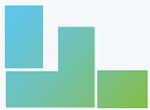


**FOUNDATION
FOR FUTURE
LONDON**



In partnership with:



Foundation for Future London Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025



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Co-Chairs' Report

**Sir David Bell and
Baroness Lola Young , Co-Chairs**

The Foundation for Future London has celebrated another exemplary year from 2024 to 2025. We were pleased to see so many fruitful, authentic collaborations and relationships with local communities and partners through our various programmes across the East London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, as well as across the UK.

In June 2024, we were honoured to welcome our patron Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to The Talent House, Stratford, to launch the second year of our UK-wide youth programme, Culture Exchange, co-funded by our partner Westfield Stratford City through our Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund. What a thrilling day for all the young people involved in the Culture Exchange pilot programme, as well as artists, staff and volunteers from our



Culture Exchange launch with HRH The Princess Royal.
© Anne-Marie Michel



funded organisations based at The Talent House, East London Dance and UD, plus other community partners. The second year of the Culture Exchange programme was delivered from June–October 2024 in Bradford, Nottingham and East London, again with stunning, impactful results for marginalised young people's lives.

Another highlight was watching the growth of our new Community Ambassador programme. This programme invites a wide range of value-driven individuals who are passionate about our East London communities to support and elevate our work. In September 2024, Tiwa King was appointed as the first Community

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- 1. © Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History.
- 2. Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History.
- © Shaun Wayne Crichlow
- 3. © Deafroots



Ambassador, to act as the programme's lead. Tiwa is an internationally known singer, wellbeing consultant, two-time TEDx speaker, host, BBC radio contributor, author, award-winning social entrepreneur and Founder and CEO of Beyond a Song CIC. Through her leadership, she helped us recruit Jazal Babar in December 2024 and communications professional Katie Balcombe in March 2025.

We have been impressed by the way in which our community-focused programmes, grant schemes and capacity-building opportunities have continually responded to local needs and challenges, through the evolution of our award-winning Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund to campaigns on safer spaces, care leavers and young people.



Safer Spaces Community Event. © Anne-Marie Michel



Safer Spaces Community Event. © Anne-Marie Michel



Safer Spaces Community Event. © Anne-Marie Michel

CEO's Welcome

Sarah Nelson

Since taking on the permanent CEO role in April 2024, the Foundation for Future London team and the Board of Trustees have not only been implementing our five-year strategy for 2024–2029, but are also building on new and existing partnerships, forging exciting new collaborations and continuing to deliver our flagship Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund (WEBCFF) programme. Alongside this, we have developed an ambitious new portfolio of programmes. We were proud to be recognised for our work, becoming a runner-up and a winner in several industry awards for our flagship collaboration with Westfield Stratford City.

Highlights over the past year include expanding our Safer Spaces campaign, ensuring that the communities we serve shape what 'safer spaces' means to them. We have also evolved our Capacity Building Programme to go beyond training delivery, creating meaningful opportunities for collaboration and new platforms for grassroots organisations to thrive.

We were delighted to launch our Community Ambassador Programme with Lead Ambassador Tiwa King, later welcoming two additional ambassadors to help shape the next generation of leaders and support the Foundation in evolving its strategy and programmes.



The Board has been strengthened by the appointment of five new trustees, whose insight and guidance are already helping to drive our strategy and deepen partnerships. Our growing profile has also led to invitations to present at key sector conferences, including the Coventry Youth Conference, the Buckinghamshire Arts and Cultural Conference and the University of East London's new Creative Industries Festival, where we are now a core supporter.

A particular highlight of the year was the honour of welcoming our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, who visited to learn more about our cultural exchange programme and to officially launch its second year.

Like many charities, 2024 brought challenges. However, the Foundation has remained resilient and optimistic, with a clear focus on strategic fundraising and partnership development; work we will continue to prioritise throughout 2025, 2026, and beyond.



