

Proudly supporting
youth social action



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



DARTINGTON
SERVICE
DESIGN LAB

#iwill Fund Learning Hub Evidence Workstream

Data Review 8
Dartington Service Design Lab
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Introduction

This is the eighth and final data review produced by the #iwill Fund Learning Hub. The purpose of these reviews is to synthesise the learning that is being generated and documented by the #iwill Fund and Match Funders with existing and emerging evidence outside the Fund. The scale and variety of youth social action supported by the #iwill Fund represents an unprecedented wave of activity. These data reviews seek to harness this activity to capture and disseminate valuable learning for the field. We assess this information using the Sector Evidence Plan questions as a framework to understand how learning can feed into youth social action going forward.

1. What is youth social action?

A summary of our learning on this question prior to this review can be found in Appendix 1.

1.1 What has the #iwill Fund funded?

The Information Management System allows us to paint an emerging picture of what has been funded. Data was accessed in May 2022.

Volunteering (44% of funded opportunities) is the most common form of youth social action supported through the #iwill Fund, followed by tutoring, coaching or mentoring (21%) and helping to improve the local area (17%). Campaigning still represents a small proportion of funded activity (9%). Over half (63%) of youth social action opportunities in the #iwill Fund portfolio are delivered in community settings with the second most opportunities delivered through schools (29%).

The vast majority of #iwill-funded youth social action opportunities are directed towards a specific cause (83%) and the most popular causes are People & Communities (28%), Education & Learning (24%), health and care (13%) and environmental (8%).

1.2 Our emerging typology

The Learning Hub's paper 'Towards a Typology of Youth Social Action' reviews definitions and typologies of youth social action, and begins to build an evidence-based picture of the different types of youth social action being supported by the #iwill Fund. To clarify this further, we have recently adjusted our evidence questions to focus on what common Theories of Change and 'user journeys' exist within youth social action.

1.3 The language of 'youth-led'

Virgin Money Foundation (VMF) described the foundation's and the funded organisations' journey with the use of language in youth social action and describing what it was. Many funded organisations minimised their use of the term 'social action' and rather talked more specifically about projects and young people. Equally, many projects were undertaking a youth-led approach but instead described it as "really good youth work". Conversely, others thought their projects were youth-led because at

some point they asked young people for an opinion but when examined weren't driven and delivered by young people and were often inflexible to the needs and ideas of young people.

VMF addressed this by insisting young people were involved in writing applications, applications included young people's references and young people that were involved in delivering the programme were also part of the assessment visit. As *VMF* is launching the second round of the #iwill Fund, they are pleased that understanding of youth social action has shifted considerably on a regional and national level. *VMF noted that* youth panels, advisors and Board members are becoming much more commonplace in both the organisations on the ground and amongst funders themselves. Through an increased common understanding of the language of 'youth-led', *VMF hopes* to see less difficulty in assessing the strength of 'youth-led' in the second round of the fund.

2. What does youth social action do?

A summary of our learning on this question prior to this review can be found in Appendix 1.

2.1 A framework for the benefits of youth social action

In our paper [on the community impact of youth social action](#), the #iwill Fund Learning Hub set out a framework for thinking different kinds of benefit for young people and communities. We identified five kinds of potential benefit from youth social action opportunities.

1. **Young person.** Young people benefit directly from participating in the youth social action. Our paper on outcomes for young people identified four major categories: (i) socio-emotional or character outcomes, (ii) civic or societal outcomes, (iii) employment outcomes (iv) education outcomes.
2. **Organisational.** Organisations that provide youth social action opportunities can benefit directly from the activity, e.g., young volunteers free up capacity for paid staff.
3. **Community.** Benefits may accrue to a community directly from the social action young people are engaged in, e.g., the local community may benefit from young people regenerating a park area, or people may benefit from volunteering undertaken by a young person.
4. **Reflexive.** Young people belong to communities. Any benefits that accrue to their communities may also benefit the young person individually, e.g., young people can also enjoy the regenerated park.
5. **Societal.** Young people continue to belong to communities as they grow up. Some of the benefits that accrue to young people directly from youth social action participation may be beneficial for the societies in which they live, e.g., young people may become more active citizens.

