



CoRe

PROGRAMME IMPACT REPORT 2021

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BIG ALLIANCE



About CoRe

The CoRe (Community Resourcing) programme is a collaborative partnership between the Macquarie Group Foundation and Slaughter and May, delivered by the BIG Alliance. Over a six-month period, the programme aims to enhance the capacity, capability, and sustainability of non-profit organisations in Islington and surrounding areas by addressing their key operational needs and strategic challenges. Throughout the programme, teams of employee volunteers from Macquarie and Slaughter and May

use their professional business skills and expertise to provide direct support to local community organisations on a variety of projects.

2021 was the 13th year that the CoRe programme was delivered. A total of 40 volunteers from Macquarie and Slaughter and May gave over 1,250 hours of their time in support of 11 local community organisations. This report details the work undertaken during the 2021 edition of the CoRe programme.

CoRe 2021 in numbers:



What the community organisations said

“Organisations can’t work in isolation. It’s essential for the community sector and other sectors to work together to benefit from each other’s expertise, experiences and intelligence”

– JULIA BROWN, CEO OF BRANDON CENTRE

“The volunteers formed a really warm team. They weren’t judgemental in any way, shape or form. It wasn’t ‘us vs them’, we were a team working together. I felt like I’d known them for a long time, they didn’t feel like people who came here to tell me what to do, more like critical friends which was really nice. They were people I could depend on, and I knew they were looking out for my best interests”

– SHERI LAWAL, DIRECTOR OF CHOICES CIC

What the volunteers said

“The organisation that I worked with is addressing really important social issues, and they have some really big initiatives that tackle those huge problems. Just the idea that I was contributing, even in a small way towards that was pretty powerful”

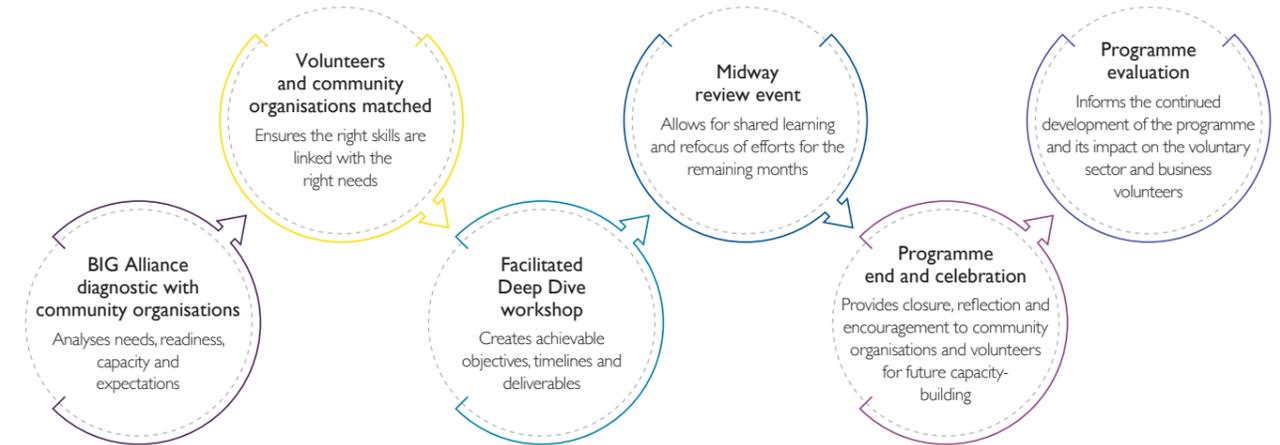
– MACQUARIE VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED CUBITT ARTISTS

“CoRe opens your eyes to the obstacles small charities encounter and is rewarding for all parties when you can assist”

– SLAUGHTER AND MAY VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

CoRe framework

Due to the on-going coronavirus pandemic, the 2021 CoRe programme was delivered virtually. All events, other than the end of programme celebration event, took place online via a range of digital platforms.



