

BEYOND BOUNDARY KEY LEARNINGS REPORT 2017



The
Nomura Charitable Trust



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Project background

Beyond Boundary is a collaborative community project in the heart of Bethnal Green, managed by ELBA and principally funded by The Nomura Charitable Trust and State Street.

Named after the historic Boundary Estate, the project worked to enhance community cohesion and provide young people with access to opportunities through strategic use of the business skills, time and expertise of employee volunteers. The project was one of the first to bring together multiple stakeholders from across sectors to work collaboratively, making use of diverse skill sets and championing strategic partnerships in the City.

The aims and objectives of the project were designed to support young people in the area to increase their confidence, raise aspirations and facilitate access to opportunities for personal and professional development on their doorstep and beyond. There was also an aim to help regenerate the area.

After five years of impact, working alongside a broad array of corporate and community partners, the project was brought to a close in Summer 2017. Following careful analysis of how the programme has evolved, it was agreed to wrap up the focus on this geographical hot spot, to allow for targeted and thematic support where need is highest. The project area has significantly benefitted from the programme of support, and some incredible numbers have been delivered over the years.

This Key Learnings document has been compiled by ELBA as part of a critical evaluation of the programme's successes, designed to share learnings with project partners and future collaborators. Charting our experiences to date, we hope that our shared learnings will be as valuable to others, as they have been for us.

Project Aims:

To enhance community cohesion, and provide young people in and around the Boundary Estate with access to opportunities through the use of the business skills, time and expertise of employee volunteers.

Objective 1

Develop and strengthen the community and voluntary sector by supporting senior leadership and management within organisations working with young people, to improve their business effectiveness

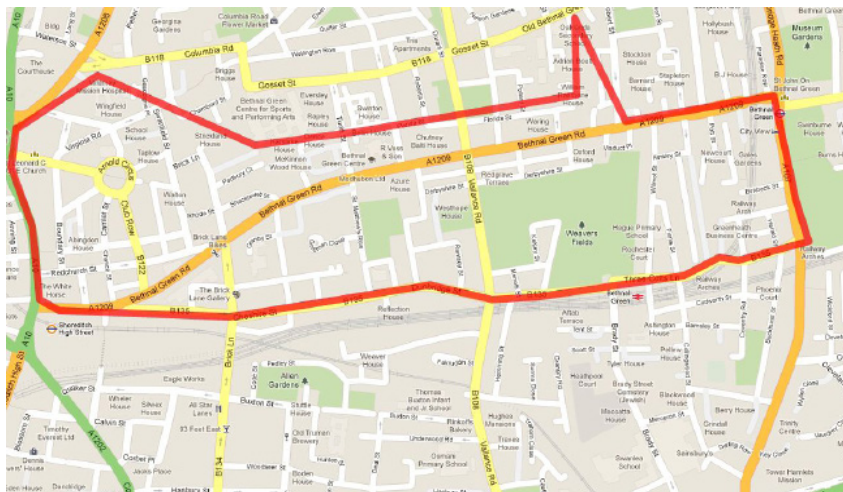
Objective 2

Improve the employability skills and aspirations of young people in the project area by:

- Improving confidence and raising aspirations to promote and encourage education, employment and training
- Providing information, advice and access to employment opportunities

Objective 3

Support the regeneration and improvement of community and youth organisations' facilities and/or aesthetic environment



Named after the Boundary Estate, Beyond Boundary covered the Weavers and Bethnal Green South wards of Tower Hamlets, which are priority areas for the borough, based on local need and proximity to the City of London.



