

**TSIP**



Impact  
on **Urban  
Health**

**wellcome**trust

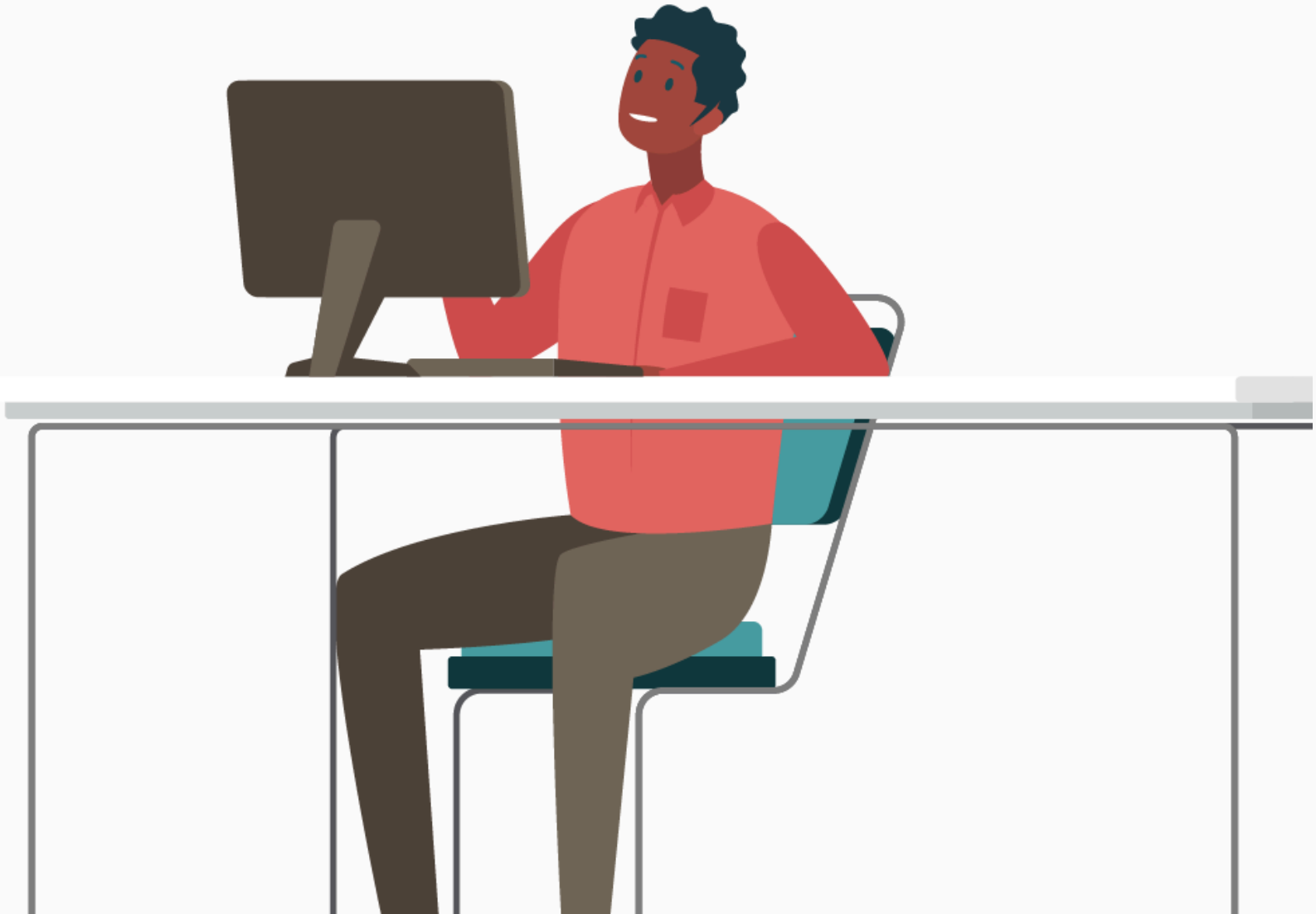


# Reaching the 'Connectors'

HOW TO BUILD TRUST WITHIN A COMMUNITY

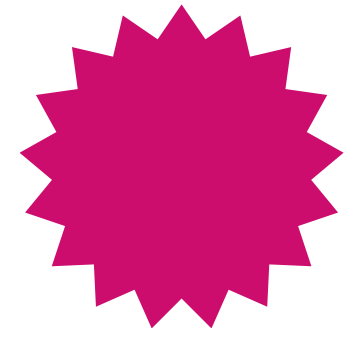


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# Introduction



Backed by Impact on Urban Health and Wellcome Trust, The Giving Lab (TGL) is a community-led fund that brings together people, organisations and businesses in West-Central Southwark to share and develop ideas for improving community health (watch our explainer video [here](#)). It supports community members to:

- **Meaningfully and authentically engage with health research**
- **Better understand local health systems**
- **Define priorities, develop, and fund health initiatives**

