

The Mayor of London's Citizen-Led Engagement Programme

Year 2 qualitative evaluation

Contents

Introduction	4
Scope of this evaluation	8
Summary of key findings and recommendations	10

Objective 1

Strengthen connections and engagement with communities	18
---	-----------

A. Beyond research	18
B. Partnership of equals	21
C. Engaging on the community's terms	23
D. It's the little things	27
E. Trauma informed care and support	29

Objective 2

Identify and develop community leaders	31
---	-----------

A. Training & Accreditation	31
B. Growing a Peer Research network	35
C. Beyond City Hall	37

Objective 3

Generate insights that others within the GLA can learn from and act on	39
---	-----------

A. Research	39
B. Analysis, presentation and dissemination	42

Conclusion	45
------------	----

The Community Engagement Team at the GLA	46
--	----

With thanks to participating organisations	48
--	----

References	59
------------	----

About the Social Change Agency	60
--------------------------------	----

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 remains one of the Mayor's priorities, as is reaching out to London's huge variety of communities, including those newly arrived in the city.

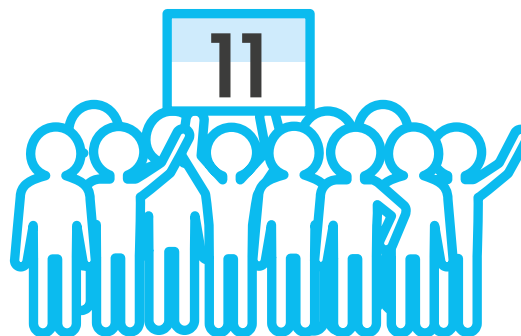
In response to this, between September 2017 and May 2018 the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Community Engagement Team (CE Team) launched and managed a pilot peer research project designed to enhance engagement with communities whose voice and influence over public policy had previously been under-represented called The Citizen-Led Engagement Programme (Citizen Led or programme). **The evaluation of the pilot programme** (see References on page 59) highlighted the potential of this work, and Citizen Led was extended for a further year.

For Year 2 of Citizen Led, six additional communities and six research themes were identified. The six communities included: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups; European communities; East Asian communities; Refugee, migrant and asylum seeker communities; Deaf Londoners; and BAME LGBT+ Londoners. The six themes included: Health and young people, under 25 in the criminal justice system (including young women); The impact of Brexit on Londoners; Serious youth violence; Victims of hate crime; Trust and confidence in policing; and Barriers to accessing green spaces.

Year 2 of Citizen Led was delivered between April 2019 and March 2020 in close partnership with 11 very diverse community organisations (Partner Community Organisations) from across London. You can read more about each of these organisations and the communities they work (see With thanks to Partner Community Organisations on page 48). Each Partner Community Organisation received grants of up to £12,000 to carry out their own community engagement and peer research projects (Projects), recruiting community based researchers (Peer



Trained Peer researchers



Community organisations supported

Researchers) to explore issues around social integration with people from across their communities (Participants). The programme resulted in 116 trained Peer Researchers, who together carried out 207 individual interviews, received 393 individual survey responses and conducted 30 focus groups with 177 individuals.

Each Partner Community Organisation was given significant freedom to design their own engagement activity, recruitment process (for both Peer Researchers and Participants), interview questions, interview formats and in how they collated and shared their conclusions. Citizen Led was also intended to include a showcase and celebration event at City Hall in May 2020 before the COVID-19 crisis meant that, at the time of writing, this event had to be postponed.

The GLA provided training in peer research and qualitative data analysis and specific support to help refine interview questions. Storytelling workshops were also provided as part of the training programme to support organisations to develop a compelling narrative around the research findings.

As well as direct support to selected Partner Community Organisations, the CE Team also delivered 2 information workshops to 26 community organisations from the 12 target groups before applications were received. These workshops focussed on sharing the experience of a pilot programme participant, on improving creative thinking skills of community leaders in preparation for their project applications, and helped raise awareness of the Mayor of London's vision for social integration, social mobility and community engagement.

Each of the Partner Community Organisations had a lead contact (Project Lead) who were assigned a main contact (Policy Lead) drawn from the CE Team or other GLA departments taking part in Citizen Led. These contacts were in place to provide updates, specific advice or guidance and help Partner Community Organisations feed their findings directly into relevant GLA policy teams.



Interviews conducted with under-represented communities



Survey responses



Focus groups

Citizen Led has three core objectives:

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.

Year 2 of Citizen Led built on the learnings from the pilot. It was intended that in continuing to focus on these objectives Citizen Led could further grow its contribution to the Mayor of London’s agenda for social integration as well as influence wider policy and practice across the GLA. Outside of the GLA, Citizen Led was also intended to help lay foundations for ongoing civic engagement amongst under-represented communities in all aspects of public policy and debate across London.



Some Citizen Led participants with Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard. Photo from the CE Team, GLA



Objective 1

To strengthen connections and engagement with communities whose voice and influence on public policy is under-represented

Objective 2

To identify and develop community leaders in those communities



Objective 3

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



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 and supported by Karen Lam of The Social Change Agency. It does not cover an analysis or summary of the peer research findings from each of the Projects, but instead seeks to understand how well Year 2 of Citizen Led met its three core objectives, as well as provide practical recommendations for its future development.

The evaluation is qualitative in nature and builds on the Year 1 pilot programme evaluation, From 'what will the Mayor do about it?' to 'what can we do about it together?' (see References on page 59). Similar to the pilot evaluation approach, insights and recommendations were co-produced with Project Leads from each of the Partner Community Organisations, Peer Researchers, Policy Leads and the CE Team. The purpose of this collaborative approach is to continue to strengthen the connections with the communities on which Citizen Led is focussed and to co-produce recommendations, leading to suggestions for development that are considered and realistic.

The process of evaluation for Year 2 had two phases:

Phase 1:

- Review of all key information from across Citizen Led and the individual Projects, including applications, presentations, and mid-project reports collated and shared across all 11 Partner Community Organisations;
- Interviews with Project Leads from each of the Partner Community Organisations;
- Interviews with Policy Leads from the CE Team and other departments across the GLA;
- Interview with a previous Project Lead of the Citizen Led pilot;
- Workshop with Project Leads, Peer Researchers and Policy Leads from the CE Team and other departments across the GLA to jointly explore and fully understand the emerging findings from Phase 1.

Phase 2:

- Second round of interviews with Project Leads and Policy Leads to get updates on progress, further develop the findings and begin to test emerging recommendations based on the findings from Phase 1
- A further workshop with Project Leads, Peer Researchers and Policy Leads from the CE Team and other departments across the GLA to consider further findings and co-produce and prioritise recommendations.
- Additional opportunities for input and feedback on the draft and final report from all those that had participated in any of these interviews or workshops.

“The purpose of this collaborative approach is to continue to strengthen the connections with target communities on which the project is built and to co-produce recommendations, leading to suggestions for development that are realistic”



Summary of key findings and recommendations

The findings and recommendations in this report are divided into three parts which correspond to Citizen Led's three objectives. In this section we draw out the most significant findings and recommendations. What appears in this section as 'significant' has been informed by the full collaborative evaluation process and in particular the final workshop in Phase 2 of the evaluation, where each of our draft recommendations were discussed and collectively prioritised. This was done on the understanding that with a limited capacity it may not be possible to implement every one of the recommendations made in the short term.

Key strengths

- The approach to and value of peer research that Citizen Led has created was appreciated by everyone as an important way for communities to share their stories and open up on their own terms.
- Many of the areas for development highlighted from the pilot evaluation have been addressed, including providing clearer guidance for the Project Leads on the process, research themes and expected outputs.
- Partner Community Organisations themselves have had greater research experience and capability than during the pilot, which has sat alongside increased investment in research training and support. This has resulted in a marked difference in the quality of the research findings and helped them be more clearly disseminated and acted upon both within the GLA and beyond.
- As well as providing a clearer focus on the research expectations and investing more in research support, Citizen Led has continued to help to bring communities together and find their voice, laying the foundations for deeper connection and engagement.
- Allocating a dedicated Policy Lead to each Project as well as providing additional support to help Partner Community Organisations balance time and resources between community engagement work and the core research task has made a significant difference.
- Partner Community Organisations continue to feel positive about the extent to which they have been able to lead and shape their projects, with the GLA playing a supportive role rather than a controlling one. GLA staff were considered very supportive, flexible, and collaborative in the question design process as well as throughout the programme.
- Project Leads, Peer Researchers, Policy Leads and members of the CE Team have all valued the many opportunities created to connect on a personal level with each other. These have been open and honest discussions, not just about individual Projects but through this evaluative process they have also covered the purpose and development of the overall strategy for Citizen Led.

