

A housing advice surgery and a church-based cleaning company employing people who have been homeless have been awarded £30,000 each to expand their work in a competition backed by the Church of England.

Three men are discussing a housing project ahead of the Cinnamon Network competition

Hope4All, based in south east London, and Radiant Cleaners, a social enterprise from Nottingham were among five finalists in a competition aimed at helping identify innovative housing projects that could be adopted by churches across the country.

This year's Project Lab competition was run by the Cinnamon Network charity in partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community, and with funding from the Andrews Charitable Trust and Mercers' Charitable Foundation

All the finalists in the competition - including entries from Brighton, Cambridge and Glasgow - will take part in an 'MBA for small charities' the Cinnamon Project Incubator - a two-year mentoring, coaching and development programme to help them expand their work across the country.

Two people are chatting at one of the housing projects nominated

Hope4All has helped more than 500 people since it was set up five years ago in Abbey Wood, south east London. Many of its clients have faced eviction and the housing surgery has advised them on their rights and benefits.

Radiant Cleaners, a social enterprise, based in Grace Church, Nottingham, was founded three years ago and provides jobs paying the Real Living Wage to people who have faced numerous barriers to employment including homelessness.

Adeola Ogunade, from Hope4All, said they would use their prize money to help provide training to churches across the country on housing advice.

"The pandemic has highlighted how important it is for people to know their housing rights. We believe that churches should continue to be part of the solution, the application of knowledge is power," she said.

Matt Parfitt, of Radiant Cleaners, said the grant would help to explore how to replicate their work and increase the number of homeless people they employ.

He said: "This is one way of showing that church is not just a Sunday thing, it is about showing the practical love of Jesus for people every day of the week. There are lots of amazing churches out there who are already involved in social justice and they know that unemployment and homelessness are interconnected."

London landscape

In a message delivered to the competition, the Archbishop of Canterbury said lockdown had brought people face to face with the inequalities of our society.

"Too many people haven't had the foundation of a safe home or the support of a community through these tough times. Many have worried about eviction when the lockdown finished or whether they can pay the rent or their mortgage if their jobs disappear. The current pandemic has brought into sharp focus the crisis in housing that our nation has long been battling with," he said.

He added that the Commission had been "inspired" by the action of churches to help tackle the housing crisis in their local community.

Amanda Bindon, Co-Chief Executive of Cinnamon UK said: "The standard of applicants for 2020 Cinnamon Project Lab was incredibly high and all the finalists should be proud of what they have achieved so far. Project Lab is all about finding the most effective grass roots initiatives and, through the Cinnamon Project Incubator, giving them the opportunity to develop the foundations they need to replicate their work for the benefit of communities across the country."

Note for Editors:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community was set up last year in response to the housing crisis and is due to report in February next year.
- Commission members, made up of academics, housing experts and theologians are examining how the Church of England can build on its own work in housing and contribute to the national debate on policy. [More information can be found](#) on the Church of England's website.
- The [Cinnamon Network](#) is a charity working with churches to provide social action projects. The video of the competition, which was held online, [can be found on their website](#).
- Andrews Charitable Trust supports innovations tackling the links between housing and poverty. A Christian charity that owns a property services company, [Andrews Property Group](#), from whom they own most of their income, they are passionate about encouraging churches, businesses and the wider community to work together with social purpose.

2020 Project Lab Winners:

- **Hope4All Housing Surgery, South East London** "working to prevent homelessness by boosting people's understanding and confidence on issues such as tenancy disputes, and signposting individuals to relevant support. Their vision is to train churches and volunteers with knowledge and skills to help resolve housing issues so that people are not left powerless in the face of the current housing crisis.
- **Radiant Cleaners, Nottingham** "The connection between unemployment and homelessness is well known, and Radiant Cleaners address both problems through jobs that give hope, purpose, and dignity. Providing jobs and support for people who have faced multiple barriers to work, including homelessness, employees are recruited on the basis of their need and demonstrated desire and willingness to get back into employment.

Runners Up:

- **Cambridge PACE, Cambridge** – designing and building micro-homes to serve the homeless of the city and providing on-the-job skills, training and experience to enable people find a future as well as a home. The modular housing can be built on unused land and the simplistic design and construction methods make this project a great way to teach construction skills too.
- **Safehaven Women, Brighton** - Helping women get into positive housing situations by empowering and supporting each woman to overcome her barriers. Providing a safe space and emotional and spiritual support SafeHaven Women engages with women in need through networking with a range of partners across the city including GPs, midwives, women’s hostels, housing, mental health and addiction support groups.
- **Street Connect, Glasgow** – Using a holistic approach to support people who battle multiple disadvantages including those who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness to help people achieve recovery from addiction and tackling associated issues. Street Connect works through drop-in cafes and interventions on the streets to connect with people who would not otherwise come to them.

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