Culture Exchange launch with HRH The Princess Royal. © Anne-Marie Michel



Soul and Sound, Jus Jammin Arts Programme.
© Nash Photography



© True Cadence CIC

2024-25 Highlights



Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund launches Year 5 community grant scheme and awards **£210k** to **15** community organisations and individuals, with a total of **£2,144,482** awarded to **185** community organisations



55 organisations received capacity-building grants



50 young people gained paid work experience through the Culture Exchange, Year 1 programme



81% of participants reported developing technical and sector-specific employment skills



1,070 participants received capacity-building training and support



Key thought leadership pieces in regional and national press, with a **1.25 million** audience reach



Launched and successfully delivered our first participatory community grant-giving panel, including training and fair payment for panel members



Presented at the Coventry Youth Conference, Buckinghamshire Arts Culture Conference and UEL Creative Industries Festival



Introduced the Foundation's Community Ambassador Programme, welcoming Tiwa King (Lead), Jazal Babar and Katie Balcombe (Communications Lead)



Hosted a celebratory event and launched the second Culture Exchange Programme, attended by HRH The Princess Royal



Culture Exchange Year 2 (June–October 2024) – Bradford, Nottingham, East London



Delivered **two** high-impact workshops and thought leadership events, advancing our Safer Spaces campaign



Built new strategic partnerships, including with the GLA and UEL



Recruited **five** new trustees and appointed a full-time Governance & Events Manager



Achieved recognition as Runner-up at the Third Sector Charity Awards in the Mid-Term Partnership category



Won Gold at the Corporate Engagement Awards for Best Arts & Culture Programme



Sponsor for “Create and Thrive Award” for 2024 Newham Civic Awards in association with Berkley



Impact Report produced



Funded 2024 Great Get Together in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Who We Are

Foundation for Future London is an independent charity dedicated to building community equity and empowerment through the arts, culture, heritage, sport and the environment. We see these as powerful catalysts for equitable regeneration, primarily across the East London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, with a growing focus on wider East London, London and beyond.

London is one of the most unequal cities in the UK, and East London reflects some of the starkest challenges. East Londoners earn less, have fewer qualifications, face higher unemployment, live in poorer housing conditions and experience worse health

outcomes than other Londoners. Tower Hamlets and Hackney are the two most deprived boroughs in London, with Tower Hamlets ranked as the most deprived in the country. In Newham – where a third of residents are under 25 and over 70% are from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds – rapid change can create both opportunity and fear. Together, residents speak more than 104 languages, demonstrating the extraordinary richness and diversity of the area.

Our new five-year strategy, launched in early 2024, drives a holistic approach centred on programme delivery and grant-giving, underpinned by capacity building, community leadership, peer exchange, safer spaces, grassroots programming, strategic investment, advocacy and policy change. This



BSMT Community Exhibition Photos © Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History.



Young Strip Visitors. © Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History.



approach is vital to tackling inequalities and unlocking opportunities for local people and places to thrive.

At the heart of our mission is a unique partnership model, rooted in genuine co-design and participatory practice. We listen to and amplify local voices while connecting communities with institutions and stakeholders, from grassroots organisations to statutory partners. Our commitment to diversity and inclusivity is the bedrock of resilient, flourishing communities. By empowering underserved groups with resources and opportunities, we help unlock leadership, improve health and wellbeing and enable community ownership of assets.

East London, home to more than two million people, is rich with creativity,

resilience and potential. To date, we have partnered with over 500 grassroots organisations, supporting the creation of more than 35,000 training, employment, youth and entrepreneurial opportunities. Our user-centred theory of change guides and measures the impact of our work, ensuring that communities remain at the heart of everything we do.

The challenges we face are not unique to London. Cities across the UK, including Birmingham, Nottingham and Sheffield, experience many of the same inequalities and barriers. That is why we are extending our model nationally, working with like-minded organisations to share knowledge, align best practices and amplify collective impact. Together, we are committed to driving systemic change.

1) Vision

Through our cross-borough working and unique investment and engagement model, we want to see our East London communities empowered to become resilient and thriving, developing prosperous and sustainable creative and social economies. This will be achieved through access to equitable opportunities and fair regeneration throughout East London, with dynamic and life-changing possibilities.



© Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History.



Purple Moon. © Cheryl May Ndione



© Deafroots.



2) Model and Theory of Change

As a small team, it can be easy to focus on day-to-day operations. At the Foundation, we ensure we don't lose sight of our mission. Our approach is inclusive, accessible, agile, and collaborative, designed to support economic development, local employment, and the creation of inclusive places and communities. At its core, we are committed to strengthening partnerships with local organisations, communities and stakeholders, while championing equality, inclusion, sustainable development, and environmental responsibility. A commitment to co-design and participatory approaches runs through everything we do.

We don't focus on large, impressive KPIs that may not translate to real impact. Instead, we use our user-centred theory of change, co-designed with communities, local people and partners. This is underpinned by our strong Impact Framework that not only sets out the change we want to make, but also tracks the steps involved in achieving it. The Impact Framework captures all inputs and outcomes, providing evidence of the short-, medium- and long-term impact we are making with our communities and partners.

