

Annual Report Year Five

Hackney Works (formerly Project Central Hackney) was developed to improve the employability and life skills of local people and to strengthen the efficiency and operations of the community sector, which provides vital services to local residents living in the Dalston, Central Hackney and Homerton areas of Hackney.

In order to achieve project outputs, Linklaters, Societe Generale and UBS have funded a project manager to develop relationships with community partners and engage employee volunteers.



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Year Five Highlights

66 local people attended employability workshops



164 employee volunteer participations



8 social enterprises supported



42 individual interventions undertaken



21 organisations supported



Pitch for Success reaches new heights as Lord Mayor speaks at workshop for City Giving Day



Pitching skills support given to Hackney Giving grant applicants

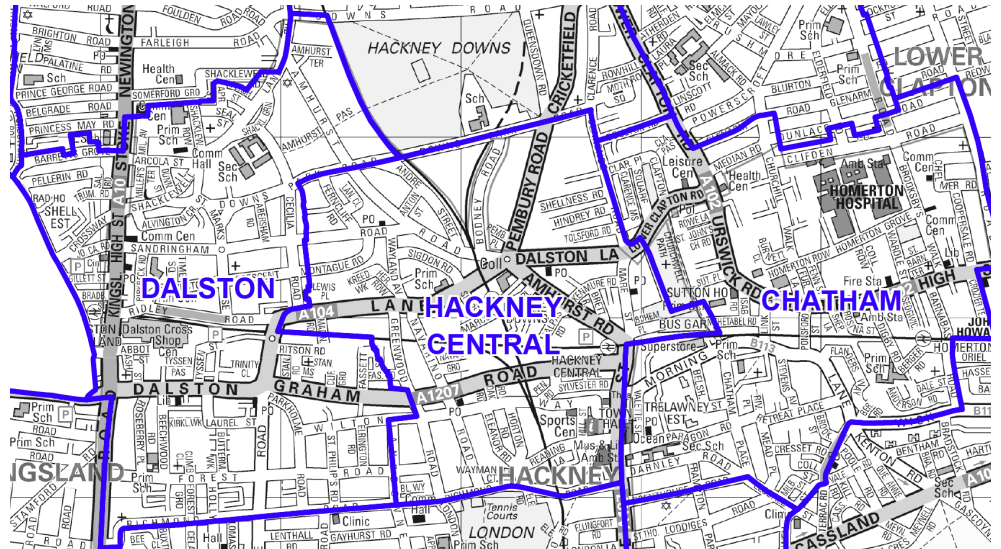
Project Background

Hackney Works began in 2010 and was designed to support the socio-economic regeneration of the community to accompany the large-scale physical regeneration taking place in the area. Physical regeneration in the project area involved both improvements to the commercial hubs and also to the various residential estates in the area.

Public funding cuts have placed significant strain on the voluntary and community sector (VCS) over the past 5 years. Public services are forced to retrench, often leaving a void that the community and voluntary sector attempt to fill. Discretionary services that local authorities may once have provided, such as outreach with young people and community grant programmes, are often the first to go, while even mandatory service areas such as social care are forced to provide the bare minimum. This can have a negative impact on the deprived communities in Hackney who rely on many of these services.

Simultaneously a number of public grants that were once used to fund the VCS have left them with reduced financial resources to fill this public service gap. The project area hosts a wide variety of VCS organisations, particularly in the economic and cultural hubs of Dalston and Central Hackney, providing opportunities for the project to support the sector during this difficult time to become sustainable.

The regeneration that has taken place so rapidly since the project began has also seen significant challenges in the borough (as well as opportunities). The cost of living in the area has generally risen, particularly housing and rental costs. This can cause difficulties for unemployed residents, particularly the long term unemployed, who may struggle to grasp the opportunities offered from the regeneration of the area and the employment opportunities in the City. The project attempts to break down these barriers through its interventions in the community.



Third Sector Stats:

75% of charities nationally reporting an increase in demand for their services¹

Only 15% feel adequately resourced to deal with an increase¹

48% of population in project area in socially rented housing²

57% of benefit claimants have claimed for 5 years or more³

43% of population qualified level 4 and above²

Hackney Works objectives:

- **Objective one:** Improve the governance and overall performance of the community and voluntary sector.
- **Objective two:** Build the employability and life skills of local people.

