

# CAMERADOS @ LEARNING REPORT

JUNE 2023

For National Lottery Community Fund  
compiled by the Association of Camerados  
Camerados CIC Reg: 11634986



IS A PUBLIC LIVING ROOM.  
ALL WELCOME COME ON IN!  
C&D

IS A PUBLIC LIVING ROOM.  
ALL WELCOME COME ON IN!  
C&D

Hello  
CAMERADOS

NO AGENDA  
NO FIXING  
JUST BE!  
#CAMERADOS

THE ANSWER TO  
OUR PROBLEMS  
IS EACH OTHER  
BE A CAMERADO

#WeAreCamerados

**THIS YEAR WE MADE THIS 3 MINUTE  
ANIMATION TO EXPLAIN WHO WE ARE...**  
**[CLICK ON THE LINK HERE TO WATCH](#)**



**CAMERADOS  
IT BRINGS**

**ASIA** IN,

**PEOPLE DON'T FEEL  
PREACHED AT**

Sam  
C

**I WAS DIAGNOSED  
WITH CANCER... AND THEY**

**ALL CROWDED AROUND**

**ME AND WERE REALLY  
SUPPORTIVE AND I**

**NEEDED PEOPLE**

**LIKE THIS IN MY LIFE. PAULA**

# #WEARECAMERADOS,

THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM PEOPLE.

WE GET TOGETHER AND GET EACH OTHER  
THROUGH TOUGH TIMES.

NO AGENDA, NO FIXING, JUST ALONGSIDE  
OTHERS WITH A BREW, MAYBE A BOARD GAME  
AND DEFINITELY NO HEAD TILTING.



GET IN TOUCH AT

[CUPPA@CAMERADOS.ORG](mailto:CUPPA@CAMERADOS.ORG)

TO SET UP A PUBLIC LIVING ROOM IN YOUR COMMUNITY.



I HAVE NEVER  
MET MORE

# AMAZING PEOPLE

THAN I HAVE AT CAMERADOS

*Mymuna*



# THINGS WE'RE GOING TO COVER

01 Some Numbers, some words

02 The Story of our project this year

03 How we involved people in our community

04 The difference we're making big and small

05 What we've learnt - what's worked and what hasn't

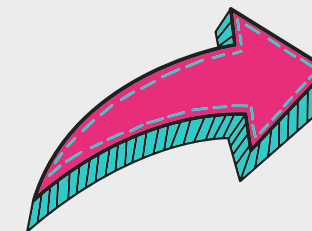
06 How we're changing what we do

07 What we've spent this year.

08 Conclusion and the Future



Probably best to get yourself some tea & biscuits before proceeding. We wanted this to be short and pithy but too much has been happening! Hope we hold your interest!



01

## Some Numbers, some words

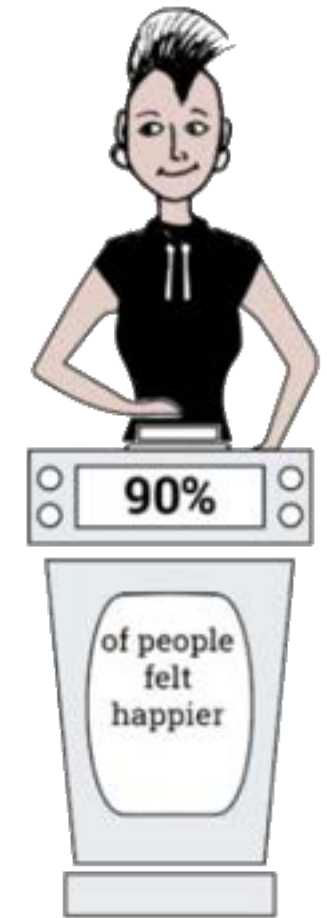
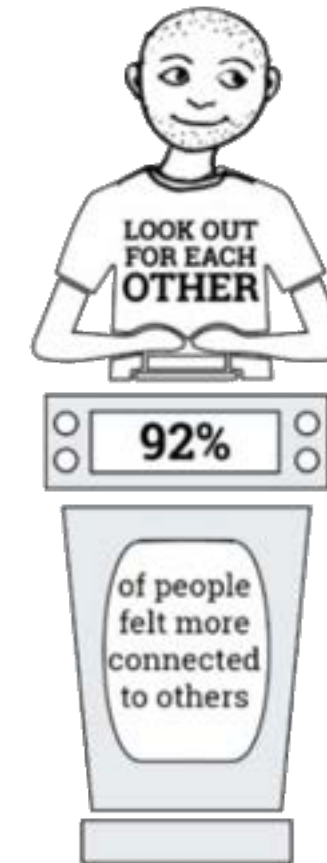
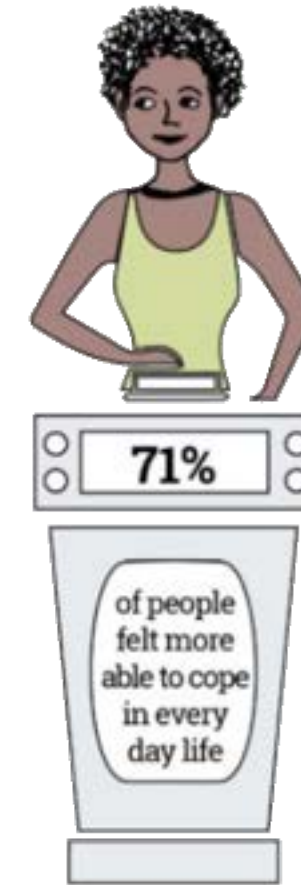
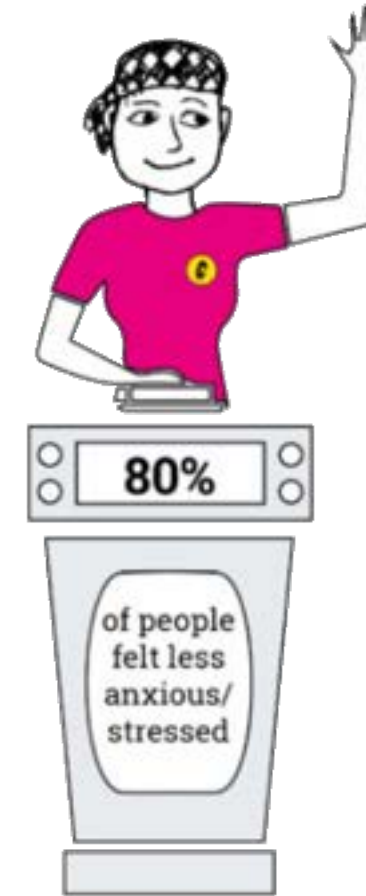
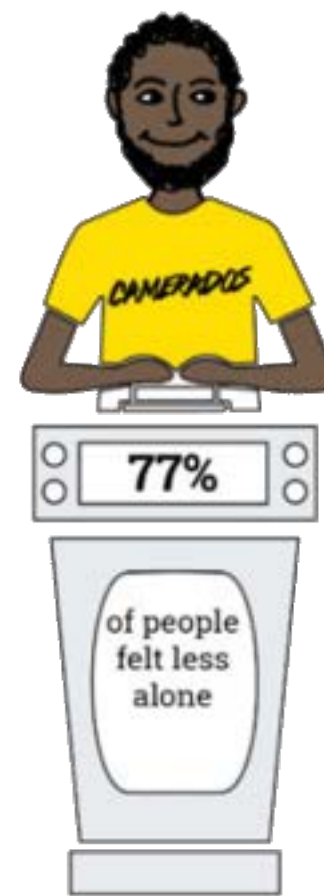
**187** PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS OPEN

