



**CHURCH
URBAN
FUND** ⊕

Impact Report 2022

Stories of hope in the
cost-of-living crisis



We will empower 15,000 people of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs to serve, lead and speak by the end of 2024. These people will, in turn, engage 100,000 others.

**TOGETHER
NETWORK** 

**NEAR
NEIGHBOURS**

**JUST
FINANCE
FOUNDATION**



**PLACES OF
WELCOME**

Local churches continue to provide the one thing we all need: hope.



Thanks to your support, CUF is here to serve them.



This year, I've been reflecting on the role we've played in mobilising faith-based social action that has transformed lives, including the

development of Growing Good, Places of Welcome, and the Together Network.

This progress is the result of 35 years' experience listening to and serving local churches, which has led to innovative and sustainable ways to respond to local need.

In 2022, the cost-of-living crisis has only heightened the unprecedented challenges we faced in 2021, pushing more people into financial distress, poor physical and mental health, and loneliness. But local churches and generous volunteers have continued to inspire us with their resilience and creativity, providing practical support as well as love and care.

In 2022, we continued our work building and mobilising a national movement of faith-based partners working together to serve local people and organisations who know their communities best. We equipped people to make a bigger difference in their community through leading high impact programmes. And we amplified

local voices, speaking out to influence policy and decision makers.

However, we know we have much more to do. As we enter the second year of our new strategy, we will build on this progress, but also adapt our approach to respond to the needs of local people and churches.

At CUF, we remain committed to equipping local churches to serve, lead, and speak.

As Christians, we know the value of community and fellowship. We know that we need each other to really flourish. We have all been given different gifts for this purpose: to serve others as Jesus did. Church communities allow us to love one another, walk in fellowship with one another, bear each other's burdens, and grow to serve our world together.

As local churches across England serve and care for people in need, we must continue to stand with them. The world remains a complex and unjust place for too many people. But, as is shown through the stories in this report, it doesn't have to be that way.

We have hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Barnett".

Andrew Barnett OBE, Chair

Our vision is a future where every person in need has access to a community of support.

As Christians, we are committed to playing our part in Jesus' mission to restore hope, justice, and peace to all.

A message of **hope** from Peter Smith

Peter is a Parish Development Worker at Wellsprings Together in the diocese of Leeds, a core member of our Together Network.

For Peter, 2022 was a year for doing things differently, finding new ways of communicating and resourcing their networks.

“

I've been encouraged by the resourcefulness and bravery of churches in the ways that they work to tackle an almost impossible social and community environment in the cost-of-living crisis. Their hope shines out as they continue to journey with people.

Churches have that presence to create a family and a sense of belonging in a way that very few other organisations can. Buildings, volunteers, experience, whatever it may be, churches have something they can draw on that meets a need in the community. Churches often underestimate the impact they have and how many people they are reaching in various different ways.

This year we've seen very small Sunday congregations dedicate time and resource to make a disproportionately great impact throughout the week to serve their local area, and seen Places of Welcome becoming a hub for the community again in areas where identity has been lost over the years, providing safe spaces for people to just be.

I think of a guest, Jack, who was traumatised after the loss of his sister to the point where he wasn't eating. He came along to a Place of Welcome. The first week he didn't want to talk, he just wanted a space to sit. Just five weeks later, he'd found a group of new friends and was tucking into a bowl of soup and a roll. It was astonishing. Things like this happen, often not planned, but these spaces are where God turns up in unexpected ways.



Places of Welcome volunteers at Skipton Community Wellbeing Café

The Christian ethos which underpins our work, and that of CUF, centres on care, support and resourcing – not judging but being patient with people. A focus on building relationships with those we serve has been essential, and at Wellsprings Together we work to establish relationships, understanding, and form a bond of trust over time.

We aim to do things with people rather than for them.

As you're reading this report I hope you get a sense of how all CUF's partners have adopted the Asset Based Community Development approach, using the resources they've already got, and getting people to realise what they have, working to develop something together rather than imposing something from above. That is very much the approach that we take and the learning we will bring with us into 2023. Thank you for your support.

Wellsprings Together priorities for 2023 include: resourcing community facing groups; the growth of Places of Welcome; addressing the issue of modern slavery.

Founded and convened by CUF, the Together Network group of Christian charities helps churches, community groups and faith organisations make the most of the skills, assets and experiences of their community to tackle local issues. They provide expert guidance, offer innovative ideas, share helpful contacts and establish and strengthen partnerships.

