

MAYOR OF LONDON

From ‘what will the Mayor do about it?’ to ‘what can we do about it together?’

A qualitative evaluation of the Mayor of London’s
Citizen-Led Engagement Programme



August 2018

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Introduction

London is home to a vast array of dynamic and ever changing communities. Its diversity is one of its greatest assets. If properly harnessed, this diversity of insight and experience has the potential to improve the quality of policy making in London, and help to set priorities that reflect the lived experience of Londoners across the capital. Addressing inequalities in voice and power in the capital is one of the Mayor's priorities, as is reaching out to London's huge variety of communities, including those newly arrived in the city. Staying connected to Londoners will ensure that they can fully participate in every aspect of life in the capital, especially civic and political life.

Between September 2017 and May 2018 the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Community Engagement Team (CE Team) launched and managed a pilot peer research project designed to enhance engagement with communities whose voice and influence over public policy had previously been under-represented.

In particular six target communities were identified: young black men; older members of the BAME community (65+); homeless people & rough sleepers; Gypsy Roma & travelling groups; the Somali community; and Eastern European communities (especially Romanian and Bulgarian).

The project was delivered between September 2017 and May 2018 in close partnership with six very diverse community organisations from across London. You can read more about each of these organisations and the communities they work with on page 38.

Each organisation received grants of up to £10,000 to carry out their own community engagement and peer research projects, recruiting community based researchers to explore issues around social integration. The project resulted in 84 trained peer researchers, who together carried out 833 individual interviews.

Each organisation was given significant freedom to design their own engagement activity, recruitment process (for both peer researchers and interviewees), interview questions, interview formats and in how they collated and shared their conclusions. This included a showcase event at City Hall on 4 May 2018.

The Greater London Authority provided training in peer research and qualitative data analysis and specific support to help refine interview questions. Project leads from each of the community organisations were also in regular contact with the CE Team to provide updates and seek specific advice or guidance.

As well as direct support to selected partner community organisations, the CE Team also delivered three capacity building workshops to fifteen community organisations from the six target groups before applications were received. These workshops focused on improving the skills of community leaders in preparation for their project applications and included raising awareness of the Mayor of London's vision for social integration, social mobility and community engagement, as well as practical skills training on how to bid for public funds.

The pilot project had three core aims:

1. To strengthen connections and engagement with communities whose voice and influence on public policy is under-represented
2. To identify and develop community leaders in those communities
3. To generate insights that others within the Greater London Authority can learn from and act on.

It was intended that in focusing on these aims the pilot project could make a significant contribution to the Mayor of London's agenda for social integration as well as wider policy and practice across the GLA. Outside of the GLA the project also intended to help lay foundations for ongoing civic engagement in all aspects of public policy and debate across London.



Photo from GLA. From Left to right: Nadiya Zahman, Age UK, Farah Mahammoud, You Press, Julia Farrington, Kayd Somali Arts, Boyko Boev, London Bulgarian Association, Kayd Somali Arts, Graham Weston, High Trees, Grace English, High Trees, Ayan Mahamoud, MBE, Founder of Kayd Somali Arts, Hanna Ali, Kayd Somali Arts, Anthony Graham, Working with Men, Matthew Ryder, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement.



Community organisations supported



Peer researchers recruited



Interviews conducted with underrepresented communities

“London is home to a huge range of communities that are ever changing. Its diversity is one of its greatest assets. This diversity of insight and experience has the potential to improve the quality of policy making in London”



1: Strengthen connections to and engagement with communities whose voice is under-represented across the GLA

2: Identify and develop community leaders in those communities



3: Generate insights that others in the GLA and beyond can learn and act from



Contributes to the Mayor’s agenda for social integration as well as wider policy and practice across the Greater London Authority



Lays the foundation for ongoing civic engagement across under-represented communities in London

Scope of this evaluation

This evaluation was led by Bob Thust of the Social Change Agency and seeks to understand how well this pilot project met its three core aims, as well as provide recommendations for its future development. Specifically, these recommendations will feed into a second stage of the pilot project to be launched in late 2018.

The evaluation was qualitative in nature, based on a review of submissions from partner community organisations, one to one interviews and workshops. It does not include academic references, nor an analysis or summary of the peer research findings themselves, though we have sought to identify how well the findings have been collated and shared so far and provide some recommendations on next steps.

In keeping with the spirit of the pilot project, the process of evaluation has been highly collaborative:

- Review of all key project information, including presentations, videos and photos collated and shared across all six partner community organisations;
- Interviews with the project leads from each of the partner community organisations;

- Interviews with three of the pilot project leaders from within the Community Engagement Team at the GLA;
- A workshop to test and refine emerging findings with four of the project leads, two members of the Community Engagement Team and 8 trained peer researchers;
- A workshop to share learnings and explore potential next steps with 6 staff from across the Community Engagement, Social Integration and Culture Teams at the Greater London Authority; and
- Additional opportunities for input and feedback on the draft report from all those that had participated in any of these interviews or workshops.

Despite this highly collaborative approach, we have been given full editorial control of the final report. We hope that as a result this evaluation identifies the key areas of strength and doesn't hold back on the areas for development, yet also provides an insightful, practical and realistic set of recommendations to take this work forward.

Review final submission and presentations



Interview GLA staff responsible for delivery



Interview Project Leads from local communities



Workshop with GLA staff, project leads and selected peer researchers



Deep dive with GLA staff



Interim report shared and refined with all participants in the process



Final report

“We hope this evaluation provides an insightful, practical and realistic set of recommendations to take this work forward”
Bob Thust, Evaluation Lead

Summary of key findings and recommendations

This report is divided between each of the three core aims of the project. In each section we go into some detail on strengths and areas for development. The most significant of these are summarised in this section. We also draw out here the most significant recommendations from those we have made throughout the rest of the report:

Initiating and successfully delivering a new project in the wider context of the GLA was never going to be easy, but what struck us most during the evaluation is how enthused and engaged in the project those we spoke to were – from the Community Engagement Team, to other GLA staff, to partner community organisations and to peer researchers. This is testament to the strong foundation that the pilot project has created, making progress against each of its three core aims over a relatively short time. There is potential for the project to make more progress against these aims, and to contribute to the Mayor’s priority to address inequalities in voice and power in the capital.

As encouraging and exciting as this is, this small-scale pilot is just a beginning. Because the levels of enthusiasm and engagement were so high we were not short of feedback, ideas and suggestions. It is clear that what happens next is critical to realising the long-term potential of this project, as well as creating a genuine sense of equal partnership built on mutual trust. This will require long-term engagement. For communities who feel like their voices are not heard it can be natural for them to be suspicious of such attempts to gather their views, and what often follows is the question “So, what’s the Mayor going to do about it?”. We have focussed this evaluation not just on identifying strengths and areas for development, but on a series of what we feel are realistic and practical recommendations that can help strengthen the project for the future, maintain a strong connection with these communities and as a result help shift this question to “So, what can we do about this together?”.

“Being a part of this project has been brilliant - a really positive experience for all of us”
Project Lead

Strengthen connections, and engagement with communities whose voice and influence on public policy is under represented



Key Strengths

Placing communities in the lead, engaging with them on their own terms and playing a highly supportive and enabling role

Flexible project management, responsive to emerging findings and challenges

Recognition of the importance of the ‘little things’ in building trusted relationships, such as providing venues, attending community events and making introductions or connections



Key areas for development

Not yet clear what happens next with the relationships established, nor what is now done with the research findings

Need to review internal GLA due diligence, reporting and oversight processes and, where possible, streamline them to allow for flexibility on small grant projects like these.