This model enables the Foundation to deliver a unique approach to community investment, ensuring its involvement goes beyond the basic transaction of project funding. Instead, the Foundation fosters longer-term networks and relationships. Our engagement connects with authentic voices and ensures access to wrap-around and sustained support, particularly for under-resourced communities.

We put the support into practice through flexible application and grant management processes, alongside a transparent, community-led participatory grant-giving panel. Our wider programmes are built from the bottom up, informed by consistent feedback and intelligence from communities and grassroots organisations. In particular, our ambassador and capacity-building programmes provide skills, training and platforming opportunities that directly strengthen our social impact.



Soul and Sound. © Nash Photography

3) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Sustainability

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) underpin all the Foundation's grant-making and programme activities. Every programme we deliver is designed to reach a wide spectrum of beneficiaries and communities, reflecting diversity across demographics, ethnicity, age, lived experience and need. Our participatory, co-designed approach ensures that underrepresented voices are at the centre of decision-making, while our wraparound support reduces barriers so that grassroots and marginalised groups can access opportunities.

Our EDI commitments are embedded across our wider strategy and values, ensuring that inclusion and fairness of opportunity are not only principles, but practices that shape how we work. This is reinforced by our pledge to secure the 'Trusted Standard' mark for good governance and EDI by 2029, our community ambassador programme that elevates authentic voices and our expanding grant-giving panels that reflect the communities we serve.

Our mission to drive sustainable and inclusive development in East London is directly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international good practice.

In particular, our work contributes to:

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** Ensuring inclusive, equitable and high-quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Supporting inclusive, sustainable economic growth and creating pathways to employment and decent work for all, especially those underrepresented in the labour market
- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** Tackling inequalities within and between communities by addressing structural barriers and championing equity in access to funding, skills and opportunities
- **SDG11 – Sustainable and Inclusive Cities:** Contributing to cities and communities that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through equitable regeneration and placemaking

Through this integrated approach, we ensure that EDI is not a separate strand but the golden thread running through our strategy, shaping how we invest, how we partner and how we empower East London communities to thrive.



4) Values



5) Investment Principles



6) Investment and Fundraising

The Foundation for Future London continued in its role as a fundraiser and investor in our communities and their income-generating capacity. We have four priority income streams: trusts and foundations; corporate partnerships; statutory, including the Lottery and the GLA; and major individuals offering the possibility of higher-level gifts.

Our fundraising partnership with Westfield Stratford City focused on delivering co-designed community and capacity-building programmes. All other fundraising falls under the aegis of New Business Development as we reach out to and monetise existing and new relationships.

We have developed particular expertise in fundraising with partners such as UEL. We are developing a new partnership with the GLA to fundraise for the Transatlantic Slavery Memorial: The Wake, which will offer strong opportunities for corporate, individual and trust and foundation partnerships.

Strong partnerships across many sectors underpin our fundraising approach. We have begun developing a range of programmes, including Empowering Safer Spaces, Care Experienced, Culture Exchange, Creative Futures, and Civics programmes across London and the UK. Our relationship

fundraising builds on the strengths of our networks, ideas, impact data, community stories and reputation as we continue to seek funds for community investment.

We initiated partnership conversations about how we can ensure social investment is more inclusive and focused on the communities that are traditionally most excluded, with a possible partnership in Barking and Dagenham.

Through early 2025, we worked towards introducing care-experienced co-creation events that will lead to powerful proposals focusing on advocacy and dedicated Cultural Exchange projects, with a focus on statutory, trust and foundation sources. A focus on specific underserved groups has broadened funding opportunities.

We will continue to act as a fundraising instigator, capacity builder and connector for all sectors, from statutory services, including Public Health, Climate Action and Newham Data, to a range of property developers developing brownfield sites across Newham. Our partnership with UEL is leading towards joint 2025 applications for inclusive research funders, including UKR as well as Green Skills, Creative Futures and inclusive AI projects.



7) Governance

Good governance underpins the Foundation’s work, ensuring accountability, transparency and effective delivery of our mission. In 2024, this was further strengthened through the appointment of a dedicated Governance and Events Manager.

Our governance framework is regularly reviewed to ensure policies remain fit for purpose, aligned with our values and principles, compliant with changing legislation and responsive to developments in equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Each policy has a designated staff lead to ensure accountability.