1. Localgiving's Local Charity & Community Group Sustainability Survey 2015
 2. Dalston, Central Hackney & Homerton Ward Profiles, London Borough of Hackney, November 2015
 3. London Borough of Hackney Local Economic Assessment 2014

Year Four at a glance

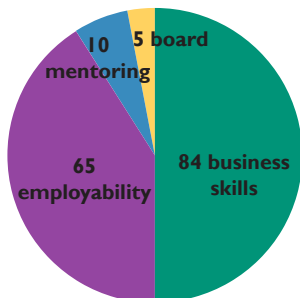
Project inputs

Performance against targets and impact infographics

Time period	Year 4		Year 5	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Supporting community organisations				
Mentors (introduced)	15	17	15	9 (10)
Board members (introduced)	5	7	5	4 (5)
Other business skills activity volunteers	60	86	60	99
Total volunteers	80	86	80	99
Total beneficiaries	80	110	80	187
Employability and life skills of local people				
Beneficiaries	70	99	70	66
Total Volunteers	70	100	70	65
TOTAL BENEFICIARIES	170	209	150	253
TOTAL VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION	130	203	130	164
				577.5 hours

The objective of supporting SMEs was removed for Year 5 as it was viewed that business support was not a good fit with the project, with East London Business Place and London Small Business Centre providing this support

Volunteer breakdown:



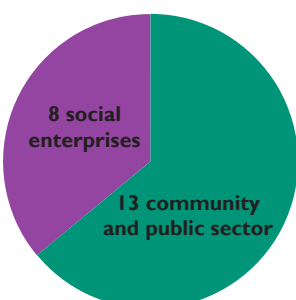
Total value of volunteers' time £28,875



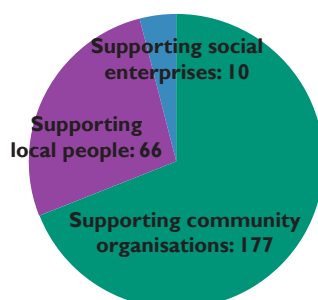
£8,340 Gifts in kind

Project outputs:

Organisations supported: 21



Total number of direct beneficiaries: 253



Total number of volunteers: 164



Objective One

Objective One

To improve the governance and overall performance of the community and voluntary sector



99 volunteers



426.5 hours
volunteered



187 direct
beneficiaries

The project continues to work with a wide range of organisations and now also works with social enterprises under this objective, with the umbrella term of “Community and Voluntary Sector” often used to refer to all different types of organisations.

The ongoing partnership with Hackney Council for Voluntary Services (HCVS) has been vital in delivering volunteering support to a variety of community organisations. Input from corporate volunteers has given particular support to pitching and presentation skills as the Pitch for Success workshops have attracted a great deal of interest, helping organisations to communicate their projects effectively and prepare them for funding streams such as Hackney Giving. This has been alongside a range of other continued support, for example board placement, mentoring and training workshops.

The project also trialled a pricing structures workshop for the first time. Volunteers worked with community organisations to consider how to adapt in an increasingly competitive world for the voluntary sector and cost up their services accurately and effectively. This will help put them in a stronger position for tendering processes, particularly for larger public contracts.

Evaluation

Support for community organisations has continued to be successful over the last year as they face ever increasing pressures from service demand and public funding cuts. For example as a result of the Pitch for Success workshop interventions 79% of participants said it had boosted their confidence and 79% also said they had a clearer strategy as a result of attending. This can help them as they continue to pitch for other funding streams in the future. Over the next year the project will scrutinise what volunteering support is most effective as it seeks to maximise impact on the community organisations it works with.

Case Study: City Giving Day



Lord Mayor speaking at the Pitch for Success event

The Lord Mayor’s City Giving Day took place on 30th September – a day for City companies to celebrate and showcase all the good work they do in the community. This seemed an ideal opportunity to demonstrate the success of Pitch for Success and provide vital pitching and presentation skills support to a host of organisations in anticipation of the upcoming Hackney Giving deadline on 12th October.

The workshops responded to a need for community organisations to demonstrate impact more effectively in their pitches and funding applications, integrating activities that would help them consider how to do this with the support of employee volunteers.

One organisation, Family Mosaic, said the session was “very well delivered and provided valuable coaching from a professional in a different field”. It is also an excellent opportunity for barriers to be broken down, with Arcola Theatre saying “it’s nice to see the business community cares and the City is nothing to be scared of”.