Manage expectations of what the GLA is able to do to directly support communities and in response to research findings carefully and with real honesty from the outset



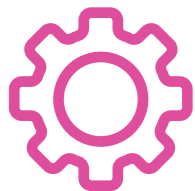
Identify and develop community leaders in those communities

Key Strengths

Building an engaged network of skilled peer researchers

Helping partner community organisations build their capacity through training and ongoing support

Recognising the value of partner community organisations and the peer researchers e.g. by paying the London Living Wage



Key areas for development

Additional training needed in community leadership and community organising primarily for peer researchers

Opportunity to nurture and grow a cross-London network of peer researchers

Opportunity to use the GLA's convening power to bring together other organisations working to develop community leaders, which will enable co-ordinated activity and deepen networks



Generate insights that others within the Greater London Authority can learn from and act on

Key Strengths

Demonstrating genuine joint working in designing and developing research questions

Providing communities with the platform to share their voice and the freedom to do so in their own, creative and authentic ways

Asking peer researchers to provide insight and challenge in other areas of policy across the GLA outside of the specific aims of this project



Key areas for development

Need to analyse and summarise findings across all projects and share those findings more widely through live events and online, both externally and internally within the GLA

Need to develop capacity to analyse findings and share them through storytelling alongside quantitative and qualitative data analysis, whilst ensuring the authentic voices of communities are not lost. This to ensure that those voices are more widely understood and acted upon.

Opportunity to engage and support other GLA teams more proactively, as well as partner with external organisations that might bring in additional expertise or resources to the project

Key recommendations

This analysis of key strengths and areas for development has highlighted the following key recommendations from those made across the report:

- **To explore opportunities for longer-term engagement** with existing partner community organisations first before looking to expand the breadth of this work. This will require that the budgets for future stages are not spread too thinly, over too many projects. It would be better to allow sufficient resource to continue to build on this foundation by starting to address some of the areas of development identified. We hope our recommendations provide a practical set of actions that could help to achieve this.
- **To maintain flexibility** in how projects are funded, supported and managed. This is to include attempts to streamline some of the internal processes that restrict this flexibility and seem overly onerous for grants of this size.
- **Not to underestimate the power of the ‘little things’** in developing close connections to communities, like providing venue space or event platforms for communities to share their stories, attending community events or helping make introductions and connections.
- **To ensure relationships with communities continue to develop into more equal partnerships**, with regular dialogue and debate, a real honesty about what is and isn’t possible and ultimately, more collaborative work on shared challenges.
- **To pay close attention to how and when findings are collated and shared**, ensuring that wide audiences are able to engage with, understand and use those findings effectively. This will require a combination of story-telling, qualitative and quantitative data analysis presented in a variety of creative ways that respect the authentic voice of those communities. It will also require a much wider use of different communication platforms to share those findings, from events, to meetings, to websites, to social media.
- **To provide additional training in community leadership** and help convene conversations with other organisations working to similar goals. This will help to build the capacity of communities to engage in public policy debate themselves.
- **To seek to partner** with one or two other organisations with similar aims across London that may be able to lend their experience or even attract additional resources.
- **To engage actively with other teams across the GLA** using this evaluation as a starting point to discuss how the CE Team might best be able to support them - especially those teams already involved in some capacity in this project, or those already taking similar approaches to some aspects of their work.



Photo from Bulgarians in London. Credit: Teodor Totev

1: Strengthen connections and engagement with communities



A. Engaging on the community's terms

Application process

Holding workshops in advance of inviting applications was well received, partly because many were held outside of City Hall (which can be an intimidating place to come for some community groups, particularly those which have little experience of corporate offices). This helped to set the right tone and environment for an open, two-way conversation. It also helped to build the capacity of groups to make an effective application. In the end this resulted in a creative set of more than 47 applications from most of the CE Team's target communities, including a number of more informal community organisations that might otherwise have been overlooked.

Although the final six projects selected covered most of the CE Team's target communities, no projects focussed on engagement with homeless people & rough sleepers, or from Gypsy Roma & travelling groups. No applications were received from projects representing or working with homeless people & rough sleepers. This was partly because it was decided that other parts of the GLA held those relationships more strongly so involving them in this project could cut across those established connections. We revisit this as part of section 3 on page 28 when discussing the ways in which the CE Team can work with others across the GLA on this project in future. For Gypsy Roma & travelling groups just two applications were received. It would

be useful to build direct connections to organisations or networks that could have the potential to apply well in advance of the second stage of this project.

It was outside of the scope of this evaluation to speak with any organisations that applied but were turned down. However, this is important to do before the second stage of the project in order to get deeper and more challenging feedback on the application process. Responding to that feedback can help ensure the advance workshops maximise the diversity of applications and that the application process itself doesn't inadvertently undermine engagement with groups who are within the GLA's target communities but who were unsuccessful with their bid.

“We found the application process straightforward and the meetings in advance really helpful” Project lead

Flexibility in project management

Although partner community organisations were set clear objectives they were given a lot of flexibility to decide how they'd meet those objectives. This was widely appreciated and clearly helped partner organisations to engage with peer researchers and their wider community. For example, Kayd focussed their research questions on the significant role of poetry in Somali culture; Working with Men were able to present their final research findings through videos made by young black men on their phones. Partner community organisations were able to draw out and share themes

related to social integration on terms that those in their community understood and could directly relate to.

Partner community organisations felt well supported with their ideas throughout, rather than feeling they were being led, with the CE Team providing appropriate challenge, guidance and support where needed. For many this was not an experience they were used to from funders, creating a sense of partnership they had rarely experienced in their previous engagement with any statutory bodies. If this can be maintained in future stages we have no doubt this will go a long way to building trust within those communities over the long-term. We return to the theme of partnership again below.

Supporting this flexibility was not easy for the CE Team who wanted to remain responsive to emerging needs whilst also managing the internal due diligence, oversight and reporting processes in a way that did not create an unnecessary burden on the partner community organisations. Despite challenges, for example with some delayed payments, it's clear that this was managed well. In our experience of small projects with any community, and especially those that might have reason to feel their voices have been left unheard, this 'buffer' role is critical to ongoing engagement but can prove difficult to maintain as projects expand from initial pilot stages and the number of staff involved grow. Given the relatively small size of each grant, we would recommend a careful review of these internal processes within

the GLA to try and ensure that they are appropriate. We appreciate that this may not be easy as it could have implications for processes across the GLA and not just for this project. Nevertheless we still feel it's important to for the CE Team to discuss this with colleagues within the the GLA, potentially using this project as a testbed for a more streamlined approach.

