



FEEDING THE CITY ACCELERATE

IMPACT REPORT
2020



IMPACT
HUB King's Cross





Whilst many incubator programmes support early stage social enterprises, the Feeding the City Accelerate programme fills an important gap for sustainable food enterprises that are ready to scale more widely; but lack the guidance, support and networks to achieve this. Impact Hub Kings Cross (IHKX) has an excellent track record of delivering impact and growth for social enterprises within the food sector. With the emergence of Covid-19, IHKX have adapted the Feeding the City Accelerate programme so that food enterprises get the support they need to not only pivot their business models, but to put in place effective growth strategies during a particularly difficult period. We are proud to fund a programme that will deliver significant social impact and enterprise growth within a sector that is in need of new sustainable approaches.”

Joseph Ray

Social Investment and Innovation Advisor
at People's Postcode Lottery



ABOUT IMPACT HUB

Impact Hub is locally rooted, globally connected. We are one of the world's largest networks focused on building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale – home to the innovators, the dreamers and the entrepreneurs who are creating tangible solutions to the world's most pressing issues. We are part of a global network that has:



100+

Impact Hubs across



50+

countries



16,000+

members, with



67%

being founders or co-founders



200+

programmes delivered annually, many of which focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Established over

10,000

socially focused start-ups since its inception

IMPACT HUB: KING'S CROSS

Since 2009, Impact Hub King's Cross has worked to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises so they can accomplish greater impact. We achieve this through our business support programmes, our events and business clinics and our collaborative coworking community. We are a B Corp and a certified social enterprise. Our purpose is to catalyse entrepreneurial ecosystems for a socially inclusive, zero emissions economy. We seek to inspire, connect and enable people to take entrepreneurial action to pioneer a just and sustainable world where business and profit are used in service of people and planet.



549

enterprises have been supported on Impact Hub King's Cross programmes



92%

of programme participants said Impact Hub King's Cross has developed their skills and capabilities



82%

of programme participants felt they had been connected to relevant experts and advisors