CoRe impact

Impact on community organisations

100%

of community organisations said that participating in CoRe

- Increased their capacity
- Improved their capability
- Enhanced their sustainability
- Enabled them to do something that they would not otherwise have been able to do

100%

of community organisations said that they would recommend CoRe to another not-for-profit organisation

Community partner perspective

“Having a clearer business plan and budget for the next four years will boost our sustainability. Thanks so much to the volunteers who helped us to create this vital document and blueprint for the organisation. We would not have achieved it within the timeframe without their support”

– MICHAEL CHANDLER, CEO OF UNION CHAPEL

“Without support from our CoRe team we would not have been able to redevelop the website, we would not have been able to reach out to adjacent user groups and help publicise their activities in our park, we would not have been able to do a comprehensive review of our policies or marketing strategy, and we wouldn’t have developed the user questionnaire or obtained footfall data”

– MIRIAM ASHWELL, CHAIR OF CALEDONIAN PARK FRIENDS GROUP

“Working in the charity sector can be lonely, so it’s nice to have someone with shared expertise to bounce ideas off. It was also interesting to learn about the corporate sector, their workload and what sort of pressure they’re under”

– KATIE SKEA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT AGE UK ISLINGTON

“I think the CoRe programme is a wonderful opportunity to build relationships between sectors - you need time and energy to make the most of it - but you get back what you put in, and more!”

– EMMA BRECH, CEO OF THE MAYA CENTRE

Impact on volunteers

When asked about what they had gained from joining the CoRe programme, the following proportion of respondents reported that they had achieved or partly achieved:

92% a positive impact on a local community organisation

92% using or developing their existing skills

92% meeting new people and broadening their networks

69% learning or developing new skills

96% representing their organisation in a positive way

88% doing something rewarding and giving back to the community

92% doing something different from their day job

Skills development

As a result of their involvement in the CoRe programme, volunteers reported that they developed skills in:

85% Decision making

92% Adapting to change

77% Negotiation and influencing

81% Problem solving

85% Strategic thinking

85% Collaboration and relationship building

85% Prioritisation and managing project scope

Impact on insight and understanding across the corporate and non-profit sectors

As a result of their involvement in the CoRe programme, volunteers reported that they gained insight or increased motivation in:

96% Knowledge and understanding of the charity sector

88% Increased motivation to volunteer again in the future

92% Knowledge of the social issues that exist in the Borough of Islington

Volunteer perspective

“I previously had no appreciation of the specific challenges faced by part of the LGBTQI+ community. The CoRe programme showed me how important the services provided by the Outside Project are”

– MACQUARIE VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

“I think that I enjoyed the project as it involved doing things that I know how to do but approaching them differently, because the charity’s audience is very different than in the legal space. That was a real positive”

– SLAUGHTER AND MAY VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED AGE UK ISLINGTON

“The CoRe programme gave me insight into the extent to which charities operate with limited resources. What I might perceive as a moderate contribution is actually really meaningful for a charity given they would never be able to allocate resources to a particular initiative without sacrificing another part of their operations”

– MACQUARIE VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED BRANDON CENTRE

Project summaries



Age UK Islington



Age UK Islington is an independent charity working in Islington to offer support and services to people aged 16+.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Age UK Islington develop their marketing and communications strategy to raise awareness about their support for older and younger adults?

Outputs

- Developed Website
- Developed Marketing and communications strategy and materials
- Developed Social Media strategy and presence
- Developed Monitoring and Evaluation strategy

Outcomes

- Improved Marketing and Communications abilities
- Enhanced Social Media presence
- Increased knowledge of the corporate sector

“The CoRe programme enabled me to receive expert input from a marketing communications professional who was also able to help me to receive input from a designer and a PR professional. For example, the volunteer team assisted with the development of a new homepage for our website, to better explain the services that Age UK Islington provides. We are most grateful for the opportunity to have worked with the CoRe team and would like to thank Big Alliance for their professional management of the programme”

– KATIE SKEA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT AGE UK ISLINGTON



Autism Hub Islington



Autism Hub Islington is a user-led initiative by and for adults with High-Functioning Autism and Asperger's. Their aim is to improve the quality of life for adults with autism by connecting people to resources, services and organisations from a central point.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Autism Hub Islington increase engagement with partners and beneficiaries through improved marketing and communications?

