Giving Together: How Islington Giving is transforming local philanthropy

June 2013
01 Executive Summary

1.1 What is Islington Giving?

Islington Giving is a ground-breaking charitable campaign that tackles the most pressing issues facing residents in Islington, London. The campaign sets itself apart from most charitable organisations in a number of important ways:

• **Place** – Islington Giving aims to help one defined place – the London Borough of Islington. The campaign addresses the priorities of that place, not the priorities of a particular donor or funder.

• **Partnership** – Islington Giving is not a single charity, it is a partnership of endowed trusts that have come together to pool resources and knowledge in order to maximise their collective impact.

• **Local Knowledge** – as a consortium of long-standing local charities, Islington Giving has extensive local knowledge of the borough, its community and its issues.

• **Collaboration** – Islington Giving takes every opportunity to work with others, from national stakeholders, local decision-makers and delivery organisations, through to businesses and individual residents. The campaign fosters partnership and volunteering at every level.

At the heart of Islington Giving is one simple idea: that the whole can be more than the sum of its parts. The campaign seeks to establish whether a combination of partnership, collaboration, local focus and local knowledge can achieve greater impact than a disparate collection of organisations working in isolation on their own particular priorities. Instinctively this feels like a logical approach, but Islington Giving is testing its model on the complex and entrenched social problems of one the UK’s most deprived areas. The aim of this independent evaluation is to judge the degree to which the campaign is succeeding – put bluntly, to see whether there is any mileage in the Islington Giving model.

1.2 Why now, why Islington?

Islington is commonly perceived as a place of affluence, the home to countless wealthy professionals, a thriving hub of upmarket shops, fancy restaurants and million-pound properties. Whilst these perceptions are not inaccurate, they are not complete. Behind the “rich Islington”, there sits another Islington, one that few acknowledge, a place of crippling poverty, isolation and disadvantage. In 2008 a report published by Cripplegate Foundation exposed this hidden borough and threw light on the day-to-day lives of its poorest residents. It was the shocking findings of the Invisible Islington report that inspired a group of endowed charities to come together and form the Islington Giving campaign.

In 2010 Islington Giving was launched with the aim of taking action to improve people’s lives. By involving residents, businesses, organisations and all those who have an interest in Islington, it aims to make a real difference and change Islington to be a better place for all.

This evaluation – commissioned from independent researchers OPM and NCVO – uses a mixture of desktop research and semi-structured interviews to explore the progress Islington Giving has made towards these aims. The research looks at the campaign’s outputs and outcomes (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), investigates the challenges it will face in the future (Chapter 7) and examines how other areas might learn from the Islington Giving experience (Chapter 8).

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2. Details of the methodology used in the research are giving in Chapter 3 and Appendix A
3. Islington Giving’s outputs and outcomes are set out in Its Theory of Change Model on page 18.
The evaluation takes place at a very early stage in Islington Giving's development after only two and half years of operation (from December 2010 to April 2013). It was commissioned at this point precisely because the campaign's methods are innovative and the Islington Giving board felt that it was important to gain an early sense of whether those methods are working.

1.3 Outputs (Chapter 4)
The evaluation concluded that Islington Giving has achieved a great deal in its early life. Specifically it has:

- raised £1.8m, critically bringing new money into the borough and maximising the use of existing funds
- funded 30 community organisations and invested £700k in local initiatives with a further £1m planned in 2013 and 2014
- raised awareness of Islington's issues and started to establish Islington Giving's reputation as a trusted, knowledgeable and active route through which to give money, time and support
- established Islington's first employee volunteer scheme (BIG) and involved 600 volunteers

The interviewees were rightly proud of these achievements but acknowledged that more needed to be done, particularly on fundraising (a dedicated fundraiser joined Islington Giving in 2012) and on developing the campaign's profile.

The research found that Islington Giving had developed new and proactive ways of working. As well as responding to external funding proposals, the campaign identifies services that are needed, finds the right organisation to deliver them and then works with that partner to see the project through to fruition. The approach is dynamic, creative and flexible and has resulted in initiatives like The Saturday Night Project (page 29) which provides activities for young people at times when traditionally no facilities have been open for them. The interviewees were very positive about this ability to identify need and to trial new activities at the times when residents are in greatest need but when services are often closed.

1.4 Outcomes (Chapter 5)
By any measure the outcomes that Islington Giving seeks to bring about are challenging and long-term. They are:

**Improved quality of life** – achieved by investing in young people, tackling poverty and reducing isolation.

**People giving money and time** – individuals, businesses and organisations giving money and time to create lasting social capital

**A new model of 21st century philanthropy**

Further analysis will be needed to assess fully how Islington Giving is contributing to these outcomes in the longer term but, through our interviews and case study analysis, we found that Islington Giving’s work is already having a profound impact on many of the borough’s most disadvantaged residents.

**Improved quality of life**

**Investing in young people**

At the Saturday Night Project (page 29) we saw how Islington Giving identified the lack of opportunities for young people particularly at weekends and brought together relevant organisations and funding to fill that gap. The project is a huge success and regularly provides activities as well as advice and support to over 500 young people.

**Tackling poverty**

In the Good Neighbours Scheme (page 32) and Parent Mentoring Project (page 34) we saw how funding from Islington Giving has expanded valued existing services (social activities and parent mentoring) and, critically, helped to develop the skills and self-esteem of volunteers and isolated parents so that they are better able to take on new opportunities.

**Reducing isolation**

In the case of the Angel Community Canal Boat Trust (page 38) and the Maya Centre (page 36) we saw how Islington Giving has enabled two small charities to reach more people, helping isolated older women to get support in the form of counselling and simple canal boat trips that provide the chance to get out and make social connections.
People giving money and time
In Chapter 5 we explore the many ways in which Islington Giving is encouraging volunteering. As well as establishing the borough’s first large-scale formal employee volunteering scheme, the campaign acts as a front door for individual volunteers who want to give either time or money. Islington Giving has also been effective in gaining in-kind support from local businesses, allowing both businesses and the campaign to benefit from the association.

A new model of 21st century philanthropy
In Chapter 6 we look at the Islington Giving model of place-based philanthropy and capture some of the key features and benefits identified by the interviewees. These include:

Partnership
The funders welcome the partnership approach for boosting their spending power and their impact, reducing duplicated effort and increasing their collective understanding of local need. Many we interviewed feel that the partnership at the centre of Islington Giving has also enabled the campaign to become a credible and trustworthy destination for resources from external funders.

Local focus
The strong area focus is viewed positively by many, both because it helps to target effort and resource where it is most needed, and because it helps to inspire community engagement. In Islington Giving there are the beginnings of a local, trusted brand that has the potential to inspire a new generation of local donors.

Support
Islington Giving’s delivery partners welcome the multi-faceted support they receive from the campaign, which includes not just funding but advice and access to networks. They value this broad support because it both increases their effectiveness and opens up conversations and new partnerships between organisations and others.

One-stop shop
Through the inter-connectedness of its activities, its local knowledge and its willingness to connect people, Islington Giving is becoming a ‘one-stop shop’ for local organisations, stakeholders, volunteers and donors. This helps stakeholders to reduce the time and effort they spend accessing services and is a critical element in the virtuous circle of activity, awareness-raising, networking and fundraising that Islington Giving is developing.

1.5 Future challenges
Significant and challenging change is on the horizon for the UK charitable sector; in Chapter 7 we explore those challenges, with particular reference to changes in public spending and funding and trends in society. We also discuss the opportunities that exist for Islington Giving, specifically:

- To complete and disseminate research currently being undertaken into the socio-economic conditions in Islington. Just as the first Invisible Islington report was key to bringing together the partners behind Islington Giving, this updated research could be critical in spreading the campaign’s message to a new generation of funders, donors and volunteers.
- To use every avenue to become more widely known in Islington and recognised as the front door for charitable giving and volunteering in the borough. Step one was to get going; step two is to get everyone else going.
- To advise others on how the Islington Giving model can be replicated elsewhere, using the principles set out in Chapter 8.

4. Five years on from Invisible Islington, new economics foundation (nef) have been commissioned to reassess the social and economic conditions in the borough.
2.1 What is Islington Giving?

Islington Giving is a ground-breaking charitable campaign that tackles the most pressing issues facing Islington, London. It was launched in September 2010 with the aims of addressing poverty and isolation by taking action to improve people’s lives. By involving residents, businesses and organisations as well as all those who have an interest in Islington, Islington Giving believes that it can make a real difference and change Islington to be a better place for all who live and work there.

