

My London Evaluation

Final report

Greater London Authority

June 2024



Please tell us about your day

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Case study

This summer was an extremely valuable experience to me, and I know my team felt the same way. We were given freedom to strategize and go out into the community to get the full picture for this project and the ability to hear that London talked greatly, especially as young people who know what will appeal to other young people.

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Introduction

My London was a two-year programme (2022-2024) which funded the delivery of youth social action opportunities by three-cross borough partnerships of voluntary sector organisations. The programme was established in response to the growing concern around young people's mental health due to the impacts of COVID-19.

My London attempted to engage young who were less likely to access youth social action opportunities to achieve four overarching aims:

1. Improve mental health outcomes for targeted groups of young people
2. Increase sustainable social action and volunteering opportunities for young people
3. Amplify youth voice in the paired boroughs
4. Support youth organisations to improve collaboration across the paired boroughs.

My London brought together three cross-borough partnerships – Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge; Ealing and Hillingdon, and Greenwich and Lewisham, to offer youth social action opportunities to local young people. Partnerships engaged a range of young people across the two years of the programme, and supported young people to develop social action projects addressing key issues of interest to them – from local youth provision to social media use among young people.

Renaisi was appointed as the evaluation partner for the My London programme. Over the course of the two years we have engaged closely with partner organisations and young people to explore their experiences of being involved in the My London programme and delivering youth social action. This report presents the findings of our evaluation over the two years of the programme, with learnings and recommendations for supporting delivery of social action and partnership working in the future.

The cross-borough partnerships

Each of the three cross-borough partnerships initially engaged five organisations across the two boroughs they worked across. One of these partners was designated as the lead partner, responsible for distributing the funding and coordinating the other partners. Lead partners were determined internally and comprised of the partner with the most capacity to manage the partnership. Organisations ranged in size, experience of working with young people, and experience running youth social action.

Before delivery of My London commenced, the organisations engaged in these partnerships were brought together for a six-month Design Lab. This Design Lab was facilitated by an external partner and brought the partnerships together twice a month to develop their partnerships and team build, plan what youth engagement would look like, generate ideas, and map key stakeholders they could engage with.

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge

- **Frenford Clubs** was the lead partner of the Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership. The club owns a sporting complex which is open 7 days a week, 9am until 10pm. They employ a senior management team of four and eight duty staff. Along with running the complex they engage young people in sport every day of the week but they had not engaged in youth social action.
- **Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance** are a volunteer led and run dance studio engaging young people across Barking and Dagenham in dance classes, leadership projects, career advice, and wrap-around support. They run a youth leadership programme encouraging young people to learn how to communicate their views.
- **Muslimah Sports** are a volunteer led and run sports organisation offering sport sessions for Muslim women and girls. They work with young people however this is not their main cohort as they work with Muslim women of all ages. They had not engaged in youth social action before this programme.
- **Shpresa Programme** engages the Albanian community in a range of holistic activities supporting them to engage meaningfully in British society. They employ 7 staff and have over 100 volunteers. They engage young people in a number of ways and have experience delivering youth social action.
- **Lifeline Community Projects** deliver a number of projects across London targeting various cohorts. They were the organisation to originally identify the partners that should be involved in My London however after the design lab phase they pulled out of the project, returning the funding to the lead partner.

Ealing and Hillingdon

- **Ealing and Hounslow CVS** were the lead partner of the Ealing and Hillingdon partnership. As a CVS they had a lot of experience of working in partnership with other organisations but had no experience of delivering youth programmes or youth social action on their own. They employ 10 staff members.
- **Heston West Big Local** is a Big Local working with local people to improve their community. One of their activities includes engaging young people in youth action to influence public decision making. Over the course of the programme Heston West Big Local passed it's funding and the My London project to C-Change West London, engaging the same staff member as lead of the My London engagement.
- **Hillingdon Autistic Case and Support (HACS)** are a charity committed to raising the awareness, knowledge and understanding of autism. They have a lot of experience of engaging autistic young people and run several programmes for them. They have a team of staff.
- **Each Counselling** are a counselling service that offer services for young people but do not engage young people in youth provision youth social action. Over the course of the programme they reduced their engagement due to capacity, offering assistance where necessary for the young people engaged in the programme.
- **Spark! Charity** work with young people to help them develop the skills they need to be ready for the workforce by the time they finish education. They work doing employment mentoring more than youth social action and were engaged to provide this support for the partnership.

Greenwich and Lewisham

- **Lewisham Youth Theatre** were the lead partner of the Greenwich and Lewisham partnership. They engage young people in theatre activities and have an existing members' committee where young people guide the direction the organisation is going.
- **Tramshed** are a theatre company in Woolwich that offer programmes for the community including a number of youth programmes. They newly set up a youth council to engage with the My London programme and did not have much experience with this before this.
- **Trinity Laban** is a conservatoire of music and dance engaging young people from many schools and universities. For My London they partnered with a local school and worked with vulnerable participants that they were already engaging. They did not have much experience with youth social action.
- **Charlton Athletic Community Trust** is the trust associated with Charlton Athletic aimed at having a long lasting impact in the community they operate. They offer a number of youth services but had not engaged in youth social

action before the My London programme. They set up a Youth Forum as part of the programme.

- **METRO Charity** are an LGBTQ+ organisation that work with this community including with young people. As part of the My London programme they developed a youth advisory panel but did not have this prior to joining the partnership.

Our approach

Renaisi was commissioned by Team London to complete a process and impact evaluation of the My London programme, focusing on the impact on young people taking part, the organisations involved in the partnerships, and the wider community in the boroughs engaged.

We have taken a mixed methods approach to explore the impact of the programme on these groups. Our evaluation has consisted of:

- **Group and one-to-one interviews with delivery organisations** understanding their experiences of delivering the programme, the impact they have seen on the young people, and the impact of partnership working on them. These were conducted twice, once in the first year and then again towards the end of the project.
- **Group interviews, fieldwork, and workshops with young people involved in the programme** exploring their reflections on delivery, the impact they have seen on themselves from engaging with the programme, and their understanding of youth social action. This occurred during their engagement with the programme at events they had organised or during one of their later sessions.
- **Two surveys of the delivery organisations** to understand their experiences of partnership working. These were conducted during the first and second years of delivery.

Measuring the impact on young people's wellbeing

One of the key aims of My London was to improve the wellbeing of young people engaged in the programme. To measure this we have collected data through interviews and fieldwork with young people. We also introduced and supported the partnerships to conduct Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) with the young people they were engaging. Unfortunately, the partnerships struggled to engage young people in these surveys and there is not enough data to draw detailed conclusions from. This occurred for a couple of reasons:

- Young people did not always engage consistently throughout the programme. If young people missed one survey then comparative data was not collected and data was therefore difficult to attribute to the programme.
- We did not offer enough support and guidance regarding how to best complete these surveys. This left partners not understanding the best way to collect data or the importance of consistent data collection.

Youth engagement in our research

At the end of the programme we ran a co-analysis session with young people. In this session young people were introduced to the basic principles of qualitative

evaluation, taught what analysis is and how it occurs, and then took part in an analysis session of data relating to young people involved in the project.