“Making sure the payments were made on time was a real challenge – for the size of grants our internal processes are often too onerous” GLA staff member

“All the partner organisations took a little time to get used to the freedom the project gave them. Once they did the way they responded exceeded all our expectations” GLA staff member

B. Going beyond research

Outside of the research itself, there was also a significant element of wider community engagement activity. For example, London Bulgarian Association organised walks across London for members of their community and other Londoners and arranged a rose planting event in a public space in the City of Westminster. Whilst the extent of such activity varied across projects, all projects had some element of specific community engagement and with good reason: without it the project would have felt completely different, much more of a process than an active and creative community-led project. In essence,

“I'm thrilled to have worked on this project and develop deeper connections with these six groups and I'm really keen to share this with colleagues”
GLA staff member

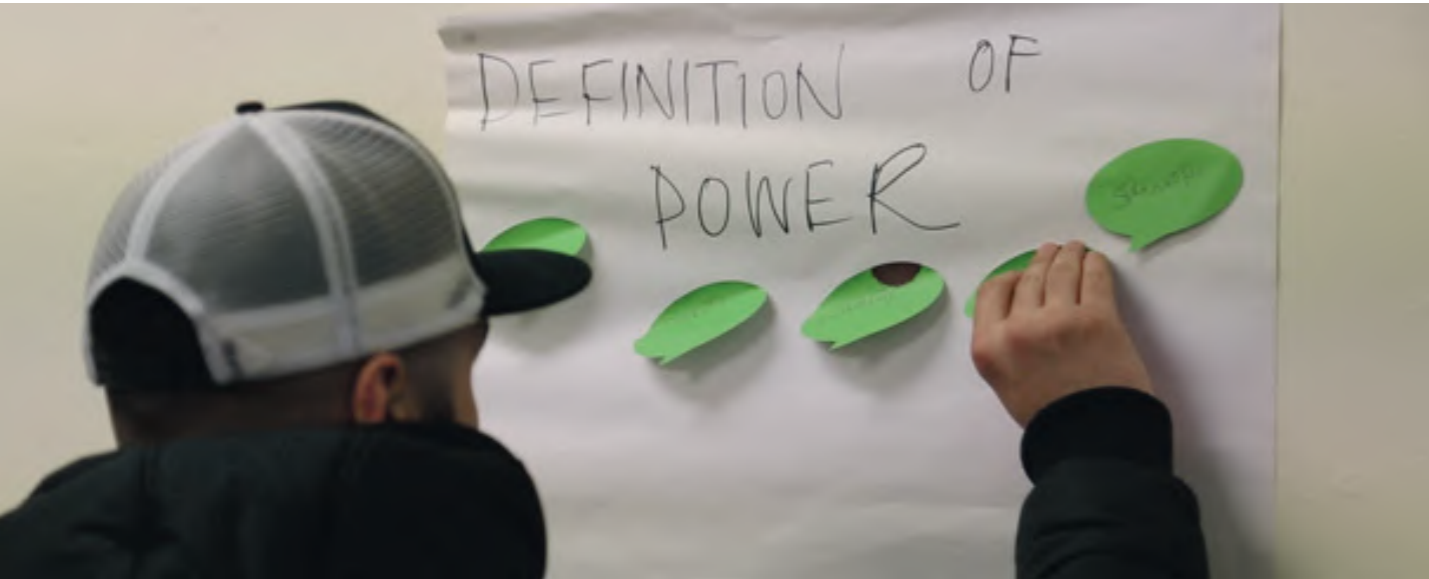


Photo from High Trees. Reflecting on the concept of power during the Intro to Community Organising training

this work helped to bring communities together, find their voice and share their stories on their terms. It was critical in helping lay the foundations for deeper connection and engagement, and clearly had a significant impact on the success of the research work itself.

“If the whole process hadn’t been as creative I think it would have been easy for our researchers to have gone through the motions just doing what they needed to get done” Project Lead

However, over time the project gradually became more focussed on the research findings. Whilst this was necessary to ensure the final findings could be shared, it did leave some feeling that the community engagement activity was less important or appreciated. In some cases partner community organisations felt that they had overcommitted on this activity given the resources available. We believe that encouraging and acknowledging the wider community engagement work will be important to ensuring this aspect of the project is not lost in future stages. We also believe that it will be important

to provide guidance to organisations to help them to balance time and resources between this work and the core research task to ensure that they are not trying to do too much given the limited resources available.

“We put a lot of time into the community engagement and we’re not sure if all of this work was fully understood or appreciated by the GLA” Project Lead

C. It’s the little things

A consistent message from all partner community organisations was the importance of the ‘little things’ that help build trust and engagement over the course of the project, for example:

- **Providing venue space and platforms for local communities:** Kayd, for example, were given access to stage a poetry performance in a chamber at City Hall in addition to the presentation event, and You Press were invited to speak at GLA events celebrating the Windrush

generation. Both commented on how valuable these opportunities were for successful engagement. Even holding one-off meetings within City Hall, such as the workshops that took place as part of this evaluation, were considered an important indication of an ongoing relationship and helped build an emotional engagement with the CE Team and the GLA.

- **Supporting community events:** It should not be underestimated how significant it is to a sense of engagement that members of the GLA attend and speak at events put on by the partner community organisations, particularly at senior levels such as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor. This was mentioned by nearly all partner community organisations, both as a significant positive where this has been possible, and as a significant negative where it had been not possible.
- **Making connections:** Helping partner community organisations make connections to other statutory bodies and decision-makers, especially across other GLA teams and within Local Authorities, would be highly valued by most partner community organisations. In practice those needing this support felt that they were largely left to navigate these connections themselves, which for many was a difficult and time consuming process.

“Being able to perform at City Hall gave us all an overwhelming sense of ‘wow’ we have made it here, we matter at last” Project lead

Although we have referred to these as the ‘little things’ we are aware that meeting such expectations is not easy to achieve for the CE Team or the GLA, not least because of their limited powers to make such connections, the limited

time of senior staff including the Mayor himself, and the limited venue space available. That the importance of these areas was recognised and followed through on at all was highly valued. In many cases partner community organisations had very high expectations of what a relationship with the GLA would enable them to do, beyond what is immediately possible. Because these ‘little things’ make such a difference to engagement we believe it is critical to give them continued focus in future. To balance this, it would be helpful to be clearer with partner community organisations from the start about the limitations to support of this kind, explaining the exact role and powers of the CE Team, the GLA and their relationships with other statutory bodies, particularly Local Authorities. Providing additional training in how to navigate such relationships and connect with the right decision-makers would also be a helpful way to add value. Again, we return to the theme of developing community leaders in Section 2, page 25.

“We are still hopeful of getting the Mayor to attend our next event: having him be there would make such a difference to this community” Project Lead

D. Creating a partnership of equals over time

One of the most striking features of this pilot project has been the extent to which the community groups felt that they were commanding this work, with the Community Engagement Team playing an enabling rather than a controlling role. For most of the partner community organisations this was an unusual experience. At first they did not trust that they would genuinely feel that they were leading this work. This change in perception of the CE Team should be highly commended.



Photo from You Press. Credit: aimvphotography.com

“It’s fantastic the GLA came up with this project and were so supportive in helping us make things happen. It’s been an incredible journey ” Project Lead

However, maintaining this over time will be hard. It is no surprise, given the reasons they were selected, that a consistent theme across all projects was that these communities have felt undervalued and unheard for many years. It will take many years to reverse this feeling. As well as playing an enabling role, achieving this will require the creation of a genuine partnership of equals in which the GLA can work with partner community organisations to jointly produce new avenues of research and engagement over the long-term. It would be easy to fall into the usual pattern of communities feeling frustrated that action has not been taken to address the issues that they have identified. Indeed, a number of participants asked the question ‘what is the Mayor is going to do about what we have found?’.

