

Leaders in
Partnership 

Leaders in Partnership Programme Report 2019/20

Coaching east London's community leaders

**ELBA**

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Leaders in Partnership

Leaders in Partnership is a community coaching programme designed to strengthen the leadership of the third sector. By creating 1:1 coaching-style relationships between senior employees and their third sector peers, Leaders in Partnership enables the development of community leaders and their organisations, allowing participants to explore professional challenges and identify solutions. Volunteers have the opportunity to develop their coaching skills, as well as learning about east London issues and the third sector.

Following a careful matching process, volunteers are paired with emerging and established

community leaders from east London, including CEOs, directors, senior management and programme leads. After a training and launch event, partners meet for an hour a month for 10 months. During this time, volunteers act as a sounding board and critical friend, helping their partners tackle professional challenges. Common issues community partners are keen to explore include managing change and transformation, staff performance and motivating the team, developing a leadership style, developing a marketing and communications style, business planning and project management.

Annual Programme 2019 - Evaluation

The Annual Programme 2019 was the first Leaders in Partnership programme open to all ELBA member companies and community partners. The

programme launched in October 2019 with twelve partnerships. Nine pairs completed the 10-month programme, with three finishing early due to personal circumstances.

Volunteers

The volunteers were all senior leaders who worked in a variety of areas within their companies including marketing, IT, strategic planning, operational resilience, compliance and operations. Seven ELBA member companies took part in the programme.

Community Partners

The participating leaders came from eight east London community organisations based in Tower Hamlets and Hackney. The organisations cover a wide range of issues and offer a variety of services to the local community in east London, including:

- Mental health
- Employment support
- Health & wellbeing services
- Grant-making services to support low-income families
- Community hubs offering activities and support



2019 PROGRAMME - COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community Partners



Community partner impact

At the end of the programme, community leaders were invited to reflect on their experience. All nine participants provided feedback:


 A large graphic showing '100%' in white text. The '1' is inside a solid purple circle, and the '00%' is to its right.

- **Felt more confident in:**
 - People management
 - Influencing
 - Problem solving
 - Managing change and transformation
- **Developed a different perspective**
- **Felt better able to identify solutions to challenges**
- **Would recommend the programme to a colleague**


 A large graphic showing '89%' in white text. The '8' is inside a solid purple circle, and the '9%' is to its right.

- **Felt more confident in:**
 - Strategic thinking and planning
 - Decision making
 - Communication
- **Developed their leadership style**
- **Felt able to perform their role more effectively**

Community partner feedback

Leaders shared the benefits of the programme:

“I have been more confident in my leadership, but also more collaborative and making decisions alongside my team. I think this has benefited my team's fulfilment in their role in that they are contributing more to the development of our service.”

“I believe that I have led individuals and the team more positively through what turned out to be a very difficult time.”

“The impact on me personally meant I was able to understand the challenges & process them in a way that will help me, in any organisation I am part of, for years to come.”

“The impact has been on me rather than my organisation. We made a decision that the process would focus on where I am in my head and how I feel, rather than what is happening with the organisation. This was identified as a high priority early on and remained the focus throughout the most difficult time I have faced as a director.”

On the suitability of their match, leaders said:

“My match was great - she was empathetic and understanding, but also assertive when needed. Assertiveness is something that I find difficult so this was positive as she made me see ways in which I could incorporate assertiveness into my leadership style. I really benefited from her understanding and empathy as I can be quite self-critical, and I don't think having someone who was harsh would have been helpful.”

“My match was brilliant! We shared a good sense of humour and seemed to 'get each other' quickly, which very positively contributed to my experience”

“My match has been perfect, and I looked forward to meeting every month. He is a coach, a mentor and a good friend and we have a good laugh at our meetings as well as extremely productive discussions related to my goals, setting new targets for the month ahead. We hold similar values which helped us to bond on a personal level and consequently created the perfect grounds for our working together”

Volunteer impact

At the end of the programme, volunteers were invited to reflect on their experience. Eight participants provided feedback:



100%

- **Felt more confident in:**
 - Building trust
 - Active listening
 - Asking powerful questions
 - Giving honest feedback
 - Motivating & inspiring others
- **Developed their:**
 - Leadership style
 - Communication skills
 - Problem solving skills
 - Knowledge of the third sector
- **Would recommend the programme to a colleague**



75%

- **Developed their strategic planning skills**

Volunteer feedback

Volunteers shared the following feedback about their experience:

“My match was very good which allowed us to connect very fast. We also share similar challenges and responsibilities so it was easier to share experience and relate...I was able to unlock more confidence in my coachee and enable her to see her strengths.”