**11** MORE PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS IN DEVELOPMENT

**2,564** PEOPLE PER WEEK ON AVERAGE ATTEND PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS

**1,464** HOURS PER WEEK THAT CAMERADOS PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS ARE OPEN

**49** BOXES SENT OUT SO FAR THIS YEAR



# EVERY WEEK NEW PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS OPEN SOMEWHERE ...AND TELL US ABOUT IT...

Windrush generation day in Cheetham Hill @NTCGFT over the weekend

❤️  
@Camerados\_org  
@ChrisBernard196  
@sineadei  
@shaziaabutt  
@hassanuln  
@shaukatali1965



Warrington MacIntyre Great Communities  
@WarringtonGrCo

Fresh coat of paint, fresh new space. Come and have a natter/brew with Rebecca in Warrington's freshest new Public Living Room The Old School in Fairfield this Friday from 11am-1pm. Come and get refreshed for the summer/meet new people/chat and Rebecca may even paint your nails.



You and 9 others

MSArgyll  
@msargyll

@Camerados\_org 🤔🤔 #PublicLivingRoom The sun is shining, the biscuits are out and so are lots of lovely folks looking for a blether. #BeMoreHuman



Sam Moon  
@TheBoyMoon1

Tuckwood Cycle Hub Public Living Room today (Sat 27th May) until 2pm, just past Tuckwood Library (Norwich). Pop by for a cuppa, connect 4, a random oh and a bike repair too if you fancy!  
@Camerados\_org @WeAreCyclingUK @NorwichCC @VoluntaryNorfo1 @BBCNorfolk



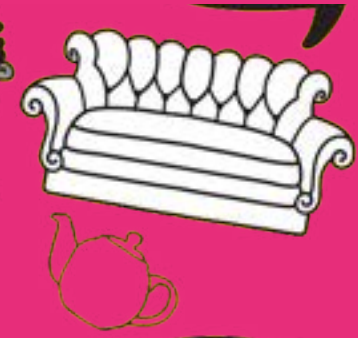
Bureau Blackburn  
@BureauBlackburn

A moment from our @Camerados\_org #publiclivingroom today. It was a great morning and had quietened down by this point. Looking forward to meeting @MaffPotts next week and to our Shindig next Saturday. #wearecamerados #blackburn





Our mission: A public living room in every neighbourhood



### Warm banks

“Cost of Living Crisis” has seen increased take up due to warm banks ...plus many imitators of PLRs !

NO AGENDA SPACES

# 3 X



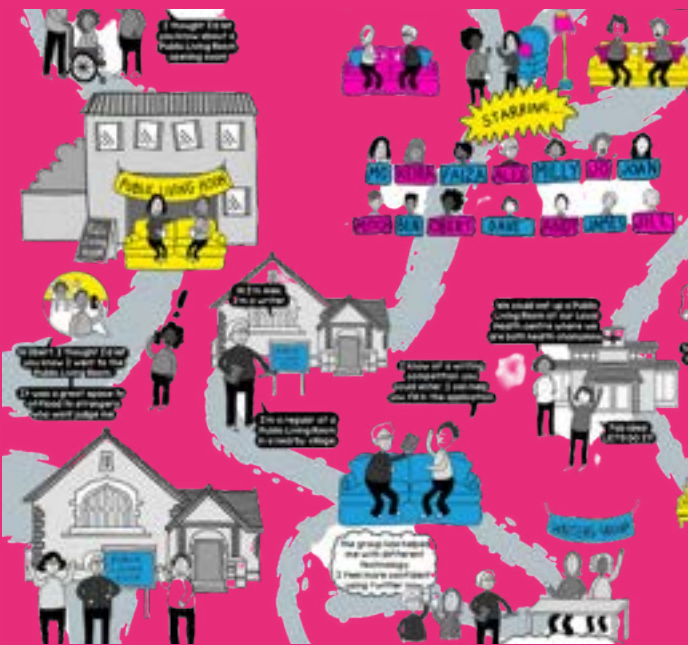
Triple the number of Public Living Rooms

### Extraordinary diversity



Public Living Rooms are being run by those with disabilities, Refugee women, income deprived neighbourhoods, LGBTQI folk, rural communities

### Ripple Mapping



We found a new way to measure impact



### Pavement Public Living Rooms

emerging as our new activism, reached new people & inspired uptake



### Shindigs

Local worked better than national for gatherings

Reduced Internal team

Period of transition for AOC



Comms Agency

12 month experiment broadening our communications



# 1. TRIPLE PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

The movement is made up of people giving their own time but the tiny team that inspires, resources and connects them are paid staff in an office with resources all of which is covered by our grant funding. This team is called the Association of Camerados - AOC.

In the words of someone in our movement "It feels like this year AOC really told the stories of communities, met them where they are in their streets, and been more like a support act not the lead singer" (Bob, Hastings)

It's been a big year of change internally and externally. We made the decision to simplify our mission and stick to one thing we did really well that had the biggest impact for people in communities. That mission "A **Public living room in every neighbourhood**". Though this takes many guises - led by the people themselves - it meant we had a pretty simple way of judging success and I'm pleased to say our external story is that we've tripled the number of public living rooms and the demand continues.