If this dynamic continues it has the potential to do the opposite of what

the project aims to achieve: leave these communities feeling even more ignored than before the project started. We believe it is vital to the future of this work to change that dynamic to ‘how can we do something together about what we have found?’. Our view, based on experience of similar work, is that this will require:

- **Real honesty between all partners:** This might include, for example, openness on all sides about the pressures that they are under, the resources they have or the limitations of their influence to respond to the issues raised by the research work. For example, it was noted by members of the CE Team that this project was not completed in time to feed into the Mayor’s Social Integration Strategy which might have presented a unique opportunity to demonstrate how this work had contributed directly to public policy. It was also acknowledged that even had the project been finished earlier, there were many other inputs to this strategy which could have

either contradicted or balanced findings made by partner community organisations. Equally, any strategy takes time to result in action so the impact is unlikely to have been direct and immediate. Many partner community organisations were not aware of this opportunity or of these limitations. The peer researchers themselves and many of those interviewed often had expectations of a direct and immediate response. Being open about challenges such as this can be difficult, but our experience is that such honesty is critical over the long-term. It is the foundation from which to build mutual trust and understanding, a pre-requisite to being able to identify joint objectives and work on them together, equally.

- **Acknowledgement of relative power dynamics:** On a related theme, it is clear that as funders and policy makers the GLA has significant power in relative terms to the partner community organisations. It is important for this to be acknowledged and discussed openly. The CE Team were highly aware of these power dynamics, and we believe that as a result there was a tendency to defer to the views of partner community organisations in order to give them the space to lead. We applaud this awareness and acknowledge the importance of communities feeling ownership of the process especially in these early pilot project stages. However, over time, we also believe that it is important that the GLA feel able to offer their opinions and can do so more regularly. Not only will staff have experience and knowledge that partner community organisations won’t have, they will also be able to raise important questions which can then be discussed and jointly shared. During the evaluation workshops, for example, we noticed

a reticence from the CE Team to contradict debate ideas with project leads or peer researchers. Striking this balance is difficult, but vital over the long-term if practical action is to follow. The process for finalising the research questions was a great example of striking this balance well; questions were designed by the partner community organisations and shared with the CE Team, who provided challenge and suggestions for improvement in an ongoing dialogue. Nearly all partner community organisations emphasised how collaborative and supportive this process had been and how it improved the resulting research findings.

“We were given freedom to design the questions we wanted to ask, but had lots of helpful feedback from the staff at the GLA – they had to be convinced they would work too” Project lead

- **Broadening of the partnership:** The GLA itself is not able to respond to and resolve all of the issues raised. In some cases, it is other statutory bodies, such as Local Authorities. In other cases, the issues are much broader and touch on national policy decisions, for example a lack of availability of social rent accommodation. In others the challenges are much more within the gift of local communities to address for themselves, for example helping to tackle social isolation. Tackling any of these issues is not straightforward and may take many years. Indeed, some of them may never truly be resolved without a coordinated, national response. In light of this this, one way that the GLA could support practical action in both the short and long-term would be to broaden the number of partners engaged in the project. This could include other funders and

networks across the statutory, private and social sectors. There are many such funders and networks interested in this type of community-led engagement and research. Starting small with one or two partners might be the best way to test this, and may even result in bringing in additional resources to support the next stage of the project.

“The GLA can feel very internally focussed at times – working with others outside of the City Hall bubble is a real opportunity” GLA staff member

“There are so many organisations and networks across London interested in this kind of participatory approach – we’d love to work with the GLA to join some of the dots in future” Project lead

- **Sustained engagement:** It is not possible to address any of the issues on this list over one or even a series of short-term projects. They require sustained engagement over the long-term. As such, we don’t believe the second or any future stages of the project should first focus on

broadening the number or type of community partner organisations but instead should consider on what basis to invest in those relationships the CE Team has already built, sustaining and growing these over time where practical. This should include regular meetings and engagement between the CE Team and project leads even in between any formal project activity, however limited. Widening the pool of communities and researchers should remain a goal but only when the GLA feels able to commit to similar levels of depth in each case. The need for such sustained engagement is also another reason to work with other partners so the project can continue in some form, even if political support or resources of the GLA changes, for example with the election of a new Mayor.

“We’re really hoping this is a start of a long relationship. If it isn’t it could make matters worse rather than better” Project Lead

“We felt like we were part of something bigger. None of us wanted it to end!” Project Lead



Photo from Kayd Somali Arts.

Summary of recommendations to strengthen connections and engagement with communities

1. Continue to ensure the application process is straightforward, including continuing to hold advance capacity building and information sharing workshops outside of City Hall for community groups who are considering applying to take part.
2. Consider gathering feedback from a selection of organisations who were unsuccessful in the first round of applications, using these findings to further strengthen the application process.
3. Continue to provide flexible, enabling support to community partner organisations that places them in the lead: ensure that any potential challenges to maintaining this are discussed internally before the next stage of the project e.g. streamlining the internal GLA due diligence, project reporting and oversight processes.
4. Encourage and acknowledge wider community engagement work as much as the research activity, providing support and guidance to partner community organisations to help them balance their time and resources between these two areas of work.
5. Do not underestimate the importance of ongoing community connections and engagement of the ‘little things’ such as providing venue space to give communities a platform, making connections to other decision-makers or sources of support, or attending and supporting community events, especially at senior levels. Be clear from the outset with partner community organisations of what the limitations of such support might be.
6. Work hard to create a partnership of equals: This will require real honesty between all partners; an acknowledgement of relative power dynamics including all partners openly sharing the challenges faced and the limitations in their powers to directly help to address issues raised in the research; working with at least one or two other partners such as funders or networks across the statutory, private and social sectors; and ensuring the CE Team can sustain a depth of engagement with current partner community organisations over time before looking to expand into wider community groups.

“I’ll reserve judgement until I can see what action happens as a result of what we’ve found out”
Peer Researcher

2: Identify and develop community leaders



A. Providing training

The training provided in peer research and qualitative data analysis was considered critical and of good quality. It helped partner community organisations to engage and recruit peer interviewers beyond the ‘usual suspects’ and as a result interview a more diverse and less previously represented group of people from within their communities. It was also highly valued as a means to capacity build organisations, not just for this project but also for other areas of their work.

In future, allowing more time and space for training would have helped achieve this more effectively, with only a limited number of peer researchers able to attend. For many of the peer researchers this would have been a highly valuable personal development opportunity. Potentially providing ‘train the trainer’ courses might also help partner community organisations to do more of this themselves.

Whilst the peer research and qualitative data analysis was considered valuable, a number of partner community organisations also identified other areas of need, mainly focussed around the development of community leaders and their ability to influence public policy and debate locally and across London. Training in community engagement, community organising and how best engage in public policy debates particularly for peer researchers themselves would help to develop more community leaders that can work with their communities to engage on

a broader range of issues themselves. This could be an important long-term impact of this project. In many cases such training could be delivered by some of the existing partner community organisations, provided they were given sufficient funding. High Trees offered training in community organising to all of their own peer researchers, for example.