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The model

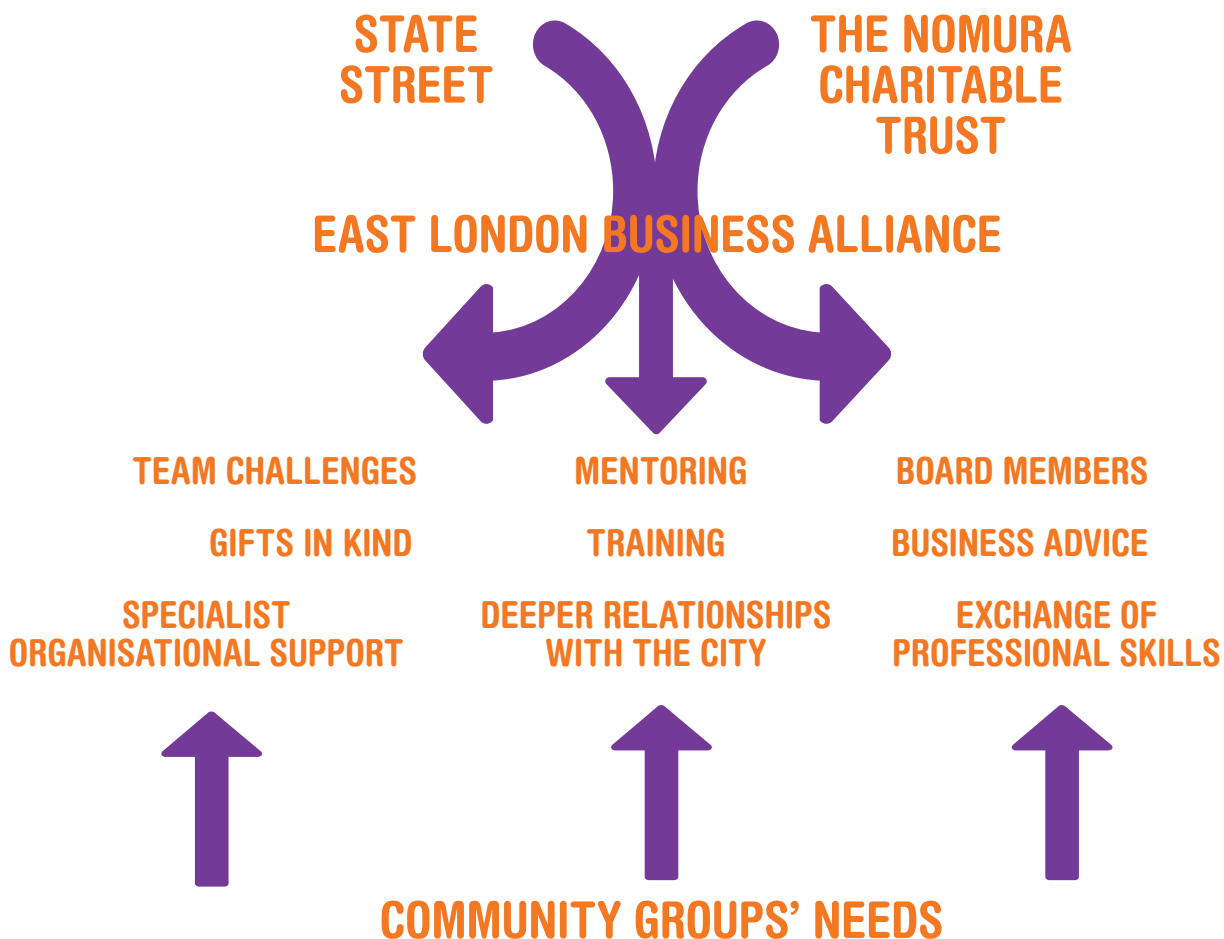
At ELBA we pride ourselves on working closely with our corporate members to understand the climate in which they work and, in best cases, we anticipate the direction their community investment may take. Here we take a step back to consider how the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda has evolved, from the language it is couched in to the attention it now receives at the highest levels of leadership.

Twenty five or so years ago, the initial shoots of sustainability reporting began to spring up in the corporate agenda, revealing a growing appetite for responsible investment and recognising the benefit of collaboration across organisations and sectors. Previously CSR was largely a reactive force, often tacked on to combat public perception of unpopular business decisions, now top business schools and forward-thinking organisations began advocating a holistic approach. In order to create sustainable business relationships, both within firms and across sectors, a deep analysis of how core business affects its environment became necessary.

We understood the need to align our volunteering engagement with our members' strategic priorities, and the Embedded Project Manager model was established, pulling together stakeholders from multi-international financial institutions to jointly tackle challenges in the Bethnal Green and Weavers Ward.

We designed a model that harnessed our corporate members' skills and volunteering priorities and aligned them closely with the needs of the Beyond Boundary community. To ensure maximum impact, ELBA and our project sponsors funded an embedded Project Manager, dedicated to working at a grassroots level with community organisations to uncover opportunities to collaborate with corporate volunteers.

The project was guided by a Steering Group which met four times a year, made up of representatives from key community partners in the area, The Nomura Charitable Trust, State Street and ELBA.



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Funding the project

At ELBA we have seen continued demand for team-based practical activities, including physical regeneration such as painting tasks, but also highly-focused skills-based volunteering that challenge volunteers to employ their professional knowledge in new contexts (e.g. coaching, strategic planning, and pro bono support). Over the five years of Beyond Boundary, we have worked with key funders, namely State Street and The Nomura Charitable Trust and mobilised their expertise to benefit the Beyond Boundary area.



