

TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL SMALL GRANTS FUND



2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT



East End
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Tower Hamlets Council Small Grants Fund

The Tower Hamlets Council Small Grants Fund launched in 2019 to support grassroots community and voluntary sector organisations across the borough to address issues facing local residents.

The Small Grants Fund was established as part of the Council's VCS Strategy 2019-23 which sets out the unique strengths of the VCS and the need to continue to support, empower and build the future capacity of the VCS for the sector to be able to continue to respond to complex issues spanning a range of areas including welfare, unemployment and housing.

The principle objective in developing the grants programme was to harness the distinctive characteristics of grants to promote sustainable and resilient communities and help enable the VCS continue to make its unique contribution towards achieving positive outcomes for the community.

This report reviews the Small Grants Fund in 2019-20.



Kayd Somali Arts & Culture, Somali Arts Festival 2019

Grants Programme

Tower Hamlets Council engaged East End Community Foundation (EECF), a philanthropic advisor and experienced grant maker, to manage and administer the Small Grants Fund. A budget of £90,000 was made available in 2019, to be distributed across two funding rounds. Please see **Appendix A** for an overview of the grant management services provided by EECF.

The grants programme consisted of five themes, each developed to achieve the outcomes established in the VCS Strategy. Under each theme specific guidelines, criteria and outcomes were developed to maximise the potential outcomes for local residents. The five themes are:

Innovation

To encourage innovation or pilot something new, especially where there is a gap in provision.

Prevention

To promote grassroots activity to reduce the need for statutory services.

Neighbourhood Action

To promote local neighbourhood initiatives

Community Cohesion

To develop community resilience, promote cultural opportunities and reduce social isolation.

Partnership

Making the sector more effective through closer partnership working within the sector and across sectors.

In addition to these, two cross-cutting themes were identified which all applications were assessed against. These are:

Community Cohesion

Developing community resilience, promoting cultural opportunities and reducing social isolation in the context of the theme.

Equality and Diversity

Demonstrating how people with protected equalities characteristics will be included.

The Small Grants Fund opened for applications in April 2019 and an open call took place across social media, through the Tower Hamlets Council and EECF's websites and the local CVS. The EECF Grants Team also hosted a funding workshop prior to each application deadline to promote the Small Grants Fund and share tips on applying for support.

Two application deadlines were held in June and September. Across these deadlines, 134 applications were received requesting a total of £653,416. EECF completed an assessment of all applications received and presented recommendations to Tower Hamlets Council and the EECF Grants Committee for approval. Grant awards were ratified by the EECF Trustees.

On successful completion of the 2019-20 Small Grants Fund £90,000 was awarded to support 23 local projects. One organisation subsequently withdrew their grant application after funding was offered, reducing the total amount awarded to £89,000 which supported 22 organisations.

Application Statistics

- The Small Grants Fund was heavily oversubscribed in 2019, the £653,416 requested was over **seven times** the budget available
- **16%** of applications received a grant, which meant 112 applications were unsuccessful
- **57%** of applications were received applied under the Community Cohesion Theme
- **50%** of the organisations that applied to the Small Grants Fund had not previously received funding from Tower Hamlets Council
- **65%** of applications received were from registered charities
- **81%** of applications received were from organisations based in Tower Hamlets
- **49%** of applications received were from organisations with an annual turnover of less than £50,000
- **45%** of the grants awarded went to organisations with an annual turnover of under £50,000

Please see **Appendix B** for further details of the applications received.