- In general, the training provided was considered excellent and delivered at the right times during the year. The expansion of this training from research to include areas such as storytelling was also highly valued, and it was noted that there has increasingly been a tailoring of training workshops for specific Partner Community Organisations.
- Citizen Led has supported Partner Community Organisations to engage and recruit Peer Researchers from diverse networks amongst their communities. This was valued as a means to support capacity building in those organisations, and deepen their connection with their communities, as well as being of great benefit to the Peer Researchers themselves.
- Partner Community Organisations were very appreciative of any connections made beyond City Hall, a clear development from the pilot programme brought about in part through the introduction of dedicated Policy Leads for each Project.



Key areas for development

- Expectations around the programme's purpose remain unclear to many. Some expected their research findings to directly influence a policy area within the GLA and they saw this as the main objective of the programme, while others saw the main objective of the programme as building capacity within Partner Community Organisation and within the community groups more generally. This has in some cases created tensions and undermined trust building efforts.
- Influencing policy can take a long time and requires a sustained two-way conversation, building relationships and trust and over many years. There is little ongoing engagement, however, with Partner Community Organisations or Peer researchers from the pilot or firm plans to do so with the current cohort.
- Although very welcome efforts had been made to connect each Partner Community Organisation with a Policy Lead, those contacts were quite varied in their position within the GLA and their seniority. Moreover, it wasn't always clear to either Policy Leads or Project Leads exactly what their remit was.
- Many research themes, particularly in Year 2 of Citizen Led were sensitive in nature and may be traumatic for those participating. Addressing this is key to building trusted relationships between the GLA and community groups as well as being a primary responsibility to ensure the safety of Project Leads, Peer Researchers and in particular Participants.

- Spending more time in local communities, using the spaces and places familiar to people from those communities would help to make engagement less intimidating, allowing Participants to open up more freely and help to equalise power imbalances.
- The GLA could be clearer on both the process and rationale of selecting specific research themes and target communities.
- Project Leads have different levels of research experience and whilst many felt the training was pitched really well, others were left feeling they needed a little more. Other training needs were also identified both for Project Leads and Peer Researchers, for example on areas such as community organising, power mapping and influencing. It is also clear that there are opportunities for learning to happen more amongst peers from across Partner Community Organisations, rather than training necessarily having to be organised and put on directly by the GLA.
- Peer Researchers and Project Leads highlighted the potential for Peer Researchers to be accredited or recognised in some capacity for their work and participation.
- The potential of the GLA to use both their internal and external platforms - such as newsletters and social media - to share insights and research findings from across each Project was felt to be significant and could be utilised more effectively to ensure that the voices of lived experience are widely heard.
- Further guidance on research design, tools and dissemination was needed, and it would be highly beneficial if the GLA were able to support common administrative barriers faced by Partner Community Organisations, such as drawing down funding, preparing reports and accessing equipment.



Key recommendations

- Instead of having three balancing objectives, Citizen Led could make it clear that there is one primary purpose - to generate community-led research that influences public policy and practice across City Hall and beyond, with the understanding that in order to achieve this, the three current objectives (engagement, developing community leaders, and generating actionable insights from each Project) all become important elements in achieving that primary purpose.
- Create many more opportunities for sustained two-way dialogue and relationship building, not just during the one-year cycle of the individual research projects, but over many years, for example:
 - Growing a network of Partner Community Organisations, Project Leads and Peer Researchers over time who can both feed into and connect with 'live' research projects in any given year, but also create a long-term resource for the GLA and wider policy makers to access. This would help ensure important voices, experience and learning are not lost from year to year.
 - Providing additional support or funding to facilitate sustained engagement, ensuring that past Project Leads and Peer Researchers, in particular, were able to come to meetings or respond to further requests to shape findings.
 - GLA staff going more often to their community spaces to meet Peer Researchers and build a direct link between them and the GLA.
- Expand the role of the Policy Lead as the key contact, ideally ensuring Policy Leads have some power to directly influence policy within the GLA, and ensure each Partner Community Organisation has a consistent relationship with a proactive and engaged Policy Lead. This would also allow the CE Team to focus on facilitating and enabling these relationships to grow, and fostering longer-term engagement and dialogue beyond the initial one-year project.
- Ensure greater clarity on the roles, responsibilities and expectations of Policy Lead, the CE Team, Partner Community Organisations, Project Leads and Peer Researchers from the start.
- Future programme developments should incorporate trauma informed care and support throughout the programme, potentially including additional training, guidance and budget allocation direct to Partner Community Organisations to provide aftercare support for those affected by the issue raised during the research process.
- Clarify the selection process for research themes and target communities through two processes:
 - From GLA policy teams reflecting their policy priorities; and
 - From previous target community groups themselves especially where they spot a specific GLA policy agenda into which their experiences would add value.

- Recognise and support common administrative burdens, for example:
 - Exploring options such as outsourcing funding administration to a third party.
 - Bulk purchasing stationery, supplies and equipment such as dictaphones, tablets, notepads and pens.
 - Providing simple project management tools for programme participants that would benefit all regardless of their research area.
- Continue to build the capacity of Partner Community Organisations to carry out and disseminate their research findings and ensure the voices of their lived experiences are heard as widely as possible, for example:
 - Further guidance on research design, tools and on different ways to present and collate findings for different audiences would be helpful to ensure findings land with different audiences and can be compared more readily.
 - Connecting Partner Community Organisations directly with different research teams within the GLA, so that they can provide advice and mentoring to groups around research for public policy making purposes.
 - More effectively use the GLA's convening power to bring together other organisations working to develop community leaders, exploring how Partner Community Organisations could work with Policy Leads to identify organisations or people they should reach out to who would have an interest in their research.
- Broadening training to include community organising, influencing and power mapping alongside research methods and storytelling.
- Fostering a peer learning environment by setting clear expectations that all those involved should look for the wisdom within and between each other and facilitating that process both with current and past Partner Community Organisations and Peer Researchers.
- Providing Peer Researchers with accreditation or a certificate of participation in Citizen Led.
- Both the CE Team and GLA could help Partner Community Organisations share their findings in a wider range of internal and external platforms - the GLA website, newsletters and social media for example. This could include short videos or quotes directly from Peer Researchers or Participants themselves, helping the unfiltered voices of lived experiences be heard much more widely.

All those that took part in this evaluation and helped to generate and prioritise these recommendations acknowledge that within both budget and time constraints it may not be possible to respond to every one of the recommendations made in this report. However, there was an overall consensus that all the key recommendations made here are important and that investment in these areas may need to be prioritised in the first instance over, for example expanding the number of individual research projects and communities that receive funding in future years.



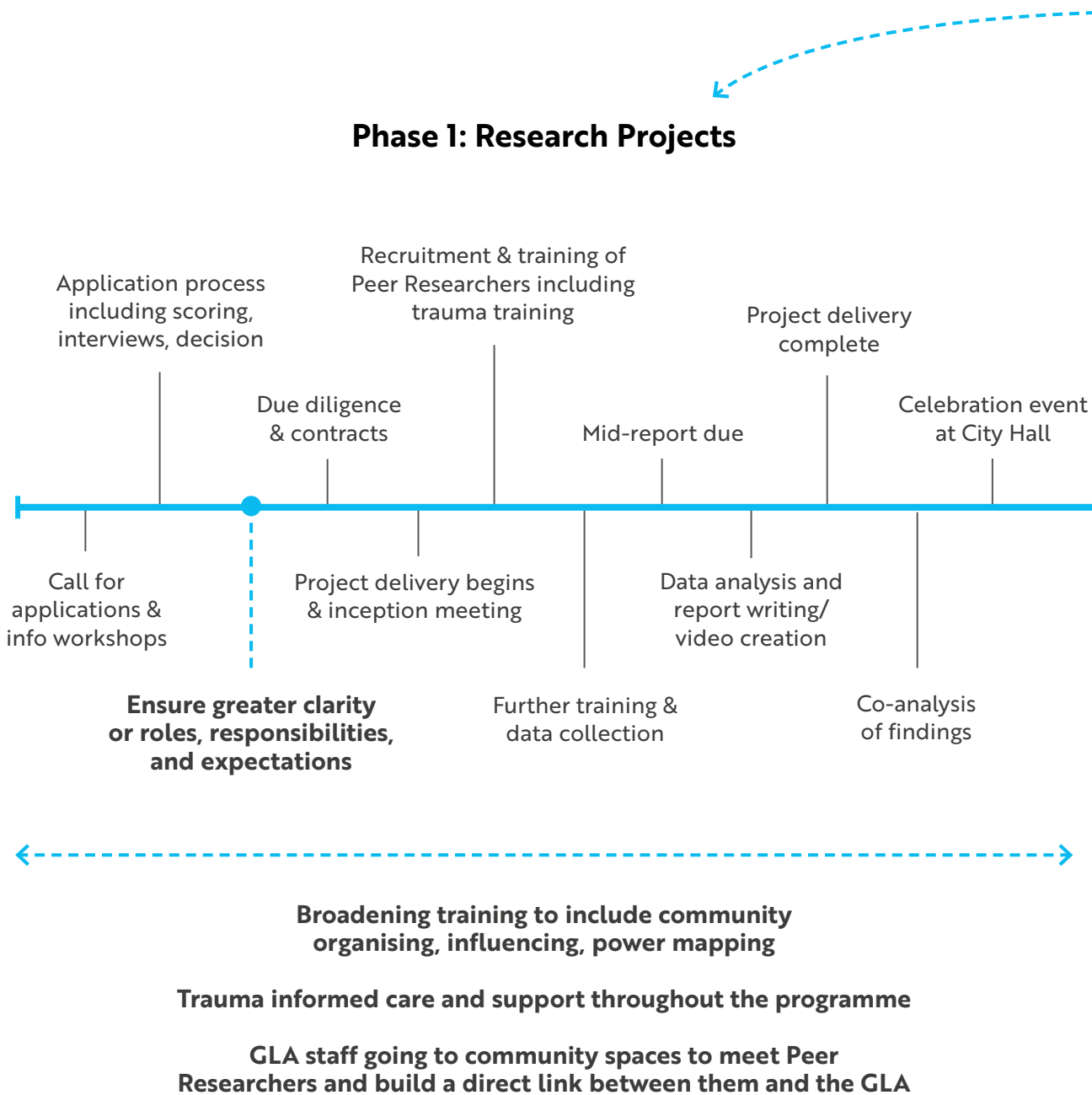
Photo from You Press. Credit: aimvphotography.com

