



# Annual Report Year 4

## St Paul's Way Project

(January 2015 - December 2015)

The Poplar & St Paul's Way project is one of East London Business Alliance's (ELBA) 'hotspot' projects, working within Poplar and St Paul's Way in Tower Hamlets, bringing the business experience and expertise of employee volunteers to support and strengthen the local community, focusing on the issues and opportunities particular to the area.

Principally funded by XL Catlin and ELBA, the project's aim is to use the skills and resources of City and Canary Wharf businesses to support the development of the voluntary and community sector, improve the employability prospects and life skills of local residents and support the regeneration of the area.



Langdon Park School students practice presentation skills at Davis Polk

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## Year Four Highlights

**616 residents  
directly supported**



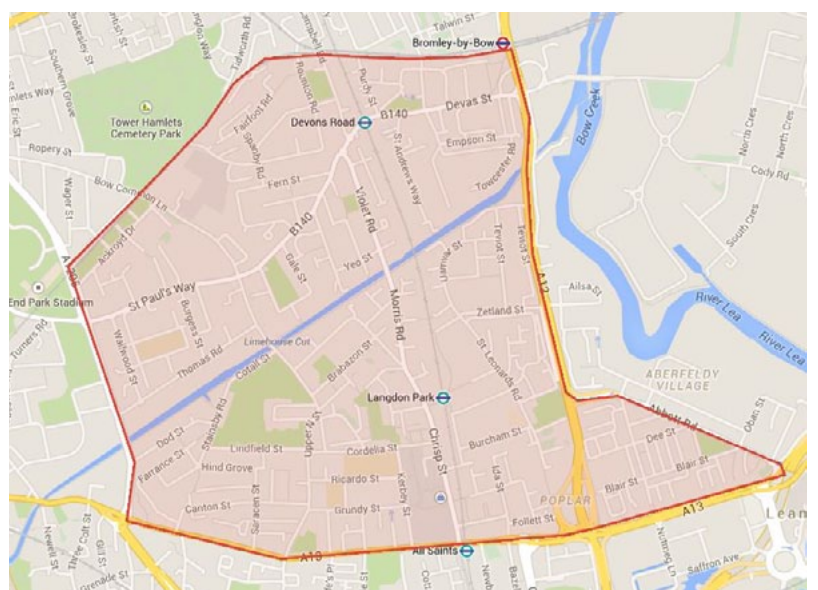
**2,052 employee  
volunteers**



**120  
volunteering  
activities**



**27  
organisations  
supported**



## St Paul's Way Project

The Poplar & St Paul's Way project began in 2011 and was designed to sit alongside the large-scale physical regeneration taking place around St Paul's Way. The project brings employee volunteers to the area to support a variety of organisations through business skills and practical support, improving on the early successes of the St Paul's Way Transformation Project<sup>1</sup>.

At the end of Year 3 the focus area of the project was expanded to include two new centres of regeneration directly to the south of St Paul's Way: Langdon Park (including the Spotlight Centre and Langdon Park School) and Chrisp Street Market.

Funding cuts affecting the London Borough of Tower Hamlets mean that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is under increased pressure and struggling to deliver, at a time when organisations are experiencing an increase in demand for services. St Paul's Way is a hub for VCS organisations, with several organisations on a mile-long stretch of road.

The Poplar area is next to Canary Wharf and just three miles from the City of London and the jobs and wealth of those districts. However, residents are less likely to be in employment, and often feel the opportunities available on their doorstep are not for them. Even local graduates are unlikely to benefit from these job opportunities, with only half in graduate-level employment.

St Paul's Way has seen huge levels of regeneration over the last few years with the final stages now underway. Residents are living in better housing and are served by better amenities in a brighter environment. The poorest part of Tower Hamlets, around Chrisp Street, is next for regeneration, and the focus of a £300m redevelopment creating a vibrant new district centre for Poplar.