Hopeful new beginnings

Our work in local areas often highlights examples of universal need and prompts innovative, nationally useful solutions.

Events in 2022 dramatically widened this scope to include meeting the needs of those displaced by international conflict arriving in our communities.

In July, we partnered with Benefact Trust on our Refugee Support Small Grants Programme. Together, we are supporting Christian projects that help refugees arriving in England from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Chichester Quakers Local Meeting were successful with their 'Food for Friends' project delivering sessions centred around a meal, encouraging refugees to share culture, build friendships and integrate into society.

Taiba* was born in Afghanistan and came to the UK with her husband and son shortly after the Afghan government collapsed to the Taliban. She translated the Food for Friends flyers into Pashto and Dari.

As well as helping promote Food for Friends Taiba has taken part and noticed the difference it has made:

“

Coming here has been good practice for my English and helped build my confidence.

The project makes relationships between refugees and British people - my son and a volunteer's little boy have made good friends and love to play together."

Taiba hopes to build on her law degree and continue her studies in the UK.

"I want to carry that on here and do something good. Food for Friends is a good initiative to contribute to reintegration of refugee families in Chichester. It plays an important role in the emotional wellbeing of refugee families."

The success of the first round of funding and interest in the grant has secured its continuation in 2023 with a further £140,000 available to distribute to local churches.

* Name changed to protect the privacy of our participant



37 projects were awarded funding projected to reach **2,621 refugees** with support including youth clubs, ladies' driving lessons, mattresses, music tuition, sewing and knitting classes, language support, advocacy, and expenses for volunteers or facilities.



Serving hope

When it comes to serving hope through loving and persistent service, local churches like St Paul's Church, Stalybridge are the real heroes. In 2022, we equipped churches to play a key role in offering people a warm, safe, and consistent place to belong.

Kath is a volunteer. Inspired by CUF's Growing Good toolkit, and supported by Transforming Lives Together, she played a key role in helping St Paul's to open a Place of Welcome.

"We were beginning to see some parents who were struggling both to heat and to eat and are now able to come and have some lunch at our Place of Welcome.

PLACES OF
WELCOME
IN 2022:



610

registered locations



168

New Places of
Welcome opened

“

A great thing about this is it brings together a mix of people who wouldn't necessarily meet otherwise.

Those staying after a communion service at church, those stopping by before toddler group or popping in after school. It really is church and community coming together in the space.

A member of the home economics team at the school approached us asking for more information about the Places of Welcome project and suggested the students would like to get involved by preparing the soup for us! Looking back it was just one of those amazing moments.

The principles of Places of Welcome have helped us focus on hospitality. Some visitors have become volunteers, as this is their place. That's one of the things I'd really like to see grow.

I also spoke to a young volunteer, and she shared that before her grandma had passed away she had also been attending another Places of Welcome in her town. Hearing St Paul's was starting a similar thing, this young woman was motivated to volunteer and be part of providing the same experience and support which her grandma so enjoyed for others.

The need for people to feel valued is just as important as offering them hot soup."

Hope brings us together

Alongside our work with churches, we supported inter-faith collaboration through our Near Neighbours partners.

In March 2022, Sumayya, Swahiba, Marium and Mithila took part in our Catalyst young leaders programme.

Catalyst is a transformative leadership programme aimed at developing creative leaders to act as positive role models in their communities and become future changemakers.

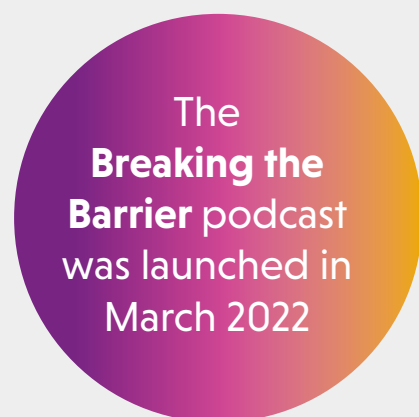
The series of dynamic, interactive sessions engage a highly diverse group of young people, many of whom have not previously participated in a leadership development programme.

During Catalyst, young people are tasked with developing an idea for a social action project that can affect change in their local community. With support from our East London Near Neighbours Coordinator, Marzena Cichon-Balcerowicz, and Assistant Headteacher Saiqua Zaneb, the group were awarded a Near Neighbours small grant to develop their idea for the Breaking the Barrier podcast series exploring culture and diversity.