Certified



Corporation

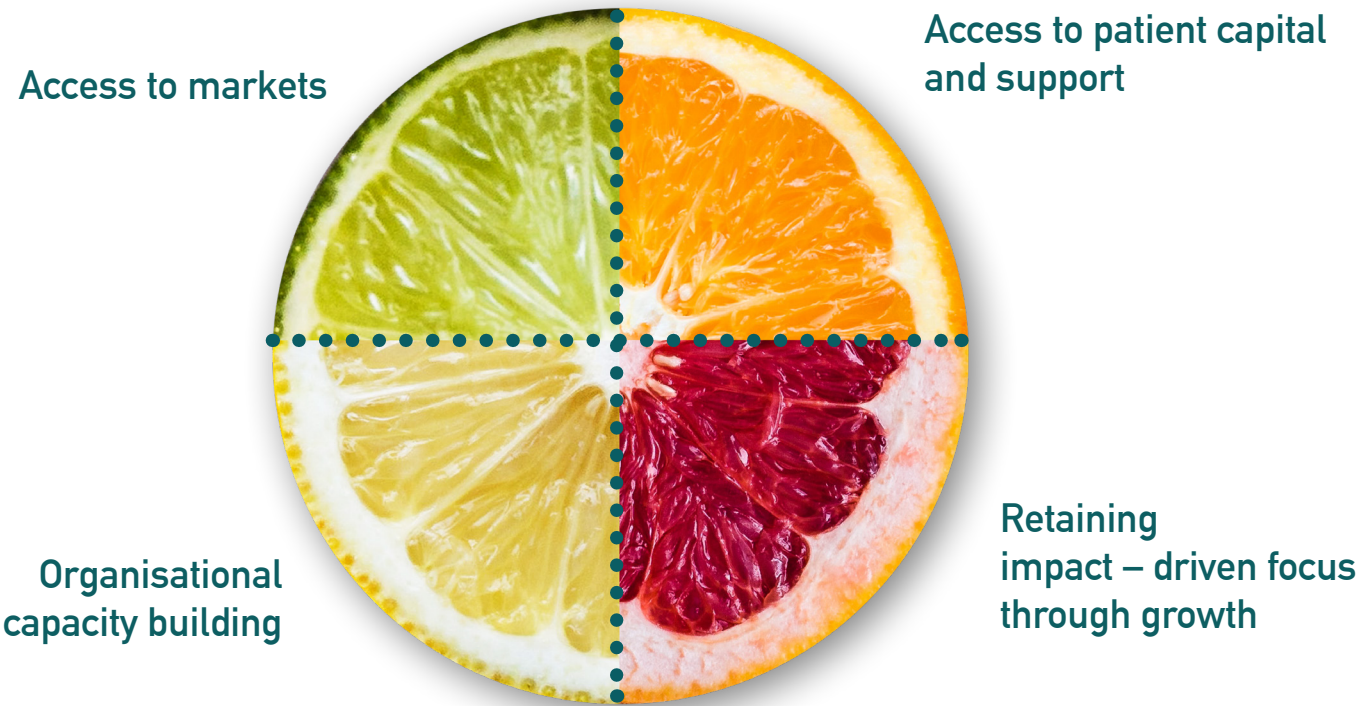


Social Enterprise UK
Certified Member

FEEDING THE CITY: ACCELERATE

Following the success of our Feeding the City: Start Up programme – for entrepreneurs at the start of their journey – we developed the Accelerate programme to help with the next stage of growth. Drawing on insights from scaling food enterprises and expertise from EIT Food, Sustain, Guy’s and St. Thomas’ Charity, Food Chain, Big Society Capital

and large scale buyers, we co-designed the programme to help businesses overcome the key challenges that sustainable food businesses face when they come to scale. This includes: access to markets, access to patient capital and support, organisational capacity building and retaining-impact driven focus through growth.



Feeding the City Accelerate is funded by the People’s Postcode Lottery and Mercedes Benz Vans UK, The Sustainable Restaurant Association, Sustain and ShelfNow.

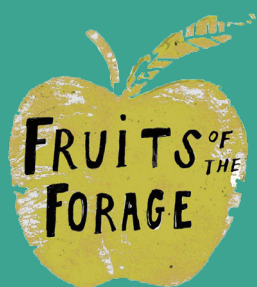


THE BUSINESSES



BETTER NATURE FOODS

Better Nature is the world's first food-tech company focused on tempeh. They have developed delicious and nutritious ready-to-cook tempeh-based meat alternatives which are organic and completely free from artificial or ultra-processed ingredients. By using tempeh, Better Nature Foods believe they can make great-tasting and healthy meat alternatives that can be consumed as a staple, all to fulfil their simple mission: to create foods that are better for people, the planet, and animals. Better Nature Foods partner with the Indonesian Tempe Movement to improve the perception and accessibility of tempeh in Indonesia.



FRUITS OF THE FORAGE

Fruits of the Forage produce sustainable preserves & spirits made with fruit that would otherwise go to waste from abandoned orchards around England and Wales. The company saved over 5 tonnes of fruit from going to waste in 2018, earning 10 Great Taste Awards. The brothers have distributed over 800 fruit trees to schools, charities and farmers; enriching biodiversity, preserving our botanical heritage and providing food for communities.



LEMONAID⁺ ChariTea⁺

LEMONAID & CHARITEA

Squeezed from fresh fruit without squeezing their growers, LemonAID & ChariTEA are soft drinks how they should be. Made from Organic and Fairtrade certified ingredients. As a Social Enterprise they deliberately pay higher prices for the raw ingredients to promote fair and sustainable trading conditions. What's more, for every bottle sold, 5p go to the LemonAID & ChariTEA Foundation which supports people and communities to help themselves, with over £4 million raised to date.