“We felt it was really important for the long-term to train our peer researchers in community organising” Project Lead

It was also raised by many partner community organisations, especially those with no or little previous experience of peer research, how much time it took to train and build both the understanding and confidence of their peer researchers. In many cases tailored, individual support was required rather than being able to convene all peer researchers together at the same time. Working with Men, for example, found that they had to redo some of the early interviews and retrain some members of the team so that they asked more probing questions, whereas Age UK East London had to run training over a series of weeks at different times to ensure that they could reach everyone. We would recommend allowing more time for this preparation in the early stages of the project, though not necessarily more resources.

If there is sufficient time, we would recommend that during the next stage of the project getting working with all of the project leads to discuss and shape a training programme together would be an ideal way to ensure a tailored and relevant training offer. This could include

working through ways in which projects might be able to support each other with a little financial support.

“It took me a while to really get it and build my confidence - the training we had was really important in getting there” Peer researcher

B. Building a network

Both staff from the CE Team and partner community organisations highlighted the opportunity to develop the group of trained peer researchers into a network, where they have the chance to connect and share learning with each other. You Press, for example, held group meetings every two weeks with their own peer researchers creating opportunities for personal development and forging a strong bond. Age UK East London recruited their peer researchers from an already strong network fostered through their Newham Old People’s Reference Group. We think extending this kind of connection across all projects could have significant benefits, including contributing to their ongoing development as community leaders; continuing to build their confidence; and enabling them to join forces to tackle common issues. Maintaining and growing the profile of such a network could also be a valuable resource for teams across the GLA or other London organisations looking for specific insights direct from communities. We would recommend that the CE Team consider facilitating this through an online network or Facebook group for example, supported by one or two events each year that bring the network together.

It is also worth noting the importance of the decision to pay peer researchers the London Living Wage. As teams of peer researchers grow and become more experienced we would recommend considering recognising this in the pay offered.

“We’d love to have the chance to meet other peer researchers from across London and share our experiences” Peer researcher

C. The convening power of the GLA

The objective of identifying and developing community leaders is one which is shared by many other organisations and funders across London. The GLA has a strong convening power to bring together such organisations from across public, private and social sectors. As recommended in Section 1, we suggest that the GLA try to partner with one or two organisations like this in the next stages of the project, including the potential this might have to bring in additional resources. Alongside this, we would recommend bringing together a wider group working on the development of leaders within each of the identified communities. This would enable the sharing of ideas and connecting work that is already happening, providing that the partner community organisations would value that opportunity. As well as the potential of finding new ways to work with others that can help lead to practical action, this relatively simple conversation would also help involve the GLA more deeply in target communities as part of existing networks.

“It’s been an exciting start. We really want to know what’s going to happen next now” Project Lead

Summary of recommendations to identify and develop community leaders:

1. Continue to provide training to project leads and peer researchers on peer research techniques and qualitative data analysis, potentially expanding the opportunity for more peer researchers themselves to attend, or look to run 'train the trainer' courses for community organisations to build their capacity to do this themselves.
2. Expand the training provided to peer researchers to cover community engagement, community organising and engagement in the development of public policy, potentially funding partner community organisations to deliver this. Shape and deliver the training programme together with project leads.
3. Allow more time for training and preparing peer researchers in the early stages of the project, though not necessarily more resources.
4. Develop a network of trained researchers from across projects, giving them the opportunity to connect and share learning with each other e.g. through an online network or Facebook group, supported by up to two events each year.
5. Continue to pay peer researchers the London Living Wage and consider reviewing this as their skills and experience grow.
6. Use the GLA's convening power to work with partner community organisations to bring together a wider group of people working on the development of leaders within each of the identified communities. This would form a short series of introductory conversations to share ideas and connect with work that is already happening.

'The one thing I want to know now is, what next? What will happen with all those findings?'

Project lead



Photo from Age Uk East London. Thirteen of our Community Researchers (two rows) from our Newham OPRG group and OPRG coordinator with Deputy Mayor Mathew Ryder at City Hall.



Photo from Working with Men.

3: Generate insights that others within the GLA can learn from and act on



A. Carrying out the research

The research was carried out through one to one conversations with peer researchers. Surveys were also used, though in nearly all cases these were filled in by the peer researchers during conversations rather than sent out to people to complete and return themselves. This less formal approach from researchers they often knew and could relate to meant that those being interviewed felt comfortable to share their views but also many of the underlying reasons behind those views. It also meant partner community organisations were able to reach many people they hadn't previously engaged with. The result was a set of detailed transcripts, audio files and videos which included deep insight that a survey alone would not have been able to provide. High Trees, for example collected over 80 recordings of up to an hour long, alongside notes from the peer researchers themselves

Partner community organisations recruited the peer researchers and all of them worked hard to ensure as diverse and representative a group as possible. The process for selecting interviewees was more varied across projects, with some partner community organisations setting their peer researchers specific targets to ensure diversity and others allowing them more freedom,. Overall, however, most of those interviewed were directly connected to peer researchers in some way e.g. family, friends, colleagues or their close connections. This was

important in establishing trust quickly and to reach people that might have been excluded because of language barriers, for example.

“Most of our interviews took place in Somali – so the peer research approach was really important in making sure there wasn't a language barrier”

No summary of the backgrounds of each peer researcher and each person interviewed across all projects has been pulled together, and no specific targets were set by the GLA to try and ensure a representative sample. Whilst we understand the importance of flexibility and the need to build trust, if this project is to continue to develop deeper relationships with these communities we believe that setting some common targets around this and collecting some summary information such as age, gender, ethnicity, etc. would help strengthen the credibility of the findings. As long as such targets are not too rigid we don't feel this would undermine the efforts to establish trust. None of the partner community organisations who set their own such targets felt that doing so had a negative impact on the quality of the interviews. Another reason for doing this would be to expand the potential of the existing network of peer researchers. No person is defined by one 'label' and is part of many communities. For example, within the current group of peer researchers there is a cross section of women that could provide interesting insights for future work.

B. Analysing findings

Each set of questions included a mixture of closed survey questions and open-ended questions, with the majority of insights coming from conversations as a result of the open-ended questions. However, the volume of those insights made it difficult to analyse and summarise themes, whereas the more closed questions were easier to analyse, for example, in graphs. At the time of writing, despite having completed final submissions to the Community Engagement Team, more than half of the partner community organisations had not finished reviewing and analysing the responses to the open-ended questions. All of them felt the training they had received in analysing qualitative data had been very helpful in drawing out the most important conclusions, so this was really down to a lack of time and resources. We would recommend allowing partner community organisations a longer period after the interviews have been completed to carry out this more detailed analysis and present their findings, as well as ensure project budgets allocated enough resource to do this work. This would help

draw out a more detailed set of insights and importantly allow some of the most revealing stories to be summarised and more easily shared. This is not necessarily about increasing the overall budget for the project, however, but about setting more realistic priorities and milestones from the start.

To date, no comparison between the findings of different projects has been carried out. This includes the closed survey questions as well as analysis of the themes and stories emerging from the open-ended questions. We understand that this work is still planned by the Community Engagement Team and we would recommend that this is followed through because it provides an opportunity to compare a set of common themes with other sources of research that together can have a more direct influence on future public policy. We also noted that there were no identical questions across all projects. Whilst we recognise the importance of allowing partner community organisations to define their own questions and the importance in allowing a diversity of themes to be explored, we do think it



Photo from Bulgarians in London. Our visit to the planting of roses. Credit: Teodor Totev



Photo from You Press. Credit: aimvphotography.com

is possible to encourage the use of a very small set of two or three identical questions across different communities to make the job of comparison easier to achieve. There is no reason why those questions couldn't be set in collaboration with all of the partner community organisations together.