The issues of poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity are all too common in the UK and feature on the action plans of countless charitable organisations, so how can Islington Giving claim to be any different? Where Islington Giving sets itself apart is in its way of working and its development of collaborative place-based philanthropy.

Place-based philanthropy involves locally-embedded charitable organisations working together – with each other, with the community and with outside organisations and stakeholders – to tackle critical need in a defined geographical area. The model is about more than just geography: a place-based funder has intimate ties to its area, in-depth understanding of its problems and a willingness to work with anyone – from resident volunteers to national agencies – who can contribute to its aims. Critically, place-based philanthropy starts with the priorities of the place, not the priorities of the donor or funder. Having established those priorities, a place-based funder then pools effort, expertise, influence and resources from the local community (residents, businesses, agencies and institutions) and external organisations in order to address them. At the heart of place-based funding is the idea that the whole can be more than the sum of its parts – that a mix of sophisticated collaboration, informed local focus and community involvement will bring greater impact. Islington Giving is seeking to test this idea on deeply entrenched, complex social problems in one of the UK’s most deprived and divided areas.

2.2 Aims

Islington Giving has set itself challenging objectives to be delivered over its first three years (from September 2010 to September 2013):

- to raise £3m in three years
- to involve a minimum of 500 volunteers
- to fund a range of organisations that deliver services to tackle its three key themes: investing in young people, tackling poverty and confronting isolation

2.3 Origins and impetus for Islington Giving

Islington Giving grew out of a shared acknowledgement by a range of local organisations and stakeholders of the depth and perniciousness of poverty in Islington highlighted in the 2008 report, Invisible Islington: Living in poverty in inner London. Whilst deprivation and inequality had long been the concern of many working in the borough, this report, commissioned by Cripplegate Foundation, threw stark new light on the issues. By exploring the day-to-day lives of Islington’s poorest residents and allowing them to share their stories of debt, ill-health, isolation and lack of opportunity, Invisible Islington powerfully expressed the often hidden human reality of inner city poverty.
Invisible Islington exposed the borough’s split personality, describing it as a place of “striking social extremes, where London’s richest and poorest residents exist side by side, living entirely different lives.” Five years on, the statistics still support this statement; if anything, the situation has worsened.

In Islington:
- **child poverty is at the second highest level in London:** 43% of children live in poverty and 15,000 of these children come from homes where nobody works.
- **men have the lowest life expectancy in London** with the poorest living 6.5 fewer years than the richest.
- **poverty amongst older people is ranked fourth for England** and rates of depression and suicide are London’s highest.
- **the divide between rich and poor is widening:** in May 2010 the average cost of an Islington property was just below £425,000 and the average property deposit was £77,000.

In the wake of the publication of Invisible Islington, a group of local and national philanthropic organisations came together to form the Islington Giving campaign. Then, as now, their shared vision was to work together to bring more resources, more knowledge and more focus to the profound issues of poverty and inequality highlighted in the report.

### 2.4 Structure and governance

*Islington Giving* is not a charity in itself, it is a charitable campaign that unites the efforts of several voluntary sector organisations. Formally, it is a restricted fund of Cripplegate Foundation, which led the establishment of the campaign and continues to cover its running costs. *Islington Giving* is led by nine board members representing a wide range of organisations and stakeholders. In addition to the members’ contribution of time and expertise, all but one of the bodies they represent has invested money in *Islington Giving*.

The members of the *Islington Giving* Board all have a long standing history and experience of working in Islington. They have included: The Breadsticks Foundation, The City Bridge Trust, Cripplegate Foundation, The Morris Charitable Trust, Richard Cloudesley’s Charity, UnLtd and Voluntary Action Islington.

### 2.5 Why evaluate now?

Less than three years from launch, *Islington Giving* is still in its infancy and consequently at an early point for evaluation. However, because the campaign’s working methods are innovative and relatively untested, the board felt that it was important to take stock early. They commissioned this report from independent researchers, OPM and NCVO, with the aims of:
- exploring the model of place-based philanthropy used by *Islington Giving* and assessing its strengths and weaknesses
- understanding the emerging impact of *Islington Giving* on the borough
- examining the challenges facing *Islington Giving* and options for future development
- drawing out key lessons for others interested in developing place-based philanthropy in their own areas

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6. These statistics are taken from Islington Giving’s website. For more information and detail about the specific issues facing Islington’s poorest residents see http://www.islingtongiving.org.uk/website/whyislington/a-divided-borough.
Methodology

3.1 Theory of change evaluation framework

For this evaluation OPM and NCVO adopted a theory of change framework, an approach commonly used in the assessment of public policy and one that focuses on identifying the theoretical or logical sequence by which an intervention, policy or organisation seeks to achieve its desired effects. A theory of change framework builds a clear understanding of how an initiative is intended to work and what it is designed to achieve. It does this by breaking down the initiative into its constituent parts, i.e. what has been invested into it, the activities it delivers, and the outputs it produces.

A theory of change approach places emphasis on understanding not only whether the activities and interventions achieve impact but how and why. This type of evaluation is well suited to interventions like Islington Giving which is breaking new ground, and where learning and reflection on the part of all stakeholders is an integral part of the process. OPM and NCVO developed a model that describes how Islington Giving is intended to work and achieve impact. This model was then tested through a combination of desk based research and qualitative in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in Islington Giving.

The model included:
- the inputs invested into the campaign (e.g. human resources, funds, infrastructure)
- the activities it undertakes (e.g. fundraising and promoting volunteering)
- the outputs that it produces (e.g. funds raised and volunteers involved)
- the outcomes generated, both for the partnership and different stakeholder groups within the wider community (e.g. reduced isolation and poverty).

The model (set out on page 18) should be read from the bottom up, starting with what has been invested into the campaign and then progressing up through to the desired outcomes. The model is referred to throughout the report in order to assess the extent to which Islington Giving works in the way that was intended.

3.2 Fieldwork

The theory of change model was designed in collaboration with Islington Giving and was then used to guide who was interviewed (the fieldwork sample) and the questions they were asked (fieldwork tools).

A total of 46 interviews, including two scoping interviews, were completed:
- 11 board members from across all partner organisations and Islington Giving staff
- 6 strategic stakeholders from a range of local businesses, funders and the local authority
- 4 residents (donors, volunteers and/or local business owners)
- 25 interviews with staff, volunteers and recipients from across six different delivery organisations

The interviews were conducted either by phone or in person, with some group interviews taking place at organisations. Interviews were semi-structured and varied in length from 20–90 minutes.
### 3.3 Analysis

The researchers conducted thematic data analysis of the interviews, drawing out findings in relation to the theory of change model. The key themes were analysed according to the different characteristics of the interviewee (e.g. stakeholder group, relationship with Islington Giving).

### 3.4 Limits to the research approach

There are a number of qualifications to the research process:

- In order to explore the ways in which Islington Giving is already having an impact, the study targeted interviewees who were already engaged with the campaign in one way or another. Although participants were promised anonymity and encouraged to give frank views, their broad views of Islington Giving are likely to tend towards the positive because they have already chosen to participate in its work.
- The evaluation did not include a large-scale survey of impact or analysis of all project monitoring data. Instead, it gathered the insights, views and experiences of a range of key contacts, partners and critical friends and drew themes and conclusions from them. The findings are therefore not statistically quantifiable.
- Similarly, the evaluation did not involve a ‘scientific’ evaluation involving control groups that would have allowed comparison of Islington Giving’s impact to that of a similar organisation, or assessment of its impact versus groups not engaging with the campaign.
- This evaluation did not include an economic analysis of the return on the investment made in Islington Giving.

A more detailed outline of the methodology is given in Appendix A.
This chapter looks at Islington Giving’s progress to date – the specific activities and targets the campaign committed to achieve at its launch and which are set out in the theory of change model (page 18).

Islington Giving’s initial aims:

- Funds – to raise £3m in three years
- Grants – to distribute these funds over five years
- Volunteers – to establish an infrastructure for employee volunteering and involve at least 500 volunteers
- Recognition – to raise awareness of Islington’s issues

4.1 Fundraising

Since its launch in September 2010, Islington Giving has received pledges of £1.8m. This sum comprises contributions from the campaign’s board members (approximately £0.6m), donations from external organisations (approximately £0.8m) and individual donations from local residents and businesses. While Islington Giving is likely to miss its challenging 2013 target of £3m, the £1.8m it has raised in its first 30 months represents a very significant achievement. Particularly impressive are the funds that have been brought in from organisations from outside Islington (e.g. Macquarie Group and Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund). This is “new money” which would not have come into the borough without the efforts of Islington Giving.