Through this work, our aim is that residents affected by multiple long-term conditions (MLTCs) will be better able to manage their own health, access support to meet their needs, and have more power and control over their lives, health and community.

The Giving Lab funds community ideas that make a lasting change in three key areas of their lives - where they live, where they work, and how they manage their money.

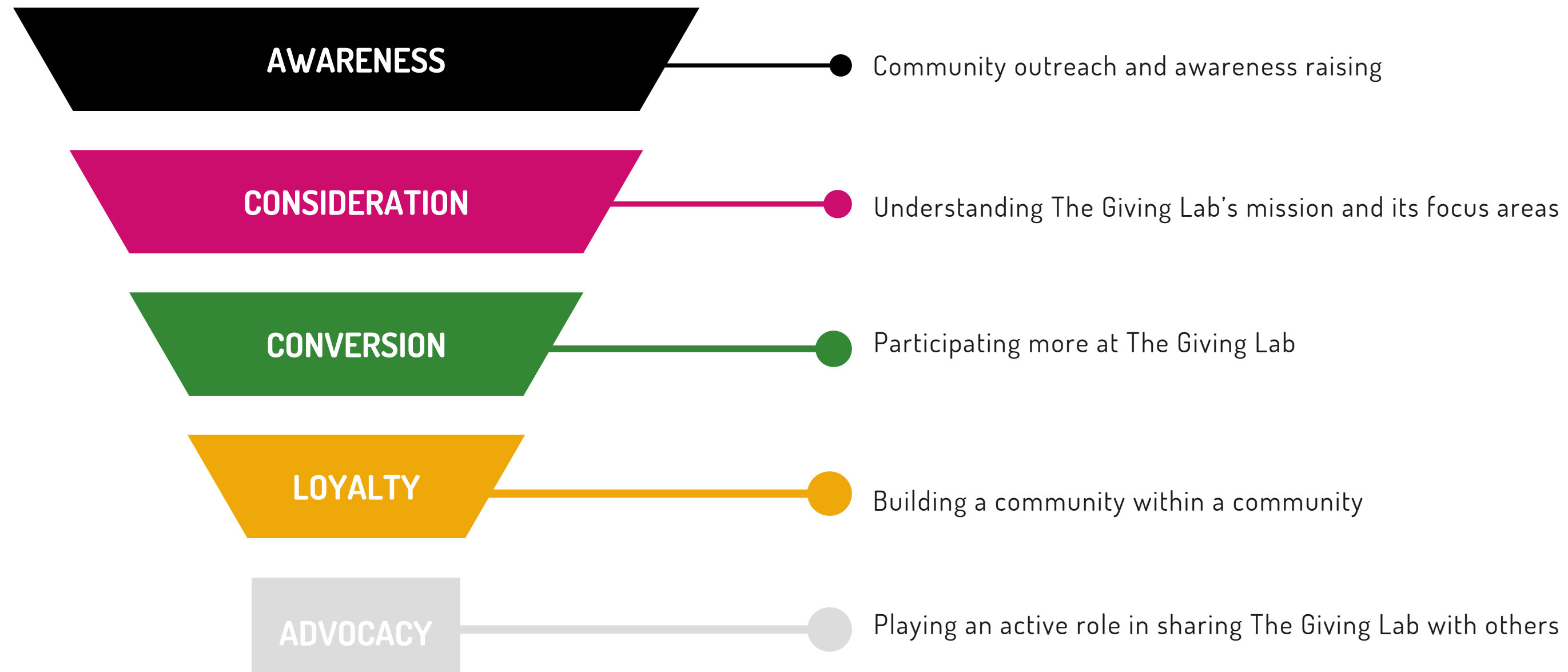
We believed that the fund would be most effective when communities' lived expertise was integrated alongside information on the local service landscape and health research in order to shape projects. As a result, we combined individual's lived experience with research, evidence, and training in a collaborative environment. Finding the best way to do this was one of the key objectives of this pilot.