NEMI TEAS

NEMI Teas is a London-based tea company that offers a variety of Fair-trade certified whole leaf tea blends as loose tea and in plastic-free biodegradable tea pyramids. The company is a strong believer in creating positive change through business and provides employment to refugees to help them better integrate in the UK. It provides work experience to refugees which allows the refugees to boost their English skills, regain confidence and work on skills required to enter the UK job market.





SNACKZILLA

Snackzilla was born out of founder Marike's frustration at not being able to find snack products for her older children that appealed to them both brand and taste wise, but were better nutritionally than the junk food they craved. SNACKZILLA's deliciously chewy oat cookies are handmade in the UK, made with 40% less sugar than most other biscuits, contain a source of fibre, with no palm oil and are wrapped in plastic free compostable packaging. The company is proud to support Shooting Star Children's Hospices as a charity partner.



SPARE SNACKS

Spare Snacks was founded as Spare Fruit in 2016 by Ben Whitehead; growing up, Ben's mum refused to waste any fruit or veg. Sometimes they lasted so long they had their own personality and pension plan by the time it came to eat them! Fruit picking in Suffolk in his teens, Ben was shocked to discover just how much fruit and veg goes to waste. After pursuing a career in the media industry, Ben decided to do something about it. He visited his local market and started saving unwanted produce. With an old dehydrator, Ben made snacks and sold them through local cafés, Spare was born.





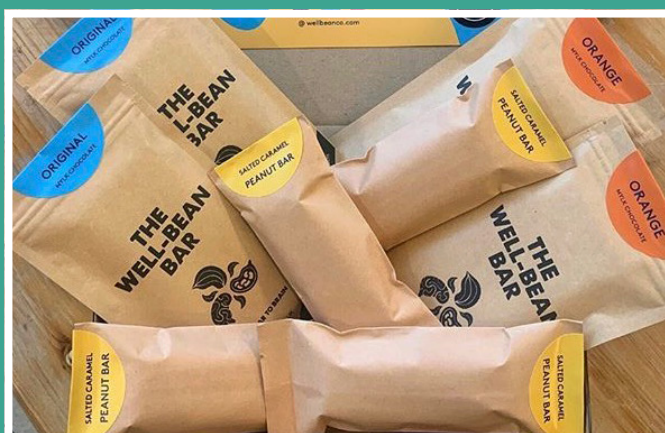
SUTTON COMMUNITY FARM

Sutton Community Farm is a 7 acre farm in South London growing vegetables using agro-ecological and organic methods. The farm delivered around 400 Vegbox orders each week which provides a regular and resilient income to the farm to support their sustainable food growing, volunteering and educational opportunities. They also supply restaurants in central London with salad and other veg. Sutton Community Farm is owned by its 400 members and all profits must be reinvested into their local community.



THE WELL BEAN CO

The Well Bean Co began in 2016 after its founder Charlie switched to a plant based diet and started to miss milk chocolate. Rather than making do with chocolate that couldn't satisfy his cravings, Charlie decided to experiment with bean-to-bar chocolate-making in his garden shed. After spending two years trying to perfect a recipe, he finally created a chocolate that he couldn't resist and couldn't wait to share with the world. The Well Bean Co crafts indulgent chocolates made from plants and donates profits to support mental health projects.



ABOUT THE COHORT



67%
male participants
and

33%
female



63%
of programme participants
were the original founders with
the remaining

37%
divided between CEO, co-founder
and managing director.



38%
indicated experiencing a barrier
to running their own business
including: lack of support net-
work, mental health problems
and carer responsibilities

