit you build in a community network of peer-referrals for the projects you fund. But it goes beyond the projects we fund, Camden Giving have seen people involved in participatory grantmaking also signposting to projects that they didn’t fund. One person involved in participatory grantmaking told Camden Giving “I feel I am now able to tell people where they can get help, I'm able to be a more helpful person now that I’ve seen how much great stuff is going on in Camden.”



Examples of this in practice

Beyond signposting to projects, our panellists often build on their own network of referrals with one another. They feel empowered to support one another and want to raise awareness of 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.

One young man identified as at-risk by the youth offending team was signposted to the Councils placement scheme by his brother who joined our youth employment pilot in 2019, and gained paid work experience with a local Camden business.

We Make Camden panellists have been signposting the fund to people within their networks and we have seen applications from them increase significantly, including applications from young people.

Examples of this in practice

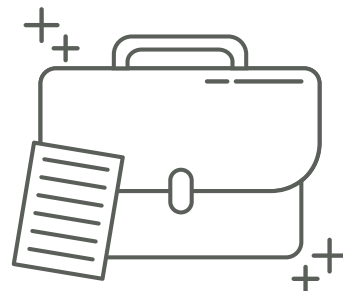
"LEARNING FROM OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE ABOUT SERVICES WAS REALLY USEFUL SO I KNOW OF NEW PLACES TO VISIT AND TO SEND TO MY FRIENDS."
- FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS PANELLIST.

"IT MADE ME AWARE OF MANY BRILLIANT THINGS ABOUT OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THIS IS THE BEAUTY OF THE PROJECT; GAINING THIS NEW KNOWLEDGE."
- INCLUSIVE FUND PANELLIST

2. Employment.

The majority of the people involved in Camden Giving's participatory grantmaking are unemployed or underemployed. We've seen that around 10% of panellists have directly gained employment through participatory grantmaking, this is down to an increased confidence, skills and networks. Camden's Job Hubs regularly refer people to Camden Giving's participatory grantmaking panels for this reason.





Examples of this in practice

A panellist on the Pathways to Employment Fund accessed a Google's digital skills workshop which we signposted to. They were further introduced to the Participatory Grant making Community of Practice of which they are now working part-time as their administrator.

Two Future Changemakers from 2020 are both Camden Giving freelance PGM advisors working with 8 external grant-making organisations such as Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow Giving, Lewisham Local, Islington Giving, National Lottery, Wildlife Trust and International charity Foundation Botnar.

A Future Changemaker panellist from 2021 volunteered for Sobriety Films, a grantee of the fund, after finding out about them during their role as panellist. They have since secured the role of a project coordinator for them. They share how "Being employed by a non-profit that has community and social action at heart and within the borough I live feels really special and probably would not have happened without Camden Giving."

3. Initiating Social Action.

Participatory grantmaking changes the way that people see themselves within their community. We know 1 in 10 of the people involved in participatory grantmaking in Camden go on to initiate some sort of social action within their community, we've seen people start fitness groups, bereavement clubs, becoming Trustees and running after school clubs. We expect the number of people involved in this are higher, but it is clear that participatory grantmaking is a catalyst for community-led change beyond the grantmaking itself.



Examples of this in practice



One panellist, after we ran a session in partnership with Peabody's Young Leadership Programme, secured a grant with them, along with access to a mentor and project management support, to develop and grow his idea to run a fitness personal training platform, set-up on social media and ran a session for his peers to engage in, including some of his fellow Future Changemakers.

A former Year 2 panellist who successfully applied and was awarded a grant by the Future Changemakers Year 3 panel for his new charity Revolution CIC. He gained a lot of transferrable skills, confidence and knowledge around grant-making which contributed to his success. We also supported him to broaden his networks to other young changemakers in Camden and through this he is now employing them at his social enterprise, and were also helping him to set-up as a community interest company so he is in a better position to attract further funding.

Examples of this in practice

Seeing an increase in applications for example an application from a panellist on the We Make Camden Kit panel who was successfully granted an award to deliver TaeKwondo for young people in Camden so they can attend national competitions via the We Make Camden Kit.

A young disabled Camden resident was also involved in supporting Pro Touch SA via our funding, won the Camden Youth Awards 2019 for Adult Volunteer of the Year, Pro Touch shared “This is great especially as he has been delivering and associated with our CG funded programmes.” The young resident then went onto apply directly to us for funding and was awarded by our participatory panel to run disability-led football coaching sessions.



3. Evidence of increased self-determined power.

At Camden Giving we survey all out-going participatory grantmakers and ask them if they feel more powerful and 100% of those responding say awarding grants has made them feel more powerful. The impact of this increase in power could be truly significant to London, especially as participatory grantmaking works with communities who are less likely to be registered to vote, less likely to hold decisions making roles and less likely to hold senior jobs within London's businesses.



Examples of this in practice



“Youth led projects are really beneficial in allowing young people to improve their confidence and gain decision making skills that are transferable in anything else they choose to do in the future.”

“This experience has made me understand the agency we all have and how best we can foster and support their (unheard) voices, whilst balancing those that already have systems in place. I am confident that Camden is such a progressive borough and I feel supported in my role to be able to bind with those I have never even met. This is due to the shared human experiences in Camden, regardless of class, that we all share.”

Examples of this in practice

BEING GIVEN AUTONOMY TO HAVE ACTUAL DECISION-MAKING POWERS AND TRUSTING OUR EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE, WHEN USUALLY YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL WE DON'T HAVE A VOICE, AREN'T LISTENED TO OR TAKEN SERIOUSLY, IS REALLY IMPORTANT.

FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS PANELLIST.

Examples of this in practice

One young man on our youth employment pilot which ended abruptly due to COVID, who had a passion for design and photography, shared:

“I’m very appreciative that you guys were able to still pay me for this month even though I wasn't working! I can imagine how tight things are at the moment with funding. I would have loved to keep on going. I felt as if I had been making good relationships and I really enjoyed working there. In the meantime I have been doing some online classes as well as watching some interesting classes on masterclass”.

His caseworker at the Youth Offending team shared: *“I know his parents were extremely concerned at one point about him and whether he would last the course of his substance misuse treatment programme, but the combination of the employment program and lockdown has helped this young person to turn a corner. His relationship with his parents and brother has really improved and although he had a rocky start to his program, this has given him the opportunity to get to grips with it.”*



Examples of this in practice

3 residents who have interacted with our PGM have gone onto receive a Camden Youth Award every year from 2019-2021.

“This is more than just learning about research. We’re learning lots of skills we wouldn’t have learnt in school or anywhere else – interview, collecting data, presentation & public speaking skills – I want to continue applying these skills otherwise I might forget them!” “I am building up confidence skills which will help me with applying for work and speaking to people” – Euston Voices Researchers who have since both moved into paid employment with existing Camden Giving partners British Land and IGP.



Year 3 Future Changemaker panellists self-reflected the following:

- 28% increased critical thinking skills
- 28% new knowledge in funding and how it works for services they attend.
- 18% increased empathy and self-awareness “We've had to think a lot about issues that we may not be directly facing ourselves. The ability to think beyond my own perspective has increased in strength. I learnt to trust my gut more, but also think logically and fairly about things too”

