Spaces for Change- Interim Report

Contents

6 Interesting Things About Spaces for Change

1) So far, **we have made 64 awards, totalling £235,247**. This is an average award of £3,675 (p.4)

2) **50% of our award winners are from BAME backgrounds and 39.34% came from the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country** – we want to celebrate the fact that we have reached a more demographically diverse pool of social entrepreneurs than our standard award-making activity (p.6)

3) **We noticed that a lot of our award making was focussed in a few regions and urban centres**. In January 2019, 79% of our awards were made within London and the South East, Yorkshire and Humber, and the North West. We've made some changes to our outreach to address this. (p.7)

4) **There are unique regional opportunities and challenges that influence how effectively social entrepreneurs can transform local spaces**– e.g. high prices and a shortage of space in London and the South East have made finding space more competitive for social entrepreneurs (p.8)

5) **Crowdfunding is a great way to generate community interest in an idea and can generate income**…. But it takes time to do well and isn't appropriate for everyone. Providing tailored guidance and support is more effective than setting a requirement for every award winner (p.9-10)

6) **Young people are full of ideas, energy, and ambition to develop social entrepreneurial ways to transform spaces in their community** …. But doing it takes confidence and resilience. Young people may need more hands-on support and encouragement from starting an application to completing an award (p.10)

Introduction

As part of the Spaces for Change programme, UnLtd is supporting young people (aged between 16 and 24 years old) to start and run social ventures that unlock the potential of unused or under-utilised spaces for the benefit of the local community. Running from January 2016 to January 2021, we will be supporting 100 young people. This paper covers the first three years of the programme, from January 2016 to January 2019.[1]

Over the course of the programme, we expect to achieve the following:

1. Social entrepreneurship helps young people to address their own personal and social challenge regarding the built environment.
2. Young people have the opportunity to participate in positive ways in their communities through finding solutions to environment problems.
3. Young people will learn and develop new skills and report that they feel equipped for social leadership as a result of the award, including environment-related skills.

In this interim report, we reflect on our progress and learning so far. As an organisation, we are committed to learning and build facilitated reflection, feedback, and response into programmes as they are delivered. As we are half way through delivering the programme, we have taken this as an opportunity to take stock and pay attention to what is emerging, and what we need to change.

In Section 1 we summarise our award-making activity (see our annual reports for more detail about this). In Section 2, we reflect on what we have found in the following areas of our work:

- Award-making – finding, funding, and supporting social entrepreneurs
- The challenges and opportunities of transforming spaces
- Crowdfunding
- Working with young social people

In Section 3 we present our future evaluation plans.

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[1] Awards data is for all awards made between March 2017- January 2019

Section 1: The programme so far

In this section, we provide an overview of progress so far in finding, funding and supporting social entrepreneurs.

Finding social entrepreneurs

Starting in January 2016, award managers began reaching out to community organisations to develop a pipeline of award winners. Building on learning from previous programmes, we knew that working with partners would help us to reach a diverse pipeline of award winners. For example, on Do It For Real, 33% of awards to we to young people from a BAME background. [2] On Spaces for Change, 50% of our award winners are from a BAME background (see Learning Highlight #1 pg.6).

As Spaces for Change has developed, we have diversified who we work with to reach an even wider range of award winners (see pg. 7 for more information).

Funding social entrepreneurs

So far, we have made 64 awards, totalling £235,247. This is an average award of £3,675. From this 64, 27 have 'graduated' and successfully completed their project.

Table 1 Summary of community spaces improved or created by award winners

	Total number of community spaces improved:	Total number of **new** community spaces created:
Park or playground	3	0
Orchard	3	0
Built environment space	9	5
Community building/room	7	0

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[2] Do It For Real – a programme building on the positive spirit inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to encourage young people to enact their ideas for social change between 2015-2017. We wanted to support young social entrepreneurs to develop and grow social ventures, creating positive outcomes for themselves and their local community. The final evaluation report can be found here

Our awards have supported people like:

- Areeb, who has put on local food events in Bradford Park as part of Bradford Eid Festival.
- Luke, who has worked with Hyde Park Source in Leeds to transform abandoned allotment plots and an un-used pavilion into a productive community growing hub.
- Miriam, a Director/ Producer at The Cellar Theatre who have transformed the old beer cellar at DINA in Sheffield into a 30-seater venue with radio station, recording studio and bar.
- Coral, and the DZ Circus School unlocking disused community spaces in Teesside.

Supporting social entrepreneurs

The programme makes awards up to the level of £5,000 alongside a range of non-financial support. Award winners are supported by three award managers who work across London, Brighton, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bradford. Award Managers typically provide 1-2-1 support and coaching to individuals to help them develop their ideas and overcome any challenges putting them into practice.