C. Presenting and sharing what you find

The freedom for partner community organisations to present their findings in a variety of creative ways, from storytelling, to poems, to videos, to graphs, to presentations allowed the voice of communities to be directly and authentically represented. As noted in Section 1, we believe that imposing any set formats or styles would have had a detrimental effect on the levels of community engagement and connection. The presentation event at City Hall was the most clear example of this. All partner community organisations felt really positive about the platform that this gave them to share their findings in their own way.

However, it was clear that there is a 'translation' issue because most people from within the Greater London Authority are more used to seeing research presented in the form of formal reports and data analysis. As a result it is often the case that they will relate more strongly to this form of communication than more creative forms of expression or story-telling. It was also clear that some of the partner community organisations felt a degree of pressure to present their findings in this more formal way. This was not because they had been asked or encouraged to do so (in fact, if anything, the opposite was true) but because they are used to being asked by statutory bodies like the Greater London Authority to present findings in this way.

The potential issue of translation is not unique to the Greater London Authority or other statutory bodies. In our experience it also exists in many larger institutions, including the media. If the insights from this work are to have any impact, then this is an area that needs close attention and will most likely require some shifts in communication style on all sides so that they can start

to meet in the middle. The challenge is doing that without asking communities to tone down or 'professionalise' their findings in a way that would undermine the authenticity of their voice. Although this is a tricky balance to strike, we do believe it is possible. In fact, a lot can be learnt from one of the partner community organisations themselves. The London Bulgarian Association had already been working with academics on a piece of research across their community before the project started. They had to work hard to revise their initial survey questions and process, with some tension between the academic approach they had started with and the peer research approach. However, having resolved these tensions the result was a set of data that stood up to academic standards, alongside deep qualitative insights and stories. This led to their findings being shared widely on social media, in both the UK and international press and within academic circles. Members of this community were also asked to do interviews for the press and speak at academic events. Not only did this help to ensure a wider influence beyond the GLA, it also contributed to a stronger sense of identity across, and pride in their own community. For them, this has been a hugely important impact of this project.

We would recommend the GLA consider how similar partnerships could enhance future stages. Many of the recommendations we make above could also help to contribute to the translation challenge. We also suggest additional investment in helping communities tell and share their stories as effectively as possible. Doing this does carry some risk that the important focus on community

leadership and the authenticity of those communities' voices could be damaged. Any step in this direction will need to be carefully managed and monitored to ensure it does not do this.

As well the style of communication, the platforms from which data and stories are shared are also significant. Live events like the final presentation at City Hall can be very effective and, as discussed in Section 1, are particularly important in maintaining strong connections and relationships with communities. However, there is always a limit to the number of people from within communities that can participate in such events. They also reach a limited audience. The City Hall event, for example, was not as well attended by Greater London Authority staff as hoped (outside of the Community Engagement Team), though the Deputy Mayor did host the event. Many partner community organisations would have welcomed the opportunity for more of their own peer researchers to attend too. Online platforms such as websites, blogs, newsletters and social media are not as personal but are still important ways to share findings more widely. Although many of the partner community organisations have already started to share their findings online or at their own events, at the time of writing none of this had been collated or shared on the GLA's website or via its social media or internal communication channels. We think it is important that this does happen to help amplify the voices of the communities that were a part of this pilot project.

"We'd really keen to see the GLA share our findings more widely - so far there's been very little. We'd hate for all that work to go to waste" Project Lead

"We felt so privileged to be a part of this project"
Project Lead

We recognise that many of these recommendations are likely to be more appropriate over time as relationships with partner community organisations develop and levels of trust are established. In the early days of such relationships a laser focus on community leadership and high degrees of flexibility can be so important. We think it is right that this pilot project maintained that focus. In fact, although report findings have not yet been summarised or shared widely outside of the presentation event at City Hall the project, even at this early stage, has started to provide a valuable resource to support other work across the GLA. For example, whilst mapping out a review of the Mayor's owned events, exploring how London's communities engage with them, 'community researchers' were identified as a valuable tool in collecting new insights. As a result, some peer researchers from this project were invited to a briefing to discuss the review and input into the questionnaire design. Three 'community researchers' were then taken on and received additional technical training to support the audio vox pops research carried out at the 'Eid on the Square' event. This is a clear demonstration of the potential of this project to generate insights that others can learn from and act on.

In addition, different communities will be able to move at different speeds so introducing any of these recommendations will need to be managed gradually and in constant conversation with the communities themselves, rather than mandated. We believe, however, that over the medium to long-term a greater focus on these translation issues will be very important in ensuring that the voices of those communities are widely heard, that practical action can take place, and in turn those communities feel they have genuinely been listened to. This strengthens our earlier recommendation

that future stages of the project focus first on the depth of engagement with existing partners over a longer period of time, before focussing on expanding to include a much wider set of partners.

“The analysis of the information and the creative process was long and daunting at times. We're really keen to know what can be done with all this information”

Project Lead

D. Working across the Greater London Authority

If this pilot project is to grow and provide valuable and practical insight that others from across the GLA can learn from and act on, then it is clear engagement with a team from within the GLA will be important. The Social Integration Team and Culture Teams have already played a part in helping inform the pilot project, and this is where we found the best examples of meeting this core aim. However, to reach its potential there will need to be a more sustained role, across a wider range of teams. Indeed the overall ambition for the Community Engagement Team is to create a new standard of community engagement that is championed across the GLA. This pilot project is a key part of helping to achieve that aim, and therefore realise one of the Mayor's priorities: to address inequalities in voice and power in the capital.

Specifically, the ambition of the Community Engagement Team for the next stages of this project is to support and enable teams from across the GLA to carry out their own forms of peer research that strengthen their direct connections and engagement with communities. Although we have only been able to speak to a small number of staff outside of the Community Engagement Team, our initial thoughts on how to achieve this effectively are to

use the findings and recommendations in this evaluation to hold conversations with colleagues to understand what similar activity they already undertake in this area, what, if any, barriers they face to expanding this type of work, and discuss how the Community Engagement Team might be able to help them overcome those barriers.

The conversations we have had to date would suggest that different approaches will be necessary for different teams depending on what they do already, how close their existing relationships across communities already are and their own capacity to manage this themselves. There is likely to be a sliding scale between the Community Engagement Team fully managing relationships with communities and networks of peer researchers in order to help inform specific policy developments, right through to providing a more light touch guidance. However, we do believe that the Community Engagement Team has an important role to play in gathering insight and sharing learning across all teams engaged in this type of work, including maintaining a growing network of peer researchers and ensuring those relationships are nurtured e.g. through

'the little things', as highlighted in Section 1.