That said, interviewees felt that Islington Giving had only just ‘scratched the surface’ in terms of its fundraising potential. They suggested that more time was needed in this area and that more focus should be given to raising awareness of local need.

‘You tell people about the stats – they think you’re talking nonsense!’
— Board member

Islington Giving employed a full time fundraiser in 2012 to coordinate future activity across the campaign.

4.2 Grants

From December 2010 to April 2013 Islington Giving supported 30 community organisations, investing just under £700,000 in local initiatives. The campaign plans to distribute a further £500,000 a year in 2013 and 2014.

Islington Giving has championed a fresh and proactive approach to grant giving.

As well as funding existing projects and proposals from delivery partners, Islington Giving develops its own ideas that meet its goals and fill gaps in provision. It then identifies the organisation to deliver them and works with that partner to see the project through to fruition. The approach is proactive, creative and flexible and based on the view that residents are people rather than “service-users” – people whose needs can’t always be met conveniently by services provided only in office hours. This way of thinking was welcomed by the interviewees, who
talked positively about the ability to trial new activities and to improve services to meet the specific needs of residents.

‘Overall it is good to have a bit of a mixture … for some organisations we ask them about how they could use the money and at other times we will have identified a need and we approached them. This is the kind of mix we want.’
— Board member

A key example of Islington Giving’s proactive, gap-filling approach is the Saturday Night Project that opens a sports centre for youth activities on Saturday nights, a time when traditionally facilities have been closed. Full details of the Saturday Night Project can be found on page 29. Other examples the Islington Giving approach are the provision of activities for older and isolated people – a philosophy group, garden visits and a telephone ring around club – specifically scheduled at weekends when they are mostly likely to feel lonely.

‘We questioned why – if you have poor mental health or are older – why should activities be at difficult times? It’s nice to be able to have some room to try new things which is what the funding from Islington Giving allows.’
— Board member

‘We’re putting things into the public domain at times that are different to what has been done before; people are not service-users, they are residents. The take up has been really impressive. We are using this to challenge voluntary and community organisations and the Council about how they provide services.’
— Board member

This approach is not without its challenges. It can take time and careful negotiation to persuade people to do things differently, or provide services at new times. The development stage of new projects can also be risky: not all new ideas succeed. Nonetheless this blended approach to grant giving has allowed both Islington Giving board members and local organisations to try out new ways of working and to learn what works locally. The next chapter looks in detail at the impact of these projects.

4.3 Volunteering

Islington Giving seeks not just to support its local community through much needed services but to engage that community – rich and poor – in its activities. Volunteering is seen as an essential part of the place-based approach, helping to build local commitment to local problems and providing rich opportunities for learning and engagement for Islington’s disadvantaged residents. Islington Giving has already exceeded its three year target and involved more than 600 volunteers since its 2010 launch.

The campaign promotes volunteering in three ways:

1. Islington Giving acts as a front door for philanthropy in Islington, encouraging residents to get involved as volunteers and supporting them to do so. Volunteers approach Islington Giving making both general offers to help wherever needed and specific offers to work on projects in which they have an interest. One interviewee, for example, signed up to help having gone on a tour. Volunteering is managed on a case-by-case basis depending on the interest and capacity of the individual.

2. Islington Giving has commissioned East London Business Alliance to establish an employee volunteering scheme (BIG), the first of its kind in the borough. This encourages businesses to get involved in skilled employee volunteering. Raising the profile of need in Islington is critical to ensure that large City firms see Islington as an area which needs support. More detail on BIG is given in Chapter 05.

3. Islington Giving encourages all the groups it supports to create and manage volunteer placements and to think creatively about how they can involve people in their work.
4.4 Raising awareness

One of Islington Giving’s core objectives is to raise awareness about both the extent of the borough’s poverty despite its seeming affluence, and the existence of Islington Giving as a trusted local hub organisation through which residents and businesses can support their community. The research identified that Islington Giving uses targeted events, advertising, and social media to raise awareness and capture the imagination.

Walking tours
Inside Islington tours’ take interested local people and decision-makers to visit projects funded by Islington Giving. Participants build their understanding of local need and learn how Islington Giving is responding to it.

Word of mouth
Islington Giving’s board members and other supporters play an important role in raising awareness amongst their networks. In addition, all recipients of the campaign’s funding are asked to act as ambassadors for Islington Giving. When projects are offered funding they are invited to meet with other funded projects, to learn more about Islington Giving, its priorities, evaluation processes, Inside Islington tours and other ways of being an ambassador. In these ways delivery organisations are welcomed as part of the Islington Giving brand strategy and are asked in return to raise awareness of the campaign in their day to day work.

The volunteers and donors we interviewed had learned about Islington Giving through word of mouth. They explained that hearing about the campaign from personal contacts was particularly effective because they could trust the source of the message. One donor had heard about the campaign via her child’s teacher, another through her other philanthropic networks. This highlights the importance of ‘ambassadors’ who can be anyone with some experience of the campaign who talk positively about Islington Giving to their contacts.

Notwithstanding the high levels of awareness of Islington Giving reported by the interviewees, they also speculated about the extent to which the campaign is really known in the borough. Whilst advertising, such as restaurant tent cards, features in local media and a central Islington billboard, have all been undertaken by the campaign, some felt that more needed to be done, particularly among local professionals and organisations such as the Council.

’If you go on Upper Street how many people would know of Islington Giving? I suspect few.’

— Board member

A growing reputation
Islington Giving was featured in the Government’s Giving White Paper as an innovative example of local philanthropy and was endorsed by Islington Council’s Fairness Commission. In 2013, the Chair of its Appeal Committee was made a Beacon Fellow for Local Philanthropy and in June 2013 Islington Giving was shortlisted by the Charity Awards for its work on pooling local knowledge to encourage community philanthropy.

Raising awareness of local need and how it is being addressed is a long-term challenge for a campaign as young as Islington Giving. The campaign has made a strong start and has the potential to provide the borough and its residents and businesses with a locally-branded, easily identifiable route through which to give money, time and support.

### 4.5 An interconnected programme

The activities of Islington Giving described above are complementary, each one contributing to and reinforcing the others. For example, fundraising and volunteering will only follow from awareness-raising work and awareness can only grow as more volunteers become involved with Islington Giving. Similarly, the fundraising strategy is not designed to raise money as a one-off end in itself, but to encourage donors to establish a longer-lasting philanthropic relationship with the local area:

‘It is...really vital that fundraising is linked to broader messages and that we continue to do profile-raising. We want to leave a longer term legacy of philanthropy and community action not simply collecting more money. Money is not an end in itself.’

— Board member

The stakeholders interviewed recognised the connectedness of Islington Giving’s activities and felt that the campaign was creating a ‘virtuous circle’ of activity. Furthermore, for these interviewees, the bringing together of a range of activities under a single, locally-based campaign has helped to turn Islington Giving into a hub, from where people can be signposted to services and where potential contributors can be drawn into additional activities. We were told of examples where local businesses had approached Islington Giving about making a donation and gone on to promote volunteering on their behalf.

### 4.6 Conclusion

In the 30 months since its launch, Islington Giving has achieved a great deal in terms of its outputs, specifically raising £1.8m, funding 30 community organisations, establishing Islington’s first employee volunteer scheme and involving 600 volunteers. Along the way Islington Giving has developed new ways of doing things, rolling up its own sleeves on the development of projects, fostering volunteering at every opportunity and turning itself into a hub for all those interested in giving or finding support in the borough.
This chapter explores how Islington Giving is working to achieve the following outcomes set out in its theory of change model:

- Improved quality of life achieved by
  - investing in young people
  - tackling poverty
  - reducing isolation

- People giving money and time – individuals, businesses and organisations giving money and time to create lasting social capital in Islington.

It is important to note that Islington Giving is still at an early stage in its development and its outcomes are ambitious and long-term. The scope of this evaluation did not allow for the quantitative assessment of outcomes. Instead, this section captures the views and experiences of individuals who have engaged with the campaign to demonstrate their understanding of its impact.

