

NEIGHBOURLY – SEEDS OF CHANGE – ICRS CASE STUDY

Environment & Social Value Case Study:

Integrating environmental benefit and social value

Green spaces are proven to support people's wellbeing by reducing depression, anxiety and stress. But only 35% in the lowest-earning households in England are currently within a ten-minute walk of a natural green space, compared with 59% of the highest earning households.

Neighbourly, the community investment and engagement platform with a network of over 18,000 small charities and good causes across the UK, launched Seeds of Change ahead of COP26 to help local causes to create green spaces for local communities and reduce their CO2 emissions.

Bringing together support from leading businesses including Southern Co-op, RSA Insurance, Cadent, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, Danone and M&G, Seeds of Change enables businesses to donate volunteer time and / or grants to small charities and local causes across the UK, empowering causes to accelerate positive change in their area.

The mission

Seeds of Change translates the enormity of tackling the climate crisis into meaningful action at a local level – enabling businesses to get targeted support to communities where environmental changes are needed the most.

About Seeds of Change

Seeds of Change is a programme which is delivering micro-grants to local causes for planting and environmental activities, using a seed-fund of around £100,000 from a selection of Neighbourly partners.

In response to almost two thirds of local charities in Neighbourly's network saying they need volunteer support with their greening programmes, partner businesses are also providing their employees with opportunities to give their time and skills to help with environmental projects.

The environmental grants are being administered by the Neighbourly Foundation, launched in 2020 as an independent charity arm to respond to an increase in local need during the pandemic. Since launch, the Foundation has provided more than £3.6 million in micro-grants to over 4,800 local charities and community causes, supporting an estimated 1.6 million people each week.

Successful causes for Seeds of Change are vetted and selected through an application process on the Neighbourly platform. Grants are being awarded for activity delivered from October to Spring 2022 that will have a sustainable and direct impact on carbon reduction, or will protect natural habitats and local biodiversity.

The social impact

As we race towards the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals, it's critical to involve community causes in accelerating responses to the pressing environmental and societal challenges we face. Seeds of Change gives businesses and communities a way to come together in the lead up to COP26 and beyond – translating the enormity of the climate crisis into meaningful action at a local level.

Seeds of Change will also enable national businesses to direct targeted support to communities where environmental changes are needed the most, by engaging and supporting local causes and community groups in these areas.

The environmental benefit

Urban green spaces are proven to reduce Co2 emissions within cities. Through creating additional spaces, and through the delivery of climate and conversation education programmes, more harmful emissions can be removed from the atmosphere and therefore improve air quality and reduce its impact on the planet. The activity will also contribute to habitat and biodiversity protection and conservation.