## REASON FOR INCREASE COULD BE:

- Possible reaction against isolation of pandemic
- Warm spaces initiative (see slide on this)
- Martyn Lewis "Money saving expert" - his endorsement of our model in guidance to libraries
- People seeing pavement public living rooms





## 2. NEW RESOURCES - ITERATION BASED ON FEEDBACK

This year our funding has helped us develop **new resources** based on feedback from people in the movement. This includes both "PLR in a box" resources and items which we send communities every few months to encourage them and maintain the movement:



- People were using postcards (hung on a washing line) less and less to record stories so we adopted an idea from Hastings public living room and will now produce **a Visitors book**
- **Our new info Book in the box** - which all PLRs receive to explain the movement and especially our principles was deemed not sufficiently diverse and also felt a little too "top down". So the new book contains quotes, stories and advice direct from movement members of all backgrounds, abilities and ethnicities. The eye catching cartoons were designed by a movement member too.
- Communities receive 4 of our much loved **mugs**(!) however they will now get 6 with a different principle on each one. People prefer this to "notices" and it's a conversation starter too. We sourced a new supplier to keep costs roughly the same
- We held a **T-Shirt competition** and two members from Lancaster and Hertfordshire won.
- We worked with a **communications agency** for 12 months and they recommended we make an explanatory animation. A movement member did all of the drawings and the animation work.
- Communities wanted a **teapot** in the box so we removed some less used items and sourced one



### 3. EXTRAORDINARY DIVERSITY OF PLRS - RUN BY THOSE WITH DISABILITIES, REFUGEE WOMEN, INCOME DEPRIVED NEIGHBOURHOODS, LGBTQI PEOPLE, RURAL COMMUNITIES

We have learnt that our mission really connects with groups of people that perhaps society views as "misfits" and different. We've learnt that something in the camarados approach makes them feel part of a community that is not based around their needs or their marginalised characteristic. In other words it is a human space not a specific safe space and this makes them feel accepted and viewed as equal and "normal". For instance in Wiltshire a quadreplegic man with other physical disabilities was told by his social worker that setting up a public living room was "too much for him". He has since set up four both inside and outside. The "Stay up late" movement that promotes the right for **people with disabilities** to party has also been captured by the camarados mission and opened public living rooms.

In Rochdale the public living room, though open to all of course, is mostly attended by **refugee women from countries such as Libya, Iran, Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt and Ukraine.**

The highest concentration of camarados public living rooms is in areas in the **top 50 places of income deprivation (ONS)**. Also we have noticed they are often the area next door to a town with a higher profile and greater investment. For example Middlesbrough (not Newcastle); Wolverhampton (Not Birmingham); Rotherham (not Sheffield) and so on.

We have also noticed an increase in demand from **rural areas** including very isolated places such as Stornaway in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland as well as two public living rooms in Lochgilphead. Also some camarados in the SouthWest have set up "**Farmerados**" and gained separate funding to promote our mission in the farming community. We are working closely with them to ensure the integrity of the model remains.



## 4. WARM BANKS / "COST OF LIVING CRISIS" HAS SEEN INCREASED TAKE UP AND PROFILE INCLUDING MANY IMITATORS

The Cost of living meant that many people were making tough choices as to whether to eat or put the heating on. Many chose the former and so were freezing in their homes. Councils, charities and community organisations began to set up "warm spaces" or "warm banks".

We issued guidance so people could benefit from the things we'd learnt about helping communities create public living rooms. This was picked up by Martyn Lewis (The Money Saving Expert) who was issuing advice to libraries in partnership with CILIP. This led to a major increase in calls from libraries. The largest "provider" of warm spaces was "Warm Welcome" who put us on their website and have since been talking to us about giving advice to warm spaces who want to continue despite winter ending as they have seen the need for such a space.

Oasis trust CEO Steve Chalk went on GMTV and BBC Breakfast to announce a national network of "living rooms". We contacted him and their sites in Bristol, Manchester and Southampton all decided to become public living rooms. We also heard from major institutions such as the National Trust, YMCA, Welsh national theatre, Royal Exchange theatre Manchester and more.

Since the weather became warmer some of the above have been in touch to ask for advice they can offer warm spaces who want to continue because they saw the benefit of the spaces over and above the need for warmth. Company and connection seemed to be the most crucial aspect of what they provided.

## 6 TIPS THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL WHEN SETTING UP WARM SPACES THIS WINTER



FROM THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM PEOPLE,  
CAMERADOS

WRITTEN BY  
MAFF POTTS, ASSOCIATION OF CAMERADOS

# 5. PAVEMENT PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS, EMERGING AS OUR NEW ACTIVISM, REACHED MANY NEW PEOPLE



**AND MORE...**

# 5. PAVEMENT PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS

When the cost of living became an issue hitting communities hard we became worried about the prevailing narrative in neighbourhoods, politics and the media. As is often the case when something is designated a "crisis" people focus heavily on tangible products such as food and fuel. Both food & fuel poverty are very real issues however just as important if not more so is the crisis of connection.

When people have less money they go out less. We commissioned a **YouGov poll** (see a **glimpse of it opposite**) which showed that *more than a third of adults say worries about money are likely to affect how much time they spend with friends and family over the winter* and *1/4 have already cancelled social plans*.

As a social species, whereas temporary isolation can feel good, habitual isolation can lead to problems. People can retreat from others, isolation spirals and this can lead to people feeling less good about themselves, mental health problems rise and quality of life can deteriorate, a support network is lost, advice is lost, and so it spirals until some very serious consequences can occur.

We want to highlight that connection was a serious business and relevant to the cost of living situation and not a fluffy "nice to have" element of life so we felt our activism had to reflect this. We looked at the areas of income deprivation Office of National Statistics and prioritised these areas as most likely to be hardest hit by the cost of living situation. We then hired a van, put furniture in it and then turned up in the neighbourhoods and created a pop up public living room on the streets and talked to anyone who sat down.

**YouGov**

	Total	Gender		
		Male	Female	
<b>VSC_Q1. Which, if either, of the following statements apply to you? (Please select all that apply)</b>				
	Unweighted base	2135	999	1136
	<b>Base: All UK adults</b>	<b>2135</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1100</b>
I have turned down / cancelled a forthcoming social event because I am worried about money		511	199	311
Money concerns are likely to affect how much time I spend with friends and family over the winter		770	351	419
Neither of these		939	504	435
Don't know		144	61	83
Prefer not to say		87	47	41
<b>VSC_Q2. You previously mentioned that money concerns are likely to affect the amount of time you will be spending with friends and family over the winter...In which, if any, of the following ways are you likely to be affected? (Please select all that apply)</b>				
	Unweighted base	767	337	430
	<b>Base: All UK adults who mentioned that money concerns are likely to affect how much time they spend with family and friends over the winter</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>419</b>
I won't be able to afford the cost of traveling to visit friends and family who live far away		484	214	270
I won't be able to afford to go out socially with friends and family who live locally		512	237	275
I won't be able to afford the cost of regular activities (e.g. class fees, membership fees, entry fees) where I meet lots of people I know		306	120	186
Other		44	28	16
Don't know		20	7	13
<b>VSC_Q3. Which, if any, of the following are likely reasons to stop you going out over the winter? (Please select all that apply)</b>				
	Unweighted base	2135	999	1136
	<b>Base: All UK adults</b>	<b>2135</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1100</b>
I feel embarrassed about not being able to afford to pay for things		478	215	263
I don't want friends to have to pay for me and I know they'll offer		388	189	199
I worry I'll be asked lots of questions about whether I'm coping financially		177	94	82

## 6. WE STARTED THE YEAR WITH SEVEN STAFF AND ENDED WITH TWO. WAS THIS THE YEAR OF TRANSITION FOR AOC?



This has happened however despite some major upheavals internally. 5 people left the team of 7 including the two longest serving members of staff. None were contentious and all were positively handled. Some were planned and contractual but most were unforeseen and due to life changes.

