

Young Londoners taking action: Musa shares his experience of social action and why positive opportunities for young people are important

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The following blog was written by Musa, a young person who took part in one of our youth social action programmes and has recently supported a London-wide evaluation as a peer researcher. In his own words, he shares his journey with social action, the importance of positive opportunities for young Londoners and why youth-led community action is important.

Musa took part in HeadStart Action, Civil Society & Sport's personal and social development programme for young people aged 14-18, who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET). HeadStart Action bridges the link between social action and employability, to engage and inspire young people and elevate their voices, giving them the skills, experience and connections they need to get ahead in the world of work.

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My name is Musa, I am 17 and I live in Westminster. I got involved in youth social action through a friend who told me about HeadStart Action, which is where I had started.

After the project, I was offered to take part in a peer researching project which was to evaluate the GLA Youth Social Action programme. I was trained to create interview questions and to interview young people who also took part in any of the youth social action projects. After that we had to analyse the data and see what were the positive and negative of these programmes.

Youth Social Action to me is **young people taking the initiative to address societal issues**, engage in community projects and contribute positively to their communities through volunteerism, activism, and leadership. In HeadStart Action, I had to work with a group of young people in my community on how to tackle a societal issue at the time, we decided to tackle the issue of cost of living. We helped at a local food bank and raised money for them to try help people who were affected by the issue.

From being involved in Youth Social Action I have **gained skills and learnt new things** every time I went to these sessions, I also had a great chance to **meet new people and to network**.

An issue I feel passionate about are job opportunities for young people as there is high competition and lack of experience make it difficult for young people to do what they want. The HeadStart Action programme was designed to also **help young people gain experience and skills**, so it helped a lot of young Londoners in 2024 navigate challenges like job opportunities and societal pressures while seeking opportunities for growth. The programme also exposed young people to a variety of job roles from different industries, which was very beneficial.

It is important for young people to be involved in positive community action as it **empowers young people, fosters empathy, builds leadership skills, and creates a sense of belonging and responsibility**. My personal goal is to make the future of young people

secure and make sure that their **voices are heard by those in power** and being involved in Youth Social Action is one way of doing so.

Young Londoners having access to positive opportunities is great as it can give them an **insight of how the world works** and keeps them off the street. After I finish my peer research, I hope to find new opportunities for me and to feel like I have left an impact on those who partake in these projects.

My call to action to engage young people is to give them a sense of belonging and show them how the real-world works providing them with meaningful opportunities.

If you have any questions or would like to chat further about our work engaging young Londoners in positive community action, contact the Youth Social Action team at youthsocialaction@london.gov.uk.