### Project Objectives:

- Support the development of the voluntary and community sector
- Improve the employability, enterprise and life skills of residents
- Improve the local community's physical environment

### Issues:

- **Funding cuts:** The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has seen continued cuts and is forecast to make £63m in savings over the next three years<sup>2</sup>.
- **Welfare reforms:** Reductions in welfare mean the total loss to Tower Hamlets residents is around £8 million a year<sup>3</sup>.
- **Increase in demand for services:** 75% of local charities and community groups saw an increase in demand for services during 2014-15, 81% expect this increase to continue over the next 12 months, and only 15% of groups feel sufficiently resourced to cope<sup>4</sup>.
- **Educational attainment:** The number of adults with no formal qualifications in the Poplar area is above the Tower Hamlets and national averages at around 25%<sup>5</sup>.
- **Employment:** Despite GCSE results in the borough being above average, there are more 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training than the English average<sup>6</sup>. 67.9% of Tower Hamlets graduates are in employment, compared to the national average of 74.7%, and just 54% of those in professional, graduate level, employment<sup>7</sup>. The Poplar area has the highest unemployment rate in Tower Hamlets at 18.8%, against the Borough average of 12% and the national average of 7.6%<sup>5</sup>.
- **Income disparity:** The average salary of those who work in Tower Hamlets is £58,000 whilst the average household income for those who live in Tower Hamlets is £29,550. Around 20% of households have an annual income of less than £15,000<sup>8</sup>.
- **Housing:** The population of Tower Hamlets grew 4.1% in 2014, the second largest rise in England. During the same time, private housing stock grew by just 1.75%<sup>9</sup>. Housing associations are required to cut social rents by 1% per year over the next four years, meaning they are increasingly relying on properties at market rate to cover losses<sup>10</sup>.
- **Poverty:** A quarter of all Tower Hamlets residents live in income deprived households, with the number rising to 39% for children – the highest in the country.<sup>11</sup> Tower Hamlets is among the 10% of districts in England that contain the largest proportion of highly deprived neighbourhoods.<sup>11</sup>

1. [www.stpaulsway.com/](http://www.stpaulsway.com/)

2. Source: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/yourborough](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/yourborough), 2015

3. Source: Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission, 2013

4. Source: Localgiving's Local Charity & Community Group Sustainability Survey 2015

5. Source: Tower Hamlets Ward Profiles - Lansbury, Mile End and Bromley South, 2014

6. Source: East End Community Foundation – Vital Issues, 2015

7. Source: HESA, 2011-12

8. Source: Tower Hamlets Equality Commission, 2013

9. Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/](http://www.ons.gov.uk/) 'Annual Mid-year Population Estimates, 2014'

10. Source: [www.insidehousing.co.uk/osborne-rips-up-settlement-and-cuts-rents-by-1-a-year/7010686.article](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/osborne-rips-up-settlement-and-cuts-rents-by-1-a-year/7010686.article), 2015

11. Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015

## St Paul's Way Project

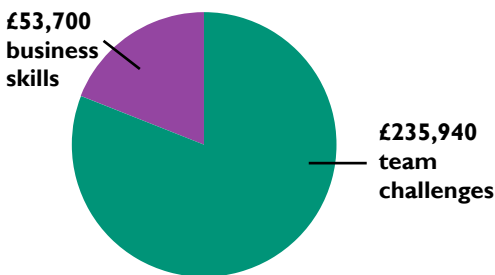
The Poplar & St Paul's Way project addresses these critical issues by connecting VCS organisations and local residents with skilled volunteers. Funding from XL Catlin enables ELBA to employ a dedicated project manager who is responsible for meeting with organisations, identifying opportunities and facilitating employee-led volunteering activities.

### Performance against targets

Time period	Year 1 Sep 2011 – Dec 2012		Year 2 Jan 2013 – Dec 2013		Year 3 Jan 2014 – Dec 2014		Year 4 Jan 2015 – Dec 2015	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Schools supported	4	3	5	5	5	6	7	4
Community organisations supported	15	8	20	19	20	17	16	17
Social enterprises supported	3	1	4	4	4	4	4	5
Team challenge volunteers*	150	2,643 (inc. 150 from XL Catlin)	150	1,985 (inc. 41 from XL Catlin)	150	1,673 (inc. 22 from XL Catlin)	150	1,827 (inc. 27 from XL Catlin)
Business volunteers	45	253 (inc. 7 from XL Catlin)	68	176 (inc. 33 from XL Catlin)	80	205 (inc. 38 from XL Catlin)	100	225 (inc. 34 from XL Catlin)