2.2 Early insights from the #iwill Fund

In this section we present some emerging findings from the #iwill Fund against the five outcomes listed above. We include here only findings that have been reported since the most recent Data Review was published in January 2022.

Outcomes for Young People	New evidence in the last quarter	Further questions to consider/points to note
Socio-emotional	<p>The Housing Association Youth Network (HAYN) reported that the number of young people agreed that they had these skills increased by the end of the programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: +22% • Problem solving: +14% • Leadership: +28% • Civic partnership: +36% 	<p>It was not mentioned how many young people were surveyed, or whether the increases were statistically significant.</p>
	<p>Spirit of 2012 reported improved wellbeing across three of the four ONS4 domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness: +13.1% • Life Satisfaction: +14.3% • Worthwhile: +16.4% <p>An average increase was also reported in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence: +30.1% • Resilience: +22.2% • Responsibility: +15.8% • Taking the lead: +21.4% <p>EmpowHER participants also experienced a decrease in limiting perceptions, either of themselves or of women and girls in general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy: +20.3% • Gender: +8.8% 	<p>Spirit of 2012 collected pre- and post-survey data (n=911). All outcomes were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).</p> <p>Those who began EmpowHER with the lowest levels of wellbeing also saw a greater amount of positive change than those who entered the programme than those who entered with higher wellbeing.</p>
Civic-societal	<p>Greater London Authority (GLA) reported a change in change agency with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase of 5% in the number of young people who agree with the statement: "I have the power to change things for the better", including a greater shift to Agree and Strongly Agree. 	<p>It was not mentioned how many young people were surveyed, whether the same young people responded both times, or whether this increase was statistically significant.</p>

	<p>Spirit of 2012 reported an increase in their perception of their place in their communities (social cohesion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted by others: +14.1% Trust for others: +20% Meeting different people: +13% 	Spirit of 2012 collected pre- and post-survey data (n=911). All outcomes were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
Employment	No studies identified in this period	
Education	No studies identified in this period	
Socio-emotional	No studies identified in this period	

Outcomes for Community	New evidence in the last quarter	Further questions to consider/points to note
Community Benefit	<p>GLA reported a change in social integration with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase of 6% in the number of young people who agree with the statement: "this local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together", including a slight shift to Strongly Agree. 	It was not mentioned how many young people were surveyed, whether the same young people responded both times, or whether this increase was statistically significant.
Societal Benefit	No studies identified in this period	
Reflexive Benefit	No studies identified in this period	
Organisational Benefit	No studies identified in this period	

3. How do we support youth social action for all?

A summary of our learning on this question prior to this review can be found in Appendix 1.

3.1 Background

The #iwill Fund Learning Hub paper on the [socio-economic participation gap in youth social action](#) sets out the data on the fact that young people from lower-income backgrounds are less likely to participate in social action. It also lays out the external evidence about what drives, and can help close, this gap.