Developed and led by young people, the podcast explores themes of diversity, identity, leadership, mental health and women's empowerment. In addition, the group plan to partner with other schools to share experiences and ideas about leadership and empowering young people.

The group are applying for university and have drawn on their Catalyst experience in applications, including the small grants process.

We established and continue to oversee the work of Near Neighbours, the organisation that runs Catalyst, as part of our mission to improve the lives of many people in a wide range of ways. Near Neighbours brings diverse people together to make a positive difference in their neighbourhood and strengthen society. We do this by providing grants, training, resources and events. We have a particular focus on empowering young people to become involved and confident leaders in their community.





“

The tendency to hide parts of yourself in different settings was something I could relate to in my own experience. The Catalyst conversation around identity helped me realise how important is it to embrace every aspect of yourself as all these things make you an individual.”

Mithila

“

We discussed how barriers can be on a micro scale, a macro scale and the relationship between the two. Minorities can influence majorities through breaking barriers, exceeding expectations and pushing social conventions.”

Sumayya and Mithila

“

These programmes allowed students to understand their own identity and what they bring to the table through working on projects that would result in impactful change.”

Saiqua Zaneb, Assistant Head Teacher

Our reach in 2022

GRANTS:

BUILDING FOOD SECURITY TOGETHER¹

30

new community food spaces opened



1,244 volunteers mobilised

8,196 households supported



105,000+ kg food saved from landfill

£442,392 saved by households



GRANTS:

SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN ENGLAND

37

projects



2,621 people reached

£126,000 awarded



TOGETHER NETWORK²



512+

churches supported



15

core members



9

associate members

550+

projects supported inc. 137 new initiatives



25+

networks coordinated and 158+ network meetings held



1. April 2021- April 2022 | 2. Based on 2022 year end survey, 12 of 15 core member responses

PLACES OF WELCOME



610 registered locations



168 New Places of Welcome opened in 2022³



Reaching **14,000** people every week⁴

2,800 volunteers mobilised



67%

of venues reported having at least **one new person** that week



88%

of venues reported that **participants/visitors** helped in some way

GROWING GOOD

1,000

people signed up to access the resources

250

people attended workshops to find out more about the resources and how to use them

OVER 300

churches used the resources to run a course



MORE THAN

£1,609,907

in funding secured by the Network



Helped other organisations secure more than

£181,680

Peer support is a key aspect of the Together Network valued by core members:

83% agreed being part of the Together Network had improved the effectiveness of their organisation



NEAR NEIGHBOURS

32 grants awarded to the value of **£100,078**



483

volunteers mobilised and **4,276** volunteer hours to strengthen communities



150



new partnerships facilitated between local organisations

2,746

grassroots leaders equipped with practical skills and confidence to make a bigger difference in their neighbourhoods

CATALYST

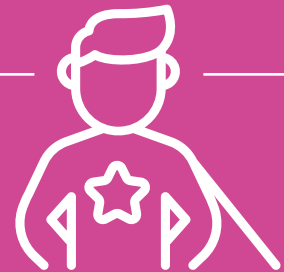
93 young people took part

4

cohorts

3

locations



FAITH:

No religion: 1% | Christian: 4% | Hindu: 1% | Muslim: 85% | Sikh: 8% | Prefer not to say: 1%

ETHNICITY:

White British: 1% | African: 14% | Asian: 71% | Mixed heritage: 8% | Other: 6%

REACH:

23% of students born outside of the UK

84% of students agreed or strongly agreed that 'Participating in Catalyst gave me a more positive view of diversity'

77% of students agreed or strongly agreed that 'Participating in Catalyst prepared me to take a more active leadership role within my community'

96%

of respondents rated their Catalyst experience as good or very good

JUST FINANCE FOUNDATION



60

new LifeSavers schools engaged



870

teachers trained



6,500

new children engaged with Milo's Money



1,923

visits to Milo's game by 943 unique players



139

active LifeSavers schools in 2022 engaging 42,218 pupils

FUNDRAISING ⁵

9

new legacies worth **£1,712,253**

85

churches donated **£35,269**

1,207

regular donors made gifts of **£238,236** (including Gift Aid)

£110,112

raised (including Gift Aid) from campaigns including Advent, Harvest, Lent, and in memory



5. Based on the management accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022

A visible and present hope

The impact of Christian social action in our communities is huge. Across the country, local churches are serving with love and compassion day in, day out. In 2022, we supported churches to reconnect with their communities, celebrate their impact, and respond to needs around them.