This involved sorting printed quotes into different themes. From here the young people were split into smaller groups and given one of these themes to further sort into smaller themes that they identified and write summaries of the data they have analysed.

We engaged nine young people from the Greenwich and Lewisham and Ealing and Hillingdon partnerships. They all engaged very well and produced high quality summaries which have been included in this report as speech bubbles.

Delivering the My London programme

The models

All three partnerships worked with young people to support their mental well-being by adopting various models and different recruitment strategies. Partnerships utilised connections they already had with young people and other organisations in the area to recruit for the My London programme. Each partnership took a unique approach to this recruitment.

The Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge model

Overall, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge **adopted a strategy to bring young people together from each partner organisation**. Each organisation recruited a group of young people to participate in the My London activities from young people they already engaged. These young people were brought together in a central location and each partner was responsible for delivering My London sessions.

The Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership **worked with their young people in six-month cohorts**. Over the course of their six-month involvement in the My London programme, young people attended fortnightly sessions, which covered topics and areas such as listening to peers, public speaking, presenting, problem solving, teamwork, and research to support their work in the youth social action project. Each cohort organised events, workshops, and activities in the community. They were encouraged to connect with young people they had not met before through bi-weekly meetings and discussions. Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge adopted a cross-borough approach to designing the youth social action projects and youth-led activities.

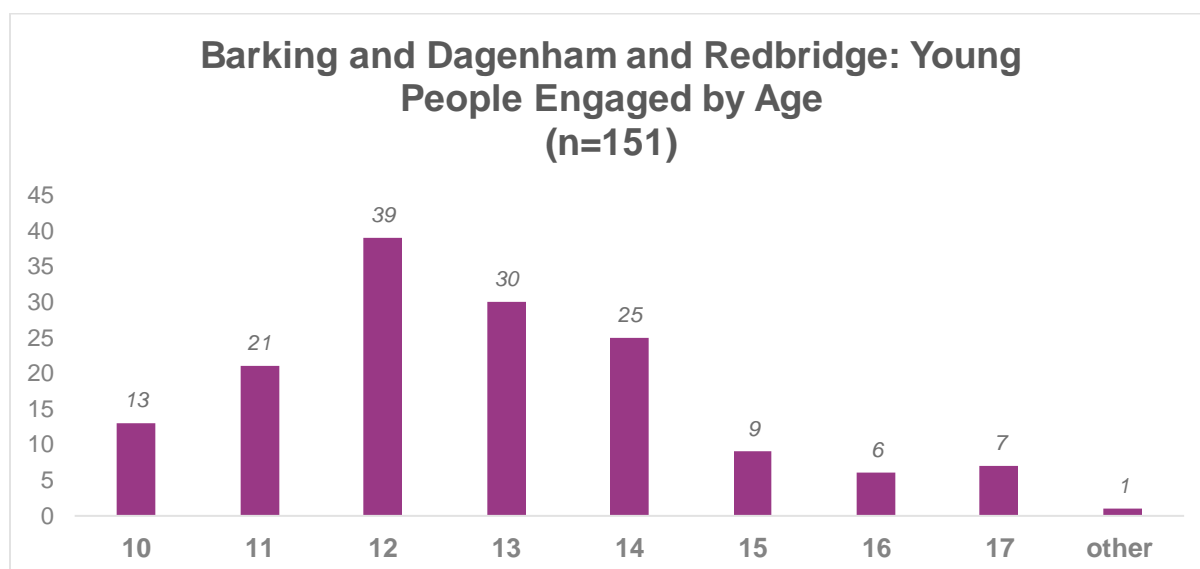
The partnership in Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge **focused particularly on reducing barriers to engagement and engaging young people through a variety of referral channels**. Organisations recruited young people primarily through cohorts they already engaged but also reached out to the community via a range of organisations and networks, such as community spaces, schools, and libraries to get access to the diverse range of young people. Moreover, they ensured that events were free of cost, meals were provided, content was culturally appropriate, and created a safe space for the young people.

“We recruited through community centers, schools, libraries, and local youth provision.”

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership report

“We have ensured that the My London programme has been accessible for those from LSEGs with the sessions being free for young people to attend, food being provided”

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership report



Barking and Dagenham engaged younger people than the other cohorts. The majority of young people engaged were under 15 and they engaged no young people older than 17. As each partner brought young people to each cohort of delivery engagement was planned and consistent.

Delivering My London in Ealing and Hillingdon

The Ealing and Hillingdon partnership **also engaged with young people in multiple cohorts** which helped them to tailor their offerings and run activities smoothly. They catered to a wide range of young people from specific groups such as young people recently diagnosed with autism, and young carers, and collaborated with them to design youth social action projects that were tailored to their interests and lived experience.

Over the course of the My London programme, **Ealing and Hillingdon worked with seven cohorts of young people.** Cohorts ranged in size and composition with some cohorts, such as the group of young people recently diagnosed with autism or the young carers group, engaging less people than the less specialised groups, such as the Cranford Community college group. To engage young people the partnership insured that young people were energised to join in and felt empowered to share their thoughts.

“Our sessions are designed to cultivate open dialogue, creativity, and empowerment. We kick off each session with icebreakers, craft activities, and drama games to energise the group and set a positive tone.”

Ealing and Hillingdon partnership report



Ealing and Hillingdon engaged the lowest number of young people. This is due to some of **the specific risk factors of the young people that they engaged**. They also engaged these young people separately, allowing them to connect with young people with similar lived experiences as them. For example, it would be very difficult to engage a large number of newly diagnosed young people with autism or young carers, but these cohorts are important to reach and there are many benefits to engaging them in separate cohorts as this empowers them to share their lived experiences. They also engaged older young people with half of all young people being either 16 or 17.

Greenwich and Lewisham partnership model

Greenwich and Lewisham **engaged young people in a unique four stage approach**. The aim of this approach was to give young people the opportunity to engage with the youth social action for the entire length of the My London programme while also allowing new young people to join in throughout. The four stages of engagement were:

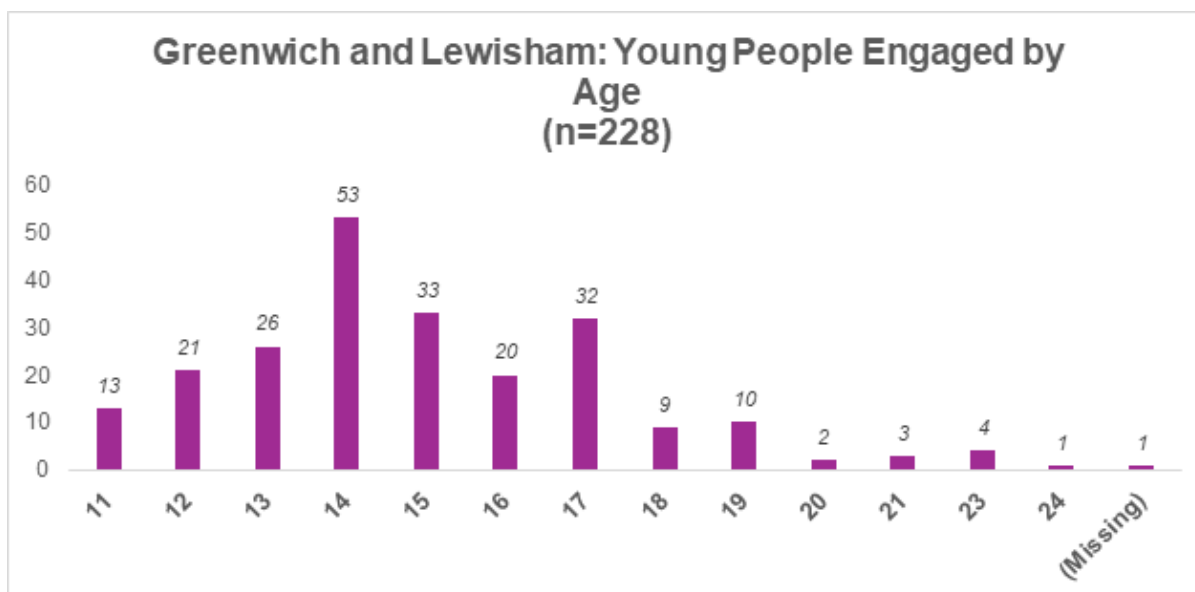
1. Develop
2. Express
3. Investigate
4. Act

These stages represented the four key stages of creating youth social action. First young people **developed** their understanding of what youth social action was. They were then given the opportunity to **express** the key themes they wished to explore before **investigating** the needs and opportunities to address those themes. Finally, the young people were empowered to **act** on their plan.

Across each of these stages partner organisations engaged their young people in specific activities related to the phase currently being completed. One of the first acts that each of the partners committed to was **to install youth voice into their**

organisation to lead this work. For Lewisham Youth Theatre this was already in place but for the other partnerships this was a relatively new concept.

Each partner would then **nominate a few young people to be part of the My London steering group.** This steering group led on the planning and development of the strategy of the partnership and planned and delivered **quarterly cross partnership youth summits.** These summits were a chance for young people from each of the partners to come together and share the work they had been doing.



Greenwich and Lewisham **engaged more young people than the other partnerships.** This was due to the number of ways in which young people were able to engage in the programme and the ongoing nature of the provision. Young people could engage in the steering group of their organisation, the My London steering group, or attend youth summits to be considered part of My London. There was a large spread of ages of young people, with most being between the ages of 11 and 17.

Successes and Challenges of working with young people

Challenges of programme delivery with young people

Young people always have **competing time commitments that they must balance**. Ensuring that young people are able to engage throughout the programme and that they were not missing too many important meetings allows them to make the most of it. When young people did miss sessions they would sometimes find that decisions had been made that they were not a part of, disempowering them.

“Young people’s lives and sort of those conflicts that they might have with academic pressures or sort of personal commitments.”

Lewisham and Greenwich staff member

To overcome these challenges each partnership ensured that **delivery was flexible**. By allowing the young people to decide when sessions took place and pausing the programme during periods where many young people would be unavailable like exam time, the partnerships were able to minimise this risk.

Another challenge faced by each of the partnerships was **dealing with various vulnerabilities young people faced**. As organisations engaged young people with a range of vulnerabilities creating a space where everyone felt safe was difficult but important.

“Addressing vulnerabilities is a real challenge, especially in situations where you are bringing very different young people together.”

Ealing and Hillingdon staff member

Ealing and Hillingdon engaged some of the most vulnerable young people in the programme and did this by creating cohorts specifically working with young people with a particular vulnerability. All of the partnerships **worked with the organisation that young people had been recruited from to ensure that their vulnerabilities were known and could be accounted for**. As the programme went on the partners learnt how to work with more vulnerable young people from other organisations.

Young people also reflected on some of the challenges that they faced when engaging with the programme. Other **time commitments and time management** were commonly brought up as well as a **lack of confidence to express their opinion**. Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge young people emphasised the challenges of being in front of a camera during their sessions. Many of these challenges were addressed in the programmes and young people reflected at the end of the programme that they had **improved their confidence and were more able to express themselves** after completing the My London programme.

Biggest challenge was probably talking to others and the member of public and facing my fears.

Time-management and commitment was difficult.

Being in front of camera was a challenge for me.

Youth voice and leadership

An important aim of the My London programme was to encourage organisations to centre youth voice in their ways of working and produce youth social action projects that young people felt were important. Each of the partnerships took a different approach and therefore achieved a different level of youth voice and youth leadership in the programme. This in turn led to various levels of youth social action

In **Ealing and Hillingdon each cohort were identified through a specific group** and therefore had a lot in common. The programme that they developed took these young people on a journey of discovering what they felt was important, how they could have an impact on this, what youth social action is, to finally producing a youth social action project. This process led to young people feeling empowered to take action on issues that they felt were important and led to a high level of youth empowerment. This was reflected in the feedback from young people.

Interacting with young people and hearing their thoughts.
Creating a positive environment.

I enjoyed bringing more awareness to mental health even if it changes 1 person's life, that is still a huge achievement.

Seeing how things turn out after all the hard work.

In **Greenwich and Lewisham each of the partners adopted a youth council** to advise them on the direction of their organisation. These young people then directed their organisation towards which youth social action they wanted to produce. This was also done on a programme wide scale with a youth steering group consisting of members of each organisation also being adopted. The programme then walked the young people engaged and the organisations themselves through the 4 main phases of youth social action over the course of the 2 year programme. This approach led to young people and partners developing an in-depth understanding of youth social action and led to very strong examples of youth social action being produced. The process was also very youth led and young people reflected this.

Young people having an option to change the world.

Young people come together to help make a change – building a community.

Having / Engaging in convos and having a say.

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge brought together young people from each of the organisations to produce youth social action projects together. They helped them understand what youth social action was but gave the young people the leadership over the funding and the direction they wished to take. One of the partners reflected that this led to less of a focus on social action than they would have liked.

“More emphasis on social action itself... That is something we need to sort of fine tune a little bit to make sure that we were meeting.”

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partner

While young people reflected that they had learnt a lot about youth social action, reflections were more focused on making friends than feeling empowered to make a change.

The trips have been very enjoyable.

Being with fun and interesting people.

Social action is a way of getting a young person's voice heard. Social action means a world full of opinions

The impact of My London on young people and communities

Summary

- By giving young people opportunities they would otherwise not have to interact with different people and complete engaging activities, confidence was boosted among My London participants and many participants fostered new, meaningful friendships.
- Through engaging in enjoyable activities and learning about their mental health, young people engaged in My London improved their mental health outcomes and developed useful skills.
- Young people engaged in My London developed an understanding of social action and many reflected that they would continue to pursue this in the future.

The second key aspect of the My London programme evaluation focused on its impact on young people and the communities in which they live. This section explores the effects of participation on young people across the three partnerships, before highlighting three key impacts on the wider communities across the six boroughs in which My London was delivered.

Impact on young people

In our evaluation of the first year of My London, we highlighted the impact of My London on young people's confidence, understanding of youth social action, employability outcomes, and connections.

The second year of our evaluation has provided further evidence of the positive impacts of being involved in youth social action across the three partnerships – building on and extending the positive effects observed in year one.

