

THE WANDSWORTH COMMUNITY FUND

IMPACT REPORT

When we launched the Tideway project we committed to making investments close to our sites in partnership with residents and community groups. We pledged to work with them to deliver projects that bring people together within those communities and to support the investments with a significant volunteering programme.

In 2021 we reviewed our programme to date to ensure it represented a fair geographical spread across the communities close to our sites and that our investments supported areas of high deprivation and those with the greatest need. We concluded that we should increase our investments in the borough of Wandsworth, where we have six of our 24 sites but where our level of proactive investment had been comparatively low, relative to some other boroughs and relative to our presence there.

We worked with the local council to launch the Wandsworth Community Fund, open to organisations supporting people where our construction sites are based and the Borough's most deprived wards, as measured by the English Indices of Deprivation. Five grants were given to charities and social enterprises supporting young people, families in food poverty and vulnerable groups.

One grant was given to the Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) in Battersea to fund its 'Love to Learn' youth and homework clubs, which help young people from refugee backgrounds to learn and explore their local environment. Sessions included:

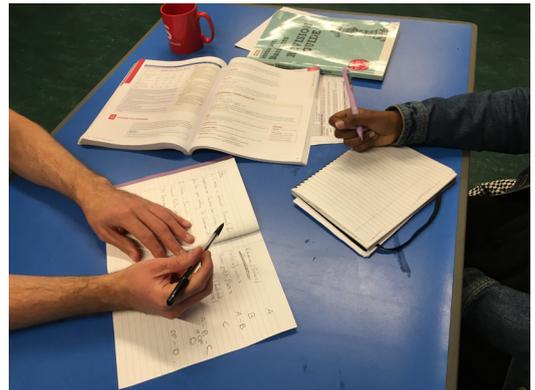
- Sustainable Fashion – learning about the impact of throwaway fashion and making or re-purposing clothes including tie-dyeing, knitting and embroidering
- On the Water – using the river boat to travel to events - many of the young refugees had no idea how close they live to the River Thames
- Careers – an introduction to career opportunities on the river with Tideway and on the banks of the river through Battersea Power Station

More than 100 young people attended environmental and community-focused sessions and 64 participated in a river-based activity. Overall 87% of attendees displayed high levels of wellbeing, based on scoring themselves across five areas of daily life and 87% said they had developed an understanding of the role they can play in combatting climate change.

Another grant was given to youth charity World Heart Beat Music Academy to enable young people to engage with communities in Nine Elms to celebrate the local area, the Thames and people's relationship with it through music. The 'Ebb and Flow' project provided opportunities for 35 young people aged eight to 23 to develop communication, song writing and performance skills through a range of activities inspired by the river. The project also supported seven music leader students to gain experience and training in event and project management, filming recording and producing.

The group produced a film of the project, which includes one of four original river-inspired songs produced by participants. An impact survey showed that 87% agreed or strongly agreed that they had improved confidence; 72% said it had a positive impact on their emotional and mental health; and 76% said it had helped to strengthen their leadership skills. The programme also had a strong impact on the academy itself, which is opening a new educational and performance venue in 2022. It said: "We have been able to build and deepen our relationships with community and cultural organisations to increase awareness of what our new venue will offer."

A third grant was given to the Bags of Taste charity to support 72 vulnerable people in food poverty through a mentored home cooking course. An average of 86% of students were on benefits, 67% has children living with them and 71% had mental health issues. At the end of the course 80% said they would cook more and the group as an average said they could save £22.56 per week.



One student, Joanne, was referred by her dietician and has been diagnosed with anaemia, endometriosis and dyspraxia. She was a beginner at cooking and as well as being intrigued by the flavours of herbs and spices that she used in the recipes, she said: "I feel like my food costs will be cut down by 50%!".