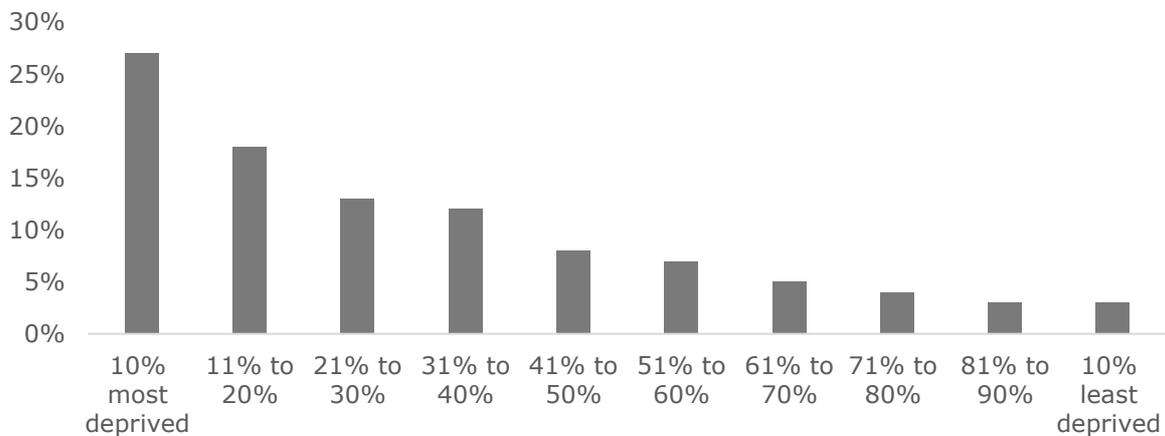
Alongside closing the socio-economic participation gap, the #iwill Fund aims to support younger children (less than 14 years of age) in social action.

3.2 Reach of the #iwill Fund

3.2.1 Deprivation

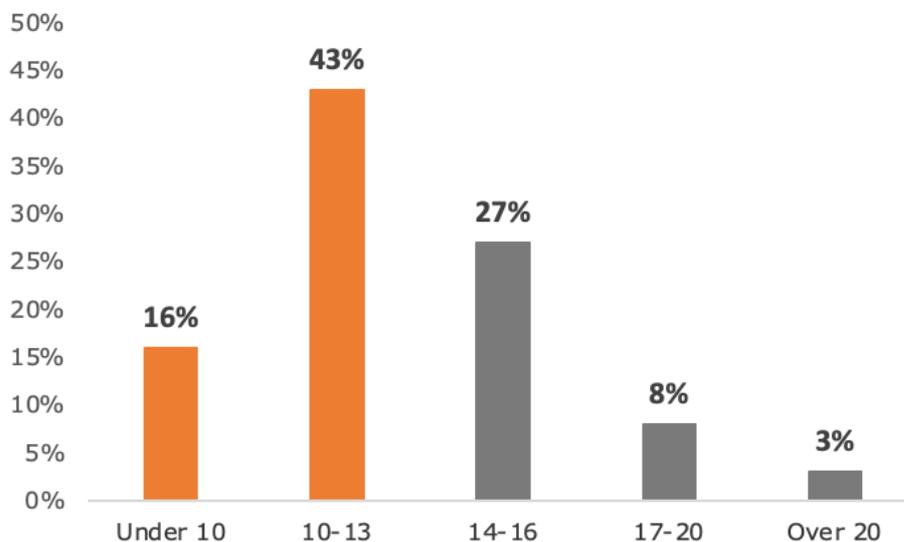
The #iwill Fund investment driver of engaging (which covers recruitment, retention, completion, and transition) more young people from lower socio-economic groups to participate in youth social action has translated into an increase in the number of social action opportunities taking place in the most deprived postcodes in the UK. Data was accessed from the Information Management System in May 2022.

The #iwill Fund has supported **more opportunities for YSA in deprived postcodes** than affluent ones



3.2.2 Age

Over half of the youth social action opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund have been for children younger than 14. Data were accessed from the Information Management System in May 2022.



3.3 How do we engage children and young people younger than 14?

3.3.1 Age-appropriate activities

UK Community Foundations (UKCF) reported that a common point of feedback throughout their evaluation was that it was a challenge for the projects to fulfil the criteria of 'Youth Social Action' being youth led given the requirement of the young people to be under the age of 14. One programme highlighted that this would require the willingness of young people, as well as a level of skills and confidence to lead on projects which were not realistic.