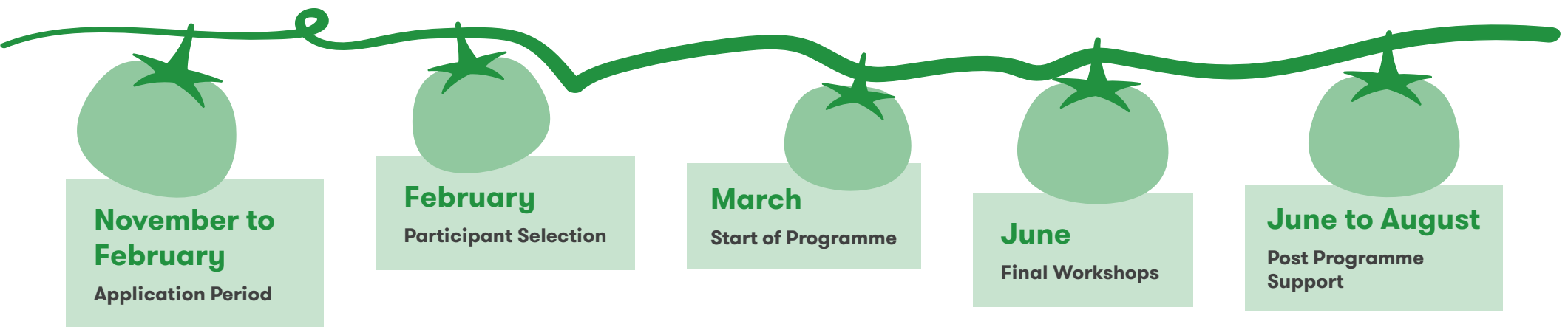


25%
trade internationally,

50%
trade nationally and

25%
trade regionally

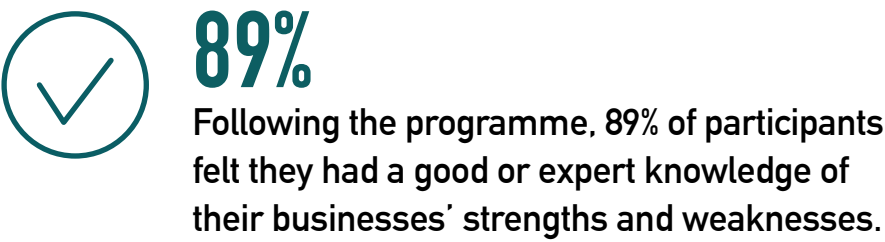
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



SUPPORT COMPONENTS

BUSINESS DIAGNOSTICS

At the start of the programme each business was reviewed in depth, creating an individual development plan to map the business journey through the programme.



INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS

The cohort took part in weekly workshops tailored to their businesses which focused on the key challenges and opportunities related to scaling and gave them the opportunity to discuss challenges specific to their businesses with leading food and business experts. Topics included: *sales, finance commercial offering, marketing, HR and team capacity, governance, buyer's insights, funding and investment and impact measurement.*

BONUS CONTENT

In addition to the weekly workshops, participants were invited to join bonus content sessions, a series of informal talks from food, business and impact experts. These talks further unpacked content discussed in the workshops, built and reinforced entrepreneurial skills and invited participants to reflect on their role in the food system as a sustainable food business. Topics included: *food citizenship, leadership, diversity and inclusion, resilience in entrepreneurs, theory of change, certification and accreditation, ethical sourcing, category management, public procurement, branding and storytelling.*



1:1 SUPPORT

All businesses received 1:1 support from mentors and food and business experts in addition to fortnightly check-ins with their programme coach.

MENTORS

All programme participants have benefitted from 1:1 support from mentors with notable experience in the food industry. From the director of Karma Cola UK to food retail experts with 20 years of experience in all the major retailers, each business received tailored expertise to help them address their challenges and growth aspirations.



96

mentor hours in total



100%

of participants indicated receiving great or exceptional support from their mentors and 78% of participants strongly agreed that the mentors and experts they engaged with were appropriately matched to their needs

FOOD AND BUSINESS EXPERTS

Our food and business experts provided insights into the businesses' processes with a view to helping them secure large contracts and maintain sustainability throughout growth. The businesses had the opportunity to work with a wide variety of experts from branding creatives and impact measurement experts to consultants with expertise in international market entry.



104

expert hours in total

PROGRAMME COACH

Each business received regular check-ins with one of our experienced programme coaches to help track their progress, signpost them to relevant resources and support, and ensure the programme met all of their requirements.



