



**Evolve**

# **Evolve Annual Report**

## **Year 2: 2022**



**ELBA**

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### The Evolve Project

2022 marked Year 2 of Evolve, a collaborative partnership between **Linklaters, UBS, Societe Generale** and the **Societe Generale UK Foundation**. Evolve aims to build the capacity of community organisations across Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Haringey, particularly in response to the effects of COVID-19.

2022 was another challenging year for local community organisations, who continue to support communities through the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis. These factors

undoubtedly put strain on the already stretched resources of small grassroots organisations.

Evolve aims to respond to these changing needs: Throughout 2022, ELBA undertook a series of community consultations to learn more about the challenges of community organisations in the current climate, and to ensure the Evolve offer was relevant, useful and impactful. In line with results, activities were developed to provide more hands-on support across some key areas.

### Evolve Activities

In 2022, Evolve delivered 29 sessions across seven activities (including two new activities: Compass and Priority Planning). All activities are designed to draw on the skills and expertise of employee volunteers to address pressing community challenges:

- **Compass:** Teams of volunteers collaborate with community organisations to navigate a key business challenge through three months of high impact, intensive-volunteer support.

- **Digital Inclusion:** A series of training sessions and capacity building workshops focussed on enhancing community organisations' digital capabilities .

- **Leaders in Partnership:** Pairing current and emerging community leaders with senior volunteers for a 10-month, coaching-style partnership

- **Learning from Leaders:** A series of workshops, training sessions and networking events, providing corporate and community leaders the opportunity to share challenges, learnings and solutions

- **Priority planning:** Teams of volunteers work through an organisation health-check assessment with community organisations, identifying priority areas for capacity building, and creating an action plan to tackle gaps.

- **Remote Review:** Volunteers collaborate with community organisations to enhance key business documents such as funding applications and resources relating to project management, business planning and finance.

- **Strategic Solutions:** Teams of volunteers work with community organisations to overcome specific strategic challenges relating to business planning, finance, HR, income strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and project management.

This report will outline the achievements of Year 2 of Evolve, looking at some key outcomes on community organisations across Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Haringey.

# Evolve Programme Key Achievements

Key achievements



Impact on organisations

The aim of Evolve activities is to help build the capacity of community organisations through the use of skilled volunteering. In 2022, 70 community organisations were supported. Of these organisations, below are the percentage of participants that are confident that the actions generated from the workshop will help their organisation to:



Impact on individuals

Across the 29 activities, 135 individuals were reached. Skills development was a big focus of these activities. Of those involved:



Impact on volunteers

139 volunteers were engaged across 29 sessions in 2022. Volunteer experience is also key to the success of Evolve:



# Evolve Programme Activities

## Compass

A new activity in 2022, Compass involves teams of volunteers collaborating with community organisations to navigate a key business challenge through three months of high impact, intensive-volunteer support. In the pilot activity, teams worked on challenges relating to marketing and communications, HR and IT. For more details on the impact of Compass, [please read the full report here](#).



4 Deep-dive sessions delivered



4 strategies developed



3 community organisations supported



12 volunteers engaged



200+ hours volunteered

**“The support involved specific HR expertise that doesn't exist in my organisation. The input from the team has supported us to develop confidence in the areas of HR we lacked confidence in. The end product of a HR handbook is a fantastic, tangible, useful reference for all staff.”**

- Community Organisation

**“The involvement of the volunteers has enabled us to undertake this IT project which would not have been possible otherwise. Moreover, the variety of volunteers enabled us to consider different aspects of the project.”**

- Community Organisation

**“I was able to use my skills like project management to support the charity. The chance to use my knowledge to support others is incredibly rewarding.”** - Volunteer



**“I think it's a great way to meet people from completely different areas and also to see the real impact these organisations have on communities. It's a great team building exercise also”** - Volunteer

Strategic Solutions

Teams of volunteers work with community organisations to overcome specific strategic challenges relating to business planning, finance, HR, monitoring and evaluation, income strategy and project management.