"What we found there was obviously one of the main premises of the programme was for the activities or projects to be run by the young people. And obviously, the younger you get, the less likely the young people are going to have the skills or the confidence, or the knowledge, we felt to be able to do that". *Community Foundation*

Other Match Funders reported similar challenges. *HAYN* highlighted that for younger children, the ultimate goal and project idea can be youth-led but the implementation and project planning is led by youth workers and teachers to ensure the community benefit from the project.

GLA described how younger people were engaged and a legacy of youth social action was created. In this example, an existing project involving a living wall in the school playground was passed on to younger children to lead. As such, younger people may be involved at a later stage in youth social action after some of the set up and more challenging hurdles of implementation have been completed by older young people. This process of 'handing on' projects may also contribute to youth social action projects being sustainable.

3.3.2 Safeguarding

Match Funders also noted that engaging young people under the age of 14 required increased staffing or volunteers. *GLA* outlined that one programme will create social action opportunities for younger people by partnering them with their parent, guardian, older sibling or a volunteer.

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) reported that existing safeguarding policies meant that some delivery partners were not able to allow young people aged under 18 to work one to one – either informally or in interviews – with other young people. This put a large burden on staff in terms of availability to support youth social action research activities. Whilst undertaking youth social action with younger people additional staff for safeguarding reasons should be considered.

3.4 How do we reach children and young people from backgrounds known to be less likely to participate?

3.4.1 Non-stigmatising

HAYN reported that by offering a wide range of activities and programmes, youth clubs were no longer seen as “just for the naughty kids”. It was noted that there has been an increase in attendance, including a more diverse group and families that had previously never sent their children.

As such, care needs to be taken to not unintentionally lead communities and young people to develop negative perceptions of youth social action programmes. Whilst being intentional with targeting and recruitment to encourage engagement of young people from backgrounds known to be less likely to participate, care in communication is key so that it does not contribute to negative labelling.

3.4.2 Wrap-around support

GLA reported that their wrap-around support not only encouraged engagement from schools but also young people’s engagement. This included personalised 1-2-1 mentoring as well as a series of workshops. *GLA* argued that having intensive wrap-around support provided important additional resources to young people that previously had low confidence to undertake initiative over time.

3.4.3 Multiple entry and exit points

UKCF reported that a key challenge experienced by Community Foundations was the overall engagement from young people across the programme. Other Match Funders echoed this sentiment, with *Bite Back 2030* describing student engagement as ‘fluid’ with young people dropping out and joining mid-year. Although this fluidity of groups can be positive in reaching more young people, it may have implications for evaluations if participants have not experienced the full programmes. *Community Foundations* noted that fluctuations in engagement are common in youth programmes that involved young people and nothing out of the ordinary.

“That’s just young people, isn’t it? They can be really enthusiastic at first and then other things happen in their lives”. *Community Foundation*

Similarly, other Match Funders noted that momentum needed to be maintained in order to hold young people’s interest. *GLA* reported that the quarterly stages of their programme provide multiple entry and exit points during the year. It was highlighted that providing clear culmination events at multiple points in the project supports participants’ commitment and allows for individuals to engage flexibly based on their needs.

3.4.4 Recruitment

3.4.4.1 Schools

Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) outlined their school 'whole year group approach' to social action whereby projects have been designed and resources developed to enable whole year participation with the aspiration that every young person will have the opportunity to undertake high-quality youth social action. More generally, as many of the resources are curriculum-based, teachers will be able to adapt the teaching resources to the needs of their pupils. This means that every child, regardless of socioeconomic or SEND needs will be able to participate in the project.

However, it should be noted that Match Funders also reported young people having limited availability in school. This is especially the case for year groups undertaking exams as well as secondary school pupils. *YEF* reported that many young people had to undertake project work outside of school, causing issues when schools weren't able to flex the working hours for staff.

Match Funders also reported that many staff in schools were at maximum capacity. As such, any youth social action facilitated in schools would need to consider funding for additional designated staff to undertake sessions if projects are not embedded so that it becomes a part of natural school life rather than an additional aspect that requires supplementary staff members. *GLA* reported one project reducing modules into bite-sized 'steps' to accommodate for strained capacity, and so that teachers could complete it in under an hour. As such, some youth social action may have to be adapted or split into smaller parts to consider the setting that it is held in.