56

total hours



Having a mentor (and such a good one!) was very useful to bring a new outside perspective to the farm. Nancy is very astute and was able to prompt useful questions and actions from our very first session. She brought new ways of thinking, new tools to use and shared useful links and resources. It was also particularly helpful and reassuring for me to have extra support during the onset of Covid-19, as Nancy helped to prioritise, and address key risks”

Alice Brown

Business Farm Manager
Sutton Community Farm



What I like most about the programme is the social and environmental impact selection criteria- a key requirement to new businesses emerging in a post Covid-19 world. The virtual workshop programmes worked well, the course was well led and all three businesses that I worked with are set to thrive!

Simon Lacey
Mentor for NEMI Teas,
Better Nature Foods and Snackzilla

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

The businesses had the opportunity to gain exposure and learn from major contract catering companies, such as CH&Co, Thomas Frank Ltd and large scale retailers, such as Waitrose.

While Impact Hub King's Cross does not take equity from the businesses on our programmes, we draw on our extensive network of finance providers to make tailored introductions to investors that match the businesses' financial needs.

PEER-TO-PEER

Despite the pandemic, the cohort had a number of opportunities to learn from each other and other peers in the food and beverage industry, learning from their failures and successes through panels, 1:1 sessions and group calls.



100%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the programme provided a supportive network of peers

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The cohort had priority access to Food talks, our sustainable food events run in partnership with the Food Ethics Council, where guest speakers stimulate debate and empower people to take action on critical and contentious food issues. Topics included: emergency response to the Covid-19 crisis, building resilience and embedding positive change from the Covid-19 response within the food system and addressing intersecting emergencies (climate, health, democracy) within the food system.

CONTRACT READINESS

Many businesses want to achieve scale by breaking into the multiples but lack crucial knowledge around the procurement process/negotiation and what buyers look for. Over the course of the programme, the majority of participants worked closely with their mentor from commercial and retail backgrounds, to develop their commercial proposition for multiples. This work was complemented by knowledge gained from a workshop delivered by Waitrose where participants walked through the procurement process from the initial email all the way through to signing a deal!

IMPACT HUB COMMUNITY

The participating businesses gained access to our global network of impactful enterprises with a free membership to the Impact Hub Community App- an online platform that connects all Impact Hubs and their members. They additionally received a year-long connect membership, which includes free day passes to Impact Hub King’s Cross co-working space and meeting rooms. Our network, from Impact Hub (IH) Shanghai and IH Prague to IH Inverness, supported the businesses through the provision of high-quality business experts, workshop providers and the sharing of expertise.



BETTER NATURE GROWTH AT A GLANCE:

Better Nature is now the UK’s fastest-growing tempeh brand with listings in over 170 retail locations across the UK, and total retail sales increasing more than 8-fold since the start of the programme. Over the 6 months, they secured distribution agreements with 5 UK wholesalers and 2 international distributors in the Nordics and Switzerland respectively, and launched on Amazon UK and Amazon Germany.



COVID-19 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not be 2020 without an acknowledgement of Covid-19 and the large impact it has had on the Impact Hub and the businesses participating in Feeding the City Accelerate. Covid-19 caught many, if not all, businesses off guard and changed the rules across the board. Supply chains and consumer behaviours changed significantly and many businesses were forced to close their doors. However, crises are also a time where entrepreneurial spirits can shine brightly and some businesses, like our Feeding the City Accelerate cohort, have shown extraordinary resilience and creativity by quickly pivoting their business models to better serve their customers. The cohort joined the programme with aspirations to grow and scale, but instead found themselves in crisis management mode. The businesses had to create new or prioritise different sales channels to reach their customers. A number of the participants saw an increase in demand for their products and had to respond quickly by increasing production. Covid-19 forced our cohort to identify and fortify their achilles heels, taking a closer look at their logistical and operational processes to identify bottlenecks. Not only have the businesses had to adapt to the change in situation, so did the programme. In response to the pandemic, the programme went virtual and delivered all workshops and 1:1 mentor, expert and coaching via videoconferencing softwares. As cohort building typically emerges organically though in-person interactions, and provides many informal learning opportunities, it was important to prioritise this and find ways to replicate this online. As well as providing the space and opportunity for the businesses to share lessons from the pandemic, it allowed the participants to share how they were feeling throughout these tumultuous times, placing emphasis on entrepreneurial resilience, in addition to business resilience.