Key

- Existing programme
- - - Additional recommendations

Overview of key recommendations

Purpose of Citizen Led: Ensuring a sustained two-way conversation between the GLA and communities who voice has been under-represented at City Hall to improve public policy making and practice.



Feeding into and connecting with "live" research projects

Phase 2: Long-Term Engagement

Growing a network of Partner Community Organisations, Project Leads and Peer Researchers

Wider GLA teams

Providing additional support or funding to facilitate sustained engagement

Accreditation for all Peer Researchers participation

Ongoing connection to wider GLA team facilitated by Project Leads

Using the GLA's convening power to reach out to other organisations who might be interested in the research

Continue to build the capacity of Partner Community Organisations to carry out and disseminate their research findings for different audiences

Continue to share Partner Community Organisation's findings to a wider range of internal and external platforms

Objective 1

Strengthen connections and engagement with communities whose voice and influence on public policy is under-represented at City Hall



A. Beyond research

Key strengths

Building on the pilot, Year 2 of the Citizen Led has continued to help to bring communities together, find their voice and share their stories on their terms, laying the foundations for deeper connection and engagement. In addition, while the pilot programme gradually focussed more on the peer research findings themselves in some cases weakening initial relationship building, in Year 2 the strong connections and relationships have been maintained throughout. Many of the areas for development highlighted from the pilot evaluation have been addressed, including providing clearer guidance for the Project Leads on the process, research themes and expected outputs. Allocating each Project

a dedicated Policy Lead, and the additional support provided to help Partner Community Organisations balance time and resources between community engagement work and the core research task, have both made a significant difference.

"The GLA helped us with forming the research questions. We drafted the questions and sent it to our Policy Lead and they sent feedback. It was quite a collaborative process."

Project Lead

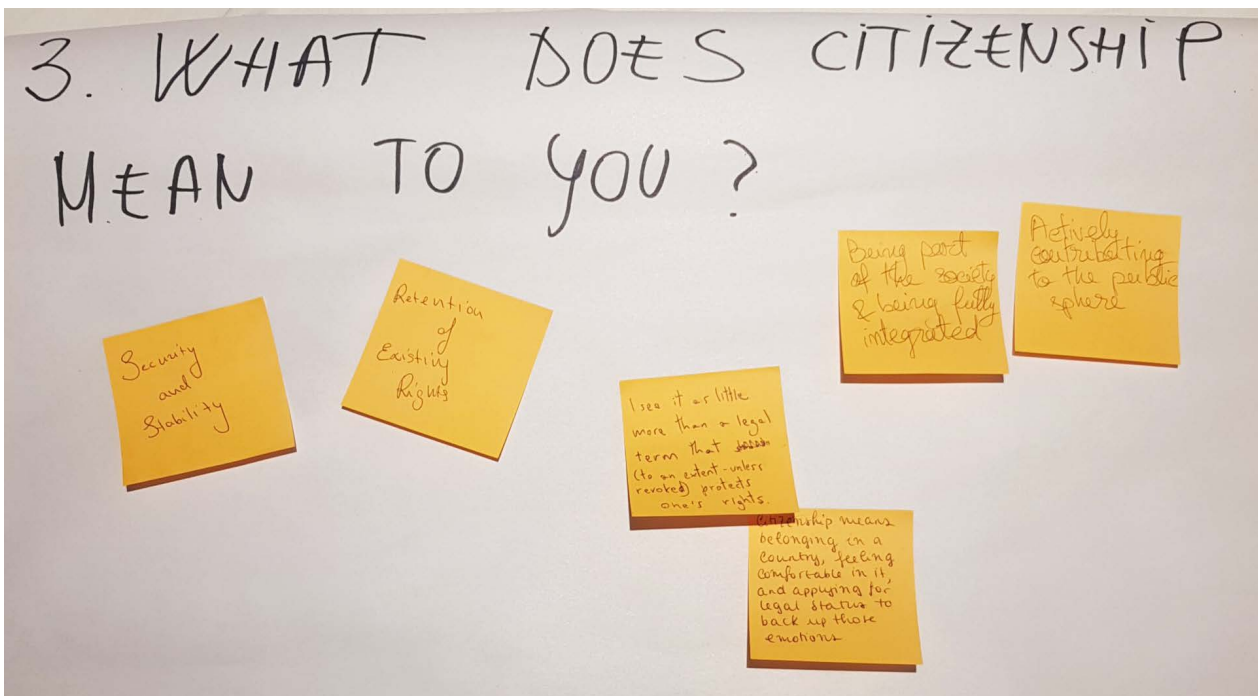
Areas for further development

Expectations around the programme's purpose remain unclear to many, echoing similar feedback from the pilot programme. For example, many Project Leads expected their research findings to directly influence a policy area within the GLA and they saw this as the main objective of the programme, while other interviewees indicated they saw the main objective of the programme as building capacity within Partner Community Organisations and within the community groups more generally. This has in some cases created tensions and undermined trust building efforts. Paradoxically, an emphasis on the importance of Objectives 1 and 2 of Citizen Led (to strengthen connections and engagement, and to identify and develop community leaders) over Objective 3 (to generate insights that others within the Greater London Authority can learn from

and act on) can in itself weaken the ability to achieve Objectives 1 and 2. In other words, it is much harder to achieve Objectives 1 and 2 if Objective 3 is not prioritised. This is also observed in a separate evaluation "Joanna Sawkins, 2019. Citizen-Led: Community Engagement or Community Research?" (see References on page 59) which highlighted a tension between the research element and the community engagement elements of Citizen Led.

"The most important objective for us is that our research will influence policy but I am still unclear if this is the main purpose of the programme"

Project Lead



the3million focus group brainstorm. Credit: Alexandra Bulat

Recommendations

Framing of programme objectives

We recommend that Citizen Led should make it clear that there is one primary purpose - to generate community-led research that influences public policy and practice across City Hall and beyond.

Having this as the primary purpose of Citizen Led will make expectations clearer, and helps frame the three current objectives (engagement, developing community leaders, and generating actionable insights from each Project) as important elements in achieving that ultimate purpose.

“I agree that the one main objective of this programme should be that the research projects will feed into policy making and practice. Community engagement and capacity building are tools that feed into the ultimate goal of influencing public policy.”

Project Lead

We think that apart from clarifying expectations, reframing in this way would have a number of important implications for the development of Citizen Led, in particular emphasising the need for more opportunities for sustained two-way dialogue and relationship building (see subsection B. Partnership of equals on page 21).

“ I agree with this [recommendation], the question for us is about what impact this programme will have and this needs to be made clear. The other objectives around engagement and capacity building are a given as a byproduct of community research. But for us, it's most important to influence policy makers and policy practice”

Project Lead

Expectations, roles and responsibilities

Project Leads highlighted that it would be helpful to be clear from the beginning what is realistic in terms of engagement with GLA policy makers. A 'minimum guarantee' of, for example, three catch-up meetings with Policy Leads over the course of the first year might work well. This would ensure Project Leads are clear on what to expect and what is required of them. Setting expectations should also include being clear about the difference between the role of the Policy Lead (as the key contact, connector, coach and mentor for each Project), and the CE team (as the primary facilitators, administrators and managers of the overall programme).