Funded Projects

Organisation	Project Summary	Theme	Amount Awarded
Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum	Delivering mental health workshops, mental health awareness training and drop-in advice sessions	Prevention	3,900
Bubble Club CIC	Workshops for people with learning disabilities to create and deliver accessible 'club nights'	Community Cohesion	5,000
CoCreate TH	An arts and mindfulness group for employed residents struggling with their mental health	Prevention	5,000
Disability Sports Coach	Weekly multi-sports sessions for disabled people at Mile End Leisure Centre	Prevention	3,082
Dorset Community Association	A programme of community forums and holiday celebrations for local residents	Community Cohesion	3,500
East London Dance	The East London Arts Fundraisers Network, a peer training and networking programme bringing together arts and cultural organisations	Partnership	2,500
Green Candle Dance Company	10 weekly dance and live music sessions for older people with dementia, their carers and companions	Prevention	5,000
Kayd Somali Arts & Culture	The delivery of Somali Day which celebrates Somali culture through art, music, food and comedy	Community Cohesion	3,500
Leaders in Community	The development of a youth panel who will develop and deliver community events	Community Cohesion	2,425*
Lincoln Area Regeneration Group	Costs to deliver community events for Black History Month 2019	Community Cohesion	1,000
Lower Regent's Coalition	A series of canoe-based clean up events for young people and BAME residents	Neighbourhood Action	2,500*
Ocean Women's Association	Coffee mornings for older BAME women to talk about a range of local issues and access local services	Prevention	4,944
Phoenix Academie	A robotics and coding programme for young people to develop new skills	Innovation	5,000

Praxis Community Projects	Engaging residents in designing and delivering a Diversity Festival	Community Cohesion	3,500
Seeds for Growth	A community gardening and food growing project at Samuda Community Garden	Neighbourhood Action	4,000
Somali Senior Citizens Club	Support for older Somali residents experiencing exclusion from other services	Prevention	4,983
Spitalfields Music	An inclusive music project for disabled and non-disabled musicians, aged 11 to 25	Community Cohesion	4,000
Tarling West TRA	Purchasing equipment and resources to establish a weekly social club at Tarling Residents Hall for all ages	Community Cohesion	984
The Friends of TH Cemetery Park	A community elders group including sit-and-sense, walk-and-talk, crafts, planting and bird spotting sessions	Community Cohesion	5,000
Tower Hamlets Parents Centre	Community celebrations marking International Women's Day, a Multiracial Eid Party, an Intergenerational Sports Day and a Christmas Party	Prevention	10,682
Udichi Shilpi Gosthi	A two-day festival celebrating Bangladeshi literature and culture	Community Cohesion	3,500
Women's Inclusive Team	A part-time Youth Worker at Spotlight Youth Centre, to meet the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised Somali young people	Innovation	5,000
Limehouse Welfare Association	A knife-crime awareness workshop for local residents	Neighbourhood Action	£1,000 (Cancelled)

*Two grants were match funded by EECF grants programmes. Leaders in Community received a match funding grant of £2,425 and Lower Regent's Coalition received a match funding grant of £2,500.

A grant of £1,000 was offered to Limehouse Welfare Association in September 2019. As part of the due diligence requirements, the offer was made with the request of a recent bank statement to evidence the organisation's bank details, a requirement to pass due diligence check and to release the grant.

Limehouse Welfare Association provided feedback that they felt this supporting document was not a reasonable requirement to receive funding, and formally withdrew their application. The grant offer was cancelled and the £1,000 has been added to the 2020-21 grants budget.

Outcomes

In 2019, **five projects** supported through the Tower Hamlets Council reported back on the reach and impact of their work. As this is the first year of the programme, the majority of monitoring data will be available at the end of 2020. The main achievements of the Small Grants Fund and outcomes reported on are provided below.

Please see **Appendix C** for further analysis of the beneficiaries supported.



630

RESIDENTS ENGAGED
IN ACTIVITIES FOR THE
FIRST TIME



1,660

RESIDENTS ENGAGED
IN FUNDED PROJECTS



84

ACTIVITY SESSIONS
DELIVERED



102

HOURS OF ACTIVITY
PROVIDED



200

RESIDENTS
VOLUNTEERED WITH
THE PROJECTS



1,152

RESIDENTS TOOK PART
IN ARTS & CULTURAL
ACTIVITIES



50

MIGRANTS RECEIVED
SUPPORT



7

COMMUNITY EVENTS
DELIVERED



523

RESIDENTS TOOK PART
IN ARTS ACTIVITIES
FOR THE FIRST TIME

Project Stories

"We can be proud as a community that our association is not just a place where we complain and moan, but a place for everyone to be a part of the estate, it will bring the residents closer and at the same time upcoming children of the estate have a place to stay safe, off the streets and away from drug gangs and abuse."