HELPING OUT WHERE THEY CAN!



Snackzilla distributed free boxes of cookies to key workers for the first month of lockdown and donated 1.5k cookies for the Free Holiday School Meals scheme.

Spare Snacks extended a 30% discount across all their products to NHS workers.



For any SME's in the consumer goods category, it is vital that they set themselves up to facilitate business growth. They must have processes and practices in place which can be scaled. Many businesses, at their early stage do not implement these tools that are so vital. Small start-ups who do not have large budgets need to think and behave creatively in order to increase market share and gain attention. In my experience, this is why business development advice at an early stage is absolutely crucial in order to take customers on the journey with you and gain true loyalty"

Mark Carter

Head of Wholesale at Karma Drinks

PIVOTING IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC: A VEGETABLE BOX STORY

FRUITS OF THE FORAGE

Early in the pandemic Fruits of the Forage noted a dearth of healthy and affordable delivery schemes in their local area and decided to create a vegetable box made up of local and foraged produce. Customers could add pantry products (often no longer available in supermarkets) to the boxes in addition to seasonal specials and Fruit of the Forage's own products. The boxes have consistently sold out, with 30 boxes being sold within the first hour of the first day they were offered.

As a result of this pivot, one of Fruits of the Forage goals for the programme shifted to evaluating the viability and profitability of vegetable box avenue and determining how the new skew fits into their existing preserves business. With help of their lead mentor Chris Holmes, they worked on developing a clear understanding of the size of the opportunity and how to effectively structure the team to deliver on both this new service alongside their existing products.



SUTTON COMMUNITY FARM

Within the first few weeks of lockdown, as people stayed home and supermarket shelves emptied faster than they could be filled, Sutton Community Farm saw a 50% increase in demand for their vegetable boxes. The farm runs on the power of volunteers with only a small pool of formally employed staff. To keep up with demand, Sutton Community Farm had to run a recruitment campaign for new volunteers and design new processes to ensure that the volunteers could work safely under new social distancing rules and understand how to replace staff in case of illness.

With the help of their mentor Nancy Sawan, Sutton Community Farm mapped the different roles in the farm and identified individuals who could move into these roles whenever necessary to develop more flexibility within the team. This helped facilitate knowledge transfer amongst team members and gave both the staff and the volunteers an understanding and appreciation of the responsibilities of each role. Increased demand further encouraged them to escalate the plans of building a new barn on their property. This would allow more volunteers to work in an undercover area with social distancing enforced, an important measure as we move into colder seasons. They received funding from Power to Change to begin the build.



TAILORED SUPPORT

With over 10+ years experience working with entrepreneurs, we know that businesses in the growth stage require tailored support and advice. For this reason, the programme begins with an in-depth diagnostic, which allows us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the business and develop bespoke development plans to ensure they achieve their goals. Well Bean Co's business diagnostic revealed that too much of the Co-Founders' capacity was being spent on production, leaving them little time for business strategy and development. Their programme coach and mentor supported them to analyse their finances and understand that the revenue generated by the increased output of a production assistant, would exceed their cost. "We took on a new team member in lockdown which was nerve racking as it was our first hire in two years! We want Mariana to grow with Well Bean and take on more responsibility if she feels open to this." In order to increase efficiencies within their operations, their lead mentor also supported them to think about different manufacturing options. After exploring the possibility of outsourcing, they decided to upgrade their own machinery to increase their production capacity. The business now has a production set up that can fulfil their growth plans and a team that can focus on new opportunities.