5.1 Improved quality of life by investing in young people

From December 2010 to April 2013 Islington Giving:

- invested over £200,000 in evening and weekend activities for Islington’s young people\(^8\)
- channelled just under £60,000 into targeted support for vulnerable children and young people in need of extra support
- supported 12 local organisations working with young people
- funded activities attended by 2,300 young people aged 12–21

Saturday Night Project

The Saturday Night Project provides fun and inspiring activities for young people aged 13–19. For one Saturday each month, the Sobell Leisure Centre in Islington opens up to an average of 400 local young people, giving them the opportunity to do something positive with their Saturday night. They are tempted in with a variety of activities including traditional sports, such as badminton and squash, and more creative activities such as zorbing, street dance and an exercise bike-powered smoothie blender!

Centre staff, partners and volunteers encourage young people to take part in different activities, help groups to integrate and ensure a safe and inclusive atmosphere. They are supported by a wide range of other partners, including the Met Police and London Ambulance, sexual health services, a local community theatre and music projects. They offer a wide range of activities and support, including female self esteem sessions, stop smoking help and careers advice.

Impact on young people

Support workers describe how the activities allow young people to ‘almost exercise by accident’, for example ice skating is seen as a fun activity rather than exercise. This is particularly important for young women who engage in fewer sports. Young people have the chance to try new things and meet new people, allowing them to have positive experiences within their community and with people with whom they might not otherwise have mixed. One young person commented:

“It’s been really great playing with people that I don’t really know and just getting away from home. It’s somewhere to relax and play.”

\(^8\) Islington Giving, Making a Difference monitoring report (June 2012)
The Saturday Night Project allows young people to find out about services and support available from a wide range of partner organisations and gives them the opportunity to ask questions they might not raise with parents or teachers.

**Impact on partners and the community**
Partners describe how Saturday Night Project gives them an opportunity to fulfill their own goals. They recruit new young people to their projects, disseminate health and other information and identify young people that could benefit from their support. One partner, a park guard, explained how the events allowed him to meet and build up relationships with young people in a trusting environment. Consequently, when he is out patrolling, the young people he encounters know who he is and this helps him to diffuse potentially difficult situations.

**Impact on the centre**
The centre manager has used the project to explore whether there is appetite from young people to participate in activities on a Saturday night. The results have been unreservedly positive: the demographic mix of attendees, attendance figures and regularity of attendance have proved that young people are willing to try new things and trust the local leisure centre to deliver them. As a result, the centre manager has been able to build a business case to open up the ice rink every Saturday night.

**Working with Islington Giving**
The Saturday Night Project was developed and supported through Islington Giving. The funding arrangement has been flexible to allow time to test new ways of working and to refine the mix of activities offered. The Sobell Leisure Centre is often used as a stop on Inside Islington tours, enabling the project to raise its own profile, build links with senior local stakeholders and attract additional volunteers.

The Saturday Night Project shows how Islington Giving has successfully developed a project that meets the needs and aspirations of young people, in this case for weekend activities. Islington Giving identified the gap, then brought the relevant institutions and funding together to fill it, and finally promoted the project to an influential local audience to show how services might usefully change.
5.2 Improved quality of life by tackling poverty

So far Islington Giving has\(^{10}\):

- invested over £280,000 in tackling poverty
- supported over 1,200 people
- invested in three local organisations with a proven track record, helping them to scale-up their operations and reach more people

Good Neighbours Scheme
(run by Help on Your Doorstep)

The Good Neighbours Scheme works with the residents of the New River Green Estate in Canonbury to provide volunteering opportunities and one-off events that improve quality of life on the estate. The scheme is run by long-standing resident, Val, who helps to set up activities and then works with residents so they can run them themselves. Val reaches out to residents who might not see that they have something to offer, or who lack the confidence to participate. The premise of the scheme is that volunteering benefits both the individual volunteer and the wider community.

Jen – a volunteer’s story

Jen (19) missed much of her final year at school and struggled with her GCSEs. She was interested in working with children but was unable to find work. Having heard about a volunteering opportunity, Jen met Val who straight away got her involved in organising a number of events, including a residents’ trip to Southend.

‘This community doesn’t really come together but loads came on the trip. It was a really good day. People were sitting down with people they don’t know and having a laugh. Some people are frightened on the estate – it’s got the usual problems, muggings, gangs – but they came out and supported their community.’

The impact

Jen feels very positive about her volunteering and how it has not just given her something to do, but also allowed her to learn new things, take on responsibility, and grow in confidence:

‘It’s a great experience. Val’s given me so many opportunities, she gives me responsibility like handling money. We come up with ideas together.’

Jen has now recommended volunteering to a friend who has low confidence. She thinks it will help her get more involved with the estate and meet new people. Jen concludes:

‘This place is a Godsend. It helps so many people. Val’s the auntie I never had.’

Working with Islington Giving

Islington Giving provided the funding that has allowed Help on Your Doorstep to retain their small staff team and continue their much needed work. Beyond just funding, Islington Giving has also supported Help on Your Doorstep to raise its profile. The project is frequently cited in Islington Giving’s awareness-raising campaigns. By being a part of the invisible Islington tours, Help on Your Doorstep gets a regular opportunity to show its work to businesses, politicians, interested residents and potential funders.

This Good Neighbours Scheme shows how Islington Giving has developed appropriate services for a specific estate, building upon the established Help on Your Doorstep project and engaging experienced local workers. The project has benefitted by association with Islington Giving through raised awareness and increased credibility within the borough.

\(^{10}\) Islington Giving, Making a Difference monitoring report (June 2012)
The Parent Mentoring project (run by Parent House)

The Parent House, based near Kings Cross, works to build the confidence and skills of parents by offering a mixture of advice, training courses and one-to-one support in a welcoming setting.

Angela – a parent’s story

After many years spent raising a family, Angela had become lonely and lacked confidence. She found out about Parent House from a friend, went along and immediately appreciated the warm welcome she got there. As a mentor commented:

‘What really stands out is the love that is felt here…you feel it as soon as you walk in, no other provision is like this, you’re usually just another person through the door, but no one feels that here: we embrace whoever comes through the door.’

Angela was matched with a local parent mentor with whom she really hit it off. They started to meet weekly for about an hour, usually in a local coffee shop. Angela was not an outgoing person but, after a few sessions, she built up the confidence to organise a lunch date with an old friend:

‘We talked about her social needs, we found out that she had put all her energy into children – and was not thinking about herself. Isolation is a big thing for parents.’

Impact

Angela benefitted greatly from having someone to talk to who was a good listener and able to give her the time to discuss her situation on a regular basis. This helped her to make small but important steps in the right direction. With the help of her mentor, Angela began to work on a CV – something she had never done before – and to discuss her ambition to start volunteering. As her skills and confidence grew she felt able to take up a weekly volunteering position at Age UK and to fulfil her long-held goal of re-taking her English GCSE.

The mentors we spoke to emphasised that there are huge numbers of parents like Angela in Islington who could benefit from this simple but life changing form of support.

Working with Islington Giving

The Parent Mentoring project has been a great success, offering a unique and highly valued form of support to isolated parents. Parent House was keen to extend the reach of the scheme and Islington Giving has helped them to achieve this by brokering a partnership with Minik Kardes, a Turkish community group, and then providing funding for a cohort of mentors who now work with parents from this community.

‘Islington Giving are very supportive, in terms of giving information and linking you up with other providers to promote more partnership working.’

Islington Giving has also been helping Parent House to raise its profile and gain further funding by inviting local donors to visit the service and see firsthand how parents – either as mentors or mentees – are benefiting from the project.

The Parent Mentoring project demonstrates how Islington Giving helps established projects expand their services. It also shows the value Islington Giving can add by linking up delivery organisations to new partners and building new relationships.
5.3 Improved quality of life by reducing isolation

From December 2010 to April 2013, Islington Giving:

• invested over £225,000 in confronting isolation
• more than £150,000 of this investment is supporting vulnerable older people – at least £40,000 of this investment is targeted towards vulnerable women
• Supported ten organisations working with isolated and vulnerable residents
• Supported over 1,500 isolated and vulnerable individuals

The Maya Centre

The Maya Centre, set up 27 years ago, is a counselling service that provides free individual and group therapy for vulnerable women on low incomes living in Islington. In 2010–11 the Centre supported 290 women, many of whom had suffered trauma and abuse. The counselling sessions occur over a year, allowing women time to build trusting relationships with their counsellors and to work at their own pace. Islington Giving funded the Maya Centre in 2011 so that it can provide its valuable services to older women (50+).