Now in its final year, we are reflecting on the learnings that have emerged from The Giving Lab's **4 Areas of Impact - Community Engagement, Public Engagement in Health Research, Piloting Funding process, and Evaluation and Learning**. With the support of our independent Learning Partner TSIC, we were able to gather and analyse the data that formed the foundation for the content in this deck.

This document will take you through **Impact Area 1: Community Engagement**, specifically, how we engaged the community in understanding the **purpose** of the The Giving Lab funding model, how we reached local 'connectors', and how we built and maintained trust.

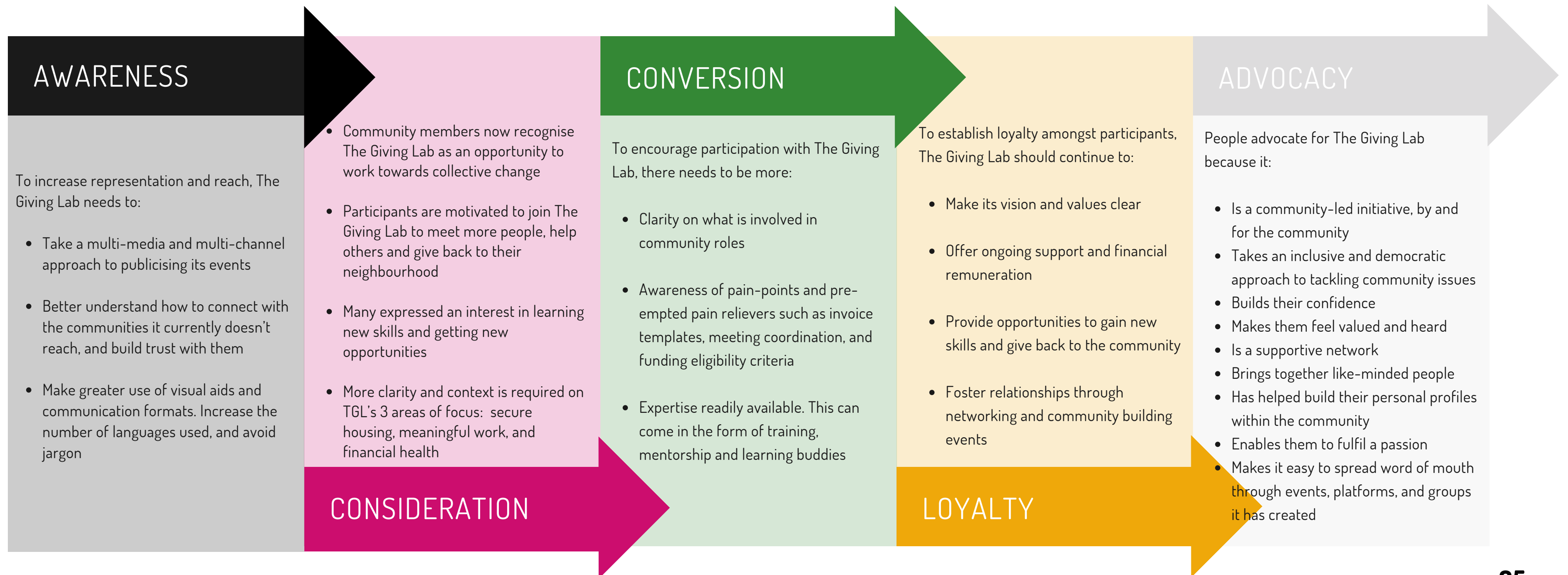
# Our journey to reach community advocates