To facilitate this we suggest holding a formal meeting at the kick-off stage for all stakeholders, including Project Leads, Peer Researchers (those who are able to make the meeting), Policy Leads from different GLA departments, and members of the CE team, to come together, make introductions, and outline roles and responsibilities.

B. Partnership of equals

Key strengths

As we highlighted last year, Partner Community Organisations continue to feel positive about the extent to which they have been able to lead and shape their projects, with the GLA playing a supportive role rather than a controlling one. Project Leads, Peer Researchers, Policy Leads and members of the CE Team have all valued the many

opportunities created to connect on a level with each other and have open and honest discussions - not just about individual Projects but through this evaluative process also covering the purpose and development of the overall strategy for Citizen Led.



You Press Roots LDN Community Research Project Volunteers. Credit: aimvphotography.com

Areas for further development

As we stated in the pilot evaluation, maintaining this kind of engagement and openness is challenging - it takes time and sustained engagement not just during the one year cycle of each Project, but beyond. Long-term engagement helps to create an ongoing two-way conversation, building relationships and trust.

The pilot evaluation recommended, for example, that the GLA consider establishing

and maintaining a network of previous Peer Researchers, or consider supporting a smaller number of Partner Community Organisations over multiple years. Whilst one of the Partner Community Organisations from the pilot also took part in Year 2, in general, there is little ongoing engagement with Partner Community Organisations or Peer researchers from the pilot.

Recommendations

Making this a sustained two-way conversation

We believe Citizen Led can foster more sustained two-way conversation between Partner Community Organisations and the GLA. To achieve it needs to be clear that while the research findings from any individual Project in a given year may not directly lead to a change in policy, the GLA are committed to continuing to engage to shape policy over time - so that insights are fed regularly into the wider policy making "mix" (a mix which includes balancing these insights with other insights and research data outside of the remit of Citizen Led itself).

"A two-way dialogue is my expectation for any community engagement programmes. For example, it would be good to have feedback from key officials in the GLA around what are the key areas they would like to tease out in our research findings that links with the overall agenda of this subject area so that we can frame our research questions in a way that would be useful to the GLA"

Project Lead

Part of this we think could be achieved through investing in growing a network of Partner Community Organisations, Project Leads and Peer Researchers (we cover this in more detail under Objective 2 on page 31).

In addition, what is clear is that for Policy Leads, Project Leads, and for Peer Researchers who were able to participate in this evaluation process, keeping reflective spaces throughout the programme for both those involved in current 'live' projects, and those that have been involved from previous years is valued and should be developed further. This enables everyone to come together to contribute to the improvement of the programmes with a spirit of open, honest conversations and collaboration.

"The positives of this programme is that it opened a conversation [between the GLA and community groups], we will be interested to see what happens after the programme ends to see how we retain and nurture this relationship."

Project Lead

C. Engaging on the community's terms

Key strengths

Following on from the pilot programme, Project Leads continued to feedback that GLA staff were very supportive, flexible, and collaborative in the question design process as well as throughout the programme. A great example of this programme engaging on community's terms include utilising You Press, one of the Partner Community Organisations in Year 2 that was also involved in the pilot programme, to deliver storytelling workshops as part of the training programme for Project Leads.

"I think it is [Citizen Led] a brilliant programme. For me, it's my first project that I've worked on that takes representation seriously. Peer research is a unique and productive approach. It takes into consideration grassroots voices. The emphasis and value is on different communities and groups instead of people who claim to represent them"

Project Lead



GLA volunteers. Photo from The Royal Association for Deaf people

Areas for further development

While there is clearer guidance around the process, research themes and expected outputs, there was also some confusion around how the communities and research themes for Year 2 were selected. This was also noted in "Joanna Sawkins, 2019. Citizen-Led: Community Engagement or Community Research?" (see References on page 59). We feel the GLA could be clearer on both the process and rationale for selecting themes and communities.

An important factor in engaging on the community's terms is to spend time in those communities and use the spaces and places familiar to them wherever possible, e.g. by using local community venues as much as possible, and hearing from peers. This helps to make engagement less intimidating, allowing Participants to open up more freely and goes so way to equalising power imbalances between GLA staff and Participants.

We also think the accessibility of training and meetings could be further improved to increase participation and relevance, for example thinking about how it can fit in participants' including Peer Researchers' schedules and commitments.

Recommendations

Process and rationale for selecting research themes and community organisations

We feel there is a strong case for selection coming through two processes:

- More directly linked to areas that GLA policy teams are currently working where additional peer insight would be helpful;
- Coming from community groups themselves (either those from previous cohorts of the programme, or more widely), especially where they spot a specific GLA policy agenda into which their experiences would add value.

This would work well where there was a longer-term relationship and two-way dialogue between Partner Community Organisations and the GLA as described above.

“The idea of a two-way dialogue could be included in the design of the programme. For example, when we [the CE Team] were choosing the themes and communities, it would have been helpful if we had reached out to the organisations working closely with the identified themes and communities to ask them about key things we may need to take into consideration. This may also include having an advisory panel as some way of gathering information but reimbursing people for their time and insight”

Policy Lead

Going to communities

Partner Community Organisations noted that to meaningfully engage on the community's terms, it would be positive to see GLA staff going to their community spaces to meet Peer Researchers and build a direct link between them and the GLA. Perhaps future workshops or programme “roadshows” could be hosted in community spaces run by previous Partner Community Organisations, with Project Leads and Peer Researchers from previous years talking about their experience of the programme. Partner Community Organisations could also host training or meetings and be compensated for the use of their spaces.

Other ideas include having two year end celebrations, a more formal sharing of final reports at the GLA and another community-based event that is more light-hearted and informal where Peer Researchers may feel more comfortable inviting family and friends to come along to celebrate.

“We are all very proud of our community settings and proud of hosting events and inviting people to our spaces. It is nice to visit the GLA, they have really nice facilities but it is equally important that the GLA come to us and meet our community members. If there is an emphasis on developing community leaders and a two-way dialogue, GLA staff members need to come to our spaces to sympathize with community leaders and to understand where they come from.”

Project Lead

“ It is important for us [the CE Team] to seek out new venues, new places, to fully understand how these community organisations are working, where they are working and how they are working. This can help us make direct links and we can also use community venues for other events. It is also a nice idea to include previous programme participants.”

Policy Lead

“If the workshops are online, then we can’t assume that everyone has access to digital tools or wifi. It may be that if the courses are online, the partner organisations can organise peer researchers to come into our spaces to view the training together”

Project Lead

Making training & meetings more accessible

The GLA should consider when training is held to accommodate Peer Researchers that may live in different areas of London or have other commitments during the standard working hours. For example, future workshops could include a recorded element so that Peer Researchers who have commitments during the normal working hours can review the training materials on their own time.

Any online training however, would need to take into consideration issues of digital exclusion. Other ways to encourage greater participation may include repeating the same training around different areas of London so Partner Community Organisations do not always have to travel to central London and have a choice of times, dates, and locations.

D. It's the little things

Key strengths

It is clear that there are many 'little things' which become very important to help build trust and engagement. Apart from the core programme, Project Leads highlighted additional connections made with other policy departments in the GLA and beyond thanks to introductions from their Policy Leads. For example, some Partner Community Organisations met with The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and were very pleased to have that opportunity as it

demonstrated MOPAC was listening to their concerns and interested in their projects. Other Project Leads mentioned that their Policy Lead introduced them to other organisations and signposted them to relevant events which was greatly appreciated. Access to GLA facilities, such as room bookings has also been utilised and appreciated by many of the Partner Community Organisations where that has been possible to arrange.

Areas for further development

We feel that there are additional, low cost opportunities that could improve Citizen Led and build trust and engagement further. Part of this would be about ensuring the positive experiences highlighted here are felt more consistently across all Partner Community Organisations forming a part of the future Policy Lead role.

It would also be highly beneficial if the GLA were able to continue to recognise and support common administrative barriers faced by Partner Community Organisations, such as drawing down funding, preparing reports and accessing equipment.

One particular area which was also raised in the pilot evaluation were challenges with the GLA due diligence, funding timescales, reporting and oversight processes which are perceived as significant despite the relatively small grant value - and sometimes resulted in delays in drawing down their funding. For the smaller community organisations, the administration burden and cash flow challenges this creates can be significant.