Impact

Due to the vulnerability of the women who use the Maya Centre, we spoke only to the counsellors who described some of the issues facing the women such as domestic violence and/or sexual abuse. The staff spoke of three ways in which vulnerability manifests itself in these women – isolation, low self esteem and substance abuse – and how the Centre helps them to address them.

‘The Maya Centre is about helping women who have nothing, to find the inner resource they all have – themselves’

Alongside the talking therapy offer by the Maya Centre, the counsellors have the freedom to find practical and activity-based support. For example, one counsellor is supporting a woman to learn English and to connect with other Muslim women. Another woman with substance abuse and hygiene issues has taken up piano and skating lessons to combat her addiction problems. She is now taking regular baths and is tackling her problem with hoarding. Elsewhere, the counselling has helped a woman to build up the confidence to report some serious issues to the police.

Working with Islington Giving

Securing sufficient funds is an ongoing challenge for the Maya Centre. Attracting funding for women’s projects and for mental health are both notoriously difficult, especially for a small charity focussed in a small geographical area.

Islington Giving’s localised approach and concern with isolation meant that the Maya Centre qualified for funding and the campaign has provided a grant so that their work with older women and for group counselling can continue. The Centre staff value this financial support and Islington Giving’s focus on linking up different services locally and encouraging funded organisations to network with each other:

‘What is different about working with Islington Giving is that they place more emphasis on networking with other groups that they fund.’

— Staff member

The Maya Centre project shows how Islington Giving funding has helped a project to extend the breadth of its services. It raises the profile of an unpopular cause and addresses key issues in Islington – isolation and mental ill health. The project appreciates the networking opportunities offered through their contact with Islington Giving and is aware that how this differs from other funder-project relationships.
Angel Community Canal Boat

The Angel Community Canal Boat Trust provides specially-designed boat trips for a wide range of groups including under 5s, schoolchildren, ethnic minority and refugee groups, women’s and girls’ groups and people with physical and learning disabilities. The Trust’s ethos is to be as inclusive as possible:

‘…we don’t ever want to turn someone down: we offer a community rate and we will go out of our way to make the service affordable to local people.’

David’s story
David cares for his mum, Jane, who has suffered from Alzheimer’s for several years. During the week Jane visits a day centre. This helps David enormously but caring for his mother is still a huge commitment, especially as she has little support from family or friends. Both David and his mum were isolated.

After speaking to someone at the day centre David and Jane were referred to the Alzheimer’s Society and not long after they received a friendly phone call and an invitation to join an Angel Boat day trip along Regent’s Canal. They jumped at the opportunity. ‘Being on the boat – that was special in itself,’ says David, ‘We lead closeted lives, but this was something out of the ordinary… being on the boat opened up the city to my mother – it made London more accessible.’

On the trip both David and his mum made contacts and friendships that they still maintain today and this has helped Jane to feel less lonely and more connected to her local area. David said, ‘It was an eye opener about what’s available, for me. It was the first thing I have attended in a group setting other than at the day centre.’
Working with Islington Giving

In 2010, Islington Giving provided a grant to the Angel Boat with the specific aim of targeting Islington’s older residents including those who are affected by poor mental health. In line with the campaign’s aim of confronting isolation, the project was to move beyond the ‘usual suspects’ and reach out to the borough’s most isolated residents, people who may rarely leave their homes.

To get to these residents – who are, by definition, hard to reach – Islington Giving helped to establish a relationship between the Angel Boat and Age UK Islington. This has played a vital role in promoting the boat trips to new groups including a Bangladeshi group, Arts4Dementia and the Alzheimer’s Society.

‘There are literally thousands of community groups across Islington that could benefit from the boat. Working with Islington Giving and Age UK has been a process of cascading awareness and use of the boat.’

5.4 People give money and time

Islington Giving encourages people to give to the campaign not just in the form of financial donations but through volunteering and in kind support.

Since 2010 Islington Giving has:

- Encouraged residents to think about what they can give within their capacity, be it time and skills through volunteering, or money through donations, which have ranged from £1 to £50,000
- Gained both pro-bono and financial support from local businesses including restaurants, solicitors, estate agents and hotels
- Brought in new support from national and international businesses who previously were unaware of Islington’s needs

Individual resident donations

Residents who donate to Islington Giving told us that they value the local focus of the campaign. They feel responsible for their local community and are looking for ways in which they can ‘give back’ to it.

‘Islington Giving is a combination of bringing rich and poor together. It’s the right way for me to give something back.’

— Local resident

Particularly helpful in encouraging residents to donate have been activities such as the Inside Islington tours that highlight the challenges facing local people and show Islington Giving’s work. For one contributor it was this event that impressed upon her the campaign’s expertise, local knowledge and trustworthiness.

‘They have a huge amount of experience…Going on the walk around inspired confidence in me that the money is being spent well.’

— Local resident

This sense of transparency in Islington Giving’s work is enhanced by the personal nature of the contact between staff and residents, who like the fact that they are kept informed about Islington Giving’s work.

Through its combination of local focus, knowledge and integrity, Islington Giving is becoming a credible route through which residents can give back and become socially responsible members of the local community.
Giving Time
Local people can learn about volunteering opportunities through Islington Giving in a range of ways. Whilst we did not interview individual volunteers as part of this evaluation, we did speak to representatives of East London Business Alliance, which has been commissioned by Islington Giving to shape a new employee volunteering scheme similar to those it runs in east London. Businesses for Islington Giving (BIG) is the borough’s first large-scale formal employee volunteering scheme.

Businesses for Islington Giving
Businesses for Islington Giving (BIG) aims to apply the lessons of the East London Business Alliance to north London, asking member companies to foster employee volunteering and to support local residents in finding work experience and employment. The initiative has four key strands:

- BIG Alliance Forum – bringing together key stakeholders to pool skills and expertise to identify the potential of the local private sector in supporting the local community
- Recruiting businesses to join the BIG Alliance and get involved in Islington, often for the first time
- Employee volunteer programmes: linking employees with local charities and programmes that require volunteer support
- Skills and employment programme – training sessions such as in CV writing, and high quality employment opportunities and work experience

BIG completed a six month pilot phase in December 2012. Whilst still at a very early stage, the programme is on track engaging businesses to secure volunteers and supporting residents into work experience placements and training.

Working with Islington Giving
BIG consider themselves to be important Islington Giving ambassadors. In every conversation with a local business, BIG staff talk of the campaign and how the BIG project is part of it. Islington Giving is part of the BIG name and seen as a core part of its identity.

'We live and breathe Islington Giving. ‘Businesses for Islington Giving’ – it’s in our name. We use the colours from the logo on our marketing materials. Wherever I go I am delivering a BIG project.’
— Staff member

As the set up phase was based on networking, the programme has particularly benefited from Islington Giving advice, support and knowledge of the local area.

‘I’m so pleased to be working with them. They know Islington inside out. They’ve helped us to make contacts with Islington and shared connections they have with corporate organisations. It just made it much more embedded, much quicker to set up.’

Staff also describe how Islington Giving’s credibility has helped them to gain the trust of businesses:

‘If we had done this on our own it would have taken so much longer and we’d have had a lot less credibility. We have instant credibility with Islington Giving.’

Other ways of giving money and time – local business support
Islington Giving encourages local businesses to contribute to the campaign by offering support in kind based on their area of expertise. We spoke to a number of local businesses, including an estate agent, restaurant and branding and communications agency, that had been asked for specific help by Islington Giving. In all cases, the local nature of the campaign had been a powerful tool in securing their support.

‘We got involved because it’s to give for a good cause, it’s local and we’re in Islington. We’re part of Islington so by definition we had to be part of Islington Giving.’
— Local business

‘I just love the localism – it’s the main reason I’m in it.’
— Local business

Those we interviewed enjoyed their work with Islington Giving and valued the flexibility they were given to dip in and out of the campaign and offer support in the way that worked best for them.
Support from a local restaurant

A long-standing local restaurant has supported Islington Giving since its launch in 2010. The restaurant manager appreciates that he has been able to give on his own terms and never at the expense of his business. For example, he has supported networking and fundraising events by providing his private dining room for free during non-peak times and subsidising the costs of meals thereby keeping the events cost-neutral.