In addition to this 1-2-1 support,

- Training is provided by sector specialists on topics including crowdfunding, marketing, and negotiating space
- We have run several networking events and two Explore events [3], in London (November 2017) and Sheffield (April 2018).
- 26 crowdfunding campaigns have been run by award winners on Spacehive

Typically support begins when an Expression of Interest (EoI) is started on the application portal.[4] This means we start speaking to applicants earlier than usual, in recognition that young people often have additional support needs (see learning highlight #4, pg. 10 for more info).

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[3] Explore vents involve young social entrepreneurs visiting spaces transformed by social entrepreneurship and meet the people who achieved it. Learning is taken from the day and used to inspire and inform applicants' work.

[4] An Expression of Interest is the first part of our 2-step application process. Applicants must answer 5 questions about themselves and their idea. If successful, then we invite them to submit a more detail application form

Section 2: Learning Highlights

In this section, we present specific learning highlights relating to:

1. Award-making – finding, funding, and supporting social entrepreneurs
2. The challenges and opportunities of transforming spaces
3. Crowdfunding
4. Working with young people

#1 Award Making

We thought that…

Our learning from previous programmes with young people had shown how partners and networks enable us to find young people with ideas that we might not otherwise reach working on our own.[5]

We used youth-focussed events and relevant youth organisations in our existing networks to find young people with ideas that we could support around the country.

We found that…

1. We supported more social entrepreneurs from deprived areas in the UK[6], and more BAME people, compared to our standard award making

Table 2 Summary of awards made by demographic

Reach	Spaces for Change	Total UnLtd 17/18	UnLtd Do Its 17/18
% Female	50.0%	61.6%	63.2%
% BME	**50.0%**	**23.5%**	**24.2%**
% Disabled	6.25%	5.6%	6.3%
% Unemployed	7.8%	5.6%	6.3%
% Most deprived areas	**39.34%**	**23.4%**	**25.0%**

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[5] [Do It For Real 2018](#), p.4-5

[6] A deprived area is defined as in the top 20% most deprived areas according to [Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#)

2. But, in January 2019 a lot of our award making was focussed in a few regions and urban centres (Figure 1).

AWARDS MADE, BY REGION

Other
21%

London &
South East
37%

Yorkshire and
Humber
25%

North West
17%

Figure 1 Awards made, by region
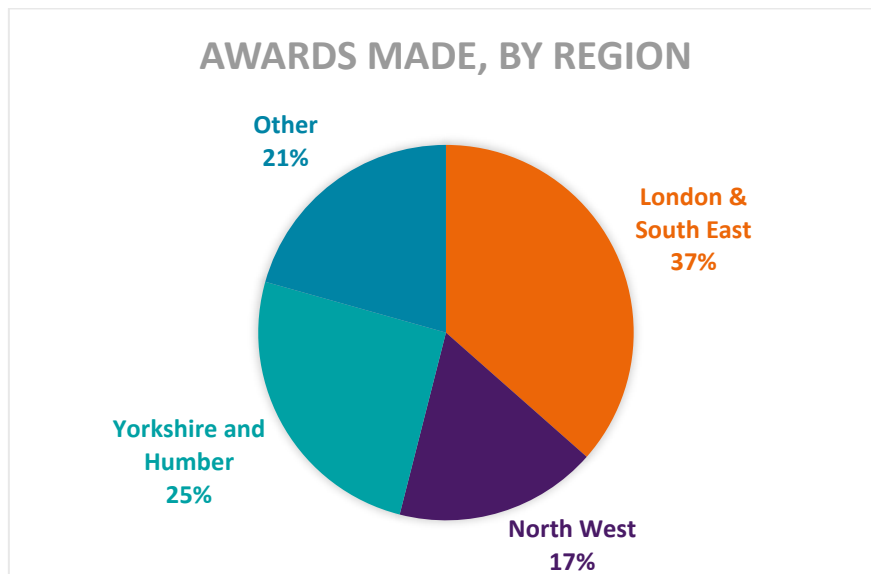
So instead, we….

The team delivering the programme have adapted their approach to find social entrepreneurs in a broader range of geographical areas, by:

- reaching out to organisations that we may not have worked with before, for example, horticultural societies, Girl Guides and Scouts, and local sports societies
- increasing our online outreach. We adapted our social media content to include more content geared towards a younger audience, including gifs and case studies of successful applicants.
- Adapted our messaging on social media. We talked more about outdoor spaces, started using more varied content like gifs, and more case studies of young people's work.

As a result, the reach of our award making has diversified, with award being made in Cumbria, Wales, Northern Ireland, the South West and more rural areas.