Recommendations

Responding to common administrative challenges

The GLA could also more effectively use its convening power to bring together other organisations working to develop community leaders, enabling co-ordinated activity and deepening networks. This could be supported with relatively simple actions, such as sending out a monthly newsletter to Partner Community Organisations, Project Leads and even Peer Researchers to share opportunities or events.

Other 'little things' that Project Leads suggested would help include the GLA bulk purchasing stationery, supplies and equipment such as dictaphones, tablets, notepads and pens that they could lend to Partner Community Organisations or sell at a reduced price.

Ensuring each Partner Community Organisation has a consistent relationship with a proactive and engaged Policy Lead able to support that process would make a significant difference.

Due diligence, funding timescales, reporting and oversight processes

It is clear that this is likely to be an ongoing challenge if funding continues to be administered through the GLA, as the CE Team itself does not have the power to directly change these in the short term. Exploring options such as outsourcing of these arrangements to a third party could be a way to resolve these concerns.

We also feel that the GLA could provide simple project management tools for Project Leads that would benefit all regardless of their research area. Whilst all Partner Community Organisations submitted budgets in advance for acceptance onto the programme, once underway we still feel further guidance would be useful e.g. templates for expense forms, invoices or budget excel spreadsheets that make it clear how best to spend the lump sum funding e.g. what percentage to spend on research vs for dissemination efforts. This may also include a digital or comms toolkit for all Projects to support them when it comes to disseminating their findings.

"For the first two months of this programme we were just waiting for the funding to come through and doing paperwork, is there any way the programme timescales could take this into account or have a couple extra months for pre-project preparation?"

Project Lead

E. Trauma informed care and support

Key strengths

This is an area that was not raised in the pilot programme evaluation but has emerged as an important theme for Year 2.

Area for further development

Many research themes, particularly in Year 2 of Citizen Led were sensitive in nature and may be traumatic for those participating, for example gang violence. Some Partner Community Organisations raised concerns that Participants sharing their lived experience may find this in itself a traumatic experience, and many Peer Researchers felt they needed more support to understand and address this challenge. In addition, if it is not clear where the sensitive information is going or what will be done with that information, this could harm trust-building efforts.

Getting this right is key to building trusted relationships between the GLA and community groups as well as it being a primary responsibility to ensure the safety of Project Leads, Peer Researchers and in particular Participants.

“People think research is objective, data is objective. But these are people’s real lives and experiences. There needs to be more care for these people if we ask them to share and re-live their traumatic experience”

Project Lead

Recommendations

Trauma informed care and support

Future programme developments should incorporate trauma informed care and support throughout the programme.

At a basic level this may include an extra section on application forms asking if prospective Partner Community Organisations envisage any trauma related issues with their research project, alongside additional training and resources on how to maintain wellbeing for yourself and others particularly when researching a sensitive subject.

A more comprehensive response would consider budget allocation direct to Partner Community Organisations to provide after care support for those affected by issues raised during the research process. This could take place for example through a post-research reflection session within each Project attended by members of the CE Team to ensure that we learn more about how the research has made people feel. It might also be possible to include optional themed workshops for Participants to discuss and address any sensitive topics raised during the research process.



Photo from Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre. Credit: Emma Edes

Objective 2

Identify and develop community leaders



A. Training & Accreditation

Key Strengths

Project Leads in general thought that the training programme was excellent and delivered at the right times during the year. This is a strength that has continued and been built upon from the pilot programme.

As noted above, Project Leads saw the introduction of storytelling workshops in addition to the general research training as highly valuable.

There has increasingly been a tailoring of training workshops for specific Partner Community Organisations. For example, a tailored training session was provided for the Royal Association for Deaf people as their researchers are British Sign Language (BSL) users. The Royal Association for Deaf people noted that their research questions and methods may be different from other Partner Community Organisations and that they appreciated the support GLA had given them in organising separate training and giving them extra time to book BSL interpreters.

There were also some great examples where the GLA had helped to develop and invest in community leaders. For example, Farah Mohammoud from You Press, who participated in the pilot programme as well as Year 2 of Citizen Led, was selected into the GLA Civil Society Leadership Programme.

“Out of 150 applicants, You Press is one of the 25 most rooted, dynamic, determined community organisations in London that was selected for the first cohort of the Civic Futures programme. We are very honoured that we were selected for this unique programme that explored Transformative Social Change! The programme has been very helpful for growth and development, especially with the kind support from the GLA team, The Young Foundation Team, The Koreo Team and our coach; Lydia Hascott”

**Farah Mohammoud,
Project Lead from You Press**

Areas for further development

Given Project Leads have different levels of research experience whilst many felt the training was pitched really well, others were left feeling they needed a little more.

Beyond training in the research process itself, wider training needs were also identified both for Project Leads and Peer Researchers. As well as storytelling introduced this year, this could extend to include areas such as community organising, power mapping and influencing - alongside trauma informed care and support discussed on page 29.

It is also clear that there are opportunities for learning to happen amongst peers from across

Partner Community Organisations, rather than training necessarily having to be organised and put on directly by the GLA, although this would need some support and coordination.

Peer Researchers and Project Leads highlighted the potential for Peer Researchers to be accredited or recognised in some capacity for their work and participation - not only would that be greatly appreciated it would add significant value for the Peer Researchers themselves in their future work.



Photo from BlackOut UK December 2019 Brunch Event. Credit: Dane Black, BlackOut UK

Recommendations

Tailoring training

We would recommend that the existing training programme on research approaches continue to be provided to Peer Researchers or Project Leads that may have less research experience, but that for more experienced Project Leads instead of attending training, they could hold a session or series of sessions with other Project Leads and/or Peer Researchers where they could share best practice with each other. This may include previous Project Leads. As well as utilising the talents in the network, it was felt that this would help to build more of a community between Partner Community Organisations over time.

Broadening training

To further develop and invest in community leaders, the training programme could also extend beyond a focus on research and storytelling to include community organising, influencing and power mapping - helping community leaders to navigate the political process and to further build capacity in their communities to engage on a broader range of issues.

Fostering a peer learning environment

We feel there is significant untapped potential in the skills and experiences of Partner Community Organisations including both Project Leads and Peer Researchers. Setting the expectation from the start that all those involved should look for the wisdom within and between each other would emphasise the role of Partner Community Organisations in sharing their ideas and best practice with each other.

As well as sharing best practice on research methods between Project Leads mentioned

above, we think there are also other ways to foster a peer learning environment like this. For example. setting up a regular day where each Project Lead shares a certain skill or insight for an hour e.g, around storytelling, campaigning, research, community organising, lobbying.

Other opportunities might include grouping Partner Community Organisations who are researching similar topics together so they can evaluate their research projects and learn together - Project Leads and Peer Researchers alike - at key milestones each year.

Including previous Project Leads and Peer Researchers in these sessions could also be valuable if some resources could be allocated to support this and recognise their time, connecting with the idea of building a longer-term London-wide network of Partner Community Organisations and Peer Researchers discussed in more detail below.

“Getting organisations in the programme to get to know each other is very valuable. I only know one other organisation in the programme. If we get to know the other organisations, find out who is doing what, and exchange skills that would be great”

Project Lead

“If we get more opportunities to share more with each other [other programme participants] we can ask all the crazy questions behind the scenes to support and learn from each other”

Project Lead

Accreditation for peer researchers

Providing Peer Researchers with accreditation or a certificate of participation in Citizen Led would not only demonstrate that their work is valued and recognised, but give them something concrete to demonstrate on their CVs.

Creating a new accredited course could be expensive, though there may be opportunities to use modules or units from existing accredited qualifications - this would need some further research. We do think that formal accreditation of some form would be highly beneficial, though if the cost of that is prohibitive some formal recognition of a Peer Researcher's contribution such as a participation certificate or reference letter from the CE team would still make a difference.

"I can't agree with this recommendation more, a certificate of participation won't do much, it needs to be accredited. All of the peer researchers we work with are looking for work so it would be good to get a reference from the GLA"

Project Lead



Volunteer Training Workshop. Photo from The Traveller Movement

B. Growing a Peer Research network

Key strengths

Building on the strengths from the pilot programme, Citizen Led has supported Partner Community Organisations to engage and recruit Peer Researchers from diverse networks amongst their communities. This was valued as a means to capacity build those organisations, and deepen their connection with their communities, as well as being of great benefit to the Peer Researchers themselves. Almost all Peer Researchers enjoyed taking part in the research project and reported that their skills and confidence had grown.

“Peer researchers are really happy with their work and being part of the Programme, they always ask “can we be doing more?”

Project Lead

Areas for further development

Whilst Partner Community Organisations, including Project Leads and Peer Researchers have got a great deal from Citizen Led locally, there remains a desire to enhance their networks more widely across London both to other community organisations and with policy makers beyond just the GLA.