Overall, young people and partner organisations highlighted five key impacts of the programme:

1. Increasing young people's self-confidence
2. Improved mental health and wellbeing
3. Developing strong connections and friendships within and across boroughs
4. Enhancing their understanding of youth social action, and its relevance to their lives
5. Building transferable skills through participation

Impacts	Young people's reflections	Key enablers
Increasing young people's self-confidence	<i>"It's improved my confidence. It's helped me become more confident in myself and speaking with others. Sometimes it can feel like a chore but now it's actually fun."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive group environments for young people to share and articulate ideas. Opportunities for young people to present their ideas and social action. Presenting to and speaking with adults at events and meetings.
Improved mental health and wellbeing	<i>"Learning more about subjects like mental health and social media and how we can help tackle them."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning more about mental health and wellbeing issues. Supportive environments to share experiences. Meeting other young people from different backgrounds.
Building connections and friendships	<i>"The people we have met have been the highlight. I've met lots of people that I wouldn't have met otherwise."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting other young people from different backgrounds. Emphasis on teamwork and collaborative activities.
Developing understanding of youth social action	<p><i>"Having a greater understanding of what's going on."</i></p> <p><i>"Young people having an option to change the world."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to research and discuss wider societal issues. Taking the lead in planning and delivering events, activities, and social action projects.

Development of transferable skills	<i>“I’ve learnt how to write formal emails.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical exposure to event design and planning• Ownership over budgeting and delivery of My London events and activities.
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Drawing on our co-analysis with young people

In the final year of the My London programme, we organised a co-analysis workshop with young people from across the partnerships to discuss key themes emerging from our evaluation.

During the session, young people coded raw data and identified the key themes they observed.

Our analysis draws on their insights. In the following sections, we highlight the key reflections participants shared from their analysis.

Increasing young people's self confidence

Reflections from co-analysis participants:

Young people identified increased confidence as a key impact of My London. This was connected to young people seeing evidence that they can make a positive impact, as well as gaining the skills to do so. Participants gained new friendships in their communities and gained access to many opportunities.

Across both years of the My London programme, participation in My London activities had a significant impact on young people's self-confidence. Several aspects of the programme played a role in boosting confidence. During sessions, creating space for young people to share and articulate their ideas helped young people to voice their reflections more openly.

"It's improved my confidence. It's helped me become more confident in myself and speaking with others. Sometimes it can feel like a chore but now it's actually fun."

Young person

"Learning to be more confident and bounce off of other people's energy."

Young person

Across all three partnerships, the programme effectively fostered a supportive environment where participants developed the confidence needed to navigate challenging situations and make meaningful contributions to the social action ideas developed. In Ealing and Hillingdon, for example, young people noted the importance of a safe and supportive environment, in which they met other young people who shared similar lived experience, for developing their confidence.

"At the start it felt uncomfortable but everyone is always really supporting you so my confidence has really skyrocketed. You need to be comfortable first and this has created an area I can be comfortable in."

Alongside opportunities to share ideas, building an understanding how they can effect change also supported young people to become more confident in themselves.

"You've given them the confidence...learning as well that if they do, they can use their voice, they do have a space to use that voice...that they are there to make a difference"

Barking and Dagenham staff member

“Young people are visibly more confident communicating their ideas and demands for action.”

Survey respondent

More generally, young people and organisation leads also pointed to the importance of offering young people exposure to new experiences and connections in boosting confidence. Opportunities to present their ideas and social action, or host events, for example, helped young people to be more confident – by facing situations they previously found challenging.

“I think it’s going to help me to be more confident in myself. I think I will be more confident to talk to more people and introduce myself to strangers which will be a really vital part of university.”

Young person

Improved mental health and well-being outcomes

Reflections from co-analysis participants:

A significant amount of young people reflected on something they had learnt about mental health when conducting the survey following the event [organised by one of the partnerships]. There was a common theme of young people realising the importance of mental health awareness and breaking down stigmas. “I’ve learnt it’s okay to ask for help.” This indicates that confidence and mental health are strongly interlinked in young people’s minds.

Feedback shared by both young people and organisation leads across the partnerships indicate that participation in the My London supported young people’s mental health and wellbeing. Attending My London sessions fostered strong feelings of social connection and belonging for young people across the partnerships, as they built relationships with their peers, explored challenging social issues, and co-developed ideas.

“Facilitating peer support workshops and collaboration among young people created a sense of community and solidarity.”

Barking and Dagenham staff member

In Greenwich and Lewisham, the youth council and summits used to coordinate the programme helped to build strong bonds between young people and foster a feeling of connectedness.

“There’s a real sense, I think, of belonging within those sessions.”

Greenwich and Lewisham staff member

Through taking part in My London, young people also spent time learning more about mental health and wellbeing when considering the social issues they wanted

to tackle. This helped to raise awareness of mental health issues and broader societal stigmas surrounding it. Partners noted that this, alongside the supportive environment created in sessions, enabled young people to share their own experiences and feelings.

“I think it's definitely empowered a lot of young people to be a little bit more vocal around what they're seeing and feeling.”

Ealing and Hillingdon staff member

In Barking and Dagenham, bringing young people together from different organisations and communities into single cohorts had an impact on young people's wellbeing. Connecting with young people from other backgrounds helped to foster empathy for other people's diverse experiences and challenges.

“It allowed the children to know that there were people from different backgrounds that have different struggles and face different challenges.”

Barking, Dagenham, and Redbridge staff member

More generally, many young people described the fun and enjoyable nature of My London activities. Taking part in a regular programme of sessions that they found enjoyable therefore provided a valuable outlet for young people outside of school or college.

“The fact that during this experience it's always been playful but serious enough to get work done.”

Young person

Fostering friendships with other young people

Reflections from co-analysis participants:

Young people enjoyed meeting new people and developing new friends and relationships. In particular, branching out in the community, which opened up more doors and opportunities.

As a result of participating in the My London programme, young people across the three partnerships highlighted the new connections and friendships they had formed as a key highlight of their involvement. Feedback from young people frequently described the value of meeting other young people through developing a social action project on My London.

Both young people and staff highlighted the role My London sessions in bringing young people together who may not have had a chance to connect otherwise. In Barking and Dagenham, for example, young people came together from different communities to form single cohorts which met regularly over a six-month period.

This gave young people the opportunity to build meaningful friendships with young people from other backgrounds and neighbouring boroughs.

“It’s friendships and it’s a sense of community that’s been fostered across the youth summits.”

Greenwich and Lewisham staff member

The My London programme’s emphasis on developing collaborative social action projects also helped young people to build friendships. In creating and carrying out their social action ideas, young people worked closely together to design events, plan activities, and develop campaigns. This emphasis on teamwork and cooperation further helped to build strong bonds between young people.

“The people we have met have been the highlight. I’ve met lots of people that I wouldn’t have met otherwise. I’m quite introverted usually so joining here was about getting me out of my shell. I think that’s been very successful.”

Ealing and Hillingdon young person

“I’ve made lots of friends and gained social and communication skills.”