It left us with a team of two and a movement which had just tripled so we were a worried. However we got lucky and recruited two new part-time members of staff for Finance and for Community support and thanks to great handovers from others we never missed a beat. Phew!

However without realising this has achieved through natural means what we had formally planned all along i.e. that the AOC would decrease in size as the movement grew. We had always factored this in as we didn't want to grow the organisation as we felt that would lead to the wrong behaviours and take us away from the focus on mission and our determination to get out of the way of communities. By being small it forces us to look to the people in neighbourhoods to take the action not us and to avoid just perpetuating the organisation. So it's all been rather serendipitous!



# 7. WORKING WITH A COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

## - PROS AND CONS.

In an attempt to break out of a perceived echo chamber and reach a much wider audience we worked for 12 months with a professional communications agency called SONDER. We hoped this learning would inform our path going forward.

### Pros

- Condensed our messaging and focus on our USP - Mutuality and No fixing
- Taught us how to identify PR opportunities, wrote press releases and worked relentlessly to get media opportunities
- Featured on Radio 4's "Digital Human" programme -which led directly to 7 public living rooms
- Also featured on ITV local news and BBC local radio
- They helped write & design our new Public living room book and create a 3 minute animation
- They created and planned social media content and posted it
- They carried out a YouGov poll

### Cons

- We can't directly trace the tripling of PLRs directly to comms however we can see that our social media following has not significantly increased. We hoped for an exponential rise in interest, it didn't happen. This is likely because we'd grossly under-estimated how much media spend is needed these days to cut through in a packed market of messages.
- They took our messaging to a less edgy place in an attempt to attract the mainstream. Ultimately we didn't feel this reflected the tone that had attracted many to our movement previously.

We've decided to use our ongoing limited Comms budget to create content that amplifies the voices of people in public living rooms rather than a more traditional PR approach centring around Maff and the team

As we had a great working relationship with SONDER we will keep in touch and use them for selective PR opportunities.



England | Local News | Regions | Dorset

## Dorchester's former M&S store to become 'public living room'

31 May 2022

Newsletters | Jobs | Homes | Cars | Book An Ad | Local listings | Local info | Contact us

## GlasgowTimes

News | Celtic | Rangers | Sport | What's On Glasgow | Food & Drink | Lifestyle

## Pop-up public living room appears in Glasgow to 'heal cost-of-connection crisis'

9th November 2022

EAST END | COMMUNITY | HEALTH | PEOPLE | PERSONAL FINANCE | WELLBEING | GLASGOW | SCOTLAND



Pop-up public living room appears in Bridgeton to 'heal cost of connection crisis' (Image: Camerados social movement brought their pop-up living room initiative to Glasgow on Tuesday)

Learn from experts how to turn admin time into people time.

Discover more

**Our movement only works with TONS of involvement and leadership from those in the movement. Here's some ways we do it...**

**Every public living room starts with a chat where people in communities talk about what they hope for in their community.**

**The gatherings (“Shindigs”) are led & created entirely by the community with advice and resources from AOC.**

**Our Open house meetings per quarter are hosted by movement members and allow anyone to bring any issues to other movement members.**

**The resources are entirely open source so the community lead and implement the process themselves using our resources.**

**Our learning through ripple mapping involves people plotting their own impact using our tools.**

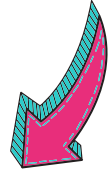
**We iterate constantly our resources and communications based on the stories we collect and the ripple mapping which occurs.**

04

The difference we're making big and small



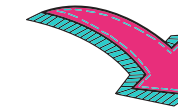
Dr Hayley Trowbridge



Dr Hayley is the Strategic lead for **People's Voice Media** which launched the Community Reporting movement in 2007. It's a method that uses digital tools to support people to tell their own stories in their own ways. We never want to harvest people's experience for our own ends so aim to honour people's stories ethically and respectfully.

This summative insight report is based on 63 stories gathered from members of and people connected to the Camerados movement between January and September 2022 and ideas that emerged during various sense-making activities with the movement held during this period. The stories have been gathered using the Community Reporting methodology.

It really is worth reading the full report



"A Really Magical Place"  
Summative **Story** insight report,  
Dec 2022

but if you don't have time here's some key things that jumped out...



# STUFF THAT WORKS WELL

- They felt that the principles were key in creating this environment and they **enabled people to grow and thrive**
- PLR is the “**most powerful community engagement thing they had ever done**”
- Camerados are taking these principles outside of PLRs and **into other spaces**
- This allows people who might be otherwise **socially isolated** to get out and meet new folk
- Particularly helped to tackle the **isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic especially children** who had experienced mental health issues through the lockdowns and this was both helpful for the children and parents as it was a space where they could discuss things and relate to one another.
- there is a **beauty in talking to strangers** as there is less pressure and you worry less



# STUFF TO WORK ON



- **Who was responsible** for making sure the principles were followed by everyone?
- **For some people there were still barriers in place to setting-up a PLR.** As one Camerado explained: “People over think it and worry”.
- Some Camerados also felt there should be **more of an option to individualise** the contents of the box in line with the movements desire to be people-led.

**CC** **STORIES FROM THE MOVEMENT**



I WENT OUT TODAY TO GET SOME SHOES FROM THE CHARITY SHOP. I SAT DOWN FOR A CHAT IN A PAVEMENT PUBLIC LIVING ROOM. I'M IN THE U.K. SEEKING ASYLUM. MY MUM DIED AND I WASN'T ABLE TO GO TO THE FUNERAL.... IT WAS GOOD TO TAKE TIME TO TALK TO FOLK IN THE POP UP LIVING ROOM. I FELT BETTER ABOUT MY DAY.



**STORIES FROM THE MOVEMENT**



I'M GOING THROUGH A TOUGH TIME RIGHT NOW. I CAME TO SPEND TIME WITH THE CAMERADOS IN THE POP UP LIVING ROOM. I FEEL REALLY ISOLATED . I'M EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND HAVE NO SUPPORT NETWORK. SOMEONE THREW A CUP OF DRINK OVER ME AND MY STUFF TODAY. I WENT AND SAT IN THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM. I FELT WELCOME. PEOPLE RESPECT EACH OTHER THERE.



**STORIES FROM THE MOVEMENT**



I CAME ACROSS THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM WHILST IN READING TRYING TO GET MY SON BACK. I HAVE NOT SEEN HIM IN A LONG TIME.

MY HUSBAND LEFT ME... HE TOOK MY SON ON THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.