Our five-year Strategic Plan is underpinned by a rolling 12- to 18-month Operational Plan and a dynamic Risk Register, both of which are actively monitored and regularly refreshed. Additionally, we continue to strengthen our Board leadership through trustee



Safer Spaces Community Event. © Anne-Marie Michel

development and best practices in governance.

We remain committed to aligning with the Charity Governance Code and relevant Charity Commission guidance and are actively working towards the Charity Trusted Standard Mark.

The Foundation is proud to be a member of or accredited by:

- ▶ Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF)
- ▶ Disability Confident
- ▶ Inclusive Employers
- ▶ Living Wage Foundation
- ▶ NCVO



Purple Moon. © Cheryl May Ndione

Key Activities in 2024

2024 Achievement ✓

Undertook a trustee skills audit, supporting succession planning and the induction of new trustees

2024 Achievement ✓

Reviewed and updated the Articles of Association, ensuring they remain fit for purpose and are registered with Companies House

2024 Achievement ✓

Established new Board committees, each chaired by a trustee:

- a) Finance, Audit & Risk
- b) PR & Communications
- c) Fundraising & Development

2024 Achievement ✓

Delivered a Trustee Away Day to review strategy and explore future direction

2024 Achievement ✓

Refreshed the Risk Register, now including clear policy review cycles

2024 Achievement ✓

Provided safeguarding training for the CEO, reinforcing leadership responsibilities

2024 Achievement ✓

Subscribed to a new HR support provider, enhancing organisational resilience and compliance



Charity Structure

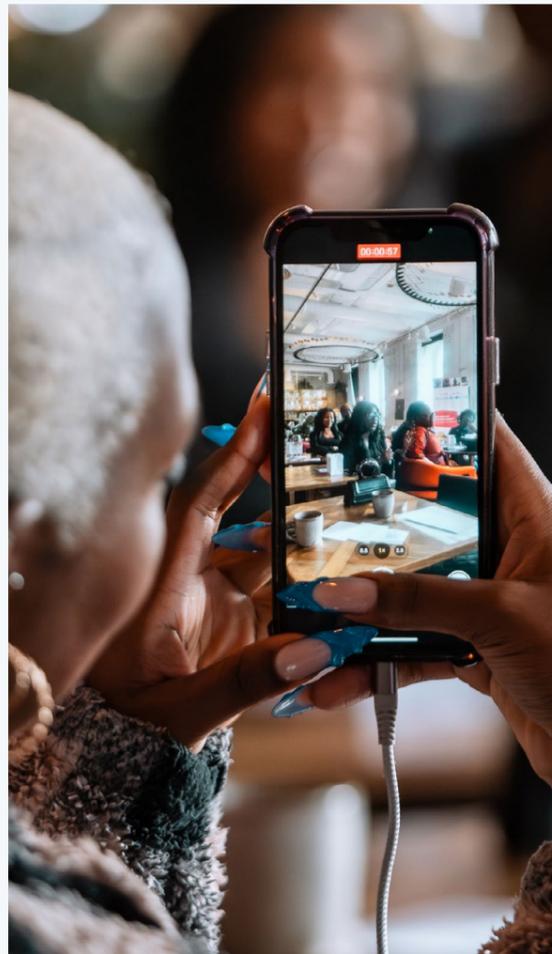
Foundation for Future London is a charitable company registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Registration No. 1160948) and established as a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with Companies House (Registration No. 09483822).



Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History. Tom © Don Travis

Subsidiary

Future London Enterprises Limited (FLE) is a trading company and wholly-owned subsidiary of the Foundation for Future London charity. It exists solely to raise funds to use for its charitable purposes. FLE is a private company limited by shares (Registration no. 09807606), with its parent charity being its sole shareholder.



The Lady Powerhouse CIC © Kowiyat Ajimobi

Review of the Articles of Association

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the Foundation's Articles of Association and was provided with professional advice on amending the articles to align with the Foundation's updated strategic plans, as well as good governance practice.



© True Cadence

Board and Committees

The Board of Trustees meets quarterly and comprises 14 members. Trustees are also Company Directors. The Board has approved a resolution to increase the Board to a maximum of 15 trustees, providing scope for a wider range of skills and experience. Five new trustees have now been recruited, including a new Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Finance and Audit Committee meets quarterly, with delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board, to oversee all financial aspects of the Charity. It has primary responsibility for monitoring and reviewing financial and other risks and associated controls, corporate governance and financial assurance. We are currently recruiting a trustee who has expertise in audit and risk to further strengthen the committee.

