

Final Newsletter

July 2015



A joint report from the Bromley by Bow Centre & Community Links

Bromley by Bow Centre

“The past five years have seen extraordinary achievements at the Bromley by Bow Centre and your investment in the East London Bond has helped deliver these great successes. So we want to say a very big ‘thank you’ on behalf of the whole team at Bromley by Bow, including our staff and volunteers, but most of all, our clients and those who benefit every day from our services. This newsletter describes just a fraction of the impact we have achieved since you pledged your support to the East London Bond 5 years ago and we hope you will share our great sense of success. We would love to tell you more about everything we do, so please do get in touch!”

Professor Ajit Lalvani, Chair

Rob Trimble, Chief Executive

The East London Bond has helped us grow the services which enable thousands of people to be well and live life to the full. Our Employment Service has expanded its reach across East London in partnership with Barclays; our Social Prescribing model has grown and formed a strategic partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support; we have continued to meet the needs of people who have lost their way in life or are stuck in a spiral of debt and can see no escape route. Every day we help people with complex needs and who have lost all hope.

We have continued our task of raising aspirations and self-confidence and giving people a sense of their place in the world. And this is perhaps most keenly demonstrated in the growth of Beyond Business, our social enterprise incubation programme, delivered in partnership with Investec.

“I urge you to take your colleagues down to the Bromley by Bow Centre and let them see what has emerged from nothing. It is one of the most impressive displays of social entrepreneurship anywhere in Europe” Lord Brian Mawhinney

Making Connections



Our model is about creating connections that bring solutions. Our Connection Zone is a vital gateway for local people into an array of targeted services and support – in a warm, comfortable setting over a cup of tea. Our team engage a huge range of people and support them to tackle a range of issues including being housebound, lonely, having low skills, depressed, unemployed and lacking the confidence to improve their situation.

Mandy, our Connection Zone Host, shares Geoffrey's story – a pensioner who lives alone and arrived one Friday afternoon:

“When I first met Geoffrey he was really distressed. His cooker had broken down and he had come into the Connection Zone as he heard that we might be able to help him. His cooker was what he used to both cook all his meals and warm his flat. I could see that he needed to speak to a friendly face, so I made him a cup of tea. I learned that Geoffrey had no money and didn't claim any benefits beyond his state pension, which wasn't due till the following week. He had no food in the house. I made up a bag of food from the emergency food cupboard to tide him over the weekend. When he came back on Monday he saw an advisor from the Advice Centre. The advisor secured a white goods grant for him (to purchase a cooker) and supported him to access his correct benefit entitlement.”

'I can't thank you enough – I didn't go hungry' – Geoffrey



Building on the Paralympic Legacy

The spirit of new hopes, dreams and aspirations never thought possible, is best captured through Motivate East, an inclusive sport participation project for disabled people, inspired by the Paralympic Games. We have been delivering accredited training to local volunteers to become Para-Legacy Agents who, over the next few years, will support and inspire disabled people to participate in sport.

Looking ahead we continue to build on the success of the Para-Legacy Agents

programme with the newly launched Active Futures, a project specialising in supporting young people with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs to overcome barriers to employment and wellbeing through a 12 week accredited sports training programme.

“I used to volunteer and get out, but once I had kids I stayed in more and I lost a lot of confidence. I started doing less. I would always say to the kids, get out there, don't just do nothing. But I wasn't practicing what I was preaching! I finished the Motivate East course in April. I passed. I was proud of myself. My confidence is so much better. It makes me a much happier person. I've done loads of exciting things! I met Prince Harry and Boris Johnson. I volunteered at the Queen's Baton Relay and I brought my 9 year old son along with me.”

Paula, Para-Legacy Agent

Preparing for Work, putting paid to poverty

Our dedicated Employment Service continues to support local people into employment, volunteering and/or training.

Capital Talent is a ground-breaking personal development programme for young people which has been delivered over the past four years in partnership with Barclays. It has a growing reputation for its innovative and dynamic approach, excellent results and its ability to reach young people left behind by other programmes.

