



FEBRUARY 2021

FUTURE TALENT

EVALUATION SUMMARY

About Future Talent

London Youth received funding from J.P. Morgan Chase to deliver a 20-month employability project for young people. The programme focused on young Londoners aged 14-18 years old from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and economically disadvantaged communities, with participants having the opportunity to develop life and social skills, access inspirational employer experiences and extend their social capital. Youth workers have also received training to deliver relevant careers advice and guidance so they can continue to support young people at the end of the programme. The aim was to engage 10 youth organisations and 320 young people over the life of the programme.

The Future Talent model was designed to be flexible, and able to be delivered alongside or to complement existing services, rather than a standalone project. The expectation was that all youth organisations would deliver the following elements:

- * 'Personal Development' activities - structured activities to develop life and employability skills like leadership, communication and teamwork.
- * 'Inspire' activities - introducing young people to the workplace and enabling them to meet others from their communities who are achieving success in London's growth sectors (e.g. Financial Services, Creative/Cultural, Digital).
- * 'Experience' - access to multiple and meaningful work experiences to increase the likelihood of informed career-related decisions and future quality employment.
- * One-to-one coaching and mentoring provided by youth workers

Future Talent was delivered by the following 10 members:

- * **Building Young Brixton**, a consortium of Lambeth-based organisations working together to inspire and empower young people
- * **Goals 4 Girls**, who provide football development support helping to build self-esteem, confidence, personal and social development
- * **OMG education**, who deliver a traineeship programme for socially excluded young people at college or NEET, with a focus on music and film
- * **Ambition, Aspire, Achieve**, who support children and young people who live in disadvantaged estates in Canning Town and Stratford
- * **The Somerville** Youth and Play provision, a grassroots community hub based in New Cross
- * **XLP**, who deliver mobile support, youth clubs and music provision across 9 London Boroughs
- * **Coin Street** Neighbourhood Centre supporting families, young people, adults and older people living in Waterloo and North Southwark
- * **Leaders in Community**, a youth led charity run by young people in Tower Hamlets
- * **Lifelong Family Links**, which provides services to children/young people with additional needs, in Southwark and Lambeth
- * **Vallance Community Sports Association**, established 20 years ago as a sports organisation, working in Whitechapel and Tower Hamlets. In 2006 they became a charity and started delivering more projects.

Who took part?

10 youth organisations were recruited to deliver the programme over two separate cohorts; the first in June 2019 and the second in November 2019. Interest in the programme was high and the application process and flexible nature of the delivery model resulted in a mix of organisations, some were experienced at delivering employability support, but for others this was an entirely new service.

Youth organisations chose to get involved in Future Talent for two main reasons; to either provide more structure and resources to existing employability support activities, or to diversify their existing activities into employability support. For some organisations, delivering this type of support to a younger age group was something new to them.

One of the strengths of the Future Talent programme is the ability of organisations to build delivery around their existing services; rather than creating a standalone project. This flexibility means that organisations can work to their individual strengths and build in employability support around existing provision. Although a strength of the programme, for some organisations it has been a challenge to consider how to embed Future Talent activities within their existing services.

As at February 2021, 394 young people were enrolled in the Future Talent programme. This represents 123% of the total target of 320 young people enrolled. The majority of the youth organisations were able to recruit most of their young people before Covid-19, which has resulted in the challenge being how to keep them engaged, rather than how to sign them up.

The main appeal of the project for young people was to gain more knowledge and information, as well as direct contact with employers. Young people also took part because they wanted to build their employability skills and their confidence.

Of the young people who took part:

- * 53% of participants were female and 45% male
- * 8% had disabilities or life-limiting health conditions
- * 89% were from BAME communities
- * 29% were not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- * 88% were aged 14-18 years

Future Talent has reached the young people it intended to engage.

Engagement and retention across all aspects of the programme has been a challenge for Future Talent. Only half (51%) of the young people enrolled in the programme have completed all elements, however, almost all (85%) have completed at least one of the three and almost two-thirds (68%) have achieved two out of the three KPIs.

Impact of Covid-19

Members faced three main challenges to engaging young people at the start of the initial lockdown in March 2020; learning how to use and be confident with technology such as Zoom, lack of access to online sessions and lack of motivation. As such, engagement was variable across the programme and engagement levels have also been lower, with fewer people attending Zoom sessions than face to face.

In the second half of 2020, the changing restrictions meant that youth organisations were able to deliver some face to face support over the summer. Once it became clear that the restrictions would continue members found that young people wanted to focus more on the future and the initial shock and fear associated with the first lockdown eased. For many young people, the opportunities that Future Talent provided them during 2020 helped them to cope and keep them motivated.

What was delivered?

Across the four elements of the programme:

- * 324 young people took part in 6,297 hours of personal development activity
- * 307 young people took part in 1,218 Inspire sessions
- * 198 young people took part in 338 work placements
- * 324 young people received 1,700 hours of mentoring support

71% of young people who completed an end-point survey felt that they received the support they needed.