One of NEMI Teas' development goals was to build a diverse Board that could provide crucial advice around the running and direction of the business. Through the programme, Pranav was supported to think of the profiles the company would benefit from, focusing particularly on a diversity of skills, as well as experiences and backgrounds. After attending the workshop on diversity and inclusion, he reached out to a member of the Refugee council, who joined their board to advocate on the side of their beneficiaries. More recently, they welcomed Renee Elliott, Founder of Planet Organic, to provide key insights around retail. Pranav was part of a select few invited to an event run by programme partner, Food Ethics Council, where he was introduced to Frank Bothwell, owner of contract catering company Thomas Franks, and Ben Greensmith, UK Manager of Tony's Chocolonely. "I reached out to both of them in regards to becoming Advisors, and Frank and Ben have since officially joined our Board!" "We're now looking for a Finance expert to complete our Board which was a key goal for us at the start of the program!"



BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Entrepreneurship can be lonely, and it is invaluable for entrepreneurs to have a network of individuals who have been on the same journey and are facing similar challenges. Feeding the City Accelerate incorporated elements of Peer to Peer learning across the programme to help entrepreneurs: broaden their perspectives by learning from a diverse set of individuals and experiences, avoid repeating mistakes of those who have been on a similar journey, gain valuable feedback and insight from a group of engaged individuals, discover helpful tips and resources and build their personal and professional networks. Over the course of the programme, participants had 8 hours of group calls and weekly 1:1 calls, which enabled them to build connections and support each other in an engaged and honest way. Despite lockdown and social distancing measures, the cohort built a strong cohort feel and created opportunities with, and for, one another. Six weeks into lockdown the participants joined forces on instagram to give away a 'good for people and planet' product hamper which resulted in their highest social media engagement to date. The programme has also led to collaborations – Well Bean and Nemi teas are working together to create The Factory, a concept cafe. In the first 1:1 call between the two businesses, Nemi Teas' founder Pranav Chopra mentioned he was looking to set up a cafe that would equip refugees with hospitality skills and provide a pathway to employment. This could not have fallen on better ears, as the Well Bean Co's chocolate factory had an existing empty premise that could be utilised as a cafe and provide additional income to the Well Bean Co. Not long thereafter, LemonAID & ChariTEA joined the team by offering to provide the refrigeration equipment and upcycled furniture. The cafe will open early October and will see 2 refugees working in the cafe on a full-time basis. Discussions are also underway to create chocolate flavours using Nemi teas.



It's been great working with the cohort, be it online, but we've definitely bonded and learnt off each other. The 1-1 calls worked wonders and definitely gave us a chance to connect with each other on a personal level!"

Pranav Chopra
Founder Nemi Teas



A healthy mind and body enables entrepreneurs to perform at their best for their business. Mental health issues are common, particularly for high achievers such as entrepreneurs and startup teams, and with stress and burnout at an all-time high in the workplace, it's more important now than ever before to include quality mental health training in your business accelerator programmes. To ensure entrepreneurs and their teams receive holistic support with their development, it is essential to offer training opportunities that nurture their mental, physical and emotional health, as well as the various practical skill sets involved in growing a business – I've no doubt this would make your programmes stand out in a truly meaningful way."

Tania Diggory
This is Calmer Founder

ENTREPRENEURIAL WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

Entrepreneurship can be a tough journey and social entrepreneurs, who experience all the stressors that 'normal' entrepreneurs do, often experience additional stress and worry because of the beneficiaries who rely on them. Failure is common in entrepreneurship and can be a source of learning if one is resilient. It is therefore imperative that entrepreneurs actively build resilience and take care of their wellbeing. Feeding the City Accelerate offers a wealth of workshops, events and 1:1 support focused on building resilience, responding to failure, pivoting and agility and maintaining a sense of wellbeing.

STATS



At the end of the programme,

100%

of participants indicated they knew how to support their team and beneficiaries through challenging times, compared to 56% before the programme.



78%

felt they had strategies in place to help them when they were faced with challenges or felt mentally unwell.