3.4.4.2 Recruitment through 'gatekeepers'

Match Funders such as *the Co-operative Foundation* noted that delivery organisations should consider recruiting through 'gatekeepers' to lend legitimacy to a project, especially when trying to recruit groups of young people who might not otherwise engage. A gatekeeper could be a well-known youth or community organisation, and involve 'snowballing' from recruited young people to their peers. Similarly, *OAT* suggested drawing on expertise and existing work already happening with children and young people to understand how recruitment works best in different settings.

YEF indicated that when delivery partners felt rushed to meet deadlines, there was not enough time to embed within communities where they could have recruited more diverse peer researchers.

3.4.4.3 Active input from parents/carers

UKCF realised the importance of getting 'active input' from parents/carers for the projects to be a success due to the reliance of young people on their parents/carers. This was particularly true for organisations working with young people who had complex needs. Engaging parents/carers and getting greater buy-in from the community involved activities such as young people creating

information leaflets for parents/carers as they may be interested in the young person volunteering for different reasons than the young person.

3.4.5 Funding

3.4.5.1 Funded resources

OAT reported that funded resources remove barriers to participation. For example, WeWill Cook has budgeted for food within the scheme of learning, as well as enrichment. This means the pupils will be able to cook without being worried about having to buy the ingredients to take into school, which they might not be able to afford.

3.4.5.2 Funders paying young people

Act for Change Fund (ACT) stressed that young people facing financial structural injustice have more barriers to participation in youth social action, with the current context exacerbating this. The Fund has seen that young people in acute crisis (homelessness; during the process of school exclusions) require support to address their immediate needs in order to engage in youth social action. Awareness and continued support for young people's crisis needs to be maintained throughout young people's engagement. There are questions going forward about how organisations and the funding sector can address some young people's ability to self-advocate for change as crisis management takes precedence.

Over the course of *Act for Change Fund*, *ACT* encountered difficulties around paying young people for intermittent contributions to work due to a series of structural and legal barriers. This is an extremely important issue, given the funding sector's ambition to better involve young people from all backgrounds in decision-making and insight. *ACT* have commissioned the solicitors Bates Wells (employment law field leaders) to provide them with research leading to advice for better practice in this area, which they will share with the sector.

In addition to enabling young people to take part in youth social action, *HAYN* noted that trusting young people with funding and decision making builds a different kind of confidence and commitment in young people.

3.5 How do we support children and young people to transition between youth social action opportunities?

3.5.1 Building partnership networks

Not only has building partnership networks been highlighted as a way to improve the reach of youth social action, but Match Funders have also highlighted it as a valuable tool for onwards referrals. *Young Manchester* reported working with partners across Manchester to establish a city-wide youth social action offer with clear referral pathways. Similarly, *HAYN* described that they were creating an 'alumni network' for Ambassadors and Advisors for youth organisations who have taken part in youth social action and would like to stay in touch.

GLA reported that building external relationships with partners such as local authorities, museums, youth councils and so on creates clear pathways to volunteering and social action. Examples of pathways that allowed young people’s voices to continue being heard were opportunities such as podcasts.

Working in partnership in this way also strengthens capacity in schools. For partnership networks to be successful, *Co-operative Foundation* highlighted that different organisations’ capacities need to be considered. For example, whilst partnership working with schools busy exam months may need to be avoided. Additionally, non-teaching staff within schools may have more capacity for planning and setting things up.

How can we support quality Youth Social Action?

4.1 Insights from the Impact Accelerator workstream

The Impact Accelerator, delivered by the Centre for Youth Impact, is an intensive process of impact support, challenge and development. Three cohorts of grantee organisations were supported in total. Learning from these organisations is being shared more widely to spread knowledge about improvement across the youth social action landscape.