Tim is a Pastor at Emmanuel Church, Brighton, part of the New Frontiers network.

“

Growing Good integrates with the things that you might already be doing. The thinking around hospitality and presence particularly resonated with us when using Growing Good for training our foodbank staff.

The group were provoked to think about the prominence of our building and consider whether people recognised it as a church and were able to access the support available inside.

We are very adaptable as a church and have a lot of the Growing Good themes in our DNA as core values, including social action, evangelism, mission, and church growth. However, we don't necessarily think them through as one piece, and a big value from Growing Good has been thinking about these themes collectively and letting them mutually inform.

We've now rescheduled activities and built these around Thursdays. If you attend on a Thursday, you realise it's an ecosystem of people going between things. Someone may come in to access the foodbank, they get to know us and might bring their kids to the stay and play."

Tim introduced Growing Good to CAB, a network of churches involved in social action across Brighton. "We come from different contexts and traditions, but the material encouraged great conversations. After looking at the Growing Good sessions, we each identified a mission plan for our local area, as well as thinking about our collective mission.

Growing Good has been key in the thinking which has drawn all these things together and has not just encouraged us but implored us to keep our faith visible throughout.

Growing Good will make you think differently about what's in your hand, attend to the situation around you, the context you're in and the ministries that are already working and think about them in a new way."





**PRESENCE,
PERSEVERANCE,
HOSPITALITY,
ADAPTABILITY AND
PARTICIPATION.**



Backed by
**three years of
research**



Offers **reflection on
scripture, stories
from churches and
time for prayer**



Provides **take-away
actions** you can
implement straight
away



Free, flexible and
easy to use



**Celebrates the
contribution**
churches are already
making in their
communities

The Growing Good Toolkit is a free six session course helping churches to grow new connections and make a difference in their community. Based on research, the interactive sessions explore the key characteristics of churches that are growing in faithfulness and fruitfulness.

growing-good.org.uk

Partnerships of hope

Our work is only possible thanks to the support of people, churches, and supporters across England, acting together so we can have the biggest impact.

The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough for a single night rose in 2022, with the largest increase seen in London⁶. The Reverend Nicolas Pye leads efforts at St Paul's Finchley to fundraise for our work addressing homelessness.

The church has a tradition of donating 10% of unrestricted income to other charitable purposes, supporting a range of local, national and international causes. St Paul's has been supporting CUF as one of the national charities that they work with since 2017.

In 2022 Reverend Pye joined forces with the staff and children of St Mary's, their local Church of England primary school, to stage their fifth Sleep Out Challenge.

"The school's decision to join with us was a direct outworking of its distinctive Christian vision and values, and a desire to help pupils become courageous advocates. Here in London, children are very aware of homelessness, and working together enabled them to take positive social action. Our Executive Headteacher invited Years 5 and 6 to sleep in the school hall, and 38 children signed up. They watched a World Cup football match or a film, played games and drank hot chocolate.

I joined them for night prayer by candlelight, during which we recalled how Jesus was homeless, modelled compassionate care for those in need, and reflected on why we were doing the challenge. Before settling down in the hall for the night we watched a short video from Rob Wickham, our Area Bishop, who sent us greetings and words of encouragement (Bishop Rob will join CUF as Chief Executive Officer in July 2023).

"It was a brilliant event and we invited the school community to give in sponsorship. Conscious of the cost-of-living crisis we were unsure what to expect, but the school and church members really got behind the children's fundraising efforts. More than 100 donors supported the event and we raised over £4,000, more than we ever have for the Sleep Out Challenge. Seeing people come together to fundraise in this way with grandparents and family members leaving messages for pupils on the online giving page showed really positive engagement and support for an issue that clearly resonated with people.

“

I believe this initiative enabled the pupils to see what it means to put one's faith into practice and to serve the common good.

I look forward to building on this success, trusting that, in future years, the Sleep Out Challenge can help our church school develop a concern for justice and the confidence that it is possible for us to bring hope to those in need."

Stefan Roos, Executive Headteacher, St Mary's CE Primary School, Finchley:

"The children could really see how we put our Christian values into practice. We talked about compassion, hope and thankfulness, and about, sometimes, while you're doing things to help other people, you can have fun. At the same time you know will make a difference for people."

6. Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, "Rough sleeping snapshot in England: Autumn 2022" Published 28 February 2023





£105,196

raised for the **Sleep Out Challenge** since 2018

Thank you to everyone who has participated in this fundraising event. Your generosity and commitment to serving others inspires our work.

Hope for the future

The cost-of-living crisis is pushing some families into impossible situations, and we are all facing difficult decisions at home. We know that children are absorbing these experiences and starting to learn money habits as early as age 3. But still, only 48% are taught financial education at school.

Through the innovative work of the Just Finance Foundation, we understand that there are many complex factors that lead to financial hardship, and these need to be addressed nationally. However, we believe that education is key to addressing financial equality over the long-term.

We know that by working with schools to support teachers, we can ensure children from all backgrounds receive the education they need to manage money well in the future.

“

Our school is in Toxteth, Liverpool, an area of significant deprivation. We wanted to encourage children to see the importance of money and making the right choices for how they use it. The LifeSavers programme offers everything we need to help our children understand the value of money and what they can do to best look after it. We have a savings club every Friday morning with our Year 6 Cashiers. We run our financial curriculum through the LifeSavers programme, using the lessons and the 5 Big Questions across KS1 and KS2. We use Milo's Money in our EYFS.

We are providing our children with the opportunity to save and learn more about the value of money.

It is a fantastic and engaging resource for children of all ages that progresses year on year, helping children discover the value of money.”

Charlie, Maths Lead and Year 2 teacher



“

When we started LifeSavers and we were discussing wants and needs – children would often place a computer, PlayStation or TV in the 'needs' section but couldn't justify why.

After Covid, when doing the same activity with a Year 3 class, a child placed TV in need, a few classmates said 'no'. I asked why they thought it was a need and they said because during lockdown some old people may have been on their own and it was the only company they had - I think that is a basic need.

Again, no right or wrong answers but if we can have our young children thinking in that way - we are doing ok.”

Julie, LifeSaver Champion, Stockton Wood



Our subsidiary charity, the Just Finance Foundation (JFF), works directly with schools and teachers to promote the development of financial education, improve learning outcomes, and strengthen children's lifelong financial wellbeing through the LifeSavers programme.

Our vision of hope

Our goal to empower communities to serve, lead and speak reaffirms our commitment to supporting churches and mobilising Christian social action across England.

We move into 2023 on strong foundations. Over the past year we have embedded our new strategy and maximised opportunities for change and development. Our fundraising has remained stable and even grown in some areas, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis. This is thanks to the generosity of our supporters – thank you for being with us over the long-term and sharing in our vision.



We plan to keep investing in equipping churches and mobilising Christian social action. The next 12 months will be a critical time for us to amplify the voices of local communities who are struggling, and celebrate the important role churches play in supporting them.

We will add further resources to our Growing Good toolkit that will help churches who have already begun that journey to understand how social action in their community can be connected to discipleship and growth. As our Places of Welcome network grows, we will support this network and local co-ordinators with practical advice and resources, equipping people to make a bigger difference in their local community.

We will listen to churches and communities to understand their developing needs as we journey together through the cost-of-living crisis and provide relevant tools for churches so that they can support communities. Through the stories that we hear from local people we will amplify their voices and the distinctive

value of faith-based social action to influence policy and decision makers to bring about systemic change to people's lives.

We also know that the impact of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis will continue to be felt in the years to come. This is a critical time to serve and care for the most marginalised people in our communities. We will continue to support the Together Network, building a movement of faith based social action that serves local communities. And we will work with local partners across England to provide personal care to people facing homelessness.

As a Christian organisation, we are motivated by a vision of the world as God intends it to be. We are passionate about building communities where material needs are met and everyone feels connected, valued, and loved.

All of this is in the hope that, together, we will build confident, connected, hopeful and flourishing communities.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Edwards'.

**The Reverend Adam Edwards,
Acting Group CEO**



**CHURCH
URBAN
FUND** 

CHANGING LIVES AND
COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Church Urban Fund

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www.cuf.org.uk |    [@churchurbanfund](https://www.instagram.com/churchurbanfund)

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Front cover photo: Reverend Dr Anna Poulson uses the Growing Good Toolkit to help celebrate her vibrant, diverse community