Tarling West Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) received a grant of £984 to purchase equipment and set up their estate community space to hold weekly club sessions for all local residents. The grant helped create new facilities to increase use of the Residents Hall, allowing time and space for residents from the estate to meet and get to know each other, strengthening existing links and creating new social ties, confidence and a stronger sense of community. The sessions have also provided young people on the estate a place to keep safe and away from gang related activities and trouble in and around the area.



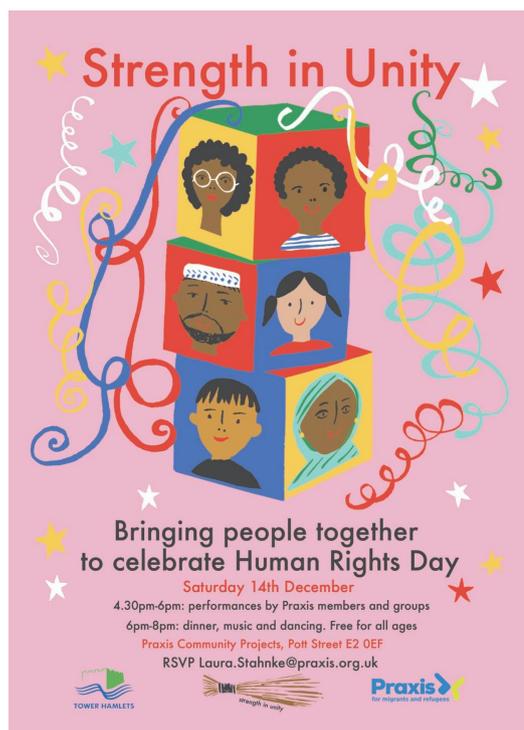
"This grant has been monumental to the delivery of our special Somali Day within Somali Week Festival 2019. This event is especially important because it allows us to connect with both the Somali and non-Somali community within Tower Hamlets. By dividing the day up into catering for our youngest audience (children and their families), and our elders, we were able to directly communicate and deliver to two key target audiences for us that otherwise do not have access to the arts on a regular basis."

Somali Day allowed us to access two key demographics - children and families and the elders of the community; both of whom who normally do not have access to culture and heritage events and through this day we were able to take the success of Somali day to further plan how we can make this accessible throughout the year."

- Kayd Somali Arts & Culture

Project Stories

"The Human Rights Day Festival provided a unique opportunity for BAMER residents of Tower Hamlets and Praxis users to come together in a celebratory event that highlights the issues migrant communities face, affirms their solidarity and shared experience but also gives a platform to demonstrate their creative strengths and talent to a wider audience. This can significantly shift perceptions and preconceived ideas of refugee and migrant status. The process of co-producing the event or developing a performance is empowering for the participants and develops their voice and skills."



The sense of joint ownership was beneficial to the health and wellbeing of participants but also engendered a sense of commonality for diverse participants. This builds community cohesion for the most disadvantaged residents and helps combat social isolation. The festival builds new significant support networks for migrant residents. The pride participants feel in their contribution to the event is very evident and important to their self esteem, it is an event participants talk about for the rest of the year."

- Praxis Community Projects



"Being granted £1,000 enabled us to programme four high quality events that have brought music, theatre and film experiences for the wider community. As a result, we have had high engagement with all of these events, attracting 75 first time attendees to Poplar Union."

Both Grand Union Orchestra and Purple Moon Drama are local organisations working in Tower Hamlets; this grant has enabled us to support local artists as well as attract participants both new to us and those who are familiar with our programme back to engage with these events. This makes a positive difference to the cultural provision in Tower Hamlets, as it is proof that our programme is highly engaged with and therefore valued within the community."

- Lincoln Area Regeneration Group

Summary

The Tower Hamlets Council Small Grants Fund aims to continue to support and empower the voluntary and community sector organisations across the borough and to build its future capacity to achieve positive outcomes for the community. Within its first year of operation the Small Grants Fund has supported 22 local organisations and funded activities which are expected to reach over 8,000 local residents.