7 workshops delivered



24 individuals reached



52 volunteers engaged



“This session alleviated pressure of our long term goals and allowed us to focus on the short-mid term, making it more scalable and achievable.”  
- Community Organisation

“It was great to have some time dedicated to focus on a charitable business challenge, applying corporate business skills to help formulate a plan of key focus areas and actions that can be put into practice.” - Volunteer

“I enjoyed the workshop, it had an effective structure which was beneficial to the participants and volunteers.” - Volunteer

“Having three volunteers meant that there was some healthy diversity of thought and experience to offer the charity.” - Volunteer

“The volunteers were really great at listening and offering specific feedback based around the areas I wanted to address.”  
- Community Organisation

“The volunteers contributed a lot. It made us think of different ways to approach our issue. I’ve left feeling more confident with tackling our problem.” - Community Organisation

Digital Inclusion

A series of practical training sessions and capacity building workshops focussed on enhancing community organisations’ digital capabilities, including sessions on digital marketing, digital communications and Excel.



2 sessions delivered



13 individuals reached



7 volunteers engaged

“The corporate volunteers were extremely knowledgeable in their field and you can really sense that. They gave great insights and helped me with fantastic ideas which were directly relevant with my organisation.”  
- Community Organisation

“The layout of the sessions were really convenient. One volunteer was able to assist with our corporate side of things and the other was able to help with our service-user directed marketing. They both gave really detailed feedback with practical examples.”  
- Community Organisation

“It was a very fulfilling experience sharing my ideas and knowing that it will benefit another organisation. I never imagined what I do at my workplace would be useful to others.”  
- Volunteer

“My experience has been really positive. I've thoroughly enjoyed speaking with peers from differing industries and learning about their challenges and pain-points. It's been a great opportunity to share my marketing and communications knowledge.” - Volunteer



Leaders in Partnership

A ten-month community coaching programme designed to strengthen the leadership of east London’s community sector, pairing community leaders with peers in the business sector. The Evolve Leaders in Partnership celebration event recently took place in January 2023. More details on the impact of the programme will be made available in a separate report.



15 partnerships created



15 volunteers engaged



15 community leaders reached

Words used by participants to describe their experience of Leaders in Partnership at the MidPoint event:



“My partner encouraged me to have conversations around personal and professional development which I never do. It's good to be asked what I want, where I see myself.”  
- Community Organisation

“My partner has been super helpful in allowing me to navigate more senior management conversations. They have supported me with interview preparation and I’ve since got a promotion and will be part of the senior management team.”  
- Community Organisation

“I’ve been able to pass on management skills and tips to help my partner address their issues. They’ve been able to manage them better, I’ve found that very rewarding”  
- Volunteer

“It reminds me of the importance of local community. Just seeing what wonderful efforts that people put in from a personal and work perspective. It has brought it home for me.” - Volunteer

Learning from Leaders

A series of workshops, practical training sessions and networking events, providing corporate and community leaders the opportunity to share leadership challenges, learnings and solutions. In 2022, topics such as workplace bias, confident communication, people management and project management were explored.



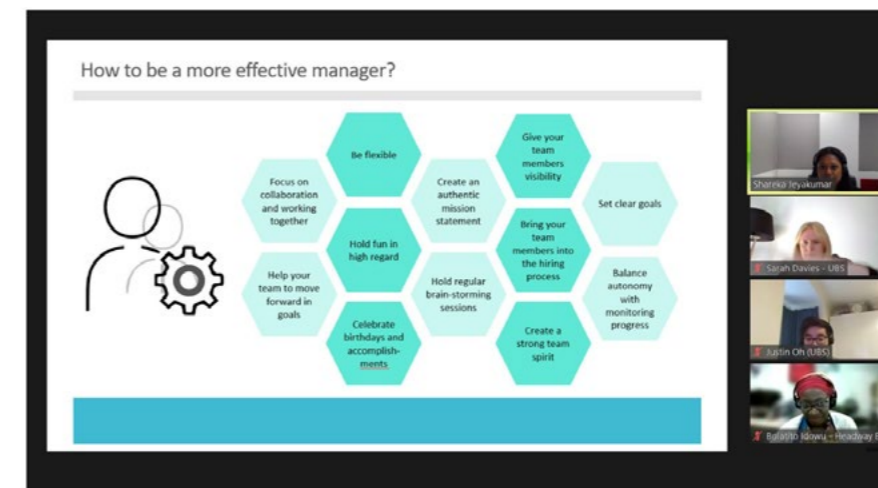
5 sessions delivered



68 individuals reached



25 volunteers engaged



“Project management has always sounded like a very complex system but the team has managed to break it down into understandable parts.”  
- Community Organisation