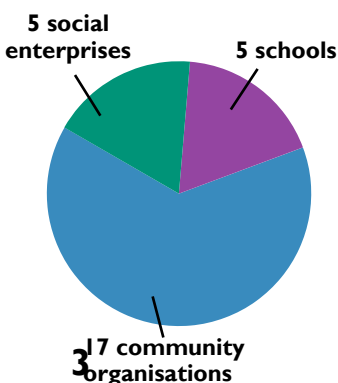
\* Years 1 and 2 included team challenges at Mudchute Park and Farm and Stepney City Farm – both removed from project for year three as they are not in the immediate area.

### Project inputs:

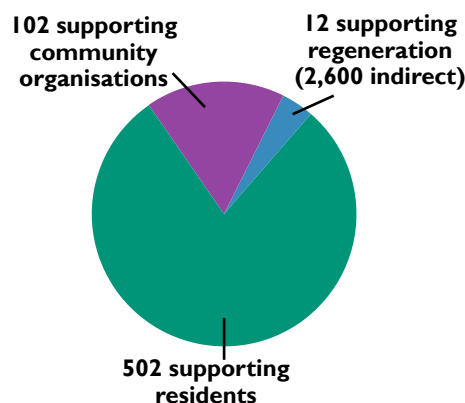


### Project outputs:

**Organisations supported: 27**



**Total number of direct beneficiaries: 616**



**Total number of volunteers: 2052**



## St Paul's Way Project

### Objective One

Support the development of the voluntary and community sector

### Results



39 volunteers



327.5 hours given



102 direct beneficiaries



We Walk the Line receive business advice from Citi

With charities increasingly feeling the pressure of reduced resources and increased demands, and Localgiving recommending that more skilled volunteers with specialist knowledge are required to support community organisations, projects such as the St Paul's Way project have never been more important.

Staff at youth charities Streets of Growth and Leaders in Community have been matched with mentors from State Street Bank, Beazley and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, helping them with their professional development and goal setting.

Streets of Growth and Leaders in Community have also been introduced to trustees from various companies, helping improve governance at board level.

Children's charity Toyhouse received support from a Linklaters volunteer to put together a fundraising brochure, and a City of London volunteer to research funding sources from corporates.

Emmaus East London received support from an HSBC volunteer to review their social media presence, helping to promote their social business, and Your Bike CIC hosted volunteers from Financial Ombudsman Service to help improve their customer experience.

### Evaluation

In Year 4, the project has continued to link up small community organisations in Poplar and St Paul's Way with experienced professionals, happy to share their skills. For these organisations, it means they are able to tap into skills and resources that may have otherwise cost money or taken time away from delivery.

Organisations have said that this support from volunteers has enabled them to improve services, deliver operational improvements, increase their profile and increase their confidence in trying new ways of working.

Expanding the project area to include Chrisp Street Market has enabled us to work with Poplar HARCA on engaging new social enterprises such as Dolittle, Emmaus East London and Your Bike CIC.

### Case Study: Leaders in Community Board Members

Leaders in Community (LiC) were looking to refresh their board of trustees, which is made up almost entirely of young people. ELBA reached out to its member base, targeting younger members of staff and asking for those interested to apply with details of the skills they had to offer and why they were interested.

ELBA introduced four individuals to LiC CEO Momtaz Ajid who gave them an overview of the organisation and discussed their motivations, before inviting them to shadow a board meeting and meet the other trustees.

As an introductory task on joining the board, Danny Davis (FTSE), Tosin Nubi (FTSE), Chloe Caudell (HSBC) and William Pointing (Citi) all got involved in fundraising events for LiC, with activities including a cake sale, comedy night and sponsored run.

The four new trustees now sit on LiC's board, attending meetings and helping them deliver operational improvements, as well as providing support for the younger members of the board.

Momtaz said about the new trustees: "It's great to have skilled people from large corporations, bringing their skills to a young board. They not only act as mentors to our younger members, but also champion LiC and are very passionate individuals. This comes through at the board meetings with their passion helping to inspire the younger board members".