Greenwich and Lewisham young person

As outlined above, in some partnerships, young people also came together with other young people who shared similar lived experience. This enabled young people to build connections with other young people with whom they shared common experiences, forging trust and mutual understanding. Working closely with their peers in this way helped young people to form strong connections through the My London programme.

Building an understanding of social action

Participation in the My London programme also had a significant impact on young people’s understanding of social action – and how they can lead it in their communities. During sessions, partnerships spent time with young people focusing on broader societal issues such as social media use, safety, and mental health. In Greenwich and Lewisham, for example, the partnership dedicated a phase of the programme to exploring social issues affecting young people in more detail. Dedicating time in sessions to focusing on societal issues in this way helped to raise awareness of social action, and the role young people could play in achieving change.

“I have just been a lot more aware of the different things about our society and learnt about others.”

Young person

“Learning more about subjects like mental health and social media and how we can help tackle them.”

Young person

Importantly, being exposed to other young people’s views and perspectives also helped young people to think more broadly and critically about wider social issues – developing their understanding of social action further.

The understanding of social action that was built through initial research and scoping of ideas was further developed when young people carried out their social action projects. Many young people noted that the process of learning about social issues and developing their projects helped to change their perspective on social action, and their role within it. Rather than viewing social action as a large-scale change, young people came to view it as something they could lead within their communities.

The My London programme empowered participants to effectively use their voices and advocate for change. For example, through conducting research, attending youth summits, and making podcasts; young people became determined to attend different events and learn more about social action projects happening in their borough. Through their experiences, they learnt a lot about project management, problem-solving, and the importance of genuine youth voices in social action initiatives.

Development of transferable skills in young people

Reflections from co-analysis participants:

Young people reflected that the My London project enabled them to gain new skills while meeting other young people and building social skills. Many are now more motivated to join in social action projects as they are keen to use the skills gained and continue making positive change in their communities.

Young people highlighted that the programme helped them to develop transferable skills. Through engagement in youth social action projects, participants not only addressed societal problems but also honed problem-solving, communication, project management, and teamwork skills.

“Transferable skills like communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. I thought those skills were incorporated into this project.”

Ealing and Hillingdon young person

Furthermore, young people noted how the programme encouraged them to think creatively, adapt to new situations, and expand their perspectives. My London

programme provided an opportunity for the participants to develop leadership skills and take ownership of their projects. Overall, the programme served as a platform for young people to develop transferable skills that will help them in their personal and professional growth.

“I’ve learnt how to write formal emails.”

Ealing and Hillingdon young person

“How to face your fears.”

Barking, Dagenham, and Redbridge young person

Coordinating and organising events through My London

Across each of the partnerships, young people developed a range of ideas and delivered several different types of social action activity. As part of their projects, several cohorts of young people led the organisations and delivery of events for other young people in their communities.

The events organised during My London were one of the key successes of the programme for young people. Through planning and delivering events, young people learnt more about project management, finances, and working as a team. Importantly, the scale and scope of organising events enabled young people to develop their ideas from inception to completion.

While organising events may have a smaller potential reach than some of the other social action ideas developed during the course of My London, such as an interactive map of local youth provision, their more visible and immediate impact gave young people a sense of accomplishment and opportunity to develop skills.

While this does not mean that other forms of social action should be dismissed, having quick wins and a visible impact is an important aspect of making young people feel empowered.

“The highlight has been the event. Seeing people coming together, enjoying themselves, talking about mental health, and yeah I think that’s been the favourite part.”

Impact of My London on wider communities

Summary

- Through the My London programme, young people connected with wider stakeholders when delivering their youth social action projects.
- Each partnership gave young people the opportunity to engage with local and national politics in some capacity, giving them the ability and passion to make further change in the future.
- Through My London, the wider community’s perceptions of young people improved as youth social action was appreciated across the boroughs.

As part of our evaluation of the My London programme, we also sought to understand how and where the programme has had an impact on wider communities across the six boroughs involved.

During the first year of our evaluation, we identified some early indications of wider community impact, relating to awareness of youth social action locally and perceptions of young people. As the programme progressed, further evidence of the wider impact of My London has emerged, as young people have organised events, engaged with local stakeholders, and delivered social action campaigns. Through these activities, My London achieved wider community impact in three primary ways:

1. Building connections with other local stakeholders
2. Connecting young people into local politics and decision-making
3. Boosting perceptions of young people

Impacts, instances and enablers – an overview

The table below provides an overview of the key community impacts of My London, instances across partnerships, and the key enabling factors.

Wider impacts	Instances across the partnerships	Enablers
Building connections with other local stakeholders	Ealing and Hillingdon Mental Health and Wellbeing Day	Organising events bringing together local stakeholders and organisations.

		Partnerships building links with wider stakeholders, e.g. schools through delivery.
Connecting young people into local politics and decision-making	<p>Greenwich and Lewisham – young people taking part in consultation sessions</p> <p>Ealing and Hillingdon – Local MP attending Mental Health and Wellbeing Day</p> <p>Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge – trip to parliament</p>	<p>Young people given platform to take part in sessions with local councillors and council members.</p> <p>Empowering young people to share their views.</p> <p>Time for organisations and young people to build connections with local council structures.</p>
Boosting perceptions of young people	Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge – Cohort Celebration events.	<p>Young people and adults coming together around social issues – especially through young people-led events.</p> <p>Young people leading responses to social issues affecting them</p>

Building connections with other local stakeholders

During the My London programme, young people organised a range of activities and events which brought together young people and other stakeholders, such as local community members, grassroots organisations, and local councillors. As a result of doing so, partnerships reported that young people were able to build connections with other organisations across the boroughs who were supporting young people in different ways – such as schools and community groups.

“We’ve seen a positive impact, especially connecting to other local community groups, charities, schools and working alongside the councils.”

Survey respondent

The events organised through My London were particularly effective in forming these connections with organisations and stakeholders locally. In Ealing and Hillingdon, for example, young people organised a Mental Health Day, which brought together young people and adults to discuss issues affecting young people's mental health. Elsewhere, in Greenwich and Lewisham, quarterly youth summits also brought young people and local stakeholders together around issues being explored through each stage of the programme. These events played an important role in bringing local adults into youth spaces and fostering dialogue between adults and young people about issues that are important to (and effect) young people.

“Adults in the community are starting to come into youth spaces for community events, which shifts the context of important discussions.”

Survey respondent

More generally, delivering the My London programme also enabled partnership organisations to build further connections with other organisations working with young people locally. Organisations across the three partnerships reported that delivering the My London programme had helped to build new connections with local stakeholders, including organisations with whom they had not previously had a relationship.

“We've seen a positive impact, especially connecting to other local community groups, charities, schools and working alongside the councils.”

Survey respondent

Connecting young people into local politics and decision-making

The My London programme also connected young people involved into local politics, through the delivery of their social action campaigns. Young people across all three partnerships learnt more about and engaged with local decision-making and political structures, to raise awareness of the issues affecting them and their peers.

Through the course of their My London projects, young people engaged with local politics and decision-making in several ways. As outlined above, organising events such as Ealing and Hillingdon's Mental Health Day brought together local organisations and stakeholders supporting young people, and helped to advocate for further support locally for young people.

