



# Common Change UK

Guide for Generosity Dinners

*Together there is enough*



### What is a Generosity Dinner?

It's all about **resources** and **relationships**. Through Generosity Dinners, we can reimagine the relationship between ourselves, our resources and the relationships that we cultivate with those in our communities.

Coming together to share a meal and stories of need in the community with the goal of collective raising funds to meet those needs is a perfect way of illustrating the truth that "together there is enough".

A Generosity Dinner can be a deeply meaningful shared experience. They have a potential to become much more than a one-off event and can become the foundation for a lasting community of generous collective givers.

*Together there is enough*



# Generosity Dinners

## How it works...

### EATING



Invite your friends to join you in a meal to which every guest has contributed, be that a dish or a drink, highlighting again the principle of abundance, and that together there is enough!

**NB** if you manage to in host a dinner with 8 or more guests, Common Change UK will donate to your Common Fund £100!

### GIVING



Bring a gift - Everyone gives a gift towards the Common Fund (typically from £5 - £50), that is within their individual means.

**NB** Online donations are easy! Contact: [fiona@commonchange.uk](mailto:fiona@commonchange.uk) to set up your groups individual donation page online. You will be supplied with a QR code that guests can scan with their phones to make their donations

### TALKING



Bring a story - Around the meal, stories will be shared about people who might benefit from a gift made out of the Common Fund.

The dinner Facilitator should help **steer the conversation.**

### VOTE



Allow your guests to vote for the top three stories they feel have the most need.

You can chose to do this on the night with the lead of the Facilitator or give your guests the opportunity to reflect on the stories and email you the next day.



### The Practicalities

- A member of the group should volunteer to host the dinner, ideally in their home. However, another venue can be used if more spacious/appropriate, such as a community hall.
- The optimal number to make a dinner work is 10-15 participants.
- Please note seed-funding is not available for dinners involving less than 8 participants.
- Generosity dinners function well on a 'bring & share' basis, which reduces the catering burden on the hosts, and underlines the economic principle of sharing.
- If lots of people are attending this may mean bringing extra chairs and crockery!
- Ensuring everyone has the date in the diary is important, as is a commitment from all involved not to drop out at the last minute!



### Roles at the Dinner

- **Host/Facilitator**  
Leads through, ensuring smooth-running and full participation.
- **Treasurer**  
Responsible for counting money and votes, and for overseeing distribution.
- **Scribe**  
Makes notes of the stories shared and summarises prior to voting.



### Structure of the Dinner

#### Welcome drinks

Like any dinner event people will arrive in dribs and drabs so there should be time for everyone to arrive and socialise over a drink before things properly get going.

#### Introduction & Inspiration

When everyone has arrived and had chance to get a drink and chatter for a while the Facilitator will invite everyone to sit at the table. She/he will take 10 minutes set the scene including the following elements:

- thanking everyone for coming
- giving a reminder of the purpose of the meal and explaining how it is going to work
- asking for volunteers for the role of Treasurer and Scribe.



### Reflection

As part of setting the scene for the meal, the Facilitator should inspire the group with a sense of what can be achieved through the creation of the Common Fund. Suggest to guests to recall an example of the difference that a timely gift has made to someone in need, and the message it conveys to that person or family, of not being alone in their struggles.

To help everyone get engaged, the Facilitator could take a further 10 minutes to suggest, that everyone around the table answers in turn, a question like: ***“Tell us about a gift that you once received that made a lasting impression on you”***

### Giving

After everyone has had chance to speak the Facilitator should discuss the Common Fund. **It is important to remind people why giving happens.** Gifts are freely given in recognition and celebration of community and connection, not solely as an emotional response to a moving story that may have been shared. Gifts made online are best; contact [fiona@commonchange.uk](mailto:fiona@commonchange.uk) in advance to set up a **unique online Donorbox giving page** for your dinner. You will be supplied with a QR code that you can print out and have on the table for your guests to easily scan with their phones and donate securely online. If there is a need for cash donations, the Treasurer should ensure that guests don't see the amount of one another's gifts – it isn't a competition and nobody should feel pressured. Ensure to give your guests a form of receipt or their donation.



### **Eating**

When the giving is complete give thanks for the food and the company before everyone gets stuck in.

### **Sharing stories**

After the main courses and before the desserts is the best time to discuss the distribution of the Common Fund. The Treasurer will announce how much money has been raised. Then the Facilitator invites guests around the table to share a story of a need that could be met, e.g.

- Pay a neighbour's overdue utility bill.
- Help a newly settled refugee to furnish their home.
- Support the costs of transport for a young person getting to-from college.
- Buy a pack of essential baby items for new parents.
- Replace a broken-down washing machine for a local family.

The Scribe should make brief notes as each need is shared, on a pad or flipchart. Each need should be given a number and a title, to better present a summary up at the end of the process.





### Helpful guidelines for presenting needs include:

- Relationships matter. The principle of 'degrees of separation' is a very helpful one i.e. does the person sharing the need know the person who will be receiving the gift, or are they a friend-of-a-friend, or a friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend? The fewer degrees of separation, the better.
- The need should preferably be for an individual, couple or family, rather than a project.
- If it is a project, then not a large project that has access to other funding.
- Respect the person whose need is being shared by preserving their anonymity.
- Give some backstory and context but don't say more than you need to.
- Be specific about the need and suggest how much money might be required.
- Invite questions from others around the table to ensure they have understood.

### Voting

Once all needs have been shared and the Scribe has given a summary, the voting process can take place. You can give your guests the option to vote in person there and then or via email after reflecting on the needs overnight. If your groups opts to vote there and then, the Facilitator should distribute voting slips (small blank slips of paper). Everyone should write down their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice, then give their slip to the Treasurer. At this point, dessert can be served!



### **The Result**

If your guests have chosen to vote on the night, the Treasurer should tally votes and verify them with the help of the Scribe, and announce the results. A clear consensus generally emerges around 1 or 2 needs. The Facilitator then leads a conversation to agree how much £'s from the common fund will be split between the needs. A Gift Agreement Form should be completed for admin purposes, this can comprise of the names of the needs, the amount given to each need and the signatures of your guests. For an email vote, results should be summarised in a group email with suggested amounts for each need offered. Request that they reply with agreed and this will suffice as a Gift Agreement for records.

### **Gift Distribution**

Finally, you need to get the money into the hands of those who need it. Contact [fiona@commonchange.uk](mailto:fiona@commonchange.uk) who will collect the payment details from you and arrange for bank transfers or cheques to be made. We encourage these methods of gift distribution as it is more secure than making cash gifts. Your Facilitator or Treasurer should therefore handle this step supported by Fiona.

**That's it! If you have any questions or require some inspiration or support [fiona@commonchange.uk](mailto:fiona@commonchange.uk) is just an email away!**