To start with we would suggest working with a small number of teams most likely to be supportive, as the Community Engagement Team already have in connecting with the Social Integration and Culture teams. We would also suggest sharing both insights and stories directly from communities via internal communication channels, such as newsletters or through staff meetings and events. Importantly, these should also highlight examples of how this project has helped inform the work of other teams, and the different ways in which the Community Engagement Team have been able to provide support. The more those stories can come directly from those communities or the people in teams outside of the Community Engagement Team the more likely they are to be effective and engage on both an emotional as well as an intellectual level, for example, through inviting people to speak at events, or sharing blogs and video. We believe that this could help to build momentum, although note that this is unlikely to be a quick process and will require consistent and regular communication.



Photo from Kayd Somali Arts.

Summary of recommendations to generate insights that others from across the GLA can learn from and act on:

1. Continue to ensure partner community organisations have the freedom to recruit peer researchers in their own ways, and allow those peer researchers to engage in informal conversations with people that they have connected with from across their communities. Do work with both groups to agree some common targets that would allow for a more representative sample over time, and work with partner community organisations to collect information on e.g. age, ethnicity and gender of peer researchers and those people interviewed across all projects.

directly and authentically represented. However, over time work together with them to strike a balance between more academic and quantitative analysis, and more informal, qualitative analysis, potentially encouraging partnership with other organisations to achieve this.
2. Consider how the network of peer researchers could provide insights as part of different communities e.g. through a cross section of all women that took part across all six projects.
3. Allow partner community organisations a longer period after the interviews are completed to carry more detailed analysis of qualitative information and ensure project budgets allocate enough resource to do this work.
4. Analyse the findings from across the projects and try to draw out any common themes.
5. Continue to ensure partner community organisations have the freedom to present their findings in a variety of creative ways that allow the voice of communities to be
6. Invest in providing additional training to help communities tell their stories as effectively as possible.
7. Share the findings more widely through a variety of GLA platforms, including existing events, on the website, on social media and through internal communication channels such as staff meetings or newsletters. Wherever possible share stories and insights directly from communities or people from other GLA teams directly, e.g. through video, or by inviting them to speak at meetings or events.
8. Use the findings and recommendations in this evaluation to hold conversations with colleagues across the GLA to discuss how the CE Team might be able to help support them, starting with one or two of the most engaged teams.
9. Gather insight from and share learning across all GLA teams engaged in this type of work and maintain a growing network of peer researchers connected to teams across the GLA, ensuring those relationships are nurtured.



Photo from High Trees. Peer Researchers team ready to interview local community



Photo from Working with Men.

Conclusion

One of the Mayor's priorities is to address inequalities in voice and power in the capital. In response to this priority, the Community Engagement Team wants to create a new standard of community engagement that is championed across the GLA. This pilot project is a key part of helping to achieve that aim.

Achieving such an ambition is no small thing and goes well beyond the boundaries of the GLA itself. London certainly has some catching up to do with other cities in terms of community leadership and engagement. One could look at Paris who ran an ambitious city-wide participatory budgeting process in 2015, or Portugal who ran a similar process nationwide in 2016 for example. For the GLA to lead a step change in approach across London will clearly require significant culture change over many years.

We believe that this project, although small, has laid some important foundations and has the potential to be an important part of achieving such a change. In particular, its focus on placing communities in the lead, engaging with them on their own terms and playing a highly supportive and enabling role has not only been appreciated by the partner community organisations themselves, but has driven significant benefits across all

of the projects core aims: to strengthen connections and engagement with communities whose voice and influence on public policy is under-represented; to identify and develop community leaders in those communities; and to generate insights that others within the Greater London Authority can learn from and act on.

Although we have made a wide range of recommendations, if the project is to realise its potential we believe the most important priorities for the next stage are those listed in the 'summary of key findings and recommendations' section on page 12.

We have been delighted to carry out this qualitative evaluation, and we hope that it provides an early opportunity to reflect, learn and identify how to make the most of the opportunity the development of this pilot project has created. In the end we hope it goes some way to helping shift the dominant narrative that exists in many local communities, from them asking the question "what is the Mayor going to do about it?" to asking the question "what can we do about it together".

Bob Thust and Esther Foreman,
The Social Change Agency

'I think Sadiq Khan is the first Mayor who has done something to recognise our community and this has been so important for us'

Project Lead

The Community Engagement Team at the GLA

Community engagement involves dialogue and interaction with Londoners to involve them in deliberation, decision making and practical action. This may take the form of direct engagement with members of those communities, or using representative groups, organisations or individuals ('stakeholders') to assist in such engagement. The defining feature of 'community engagement' is that its primary aim is to connect directly with the members of communities themselves.

The Citizen-Led Engagement Programme has been designed as a pilot project using six core principles of community engagement.

1. Be creative and participatory
2. Engage with purpose
3. Tackle inequalities in voice and power
4. Be responsive and adaptable
5. Help communities find common ground
6. Gathering insight and data for measuring, sharing and learning

The hope is that these six principles will become the standard for community engagement across the GLA.

About the Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team (CE Team) works with the Mayor and Greater London Authority colleagues to:

- Advise internal colleagues on their engagement with London's communities to help shape City Hall's policy and programmes.
- Use a creative range of methods to engage in dialogue with London's communities.
- Work with external partners to create and test new ways for London's communities to have a voice in political and civic life.
- Partner with Civil Society to support community-led action, with an emphasis on working with smaller voluntary and community organisations.

Contact us on: communityengagement@london.gov.uk or 0207 084 2572

With thanks to participating organisations

An overview of each of the six partner community organisations is provided below, along with a description of how they approached their community engagement and peer research activity as part of this project. All six have provided contact details and would be delighted to hear from you.



Age UK East London supports older people to live with dignity and independence whilst reducing social isolation. We do this by connecting older people to services, activities and most importantly, others in their communities through our Older People's Reference Groups (OPRGs).

We carried out this project with our Newham OPRG, a thriving group of over 300 members who make sure the views of older people are heard. We support and enable them to get involved in changing the services they need and use, or to influence decisions within those areas that are most important to them.

Our project focussed on the question: How socially integrated do older people from BAME communities in Newham feel?

Fifteen OPRG members volunteered as Community Researchers, trained, co-designed the research methodology and carried out the research within the community & at an OPRG meeting. The research findings are a needs assessment of how socially integrated older people from BAME communities within Newham feel they are and where they would like to be.

We reached 150 people from ages 50-100yrs, the majority were 60-80yrs and women from these ethnic groups: Pilipino, Ghanaian, Caribbean, Nigerian, African, Somalian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indian, Pakistani, Mauritian, Chinese, Mixed White/Black Caribbean.

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020 8821 0861



High Trees Community Development Trust is a community anchor and hub, established in 1998 by a group of local residents with the aim of improving the socio-economic well-being of communities in Tulse Hill, Lambeth. Guided by the needs of the local community, we deliver and support a range of projects grouped in Employment, Education and Training Support; Children, Young People and Family Services and Community Engagement and Development. Our work aims to ensure individuals have increased skills and a stronger voice; for life and work, and to build active, resilient communities.

During this project we recruited 12 peer researchers that we trained and supported to practice a Community Organising approach. We delivered a quality assured Intro to Community Organising and Listening 1-day workshops to support the three-day listening campaign in which 200+ people from the most unheard section of the community were reached. Our target was to specifically listen to young black men under the age of 25 and BAME older people over 65.