To reach local connectors and build widespread trust, The Giving Lab went on a journey with its community members. First spreading awareness of who we are and what we aimed to achieve, all the way down the funnel to reaching those who would champion The Giving Lab and become its advocates.



# Key Learnings: An Overview

The Giving Lab (TGL) hosted several in-person and virtual workshops throughout the pilot. All learnings listed throughout this document are evidence-based and sourced.



# AWARENESS

## Community outreach and awareness raising

### The Giving Lab Outreach Activities:

- Direct visits to organisations/community groups
- Word of Mouth
- Outreach through community connectors
- Pop-ups at local venues
- Social media comms
- Participation at local community events:
  - Kaleidoscope Africa Day, St. Peter's Church
  - The Winter Festival, Nursery Row Park
  - Black History Month, Pembroke House



Data source: In-person learning workshop, September 2021

### Challenges:

The Giving Lab must consider how to extend its reach to connect with more diverse representatives in Walworth. These include under-represented people in housing estates, the Latin community, businesses, young people, and parents. A more profound understanding of these groups, their interests, concerns, accessibility criteria, and existing activities within the community is needed.

### Community suggested solutions:

- Use of different and more accessible language
- Visual aids
- A wider mix of communication formats including video, voice notes, and captions
- Short surveys to capture people's diverse needs
- Greater support and guidance
- Revised funding applications that speak more to intent rather than skills and qualifications
- A more 'targeted outreach and engagement' approach to reach under-represented communities