Young people across the partnerships were also supported to proactively respond to local issues affecting them. In Greenwich and Lewisham, for example, young people participated in consultation sessions with Public Works about the needs of young people to be included in Levelling Up refurbishment plans for the Lewisham Library, and with Lewisham Council staff about provision for young people in the borough. In

Ealing and Hillingdon, young people sent a letter to local council members to respond to the closure of a local youth club.

“One of the local youth spaces has been closed and that isn’t acceptable for us so we wrote a letter to a counsellor asking why has it been closed, what can we do to reopen it because it would have a big impact on us.”

Ealing and Hillingdon young person

Importantly, these engagements connected young people’s views and concerns with stakeholders locally with decision-making power. Through leading their social action campaigns, young people developed confidence in articulating their views, and used this confidence to share the perspectives of young people in dialogue with local decisionmakers.

Connections between young people and local decision-making structures emerged more prominently in the second year of the programme, as the programme became more established, and connections were built by organisations and young people with local council members.

Boosting perceptions of young people

Across both years of the My London programme, partnerships reported that the delivery of social action projects helped to improve perceptions of young people among local community members. Through delivering their social action projects, young people focused on key societal issues locally, such as spaces for young people and social media use, organising events and activities that brought adults and other young people together to discuss these issues. This helped to boost perceptions of young people, as wider community members could see the positive effects of participation on young people – and valued their focus on wider community issues.

“Other community members understand the importance of this project, and the importance (and benefit) of young people wanting to solve community challenges.”

Survey respondent

“Positive and improved perceptions of young people, who have designed and delivered meaningful social action within the community.”

Survey respondent

The My London programme also had a positive impact on the parents of young people involved, through raised awareness of the social and emotional development of their children. Through advocacy campaigns and community

events, parents observed their children proactively leading responses to contemporary social issues. Parents particularly acknowledged the newly developed confidence and self-esteem in their children; they appreciated the independence and social interactions developed by young people.

“That's been a great project. They've had a good time. Or, you know, a parent recently coming out to me like my goodness. They were completely buzzing after the summit. They loved it.”

Ealing and Hillingdon staff member

Partnership working through My London

Summary

- Appointing a dedicated My London Project Lead helped to ensure greater coordination and collaboration between partners. This was particularly effective when the Project Lead was viewed as being situated in the Partnership, rather than working on behalf of one of the organisations involved.
- Long term partnership working builds connections between organisations and allows them to make the most of their relationships with one another increasing the chances of working together in the future.
- Losing staff had a negative effect on partnerships as the drive and understanding of the project is lost.

A central aim of the My London programme was to support grassroots organisations to build connections and capacity through working together to deliver the programme across boroughs. Over the course of the two years of the My London programme, organisations worked together – in some cases, for the first time – to deliver youth social action opportunities for young people. This section first explores the three partnerships' experiences of working collectively, before examining the impact of partnership working.

Defining clear roles and responsibilities

Ensuring that members of a partnership have a clear understanding of their own role, and how their role connects with the responsibilities of other partners, is important for coordinating work across a partnership. While partnerships reported that working together was a positive experience overall, some challenges did arise

relating to a lack of clarity around the roles of individual organisations within partnerships.

In the early stages of the programme, the transition from the Design Lab phase to delivery caused problems as organisations had to adopt new roles or adjust their approaches. For Ealing and Hillingdon, for example, a lack of communication around role reallocation made it difficult for partners to know what their role was in delivering My London.

“Re-assigning roles created confusion within partnership due to lack of clear communication on partner roles.”

Ealing & Hillingdon End of Year 1 Report

As My London progressed, the development of closer connections and greater understanding between organisations helped to address this lack of clarity. Nevertheless, some organisations continued to report challenges around expectations and organisation roles into the second year of the programme. In the Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership, for example, the lack of a dedicated Project Lead for the partnership was felt to have created uncertainty around the roles of individual organisations within the partnership.

“I think sometimes our roles have been confused...if we had [a project coordinator] it would have run a lot smoother because they would have known their roles and responsibilities.”

Survey respondent

For one of the organisations involved in one of the other partnerships, creating a shared understanding of the time required to deliver youth social action represented a key challenge.

“Getting all partners to understand the amount of work they need to put in to facilitate quality youth-led social action.”

Partner interview

Across the partnerships, a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities of individual organisations in contributing to partnership working led the delivery of the programme to fall unevenly, leading some organisations to take on more responsibility than initially intended.

“It's been amicable. We've all gotten along with each other...but there have been times where one organization might have felt that they've put in more than the other organizations...if there were clear definitions of who does what, then I think it would have been a lot smoother.”

Partner interview

As the programme progressed, organisations reported developing a greater understanding of the ways of working of other organisations in their partnership. This made it easier for organisations to coordinate the delivery of the My London

programme more easily, resulting in smoother coordination towards the end of the programme.

Developing effective communication channels between organisations

During the My London programme, the three partnerships took different approaches to communicating with each other to coordinate planning and delivery.

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge **adopted more informal communication channels to** coordinate activities across their partnership. Throughout the My London programme, WhatsApp was used as the primary communication channel between leads at each of the organisations involved. This approach was felt to have led to good communication across the partnership, as organisations could maintain regular contact and adapt to changes and challenges as they arose. When one partner fell ill, for example, the partnership felt that they were able to respond quickly and coordinate the continued involvement of the organisation in the programme.

“(When one partner fell ill) the remaining partners rallied around and supported. That was actually quite beneficial because we saw them as an equal partner.”
Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge staff

Nevertheless, this method of communication presented some challenges. As partners were using WhatsApp, communication lines were always open and therefore **disengaging from the programme was a challenge.**

“So having said that, we communicate really well, because we do have a WhatsApp group and we communicate sometimes ridiculous times of the day into the evening and over the weekends and bank holidays, to many groups that many messages.”
Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge staff

Coordinating activities and delivery through Whatsapp also made it difficult to keep up with changes and decisions when partners were unable to check their messages regularly. This contributed to the uncertainty expressed around individual partner organisations’ roles and responsibilities on the project, leading to some decisions and planning being left to a late stage.

“(A challenge has been) being clear on the stuff that we’ve been asking each other to do and make sure it’s been done. I don’t think anyone meaningfully has not done a task but I think sometimes it has been left to the last minute.”

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge staff

Ealing and Hillingdon and Greenwich and Lewisham adopted more formalised approaches to communication and decision-making on the My London programme. In both partnerships, approaches to decision-making and communication were aided by having a dedicated staff member hired to work on the programme full time.

This made communication between partner organisations more streamlined, as the Project Lead represented a central connecting point responsible for sharing updates, coordinating partners, and organising meetings.

During the first year of the programme, Ealing and Hillingdon did encounter some communication issues, however. Partners nominated senior members of staff to be the lead My London contacts for the programme. As these senior leaders had to balance the My London programme alongside other responsibilities, coordinating regular and timely engagement with the programme proved difficult.

“I don’t think we have been as engaged as we need to be or perhaps could have been. That’s been difficult from our end because we haven’t had the capacity in the senior team. This really needs to sit with the operational team.”

Ealing and Hillingdon staff

The appointment of a dedicated Project Lead, and involvement of more junior members of partner organisations helped to address this challenge as the programme progressed.