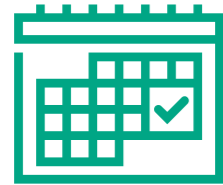
“Great coverage of communication styles and techniques. The section on identifying other peoples communication styles was particularly interesting. I enjoyed hearing practical experience and advice from the businesses.”  
- Community Organisation

“I have been supporting the preparation and delivery of multiple presentations led by Evolve. All have run very smoothly; great people attend every session and I have enjoyed each workshop.” - Volunteer

“What an inspiring evening. I truly found the session humbling to be a part of, especially when you can see first hand what’s being created that is so much bigger than any of us.”  
- Volunteer

Priority Planning

Teams of volunteers work through an organisation health-check assessment with community organisations, identifying priority areas for capacity building, and creating an action plan to tackle gaps.



2 sessions delivered



8 individuals reached



12 volunteers engaged

“It was great to brainstorm potential actions, and hear the volunteers' expertise and how that can be utilised. Both volunteers had a great grasp of our needs and how to address them. They asked really good questions.”

- Community Organisation

“I loved the freedom to talk openly with external people. Informality was good!”

- Community Organisation

“Putting us in smaller groups helped our understanding and boosted our confidence in terms of voicing our opinions and getting help.”

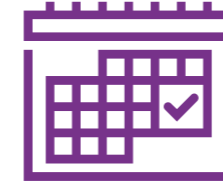
- Community Organisation

“I enjoyed the opportunity to discuss such a wide range of business issues with the community organisation and help them reflect on relative priorities.” - Volunteer



Remote Review

Volunteers collaborate with community organisations to enhance key business documents such as funding applications, and resources relating to project management, business planning and finance.



6 sessions delivered



29 individuals reached



30 volunteers engaged

“The team provided invaluable feedback and support. They were exceptionally patient. It was a pleasure working with them. The feedback they gave me was truly helpful and constructive.”

- Community Organisation

“Very useful to have feedback and a second opinion - writing funding bids for small organisations can be a lonely business.”

- Community Organisation

“Even though we asked for your help at a date very close to the submission deadline, your support was immediate and effective and we are very grateful for it.” - Community Organisation

“I've really enjoyed getting to know causes local to me.” - Volunteer

“It was great to be able to help an organisation to try and get valuable funding.” - Volunteer



Spotlight on Evolve Partners

We were pleased to be able to feature many Evolve community partners in ELBA's Community Spotlight feature this year, including: [Action for Kids \(AFK\)](#), [CaribEats](#), [Hackney Works Supported Employment Services](#), [Headway East London](#), [Vision Ability](#).

We also took the opportunity to highlight some positive case studies throughout the year. For example, as part of Disability History Month in November 2022, Evolve shared some insight into work done with Headway East London, a local charity supporting people affected by brain injury. [This case study](#) included feedback on their participation in Leaders in Partnership practical training sessions as well as a bespoke development day.

[Learn more here.](#)

**“Managers matched with mentors have reported the positive impact of the partnerships on themselves personally and their work. They enjoy the dedicated time to spend talking and reflecting, and have appreciated the external lens, questions and suggestions that mentors have offered. Managers have increased in confidence as a result of these sessions, using them to talk through difficult situations, discuss strategy and planning.”**



Evolve 2023: Looking ahead

2023 is set to be another challenging year for community organisations, as the cost of living crisis continues to increase demand for services, whilst also putting a strain on resources and staff. This is alongside the impact of COVID-19 which is still being felt in communities across East London and beyond.

As we enter Year 3 of the project, the Evolve team will continue to engage with local partners to understand challenges and pivot the programme to meet the needs of the third sector. We hope this continued engagement will help us better understand and meet the needs of local community organisations, and

ultimately, support the sustainability of east London's third sector going forward.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss opportunities within Evolve, please get in touch with The Evolve Project Manager: [community@elba-1.org.uk](mailto:community@elba-1.org.uk).







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Contact [community@elba-1.org.uk](mailto:community@elba-1.org.uk) for more information.