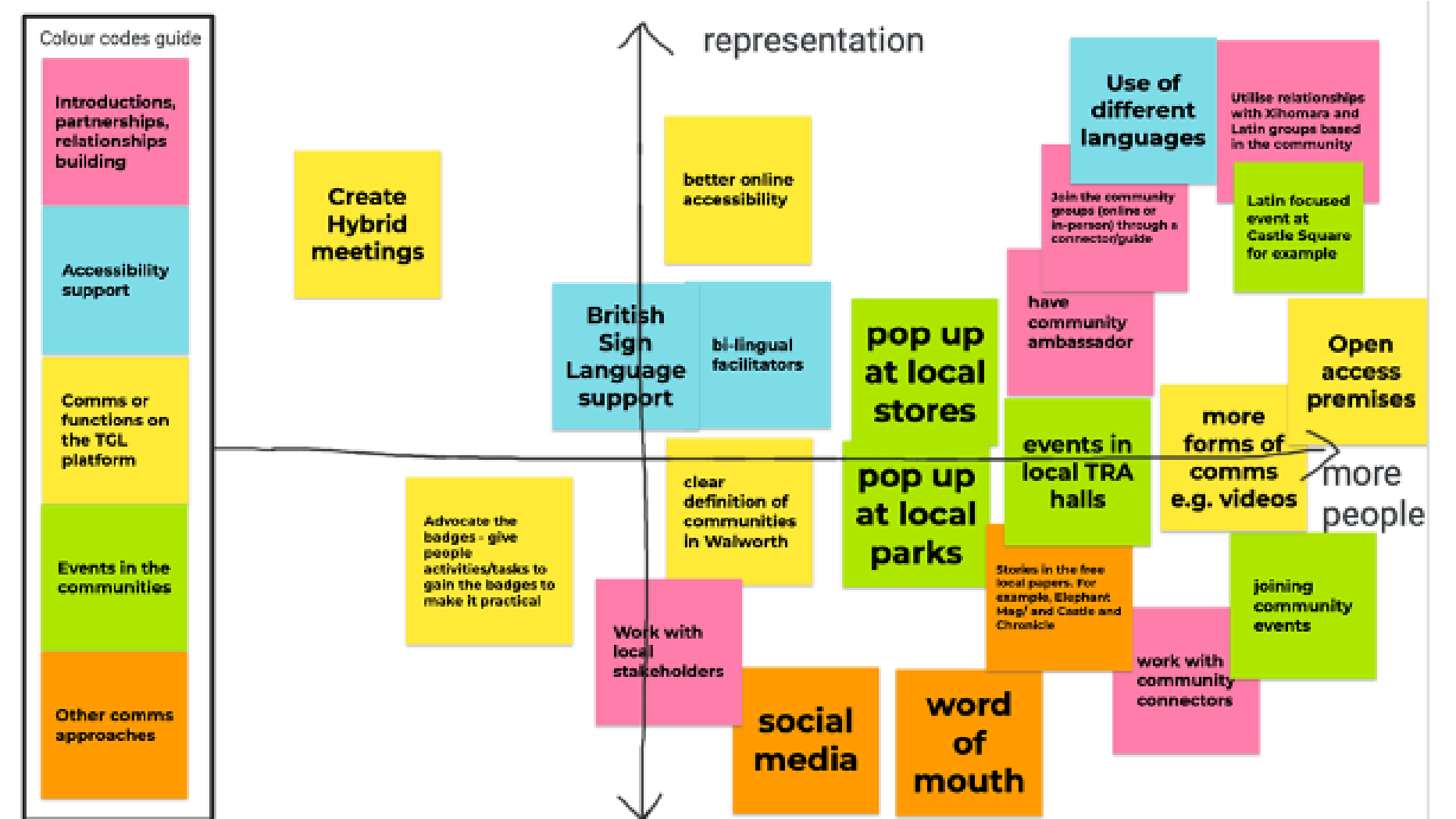
# AWARENESS

## ● Reaching more diverse communities

During the workshop, participants prioritised the ideas collated from previous sessions and brainstormed more ideas to increase reach to diverse communities more equitably. Ideas were prioritised via two metrics, **1) Improve Representation, 2) Increase Reach**, and grouped into 5 categories:

1. Introductions, Partnerships, Relationship Building
2. Accessibility and Support
3. Communications on how the The Giving Lab platform functions
4. Community Events
5. Other communications approaches

**Conclusion:** To increase representation, there needs to be a greater focus on **accessibility** as well as **face-to-face meeting opportunities**.



# AWARENESS

- A community member's reflection

## SERENA DYETT, THE GIVING LAB ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH LEAD, WALWORTH COMMUNITY MEMBER



*Serena first heard about The Giving Lab (TGL) when it was being co-designed. She has always been involved in community work, and yet had never come across anything that called on local residents the way that The Giving Lab did. "In my experience, Funders never really ask questions, they just assume that they know what people want... It starts with acknowledgement. Taking the time to understand a community - the language they speak, the local areas they spend time (parks, street, cafes etc). Funders should be asking themselves: how does this community interact socially; what are their concerns; is there any community work they are already involved in; and who are the influencers within their circles?" Serena liked The Giving Lab's micro-community approach and the sense of belonging they gave to people, especially those struggling through Covid and the cost of living crisis. She started attending some TGL pop-up events and spreading the word to others who she thought could benefit from the fund.*

For more on how Funders can reach new demographics and build trust with their connectors, read *Trying harder: How to involve and engage communities who are seldom heard, a conversation with Serena*



# CONSIDERATION

## Understanding the community's response to The Giving Lab's mission and their motivations to participate

The Giving Lab is an experimental pilot that, by nature, is constantly evolving and being adapted based on community feedback. We always expected that we might need to briefly pause and refine our funding model, which is exactly what we did in 2021 (?) **For more on why and how we refined our funding model, read our [Q&A with Saboohi Bukhari](#), Head of Funding at TGL.**

During the September 2021 In-Person Learning Workshop, we were pleased to see that community members were clear and aligned on The Giving Lab's mission and saw it as a platform that would affirm their agency and offer a range opportunities to take more social action, community build, and learn new skills.