IMPACT

Creating a positive social or environmental impact is at the heart of what our cohort does. As a social enterprise programme, there is a strong emphasis on identifying, understanding and capturing the full value of their activities. Impact measurement is the compass that guides social enterprises and an indicator of whether businesses are meeting their mission and values and if they are doing this effectively.

Through advice and support two of the businesses were encouraged to formalise their impact.

Marieke, Founder of Snackzilla, specifically selected an impact driven support programme, to ensure she was creating long-lasting, meaningful difference through her business. Over the course of the 6 months, she explored

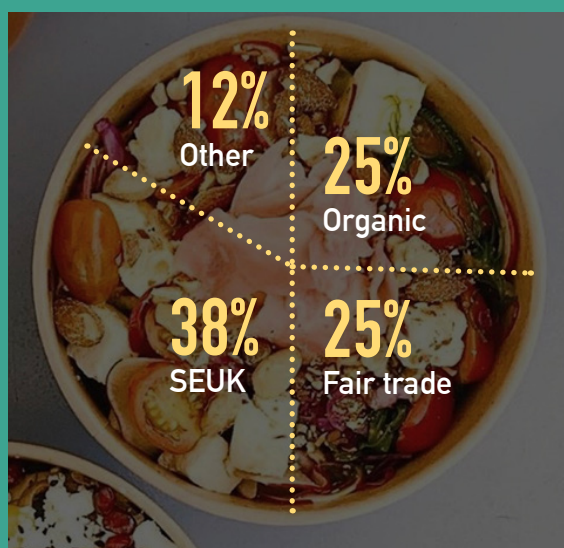
different legal structures that could embed her charitable aims within the company. After discussing the options with our expert advisors, she is now in the process of setting up a Foundation, directly funded by the company, that will carry out the activities to support children in need.

At the start of the programme the Well Bean Co. was donating a portion of their profits to supporting mental health projects. After being inspired by the impact models they were presented throughout the programme, the team was emboldened to change their impact commitment. 5p from every bar sold now goes toward supporting their mental health activities, allowing their customers to see the direct impact from each purchase they make and feel good about consuming chocolate!



Better Nature has partnered with rePurpose global to support Indonesian social enterprise Waste4Change to remove as much plastic from nature as is used in their packaging and shipping. Better Nature is now the first Plastic Neutral meat-alternative company in the world.

The businesses hold a range of certifications/accreditations with the three most common being:



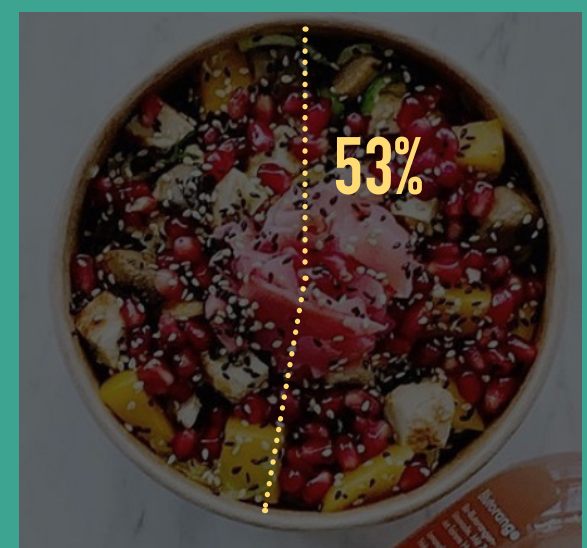
Others included: Rainforest – Alliance certification, Vegan society, COOPS UK and plastic-free.

The businesses are tackling a wide range of food issues, often multiple at the same time.



including Packaging (ie. single use plastic, materials that cannot be recycled), Production/Processing, Consumption (ie. unhealthy diets), Access (ie. lack of sustainable/affordable healthy food options available in certain areas of a city); Distribution (ie. food travelling long distances before reaching consumer).

Our participants are working towards



of the businesses on this cohort are working towards the Sustainable Development Goals including Good Health and Wellbeing, Zero Hunger, decent work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequality and Responsible Consumption and Production.