Two new Board committees, the Fundraising Committee and the PR and Marketing Committee, have been established, ensuring a greater depth and focus in the discussions. A Risk Committee has also been formed to support the Finance and Audit Committee and provide greater oversight.



Board Development

A Board away day was arranged, bringing together continuing and new trustees, enhancing teamwork and providing trustees with the opportunity to discuss and align strategy, mission and goals. The newly recruited trustees have been guided through the trustee on-boarding process and provided with relevant induction and support.

Trustee Review

A comprehensive trustee skills audit has been conducted alongside individual consultation meetings, strengthening trustee engagement and ensuring that their knowledge and expertise are applied more effectively. The Co-Chairs have conducted trustee review meetings and consultations, further strengthening governance and accountability.



© Tiwa King, The Healing Tour.

Risk Management

Our strategic plan is supported by an operational plan and an adjoining risk register. The risk register has been reviewed and comprehensively updated to better support the management of risks and decision-making. The conflict-of-interest policy has been maintained, with the Trustee declaration of interests recorded.

Policies and Procedures

The Foundation is a member of NCVO and the Association of Charitable Foundations. The Foundation is also working towards the Trusted Standard quality mark, which ensures that we are establishing good practice in all aspects of the Charity's operations and procedures.

Key policies can be found on the Foundation's website or are available on request.

The Foundation's fundraising policy and procedures have been applied alongside the ethical policy wherever relevant, when applying for funds, and in fundraising activities.

Grant giving, as a key component of the Foundation's programme and output, has been regulated and guided by the Charity's grant-giving policy and procedure.

PROGRAMME

Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund

Throughout 2024-25, we continued progressing towards the final year of the five-year Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund (WEBCFF). The impact of the programme is becoming ever more visible, with tangible social change evident across the communities we serve. None of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of Westfield Stratford City, whose £10 million donation has powered well over 19,000 new jobs, learning, training and educational opportunities, the programme is committed to. These opportunities have been unlocked through the transformative power of art, culture, innovation and creative placemaking.

At its heart, the programme remains rooted in the vibrant and diverse people, grassroots organisations, social enterprises and communities of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, and Waltham Forest. As WEBCFF has grown, it has also expanded its reach through new strategic priorities and partnerships, including collaborations with Newham Sparks, the British Council, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and others. These relationships are increasingly interwoven with our campaigns, strengthening both delivery and long-term impact.

Crucially, the WEBCFF programme continues to evolve in direct response to consultation and feedback from grantees, stakeholders and communities. While maintaining its core strands and project activities and ensuring all key targets are consistently met, 2024 also saw new and ambitious initiatives. Among these were a highly successful UK Culture Exchange programme and the launch of a Safer Space campaign, both of which will grow further in Year 5 and are expected to generate impacts well beyond the life of WEBCFF.

The Fund continues to deliver impact through six interconnected strands:

- **Community Strands (Small, Medium, Large Grants) – delivered with the community grants panel**
- **East Bank Partnership Collaborative Employment Strand**
- **Capital and Capacity Building Training and Funding Strand**
- **UK Culture Exchange**
- **EDI, Sustainability and Additionality**
- **Impact Evaluation and Monitoring**



Impact in 2024

The wide-ranging activity across these strands delivered significant outcomes this year:



2,568 learning opportunities provided



676 employment opportunities achieved



3,860 young people engaged in the programme



525 entrepreneurial opportunities created



39% of participants improved their employability



69% reported increased self-confidence and belief in their potential



26% felt empowered to innovate or start their own business

Case Study:

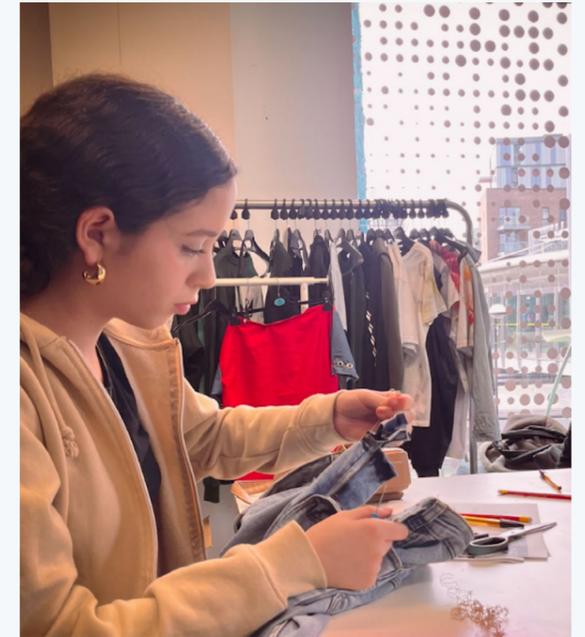
Sirlute, Fashion Fusion

Sirlute is a lived experience-led charity delivering creative training programmes and mentoring for young people from underrepresented backgrounds, to support them to enter the creative industries. Thanks to funding from the Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund, they delivered Fashion Fusion, youth-focused programmes that aimed to open career pathways in the fashion and creative industries.