### OPPORTUNITY 1

A chance to define how the community could work.

### OPPORTUNITY 2

Affirming community members' position to speak to the council and other organisations about local problems.

### OPPORTUNITY 3

A chance to meet new people and give back to the community.

### OPPORTUNITY 4

Learn new skills and get new opportunities.

# CONSIDERATION

## Communicating The Giving Lab's 3 focus areas

### Challenges

- Participants didn't know why the 3 themes (secure housing, meaningful work, and financial health) were chosen as the priorities in Walworth and believed the community's agenda could be different
- The understanding of the themes seemed to depend on how long the community members have been involved with The Giving Lab
- Those mainly engaging with The Giving Lab via the online platform didn't feel there was sufficient accessible information about the 3 themes
- Participants expected to know how to make use of The Giving Lab resources first and foremost before engaging with the 3 themes.
- Community didn't understand why 'preventative health' wasn't included in the fund's criteria, as it has the ability to stop a single long-term health condition from becoming multiple long-term health conditions.

**Data source:** In-person learning workshop, September 2021

### Community suggested solutions

1. Provide **evidence and information** about the three key areas:

CHANGING THE LANGUAGE FROM 'SECURE HOUSING, MEANINGFUL WORK, AND FINANCIAL HEALTH' TO 'YOUR MONEY, YOUR HOUSING, YOUR WORK'

INCLUSION OF 'PREVENTATIVE HEALTH' IN CRITERIA

EVIDENCE MAPS AND VISION BOARDS

TESTIMONIALS AND IMPACT STORIES

BRING STORIES TO LIFE THROUGH ART, THEATRE, MUSIC AND DANCE

Building community trust came from listening and adapting our approach to one that had more resonance with the local population.

# CONSIDERATION

● A community member's reflection



## JOHN WHELAN, THE GIVING LAB COMMS AND EVENTS ADVISOR

*"We once held a workshop where we got community members to dramatize The Giving Lab's 3 themes - your money, your house, your job. It humanised what the fund is all about... If you're going in cold, it's difficult to get people to open up. Creativity, whether it's drama, crafts, or something else, offers a safe and democratic space where everyone has an equal voice.*

*Most Funders are guilty of committing 'death by powerpoint'. Not only does the content not resonate with the audience, but it establishes an 'us and them' rapport, which by definition, is not community engagement. "*

For more on the role of creativity in shifting power dynamics and building trust, scroll through *Creativity and Community: Moving towards equity and away from 'us vs them'* a photo-essay with John.

