**Points of discussion**

* Experiences of low-income Londoners during the holidays
* What are some of the challenges in the system set up to support Londoners with food and other services?
* What are some of opportunities for funders to take action? What can we learn from others working in this space?

**The partnership between the GLA, The Felix Project and the Mayor’s Fund which aims to provide 10m meals to low-income families during weekends and school holidays.**

It’s expanded the offer of the Kitchen Social (Kitchen Social gives children and young people a safe place to go during the school holidays where they can socialise, make new friends and receive a free, nutritious meal.).

They are providing the following (there is no eligibility criteria):

**Take & Make:** During the pandemic, we launched Take & Make to provide nutritional, ‘low cook’, high-quality recipe-kit boxes for children and their families. All recipes were designed to be made with limited kitchen utensils to ensure cooking at home is as inclusive as possible. Every box contains instructions and skill training cards plus online video tutorials to build confidence in cooks of all ages.

**Create & Make:**A meal kit for families providing four-to-six meal portions. Create & Make provides a selection of store cupboard staples along with a lucky dip of fresh produce and instructional materials to help families turn ‘wonky’ fruit and vegetables into delicious meals.

**Heat & Eat:**Single-portion meals that can be reheated and served on-site or given out to be heated up at home. The Felix Project’s kitchen creates delicious meals from fresh surplus produce, which are delivered chilled to locations across London.

QR codes on the packs allow families to scan through and get extra support.

What they are seeing on the ground:

* Community organisations are saying they need more support from funders given the high level of need from low income Londoners
* The type of people in need is changing with people coming for support with full time jobs etc. There is a concerning trend of in-work poverty
* Youth community hubs are seeing families come in for debt advice/ sanitary products – they have become an ecosystem for the community
* One challenge is coordination – there are still cold spots and there is need in particular communities that aren’t engaging with mainstream provision
* Things are changing on the ground quickly – it’s hard for the system to keep up. There are lots of fires to fight and groups are having to quickly move on to the next one – we can only be informed by the people who know best on the ground
* Younger children are fed at events but older children might not take advantage of it – we need to think about how to make it more appealing

**London Community Foundation**

* Recent COL grants have been very over subscribed
* There has been a huge jump in food insecurity in general becoming a bit focus
* They have seen an increase particularly in Tower Hamlets
* Direct cash to individuals has been particularly popular, more than during Covid
* Individuals within the community are facing burnout from the cycle. Demand and need of organisations are increasing and changing but they have less money to use

**Free School Meals at the GLA**

* TheMayor allocated £130 million to free meals for those not eligible to the pre-existing Government scheme. The current threshold to receive free meals is extremely low (income has to be c.£7k a year)
* Every primary school child in London is eligible. They have also increased the current rate for each meal to provide more in the offer
* All boroughs have now agreed to take up the offer and have all signed grant agreements. The Mayor has written to all parents to inform them of the offer
* They’re looking at protective characteristic needs e.g. SEND/ faith requiring a different meal and have an extra £5m to cater for that
* It is a COL intervention just for the school year from September 2023
* The five boroughs that do this already have been sharing good practice with other boroughs
* Some schools that have less kitchen capacity are struggling a bit. The GLA don’t have the capital investment for this and would like to ask partners who may be able to support to contact them.
* Those who are eligible for the existing scheme are being asked to continue to apply for it to ensure it is continued after the school year
* Evaluation partners are onboard and they’re looking at long term funding

**Discussion -**

How do we move on to make it not a recurring or growing problem?

It’s one year until the election so we need to evidence this work, it should be a public debate and not a charitable debate

There is less provision in outer boroughs as the support structures are traditionally based around inner city poverty. How do we find ways to build ways of supporting people in these outer boroughs?

* There are schools in every borough – it doesn’t have to be that community hall that it’s always been – let the community say where they want it to be – provide training and resources for hubs to build it up and be that extra support for those on the ground – it’s about being adaptive with the work they do - coordination is where we need help – there is so much collective intelligence / importance of young people’s voices in this

There will be another food summit in 2024 before the election.

We’ve been stuck in this emergency loop – we need to support those organisations on the ground to do projects on systemic change and supporting resilience. We need to shift to shoring up these organisations.