It provides a number of key recommendations for funders and delivery organisations that wish to embed continuous quality improvement in their work, in order to support more robust, data-driven, and high-quality youth social action opportunities. The recommendations relate to the design, delivery, evaluation, outcomes, and sustainability of youth social action opportunities.

The full final report for the third cohort can be found [here](#).

<p>Start of funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear aims for the youth social action opportunity that is being funded. Working on Theories of Change can help both organisations that are new to delivering youth social action, and those who already support it. • Support high-quality activity design. Dedicated design work in the early stages of funding can help to fill any gaps or lack of clarity in activity design, which will in turn increase the quality of delivery. If YSA delivery needs to start very soon after, or even before, funding is in place then funders could support short ‘test and learn’ cycles in between phases of delivery. • Have open and honest conversations about how much an organisation can invest in quality improvement for their youth social action opportunity. When considering the best way to commit to and embed quality improvement,
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	<p>and what can be expected from those involved, funders and organisations should seek to engage staff at various levels in these conversations – from those delivering the activity to senior leadership.</p>
<p>During funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Explicitly fund and embed cycles of learning and improvement into grants for youth social action. Structured support, accountability, and more time and headspace for improvement work can help to increase quality of provision.</p> <p>Work with organisations to identify where support and capacity building will be most valuable. The Confidence Framework can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify an organisation’s strengths and areas for development, as well as what type of capacity building support may be most valuable.</p> <p>Understand that the benefit of quality improvement won’t come through outcomes measurement alone. Funders could work with grantees to gather more data about quality, fidelity and engagement, which is more likely to align with consistent and ‘faithful’ delivery. Additionally, funders could replace traditional requests for outcomes data with a series of ‘learning indicators’ that demonstrate how the organisation is increasing confidence in delivery through data-driven decision making</p> <p>Treat evaluation and learning activities as an organisational process. Quality improvement requires engagement from across the organisation in order to be effective and productive, especially when it throws up bigger, strategic questions that extend beyond youth social action. Meaningful measurement is more likely to take place if embedded within an organisation’s wider measurement plan, with data contributing to the broader learning objectives.</p>
<p>End of funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Ensure learning and insights are captured at the end of delivery, focusing either on development or legacy. For organisations who will be continuing delivery, the Outcomes and Sustain sections of the Confidence Framework pose key questions to consider for the next stage of delivery. For those who will not be continuing to offer the YSA opportunity, it could be valuable to focus on the core components of their programmes to see if learning might be applied to other areas of the organisation’s work. Additionally, funders could support organisations to further codify, manualise, and disseminate resources so that the wider sector could benefit from it.</p>

4.2 Insights from Match Funder reports

Whilst the Impact Accelerator is our main source of understanding how we can support quality Youth Social Action, we gained some reflections from Match Funders' reports about what they think supports quality.

4.2.1 Time

Match Funders reported shifting deadlines to accommodate organisations in their delivery. *YEF* described that inflexible deadlines could lead to young people being pushed to meet external programme deadlines, rather than following their own rhythms and paths.

Strategies to alleviate this pressure were described as "resisting" or "carrying". Resistance strategies include giving young people time off to relax when the pressure has been building; resisting demands to meet existing deadlines; slowing down to make connections between young people and reflecting on what other people in the community might want. Carrying strategies involved delivery partner staff taking on tasks that had been anticipated young people would lead. Some delivery partners suggested that one important aspect of their role is to understand the expectations of the funder and act as a buffer for the young person so that pressures do not get passed down.

The Match Funder responded to some of these time concerns by shifting deadlines to allow more time. In cases where the Funder was seen as inflexible, it produced a sense that there was a lack of trust.

Allowing young people to reflect and take their time seems to sometimes be in tension with Match Funders reporting that elements of fast-paced programmes and deadlines maintain momentum.

