



Power shift marks a new age of philanthropy

Philanthropy – private wealth for public good – has never been more important than it is now, writes **Cheryl Chapman**



A study of over 18,000 London donations by theBigGive.org.uk found that residents of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney and Haringey give the most charitable donations

Local authority budgets are under pressure, and demand for charitable services is increasing. While philanthropy will never be a substitute for government, it must now play a leading role for community provision, just as London's philanthropists have done for centuries, providing hospitals, schools, housing, infrastructure and other services.

There is some encouraging news on the giving front; philanthropy is experiencing a 'boom time' says Coutts, with £1m plus charitable donations in the UK at their highest level since 2008, according to its latest report. It shows that £1.83bn was given in 355 gifts to causes or foundations in 2015, with the majority from London.

Even more encouraging, there were 68 first-time million pound donors in 2014 and 2015, and seven of the first-time donors from 2014 gave again at this level in 2015.

So, we can tentatively hope that a culture of philanthropy is emerging once again among



Cheryl Chapman, director of City Philanthropy, on the importance of London's community led philanthropy and the positive changes it brings to communities and people's lives.

London's rich, numbering 4,400 according to 2015 figures from data provider Wealth Insight.

Of course, the poor have always been generous and partake in informal philanthropy in their own communities. New evidence of this is contained in The Big Give's London heat map of generosity.

A study of over 18,000 London donations by theBigGive.org.uk finds that some of London's most deprived boroughs are also demonstrating some of its highest levels of generosity.

Residents of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney and Haringey, where child deprivation rates are above 30 per cent, which means many kids go hungry particularly during school holidays, give the most. While those from Richmond, Wandsworth and Bromley are the least generous donors, according to the research.

Despite their giving, the poorest have not traditionally had a say in how to tackle social issues. But that is changing.

In a new spirit of 'co-production' and an understanding that 'the shoe-wearers know where the shoes pinch most' as the African proverb goes, there is a grand vision for London to "own its own future" as set out in the London Funder's report The Way Ahead, funded by the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, City Bridge Trust.

"We see a re-ordering of civil society where Londoners work with those in power and each other, so that all voices are heard equally in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions to make London a better place," explains David Warner of London Funders.

The hashtag #shiftthepower is how the or-

ganisers of the recent Global Summit on Community Philanthropy sum up this move away from traditional donor/recipient relationships, to people-led development.

'Islington Giving' is living proof of this new philanthropic contract. It launched in 2010 following the Invisible Islington report, commissioned by Cripplegate Foundation, which explored the day-to-day lives of Islington's poorest residents and allowed them to share their stories of debt, ill-health, isolation and lack of opportunity.

It revealed a borough suffering from a 'split personality' where London's richest and poorest residents existed side by side, living entirely different lives.

"The report allowed us to identify what we care about and what's happening in our own backyards and for us all to take action. People do not want to be 'done to'. No one has a monopoly on the solution, particularly when poverty and inequality are so entrenched in Islington," says Kristina Glenn, Islington Giving Director.

"Islington Giving is based on the simple idea that everyone can give, whether that's time or money, and when they do we all benefit. It's about reciprocity," she explains.

Since its launch it has raised more than £5m and engaged thousands of community volunteers. In 2016 alone it granted more than £1m to local projects and touched the lives of 4,500 residents.

Through The BIG (Business for Islington Giving) Alliance it offers business-supported employee a volunteer programme to strengthen links between businesses and community organisations, schools, colleges and universities

across Islington. This work goes from strength to strength and 2016 saw the 1,000th employee volunteer going out into the borough to share their skills and experience to support the social and economic regeneration of Islington.

Islington Giving is part of the London's Giving movement. So successful is this example of community-led philanthropy that City Bridge Trust is now funding the London's Giving project to develop and energise giving in every London borough.

Place-based giving partnerships have been established in Hackney, Kingston, Newham and Kensington and Chelsea, and are emerging in other boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Camden, Lewisham and Sutton with more in the pipeline.

"Each is unique because it is built around the particular challenges and assets of the borough, but they are all based on a thorough understanding of the needs of residents and involve everyone – residents, businesses, funders – in finding solutions," says Deborah Xavier of London's Giving.

Philanthropy has gone through many iterations over the centuries from hand outs, to hand ups, but today we see most importantly it is about everyone having a 'hand in'.



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- For more information visit cityphilanthropy.org.uk
- To download the Coutts report, go to philanthropy.coutts.com
- More on the Global Summit on Community Philanthropy can be found here cpsummit.ngo
- More on London's Giving can be found here londonfunders.org.uk