



Evolve

Evolve Annual Report

Year 1: 2021



ELBA

The Evolve Project

The Evolve Project is a collaborative partnership between **Linklaters, UBS, Societe Generale and the Societe Generale UK Foundation**, delivered by ELBA. It aims to build the capacity of community organisations across Hackney, particularly in response to the effects of COVID-19. The ultimate aim is to help ensure the sustainability of Hackney's third sector and also support Hackney residents. While the key focus is on Hackney organisations, Evolve also supports community organisations in Tower Hamlets and Haringey. Evolve has been

designed to respond to the changing needs of local community organisations, drawing on the skills and expertise of employee volunteers to address pressing community challenges.

This report will outline the achievements of Year One of The Evolve Project, looking at some key outcomes on community organisations across East London. It will also look ahead to 2022, and plans for development.

Evolve Activities

Evolve consisted of seven different activity types:

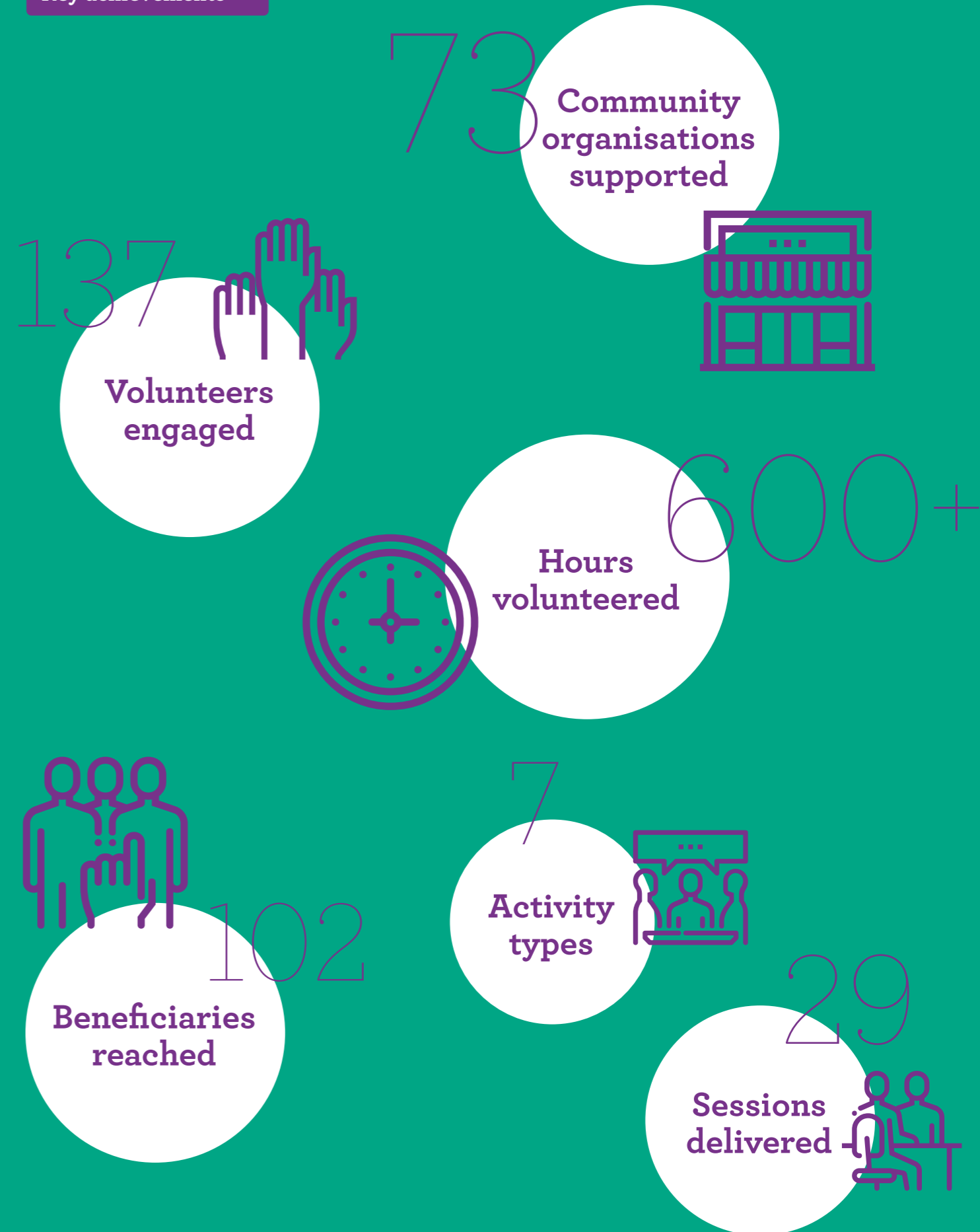
- **Leaders in Partnership:** Pairing community leaders with senior volunteers for a 10 month, coaching-style partnership.
- **Learning from Leaders sessions:** Bringing together corporate and community leaders to explore key leadership themes and share learning, challenges and tools.
- **Evolve BoardBuilders:** Training and matching events, designed to strengthen the governance of Hackney-based community organisations by placing employee volunteers as trustees of the organisations.