Contact: Margaret Pierre
Margaret.pierre@high-trees.org
0208 671 3132



YOU PRESS www.youpress.org.uk

You Press is a social enterprise based in London. Since 2011, You Press has operated with the vision of creating cohesive communities in which young people contribute and are valued. Our focus is on providing young people & communities between the ages of 16 and 30 with valuable, transferable skills and providing a voice for communities who are less well-represented in society. This involves challenging stereotypes and stigmas about young people, tackling social issues and community engagement (through the creative arts and writing).

Originally aiming for 12 participants from the BAME demographic ranging from 16 to 30 years old, You Press managed to bring in 18 researchers to collect 96 data regarding topics of communal concern. Once the data had been collected, the researchers converted their findings into 18 original artistic responses (e.g. music, poetry, photography, stories and art installations).

Contact: Farah Mohammoud
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0207 286 0654 (Extension: 208)



Kayd Somali Arts

Kayd Somali Arts & Culture (Kayd) was set up in 2008 to promote Somali arts, heritage and culture in the UK and specifically to produce the annual Somali Week Festival (SWF) in London during Black History Month. In 2016, Kayd became a registered charity with a remit to: deliver arts and cultural events; advance education through workshops, discussions and debates; provide for recreation with the object of improving well-being.

The ten-day annual festival in London is the central focus of our work, delivered by a dedicated 3-person part-time team who work on a sessional basis, with a festival administrator joining the team in the lead up to the festival. Our programmes are informed by an unmatched knowledge of Somali art, heritage and academia, and close programming ties with our sister organisation Red Sea Cultural Foundation in Somaliland and across the Diaspora. The founder, Ayan Mohamoud, MBE, was recognised for her contribution to UK/Somaliland relationship building in 2016.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of poetry in Somali culture. Poets are of the people, not a literary elite as they are in this country; popular poets have the status of rock stars and the influence of politicians. Poetry is fundamental cultural expression for Somalis, basic, accessible, owned, a key to the hearts and minds of the community. Through poetry we can learn about each other and ourselves in a safe way, understand our predicament and heal, linking Somalis all over the world. Somalis in the Diaspora are equally invested in poetry as those in the Horn. In this project, we researched the importance of poetry across generations in our community by attempting to answer questions such as: What role does it play for young people trying to find their voice in this country? Or for older people how does it connect to a positive sense of self and identity? How is used, learnt, passed on? What role does it play privately, domestically, within the family, publicly? How are local forms of poetry influencing expression of younger poets? How could poetry be a viable tool for integration in London?

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workingwithmen.org

Working with Men (WWM) is a multi-award winning specialist charity supporting positive male activity, engagement and involvement. WWM has expertise in the challenges and solutions in working with boys and men who are socially or economically disadvantaged, marginalised or isolated. Our interventions focus on the transitional times in life such as starting school, getting a job or becoming a parent; these are the times when men and boys are most likely to encounter challenges and therefore most likely to engage or seek help. Our aim is to significantly reduce the number of boys and men, particularly from socially excluded or disadvantaged backgrounds, who are unable to achieve their full potential to become productive and active members of society.

Working with Men and Queens Park Community Council aimed to explore what the young BAME male Londoners tend to (or would like to) do with regards to fun and recreation and by way of this research we hoped to ascertain how the young BAME Londoners experience the city. We had identified that the young BAME male London group is both a diverse and vibrant cohort, one which holds a wealth of information regarding the current status of their cultural engagement. London clearly holds a large concentration of creative arts, media and culture and our group of researchers set-out to inspire respondents to stimulate responses and participate in debate.

Contact: Anthony Graham
info@workingwithmen.org
0207 237 5353



London Bulgarian Association bulgariansinlondon.com

The London Bulgarian Association aims to connect Bulgarian Londoners with London and other Londoners. Created in 2015 the association draws on the passion of its members to explore London together, gain knowledge about British culture and make friends. The association supports initiatives which give visibility of Bulgarian Londoners, help their integration and participation in the public life of London. The association has become known with its stories about the history, geography and public life of London, British culture and Bulgarian Londoners as well as with the regular group walks that enable Bulgarian Londoners to explore different parts of the city, build relationships with other Londoners and have a rest outdoors.

The London Bulgarian Association's project supported by The Mayor's Citizen Led Engagement Programme aimed to gain knowledge about Bulgarian Londoners. We conducted the first survey of Bulgarian Londoners which included 150 people. The project also aimed to establish contacts between Bulgarian Londoners with London institutions. We organised group visits to City Hall, Metropolitan Police, University College London, British Museum and the Immigration Museum. The project encouraged Bulgarian Londoners to consider how they can contribute to the public life in London and as a way of giving back to London Bulgarian Londoners planted Bulgarian roses in Golden Square in Soho, as roses are national flowers of both England and Bulgaria. Aiming to build relations between Bulgarians and other communities we also organised a Bulgarian food tasting and party with Bulgarian artists and dancers, living in London. The party, which was well attended by Londoners and representatives of the other projects supported by The Mayor's Citizen Led Engagement programme, was in Golden Square next to the roses planted by Bulgarian Londoners.

Contact **Boyko Boev**
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About the Social Change Agency

The Social Change Agency is a systemic change consultancy, specialising in creating powerful human centred networks and movements for social impact. We are committed to the development of network-based, participatory and collaborative leadership styles. We have a wide range of clients, preferring to work with organisations who wish to create social impact. We use research methodologies such as ethnography, data analysis and facilitated workshops to uncover social demand and analyse practice impact, overlaid with a deep understanding of how to map supply to expose the gaps in services and provision. We have a strong track record in evaluation and a particular interest in building leadership with people with a lived experience. We support wider transformation around this in the public, private and charitable sectors.

This evaluation was led by Bob Thust, an associate of the Social Change Agency and a highly experienced facilitator with specialism in community leadership. Bob is a former Director of Responsible Business at Deloitte UK, a former Director of the Power to Change Trust, a current trustee of the Local Trust, and a treasurer of the Bevy the UK's first community-owned pub on a housing estate. As well as freelance work, he also co-founded and continues to grow Practical Governance, an organisation which explores a range of governance, leadership and management challenges for those advancing social purposes, including a particular focus on rebalancing power, control, share of voice, coproduction and community leadership.

Esther Foreman, our CEO, provided oversight of the evaluation. She has 15 years' experience of engaging, organising and supporting local and national communities to work together and achieve change, on and offline. She began her career in campaigning at large charities including Help the Aged, Shelter and Mencap and has been commissioned by funders including the Young Foundation, Wayra and UnLtd to support social ventures. Esther has a solid research background, with an MPhil in Social Anthropology (incorporating social research methodology) from the LSE, where she also founded a peer reviewed academic journal on Interdisciplinary Research Methodology of the Social Sciences, the JGSS. Her original research includes Peering In and Shouting Down the House, two UK and international studies on digital and grassroots campaigning. In addition to being the lead convener, she has commissioned, written and produced over 30 policy reports for a range of organisations and contributed to many more including the JRF 100 Questions on Poverty and Stories of Ageism, a crucial policy report in the successful campaign to outlaw age discrimination. She is a Clore Social Fellow, a Winston Churchill Fellow and a Trustee of the MS Society and The House of St Barnabas.

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the
social
change
agency

The Social Change Agency is the leading consultancy for movement building. Specialising in community organising, crowdfunding, peer networks, innovation and systemic and organisational change.

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