Paige Murphy, Grants Manager for East End Community Foundation, who manage the Hackney Giving programme, said “This workshop gives us the opportunity to provide support to Hackney Giving applicants on the issues that often hinder their chances of receiving funding. It is an excellent opportunity for these organisations to explore these themes alongside business volunteers and to gain a valuable external perspective”. Many volunteers and community organisations have continued to stay in contact since the workshop, providing ongoing advice and support.

Objective Two

Objective Two

To build the employability and life skills of local people



65 volunteers



151 hours volunteered



66 direct beneficiaries

Unemployment and deprivation in Hackney remains a significant issue, particularly in the Homerton ward where the majority of the area remains in the top 1% of most deprived areas in the country. A high proportion of jobs available in London are also highly skilled, whereas the unemployed are often low skilled. This creates significant challenges that the project can help to address.

Volunteers are well placed to share their knowledge and provide support to local people on a range of topics covering employability and life skills. Hackney Works undertook nine employability workshops in total during Year 5, working with organisations such as Re-present Radio, Volunteer Centre Hackney, The Boxing Academy and Ihsan Children's Centre. These include a combination of long-standing partners and new ones. Stepping Forward for example is a new support programme for unemployed lone parents in Hackney where Hackney Works engaged with beneficiaries for the first time.

Expanding beyond interview techniques and CV advice, the project also delivered confidence building and assertiveness, presentation skills and "money smart" workshops to address wider needs in the community. The project recognises life skills as essential under this objective and, as a result of activity, 70% of respondents who attended employability workshops learnt new skills and 90% reported an increase in confidence.

Evaluation

The project has continued to deliver highly popular employability workshops which help raise the confidence and skills of participants, helping them in their search for employment. The project recognises that there are different levels of need, particularly for those further from the job market, and has reacted to this need through the range of workshops delivered. Going forward the project can consider how it can maximise its impact on groups of beneficiaries, exploring further links with both the internal ELBA Employment Works team and external agencies.

Case Study: Training into Work



Beneficiaries taking part in employability training

Hackney Works regularly partners with the Training into Work programme delivered by ELBA's Employment Works team and this year was no exception. In March 2015 volunteers from UBS and Societe Generale took part in the programme which provides one week of employability training and a two week work placement. Upon completing the programme candidates are given a guaranteed interview. The March 2015 programme was delivered with Gateway Housing who provided a number of the Hackney candidates.

A variety of topics are covered in the employability training week where volunteer input is really valued. Budgeting, money management, CV surgeries and mock interviews are just some of the activities undertaken with volunteers to prepare candidates. Training into Work gives the chance for volunteers to maximise their impact by providing support to candidates who can use what they have learnt immediately in their work placement and interview.

Shernade Benn, Programme Manager within Employment Works said "involving volunteers is a great way to add real value to the programme as they share their experience and knowledge with candidates over this great programme".

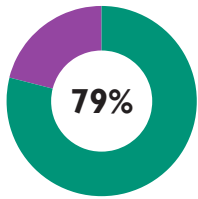
As a result of Training into Work and volunteer support all seven candidates felt increased confidence and four candidates secured long-term employment because of the programme. Volunteers provide an invaluable input into the process and we look forward to collaborating in the future.

Impact

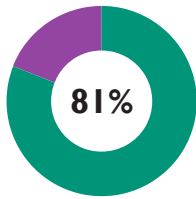
Monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure we are supporting the community and corporate volunteers to have an effective experience working together, and feedback is used to shape future activity. Following each activity, a paper survey is given to volunteers and beneficiaries. For longer term volunteering assignments such as mentoring or board membership, evaluations are sent either six or twelve months after the initial introduction.