Managing staff turnover and organisational capacity

Throughout the course of the My London programme, turnover of staff within partner organisations made it more difficult for partnerships to collaborate effectively. All three partnerships experienced issues relating to staff turnover – a wider systemic issue experienced across the VCSE sector. This manifested in different ways during different stages of the programme.

Several partners noted that the length of time between the Design Lab phase and the beginning of programme delivery caused challenges, as some staff members involved in the Design Lab process subsequently moved on.

“From an organisation perspective we were involved in terms of designing the project. I wasn’t involved in that process but my colleague was and so my understanding might not be quite the understanding of the consortium.”

Ealing and Hillingdon partner

As a result, organisations found it difficult to coordinate the early stages of delivery and determine who was responsible for holding key responsibilities. This was further exacerbated by capacity issues within organisations, which prevented organisations from committing the time they had originally planned to invest during the Design Lab phase.

Another key challenge was **partners leaving the programme entirely**. After the Design Lab phase in the Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership, Lifeline Community Projects withdrew from the programme, owing to concerns around how the programme was being coordinated. This led to the partnership

having to restructure how the programme would be delivered and spread responsibilities across the four remaining organisations.

As the programme progressed, the departure of organisation leads led to capacity issues across partnerships. This led to a loss of institutional knowledge around how an organisation was involved in the programme and level of involvement in delivery. Responding to the loss of key personnel, some organisations were then required to take on additional responsibilities to ensure smooth running of the programme.

“Sometimes difficult if there is change within an organisation, also sometimes finding suitable times to meet can be a challenge for all to agree.”

Survey respondent

“That's because, you know, [X] as an organization had capacity issues, our main contact from [organisation], she'd gone on to maternity leave. So again, it's that in this sector people kind of not being available.”

Partner interview

In the second year of the programme, the departure of Ealing and Hillingdon's Project Lead led to communication between partners becoming more irregular and strained, as there was no central coordination. Again, this led some partners to feel that the responsibility for managing the programme fell unevenly on their organisation.

“Before the project manager left (delivery) was more even in terms of style of work, but afterwards the pendulum swung.”

Partner interview

Connecting organisations – the importance of the Project Lead

To support with delivering the My London programme, two of the partnerships chose to appoint a dedicated Project Lead, responsible for coordinating their project. Creating this dedicated project lead was a key factor in enabling effective partnership working and coordinating delivery across multiple organisations. During the early phases of the programme, Ealing and Hillingdon encountered delays in appointing a Project Lead, which created onward delays in the coordination of delivery, as organisation staff were having to manage the programme alongside existing responsibilities. Following their appointment, the Project Lead was able to coordinate partnership working more effectively, leading to programme delivery to develop more quickly.

“We realised that the partners don't have enough capacity to deliver this work through whatever they're doing so we're actually going to have to have a project officer...”

Ealing and Hillingdon partner interview

Similarly, Greenwich and Lewisham hired a Project Lead to coordinate the programme. The lead remained in post throughout the programme, which enabled them to build strong connections across the partnership and establish a consistent approach to coordination. Significantly, this role was created to work *for* the partnership, and work across all five partners – rather than the lead organisation alone.

"I'm officially employed by the lead partner but I work across all five partners. The majority of my role is joining up the dots between all the social action campaigns that are happening across the partnership and making sure that we're working towards the same goals."

Partner interview

As this role was created as a dedicated position, with a sole focus of coordinating and supporting partnership delivery, the Project Lead was able to play a connecting function more effectively, as they were working to support delivery of the programme.

Building a legacy beyond My London

Summary

- All of the partnerships have plans to continue working together to some extent following the end of My London. This includes both to complete further youth social action but also to share resources.
- Each of the partnerships also plan to continue completing youth social action with some planning to continue with a very similar model to My London whereas Ealing and Hillingdon plan to take the youth social action technique they implemented to other groups.
- All of the partnerships rely on getting additional funding to maintain most youth social action activities however even without additional funding they will be able to maintain some level of partnership working and youth social action.

As the My London funding came to an end the GLA shifted its focus onto the ways in which partnerships were going to ensure that the programme would have a legacy on the organisations involved and the places they work. To do this Renaisi conducted a workshop with the partnerships to help them think about the ways in which they were going to continue the work post-funding.

This section will focus on two distinct impacts that the programme aimed to have on organisations to test how effective this has been. First, we will look at the impact that the programme has had on working with partners and working cross-borough. Then the focus will shift to the impact the programme has had on providing opportunities for youth social action within the organisations that took part in the programme.

Maintaining partnership working across boroughs

All of the partnerships reflected that they **have the desire to continue to work together in the future**. In the workshop with Renaisi they planned what they wanted the future to look like, how they should get there, and where they would start.

In Greenwich and Lewisham the emphasis is on **maintaining the relationships and communication** between the organisations involved in My London. They reflected that they would like to engage in similar activities as the ones that took place over My London such as the summits and the steering group.

All of the organisations within the **partnership are still very well engaged and, due to the consistency of the project manager**, they have all had a very positive experience of the My London programme. However, as the funding is coming to an end, the funding for the project manager position will be coming to an end which may cause challenges for the longevity of these relationships going forward. If

further funding to maintain this position is not found, the partnership will have to find other ways of working together.

In Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge the **focus is also on maintaining relationships with each of the partners**. This especially emphasises the cross-borough working and ensuring that young people still have the opportunity to engage with others from neighbouring boroughs.

As each of the **partners worked very closely with each other they have developed a solid relationship** which may be easier to maintain going forward. Some of their ideas moving forward is to designate a project manager for the area to coordinate and focus the accomplishments the organisations achieve, to create opportunities to train members of the community supporting young people, and researching the needs of the community.

Ealing and Hillingdon emphasised the importance of partnership working but reflected that they are **likely to look at changing the way partnerships would work, with fewer organisations at the core of the partnership**. Instead, organisations would be brought in when the need for a specific set of skills became apparent such as when the partnership wanted to work with a specific group of young people or wanted to offer specific support.

"I'll bring in partners as and when (I need) you'll meet different groups come in and support the programme."

Ealing and Hillingdon partner

Partnership working is intended to extend beyond the partners within My London. To ensure the longevity of the programme in Ealing and Hillingdon the partners proposed training other local organisations to deliver their social action model, partnering with other organisations including with businesses to provide financial and non-financial support, while also working with already existing partners.

One of the key elements that has led to the partnerships looking for opportunities to work together more in the future is **the longevity of the funding**. Providing two years of funding for organisations to work together and build an offer has led to relatively strong partnerships and connections. Similarly, **partnerships now have an offer** they can use to try to attain additional funding in the future. Providing the space and encouragement for partnerships to think about the future and how they can continue to work together also provides a push for this to occur but it must be accompanied by appropriate support to ensure that this actually occurs.

Furthermore, each of the partners reflected that **working across different boroughs was an important** aspect of the programme and something that they wished to continue to do. Young people and organisations were able to work with young people they never would have otherwise, and this gave them the opportunity to grow and learn a lot about different areas of London. Ealing and Hillingdon reflected that they are looking at working in more neighbouring boroughs such as Hounslow.