The manager feels that Islington Giving benefits from its association with the restaurant which has been in the area for decades and is seen as a local institution:

‘We also had a tent card on every table…if customers see the logo in the restaurant they see it’s not a bogus charity, it’s connected to us…Islington Giving’s got credibility by association. There’s a respect for us locally, so if we get involved it might encourage others to do the same.’

He feels that the restaurant also benefits from supporting Islington Giving. He is able to use his space on quieter days and reach out to old customers and introduce new ones to his restaurant. The work has a positive impact on staff morale: they like to see their workplace making a positive contribution to the local area:

‘It’s a family run restaurant that supports its local community – the staff like that.’

From its inception, Islington Giving sought to build a new and innovative approach to philanthropy which differed from other models. This chapter explores the structure and working methods of Islington Giving, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of its place-based approach and its progress towards creating a new model of 21st century philanthropy.
6.1 Governance – the power of partnership

At the heart of Islington Giving is a partnership of five endowed trusts and other charitable organisations, all of whom have contributed to the funding of the campaign and who are represented on its board. At its inception, Islington Giving’s board agreed roles and responsibilities and established the overall aims of Islington Giving and its strategy for the first three years.

Cripplegate Foundation is the host organisation for Islington Giving. The Foundation led the initial set-up of the campaign and continues to be its major funder and provider of administrative infrastructure. In formal terms, the campaign is a restricted fund of Cripplegate Foundation; consequently all decisions taken by the Islington Giving board are reviewed and agreed by the Cripplegate board. The Foundation covers the cost of running the campaign, including a full-time member of staff, the use of Cripplegate Foundation’s finance and payment systems, and in-house grants officers to set up programmes.

Strengths

The board members interviewed were very positive about the partnership behind Islington Giving and the early set-up processes. The interviews highlighted a number of strengths in the current governance arrangements:

- The hosting and support from Cripplegate Foundation means that all contributions given by members of the public go directly to supporting projects, meaning Islington Giving offers real value for money to its investors.
- In the early days of the campaign the ready-made infrastructure provided by Cripplegate Foundation freed the board to concentrate on establishing the campaign programme and formalising the partnership structures.
- At the same time, the association of Cripplegate Foundation acted as a ‘quality mark’, helping to open doors and establish Islington Giving’s credibility.
- Board members appreciate the different backgrounds and areas of expertise brought to the boardroom table, not just because this diversity strengthens Islington Giving but because it helps the board members to network and gather knowledge for their individual organisations.
- Strong personal relations have developed between the board members.

Points to note

- Offering significant funds and infrastructure support, Cripplegate Foundation is the ‘major partner’ in the Islington Giving coalition. There is a risk that such an arrangement could lead board members to feel less equal than their Cripplegate Foundation counterparts. The evaluation suggested that this was not the case and that the association of Cripplegate Foundation was highly valued for the reasons given above. However board members need to remain conscious of the importance of always maintaining consensus and collective decision-making. Islington Giving’s strength and credibility lies, in part, in the genuine partnership at its centre.
- Islington Giving’s relationship to Cripplegate Foundation brings with it an additional layer of approval (all decisions taken by the Islington Giving board are reviewed and agreed by the Cripplegate board). Likewise, the collaborative nature of the campaign means that processes might take longer than they would in a lone organisation. However, in practice, Cripplegate has developed ways of expediting urgent decisions and the interviews suggested that the benefits of the collaboration far outweighed this potential drawbacks.

6.2 Local focus – the power of place

Islington Giving was established with the explicit aim of focusing on a specific local place – Islington. Where other models of philanthropy tend to fund across a wide geographical area, Islington Giving is deliberately local. The campaign’s marketing and relationship-building – including the use of personal stories to convey the hardship that residents face – effectively emphasise this local identity and purpose. This strong local focus was seen as a positive by those we interviewed. Islington Giving’s stakeholders saw in it the potential to inspire long-term community engagement:

‘It’s very interesting that they’re doing it on a local level…they want to draw people in and make them much more into an integrated community, to unite both halves together and see if they can get some long term engagement between them.’

— Islington Giving Partner
Likewise Islington Giving’s donors were inspired to give because they understood where and why their money was needed and could see its impact on their doorstep. This visibility and transparency was particularly valued by individual donors who wanted to feel that they could trust the organisations in which they invested. This sense of impact is heightened by Islington Giving’s practice of sharing the human stories behind its work.

‘The impression I get is that Islington Giving appreciates the importance of the real. For example, it’s not just a bureaucracy that says fill a form in but it understands that stories are what matter in getting people to give up their time, and does things face to face.’

— Strategic stakeholder

The local focus of Islington Giving was also seen to be in step with policy drivers such as localism, place-based leadership and the Big Society. Indeed Islington Giving’s approach has been recognised as an exemplar of modern giving in the Government’s recent Giving White Paper12.

6.3 Collaboration – the power of shared resources

Where most charitable organisations use collaboration on specific projects; Islington Giving has collaboration at its core. The campaign’s aim is to pool the resources of multiple funders and delivery partners and to encourage the extensive involvement of local people and businesses, not just as financial contributors but as the givers of time and other resources. This inclusive approach is not without its challenges but the interviewees in this study were positive about the many benefits of collaboration:

Greater spending power and better coordination for Islington Giving’s board and partners

Put simply, working together is more powerful than working alone: Islington Giving is able to magnify the impact of the work of the endowed trusts that sit at its centre.

‘By sharing resources the organisations can achieve more than the sum of their parts – as a group they have greater capacity and therefore more leverage of the same amount of money, rather than working in a way that is fragmented and overlapping.’

— Board member

Increased funding and resources from elsewhere

Islington Giving’s central partnership has enabled it to become a credible and trustworthy destination for resources from external funders.

‘Islington Giving is a vehicle that more and more foundations, trusts and other donors can have faith in and put their money into and know they can expect good results.’

— Board member

Clearer shared understanding of local need

Islington Giving board members are local experts with many years of professional and private experience of the community. The pooling of their knowledge and contacts gives the campaign a strong foundation of evidence and networks.

‘As grant makers in a campaign they have an extraordinary wide knowledge of projects, programmes and a real knowledge of the borough.’

— Strategic partner

Confidence to tackle complex issues

In contrast to the many grant-giving organisations that focus on single issues, Islington Giving tackles broad, complex problems. The campaign has allowed a number of endowed trusts to move away from a more narrow approach and use their independence and resources to tackle a programme of broader challenges (poverty, isolation and investing in young people) that cuts across the policy boundaries of employment, education and mental health.

‘Invisible Islington forged a different role and conversation for trusts – about moving beyond a purely grant making role, and to one more focussed on influence and understanding the profile of need, through telling stories. This was a role we could play as we are independent, not based in government.’

— Strategic stakeholder

12. “A campaign for Islington people by Islington people, it offers local people and businesses the opportunity to get involved in the community ‘in their own back yard’, secure in the knowledge that their talents and money will be used effectively.” HM Government, Giving White Paper, May 2011, p21
6.4 Delivery – the power of support

Differing from other models of philanthropy, Islington Giving seeks to develop close collaborative relationships with its delivery partners. It provides not just funds but advice, time and access to networks and draws each partner organisation into a family of Islington Giving ambassadors. Interviewees suggest that the broad support of Islington Giving is greatly valued, especially its efforts to build wider networks, open up conversations and build partnerships between organisations and others in business, the community and voluntary sectors.

‘What’s been great about Islington Giving is they’ve been excellent at linking us up or saying ‘so and so’ has the money but not the space to do X or Y… it helps us to make contacts and new links.’
— Delivery partner

The research revealed a mutually beneficial relationship between Islington Giving and the organisations with which it works. Small projects clearly value their association with the trusted Islington Giving brand, particularly the credibility and sense of fitting into a wider purpose that it brings.

‘It’s about being able to communicate to people we’re working with in the borough how our activities fit into the bigger issue of addressing poverty in Islington, and having the credibility that comes with being associated with Islington Giving.’
— Strategic stakeholder

‘Islington Giving is about knitting it all together to give you the satisfaction that you’re not swimming alone…to be confident that the way you use resources will help to maximise a wider effort, part of a bigger picture, contributing to bigger goals that has a sensible evidence base and people behind it, even if you’re not conscious of all the other activity going on yourself.’
— Strategic stakeholder

6.5 Funder, advisor, broker, hub – the power of the one-stop shop

Many interviewees argued that – through the inter-connectedness of its activities, its local knowledge and its willingness to connect people – Islington Giving was turning into a ‘one-stop shop’ for local organisations, stakeholders, volunteers and donors. While we are unable to draw on any statistical data to support this view, these stakeholders argued that Islington Giving was helping them to reduce the time and effort they spend accessing services and information.