4.2.2 Youth-led

Match Funders described various ways in which the quality principle of 'youth-led' was enacted. This was not only embedded within young people designing and undertaking delivery but also included young people undertaking and shaping evaluations, deciding on funding and staff recruitment, and being part of proposals, advisory groups, and trustees. *Young Manchester* also outlined that they were committed to employing more young people (under the age of 25), and in more senior positions, in their journey of embedding youth voice and youth leadership.

4.3 What do we know about how to support youth social action providers to improve?

4.3.1 Peer support

YEF reported that delivery partners valued opportunities for peer support and learning. Although there were elements of peer support through working groups, it was stated that delivery partners desired a more structured support system and formal networking opportunities. This was viewed as particularly important as other delivery partners were considered to be 'busy' and therefore more difficult to approach in an informal capacity. The benefits of peer support and learning were reported to arise when delivery partners were aware of the obstacles other delivery partners had experienced and overcame so that they knew whom to contact for support or advice.

Similarly, Match Funders reported that delivery partners especially valued training and workshops when these were in person. In-person workshops were considered to enable peer-learning, develop cross-partnerships, and have conversations more effectively and organically than when they were held online. Additionally, having in-person workshops and peer learning was considered to create more momentum among partnership groups than when they were online. GLA noted that this was particularly true when organisations were jumping from day to day delivery to more theoretical workshops or 'big picture' thinking.

Match Funders also highlighted peer support and learning through sharing resources through 'resource banks'. As different programmes come to an end, this may be a way to create a legacy of learning and allow similar programmes to benefit from organisations' past experiences.

4.3.2 Capacity building funding

GLA outlined their capacity building fund which was designated to support capacity building and thus quality youth social action. At the start of the programme, it was envisaged that delivery partners may identify skill gaps and then seek training to upskill themselves. Capacity building included things like social action training workshops and Theory of Change workshops. However, funding was also used for things such as mapping youth social action in different geographies, incentives for young people in proposal pitching or hiring a consultant.

GLA noted that the lack of capacity in organisations to dedicate additional time for capacity building prevented organisations to spend the whole fund. GLA will pool the remaining funding for delivery partners to use throughout the upcoming year. Although funding capacity building seems to be a valuable way to help youth social action providers to improve, this may be buffered by their available time to do so.

4.3.3 Learning and reflection points

Spirit of 2012 highlighted that funders should fund learning and reflection points so that grant-holders can make changes to delivery during the programme.

4.3.4 Design work

GLA outlined the benefit of including a design phase at the beginning of the funding round. Although this was time and labour intensive, and thus organisations need to be aware of the

expectations beforehand, it was thought to improve the quality of the programmes. Having a partnership model within the design phase additionally allowed organisations to benefit from other areas of expertise and models of delivery.

The latest Impact Accelerator Report delves deeper into the benefits of including a design phase at the start of funding.

Appendix 1. Summary of Evidence Plan Questions

The #iwill Fund Learning Hub exists to harness the evidence and learning generated by the wave of youth social action opportunities supported through the #iwill Fund. Our Data Review papers synthesise the learning and evidence from within, and external to, the #iwill Fund through the lens of our Strategic Evidence Plan questions. The Learning Hub developed the questions in consultation with stakeholders in the #iwill Fund – Match Funders, their evaluation partners, and the Leadership Board.

The boxes below summarise our emerging answers to the Strategic Evidence Plan questions. These answers are based on previous Data Reviews and are updated here in light of new evidence and data that has been generated by the #iwill Fund since the most recent Review. New content appears in **bold**.

What is youth social action?