Across each of the partnerships a **common theme was the need for additional funding**. While all of the partnerships had some plan to stay in contact regardless of this, they all felt as though this could only be meaningfully continued if there was funding that allowed them to do so.

Continuing youth social action

Each partnership reflected that they had learnt a lot about youth social action and wished to continue completing this to some extent. The extent to which this is achieved depends on funding that they are able to successfully apply for.

In Greenwich and Lewisham and Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge this would result in a similar programme as My London being delivered again.

Greenwich and Lewisham reflected that they would like to continue creating cooperative events across the partnerships, would like to maintain the coordination function of the manager, and would like to be able to maintain the youth steering group going forward.

“We are planning to use some of our sustainability fund to continue to fund the Youth Steering Group for three months one the projects ended to allow us some time to get more money.”

Greenwich and Lewisham partner

Furthermore, in this **partnership each of the partner organisations implemented youth voice into their organisation** in the form of some form of steering group. This embedded youth voice and therefore youth social action into the organisations. These groups will remain at the organisations in the long run and ensure that youth social action influences the way the organisation works in the long run.

“So we’ve got a commitment from all of the partners that they’re all going to continue their youth councils, so their internal councils in some form or other.”

Greenwich and Lewisham partner

Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge suggested a few changes that they would like to make to their model if they were to get more funding. **One thing they would like to bring in is a manager to ensure that collaboration continues.** Less focus is placed on youth social action necessarily and more on bringing young people together to engage in positive activities and build cross borough friendships.

Throughout the course of the delivery, the Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge partnership **reflected on the experiences of their cohorts to ensure that they were providing the best support possible.** They found that the initial cohorts were active during workshops which helped them to design activities that would effectively engage the last two cohorts. This learning meant that by the end of the programme they had created a much higher quality offer than when they started, and they intend to use this learning into the future.

Ealing and Hillingdon **developed a successful model of youth social action to young people**. They are planning to use that model to produce more projects with partners both within the partnership and externally. While they are unlikely to produce another programme similar to My London, they are committed to continuing producing youth social action in their area and have made many steps to procuring funding to do this.

“We’re doing a youth social action filmmaking programme. It’s basically what I’ve learnt from this programme in Hillingdon and Ealing kicking off very soon.”
Ealing and Hillingdon partner

Due to the fact that they focused on building partnerships and relationships with organisations outside of their partnership, **they have already made some headway into securing funding for further cohorts of the programme**.

“We extended support to the Hillingdon group, facilitating a togetherness environment that empowered them to contribute to My London's legacy. This collaboration ultimately led to our success in securing external funding from C-Change West London.”
Ealing and Hillingdon partnership report

By actively involving young people and community members' voices in their model, the Ealing and Hillingdon model have extended the legacy of their project outside of the delivery partners. Participants have been empowered to take responsibility for their work and create sustainable changes in their community. The partnerships model created open lines of communication among organisations and strengthened their commitment to sustain long-term collaborations and youth social action initiatives as reflected in the quote below.

“By collaborating closely with our key stakeholders, we are confident in our ability to sustainably scale our project and continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of young people involved.”
Ealing and Hillingdon partnership report

Conclusions

The My London programme created opportunities for young people to learn about, access, and lead social action projects on key issues that affected them. Feedback from young people and delivery organisations has highlighted the positive impacts of engagement on young people.

Coming together in supportive environments to develop ideas and plan and lead social action helped to build young people's confidence, understanding of their role in social change, and transferable skills.

Opportunities to meet young people from other organisations, backgrounds and boroughs represented a key success for the My London programme – fostering social connection after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The cross-borough delivery model represented a new approach to funding youth social action across the capital. Involvement in delivery had several positive impacts for organisations: developing connections locally, offering opportunities to share best practice, and offering opportunities to bring young people together across organisations and boroughs.

However, coordinating and collaborating effectively did present organisations with challenges throughout the programme. Appointing a dedicated Project Officer or Lead represented a key method for overcoming these challenges, leading to more effective coordination.

Finally, feedback from the partnerships involved indicate a desire to continue the collaborations and models developed beyond the lifetime of the My London programme – indicating the potential for an ongoing legacy for the programme.

Learnings and Recommendations

Our evaluation of My London has highlighted several key learnings for delivering social action, supporting collaboration, and designing future programmes:

For delivering meaningful youth social action

- Creating space for young people to learn about social action, develop their ideas, and lead a social action campaign or project requires considerable time and investment. This points to the **value of funding multi-year social action programmes**, to give organisations and partnerships the space to embed social action effectively.
- Through the My London programme, creating opportunities for young people to organise events represented one of the most effective ways of developing skills, confidence, and delivering tangible impact. The GLA could consider how learning gained by young people and organisations involved in My

London could be **shared with other young people and programmes, e.g. through future conversations, consultations, or resources.**

- **Giving young people the opportunity to meet and work with other young people they would not normally work with is important.** Young people tend to have small areas in which they socialise and meet people. One of the important aspects of the My London programme that worked well was cross-borough partnerships as young people were able to socialise with people they would otherwise never have met.
- Programmes that **offer more than one way to engage give young people options to participate in a way that is most meaningful to them.** This enables young people with different needs and interests to contribute to youth social action projects and can lead to higher levels of engagement overall.

For supporting collaboration and partnership working

- The length of time between the Design Lab phase and the beginning of delivery resulted in partnerships adapting their approaches and institutional knowledge being lost. This points to the need for any initial partnership development period to be closely followed by delivery, to ensure a smooth transition.
- Partner organisations found the opportunity to build connections across boroughs a valuable way to connect with other organisations locally and build links they may not previously have pursued.
- While the partnerships did value coming together with multiple partners across boroughs, the number of organisations involved made coordinating the delivery of My London challenging.
 - Feedback from Partners indicated that the number of partners involved made coordination time consuming and challenging. **Supporting smaller collaborations of 2-3 organisations could therefore help to minimise the challenges of coordination**, while also providing the benefits associated with cross-borough working.
 - Supporting partnerships to **appoint dedicated Project Lead roles**, with accountability to the partnership rather than an individual organisation, could help to ensure smooth coordination on similar programmes in the future.
- On the My London programme, Lead Partners were predominantly larger organisations with capacity to hold the additional responsibilities required. Future programmes could **consider how smaller, grassroots organisations could also be supported – through funding and capacity**

building support – to take on leadership and coordination roles, to ensure approaches developed minimise power imbalances.

- Partners adopted different approaches to working with each other, making decisions, and communicating. While supporting partnerships to develop approaches autonomously is important, the GLA **could also consider sharing minimum standard, best practice guidelines, or capacity building support, to ensure greater consistency across projects.**
- Small organisations often face challenges around capacity and confidence in collecting data that can be used to highlight the impact of their work. To support smaller organisations to build their capacity in monitoring and evaluation, **training and on-going support should be offered to all stakeholders** responsible for delivering programmes which will be evaluated. This support could be prioritised for staff who will be responsible for collecting data, and focused on smaller organisations. At the same time, this will require dedicated resourcing – beyond project costs – to ensure that staff members have time allocated to support evaluation activity.



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