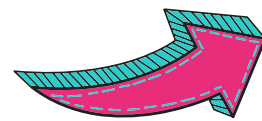


## Dr Martha Newson

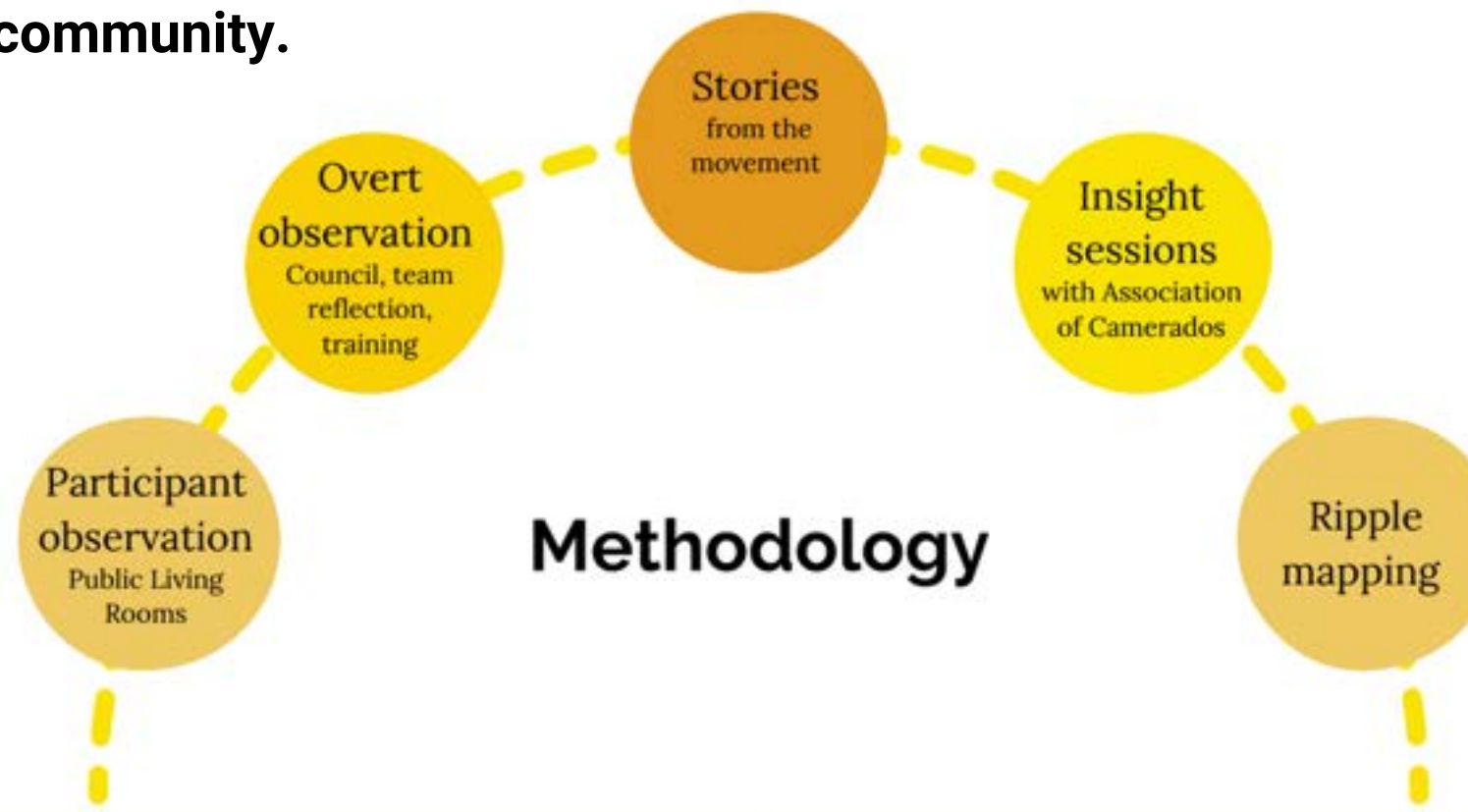
Martha analyses all the stories and data collected by *People's Voice Media*; visits public living rooms; and spends time with the AOC team each quarter.

Her annual report is found [here](#)

Here are her top line findings



An **anthropologist** (you may know her from the TODAY programme or Sky news!) based at the Universities of Greenwich and Oxford, she leads research on **group bonding, ritual, and community**.



### 1

#### **Camerados saves lives.**

Several people involved in the movement directly ascribe Camerados as saving their own or others' lives. The movement grew rapidly pre-2020, before many Public Living Rooms were shut during the pandemic. However, in the darkest times of isolation during the Covid-19 lockdowns in the UK, Camerados was a beacon of connection and humour online and, gradually, in person. The life-changing and life-saving power of the movement lies in the application of its principles.

### 3

#### **The Principles ripple through personal, organisational and societal structures.**

The personal development and relationships that evolve through the movement ripple into other areas of people's lives, ultimately affecting work spaces and wider society. These ripples also tend to be influenced by the movement's principles.

### 2

#### **Camerados creates space for social connections where they did not previously exist.**

People who report having been isolated or lonely form connections with others, and communities unite through Camerados-inspired, person-led events. This has led to lasting social structures, with Camerados providing the social 'glue', and more confident communities.

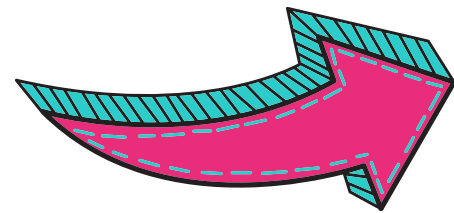
### 4

#### **Each Public Living Room and each camerado is unique.**

The movement is aware of the true diversity it attracts, including some of society's most vulnerable people, and continues to work on improving its inclusivity. Nonetheless, while Public Living Rooms vary, they all foster a sense of connection through shared experiences and humour.

## KEY IMPACT AREAS

Three areas of impact were identified using a deductive approach to ripple mapping. Themes within these overarching areas have emerged by applying inductive analysis to the ripple maps and evidence gleaned from across the research period. Specific community impacts are described on the next page.



### Individual impacts

- Camerados spaces lead to connection with others.
- These social connections relate to self-esteem and wellbeing.
- Exposure to Camerados and the Principles can influence individuals' values and lead to behavioural changes (e.g., getting out more and trying new things).
- Encouraging camerados to 'host' spaces themselves, rather than receiving the movement like a service, fosters confidence and sustains Public Living Rooms longer term.
- Individual impacts appeared to be particularly significant in vulnerable or less able populations, such as those with learning difficulties.



### Organisational impacts

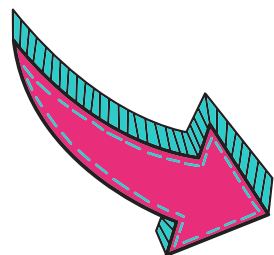
- Camerados has influenced the internal values of multiple organisations, i.e., they have become more 'human'.
- Some organisations have benefited by acting on these attitudinal shifts to address power inequalities (e.g., no lanyards).
- In some cases, organisations' loads have been reduced by the work Camerados does.