- **Reflection & Planning workshops:** Small teams of volunteers supporting community organisations to reflect, problem solve and plan.
- **Funding Application Reviews:** Volunteers providing feedback to community organisations to help improve their funding applications.
- **Digital Inclusion - Website Reviews:** Volunteers assess and review community partner websites, and provide feedback on how to improve and optimise them.
- **Strategic Solutions workshops:** Small team of volunteers supporting community organisations to overcome specific strategic issues related to Business Planning, Financial Planning, Marketing and Communications, IT and HR.

Volunteers

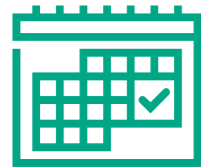
The volunteers came from the three collaborating ELBA member companies, Linklaters, UBS, Societe Generale and the Societe Generale UK Foundation.

Key achievements



Leaders in Partnership

Pairing community leaders with senior volunteers for a 10-month, coaching-style partnership.



3 events



17 partnerships



16 community organisations supported



- Would recommend the programme to a colleague
- Felt better able to identify solutions to challenges
- Developed their leadership style
- Developed a different perspective
- Felt able to perform their role more effectively

“My leadership is more focused, the organisation has more clarity over its direction. I am allocating more time for planning.” - Community Organisation

“I found the programme helped with imposter syndrome and improved the associated difficulties with that. I certainly feel more confident in my own abilities as a first time manager. It helped me to realise that I needed a change and a step-up in programme management.” - Community Organisation

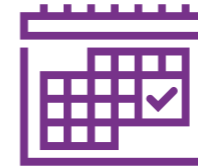
“I feel that my match was a good one as he did not come from my industry and was therefore able to provide a different perspective. This contributed well to my experience giving me new ideas on how to do my job more effectively, especially in the area of strategic planning and having difficult conversations with effective outcomes.” - Community Organisation

“I developed my coaching style - I feel I am more able to flex between directed and non-directed coaching and I have more confidence in merging coaching and mentoring in conversations.” - Volunteer

*More detail can be found in the separate Evolve Leaders in Partnership report

Learning from Leaders sessions

Bringing together corporate and community leaders to explore key leadership themes and share learning, challenges and tools. In 2021, we explored topics such as staff motivation and wellbeing, self-care as a leader, stress management and burnout, people management, and LGBTQ Inclusion in the workplace.



