



# Working in Place Case Study

## Place-based working in East London: Hackney Giving



# Overview

Hackney Giving provides grants for small, grass-roots projects that directly benefit the residents of Hackney, with an emphasis on employment and training, or health and well-being. It is jointly managed by Hackney CVS and the East End Community Foundation (EECF), with a range of other partners on the steering group.

This case study is based on interviews with staff and trustees at Hackney CVS and East End Community Foundation as well as a review of relevant documents (e.g. Hackney Giving Annual Report 2014).

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#### 1. About the approach

**Hackney Giving is a place-based funding initiative that launched in February 2014. It is a local fund jointly managed by Hackney CVS and East End Community Foundation (EECF), supported by a steering group that includes partners such as the East London Business Alliance (ELBA), Linklaters law firm and the London Borough of Hackney (LBH) (see <http://hackneygiving.org.uk/about-us/who-supports-us/> for full list of partners). EECF administers the grants and manages corporate relationships, whilst Hackney CVS manages the communication and marketing of Hackney Giving.**

The fund was set up to support small, grass-roots, community-based projects that are making a positive difference to the lives of Hackney residents. It developed in response to external changes in the funding environment; in particular, cuts were made to the local authority's small grants fund, which a number of organisations had become reliant on.

**“The organisations that the CVS supports are mostly small and were reliant on small pots of funding from the council ... so we wanted to find a solution to support these groups.”**

There was also a desire to involve the community in giving money and/or time to respond to local need.

<sup>1</sup> East End Community Foundation (2014), Hackney Giving Fund Report 2014, London: East End Community Foundation.

Hackney Giving's aim, in its first five years, is to raise £1million from corporate donations, individual benefactors and proceeds from EECF's Hackney endowment. The fund has an initial focus on 'employment and training' and 'health and well-being' projects, and it is restricted to funding organisations with an income of less than £300,000 per annum. In its first year, the fund received 85 applications, 24 of which were awarded an average grant of £4,377 (EECF, 2014:6-8)<sup>1</sup>. The funding has supported over 720 activity sessions, and just under 2,000 residents have directly benefited.

## 2. Challenges faced

### **Time**

One of the main challenges Hackney Giving has faced has been the amount of time required to build up, and maintain, the range of relationships that are critical to the success of the fund. This has been a particular challenge for Hackney CVS, which does not receive any funding to cover the costs of running the programme, yet spends a considerable amount of time raising awareness of the fund in order to seek new community and corporate donors.

### **Sustainability**

Hackney CVS staff noted that there are very few big businesses in the local area and yet small and medium sized businesses are often reluctant to give. As such, ensuring the sustainability of the fund in terms of a steady stream of fundraising is a continuous challenge. Whilst there are other independent funders in the local area, it has been noted that 'they are not keen to put their money into this ... they would rather give the grants themselves.' The fund has also had difficulties getting payroll giving off the ground as an alternate source of fundraising.

## 3. What helps?

### **Building on experience**

Hackney Giving was directly inspired by, and built on the lessons learnt from, the Islington Giving<sup>2</sup> fund. For example, it focused on building up a pot of money first before attempting any other community-building activities. At the development stage, Hackney Giving also benefited from having people who had been involved in other place-based funding programmes on its steering group: 'We took on advice from other funders and foundations'.

### **Diverse grants committee**

Hackney CVS staff noted that the diverse grants committee has been helpful because it has led to the education of a range of partners about community need in Hackney, and it has created a pool of local ambassadors for the fund.

### **Making use of local infrastructure**

The involvement of Hackney CVS has enabled the fund to be effectively marketed at, and accessed by, smaller organisations who meet the funding criteria: 'The CVS is in the best position to get to the smaller end of the sector.' EECF's involvement has also meant that the required grant-making infrastructure was already in place, making it a reasonably quick model to roll out.

### **Relationships**

Hackney Giving has established strong relationships with local donors and decision makers. For example, the Council has been identified as a valuable partner because 'they helped to shape the grant criteria to ensure it was realistic and gave us a dedicated person from the Communications team'. In addition, a relationship with the East London Business Alliance has also enabled the fund to offer capacity-building support to potential grantees.

<sup>2</sup>Islington Giving is a place-based fund that is managed by a consortium of trusts and foundations in order to respond to issues of isolation and poverty in Islington.

“With them [East London Business Alliance] we have been able to provide capacity-building support, setting up a pool of business volunteers to review grant applications and provide support to potential grantees before they are submitted.”

Finally, Hackney Giving’s relationship with the Funding Network has enabled it to deliver effective crowdfunding events as another source of support for potential grantees:

‘They [the Funding Network] are skilled at running these types of events and bringing them alive.’

## 4. What has been learned so far?

### **Shared values**

The importance of shared values has been one of the key learning points for Hackney Giving, ensuring that it is marketed appropriately in order to effectively seek new donors. For example, when Hackney Giving directly asked corporate donors what appealed to them they simply said, ‘doing good locally’. As such, donors have been less interested in ‘statistics and cost benefits analysis’, but have been concerned about due diligence to ensure that the funds are being used appropriately.

### **Balancing community needs with the values underpinning the fund**

Hackney Giving is conscious that there are a variety of community needs that it is not currently supporting, including mental health, female genital mutilation and domestic abuse. However, Hackney Giving recognises that it needs to balance this knowledge with the values underpinning the fund because ‘ultimately it is about small groups and enabling them to define need’.

### **Sustainability of funds**

Hackney Giving would like to learn more about how others funders are sourcing funds in order to support their sustainability. In particular, they mentioned wanting to learn more from the evidence base that is being collected by London Funders as part of the London’s Giving initiative<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> London’s Giving aims to share evidence, lessons learnt and know-how from local giving campaigns. <http://londonfunders.org.uk/what-we-do/london-funders-projects/londons-giving-transforming-and-energising-local-giving>