Throughout this report we have highlighted a range of opportunities to foster such connection, and emphasise the importance for sustained two-way dialogue between the GLA and the communities who have taken part in Citizen Led.

Given the significance of this to achieving the stated objectives of the programme, we feel one of the most important areas for development would be to invest in sustaining those relationships through a growing network of Partner Community Organisations and Peer Researchers.

Recommendations

Developing a network of trained peer researchers

We think the GLA could invest in developing a network of trained Peer Researchers and Partner Community Organisations. That network could both feed into and connect with 'live' research projects in any given year, but also create a long-term resource for both the GLA and wider policy makers to access - helping ensure important voices, experience and learning is not lost from year to year.

At a basic level, this may include sending out regular newsletters and holding at least one annual network event to keep Peer Researchers informed about any opportunities to engage with the GLA (such as paid research opportunities, learning opportunities or other networking opportunities). This has already happened in one instance where the GLA asked Peer Researchers from the pilot to participate in paid research opportunities around Windrush and The London Community Story. This is a great example of continued engagement and we feel should be continued and expanded upon.

We are aware that there have been some attempts to develop such a network following on from the pilot programme, including attempts to connect Peer Researchers with a wider network of other peer researchers across London and with organisations that specialise in peer research such as the Youth Foundation and the London Youth, but that there was low uptake and engagement. However, we still feel this is a goal worth continuing to pursue, perhaps bringing in expertise around network development.

Key to getting this right in our experience is to keep trying over a sustained period of time, and not to be too disappointed with low uptakes initially. Ultimately the success of such a network depends on building relationships of trust over time, and is not something everyone will be interested in. As part of this it will be important to really understand what Peer Researchers and Partner Community Organisations might value from an ongoing network and to check-in regularly as the network develops.

"A lot of our peer researchers are interested in continuing to work with the GLA, if there are more opportunities in the future they will definitely take up to it. Another example could include forming a peer research advisory group to help shape the next iteration of the programme"

Project Lead

"Our peer researchers would enjoy this [being part of a network of peer researchers], I don't know if our peer researchers even know they are part of a bigger programme or if they know other peer researchers. They are pleased to have done this project but don't have a sense of what the GLA thinks of their research, their role in and connection to the wider programme"

Project Lead

C. Beyond City Hall

Key strengths

Partner Community Organisations were very appreciative of any connections made beyond City Hall, a clear development from the pilot programme brought about in part through the introduction of dedicated Policy Leads for each Project. For example, it was mentioned that the GLA invited partner programme participants to roundtables with organisations that work with specific communities as well as workshops, for example, focussed on data skills .

Areas for further development

Whilst such connections beyond City Hall have developed, this was not consistent across Partner Community Organisations. The wider convening role of Policy Leads was not made explicit, instead relying on individual Policy Leads to identify the potential themselves as a aside to their core role.

The convening and connecting power to the GLA is significant and we believe could be a key strength of Citizen Led if used more deliberately. For example, Partner Community Organisations were also interested in exploring how they could work with Policy Leads to identify organisations or people they should reach out to who would be interested in their research findings.

Recommendations

Exploiting the GLA's convening and connecting power across London

Making connections and convening conversations beyond City Hall could be made an explicit part of the Policy Lead and CE Team's roles. This might include, for example holding a brainstorming session at the start of each Project where Policy Leads and Partner Community Organisations co-develop a stakeholder or power map and through this process, identify contacts or other network opportunities they or the GLA might be able to access.

"A key strength of this programme and where the Community Engagement Team adds value, is our ability to connect organisations internally and externally to other organisations"

Policy Lead



Photo from Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre. Credit: Emma Edes

Objective 3

To generate insights that others within Greater London Authority can learn from and act on



A. Research

Key strengths

The approach to and value of peer research that Citizen Led has created was appreciated by everyone as an important way for communities to share their stories and open up on their own terms through conversations and/or focus groups.

Since the pilot programme efforts to connect each Partner Community Organisation with an individual Policy Lead have been made. Policy Leads have been drawn from one of the GLA wider policy teams or a member of the CE Team. All of these developments have helped improve both the quality of the research and the experience of Project Leads, Peer Researchers and Participants.

Areas for further development

Although very welcome efforts had been made to connect each Partner Community Organisation with a Policy Lead, those contacts were quite varied in their position within the GLA and their seniority and it wasn't always clear to either Policy Leads or Project Leads exactly what their remit was. Being clear about this role, and ideally ensuring that partner organisations are able to have direct contact to someone with some power to directly influence policy was highlighted as an area for development.

In addition, at present Citizen Led is focussed on a series of individual peer research projects over the course of one year, with dissemination of the findings following shortly afterwards. However, Policy Leads highlighted that this wasn't usually a long enough relationship to enable them to effectively champion the

research findings and support communities to use the findings to influence those who have the power to change policy and practice. If relationships are to extend beyond the initial one year peer research Partner Community Organisations would need additional support or funding to be able come to meetings or respond to further requests to shape findings.

“For some of the research projects, it is up to the Policy Lead in the Community Engagement Team to link with the relevant team within the GLA that is in charge of that policy area but this needs translation. It needs someone to translate what the Community Partner Organisations did and knowing where the knowledge will land. This may be a challenge for some Policy Leads.”

GLA policy lead



Photo from Diversity Living Services Workshop. Credit: Fatimah Firdous

Recommendations

Timescales

We would suggest that an ongoing dialogue beyond the one year research project timeframe is important, both for building trust as highlighted above but also in generating insights that can have a direct impact on policy.

To achieve this there will need to be a recognition of costs of work done by Partner Community Organisations that want to continue a dialogue with the GLA. This connects directly to the idea of growing a peer research network described above.

Connection to policy leads and the role of the community engagement team

The role of the key contact for each community organisation is important. For there to be a meaningful two-way dialogue over time, ideally Partner Community Organisations taking part need direct contact to someone with some power to influence policy e.g. someone who sits in a relevant policy department. There have been efforts to achieve this already in Year 2 of Citizen Led with a mix of key contacts and seniority from within GLA policy teams and the community engagement team. Our sense is that this would work best where each group has a direct connection to a Policy Lead within a GLA policy team, with the role of the CE Team more focussed on facilitating and enabling these relationships to grow, and fostering longer-term engagement and dialogue beyond the initial one-year project.

“An explicit recognition that it is a two-way dialogue may give more ownership to Policy Leads to build up relationships between Community Partner Organisations and other organisations or GLA departments that have influence in the related policy area”

Policy Lead

B. Analysis, presentation and dissemination

Key strengths

One of the key strengths of the programme is that it provides a platform for Partner Community Organisations and communities to share their stories and this was greatly valued by all Project Leads. The storytelling workshop was valued highly and Partner Community Organisations liked that there was a final celebratory event planned to share the findings with each other, even if this has had to be delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Building on the key strengths of the pilot programme, Project Leads had a great deal of flexibility on how they approach their Projects. This allowed Partner Community Organisations to be creative, which in turn made the project much more engaging for Peer Researchers and Participants, as well as allow it to be more tailored and responsive to a local context.

There have also been some important developments since the pilot programme with Partner Community Organisations themselves having greater research experience and capability, alongside increased investment in research training and support, as well as more direct connection with Policy Leads with additional experiences to offer. This has resulted in a marked difference in the quality of the research findings in most cases and helped findings be more clearly disseminated and acted upon both within the GLA and beyond.



Members of the Sistah Space team with the speaker of Hackney, February 2019. Photo from Sistah Space

Areas for further development

The flexibility in the design, communication and dissemination of each of the findings from across each project is a key strength. However, as with the pilot programme this also raises the challenge that the findings can be too diverse, hard to compare and potentially 'lost in translation' when shared with other City Hall departments or wider policy makers.

Further guidance on research design, tools (including for example how to conduct focus groups that are more creative, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of each community), and on different ways to present and collate findings for different audiences could still be helpful to ensure findings land with different audiences and can be compared more readily.

Many of the Partner Community Organisations cited different pieces of similar, but not exactly the same, pieces of research that their findings could feed into and expand upon. For example, one Project Lead felt that national reports and statistics on areas of relevance to their specific community did not fully cover

an intersection of that community - so their research project and wider experience might be one way to highlight this and help address a research gap. Other Project Leads noted that they were aware of other organisations conducting similar research and that it would be valuable to contribute their research findings to a wider research agenda around a specific topic.

Finally, the potential of the GLA to use both their internal and external platforms - such as newsletters and social media - to share insights and research findings from across each Project was felt to be significant and could be utilised more effectively to ensure that the voices of lived experience are widely heard.