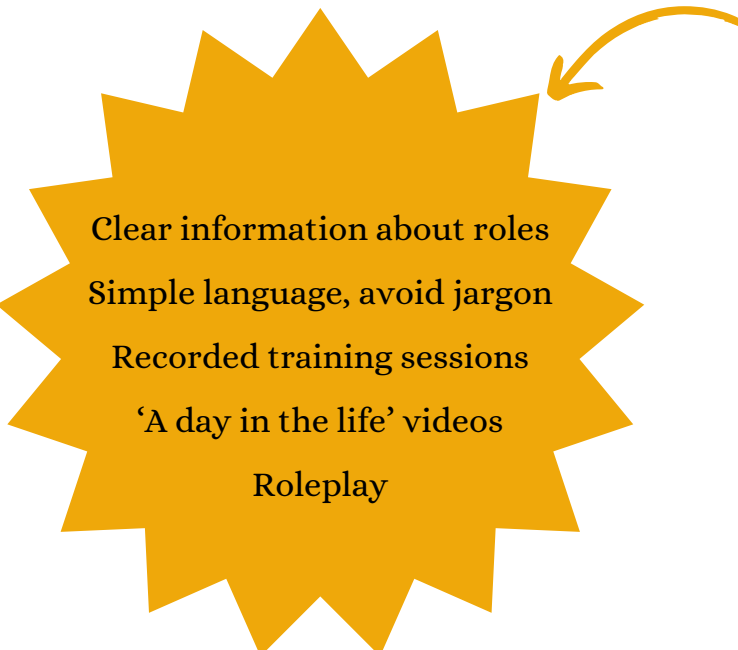
# CONVERSION

## Encouraging participation with The Giving Lab

**Data source:** Virtual Model Redesign Workshop, December 2021

During the workshop we discussed people's experience taking up the individual community roles - specifically, joining an **Ideas Team** or becoming a **Facilitator**. Experiences were broken into the 3 areas below.

**WHAT IS AN IDEAS TEAM? An Ideas Team is a group of people that work together to develop a project. Each idea team consists of a community learner, a community facilitator, and up to 4 idea team members. Each idea team is a part of one of our three Labs: money, housing, or work.**



Clear information about roles  
Simple language, avoid jargon  
Recorded training sessions  
'A day in the life' videos  
Roleplay

IDEAS TEAMS

### Roles

The roles and responsibilities of a community role.

- Developing project plans
- Weekly meetings and homework

### Pains

The challenges that they have faced and how The Giving Lab (TGL) can better anticipate and mitigate some of those pains.

- Meeting coordination
- Invoice and contracting templates
- Open communication with Facilitators
- Understanding the eligibility criteria for funding
- Making the project relevant to a wide demographic
- Ensuring all voices are heard

### Gains

The benefits or achievements they have obtained.

- Skills development and growth as a team and individuals
- Being a changemaker and benefiting from those changes
- Real community democracy
- Working with like-minded people
- Having expertise readily available within the team or at TGL
- Greater focus on 3 key themes

# CONVERSION

## ● Encouraging participation with The Giving Lab

**WHAT IS A FACILITATOR? A Facilitator is someone trained in how to facilitate group discussions with diverse individuals. Facilitators will support idea teams to make decisions together. They do this without pushing their own views or ideas.**

### Roles

The roles and responsibilities of a community role.

- Facilitate Ideas and Inspiration team sessions (online and in-person)
- Provide follow-up support

### Pains

The challenges that they have faced and how The Giving Lab (TGL) can better anticipate and mitigate some of those pains.

- Getting people interested to come along
- Preparation for sessions
- More control over meeting coordination with Ideas teams
- Make training more flexible via pre-recorded videos and other virtual options
- FAQ section or help desk

### Gains

The benefits or achievements they have obtained.

- Working within one's own community
- Leadership skills
- Boosting confidence
- Opportunities to meet new (local) people
- Buddy opportunities between new and existing facilitators
- Mentorship opportunities

FACILITATORS

# CONVERSION

● A community member's reflection

KATHLEEN, THE GIVING LAB COMMUNITY LEARNER →  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER → COMMUNITY REPORTER



*Kathleen has always worked with the community and been interested in leadership, but she tells me, that sometimes she is guilty of prioritising what's happening in her private, personal life, over her work and education. "The Giving Lab has opened my eyes to the idea that I am standing in the way of my own progress. I am grateful to them because they see my potential, and they trust my abilities. I had never even heard of a Community Learner when they first suggested I become one, and yet they keep offering me new roles and opportunities to develop professionally."*

*Kathleen tells me that The Giving Lab has made her feel heard and understood, like she's not alone. "When I spoke recently at a TRA Roadshow and told my story, others listened and felt inspired to share their own. Now I am a Community Reporter and learning storytelling techniques. The Giving Lab has really helped build my confidence, and given me a clearer road to head down."*

# LOYALTY

## ● Building a community within a community

Through all of its iterations, The Giving Lab has become a pillar in the community of Walworth. We are fortunate to have loyal participants who keep coming back to our workshops and events, and would like to believe that this is because they **share our vision and values.**