Supporting community organisations

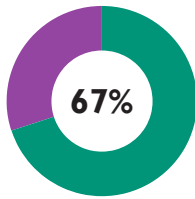
Out of a sample of 42 organisations, feedback showed:



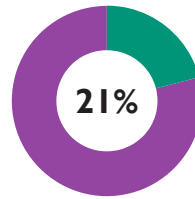
access new ideas/
a different
perspective



increase in confidence/
willingness to try new
ways of working



clearer
strategy/future
plans



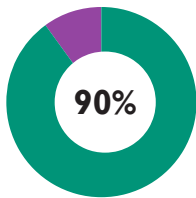
increase or
improve public
profile

“Thanks - nice to see the business community cares and the City is nothing to be scared of”
– Arcola Theatre

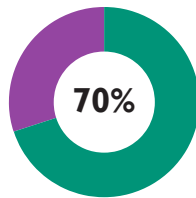
“Very well delivered - valuable coaching from a professional in a different field”
– Business skills workshop attendee

Supporting local people

Out of a sample of 10 people, feedback showed:



feel more confident as
a result



feel they have learnt new
skills

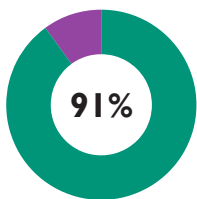
“The October confidence building event was a great success with our customers as we had the largest group of attendees. One customer who is now volunteering with us stated that it was a very informative session which has inspired her to move forward with her life”

– Gary Hodgson, Team Manager, One Support

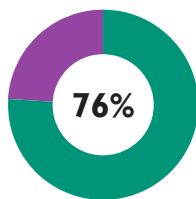
Volunteer impact

All 44 volunteers who completed an evaluation survey stated they had:

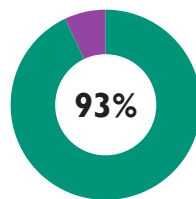
- A rewarding experience of volunteering
- Improved understanding of the community and voluntary sector
- Would recommend volunteering to a colleague



volunteered to make
a difference to the
community



improved their
own business skills



agree the skills they've
acquired will benefit
them in their own role

“Please do volunteer because it is so rewarding and important for you. You can meet wonderful people and learn as well. There are very good workshops where you can notice your own personal/professional skills and improve”
– SG volunteer

Year Six Focus and Acknowledgements

Development and New Opportunities

Since the project's beginning in 2010 the area has experienced rapid and significant change. There has been sweeping regeneration, particularly in Dalston, which brings not just benefits to the area but serious challenges. Many community organisations face difficulty seeking to address these challenges, for example trying to ensure local people access new opportunities. Simultaneously they face issues in ensuring their own survival. As mentioned previously, with both public budgets and traditional sources of grant funding reduced, organisations must innovate and find new ways to provide their services, while increasing land values place pressure on organisations trying to remain in the area.

These issues highlight the continued relevance of Hackney Works and the project will continue to focus its efforts supporting organisations and local people who are struggling with these challenges. Through a consultative exercise, engaging both funders and community stakeholders, a way forward has been agreed that refines the work undertaken to date to achieve a greater degree of impact. To complement our work we will also be looking at how we can add London Benchmarking Group reporting to the project to monitor its impact more effectively. This will help the project evaluate and improve upon its activities in an even better way.

Supporting Community Organisations

Building on the successes of the project to date, it will take a greater focus on depth of engagement with community organisations, encouraging repeat interventions with partners to maximise the overall impact. This will be balanced with an ongoing need for interventions that engage a greater number of volunteers, such as pitching skills workshops that engage multiple partners. The project will also prioritise organisations that play some kind of role in the area, whether that is working with local people or tackling localised issues. Through these refinements long term partnerships can be developed with new organisations.



Business volunteers support Hackney CVS trustees with business planning

Supporting local people

The project intends to recognise a wider focus of local people rather than young people specifically. As new and innovative workshops have been delivered the objective now recognises that support can be about broader life skills, complementing the existing employability angle. The project also intends to build much closer links with ELBA's own Employment team in year 6, working closely on more bespoke programmes alongside Hackney Works community partners and building on the existing links with the Training into Work scheme.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our funders and all volunteers from Linklaters, Societe Generale and UBS

Thank you to all corporate and community partners we've worked with, including:

Benthal Primary School, Big House Theatre, British Land, City & Hackney Carers Centre, Cordwainers Garden, Hackney Community Transport, Hackney CVS, Hackney Young People's University, Hackney Winter Night Shelter, Ihsan Children's Centre, JP Morgan, London Borough of Hackney, Mind Your Language, Peter Bedford Housing Association, Re-present Radio, School of Hip Hop, Space Studios, The Boxing Academy, The Virtual School for Looked After Children, Volunteer Centre Hackney, We Walk the Line, Young Hackney.

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