### Societal impacts

- Camerados events have brought communities together, which in turn has led to the creation of new social structures (e.g., women starting businesses together).
- Public Living Rooms inspire connections with other groups, particularly like-minded movements, leading to wider social changes.
- Camerados' visibility off- and on-line may have led to influence at a national level (e.g., BBC coverage).

# COMMUNITY IMPACTS



**BRINGING TOGETHER DIVERSE PEOPLE AND CULTURES**

i.e., challenging assumptions, prejudice, and stigma.



**INCREASED SOCIAL SUPPORT & DECREASED SOCIAL ISOLATION**

**MORE PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS LEAD TO MORE PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS**

i.e., fostering more spaces where people and communities can benefit from the movement.

**INCREASED COMMUNITY SPIRIT**

**PEOPLE-FIRST SPACES FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING**

**CREATING LINKS TO COMMUNITY PROVISION**

e.g., youth clubs, food projects, allotments, swap shops, bicycle recycling, plays, parties, craft groups, food banks, warm spaces.

**SPREAD AWARENESS OF PUBLIC LIVING ROOMS & THE PRINCIPLES**

e.g., with social workers, town council, town mayor. Leading to more people finding out about and benefiting from the movement.



05

What we've learnt - what's worked and what hasn't

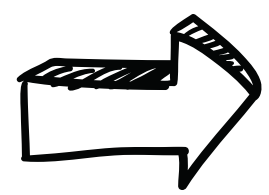
06

How we're changing what we do



We learnt that our **Governance** engagement didn't work

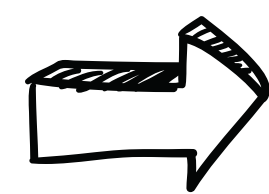
Council



Open House

We learnt that **gatherings** need to be local

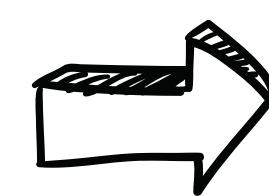
Fiesta



Local "Shindigs"

We learnt better ways to gather **stories**

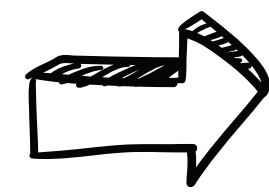
Postcards



Visitor book

We changed how we do **Communications**

Comms agency



Content creation and a generous "support act" approach\*

Arrow means:  
we learnt and it became...



\*We've combined these two headings as we always think about how to change what we do after we've learnt what has worked and what hasn't. \*

\*See Pros and Cons slide about Comms

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## What we've learnt - what's worked and what hasn't



### Council - Open House

Our independent group of movement members who were formed to support and challenge the movement decided to disband as it wasn't working. Insufficient engagement and a reluctance to criticise the AOC prompted the group to suggest a return to open zoom calls once a quarter. We call this "Open House" and it is a place

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## How we're changing what we do

where anyone in the movement could have their say. We've implemented this and already it is prompted changes directly from input from those who attend (e.g. we've brought back on-line "SpoonRoom" after it was requested).

They are hosted by people in the movement who nominate themselves and people also suggest themes to debate.

**C** Association of Camerados @Camerados\_org · Jun 6  
 A #PublicLivingRoom #Shindig in the forest at Garvagh, a celebration of the woods, art and local people.  
 #WeAreCamerados



### Fiesta - Shindigs

Nobody engaged with the idea of a national gathering. Possibly a mix of post-pandemic nervousness, cost of living impacting travel costs; and overall the fact that people identify more with their own local public living room than an international movement.

So we divided up the budget for the national gathering and gave it to communities spread across UK to hold local gatherings and invite camerados from their region.

So far 5 have happened and 5 more are planned.



### Postcards - visitor book

We've noticed that less and less people are writing their stories on the postcards we include in the box. These are to display in the public living room to inspire others and for AOC to learn about the impact that's happening.

Hastings PLR use a visitor book successfully so we've adopted this idea and will now put that in the box instead of postcards.

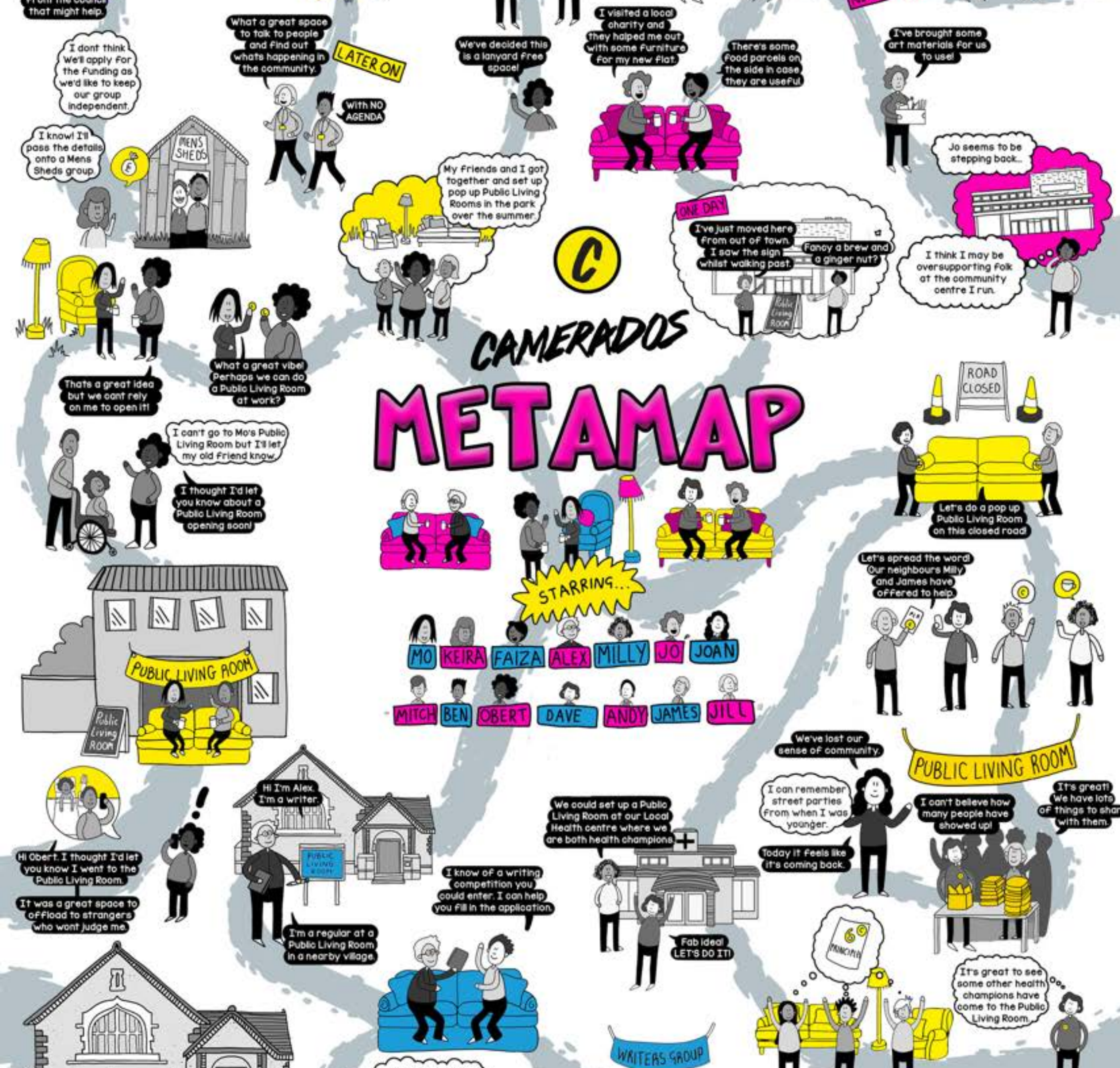
# THE RIPPLES WE'RE MAKING...