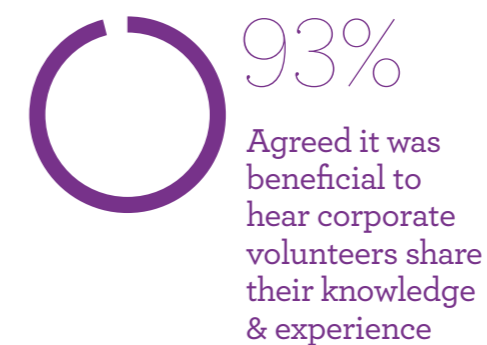
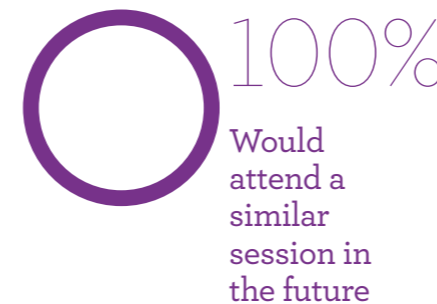
5 sessions delivered



23 volunteers engaged



62 beneficiaries supported



“That was incredibly useful - the speaker was fabulous, and I got some excellent practical tips. It's such a valuable use of time, thank you!” - Community Organisation

“Very important topic: good ideas shared as strategies to introduce into daily life.” - Community Organisation

“It was humbling to hear from the charity partners. Their experiences and challenges put a lot into perspective.” - Volunteer

“The Session was good - and it did make me think about some issues. I nearly pulled out due to workload prior to starting - but I am glad I attended.” - Community Organisation

Evolve BoardBuilders

Training and matching events, designed to strengthen the governance of Hackney-based community organisations by placing employee volunteers as trustees of the organisations.



3 BoardBuilder sessions delivered

2 successful board placements

“We found our amazing Treasurer. As Treasurer, he will have specific financial responsibilities: advice on bookkeeping, financial processes, budgeting and preparation of financial reports. As a board member, he will be instrumental in developing strategic responses to any financial questions we have. His corporate mindset will be invaluable within the charity context. I look forward to working with him in future. He will be a valued asset to our Board of Trustees, guiding us in the right direction. The Evolve project was instrumental in helping us build this financial capacity, and make the connection to him.”
- Community Organisation

Funding Application Reviews

Volunteers providing feedback to community organisations to help improve their funding applications.



7 briefing sessions delivered

30 volunteers engaged

19 community organisations supported

“The reviews from the partners were helpful as they were able to offer a fresh pair of eyes to the application and helped us understand that we needed to explain things / evidence things clearer to demonstrate our cause. All partners responded quickly and were happy to be on a phone call for further clarification.”
- Community Organisation

“Funding application reviews are really helpful: I got more funding from people I was applying to and was therefore able to expand and continue the project”
- Community Organisation

Reflection and planning workshops

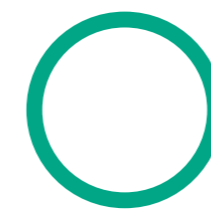
Small teams of volunteers supporting community organisations to reflect, problem solve and plan.



3 workshops delivered

17 volunteers engaged

5 community organisations supported



100%

Agree the workshop was a good use of their time



88%

Intend to carry out the actions generated from the workshop

“As the sole staff member for my charity, the opportunity to talk to the challenges and ideas with other people was exactly what I needed.”
- Community Organisation

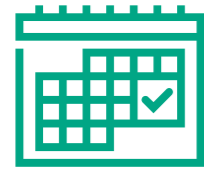
“A really good session and a standout team working alongside me to get to an action plan around the key priorities, including a plan B scenario.”
- Community Organisation

“The session was great, I was really impressed by what the charity is doing and glad to be able to help in some small way!” - Volunteer

“A truly excellent session. I was positively surprised at the value we were able to give to the community organisation by walking through their issues, providing our outside perspective and helping them draw out a plan of action. I will almost certainly be signing up to further remote volunteering opportunities this year.” - Volunteer

Digital Inclusion: Website Reviews

Volunteers assess and review community partner websites, and provide feedback on how to improve and optimise them.