## St Paul's Way Project

### Objective Two

Improve the employability, enterprise and life skills of residents

### Results



186 volunteers



628  
hours given



477 direct  
beneficiaries



XL Catlin volunteers at Tower Hamlets College

Workshops in Year 4 of the project supported local residents with their employability and life skills, with many companies hosting groups of volunteers or going out into the community to share their experiences and advice.

The unique Food for Thought programme with Leaders in Community continued with volunteers from XL Catlin, JP Morgan, Financial Ombudsman Service and Royal London cooking with young people whilst discussing career paths, CV and interview skills, and providing advice in an informal setting.

Harbour & Jones at XL Catlin hosted students from St Paul's Way Trust School for a baking session, introducing them to a corporate kitchen and teaching important skills such as following instructions and team work.

ELBA, Langdon Park School and Davis Polk worked together on Career Capital: Sixth Form, a four-week programme introducing sixth formers to life in a law firm, the roles available and skills required, as well as general employability skills.

Barclaycard hosted an insight visit for young people from Streets of Growth as part of the charity's Earn your Vision Programme, to practice team building skills and learn what employers look for.

Other workshops included young people on Poplar HARCA's NHS Apprenticeship scheme practicing interview skills at Barclays, local job seekers taking part in mock interviews with volunteers from Nomura, State Street, Citi and Financial Ombudsman as part of ELBA's Training into Work programme and an 'employability superskills' session with Tower Hamlets College at Citi.

### Evaluation

Workshops run in Year 4 of the project with Poplar and St Paul's Way residents have continued to be extremely popular with ELBA member companies, with volunteer numbers increasing on Year 3.

For local residents, the project has provided the opportunity to break down barriers with City and Canary Wharf companies, meeting professionals and finding out about their career paths and options available to them.

Participants in workshops have found them to be beneficial, with the majority saying that the workshops increased their self-confidence and communication skills, and helped them develop new skills. Volunteers have found residents to be engaged, open minded and motivated, and have been happy to share experiences and provide advice.

The project expansion in Year 4 has brought in two new partners, Langdon Park School and Tower Hamlets College, who have been able to provide large cohorts for bespoke workshops.

### Case Study: XL Catlin's Global Day of Giving supports Tower Hamlets College and ELBA's Training into Work

XL Catlin ran their tenth Global Day of Giving in Year 4, where staff members volunteered a day in their local communities. Following the recent merger of two insurance companies (XL and Catlin), this year's was the biggest yet and saw volunteers coming together on workshops in the Poplar and St Paul's Way area.

ELBA facilitated the project's largest event of the year at Tower Hamlets College, with 70 students taking part in speed networking and interview skills with 20 volunteers from XL Catlin in the morning.

Vanessa Welsh, one of the volunteers at Tower Hamlets College said: 'I really enjoyed giving something back to the young people. They were all engaged and made a massive effort'.

For the afternoon, candidates from ELBA's Training into Work scheme visited XL Catlin's offices for a workshop on CV skills and money management, with one of the candidates, Poplar resident Amina Hassan, taking a work experience placement with Harbour & Jones in XL Catlin's staff restaurant.

Eugene Maynard, one of the participants in the afternoon session said: 'It was uplifting, motivating and informative. I was given great advice and learnt to communicate on a professional level. I'm really grateful for the experience'.

## St Paul's Way Project

### Objective Three

Improve the local community's physical environment

### Results



1,620 volunteers



10,110 hours given



21 direct beneficiaries  
(2,660 indirect)

On the edge of the project focus area are two of Tower Hamlets's largest green spaces: Mile End Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. Both have excellent relationships with the Challenge:ELBA team and work closely with them to place hundreds of volunteers each year.



Poplar HARCA, a Registered Social Landlord in the Poplar and St Paul's Way area, have hosted a team from State Street Bank at Oban House through the Women's Environmental Network as well as volunteers at Lincoln Gardens on one of ELBA's Just Turn Up days.

Smaller organisations have also benefitted from volunteers placed by ELBA with a team from Barclays painting and laying floors at Fern Street Settlement, Nomura helping out in the garden at Bonner Mile End Primary School and volunteers from Lloyd's of London painting at Hestia Housing's Heather Lodge.