In 2024/2025, Sirlute offered 18 paid work placements to young people as part of the Fashion Fusion programme, which resulted in four young people becoming paid members of Sirlute's staff team.

The programme played a vital role in demystifying a sector that is often inaccessible and gatekept, opening up clear, tangible pathways for young people, especially from underrepresented backgrounds, to gain insight, experience and inroads.

Partners included ELAM College, based in Bromley-by-Bow, and London College of Fashion.



© Sirlute.



© Sirlute.



Case Study:

Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History

Future Hackney's evolving project 'Dalston's Radical History' is a photographic story set in East London co-authored with the locals. In 2024, the Foundation for Future London awarded a grant to Future Hackney for the project through our Small Grant Scheme, as well as a Capacity Building grant from the Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund.

Through professional images, oral histories, and reminiscences, we learn about the history of Dalston, as well as the rich histories and struggles faced by the Caribbean and African communities in the past. This oral and visual journey

leads us into the present, where the legacy of that struggle has allowed other marginalised groups to feel welcome.

Through street engagement, youth and community workshops, digital and print platforms, large format street galleries and press, they are creating a living archive of the rich narratives of East London's communities.



Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History. © Donna Travis



Future Hackney, Dalston's Radical History. © Donna Travis

Case Study:

Deafroots, SoundSteps: Building Futures Together

This project from Deafroots focuses on enhancing the wellbeing of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals by providing access to essential information and communication through sign language. In 2024, we supported the project with a Medium Grant, as part of the Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund.

By extending the current pilot project, led by volunteers, the initiative aims to train dedicated volunteers in basic British Sign Language (BSL) skills.



© Deafroots

These trained volunteers will offer free BSL instruction to both the general public and essential frontline service providers.

The overarching goal is to reduce isolation and foster a more inclusive society by bridging communication gaps and facilitating connections within the community and with essential services.

Key aspects include:

- **Volunteer Training:** Volunteers will receive training during their participation, equipping them with the necessary skills to support the project
- **BSL Instruction:** A group of volunteer champions will be trained in basic BSL skills. They will then provide free instruction, enhancing communication capabilities across the community
- **Preventing Isolation:** The project aims to mitigate the feelings of isolation often experienced due to communication barriers. By creating more accessible communication pathways, the project seeks to build a more inclusive environment for all



PROGRAMME:

Empowering Safer Spaces Campaign

In 2024, we launched a new campaign to explore what 'safer spaces' mean to young people and under-resourced and marginalised communities across East London.

We began by mapping the existing provision of safe spaces in local boroughs through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to London borough councils. This research then informed a tailored community consultation, designed to understand people's views on what a safe space means to them and what they want from it. Recognising the importance of amplifying young people's voices, we developed a bespoke language workshop that fed into a wider consumer survey and a deep-dive panel event.

The programme has been shaped and guided by a bottom-up approach, with the long-term ambition of driving community-led change. At its heart is the creation of sustainable networks across East London, built on principles of co-design, capacity building and collaborative development.

As the programme has evolved, it has been underpinned by a multi-sector partnership of statutory, charitable, grassroots and commercial stakeholders working on issues of safety and safer spaces. Together, they have shared learning, empowered communities and built unexpected collaborations.

To date, the programme has been supported by partners including Westfield Stratford City, the Metropolitan Police and Public Health departments – organisations that often work on safety but use different language and frameworks. By breaking down these silos, we are keeping conversations alive, strengthening trust and ensuring communities are meaningfully involved at every stage.