We felt that our current learning approach wasn't doing the following:

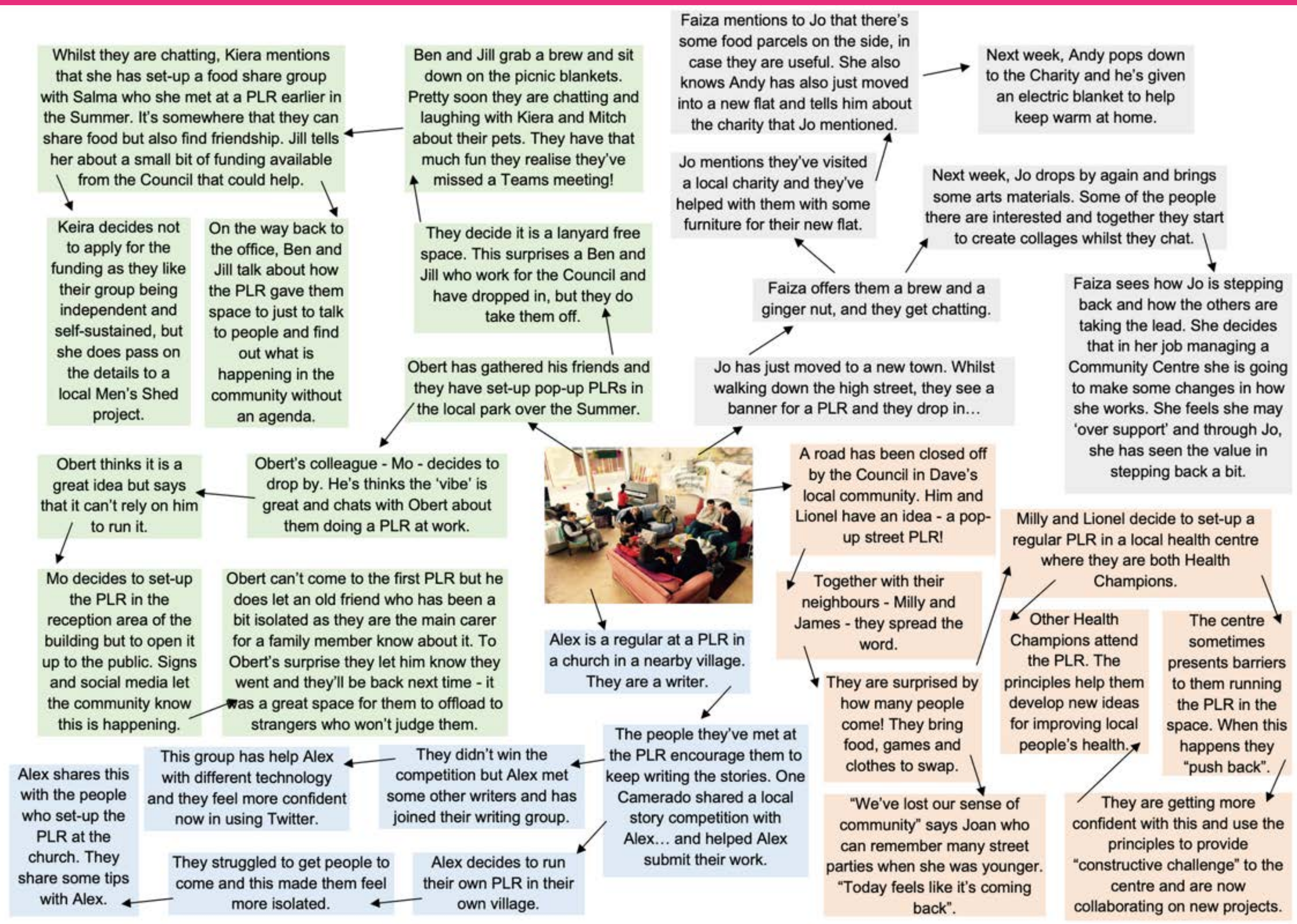
- a) Involving people in assessing the impact THEMSELVES
- b) capturing the major impacts that happen in people's lives which start as tiny micro interactions and have knock on effects.

So we did some research and found "Ripple effect mapping" and adapted it to our own use. People put their public living room at the centre then through conversation with others build a mindmap-style image of ripples of the things that have happened as a result of the PLR. They look back and see just what a difference it has made. The participant often feels surprised and validated much more than what they often see as just some sofas and biscuits!