Across community partners and charities there has been an inevitable increase in demand for services. National and local budget cuts have resulted in an increased pressure on resources, with projects like Beyond Boundary becoming crucial to filling in the gap to ease pressure off local community organisations through the provision of skilled volunteers.

We recognise that volunteering develops skills on both sides, for volunteers and beneficiaries. ELBA is drawing directly on the learnings from the Beyond Boundary project to continue to work with corporate members to improve prospects across east London. We are delighted that The Nomura Charitable Trust and State Street are continuing to support residents across east London.

What we delivered between 2012-2017:

24,036



EMPLOYEE
VOLUNTEERS

81



COMMUNITY
ORGANISATIONS
SUPPORTED

100,094



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES

2580



VOLUNTEERING
ACTIVITIES

117,242



HOURS
VOLUNTEERED

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Five things we've learnt

1. MEASURING IMPACT IS REALLY HARD

The Beyond Boundary project and its surrounding area has evolved over the past five years, changing strategic focus, evolving volunteering targets, data collection, IT processes and natural staff turnover have all had a role to play. This means that consistent data collection necessary for robust impact evaluation has been testing. We have used the London Benchmarking Group's recommendations to measure our impact - but the sheer variety of activities we do makes comparison across activities a real challenge.

We don't doubt that volunteering has lasting, sustainable impact, but we also acknowledge that some of the complex issues we aim to overcome require intensive investment and involvement from a range of institutions. For example, an employability workshop on mock interviews can be hugely beneficial to a job-seeker, but we also work with individuals who are far from the labour market and need additional interventions from other stakeholders. A joined up approach creates space for wider and more sustainable benefit.

2. BE HUMBLE ABOUT WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE

3. SUPPORT COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO SAY 'NO'

Be honest about what each partner wants from a relationship, and crucially, what they can realistically achieve. As a broker, ELBA helps small organisations to stick to their core mission, being mindful of key objectives. Sometimes small organisations want to work with large corporates but they simply don't have the resource to manage this, so it's useful to clarify commitment on both sides and ensure that parties are aware of implications of last minute changes or cancellations.

Peer-to-peer recruitment has always been one of the strongest ways to develop interest in our programme, and ensuring volunteers have a great experience is key to driving further sign up. Some members have seen great results through alternative advertising such as in washrooms! We would have liked to create higher project visibility by developing links through local news sources, but there are cost and resource implications to consider.

4. CREATE MOMENTUM THROUGH GOOD COMMUNICATION

5. HAVE A CROSS-SECTOR STEERING GROUP

To ensure a genuine partnership approach, it's crucial to have representatives from every side present. This helps foster accountability and shared benefits. It's also useful to recognise that goals, relationship management and expectations will evolve as steering group patterns change. To help, it is useful to be clear about objectives but remain flexible and open-minded, ensure you fit within your organisation's strategy, but remain flexible to the landscape and partner needs.

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Top tips for meaningful employee engagement

USE YOUR NETWORKS

Our corporate partners have well-established employee interest networks and we have seen great traction and successes where we have targeted volunteering activities to match these audiences with the appropriate community partners. A great example is our engagement of the State Street Professional Women's Network to deliver activities with community partners and schools.

TARGET CORE SKILLS

We have seen excellent work where we have targeted specific skills or departments, for example, working with HR individuals to develop an HR handbook for charities, or the ongoing support of Facilities Management individuals supporting the facilities at Oxford House.

INCENTIVISE VOLUNTEERING & SHARING SKILLS

Our project funders provide their employees with paid days of volunteering leave and it is important to continue highlighting how volunteering can develop skills and career potential, by embedding volunteering into appraisals and generating buy-in from senior management. Where possible, the volunteering activities should be linked somehow to the core business or key values.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS TO CONTRIBUTE

Not all volunteers have the time, capacity or skills to mentor or become a trustee, so it's important to create and share opportunities for engagement across differing skills and time needs. Ensuring that all employees can engage is important to wider organisational buy-in. In recent years, for example, Beyond Boundary piloted desk-based volunteering such as job seeker CV reviewing to maximise employee engagement.

UNDERSTAND HOW VOLUNTEERING NEEDS AND INTERESTS VARY

Bright young professionals are more likely to choose a volunteering opportunity based on its themes or cause; experienced professionals are more likely eager to develop managerial, leadership or strategic governance skills.

BE CREATIVE

Don't be afraid to go beyond typical activities and try something different. Hosting a collaborative practical volunteering activity between two corporate partners (The Nomura Charitable Trust and State Street) was a first for ELBA, however the feedback was fantastic and resulted in the activity being repeated at the request of the volunteers. Microvolunteering was also piloted, with volunteers reviewing community partner websites and providing feedback from their desks.