- **Is there a useful typology of youth social action that can cover both the nature and aims of an activity?**
- **What kinds of youth social action have been supported through the #iwill Fund?**
- **What are common theories of change**

- Youth social action is a deliberately broad term, and new. One result is that some grantees do not understand what is meant by the terms 'social action' and 'youth-led'. This implies a need to promote a shared understanding of these terms for that delivery organisations can develop viable youth social action proposition for funding.
- The most common way in which young people are able to lead youth social action opportunities is by making decisions and choices within the programme. Some opportunities enable young people to apply directly for funding, take a lead in assessing funding applications or get involved in evaluation and research.
- Youth social action is best understood by considering a range of typologies that highlight different features of the practice.
- The Information Management System also allows us to build a (developing) picture of the opportunities being supported by the #iwill Fund.
- We believe that understanding Theories of Change across funds and delivery organisations will allow us to say more about the different functions and forms of youth social action.

What does youth social action do?

- **Which positive outcomes have been shown to be promoted by youth social action for young people, children and communities?**
- **Can we say there are types or features of youth social action which increase chances of outcomes?**
- **How can double benefit be managed?**

- In general, the evidence base for the impact of youth social action on young people's outcomes is in the early stages of development.
- Particular areas of confidence, however, are around employment skills and civic and political engagement, where evidence suggests that youth social action can be effective in promoting positive outcomes.
- We cannot conclude from the evidence to date that participation in youth social action improves attainment in educational assessments, although there is some evidence it can affect non-attainment outcomes such as teamwork and self-confidence.
- Early insights from opportunities supported by the #iwill Fund suggest that youth social action may be able to promote young people's wellbeing by helping young people to find meaning in their life and actions.
- The evidence base for the community benefit of youth social action is underdeveloped relative to other potential benefits.
- Our analysis of Match Funder reports to the #iwill Fund identifies three mechanisms through which youth social action programmes supported through the #iwill Fund aim to achieve outcomes for young people.
 - Young people have a safe yet challenging space in which to develop practical, vocational and socio-emotional skills.
 - Young people take self-directed action which gives them a sense of purpose that contributes to their wellbeing, self-concept and self-efficacy.
 - Young people have the opportunity to engage with different communities, increasing their knowledge of others and their sense of belonging.

How do we support youth social action for all?

- **How do we reach children and young people from backgrounds known to be less likely to participate?**
- **How do we engage children and young people younger than 14?**
- **How do we initiate youth social action in 'cold spots' (geographies/sectors/institutions), and how can youth social action activity be sustained?**
- **How do we support children and young people to transition between youth social action opportunities?**
- **What are the pros and cons of digital delivery for reaching *all* young people?**

- In 2018, 40% of young people (10-20 years old) from the most affluent backgrounds took part in some form of social action compared with 30% of the least affluent.
- The #iwill Fund has supported more youth social action opportunities in deprived postcodes than affluent ones.
- The most common engagement strategy the Match Funders report supporting is *targeted universalism*, which appears to be an effective way of reaching young people from lower socio-economic groups.
- Charitable funders and delivery organisations that seek to close the socio-economic gap must be conscious of the fact that it is due to self-reinforcing patterns of behaviour and therefore requires an intentional response that is implemented consistently and with sufficient resource.
- The #iwill Fund has supported a higher concentration of opportunities in urban area, particularly in London.
- **Reports from Match Funders have mentioned being able to engage and reach a wider range of young people, with digital delivery, including those living in rural and remote areas.**
- **Factors including digital exclusion and barriers to finding an uninterrupted space to access online sessions impede on accessing digital youth social action.**

How can we support quality youth social action?

- **What can we say about the strengths and weaknesses of youth social action providers in aggregate?**
- **What do we know about how to support youth social action providers to improve?**
- **How can digital delivery support the quality principles?**

- Shared quality improvement challenges for the field include managing and monitoring implementation fidelity, measuring impact and learning from this and sharing learning across the field.
- Organisations within the Impact Accelerator benefitted from support to integrate youth social action into their theory of change, and to define what is 'core' and 'flex' within their programmes.
- The #iwill Campaign quality principle of youth-led opportunities can be implemented at different levels. Funders with a commitment to supporting youth-led social action should consider how to adapt all of their processes to enable young people to be part of leadership and decision-making.