Outputs

- Created Fundraising strategy and materials
- Created Marketing and Communications strategy and materials
- Created Social Media strategy and enhanced Social Media presence
- Created a new workshop for service users
- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Finance strategy
- Developed Website

Outcomes

- Improved fundraising capability
- Enhanced marketing and communication capability
- Increased volunteer's awareness of Autism and Asperger's

“The CoRe volunteers were a real pleasure to work with. The highlight of the programme was the employment workshops between the volunteers and the hub users. The way the hub users interacted with each other, and how comfortable they felt to ask volunteer questions was amazing. I don't think the volunteers realised how unusual it is for the hub users to do this first time they meet a new person but the volunteers were able to create that safe, comfortable space for them”

– JILL BRADFORD VOLUNTEER & ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM HUB ISLINGTON

The highlight for me was definitely one of the sessions that we delivered to a group of people from the Autism Hub around employment. There were a few times that I was really emotionally hit by my experience with this group. I learnt a lot about the challenges associated with Autism as well as the potential solutions. It has been fantastic”

– SLAUGHTER AND MAY VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED AUTISM HUB ISLINGTON.

Brandon Centre



Based in the heart of their local community, Brandon Centre offers a comfortable, welcoming, and non-institutional setting for young people to access sexual and mental health services.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Brandon Centre improve their communications to increase partner engagement and support, particularly with corporates?

Outputs

- Developed a Business Development strategy
- Developed Training and Consultancy services
- Developed Marketing and Communications materials
- Developed Fundraising materials

Outcomes

- Enhanced ability to share what Brandon Centre does with a wider audience
- Increased knowledge of the corporate sector
- Improved confidence to have different dialogues with different organisations, including corporate companies
- Created opportunities to generate additional income to support young people and families

“We had several main outputs from our CoRe project. The additional and specialist support has been invaluable. The CoRe team were brilliant to work with. They were professional, supportive, and creative, and helped us get our goals achieved through excellent partnership working”

– JULIA BROWN, CEO OF BRANDON CENTRE

“The experience with the Brandon Centre has been extremely positive. We were lucky to have a very open and honest discussion at the start of the project with a few of the Brandon Centre team telling their personal stories involving the Brandon Centre services. This honesty and openness lead to members of the working group sharing their own personal stories which was extremely positive way to begin the initiative and was enough to convince me that volunteering work can be extremely rewarding”

– MACQUARIE VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED BRANDON CENTRE

BTEG (Black Training and Enterprise Group)



The Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) is a national charity delivering programmes for young Black, Asian and minority ethnic people aged 11-30 years. They conduct action research, operate as a learning partner for funders and provide a voice to government for community organisations.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can BTEG grow their trading arm (BTEG Ltd) and increase the reach of their Routes2Success programme?

Outputs

- Created Marketing and Communications materials
- Developed Business Development strategy
- Developed Information Management strategy
- Developed Social Media presence
- Gained a new Trustee

Outcomes

- Improved information management capabilities
- Increased confidence
- Expanded network

“We have been able to progress with plans to improve our Training offer which will ultimately increase our income generation. Before joining the CoRe programme, I had hesitation about growing the business model and exploring the income generation side of things. The volunteers helped my confidence as well as providing practical support. The team was brilliant – they were authentic, probing, and asked lots of good questions”

– TEBUSSUM RASHID, DEPUTY CEO OF BTEG

“My programme highlight was understanding what BTEG do and what they're trying to achieve. I think for me, it was an eye opener and that's why I decided to apply to join the board of BTEG. I admire what they're trying to achieve and how they're pushing forward”

– MACQUARIE VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED BTEG (AND HAS SINCE JOINED THEIR BOARD OF TRUSTEES).