Recommendations

Research support for partner organisations

The GLA should continue to invest in guidance on research design, tools, and on different ways to present and collate findings to ensure findings land with different audiences, are considered as robust as possible and can be compared more readily (e.g. touching on what might be considered appropriate sample sizes and how to frame questions to avoid inherent bias). Such guidance could be continuously improved each year, and incorporate the expertise shared by more experienced Partner Community Organisations themselves over time.

Connecting Partner Community Organisations directly with different research teams within the GLA, so that they can provide advice and mentoring to groups around research for public policy making purposes could also be made an explicit part of the Policy Lead role, ideally where the connection is made with people who have knowledge and understanding of peer research methods. Both Project Leads and Policy Leads were receptive to this idea and noted that such light touch support or guidance from the GLA research teams would demonstrate that it's not just the CE Team that is interested in engaging with communities but other departments within the GLA as well.

The need for further research support is also raised in "Joanna Sawkins, 2019. Citizen-Led: Community Engagement or Community Research?" (see References on page 59) which suggests partnering with research providers and institutions, to build capability and capacity.

"Research for policy making and influencing is a skill, to have the GLA research team support or mentor us in that process would be amazing. For example, we have never done a policy briefing before so it would be great if someone on the research team walk us through how to write a simple policy briefing"

Project Lead

Disseminating findings for different audiences

Both the CE Team and GLA could help Partner Community Organisations share their findings in a wider range of internal and external platforms - the website, newsletters and social media for example. This could take many forms, but needn't be limited to a full publication of research findings. It could include short videos or quotes directly from Peer Researchers or Participants themselves for example, helping the unfiltered voices of lived experiences be heard much more widely.

"If the GLA shares our research findings and/or video on the GLA website or twitter, this would mean so much to our community. They would hold so much pride in this as they worked really hard on the research project."

Project Lead

Conclusion

One of the Mayor's priorities is to address inequalities in voice and power in the capital. This is a bold ambition, one which the GLA alone cannot realise and one which will clearly require sustained focus over many years.

In response to this priority, the CE Team have themselves set out an ambitious programme in Citizen Led which has continued to grow and develop from the pilot programme. Whilst relatively small in scope, we believe Citizen Led has already laid important foundations and begun to realise its potential as an important part of achieving this a long-term ambition.

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 Citizen Led's objectives.

Throughout this report we have made a wide range of recommendations, the most important of which are summarised in Summary of key findings and recommendations on page 10. As Citizen

Led continues to develop we feel the single most important learning to date has been the need to invest not just in a wide range of peer research projects but to ensure that there is a sustained two-way conversation between the GLA and communities who voice has been under-represented at City Hall - with a clear focus on how such a evolving conversation can directly improve public policy making and practice across the capital.

We have been delighted to carry out this qualitative evaluation, and have truly valued the engaged and collaborative discussions we have had with everyone involved. In the end this evaluation report is not ours, but a joint effort and we hope it helps both celebrate the great achievements of the past two years, as well as provide spring recommendations that are realistic and can help further strengthen this important work.

**Bob Thust and Karen Lam,
The Social Change Agency**

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 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: 0207 084 2572 or communityengagement@london.gov.uk

With thanks to Partner Community Organisations

An overview of each of the 11 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 11 have provided contact details and would be delighted to hear from you.



advancecharity.org.uk

Founded in 1998, Advance is an award-winning charity working to tackle issues affecting vulnerable women and girls. Based in London, we are a women-only organisation delivering services for women by women, helping those experiencing domestic violence to be safe and take back control of their lives, and ensuring those who have committed crime are supported to break the cycle of re-offending and prevent the breakdown of families. Advance's Minerva project provides support for women and girls who have committed offences with holistic, trauma-informed support to address the often multiple, complex issues across the nine pathways to offending.

The aim of this research was to gain insight into the experiences of young women who are involved in the criminal justice system to inform the continued development of tailored support for this cohort. This project meets the GLA aims of strengthening connections and engagement with under-represented voices by improving insights into communities who do not currently have a voice in City Hall to inform policy and practice. Our current objective, which is the first step towards achieving our long-term goal, is to identify the determinants of behaviour pertaining to early sexual relationships and also explore the impact of these early relationships on longer-term health outcomes and the risk of offending.

Contact: Ashleigh Murray
ashleigh.m@advancecharity.org.uk
admin@advancecharity.org.uk
020 39533111



blkoutuk.com

We mobilise gay/bi and/or trans men of African descent in the UK through network-building, arts and cultural production/events, an online magazine, social media, a mobile app, newsletter, online courses, a monthly community 'brunch', and through incubating collaborative enterprise. We believe in starting from what's strong to build resilient communities, with the capacity to support healing from the traumas of injustice.

Black queer men should have access to each other as a resource for their personal and collective liberation. Together, we work to address shared challenges, create platforms for our voices, build networks to support our aspirations, and enable each other to play a more active role in the communities of which we are part. We are unique in our evidence based, inter-generational, unapologetic, radical, asset-based, collaborative approach.

BlackOut UK - the Black queer men's community-building collective, is working with the Mayor of London to better understand the experiences, needs and aspirations of bi/gay/trans/queer men of African descent in London and how they relate to the Mayor's policy priorities.

We undertook a six month community-led research project, that builds on the (limited) existing research knowledge, and centres groups of men who are most likely to draw on support from statutory services in health, education, policing, housing and/or social care:

- under 25 - experience of seeking asylum in the UK - living with HIV - over 55 - trans experience.

Throughout, we sought to create opportunities for participants to build their personal and collective sense of belonging, to influence the shape of the research project, and identify with the research outputs. At the same time, we worked closely with the relevant policy teams in the Mayor of London's office to ensure that the knowledge gained can be connected to the Mayor's policy strategies - and maximise the chances of the research having a policy impact and life beyond the publication/dissemination of the final report.

Contact: Rob Berkeley
contact@blkoutuk.com



www.diversityliving.org

Diversity Living Services (DLS) is a charity organisation which aims to promote equality & diversity by supporting BAME people in accessing services and opportunities through advice, training, advocacy, participation and engagement with mainstream services. As an organisation which was established in 2002, DLS has created a strong foundation in Edmonton Green and in Enfield as a borough. We have various services all of which came into existence due to the need of our community members. Every month, DLS runs two workshops on chronic health conditions, offers weekly nutritional coaching to local members of the community and provides one to one support on welfare issues.

Currently, DLS is working on a Youth Project titled 'Stand Up Against Youth Violence' supported by the Mayor of London. The project aims to invite young people (13-25) in order to train them on how to become researchers with the support of experienced members. We have already undertaken this task, and to date we have trained 17 young people using the oral history research methodologies.

The purpose of the research is to get young members in the community to work with parents and guardians to find solutions and ways of tackling youth crimes. The young people who we have trained have taken the lead but they are still supported by experienced researchers on the researching, interviewing and recording. The questionnaires were put together by us as a team and focus on social challenges. The questions are for parents and caregivers, who we as an organisation feel are neglected when policies and strategies against youth violence are being implemented.

Contact: Kawsar Abdallah
info.diversity@diversityliving.org
02088036161



www.hopscotchawc.org.uk

Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre is a community where BAME women are respected and safe, and achieve their full potential. Our values are rooted in protecting and promoting women and girls' human rights and ensuring their safety, working with all ethnic minority women.

Our research project recruited community researcher's living in and around Euston station in Camden on how the surrounding area been effected by HS2 construction work. They interviewed residents, businesses and those working around Euston on how its impacted on their safety, crime and their relationship with the police.

Contact: Luthfa Khan
info@hopscotchawc.org.uk
020 7388 8198



www.reap.org.uk

'REAP' is Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership, an independent, refugee-led, membership organisation in West London. We aim to influence policy decisions and practices, and empower refugees and asylum-seekers so they can live equally as valuable and valued members of British society.

Refugees and other migrants who speak other languages, but not English, can struggle to access the range and quality of services they need, even in London. They have little chance of talking to the people who design services and make policy. So REAP 'Speaker' Connectors are going to give them a voice by listening to them speak and tell their stories in their own languages, and translating what they say to present their views directly to decision-makers.

People who don't speak English build strategies to cope and to communicate with staff in formal organisations: they use Google and smart phones, turn to friends and family to help interpret and translate, seek out shops and services where there are staff who speak their language, and many other strategies. Service/statutory bodies can take positive action to build on what refugees and migrants are already doing for themselves.