Empowering Safer Spaces consultation . © Chris Baker

PROGRAMME:

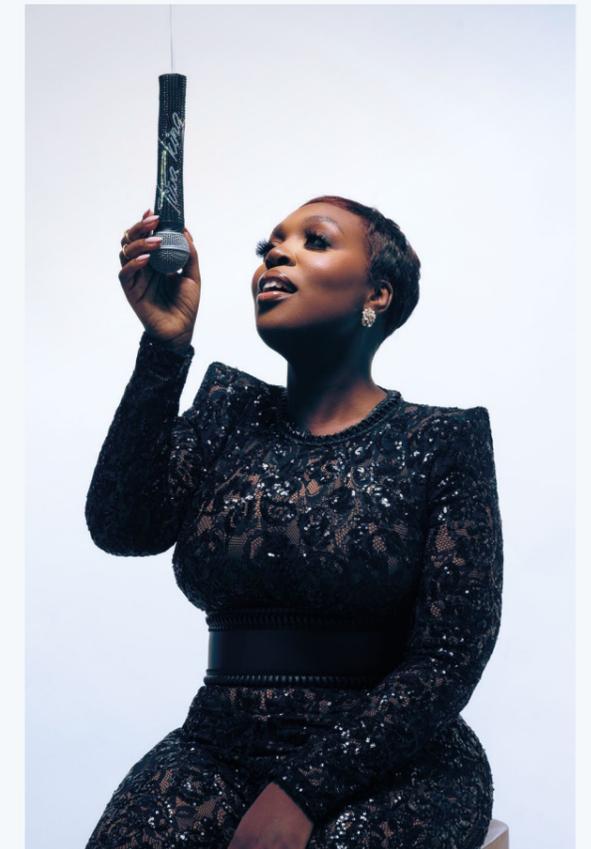
Community Ambassadors

This year, we proudly launched our new Community Ambassador Programme, designed to nurture future leaders with lived experience and deep connections to their local areas. The programme empowers residents to become agents of change in the communities they know best.

Our ambassadors are volunteers from across the boroughs we serve and are selected not only for their skills and expertise, but above all for their passion for sharing the Foundation's vision of driving equitable opportunities and fair regeneration across East London.

To help shape the programme from the very beginning, we appointed a Lead Community Ambassador, someone who could work alongside the Foundation team to recruit and support future ambassadors. This year, we were delighted to announce that award-winning singer and entrepreneur Tiwa King became our first Lead Community Ambassador.

Community Ambassadors represent the face of the Foundation's work through advocacy, representation and championing our mission. But



© Tiwa King

this is also a two-way commitment: just as ambassadors champion the Foundation, we champion them. We are dedicated to recognising and amplifying their skills, knowledge and lived experience, showcasing them to our networks, partners and audiences at high-profile events. We also provide training, development and networking opportunities, as well as fair financial recognition for their time, expertise and expenses.



PROGRAMME:

Capacity Building

Our Capacity Building Programme continues to provide the foundation for growth and sustainability for current, past and future participants. It has gone from strength to strength, offering a wide range of skills development and training opportunities, while also creating spaces to connect with like-minded people, form new partnerships and spark collaborations.

Our network and platform-raising offer acts as a portal for sharing information, best practices, collaboration opportunities and one-to-one guidance and has grown by 18.2%. Notably, 80% of those supported identify as coming from underrepresented backgrounds, reflecting our commitment to equity and inclusion.



Friends of the Joiners Arms - Frank. © Alex Janaszewski

The training delivered through the programme has focused on practical and impactful areas, including:

- **Writing successful funding applications**
- **One-page impact reporting masterclass**
- **Defining mission, vision and values**
- **Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund application feedback**
- **Branding strategies**
- **Logo design masterclass**
- **Social media strategy**
- **Making freelancing work**
- **Project risk assessment best practice**
- **Bid and proposal writing, strategy planning and policy**



Friends of the Joiners Arms. © Queer Garden

PROGRAMME:

Culture Exchange

The UK Culture Exchange was developed as an innovative nationwide arts and cultural exchange programme. Its purpose is to connect young people, cultural and innovation organisations and communities in East London with those in other UK cities, using creative and inclusive placemaking as both a learning tool and a driver of leadership and changemaking skills.

The first pilot concluded in 2024 and brought together East London young people with those in Preston, Sheffield and Birmingham. It not only gave young people valuable experience, skills and pathways into training and employment, but also strengthened the grassroots organisations that supported the delivery. These organisations reported significant benefits, including increased confidence, expertise and recognition and helping to build their long-term sustainability.

The pilot demonstrated real impact: raising aspirations, it gave young people a platform to share the richness of East London's cultures with peers from other cities. It showed how cultural exchange can help create a more level playing field across the UK.