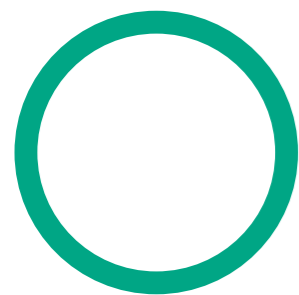
2 sessions delivered



13 volunteers engaged



11 community organisations supported



100%

- Intend to carry out the recommendations suggested by the volunteer
- Now feel more confident in improving their organisation's website
- Would recommend this session to other organisations

“My experience with the website review was really quite excellent in many ways such as initial communication with ELBA staff, which was followed up quite quickly for potential volunteers. The whole process worked smoothly; the volunteer has visited our premises and is following up with improvements for the website.”
- Community Organisation

“It was great to have an independent view on the strengths of the site, as well as practical pointers on what could be improved. It was clear that a lot of consideration had gone into the review, and it's very much appreciated.”
- Community Organisation

Strategic Solutions workshops

Small team of volunteers supporting community organisations to overcome specific strategic issues related to Business Planning, Financial Planning, Marketing and Communications, IT and HR.



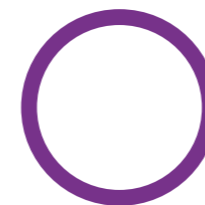
6 workshops delivered



35 volunteers engaged



15 community organisations supported



100%
Would attend a similar session in the future



94%
Would recommend this workshop to another organisation



88%
Now feel more confident in addressing their particular challenge

“Absolutely brilliant!!! Attending these sessions is invaluable and a great use of limited time to speed up financial management problem solving. The volunteers were so generous and knowledgeable and gave more than I expected.”
- Community Organisation

“The volunteers helped me to better define the need for change, to identify a possible solution, the risks and benefits of that solution, and how to test it. They broke down the steps I might take to implement it and provided coaching on how to work with existing contractors to get the desired outcome. I now feel more confident to start to deliver this change for my organisation.”
- Community Organisation

“I found the session useful and served as a reminder of how easily it can be to overlook or underplay the tools one may have in their arsenal”.
- Community Organisation

“Fantastic session that I would strongly encourage others to participate in. I found it a very positive experience to learn about a new organisation and understand how they are helping others” - Volunteer

“I really underestimated how much my IT skills could help another person. It was such a rewarding experience and something I'd be more than happy to do again.” - Volunteer

Beyond Delivery

Community needs are not static. With this in mind, Evolve has been designed to respond to the ever-evolving needs of local community organisations.

Throughout 2021, the Evolve team have been continually connecting with community organisations to ensure the Evolve offer is relevant, useful, and impactful. In late-2021, we launched a community consultation, to learn more about the support-needs of community organisations. In line with our initial findings, we have altered our support for 2022 to include more practical, hands-on support across some key areas. In March 2022, we will expand on this initial consultation and undertake a more in-depth workshop to further explore how volunteering opportunities can meet the capacity building needs of East London community organisations. Throughout the consultation process, we have been engaging

with key stakeholders in the local area, including Hackney Council and Hackney CVS (an organisation that supports and brings together local charities and community groups in Hackney). The consultation will be run alongside ELBA's continual evaluation of current activities.

We hope this consistent culture of learning will help us better understand and meet the support-needs of local community organisations, and ultimately, add to the sustainability of East London's third sector going forward.

If you have any questions, would like to partake in an Evolve activity, or discuss a particular area of need, please get in touch with Orlaith, ELBA Community Development Project Manager:
orlaith.mcguinness@elba-1.org.uk



“It's been great to have an external pair of eyes on the challenges we have faced, as often we are self limited by our perspective. Greatly appreciate the insight!”

**- Community organisation,
Leaders in Partnership
Programme**

“I really underestimated how much my IT skills could help another person. It was such a rewarding experience and something I'd be more than happy to do again.”

**- Volunteer,
Strategic Solutions session**



Evolve

Evolve Annual Report

Year 1: 2021



ELBA

Contact orlaith.mcguinness@elba-1.org.uk for more information.