In our project

- 'Speakers' describe lived experiences and views in depth, in their own languages – Eg. Dari/Farsi, Somali, Tamil, Arabic (Syrian, Iraqi, Iranian), Lingala, Eritrean and Ethiopian languages, plus Bangladeshi languages, French, Spanish.
- 'Connectors', many who themselves learned English after arriving in London will interview, translate, reflect, present; becoming increasingly capable, engaged, confident and articulate connection-builders in West London.
- Other bi-lingual and multi-lingual Londoners tell their stories one to one, in focus groups and/or in workshops.
- People's experiences and stories are collected and form a valuable data bank to see and show patterns, lessons and recommendations.
- Main topics in 2019/20: Access to interpreters (interpreters at GPs); Access to English learning.

Contact: Sarah Crowther

sarah@reap.org.uk

01895 441 530

the salmon youth centre
in Bermondsey



salmonyouthcentre.org

Salmon Youth Centre has been reaching out to young people in inner-city London for over a hundred years. We inspire young people to reach their potential and contribute positively to the community in which they live. We promote positive change in young people and support their transition to adulthood in three key ways: Improving young people's Health & Wellbeing; Preparing young people for Education & Work and; Involving young people in positive Community Engagement.

Our research project looked to engage young people aged 14 – 19 years with the hopes of answering the question: How do young people and the community view the police? Peers researchers within the same age bracket conducted surveys and set up focus groups with over 80 young people from the Southwark area in South East London, whom our organisation primarily serve. After data had been collected and analysed, our peer researchers had the voices of the participants heard by police on North Bermondsey Ward Safer Neighborhoods' Panel and continue to work towards making connections with other local and national authorities.

Contact: Amma Appiah
amma.appiah@salmonyouthcentre.org
020 7237 3788



www.sistahspace.org

Sistah Space is a charity dedicated to supporting African and Caribbean heritage women and girls affected by domestic sexual abuse. The organisation was founded following the death of Valerie Forde a black woman from Hackney, and her 23-month-old daughter RJ. A homicide review found that a series of mistakes were made by the Metropolitan police that could have contributed to the death of Valerie and RJ.

Our research project was born out of the need to activate change within a system that systematically discriminates against African and Caribbean heritage people. Among the many challenges is the relationship between the black community and the police.

Sistah Space used this research project as an opportunity to take an in-depth look at whether there was in fact a gap between the black community and the government institutions supposedly in place to help. Specifically if and why black women are hesitant to report abuse or any crime to the police. The project lead for this research was Djanomi Headley, who coordinated a team of participants to conduct surveys and interviews. The results found that the majority of women who participated have had a negative experience with police and would be extremely reluctant to trust them in a moment of crisis. We hope to use these findings to activate change by highlighting discriminative systems and giving a voice to those who too often go unheard. This project is in the hope of not only changing policy but making a difference visibly within the African & Caribbean heritage community.

Contact: Djanomi Headley
sistahspace1@gmail.com
07904396387



Royal Association for Deaf people

www.royaldeaf.org.uk

The Royal Association for Deaf people are a passionate team that work tirelessly to secure funding and deliver a wide range of services to Deaf people in their first language, BSL. We consult with our clients on a regular basis to review our current provision and to measure that we are meeting their needs and providing services that are the most supportive to them but we do have some limitations based on the availability of funding provided. For example, one of the most popular services that we receive funding for is Information, Advice and Guidance run by a team of qualified staff in BSL. The services (6 currently in London) are well attended, some of them have waiting lists and on occasion clients have regrettably had to be turned away because we have been unable to meet the demand on the day. One service, at City Lit accepts visitors from outside their Borough and Deaf clients travel long distances to attend a session there to seek support for a variety of reasons. For some time, we have been concerned that Deaf people do not have accessible access to quality advice and we know from experience that can lead to serious consequences. Deaf people have a limited choice of options available to them, in all areas of advice support including employment, careers or health as examples. Our provision supports the well-being of our service users as our interventions have prevented Deaf clients from becoming homeless, losing their benefits, falling into debt and having their utilities cut off, to name but a few issues that without support they would struggle to understand the implications of the situation.

We have not had the time or resources to carry out our own research so we saw the Citizen Led Programme as a great opportunity to learn more about the best ways to engage and find out more about how Deaf people felt about their access to advice services across the London Boroughs.

Contact: Emma Hampson
emma.hampson@royaldeaf.org.uk
0300 688 2525



travellermovement.org.uk

The Traveller Movement (TM) is a leading national charity committed to the fulfilment of Human Rights for ethnic minority Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) people. The Traveller Movement's mission is to develop a platform and voice for Travellers, working in solidarity with GRT communities to achieve equality through self-determination and proactive participation in influencing and shaping policy.

The Traveller Movement trained 11 young peer researchers in basic qualitative research skills and assisted them in creating a questionnaire. The peer researchers interviewed forty four 15 - 25 year old Travellers in London about the barriers they have faced in education. Their findings were transformed into a [video](#) and to a [booklet](#).

Contact: Jenni Berlin

partnershipsmanager@travellermovement.org.uk

020 7607 2002



www.the3million.org.uk

the3million is the largest organisation campaigning for EU migrants' rights in the UK. It was formed after the 2016 EU referendum to protect the rights of people who made the UK their home, regardless of the Brexit outcome. the3million is an organisation for and of migrants. The organisation has been lobbying on EU migrants' rights in the UK and the EU, especially on the changes needed on the EU Settlement Scheme to ensure that no one is left behind. The team also campaigns on preserving and extending voting rights for migrants. Alongside lobbying activities, the3million is involved in media work, legal challenges and a variety of research projects with university partners and other civil society groups.

The Young Europeans research project, managed by Alexandra Bulat (Chair of Young Europeans at the3million), explored what do young European Londoners know and think about their rights and politics in the UK. This Citizens' Led Engagement Programme enabled 12 young European peer researchers and one documentary producer to do paid work experience with the3million during the summer of 2019. The team focussed on the experiences of 16-30-year-old Europeans in London, from 11 nationality groups who are less represented in policymaking (Danish, Romanian, Belgian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Dutch, Greek, Latvian, Slovak, Swiss and Albanian) and from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds (in pre-university education, on low income and/or with dependants).

The project outputs include: a research report based on 20 focus groups; a briefing paper with recommendations on settlement and citizenship policies and political rights of migrants; and a documentary reflecting the research findings, with interviews from local London politicians, focus group participants, peer researchers, City Hall representatives and the3million team.

Contact: Alexandra Bulat
alexandra.bulat@the3million.org.uk
07745 908661



YOU PRESS

youpress.org.uk

You Press is an award-winning social enterprise based in London. Our projects empower young people (between 16-30 years old) and under-represented communities to find their voice and be heard. This involves challenging stereotypes and stigmas about young people and communities through the creative arts, media, training and writing.

We are committed to working with young people & communities from varied social and cultural backgrounds. At You Press we believe in the power of words and stories to change lives for the better and our mission is to use creative arts and writing to empower people to find their voice and be heard.

We are working with The London Mayor's 'Citizen Led Engagement Team to deliver a unique community research project that will focus on social inclusion, integration and developing civic leadership in communities that currently do not have a voice in City Hall.

This year we carried out an in-depth research & analysis with the BAME community in order to gain an insight on how this community is affected by serious youth violence and crime in London. Our aim is to find out the barriers faced by the BAME community, when it comes to social integration, sense of belonging and their voices being heard with a specific focus on serious youth violence in London. Our aim is to also provide a creative outlet for the community stories, experiences and voices by working with the young and creative researchers.

Contact: Farah Mohammoud

farah.mohammoud@youpress.org.uk

020 7286 2722

References

Bob Thust, The Social Change Agency, 2018. 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. Available from: <https://thesocialchangeagency.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Citizen-Led-Report.pdf>

Greater London Authority, 2019. The Mayor of London's Citizen Led Engagement Programme Funding Prospectus Round 2- 2019/20. Available from: <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/prospectus-citizen-led-engagement-programme-201920.pdf>

Joanna Sawkins, 2019. Citizen-Led: Community Engagement or Community Research? Recommendations ahead of Year Two evaluation and Year Three planning. Available from: <https://docdro.id/XJHw1tr>

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. Everything we do, from research projects to unconferences, movement building strategies to communities of practice, is designed to connect people and enable them to build the skills, knowledge and networks to make change happen.

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.

Karen Lam, Consultant at The Social Change Agency supported this evaluation. Karen specialises in building people powered networks and fostering cross-sectoral relationships for change. She is currently managing the Losing Control Network, a peer-led network of over 400 individuals across sectors who are implementing ways of working that share power more equally. Prior to joining SCA, Karen has worked in the housing sector and the health sector as a researcher and currently she is a trustee of CAYSH, charity that supports young people facing homelessness

**Contact: hello@thesocialchangeagency.org
www.thesocialchangeagency.org**

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.

www.thesocialchangeagency.org
[@socialchangeag](https://twitter.com/socialchangeag)