‘Islington Giving have done a good job at plonking themselves in the middle of that terrain, making themselves a one-stop shop in Islington if you want to volunteer or donate’
— Strategic stakeholder

That role of joining the dots and bringing people together is much less efficient without an organisation like Islington Giving, so they can put a business in touch with a project which didn’t know of each other’s existence, and that could open some doors for both, bringing them skills, materials etc.’
— Strategic stakeholder

There is also evidence of a ‘virtuous circle’ emerging whereby new funding is leveraged into Islington Giving as its relationships strengthen, its activities multiply and its reputation grows.

‘As Islington Giving invests money and achieves more, more people will want to put their money towards it as it becomes trusted and well regarded.’
— Board member

‘…we as the Council promote them wherever we go. People with money to give will not give it to us, but will to them, so we point them in their direction.’
— Strategic stakeholder

Islington Giving is, however, still in its infancy and it is by no means universally known. One stakeholder, for instance, said that he was aware of several small charities that did not know about Islington Giving. Another said that Council staff still do not always know about the campaign and therefore fail to signpost people to Islington Giving. This is an area for future action.
6.6 Conclusion

*Islington Giving* has established effective governance arrangements and is well led by a diverse but integrated board. In its earliest days, the campaign successfully piggy-backed off Cripplegate Foundation, using its infrastructure and influence to establish itself. Cripplegate Foundation’s host role – both its financial and administrative support and its governance role as parent body – continues to be significant. Whilst this situation has the potential to create unevenness in the board, in practice, the benefits of Cripplegate’s support far outweigh this theoretical drawback.

*Islington Giving* has developed its own model of place-based philanthropy, the key features of which are local focus, advanced collaboration and the desire to be more than just a funder and instead provide advice, information, connections and access to networks as well. This research has uncovered many positives in the *Islington Giving* model: the funders praised its partnership approach for intensifying their impact and reducing duplicated effort; the delivery partners welcomed the multi-faceted support they received; the donors appreciated the visibility, transparency and trustworthiness of *Islington Giving* that allowed them to give on their doorstep, and the stakeholders saw in the campaign the emergence of a one-stop shop for anyone looking to give time, money and support in Islington.

7.1 Challenges

Interviewees highlighted a number of future challenges facing *Islington Giving*, all of which spring from wider national trends in the state provision of services, funding and social change.

**The changing role of the state**

*Islington Giving’s* future planning should be based on the premise that the scale and nature of the state’s role in social and welfare provision are no longer fixed. It is expected that state provision will reduce – potentially significantly and rapidly – and that state support for the vulnerable will increasingly rely on, indeed expect, additional support from within the community, although not necessarily from organised voluntary and community groups. This could have significant implications for *Islington Giving*. In future philanthropic organisations could be called upon to provide not just supplementary services but baseline provision. In Islington, where the local authority is under particular financial pressure, the scale of these changes could be considerable. In their interviews, stakeholders working for the local authority were pessimistic about their ability to continue to provide a ‘full service’ to local residents.

13. In the period 2011–15 the London Borough of Islington is looking to save £100m, a third of its net budget. At the same time, demand for services such as child protection and support for people with learning disabilities is increasing. (http://www.islington.gov.uk/about/council-works/councilfinance/Pages/faqs.aspx)
‘We are instituting another round of major cuts to budgets, and this is forcing us to look seriously at reducing core services. We are past the point where the savings can be found simply by cutting inefficiencies.’
— Local authority stakeholder

Growing demand for services and changing patterns of vulnerability

Work now being undertaken by the new economics foundation14 (nef) is highlighting that the depth of the poverty in Islington is intensifying. There is evidence of growing economic insecurity up and down the social scale, and of more people facing stark financial choices, such as the one between eating or heating.

Reduced resilience (the ability to adapt to changes in circumstances such as job loss) is being exacerbated by decreased provision and/or effectiveness of support services. The likely consequences of this are increased stress and mental ill health. There is some evidence that social networks, often assumed to be one means of filling the gaps left by spending cuts, may actually be reducing in their scale and capacity. If this is the case, the risk of people being locked out of the mainstream economy whilst being socially isolated will also increase.

Organisations like Islington Giving will be asked to respond to this ‘double whammy’ of increased fragility in society and decreased capacity to cope with it. As a number of board members commented, if this scenario of increased need becomes more widespread, it will be harder for the campaign to keep the precise focus which has been part of its operating model to date.

‘We are running up hill, more and more needs to be done, suddenly everything has become an essential priority. Trying to focus on this and improve quality of life when poor people are getting poorer very fast is the key challenge.’
— Board member

7.2 Opportunities

Updating the evidence base

Islington Giving recognises that the baseline of evidence upon which it has built its activities – Invisible Islington15 – may already be out of date. New research from the new economics foundation16 (nef), will generate a reassessment of the socio-economic conditions in Islington. In their interviews, stakeholders told us that this report would help Islington Giving to focus its future work and would serve to energise partners and donors. The interviewees wanted to see its findings disseminated as widely as possible and used to build consensus across the coalition of what the next generation of priorities should be.

Trends in funding

There are two major questions about the future funding ecology for Islington Giving. Firstly, whether the current levels of philanthropic giving can be maintained and, if they diminish, whether the partnership approach might be undermined as organisations compete for decreasing resources. Stakeholders told us that partnership working takes time and effort. In a climate where the survival of small charities is at risk, might some turn to look inwards instead of outwards in order to survive?

The second question is about whether changes in statutory provision will open up the prospect of organisations like Islington Giving receiving state funding and moving towards a more contractual model, although potentially with significant delegation of decision-making. Significant changes in the balance of Islington Giving’s funding could have a major effect on the nature and governance of the campaign.

The trends highlighted above suggest that the terrain is likely to get rockier for all UK charities and that, for Islington Giving, even continuing to meet today’s demands and priorities will become more of a challenge.

‘We should make a very big noise about what the evidence tells us. This is especially important in an environment when the council has less money and capacity to play this role as community leader.’
— Strategic stakeholder

As one board member noted, the tightening financial context might present an opportunity for the campaign – Islington’s poverty is becoming more visible:

‘We have a big message to tell – it should make people more generous, food banks are opening.’
— Board member

Stakeholders felt that, just as the first Invisible Islington report had brought together the founding partners of Islington Giving, there was an opportunity for this new report to galvanise the wider community and local businesses.

**Capitalising on the place-based philanthropy approach**

As set out in Chapter 6, those we interviewed saw many strengths in Islington Giving’s collaborative place-based approach. There was broad consensus that the campaign was well placed to encourage giving in Islington and address future challenges in the borough and that the model should not be dramatically changed. Several interviewees also judged that, in a climate of growing distrust in government’s ability to bring about change, a locally based campaign benefitted from being independent. Nonetheless, whilst there was broad support for the overall principles of Islington Giving, several interviewees argued that the campaign would have to adapt and change some of its focus and activities in order to stay relevant.

### 7.3 Areas for future consideration

This evaluation took place just after the mid-point in Islington Giving’s three year strategic plan. Board members spoke of their experiences of being part of Islington Giving so far, including how the campaign first came together and how early campaign activities have been trialled on an ad hoc basis, albeit according to the broader strategy. There was a sense that Islington Giving was at a point of transition, about to enter a new phase of operation – a second term of delivery, in which it would seek to sharpen all its functions, from strategic decision-making to day-to-day operations.

In 2012 the Islington Giving Board decided to extend the campaign’s fundraising from three to five years in recognition of its early success, a wish to strengthen and deepen its work and an awareness of growing need in Islington.

As the following diagram shows, Islington Giving has achieved a great deal by having place-based philanthropy as its starting point but its next phase of development will bring new questions and dilemmas.
In particular, the research raised the question of whether Islington Giving should be concentrating on targeted fundraising or setting its sights on a mass campaign.

One of the key challenges to Islington Giving’s aspiration to be a borough-wide campaign is the cost of broadening out its appeal, particularly in the current financial context when money for profile-raising is scarce. Board members described how a more targeted approach to fundraising (for example consolidating relationships with known supporters to secure larger, one-off donations) might generate a more secure income stream than a mass campaign aimed at the whole borough (for example the £1 donation per text campaign as advertised on a central Islington billboard).