Impact of Covid-19

During the first lockdown (March-July 2020) all delivery shifted from face to face to virtual; either over the phone or via Zoom. Examples included; weekly Zoom discussions and workshops, weekly welfare check-ins by phone, work experience at home days, use of other online platforms for delivering sessions, setting young people challenges and activities to do during the week, and young people being involved in distributing food parcels.

The type of sessions was varied, however most organisations had a strong focus on wellbeing. Support initially focused on 1-1 mentoring and group based personal development sessions, and in the second half of 2020 members started to deliver more Inspire and Work Experience sessions remotely.

Personal development

Youth organisations delivered a range of personal development and mentoring opportunities for young people, both in person and virtually, including:

- * Sports sessions to develop team working and leadership skills

- * Life skills sessions (e.g. healthy eating, cooking, shopping etc)
- * Visits and trips to build confidence and broaden horizons
- * Employability skills, CV writing and applying for jobs, personal conduct and communication in the workplace
- * Money management
- * Pitching and delivering presentations
- * Planning and delivering projects
- * Wellbeing sessions
- * ESOL sessions for young migrants/refugees

Personal development and mentoring have been easier to deliver since Covid-19 as the youth workers can design and deliver content themselves, rather than having to rely on external speakers or employers.

Skills Builder

The Skills Builder tracking tool was used to help members and young people understand how the personal development activities were helping to improve skills. Skills Builder breaks down 8 key skills into manageable steps and provides a mechanism to track distance travelled through a scoring system.

Although the concept of Skills Builder is sound, youth organisations have experienced a number of challenges with the system. Youth workers reported that it is difficult to use in a youth work setting, that it is designed for groups rather than individuals and that it is not very user friendly and can be off putting to the young people involved.

In 2020 London Youth worked with Skills Builder to make changes to the system to address these challenges and ensure it was more appropriate for the Future Talent

programme. These changes made it more user-friendly and easier to understand for the young people. However for some members the tool has continued to be difficult to use in an engaging and positive way for the young people.

Despite these challenges, 69% of young people found Skills Builder to be useful.

Case study: Virtual personal development

“We moved everything online so we created a platform for them to have inspirational content, courses they can do, helping them to sign up to external courses. I’d talk them through what courses they wanted to do on Zoom. They can leave comments behind on what they’ve done and what they’ve engaged with. It’s getting them in the zone of being at work. We also had sessions with Barclays on fixed and growth mindsets which were really cool. And they are commenting [on the platform] saying it’s helping them to have a growth mindset. And we’d talk about it afterwards on Zoom. Getting them to think about what they aren’t good at and moving from a fixed to a growth mindset. Getting them to be the best versions of themselves. A lot of self development.

We created the platform for Future Talent with specific Future Talent focused courses and content. It’s about getting them to do independent learning – if they can do things for themselves they are halfway there – they are used to being spoon fed at school but when they leave they will need to find things for themselves. It’s a learning environment but it’s not like school. You can see their comments and how they have engaged in the content. We have 1-1s and I can see what they’ve learnt and I can then see where they are in the Skills Builder steps. It helps me to reflect on where they are.” (youth worker)

Inspire sessions

Inspire sessions have been the most popular element of Future Talent. Young people have directly engaged with employers and learnt about career options within a range of different industries. The Inspire sessions have been motivating for young people, particularly those that involved people who had similar backgrounds to them growing up. Inspire days were also effective at building young people’s skills and confidence, helping to put them in situations that they may encounter in the work place.

Example Inspire sessions have included:

- * Inspirational speakers visiting young people to talk about their careers
- * Visits to employers to find out more about the organisation and opportunities available
- * Visits to Parliament and talks with MPs
- * Attending conferences and careers fayres
- * ‘Take-over’ days

Although Inspire sessions were much more difficult to deliver during the early months of the initial lockdown, members have found ways to deliver remote sessions since summer 2020.

“We went to an investment bank that does trading and they didn’t know the difference. So they had a range of people who worked there – HR, receptionist, the CEO showing them the different levels. There was someone who transferred from China and the kids were like ‘I didn’t know you could do that’ – it showed them that you can work abroad and then come home for a few years, you can get jobs with companies who will send you places. And it’s been helpful for them to see people like them in companies like that. To see a black lady from Birmingham and she was only 23 and she told them about where she’s from and it sounded just like their estate and she now works here and moved from Birmingham to do that. To see themselves in people who are working, as they don’t know. The jobs they see in the people around them are normally just basic jobs. They just don’t know other options are out there.” (youth worker)

Work Experience

The work experience element of Future Talent has been the most challenging to deliver. Prior to Covid-19, members were finding it difficult to engage employers (particularly if they did not have a pre-existing relationship) and were also facing challenges with scheduling the work experience around school and exams etc.