Key findings from the pilot include:

- **50 young people accessed paid work experience at London Living Wage**
- **27 participants received Apple iPads, ensuring digital inclusion throughout the programme**
- **8 grassroots organisations funded to teach on the programme, supporting organisational development and sustainability**
- **100% of participants came from working-class backgrounds**
- **90% of participants identified as from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds**
- **80% of participants faced significant barriers to wellbeing, including financial insecurity, care experience, criminal justice involvement, caring responsibilities or young parenthood**
- **Each participant received an average of 2.5 hours of tailored weekly mentoring over 30 weeks, designed around their individual needs and aspirations**



- **3 young people returned to further education; 1 progressed to university**
- **5 secured new, sustainable employment, while others are pursuing creative development**
- **17 young people received £1,000 community project grants, supporting personal and creative growth**
- **100% of participants gained paid work experience, alongside essential employability skills such as CV writing, interview preparation and communication**
- **100% of participants raised their future aspirations, 95% said the programme built their confidence in their own potential**
- **90% felt better equipped to manage difficult emotions**

The success of the pilot was celebrated in March 2024 at an inspiring showcase event at Plexal, Here East, attended by participants, stakeholders and local partners. We were thrilled to launch the second exchange in June 2024, with our patron Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal as the guest of honour, who awarded past participants with Alumni Certificates of Achievement.



All photos: Culture Exchange launch with HRH The Princess Royal. © Anne-Marie Michel

The Year Ahead



Safer Spaces Community Event. © Anne-Marie Michel

Throughout 2024–25, the Foundation has undergone a number of changes and strategic shifts. We have built a strong programme of work that complements our grant-giving, while forging new and meaningful partnerships across East London, wider London and cities across the UK. In 2025–26, we will continue to strengthen this approach, while also revisiting and refining our strategy. Through consultation and review, we will ensure that our vision remains at the heart of everything we do.

As part of this strategic review, we will reflect on the impact achieved over the past four years, celebrating what has been accomplished in partnership with grassroots organisations, individuals, communities, key partners and stakeholders. At the same time, we will continue to consult widely, ensuring our mission remains relevant, our practices remain robust and our efforts create the greatest impact where most needed. These insights will directly shape our future programmes and fundraising priorities.

We are mindful of the ongoing challenges in the fundraising landscape, but we remain resolute in our commitment to working alongside communities and stakeholders through true co-design and participatory practice. In 2025–26, our focus will include key priorities identified over the past year, such as supporting care leavers and those with care experience, strengthening our lobbying and advocacy work, expanding our safer spaces initiatives and growing our Community Ambassador scheme. We look forward to advancing this work with partners including UEL, the GLA and a range of UK-wide organisations that share our values.

We are also excited to see the culmination of the fifth and final year of the Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund, which will place particular emphasis on safer spaces, underpinned by collaborative cross-sector partnerships.



About Us

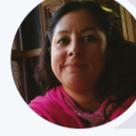
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-  **Baroness Lola Young**
Co-Chair
-  **Andrew Adedipe**
-  **Louise Jeffreys**
-  **Sarah Lockhart**
-  **Joseph Lyons**
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-  **HRH The Princess Royal**
-  **Amy Shepherd**
(Resigned - 31 January 2025)
-  **Sophie Beagles**
-  **Hal Khanom**
-  **Abul Hussain**
(Appointed - 2 November 2024)
-  **Vaibhav Negi**
(Appointed - 11 November 2024)
-  **Anne Mullins**
(Appointed - 2 December 2024)
-  **Ciara Solmi**
(Appointed - 2 December 2024)
-  **Lauren Gee**
(Appointed - 2 December 2024)

Staff team

-  **Sarah Nelson**
CEO
-  **Alice Devitt**
Director of Fundraising and Development
-  **Guy Kassongo**
Head of Finance
-  **Ashton Mullins**
Grants and Programmes Manager
-  **Amy Glass**
Communications Manager
-  **Rosy Awwal**
Events and Governance Manager
-  **Adam Jaye**
Trust and Foundations Manager

Board Working Groups

-  **Communications, Marketing & PR Committee**
Fundraising Committee
-  **Finance, Audit & Risk Committee**

Community Ambassadors

-  **Tiwa King**
Lead
-  **Jazal Babar**
-  **Katie Balcombe**
Communications Lead



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FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE LONDON

Charity registration number: 1160948
Company registration number: 09483822

Plexal, Here East, 14 East Bay Lane,
London E20 3BS

Email: Info@future.london
Website: <https://future.london>

X/Twitter: [@fdnfuturelondon](https://twitter.com/fdnfuturelondon)
Instagram: [@foundationforfuturelondon](https://www.instagram.com/foundationforfuturelondon)
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