Yet board members also described how the vision of Islington Giving was about involving the whole borough and finding creative ways for people to give, whether it is time or money. This tension – between a narrow but cost effective approach on the one hand and the principle of the Islington Giving vision on the other hand – is a key question for future development of the campaign. The recommendation from board members was that Islington Giving should be more ambitious, particularly in terms of fundraising and awareness-raising. Despite the resource implications, they wanted to see Islington Giving broaden its appeal so that the campaign could meet its overarching objectives of tackling Islington’s most pressing issues.

‘We should have more focus on building recognition, profile raising and building a wider audience who are aware of and contributing in some way to Islington Giving.’

— Board member
Delivering the Islington Giving Model in Other Areas

Islington Giving is a campaign with a unique purpose – to meet the particular needs of Islington residents. The specific nature of the poverty in Islington creates a powerful hook for the Islington Giving campaign: the area’s deprivation is made all the more shocking by the trappings of wealth so evident in the borough. The contrasting of these extremes has been a powerful tool in the mobilisation of Islington Giving.

However, despite the ‘uniqueness’ of Islington, the model of Islington Giving can be replicated and there is interest in doing just that from both other London areas (The Fund for Hackney and Lambeth Giving) and further afield (Margate and Leeds). The local situations in these areas will vary widely but the principles developed by Islington Giving could help create successful place-based campaigns in all of them.

Ingredients for replicating the Islington Giving model:

1. Know your local area
   ‘I would recommend the local model…there are advantages of being able to be flexible, meet the needs of the local area and not be locked into issues.’
   — Board member

2. Know what you want to achieve
   With your campaign’s vision agreed, establish a clear set of priorities and aims. Ensure that there is a clear programme, and that you can measure success. Focus on aims that are defined and realistic. These should be activities that can be monitored and evaluated to show what is working and what is not.
   ‘Agree the aims and vision, then share priorities and build a blueprint – pick aims and don’t over stretch yourself.’
   — Board member

3. Find a host
   It is hugely important to find a leader/host with the vision, local knowledge and respect to coordinate initial activity and catalyse and maintain enthusiasm:
   ‘Have a strong local partner who has knowledge and standing in the area and the clout to open doors (like Cripplegate).’
   — Board member

Ideal, your leader will represent an organisation that can ‘hold’ the campaign, especially in the early set-up days. Islington Giving is a campaign of partner organisations and not a charity, although many of its partners are charities. As such, it is ‘held’ and costs are underwritten by Cripplegate Foundation. The benefits of this approach are that every £1 donated goes directly to Islington Giving, the campaign saves on time, organisation and administration costs, especially useful during its set up phase, and Cripplegate Foundation lent immediate credibility.
to the new initiative and helped to open doors. For the model to work successfully the holding organisation needs to command high levels of trust amongst the partners.

‘Have a core partner like Cripplegate who you can trust to deliver quality.’
— Board member

4. Build the partnership

‘Make sure you choose your partners wisely – the criteria need to go beyond enthusiasm and chemistry. You need to do due diligence on your partners to see their capacity to get involved and support in the longer term.’
— Board member

Local knowledge

Try to bring a diverse range of local organisations into the partnership, each one bringing a different area of local knowledge. Breadth of expertise will help to turn the campaign into a one-stop shop for brokering support for local needs:

‘Islington Giving are great because they are a serious attempt at one-stop shop brokerage – the ‘go-to’ place in trying to bridge the rich and poor’
— Key stakeholder

Sharing local intelligence will allow you to join the dots and meet local need more effectively. It will also add the weight and credibility to the campaign when you come to ask large national funders to get involved:

‘For big grant funders, to have knowledge on the ground is essential. Cripplegate Foundation is a local shop for foundations that are interested in working on local issues. In that way, Cripplegate – and Islington Giving – offer a quality stamp to local organisations of good knowledge.’
— Board member

Financial and other forms of investment

Partnerships work well when they are founded on trust and equality. However there can be flexibility over the nature of different campaign members’ contributions with some giving expertise, networks or contacts rather than funds. The same applies to the size and timing of financial contributions. Finding a balance between financial commitments and other forms of support will be crucial to the long term success of your partnership:

‘The starting point has got to be real commitment – partners put up a lot of money. It’s not just about governance but it’s about showing serious investment.’
— Board member

‘The capital to get it going is there along with the valuable contribution of individuals.’
— Board member

5. Take time to get it right

Give yourself at least a year to set up the campaign, ensuring that all partners are on board and fully committed to its priorities:

‘My advice for someone else starting up: … start with a partnership but spend a year building it before thinking of asking for money. You have to make it work – so get them in early and be genuine stakeholders in the whole operation.’
— Board member

This time is also important to allow the build-up of trust between partners:

‘Things work best with trust – this isn’t something you get off the shelf. You grow it through people working together. This is really important as you can take more risks, when things are a bit difficult you can lean on each other.’
— Board member

It is equally important to be realistic about the time it will take to achieve your targets whilst still maintaining momentum.
6. Build support through early wins
Some “early wins” are a useful way to develop momentum, create a culture of success, motivate your board members and raise the profile of your campaign. Have a starter pot of money with which to fund projects that can be set up quickly by effective organisations.

‘Have some early wins then communicate them.’
— Board member

‘Focus on raising profile in the beginning and getting some money upfront to raise profile. Have something you achieved early on to help you sell the idea, like a poster project.’
— Board member
Appendix A:
Methodology

The research was conducted by the Office for Public Management (OPM) and National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) who developed a methodology comprising three elements:

- Scoping stage
- Interviews with board members and strategic stakeholders
- Project visits

1. Scoping stage
This stage was about building up an understanding of the structures, partnerships and intended impacts of Islington Giving and developing the evaluation framework and research tools. It involved:

- attending a set-up meeting for newly funded delivery organisations
- a review of Islington Giving’s project documents
- two scoping interviews (identified in Table 1 below)
- development of an Islington Giving ‘theory of change’ logic model
- topic guide design

2. Interview with board members and strategic stakeholders
The researchers wanted to gather a range of perspectives about the effectiveness of the processes, partnerships and structures of Islington Giving and about the progress and impacts achieved against the campaign’s three objectives. To do this they interviewed the Islington Giving board (at least one board member per funding organisation) and a range of strategic stakeholders in the borough.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that a broad range of perspectives could feed in their views. Participants were emailed invitations and asked to give a convenient date and time for interview and to choose whether they preferred be interviewed face-to-face or by telephone.

The interviews were semi-structured and participants were encouraged to be frank and constructive. All participants were assured that their interviews were held confidentially and that their comments would not be attributed in the final report.

3. Project case study visits and telephone interviews
The aim of this stage was to learn about the impacts of Islington Giving’s funded projects and the reasons why residents have contributed to the campaign. Where possible, a member of the evaluation team visited both those delivering the project and those who were benefiting from it.

The interviews were semi-structured and the evaluation team worked to accommodate the needs and preferences of participants in terms of the length and location of interviews. If a visit proved impractical for the project, or key people could not be present, additional telephone interviews were arranged.
### Table 1: Board members and strategic stakeholders interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Partner Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui Broadhead</td>
<td>Islington Giving staff (scoping stage interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td>UnLtd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Davidson</td>
<td>The City Bridge Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne-Marie Ellis</td>
<td>Cripplegate Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristina Glenn</td>
<td>Cripplegate Foundation staff (scoping stage interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Hull</td>
<td>Cripplegate Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Jupp</td>
<td>Cripplegate Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Morris</td>
<td>The Morris Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Newton</td>
<td>Richard Cloudesley’s Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz Payne</td>
<td>The Breadsticks Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Sheriff</td>
<td>Voluntary Action Islington</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Project representatives, donors and volunteers interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Participants Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent House: Mentoring Project</td>
<td>• Project manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent mentee/mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel Community Boat Trust</td>
<td>• Delivery partner at Age UK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery partner at Arts4Dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery partner at Alzheimer’s Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Project beneficiaries x 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help on Your Doorstop</td>
<td>• Project coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Beneficiaries x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Project volunteers x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Maya Centre</td>
<td>• Project Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Counsellors x 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Night Project</td>
<td>• Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visited event and had informal conversations with support services and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses for Islington Giving (BIG), East London Business Alliance</td>
<td>• Project Managers x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers, donors and other supporters</td>
<td>• 4 interviewees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To find out more about Islington Giving, please contact us:

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