The fund was heavily oversubscribed with local organisations requesting more than seven times the budget available. While this demonstrates that there is a need for funding locally, and that the priorities of the Small Grants Fund are relevant to local issues, this may be more symptomatic of the recent changes in Council funding and a new grants programme, which often results in an initially high volume of requests. We have seen the volume of applications reduce in year two, as the programme becomes more established and the themes and outcomes are better known and understood.

The Community Cohesion theme attracted the highest volume of applications, with almost 60% received under this theme. This meant that there was a much higher rejection rate under this theme in particular. In year two, through the promotion of the Small Grants Fund and the workshops, we have been actively encouraging applications under the other themes to ensure there is a broader range of applications.

As organisations funded through the Small Grants Fund in 2019 are largely still delivering their activities, the outcomes data is limited and is based on the five projects that completed their work and reported back prior to the end of March 2020. The initial outcomes data indicates that the Small Grants Fund is having a positive impact on local residents, particularly in relation to community cohesion and bringing diverse members of the community together.

Year two of the Tower Hamlets Council Small Grants Fund launched in March 2020 and we are already seeing more variety in the applications received as well a consistent level of applications. The impact of the covid-19 pandemic has meant that many organisations have had to be agile and flexible in responding to the immediate needs of local residents. We have received a high volume of change requests to re-purpose the grants awarded to better meet the emerging needs.

The strength and value of grassroots organisations has been highlighted particularly since March, they have been able to respond effectively to the changing needs of the community because of their local knowledge and relationships. The VCS organisations will be an essential component of the recovery process particularly in supporting residents to re-integrate and build cohesion.

We welcome any feedback on the development of the fund and look forward to continuing year two of the Small Grants Fund.

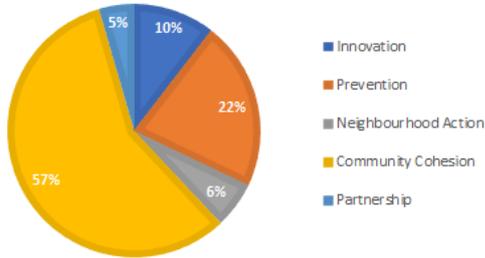
Appendix A: EECF Grant Management Services

With the 12% contribution (£32,400 for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 programmes) to EECF for the management and administration of the Tower Hamlets Council Small Grants Fund the Council receives a cost-effective solution to local giving, delivered by a team of community experts with over 32 years of combined knowledge of effective interventions to support the local community. EECF's service includes;

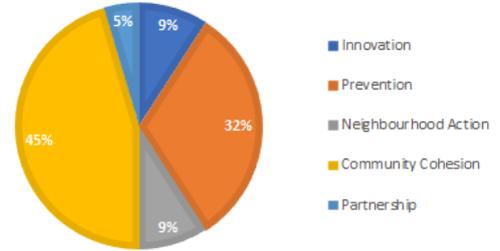
- Full programme management including fund set up and grant criteria shaping
- Creation of the Small Grants Fund structure including writing application and monitoring forms, relevant to the size of grant award
- Fund promotion to over 2,000 voluntary sector organisations via newsletters, social media and community partners including the Tower Hamlets CVS
- Enquiry management services for local organisations to email or call the EECF Grants Team to receive information, advice and guidance on the Small Grants Fund
- One-to-one application support for applicants seeking grants of £1,000 or less
- A funding workshop prior to each application deadline (three times a year) providing advice and tips on applying for support
- Full assessment of all applications received and due diligence checks completed on shortlisted applications, with recommendations presented to Tower Hamlets Council
- Match funding opportunities with other grants programmes managed by EECF
- Notification to successful and unsuccessful applicants
- Negotiating and/or clarifying project outcomes, managing project change requests and ongoing support to funded projects
- Budget management and making grant payments to funded organisations
- An annual grants celebration event to meet funded organisations
- Monitoring and evaluation of funded projects (spend and outcomes)
- An annual report to Tower Hamlets Council reviewing the Small Grants Fund and outcomes achieved