Caledonian Park Friends Group



The Caledonian Park Friends Group was formed to represent park users and to protect the amenities and wildlife of the park.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Caledonian Park improve visitor engagement and experience by utilising contemporary technology?

Outputs

- Developed Marketing and Communications strategy and created associated materials
- Created Policies and Procedures
- Created Monitoring and Evaluation strategy
- Created Risk Assessments
- Created Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy
- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Operational strategy
- Developed Governance strategy
- Developed Social Media strategy and presence
- Developed website

Outcomes

- More robust governance
- Increased professionalism
- Increased confidence
- Improved ability to manage data

“It’s been incredibly inspiring working with the CoRe volunteers. We now have a comprehensive set of policies and clear review of our procedures. These enable us to work with other organisations, including funders, more efficiently and more effectively. The web and social media development, marketing, and policy development has been worth several thousand pounds. I learned an incredible amount from the CoRe volunteers which has boosted my confidence. The whole project has been a really positive experience”

– MIRIAM ASHWELL, CHAIR OF CALEDONIAN PARK FRIENDS GROUP

Choices CIC



Choices is a Community Interest Company dedicated to changing the lives of people in their community. They have a holistic approach in tackling social and economic issues that affect the wellbeing of clients.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Choices London CIC ensure their takeover of a refurbished community space is a success?

Outputs

- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Operational strategy
- Developed Finance strategy
- Developed Fundraising strategy and materials
- Developed Marketing and Communications strategy
- Developed services
- Developed Risk Assessments

Outcomes

- Improved Organisational Governance
- Increased understanding of best practice in relation to IT and Data Management

“The CoRe programme helped me to effectively achieve my organisational development plans. We were able to come up with development strategies which Choices would not have been able to do without the expertise of the volunteers. The support received helped us to convince the council to provide us with a community building. I had really good support from the team and felt that we were working genuinely towards the success of my organisation”

– SHERI LAWAL, DIRECTOR AT CHOICES CIC



Cubitt Artists



Cubitt is an artist run cooperative based in Islington, London. Founded by a group of artists in 1991, Cubitt consists of a non-profit gallery, education programme and 32 artist studios.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Cubitt Artists redefine who they are and how their work is understood by external audiences?

Outputs

- Developed a Business Plan
- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Operational strategy
- Developed Finance strategy

Outcomes

- Enhanced financial capability
- Renewal of grant funding
- Increased business planning capability
- Increased confidence

“The business plan that we created with our CoRe team has supported our renewal of grant funding that covers some core costs and we had strong financial advice that we previously were unable to access due to the costs associated. Taking part in CoRe has supported the confidence of myself and the finance manager in our strategy and supported the team in setting new standards around how we communicate our work both internally and externally. I think the support is invaluable and has been a huge boost to our confidence. I think many organisations feel like they are drowning, and this kind of solidarity and advice is amazing. Our deepest gratitude!”

– AMAL KHALAF, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES AT CUBITT ARTISTS



Rich Mix



Rich Mix is a charity that connects some of the city’s most adventurous and diverse audiences to a vital, exciting and ambitious programme of contemporary culture. Rooted in the city but open to the world, they champion diversity in everything they do.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Rich Mix improve their corporate engagement offer?

Outputs

- Developed Corporate Partnerships strategy and materials
- Developed Marketing and Communications strategy and materials
- Developed Social Media strategy
- Developed Fundraising materials
- Developed Services

Outcomes

- Clearer understanding of corporate partnership strategy
- Enhanced knowledge of CRM systems
- Creation of cross organisational working group
- Time and space to think outside of day to day working

“The CoRe volunteer team gave us expert feedback on strategy and on developing marketing materials. They have enabled us to be clearer about our thinking and strategy in terms of our Corporates offer. The CoRe programme provided structure and kept us on task”