ELBA also provides support to the St Paul's Way Partnership group, chaired by XL Catlin's former Group Sustainability Director, John Carroll, and responsible for the physical regeneration of St Paul's Way. Towards the end of Year Four, Poplar HARCA CEO Steve Stride gave the group a tour of the area, pinpointing places that will be next to benefit from regeneration and inviting more opportunities for collaboration between stakeholders in the area.

### Evaluation

Team challenges continue to be extremely popular and the project is in the vicinity of two of ELBA's largest team challenge partners in Mile End Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. Team challenges provide access to hundreds of volunteers, enabling these organisations to achieve results that they would otherwise not have had the resources for and helping to improve the local physical environment for thousands of local residents.

Being part of the St Paul's Way partnership group has enabled ELBA to play a role in the physical regeneration of the area, bringing partners together and introducing corporates to the area. The partnership group ensures that a variety of stakeholders are involved in the regeneration of the community.



Volunteers on a 'Just Turn Up Day' at Lincoln Gardens

### Case Study: St Paul's Way Partnership Group

In Year 4 of the project, ELBA was asked to join the St Paul's Way Partnership group.

The group is chaired by former XL Catlin Group Sustainability Director, John Carroll, with senior representatives from key organisations in the area such as Poplar HARCA, The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, St Paul's Way Trust School, The Prince's Trust, Queen Mary University of London and St Paul's Way Medical Centre.

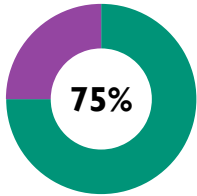
The group has been instrumental in bringing local partners together to drive physical changes to the environment in St Paul's Way, such as improving the streetscape, reviewing the retail offer in the area, helping St Paul's Way Trust School increase capacity and providing new premises for St Paul's Way Medical Centre from 2016.

As well as providing secretarial support to the group, ELBA has also brought in representatives from Morgan Stanley, helping to increase corporate engagement in the area.

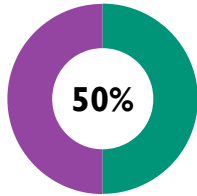
## St Paul's Way Project

### Supporting community organisations

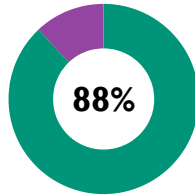
Of a sample of 8 beneficiaries surveyed across 6 community organisations, feedback showed that support from corporate volunteers has:



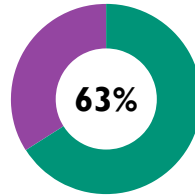
Enabled them to improve existing/provide new services/products



Helped deliver operational improvements and/or management systems



Increased or improved their public profile

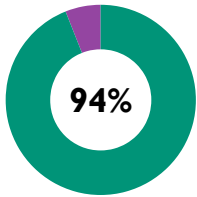


Increased confidence and/or willingness to try new ways of working

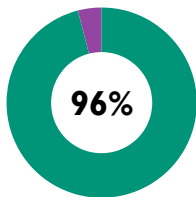
*"This workshop has stayed with the group in developing understanding of what is good and bad customer service and how to remedy failures when they occur"*  
Amir Miah, Your Bike CIC

### Supporting residents

Of a sample of 122 beneficiaries surveyed across 9 workshops, participants said that workshops had:



Increased their self-confidence and communication skills



Helped them develop new skills that they can relate to work/education/personal life

*"I wanted to know what motivated people to aspire and work hard and after the interviews I have a better understanding of what I want in life"*  
Streets of Growth 'Earn Your Vision' participant

*"I never thought that I would be able to make such good relationships with companies. The sessions helped me to boost my confidence and communication skills, gave me CV tips and helped with my first impressions"*  
Langdon Park School Student

### Supporting regeneration

Asked about the impact of team challenge volunteers, 3 of our Team Challenge partners agreed that:

**Team Challenge volunteers helped make a visible improvement to the local physical environment**

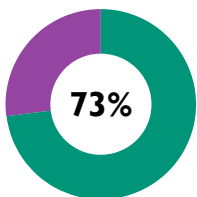


**Team Challenge volunteers enabled them to achieve results they wouldn't otherwise have the resources for**

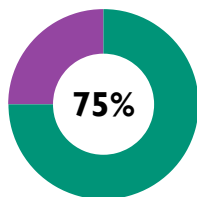
*"Jan and her team were friendly and enthusiastic and went beyond our expectation. Really lovely people, thank you so much!"*  
Rosie Fowler, Hestia Housing and Support

### Volunteer impact

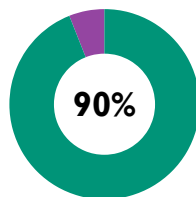
Of 52 volunteers surveyed across 8 workshops, feedback showed:



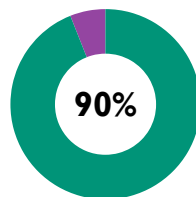
Increased their self-confidence and communication skills



Helped them develop new skills that they can relate to work/education/personal life



Increased their awareness of how businesses and community organisations can work together



Increased their interest in other ELBA opportunities

*"I learnt how people from different backgrounds all have the same needs and concerns regarding career"*  
James McKernan, Nomura

*"Volunteering was a great way to actively help members within the community. I've been able to step outside of my comfort zone and learn more about different individuals"*  
Jasmine Atiba, Financial Ombudsman Service



## St Paul's Way Project

The St Paul's Way project focuses effort where need is greatest and where corporate support can have the most impact. Since it's start in 2011, the project has engaged hundreds of volunteers and supported dozens of community organisations. Looking ahead to Year 5, ELBA will continue to pursue the core goals of supporting voluntary and community sector development, improving the employability, enterprise and life skills of residents and enhancing the local physical environment.

In Year 5, however, the project will target the needs of young people in particular, by directly supporting them on a path towards employment and by working with local organisations specifically focused on their needs, such as St Paul's Way Trust School, Langdon Park School and the Spotlight Centre. ELBA has already engaged all these organisations but recognises that there is potential to have greater impact by further brokering relationships with employee volunteers and by bringing these and other organisations together.

Under the banner of the St Paul's Way project, Year 5 will also see ELBA continue to work with stakeholders on the St Paul's Way Transformation Project. With ELBA's support, this group has recently revisited its terms of reference and will soon develop a new action plan. ELBA will continue to play a pivotal role in connecting the St Paul's Way project to the broader regeneration agenda.



Finally, through a refreshed focus on young people, employability and connecting with regeneration, ELBA aims to specifically promote community cohesion over the coming year. Although recent changes in the neighbourhood have brought social and economic benefits, the area has experienced some tension – for example, between different housing estates, between ethno-cultural groups and between newer and older residents. By developing initiatives that bring communities together, the St Paul's Way project will do its part to encourage interaction and understanding, thus helping to bridge these divides.

### Thank you to community and corporate partners involved in the St Paul's Way project in Year 4:

#### Community Organisations:

Bonner Mile End Primary School, City Gateway, Dolittle, Emmaus East London, Fern Street Settlement, Hestia Housing, Langdon Park School, Leaders in Community, Metropolitan Police - Tower Hamlets, Mile End Park, Milestone, N.AbleD, Poplar HARCA, Spotlight Centre, St Paul's Church, Bow Common, St Paul's Way Medical Centre, St Paul's Way Trust School, St Paul's Way Trust Foundation School, St Paul's Way Trust School Cafe Enterprise, Streets of Growth, The Prince's Trust, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Tower Hamlets College, Toyhouse, We Walk the Line, Women's Environmental Network, Your Bike CIC, We Walk the Line

#### Corporate Volunteers:

XL Catlin, Accenture, Aon, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays, Beazley, Chaucer, Citi, City of London, Clyde & Co LLP, Davis Polk, Deutsche Bank, Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Ombudsman Service, FC Business Intelligence, Financial Services Compensation Scheme, FTSE, HSBC, Harbour & Jones, J.P. Morgan, Linklaters, Lloyd's of London, Mazars, Moody's, Morgan Stanley, Nomura, Royal London, Skanska Construction Group, Societe Generale, State Street Bank, T Rowe Price, Thomson Reuters, TIAA Henderson Real Estate, UBS

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