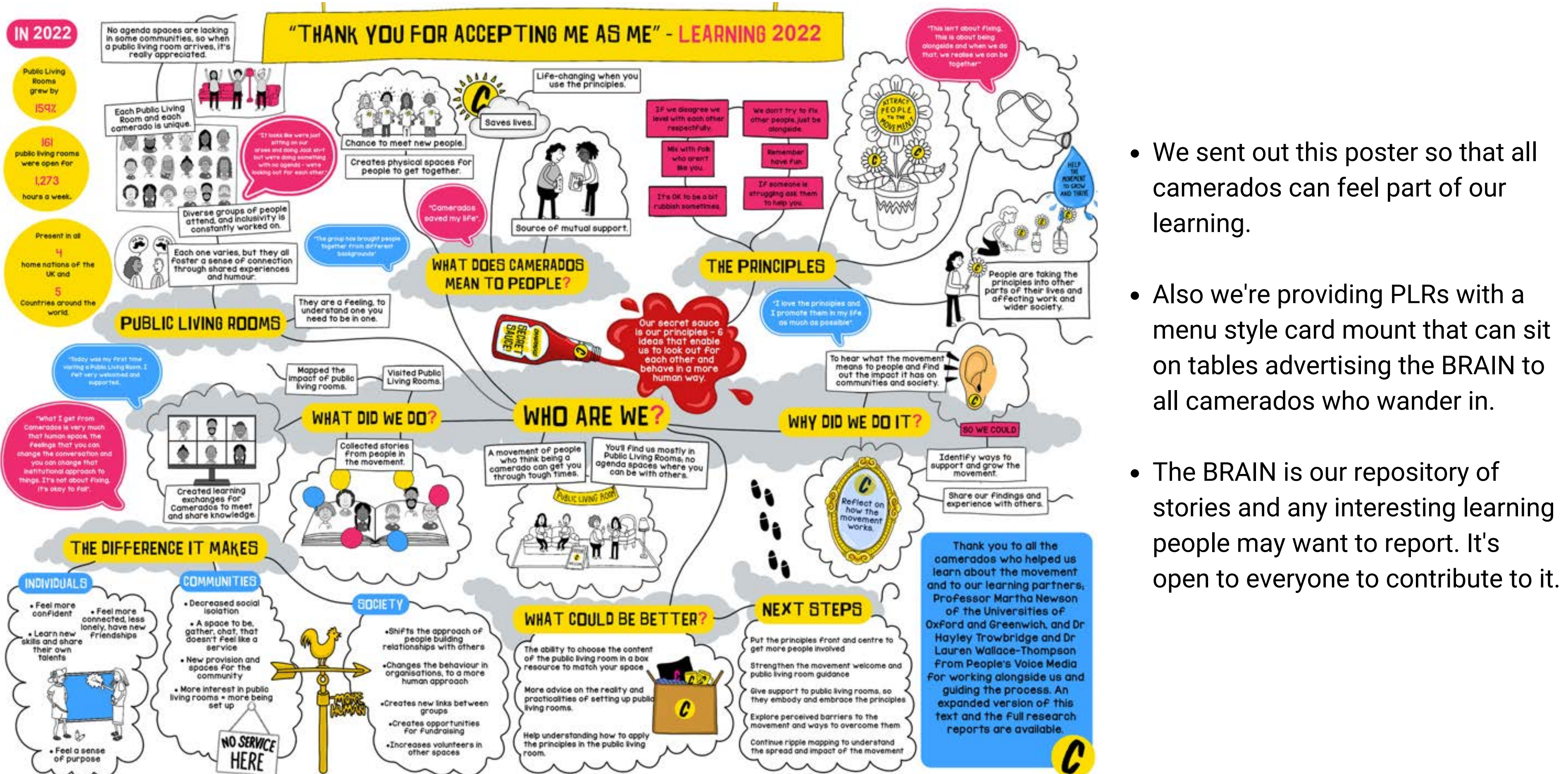
If you'd like to know more please get in touch [cuppa@camerados.org](mailto:cuppa@camerados.org)



# FOLLOW THE RIPPLES AND SEE THE IMPACT THROUGH REAL LIFE STORIES...



# THE LEARNING POSTER



- We sent out this poster so that all camarados can feel part of our learning.
- Also we're providing PLRs with a menu style card mount that can sit on tables advertising the BRAIN to all camarados who wander in.
- The BRAIN is our repository of stories and any interesting learning people may want to report. It's open to everyone to contribute to it.



Please find our Year 3  
Actuals vs Budget figures  
here for money received by  
National Lottery  
Community Fund [here](#)\*

\*If you click on the link and cannot see a spreadsheet please click through to request access.

Despite internal contraction we've seen external expansion. We are very grateful for the continued inspiration and motivation which comes from the people themselves in neighbourhoods who are demonstrating their desire to get together despite the collective trauma of the pandemic and followed swiftly by the impact of the cost of living situation. Thanks to them and their indomitable and hopeful spirit we shall see 200 public living rooms by the end of July 2023.

We've also accepted that we will never know the full impact due to the micro-interactions and conversations which occur everywhere as an effect of people seeing and stopping by public living rooms.

This is why we developed Ripple Mapping which is proving very popular and effective. Pavement public living rooms have also put the issue of connection at the heart of poverty and inequality debates and led to more people to be inspired. Our mission of INSPIRE - RESOURCE - CONNECT remains. Perhaps this year our inspire turned up the dial in the streets, we shifted a little more to resources and we still struggled with connect (something we continue to iterate).

We need to raise our game in both CONNECT and also our own revenue generation. That is a big goal between now and 2025 and we hope to do this mainly via our own approach to training (non prescriptive) and (early ideas) using music events to sell tickets and merchandise.

For the future see the following slide...



## 2023 - PLR IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD



## 2024 - PLR IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD



# OUR 2023 - 2025 STRATEGY

This is very top line strategy from our board however I think we can expect to see innovations post 2025 such as

- Regional lock ups for furniture & other items for community use
- Regional campfires led by PLRs at regional level
- Sector specific resources capitalising on our experiences in
  - housing
  - schools
  - hospitals
  - and more

## 2025 - PLR IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD





# DID WE DO WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD IN OUR LAST REPORT?

This is a list we put in our last report about what we would achieve in the future - the pink is our response one year later.

- **More public living rooms in neighbourhoods so people get through tough times.** YES - Tripled the number
- Engaging with those most struggling with the **cost of living crisis.** YES through pavement Public living rooms, membership of the Cost of Living Alliance and through our story gathering, ripple mapping and YouGov poll
- Even more street activism with **Pavement Public living Rooms** - Yes. Visited a neighbourhood almost every week.
- Increased involvement and **leadership from the movement.** YES and NO. Council disbanded but replaced by Open House
- **Increase number of spokespeople from the movement** lessening the reliance on the founder, Maff, and promoting our diversity. YES and NO. Many more people have led events and speaking sessions than ever before. However Maff remains main voice.
- **Greater quality assurance** through Council insight & gentle guiding by our Profiteroles visiting public living rooms for tea and stories. NO and YES - Profiteroles didn't last and morphed into general associate days. These have happened though and as well as our story gathering on zoom has brought tons of insight.
- **Continued iteration of the resources** that AoC provides both on-line and physically YES we've iterated with the visitor's book, principles on mugs and more
- Figuring out a way to "connect" the movement more via **campfires & events** - YES We created Shindigs with the movement - the funding of local events rather than a national one.
- **Greater use of our principles** in multiple sectors working with people who are struggling NO. **We haven't made sufficient progress on sector specific growth**
- **Greater public awareness & engagement** - YES. the Sonder Comms agency experiment worked well in many ways but also showed us that raising awareness through supporting the communities will work better than a national mouthpiece.
- **Period of stability** for AOC team. NO. Many team members left. However already in 2023 the new team seem pretty stable.
- World peace and a way to wash **socks** without losing them\* **Still working on it!**

# WELL DONE YOU GOT TO THE END!

Please holler if there's anything you want to dig into or talk about - there's a lot here.

And we REALLY do mean it - WE'D LOVE TO HEAR MORE FROM YOU and help your work in any way we can.

**Thanks again for your support and encouragement, you rock!**

Association of Camerados  
JULY 2023



# THANK YOU FOR READING THIS!