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Ten examples of success that makes us proud

1

Nomura's Real Estate and Services team have developed a strong partnership with Oxford House and will continue to work with the community partner in the heart of Bethnal Green, supporting the development and improvement of their facilities and assets, beyond the project lifespan.

6

Working with State Street's Professional Women's Network was a prime example of how strong affinity groups within corporates can be engaged to support requests from community partners.

2

Nomura's HR department supported Rich Mix with the creation of a HR Handbook which has since been shared with arts organisations nationally, spreading benefit within but also far beyond the Beyond Boundary landscape.

7

Remote CV Surgeries: The project was able to engage volunteers with time constraints and work with beneficiaries from Step Forward, an organisation working with vulnerable young people.

3

CM Sounds, an organisation working with young people through music and sound, was in need of support with its IT systems. Through introductions via the Beyond Boundary project, as well as developing an exciting new website for them, CM Sounds have now become a partner charity of The Nomura Charitable Trust.

8

Nomura's Finance Team volunteered at Weavers Adventure Playground every summer on a practical and skills-based level, working directly with their young people, in addition to supporting the regeneration and up-keep of the grounds. John Tierny, Chief Finance Officer at Nomura, volunteered and worked directly with the young people improving their presentation and team working skills!

4

State Street volunteers repeatedly volunteered with job seekers at Providence Row Charity improving their employability skills on a fortnightly basis, building an important and impactful relationship with the homelessness prevention organisation.

9

We have placed and introduced a number of trustees to community partners from our corporate members over the years. Organisations such as Renaissance Foundation and Oxford House have most recently benefitted in having a trustee placed on their board, and these outcomes will continue to resonate impact on the organisations and local area.

5

Senior leaders at State Street supported charity leaders through our Executive Partnership Programme. Volunteers including State Streets' Chief Finance Officer, Stephen Craig participated, benefitting a range of community partners across Beyond Boundary. The programme was a great example of impactful volunteering bringing benefits to both volunteers and beneficiaries.

10

Volunteers from State Street supported local job seekers who engaged with our flagship Training into Work programme to gain employment. Feedback from the candidates was extremely positive, with 70% of participants securing permanent employment through the programme!

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Closing remark from ELBA's Chief Executive

Areas can change their destiny and people can turn around their lives. The Beyond Boundary project proves the case. As you walk through the area in 2017 you will see an improving environment, and in some parts a transformation area, with a thriving hospitality offer, residents and tourists mingling together and a restored public realm and well maintained commercial and residential properties. At the same time, local residents and local community organisations have been helped to share in the changes rather than being pushed out and excluded by gentrification. More than anything the Beyond Boundary project has shown the power of the community and business working together.

As we have learned from this project, changing the trajectory of an area is too difficult for it to be left to one section of society. Everyone needs to play their part and ELBA is proud to have been part of this successful



collaboration. All those involved should be rightly proud of their role and we are very grateful to our two main business partners The Nomura Charitable Trust and State Street - we come away from the project awed by the dedication and extraordinary efforts of their employees. It's been a great team effort, and it has changed this bit of London for the better.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to community and corporate partners involved in the Beyond Boundary project in Year 5:

Business Skills recipients: Account 3 Women, Bethnal Green Academy, Oaklands School, Oxford House, Rich Mix, St Hilda's East, Think Forward, Tower Hamlets Homes, Weavers Adventure Playground.

Team Challenge recipients: Abney Park, Alpha Grove Community Centre, Approach Gardens, Bancroft TMC, Booth House, Chisendale Dance Space, Christ Church Primary School, East London Pensioners, Jagonari Women's Educational Resource Centre, John Scurr Primary School, Kobi Nazrul Primary School, Mile End Park, One Housing Group, Praxis Community Projects, Providence Row Charity, Rich Mix, Spitalfields City Farm, Stepney City

Farm, St James the Less, Teesdale and Hollybush TRA, Toynbee Hall, Weavers Adventure Playground, Whitechapel Mission.

Business Skills Volunteers: Accenture, Broadgate Estates, City of London, FC Business Intelligence, Financial Ombudsman Service, HSBC, Linklaters, Nomura, Standard Chartered, State Street, Thomson Reuters.

Team Challenge Volunteers: BT, Accenture, Aviva, Aviva Investors, Bank of America, Barclays, Beazely, Catlin Underwriters, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Financial Ombudsman Service, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, Lloyd's, Lloyd's of London, McGraw Hill, Moody's, Nomura, RSA, RSA Insurance, Societe Generale, Standard Chartered, State Street, UBS.

For more information, contact info@elba-1.org.uk.



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