Feedback that was repeated in all of our workshops is that participants are loyal to The Giving Lab because it offers:

- 1 Ongoing support and training
- 2 Opportunity to gain new skills
- 3 Community building and networking
- 4 The chance to give back



# LOYALTY

● A community member's reflection

## SOPHIE, THE GIVING LAB IDEAS TEAM MEMBER → COMMUNITY REPORTER



*"I initially heard about The Giving Lab (TGL) from a partner website. I wasn't sure at first - the language used was a bit formal and distant and the imagery appeared clinical (that's all changed now). I wasn't convinced that I had the right skillset to participate, it kinda seemed like you had to land on your feet. But then Serena broke it down for me and made it clear what kind of tasks I would be required to do" I joined an Ideas Team and suggested that we develop a project around security and wellbeing to help mitigate the anti-social behaviour that was happening in my mum's estate. The Council wasn't doing much about the issue, they didn't really understand the problem. It seems a lot of their solutions are bandaids.*

*I was never able to finish the project because of personal issues, and I was struggling with homelessness at the time. But some time later, I found myself back with The Giving Lab. It always stuck in my mind, I just needed to find the time and space to take an active role again.*

*Sophie tells me that she is aligned with The Giving Lab's mission to strengthen the community and do more participatory work, and she didn't want to miss out on the chance to work with a funder who actually wants to help and listens to the community's needs, rather than tell them what they are.*

*Whilst she supports the idea of creating new projects from the ground up, she wonders if there is room for funds to support local grassroots organisations who already have a foothold in an essential service?*

**Sophie is currently part of a new TGL Idea Team and will be leading on a new project. She's also co-facilitator of the community storytelling network whose aim it is to gather and amplify community voices.**



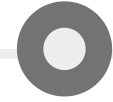
# ADVOCACY

Community members play an active role in sharing The Giving Lab with others

“It has helped build personal and professional **confidence**”



“A **supportive** training vibe”



“It’s a space where people feel **valued**”

“There is a sense of **unity** through connecting with **like-minded** people”



“It offers the opportunity to fulfil a **passion**”



“They have made it easy to build **community** and spread word-of-mouth through Whatsapp groups, workshops, events and meet-ups”



“It has helped increase my community **recognition**”



# ADVOCACY

● A community member's reflection

## SYLVIA, ADVOCATING FOR THE THE GIVING LAB

*Sylvia met Serena at a micro-engagement event for Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA) and residents living in local housing estates in Walworth. She was feeling disgruntled by her community volunteering work and let down by how political it had all become. When Serena told her about The Giving Lab, she was drawn to it because it is genuinely trying to help the whole community and not just one small part. She hadn't heard of participatory grantmaking before but feels empowered to finally be heard and seen - something she hasn't experienced with other funders. When I asked her what some of the benefits of The Giving Lab were, she tells me "it's incredible to finally have someone legitimise our plight, someone who does what they say. Now, with the backing of a reputable organisation like The Giving Lab, we can hold the Council and other decision-makers accountable for their promises and (in)actions."*

*When Sylvia first took the pilot to her community she got a turnout of 26 people. Some were reluctant at first, after all, they have been called on for their ideas in the past, to no avail. But when Sylvia explained the planning process, she helped overcome some of their hesitation. She makes sure to keep the community regularly updated as the project progresses so that they can see that steps are being taken. "Everything takes time, but as long as people see action, they will feel reassured that they're not being left behind" she says.*

*In addition to the potential for real change within social housing in Walworth, Sylvia's own mental health has improved since working with The Giving Lab. She leaves every session feeling rejuvenated, energised, motivated, her sense of purpose reawakened! "There's no ego" she tells me "every voice is valid and everyone listens to each other."*



**Want to fund or replicate The Giving Lab in your community?**

Support us, collaborate with us, find out more.

[WWW.TSIP.CO.UK/CONTACT-US-1](http://WWW.TSIP.CO.UK/CONTACT-US-1)