"I have a young daughter and I thought this limited my employment options, I was finding job searching really stressful. I was told about the Centre from my cousin. I really enjoyed all aspects of the Capital Talent programme, especially the Employability Day at Barclays. It was a massive confidence boost for me being able to complete an interview with a professional. Their feedback made me feel so much more confident about myself. Now I'm working full time as a Sales Assistant. This has really eased the financial pressure; I no longer receive Job Seekers Allowance. Earning a full-time salary means I now feel I'm more of a role model for my daughter. It's great to feel more responsible. As a father I understand how important it is for me to be able to provide for my family, and how much this means to them. The Capital Talent team have helped me so much; I feel very indebted to them. My advisors have maintained good contact with me, even now I am employed." **Mohamed, Capital Talent Alumni**

Beyond Business, our award-winning social enterprise incubation programme, supports local people to develop their entrepreneurial talent. We have now launched a total 57 social enterprises which have a combined turnover in excess of £4 million and created over 350 jobs in East London.

Visit Bromley by Bow Centre

We would like to invite you to visit us at the Bromley by Bow Centre so that we can share more of what we do and thank you for your support.

If you would like to visit us please contact Rob Trimble, Chief Executive, on: 07968 567 443 or email: Robert.Trimble@bbbc.org.uk

Underground

We are a five minute walk away from Bromley by Bow Tube Station served by District and Hammersmith & City Lines. Turn left out of the station, down the stairs and keep walking. You will see a stone archway and a park on your left hand side - the next archway leads to the Centre's main reception.

DLR

We are a ten minute walk from Devon's Road DLR Station with connections to Canary Wharf and Stratford. For walking directions from Devon's Road DLR Station click [here](#).

We are also a ten minute walk from Bow Church DLR Station. For walking directions from Bow Church DLR Station click [here](#).

Local Bus Routes

You can also visit the Bromley by Bow Centre using local bus services. Both the 108 and 488 stop outside the Centre on Grace Street. Alternatively you can get the D8 to Bow Church DLR Station and we are a short walk away.

To find local buses and bus stops click [here](#).

Get in touch:

You can keep in touch with us via:

Twitter: @Bromley_by_Bow

Facebook: Bromley by Bow Centre

Website: www.bbbc.org.uk

Community Links

“Community Links generates new growth. We are deeply grateful to all the Bond investors for your support and hope you will share its sense of particularly timely achievement. We would very much like to thank you in person and show you the latest progress, so please do get in touch.”

Michael Smyth CBE, Chairman of Trustees

Geraldine Blake, Chief Executive

Generating Change

Community Links generates change in the communities of east London; more than 17,500 individuals and families benefitted last year as it helped young people gain skills, got adults into work, provided spaces for families to thrive and developed enterprises for the future, alongside sharing the lessons learned with decision makers for national impact.

The impact of the East London Bond has been unique. Within months of the Bond closing five years ago the austerity measures took effect, bearing heavily on our communities and dramatically reducing public funding. The Bond has played a crucial part in helping us to maintain critically needed projects of Community Links and remodel them for the new economic environment. As austerity continues the Bond and its partners are part of new growth.

The Community Links Approach

Community Links delivers around 40 different projects to support disadvantaged communities in east London; whilst diverse in nature each project is based on a shared approach. Our **ground-up** projects involve service users and staff in shaping delivery to allocate just the right support. We believe that **deep value** relationships, meeting an individual's specific needs and looking at, long-term ambitions and goals are vital to providing sustainable support. Crucially our **early action** approach always seeks to prevent problems occurring not respond to a crisis.

“Things didn't start out well for me, but now I've seen a lot of things, had a lot of opportunities and done a lot of things that I am extremely proud of. I always try and keep it positive.” **Lance**



Take **Lance Scott** for example who we first encountered as a student at Education Links – the Community Links School for young people excluded from mainstream provision. Lance says 'I was the little rebel in secondary school. I couldn't concentrate, or behave myself and I tried to be the clown in the class. Then I found myself doing something really stupid and got arrested.' This was the last straw for his school; Community Links stepped in with dedicated staff working to build a rapport with Lance 'My mentor didn't tolerate any rubbish from me and I began to turn it round'.

From Education into Employment Lance made good progress, as a keen sportsman he started to join in at a youth centre and a local athletics club; this led to more formal volunteering and eventually paid youth work. Earlier this year Lance was one of the team presenting at the Community Links Street Life anti-knife and gangs youth event. He says: 'I want to make a change and give back to my community through working with young people who are being drawn into gangs and crime.'