Appendix B: Application Information

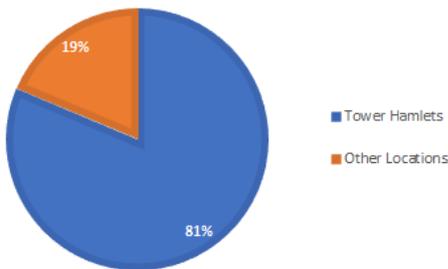
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THEME



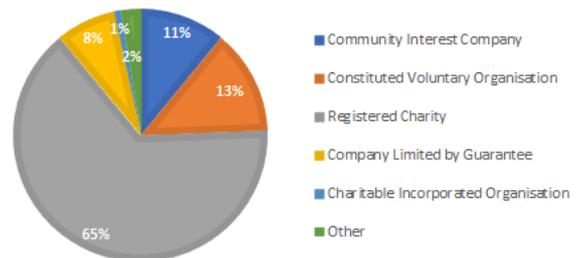
GRANTS AWARDED BY THEME



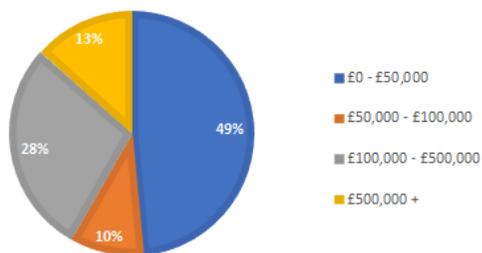
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY ORGANISATION LOCATION



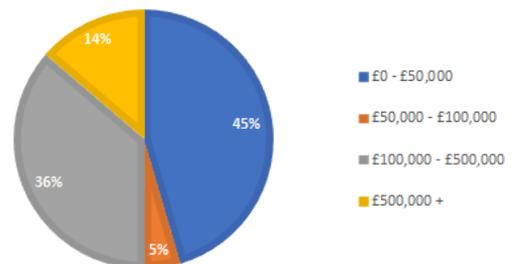
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY ORGANISATION TYPE



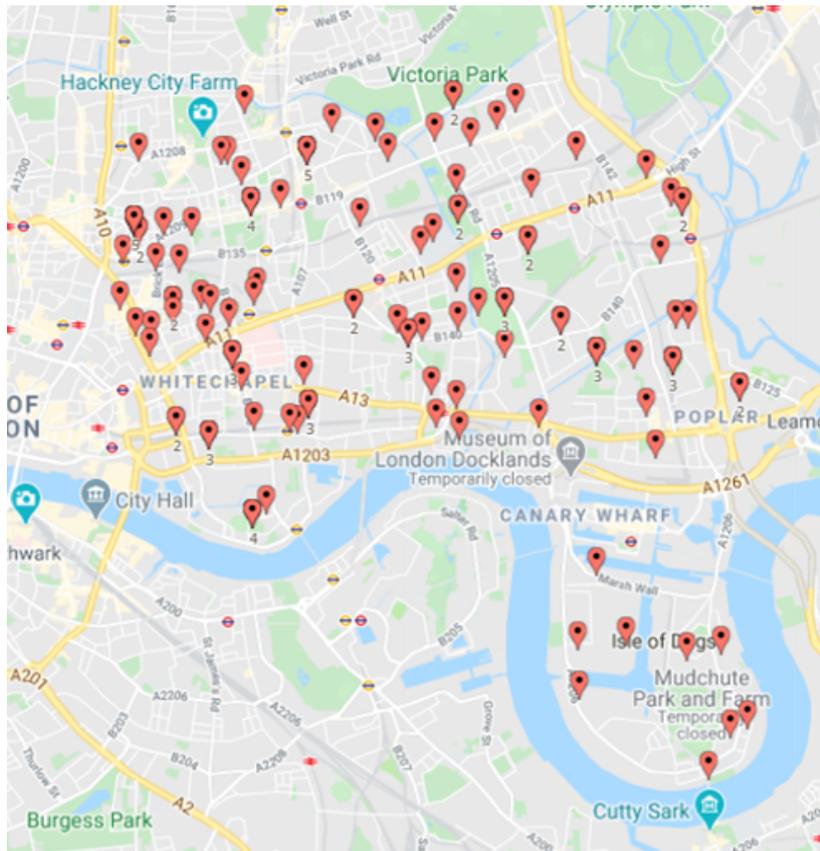
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY ORGANISATION ANNUAL TURNOVER