“It was a great experience, I learned a lot about listening, giving feedback, putting things in perspective and thinking outside the box. And it was great to get to know someone else from another industry.”

“It was excellent, the programme was well thought out and I enjoyed supporting my partner, who was engaged and committed. I couldn't have asked for more.”

“I found this experience to be very rewarding and I am very grateful to have been given an opportunity to build such a wonderful connection.”

“I now tend to more comfortably take a coach posture at work which I believe helps in solving problems creatively.”

“I feel like I have improved my active listening and empathy.”

“I feel like I have helped someone else grow and develop into a better version of themselves. I feel that I have done this as well.”

“I am a better listener, have more perspective on where someone is coming from and show more compassion.”

MEET THE PARTNERS

Junior Mtonga and Mona Patel

Junior Mtonga is a community activist who has founded a number of community hubs and projects to benefit east London, creating numerous shared spaces, opportunities, and experiences for local people. Junior signed up for the programme to help develop the leadership of the community initiatives he runs and supports.

He was partnered with Mona Patel, Group Head of External Communications at Royal London, who volunteered to draw on her experience from the voluntary and corporate sectors to benefit a community leader. The pair formed a strong partnership which drew on their strengths and offered mutual benefit to both.

MONA PATEL, ROYAL LONDON



“The programme was such a great experience. The partnership is very much a two-way relationship and I learnt a lot from Junior, not just about what he was doing and the great initiatives he is involved in, but also about myself. As his partner, I had to stop myself from trying to solve problems and remember I was there to guide Junior to get to the solutions himself.

As a result of the programme, I think Junior has slowed down and understood the benefits of planning and meeting deadlines. I’m a stickler for being on time and hate disorganisation whereas Junior is slightly more, shall we say, ‘relaxed’! We quickly realised that about one another and I hope some of my obsession with being organised rubbed off on Junior. For my part I came to appreciate the benefits that come with flexibility and taking risks.

If you are thinking about volunteering for the programme - just do it! You have the opportunity to make a great connection with someone and really explore areas you might otherwise never experience.”

JUNIOR MTONGA, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST



“I am so grateful for having Mona as a partner on this programme! The past two years have been the hardest I have experienced in social enterprise and being able to meet and speak with Mona regularly was one of the main consistent, positive factors that helped me through it.

My biggest learning has been the benefit of patience and planning. Often my community projects have been created very quickly - with no detailed plan or structure. I will never do this again! As a result of the programme, I have slowed down immensely. The Leaders in Partnership process itself was well planned and structured which, combined with Mona’s calmness and level of thinking, meant I was constantly preparing for the next step. This was very challenging for me and I learnt quickly that I would need to develop myself in order to adapt to this way of working.

The whole process was unexpected. I anticipated that we would work together to make decisions regarding the organisation itself, but it became a process that focussed on me as a leader. It was a massive benefit to see myself from a removed perspective and see how I could be doing things differently. I learnt how much I enjoy being in a ‘boring’ office, and how terrible I can be with deadlines! Mona’s patience, calmness and ability to think through any problem and reach solutions has been so beneficial.”

RUN A PROGRAMME AT YOUR BUSINESS

Bespoke Leaders in Partnership

Leaders in Partnership is a high impact programme benefitting volunteers, participants and community organisations.

Bespoke Programmes offer the opportunity to run a tailored programme aligned with your company’s CSR goals for your staff. The programme can be tailored to focus on a particular skill, issue area or east London borough, or to leverage internal networks.

Community participants can be recruited from a range of charities, or a partnership can be established with one key organisation, depending on your requirements.

Bespoke Programmes offer the opportunity to engage a large number of senior employees and deliver a high impact programme.

Contact antonia.williams@elba-1.org.uk to find out how your business can get involved.



“It has boosted my confidence and provided an opportunity for me to see things from a new perspective. It has helped me to implement best practice from the private sector within my organisation.”

- Community leader

“I found the programme highly engaging and also valuable - it’s encouraging meeting such enthusiastic emerging leaders and getting their thought and insights.”

- Volunteer

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