#2 Transforming spaces

We thought that…

Young people would be able to find disused spaces and there would be some common barriers to transforming them.

We found that….

In the South East and London, there is a greater competition for spaces and as a result, prices are high. As well as being able to cover higher costs, social entrepreneurs need the right connections and advanced business skills – bidding against corporate competitors, negotiating contracts, adapting business plans – to successfully transform a space.

In Northern towns and cities, and more rural areas, finding space hasn't been an issue. As well as keeping costs down, this has meant that social entrepreneurs often find landlords and local authorities keen to work with people with ideas for bringing them into use.

So instead, we….

We recognised that we need to adapt the way we work to fit the local context. In the South East, we are finding community groups with potential spaces to transform and then linking them up with young people.

In Worthing, our award manager identified a potential space that was being underused. We connected a [local table tennis club](#) with a young man we had met in the area who wanted to be a tennis coach. With the support of the club, the applicant was able to develop and submit an EoI. Our work was instrumental in creating the linkages that led to the application, and hopefully for the space to be transformed for others to benefit.

As well as breaking down the barriers that young people face in accessing space, we have found that connecting people to organisations provides an extra layer of support that helps them to progress with their idea.

Elsewhere in the country, where there is less competition for space, we are supporting social entrepreneurs to take control of spaces others might have overlooked, for example Millie at Northern Soul Kitchens who is working in a disused shop to run a pay as you feel café (see case study #1 pg.9).

In our final evaluation we will examine what factors, including local context, influenced the ability of social entrepreneurs to utilise unused / under-utilised spaces for community benefit.

Northern Soul Kitchen is a food waste and pay-as-you-feel café in the heart of Berwick Upon Tweed, based in a previously abandoned television shop.

Using unsold food from the local Tesco's and other small local shops in Berwick they aim to create healthy food in a welcoming environment. Customers pay whatever they think the food is worth, making it accessible for those who might otherwise not be able to afford it. Local people can even volunteer their time and skills to pay for a meal.

The former home of Tweed Televisions had been left unoccupied for the last four years. *"We don't necessarily have people sleeping on the streets, but there's this hidden group of people that you might not see"*, says Millie, *"Our women's refuge at that point was spilling out at the seams. And the foodbank was accessed every day and doubled in two years."*

For Millie something needed to change: *"I just thought that it was about time that somebody took the bull by the horns and created something. Instead of waiting for the town and the council to do something for us, let's just do it".*

#3 Crowdfunding

We thought that…

We thought that crowdfunding would help young social entrepreneurs to get community buy-in for their project and develop alternative revenue streams, so we asked all award winners to match their award with crowdfunding.

We found that…

For some, crowdfunding is an effective way to generate funds, build relationships in the community and interest in the project. GUAP, in Peckham, managed to raise £3,600 towards the costs of their video magazine hub (see case study #2).

However, it is not an effective income-generating model for all social entrepreneurs. Many award winners are operating in areas where disposable income is relatively low.

In addition, the feedback we have received suggests it takes at least 30 days to reach relatively low fundraising goals through crowdfunding. UnLtd's existing award making processes meant applicants only had a few weeks to raise the

match funding and many had difficulty accessing support on how to use Spacehive, the platform we asked them to use.

As a result, it felt more like an extra hurdle to get over than something useful to help them develop their project.

So instead, we….

Since July 2017, rather than make it a condition of their grant, we are offering award winners support and workshops on crowdfunding, to help those that want to grow their venture. We will pay attention to how effective this targeted support was in our final evaluation.

Case Study #2
Meet one of our award winners

[GUAP](#) are an online video magazine, committed to engaging young people in everything they do. They are helping to transform Peckham Levels, an underused car park in South East London.

GUAP Spot will be the new home of the GUAP platform and aims to provide a safe space for young people to create. According to Shanice, "*It's a chameleon space for us and our platform. We want to be able to offer not just space, but opportunity to people who might not have the access otherwise.*"

They were part of the first cohort to come through the programme and worked with Spacehive to secure match funding for their award. Although they admitted finding it challenging, they remain positive about the experience, "*it was good. It was something we were all fairly new to, and the first 5 hours of support was mad!*" As a result of the campaign, they managed to raise over £3,600 with just five backers.

#4 Working with Young People

We thought that…

It would be easy to find young people with energy and ambition that were able to put their imaginative ideas for transforming spaces into practice.

We found that…

On their journey to transform a space, many of the young people encountered significant obstacles that they must overcome:

- the space they were hoping to use being unavailable or taken by someone else (this was particularly an issue in the South East where competition for space is high)
- struggling to find supporters and volunteers to realise their ambitions, or new users for the space
- generate the funds necessary to realise their ambitions.