– ROSA DUNN, DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT RICH MIX

“A key takeaway for me was getting insight into how the charity is run, what their priorities are e.g. how they manage to fund their work. It was quite eye opening. At our company, we are blessed with the resources/tech that we have available internally. It was good to see this from a charity’s perspective in terms of how little they have available but how they keep bouncing back despite challenges and limitations”

– SLAUGHTER AND MAY VOLUNTEER WHO SUPPORTED RICH MIX

The Maya Centre



The Maya Centre is a community-based charity providing a free counselling service in Islington for women who have experienced mental health issues which may stem from trauma including domestic violence, physical abuse or sexual abuse in childhood, war and conflict as well as harmful practices.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can The Maya Centre better understand themselves, their identity and their place “in the market”, in order to better engage more partners and service users?

Outputs

- Created website
- Created Marketing and Communications strategy and materials
- Created Social Media strategy and presence
- Developed Operational strategy

Outcomes

- Increased understanding of strategic direction
- Enhanced platform to reach service users
- Improved engagement with staff, trustees, patrons and funders
- Increased likelihood of higher volumes of donations

“The CoRe programme increased our capacity to think strategically and analytically about the work we do and how we convey our message clearly and convincingly. It was heartening to work with a group of passionate and articulate women during a challenging time. Their commitment and moral support was as valuable as the tasks they completed and I am very grateful for their expertise, kindness and good faith! CoRe is an excellent programme - a real chance to get some fresh eyes and ideas from a group of bright and motivated individuals”

– EMMA BRECH, CEO OF THE MAYA CENTRE



The Outside Project



The Outside Project is an LGBTIQ+ Community Shelter, Centre and Domestic Abuse Refuge in response to those within the LGBTIQ+ community who feel endangered, who are homeless, ‘hidden’ homeless and feel that they are on the outside of services due to historical and present prejudice in society and in their homes.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can The Outside Project improve their internal processes and systems, particularly linked to financial management?

Outputs

- Created Operational strategy
- Created Finance strategy and framework
- Created Monitoring and Evaluation strategy
- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Governance strategy
- Developed Services

Outcomes

- Increased ability to manage finances
- Reduction of risks associated with finance
- Increased operational efficiency

“The CoRe project has resulted in us having a better overview of our financial position and giving the team more responsibility which will be really important as we continue to grow. I think support to grassroots groups like us is vital. I can’t thank the volunteers enough for sorting out what felt like a huge, complicated mess into something we will now be quite proud of!”

– CARLA ECOLA, DIRECTOR OF THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

Union Chapel



Union Chapel is an independent, secular charity which exists to care for and develop their unique building and to open it up to as many people as possible. They believe people from all backgrounds should have the opportunity to enjoy their beautiful space and that it should be available to all for generations to come.

PROJECT SUMMARY

How can Union Chapel develop a 3-5 year strategic plan to ensure that their three entities (Union Chapel, Margins Project, and Directions) operate in unison?

Outputs

- Developed Organisational strategy
- Developed Finance strategy
- Developed Business Plan

Outcomes

- Increased clarity of the organisation’s direction
- Enhanced ability to submit funding bids
- Improved expertise on business development
- Increased confidence in organisational vision

“The CoRe programme enabled us to create a business plan that would have otherwise required consultant support. The development of the business plan will enable us to deliver services and plans to a clearer remit in the future. As a result of the work undertaken during CoRe, we have been able to submit a major funding application to redevelop the organisation’s spaces to turn them into a community hub. We will also be able to use the business plan to get future funding. Throughout the project, there was a real sense of solidarity between the charity and the volunteers and I want to thank them for their commitment”

– MICHAEL CHANDLER, CEO OF UNION CHAPEL



“Over the past thirteen years, the CoRe programme has had a transformational impact on many Islington based community organisations. This unique initiative creates amazing opportunities for the local voluntary sector and, in turn, for Islington’s residents”

– SARAH BENIOFF, DIRECTOR OF CRIPPLEGATE FOUNDATION AND ISLINGTON GIVING



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