Outreach S-Team Sports Like Lance many young people can be engaged through sport. On the periphery of the Olympic Park where participation in sports is low and social need is high our S-Team provide sporting activities for young people aged 8-19. Like all Community Links projects S-Team is designed to encompass more than the specific focus on sport. Skills such as group work, sharing knowledge, communication, confidence building and building a stronger sense of local community are an integral part of the process. The project operates out of sports cages and parks around the borough, spaces where young people can 'drop-in'. It connects with young people who would not otherwise engage with traditional organised youth work and provides a progression route to the other projects run from our community hubs.

Community Hubs offer an 'all-under-one roof' space for our integrated services where people can come for support and access a range of activities to help combat poverty and transform lives. Each Community Hub provides an open access play scheme which invites children to drop in whenever they wish ensuring that they have safe place to go and engage in positive activities outside school hours. Children and young people are encouraged to spend time outdoors taking part in 'traditional play'; diverting them from anti-social behaviour as well as building their self confidence and their skills.



Siobhan McMahon was eight months pregnant with her third child when the family moved back to east London to care for her sick mother. It was tough to find school places initially so her daughters came to the after school club at one of our hubs to make friends, Siobhan says: 'Community Links has helped in lots of ways – we had some debt problems with my mum when she was sick. I didn't know where to go with all these red bills coming in for her. I've never dealt with anything like this in my life and I was in a state. I was locking myself away and it was getting worse and worse but the Centre Manager here

arranged for me to see a debt advisor at Community Links. They helped me sort it all out and it was a massive, massive relief'

National impact

Community Links has for many years shared the learning from our local work with a national audience of policymakers and practitioners. The latest example of this is **The Early Action Task Force**, convened and led by Community Links co-founder David Robinson.

This group of leaders from across the sectors are committed to building a society that prevents problems from occurring rather than one that struggles with the

consequences. By taking the case for early action to the heart of Government, the Task Force has prompted a Public Accounts Committee enquiry and National Audit Office report into early action leading to agreement from the Treasury that it will assume leadership on the issue across Government. Margaret Hodge MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, described our recent Early Action Task Force report as “essential reading for anyone planning for the next Government.”



Visit Community Links...

We invite Bond partners to make a Links visit, when we can thank you in person for your support. Experience first-hand the work we do, meet the teams who deliver it and understand how vital your support is.

If you would like to visit us please Geraldine Blake, Chief Executive, on: [020 7473 9651](tel:02074739651) or email: geraldine.blake@community-links.org

Underground

Just five minutes from Canning Town Tube Station, on the Jubilee Line and DLR.

From Canning Town station, cross Silvertown Way and head towards the flyover. Cross the road and bear right. Pass the Post Office on your right and after a few minutes you will quickly spot Community Links, a former town Hall on your left – you really can't miss it! [Map](#)

Local Bus Routes

The Community Links HQ building on Barking Road is well served by local bus services. Bus numbers 5, 69, 115, 276, 300 and 330 all pass by our building.

To find local buses and bus stops click [here](#).

Get in touch:

You can keep in touch with us via:

Twitter: [@Comm_Links](https://twitter.com/Comm_Links)

Facebook: [commlinks](https://www.facebook.com/commlinks)

Website: www.community-links.org.uk

Thank you for your generous investment

Allia would like to thank you for your generous investment into our charitable bond for East London. It has been a pleasure working with Bromley by Bow Centre and Community Links to deliver a bond that assisted some of the most deprived areas of London to make lasting change to communities.

About Allia

Allia, formerly known as Citylife, is a charity that supports organisations dedicated to making a positive social impact. We have been using bonds to create social impact since 1999 and also provide workspace, business support and other finance solutions to help ventures to start up, grow and create social benefit.

Our launch of Retail Charity Bonds

We recently launched Retail Charity Bonds to help charities to grow by providing them with access to a new source of affordable, unsecured loan finance. Retail Charity Bonds provides investors with fixed income social investment opportunities, offering market-related returns and supporting charities in making positive social impact.

Our Social Incubator celebrates its first year

Our Social Incubator East programme has just celebrated its first birthday and the graduation of the first group of entrepreneurs who have been supported over the last year to get their venture up and running.



Our next Future Business Centre opens shortly

Our Future Business Centre provides affordable workspace and business support to ventures who want to make a positive impact on the planet and on people's lives. Our centre in Cambridge is now fully occupied and we are just opening a brand new centre in Peterborough.

Future Business Centre, Peterborough

To find out more about Allia:

W: www.allia.org.uk

T: 0845 456 2431

E: hello@allia.org.uk



www.allia.org.uk

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