Lots of young people have the energy and ambition, but this isn't always matched by the ability to make things happen and resilience to respond to setbacks. Award managers noted that for some applicants, they have yet to move into rented accommodation, let alone think about what it means to take on a commercial space. Adapting plans, overcoming challenges and bouncing back takes confidence and resilience, which many young social entrepreneurs are still developing.

So instead, we….

We recognised that for our support to be effective, we must adapt it to meet the specific support needs of young people. Alongside our usual level of support, award managers identified the following strategies that they have used:

- Contact applicants as soon as they start an EoI to find out what support they need to complete the application and help them think through some of the obstacles they might face.
- Make sure that each young person has a link with a community organisation who can support them on each step of the way. We've noticed that our strongest applications often come from young people who have worked with a local organisation to develop their idea.
- Take a holistic approach to each person – ask them what else they have going on in life as well as the award. It is likely their lives are changing quickly, including where the award fits in amongst other ideas and projects.
- Be ready to be flexible to when young people's energy is on the project. It is rarely a light touch or online only relationship; face-to-face time is needed. Young people also often expect a reply instantly, even though you can't necessarily expect it in return.

Section 3: The Way Forward

We will be making the remainder of the awards of the next 12 months, with support running up to the end of 2020. Throughout that time, we will be interviewing award winners and holding reflective sessions with the programme staff. In July 2021, we will undertake the final evaluation of the programme (see Table 2).

Our final evaluation will focus on understanding how effective the programme was in achieving its aims, and what we learnt that could inform the design of future programmes and/or our support to social entrepreneurs.

We have identified a number of key evaluation questions linked to the programme aims:

1. Social entrepreneurship helps young people to address their own personal and social challenge regarding the built environment

	Key Evaluation Question	Collection Method
1.1	What was the scale and reach of our award making?	Application Data End of Award Survey Data
1.2	How effectively does social entrepreneurship help young people address their own personal and social development and navigate life transitions?	End of Award Survey Data Interviews with Award Winners

2. Young people have the opportunity to participate in positive ways in their communities through finding solutions to environment problems

	Key Evaluation Question	Collection Method
2.1	How were social entrepreneurs able to overcome the barriers to re-imagining spaces?	Interviews with Award Winners Interviews with Expert Panel members
2.2	How have social entrepreneurs contributed to transforming spaces?	Interviews with Award Winners Interviews with Expert Panel members

3. Young people will learn and develop new skills and report that they feel equipped for social leadership as a result of the award, including environment-related skills.

	Key Evaluation Question	Collection Method
3.1	How effectively did we support young people to set up and grow social ventures	End of Award Survey Data Interviews with Award Winners Staff Reflective Session
3.2	How effectively did we enable young people to develop as social entrepreneurs?	End of Award Survey Data Interviews with Award Winners Staff Reflective Session
3.3	How did involvement on the programme affect young people's life transitions (school leaving, university, entering employment)	Interviews with Award Winners Staff Reflective Session

Building on the learning presented in this report, we have identified additional key evaluation questions about how effectively we delivered the programme:

4.1   How satisfied were the social entrepreneurs we supported? Why/why not?

4.2   What did social entrepreneurs value about our support?

Table 2 Timeline of remaining activity

Activity	Who	\<2019\> J	F	MR	AP	MY	JN	JL	AU	S	O	N	D	\<2020\> J	F	MR	AP	MY	JN	JL	AU	S	O	N	D	Comments
Application Forms	Delivery	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█													
Staff reflective sessions	Research & Delivery				█					█																
End of Award survey	Research	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
Expert Panel interviews	Research			█												█										
Interviews with Award Winners	Research						█												█					█		
Interim report	Research	█																								
Final report	Research																									Due July 2021
Impact / showcasing event																								█		Exact date to be confirmed.

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Appendix A: UnLtd's approach to evaluation

Our approach to evaluation is underpinned by the following principles:

- Simple – what we produce is accessible to a wide audience, including non-specialist audiences, those that we support, and the sector
- Light touch – our evaluation activity should not be a burden for award winners
- Proportionate – we only ask what we report on and we recognise that our approach needs to be tailored for different programmes
- Practical – it is integrated into delivery.

As part of our standard monitoring and evaluation procedure we collect data on:

- the scale and reach of our Award-making activity and partnership work
- the quality of this work from the perspective of social entrepreneurs
- the effectiveness of our support in helping people to set up and grow social ventures, and to develop as social entrepreneurs
- the social impact generated by social entrepreneurs that we, or our partners, support.

We collect data using:

- application forms and an End of Award survey
- interviews with Award Winners and expert panel members
- reflective sessions with delivery staff