GRANTS AWARDED BY ORGANISATION ANNUAL TURNOVER



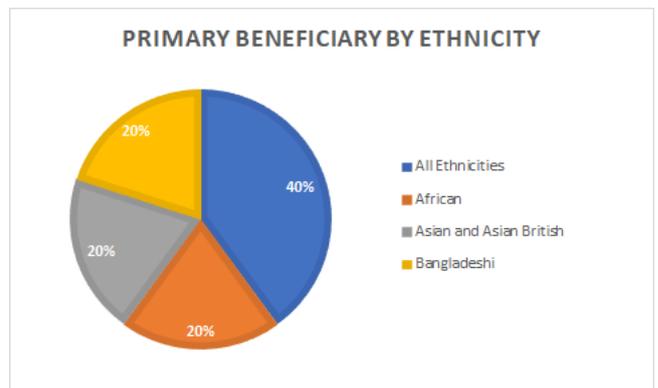
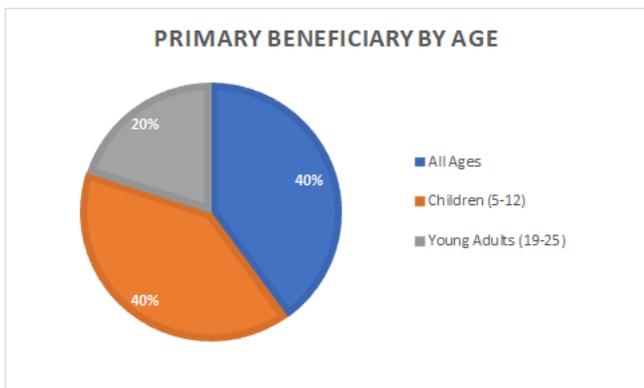
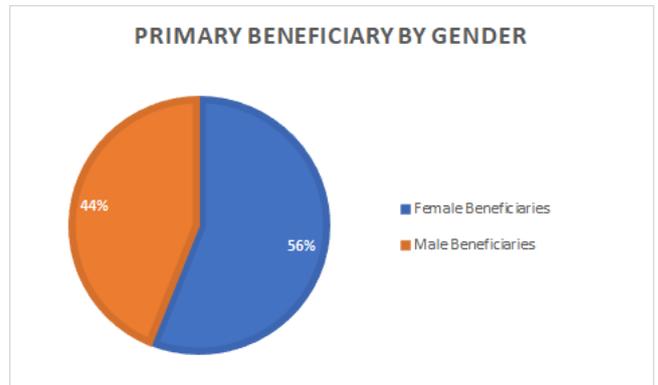
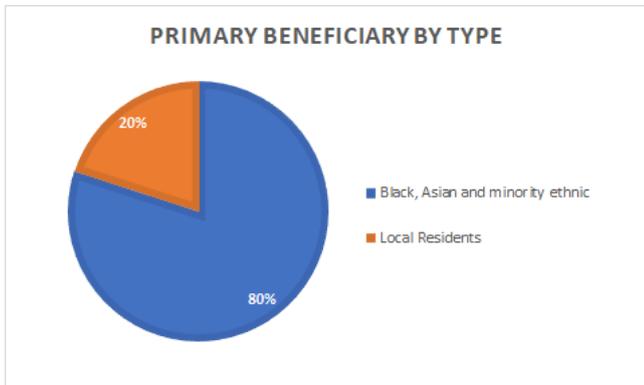
Geography of Applications Received



Geography of Grants Awarded



Appendix C: Project Beneficiary Information



The data on beneficiaries is provided by the organisations in their end of grant reports and is selected from a provided drop-down list.



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