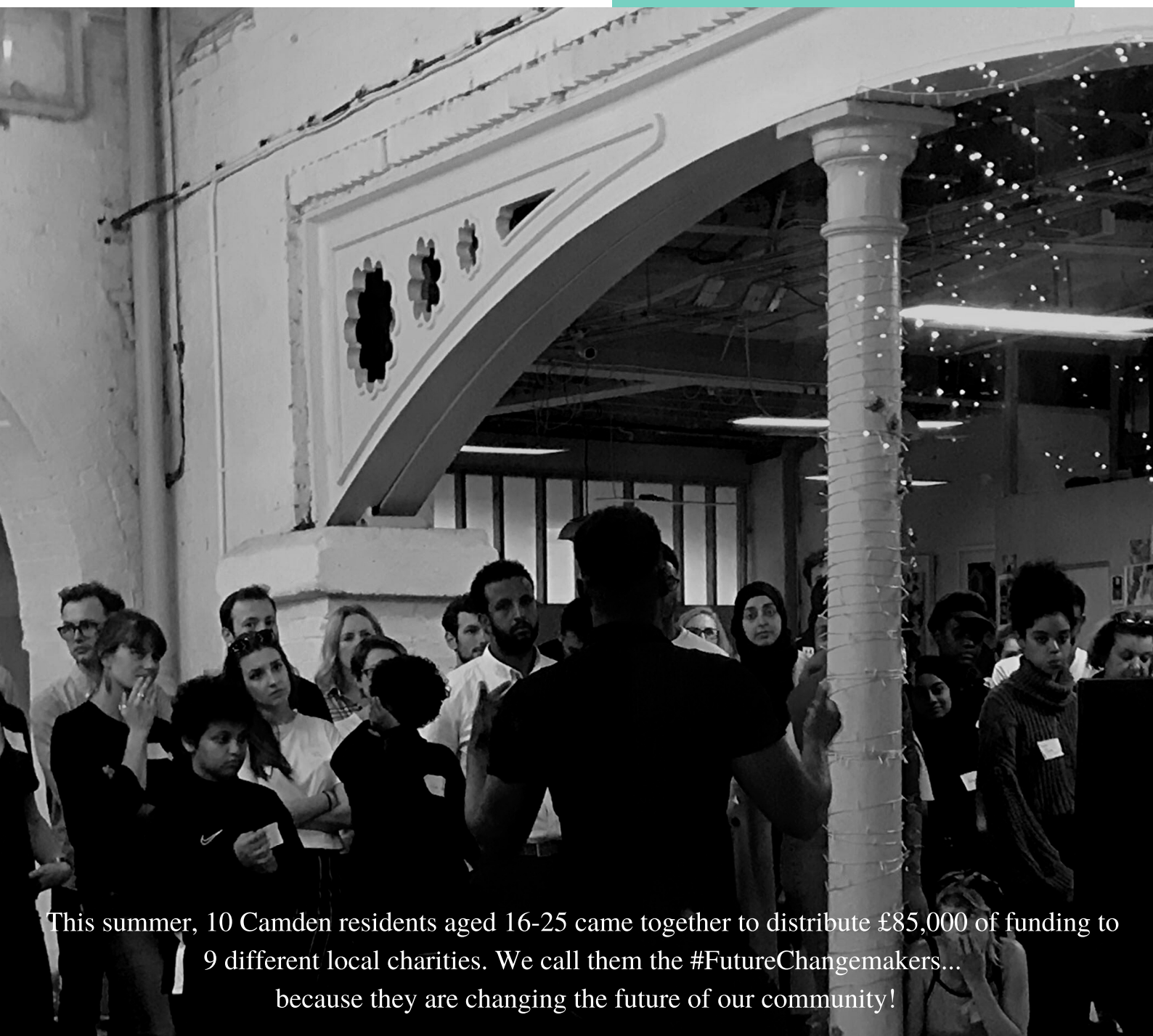


THE FUTURE CHANGEMAKERS DEBATE

Summary Report



This summer, 10 Camden residents aged 16-25 came together to distribute £85,000 of funding to 9 different local charities. We call them the #FutureChangemakers... because they are changing the future of our community!



On Thursday 12th September, 70 people from all walks of life aged 11 to 60 and came together to celebrate the work of Camden's #FutureChangemakers.

One thing the event set-out to do was to provide an innovative way to amplify young voices against injustices they face everyday. But the diversity of ages, cultures, experience, insight and voices in the room was something in itself to celebrate - from the Future Changemakers and 30 young people who are benefitting from their decisions, to youth service workers and local employees to residents from across Camden. The event allowed people, who often don't cross paths, to come together, break down barriers and start a conversation around the role that everyone can play in the borough to keep young people safe.

Audience participation was at the heart of the event and Word On The Curb - a creative insight agency focussing on youth culture - led the night's participatory debate.

They hosted a series of activities, opening up with a game asking people to agree or disagree with a topical scenario including:

“ ***Is the Home Office's #knifefree chicken box campaign a good idea?*** ”

A few people said that it has started a much needed conversation with the wider public and those who know what is needed are engaging people in power. But the majority did not agree, questioning how they could justify spending so much on chicken boxes when youth services have been cut so drastically. Some solutions offered by the crowd included investing the money into more grassroots community initiatives, trauma support for young people and families, and more support offered to young people in alternative education or those not in education.

As the debating continued, so did the intimacy and candid nature of the conversations amongst people who had only just met that night. The event gave people a space to speak about real and current issues affecting them, their peers, their family, friends and neighbours.



“ *The event gave me the opportunity to speak my mind and also understand the thoughts of others, it was nice to see so many people from so many diverse backgrounds come together to discuss issues that have an impact on us all. I'm definitely looking forward to Camden Giving's future events* ”

- Ildi, 18

Despite varying views on discussion topics such as...

“ **Should police strengthen their Stop and Search procedures, exercising more authoritative rights to stop young people?** ”

... everyone felt safe to speak up about thier experiences and opinions without criticism. Everyone enjoyed the dynamic of the evening- being in a different environment and being involved in a debate, whilst respecting eachothers opinions and values.

There was a real mix of introverts and extroverts, with one young woman at the beginning of the night expressing her worries about having to speak infront of a lot of people. By the end of the night she was one of 30 young people actively participating in discussions with confidence, integrity and passion. It's important to have such a wide spread of people to challenge each other and break out of our own echo chambers. The debate allowed others to understand the wider perception of what is needed to keep young people safe and that this needs to be addressed in a way that involves young people from the start.

“ **How can we support more young people to hold more power in our communities?** ”

There were lots of interesting conversations about how we best support young people to be involved in decision making and leadership roles. We need to continue to:

- ▶ Make young people feel confident enough to step forward for roles, such as the grant panellists and in local authority.
- ▶ Include people with lived experience of the issues you're trying to tackle. Give them a voice and platform - policymakers and decision makers are often so far removed from those people living the reality.
- ▶ Provide more funding to support youth-led change and more trust so they can be challenging injustices head-on.
- ▶ They also highlighted the importance of paying young people for their time and insight. Even travel costs can be a barrier to inclusion. They also added that there were other people in the room who are being paid to be there so they really felt valued.



“ **Do you feel safe in your community?** ”

Two young residents aged just 10 and 11 stepped forward and told us they feel unsafe leaving their homes, even travelling to and from school. Both of them bravely shared thier encounters of times they felt unsafe with the rest of the room. One told us that he was followed into a youth centre by someone thought to have been carrying a knife. Luckily a youth worker was around to help, but he questioned what would he have done if the wasnt in the right place at the right time, or if the youth centre didnt exist or he didn't feel safe going in there? The other young boy told us of a time where he was out with his friend and someone held a knife to his back a few hundred meters from his home. He managed to get away unharmed but these stories left everyone in a state of silence and disbelief. But there was also a sense of solidarity in that we were all committed to ensure that young people are safe and supported in the borough.

We asked the young people if they feel hopeful about their future

“ *Yes, tonight gave me hope that there are people out there who care about us and believe we can make positive change together. The debate really helped with celebrating diversity but also recognising similarities. It allowed a space for learning. I think more needs to be done to actually remind people of positive things that young people are doing and create more good news stories!* ”

We want to build on the work that Camden's Future Changemakers have done with a 2nd cohort of young people in 2020.

To make this possible we are seeking support from businesses, individuals and foundations who can provide funding for:

1. Training for the Future Changemakers
2. Grants for the Future Changemakers to invest into their community

To find out how you can support email natasha@camdengiving.org.uk

It wouldn't have been possible to host this event without the generosity of our supporters who funded:

Remunerating young people
£500

Catering for 70 people
£560

Camden Giving's staff time
£500

Word on the Curb's fee
£1200

Venue hire
In-kind contribution - Camden Collective

Total Event Costs £2,760



“ *The debate was just one example of the reasons why the work of the Future Changemakers panel is so necessary. So many people had come forward with their stories & ideas, expressing their fears & hopes. I truly felt like a member of my community. The only change I'd recommend is having more time to continue the conversations!* ”