Work placements have been useful at helping young people to consider the wide range of opportunities within different industries, as well as being given responsibility. It has also helped young people to put into practice the skills they learnt through the personal development sessions.

For those members that have been able to arrange placements with employers, most have found this to be easier with smaller, local businesses, or through personal contacts.

For organisations that do not have much experience of arranging work placements with employers, building up relationships has taken time, and has been affected by Covid-19. Youth workers were keen for London Youth to expand on their brokerage role, by creating and brokering more relationships with employers, particularly larger employers.

Since March 2020, arranging work experience placements has been even more challenging. Instead, many youth organisations have created 'in house' work experience placements, which worked well. Young people joined the organisation for a day or more and were given a set of tasks to complete at home; the tasks are often a combination of opportunities to practice skills (e.g. composing emails or talking to members of staff over the phone) or helping to plan and deliver other sessions for young people.

Member organisations have found that in-house placements can be designed to meet the needs of young people as well as ensure they receive appropriate support and supervision; something that is more challenging to ensure in a placement with a third party organisation.

Case study: In house work experience

"They did one day online work experience, as we weren't sure how much we could find for them to do and how long they would stick at being online. But they started the day at 9am and were emailed a list of tasks to do. A phone call to a youth worker, preferably someone they didn't know. They had to send an email to the team explaining why they were doing work experience – a professional email. And then they did Zoom meetings to discuss how to run and support sessions. So they would help with the games or the discussions. They worked as a team and figured out how to run the session with other young people – how to keep them engaged. They also had to create a social media post on things that were happening at [the club]. It was a combination of personal development and actually contributing to the organisation – a real experience. If they were running a session they had to contact the youth worker to discuss whether they could support the session. And figure out what to do if there were problems – figuring out things for themselves and discuss and agree it as a team.

Some of them were really up for it – it was optional but they were keen. The groups worked really well together – some wouldn't have known each other that well, so to have to go from not really knowing each other to getting to know them and working as a team without any arguments. They seemed to all enjoy it and they said it was really good and helpful" (youth worker)

Employer engagement

Engaging a range of employers to support delivery of Future Talent was a key element of the programme. This worked in three ways;

- * London Youth manage relationships with a central bank of employers and work with them to run centrally managed events for any Future Talent participant to take part in
- * London Youth broker relationships between their bank of employers and individual youth organisations, based on the needs of their young people
- * Youth organisations work with employers directly to support delivery

One of the main challenges of the employer engagement strand was to encourage employers to develop more intensive work experience opportunities for the age group in question. Although many employers are keen to take part in Inspire activities and light touch work experience days, as this helps them achieve their CSR objectives, resourcing and supporting longer term work experience placements has been more challenging.

Prior to March 2020, good progress was being made with employer engagement. 38 employers were engaged in the programme by February 2020, which represented 76% of the target. In addition, 10 further training providers were also engaged, and 5 youth organisation brokerages achieved. There was also a good range of different industries engaged, with the most popular industries being creative industries and technology.

However, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on London Youth's employer engagement work, with very few new relationships created. Although some employers did approach London Youth, other contacts were lost, which has resulted in no net increase in the number of employer relationships.

Despite some challenges, members have been able to engage 36 separate employers for Inspire or Work Experience sessions, in addition to those brokered by London Youth. Although it has been challenging to engage employers,

Case study: Employer engagement

"I was working for AXA insurance as a trading manager and received a Linked In message by the youth worker at [member organisation]. I asked my manager and at the time AXA were doing a lots of inclusivity workshops with other charities as part of their CSR programme and were really open to people doing this with a range of charities.

The first session was a face to face session on employability skills in the workplace, which focused on the financial industry. I went to the centre and delivered the session in February 2020 with a group of young people with disabilities. The focus of the session was explaining that, regardless of your disability, there are plenty of opportunities for people in the insurance industry, and that you don't need a degree; I don't have a degree myself. We did some work on creating a CV and I provided some information about entry level positions.

I then left AXA and went to another insurance company, but stayed in touch with [youth worker] and post Covid we did a Zoom session that looked at how to apply for jobs, reading job descriptions and deciding what jobs might be suitable depending on your age or experience. We also talked about how to use Linked In and how to create a Linked In profile, and how to find work experience this way.

I am now doing contract work for another company and in December 2020 I delivered a third session talking about the insurance industry, why it's a good industry to get into and all the opportunities there are in the City of London. So many are inclusive employers and offer a range of opportunities.

It was something completely new to the young people – they had done some retail work experience but had not necessarily considered office-based roles. I was able to explain the benefits, particularly for people like me who don't necessarily have a lot of confidence with face to face customer service roles." (employer)

Youth worker training and support

A total of 607 staff at member organisations delivering Future Talent have received training. A total of 56 different courses were delivered, ranging from mental health, safeguarding, evaluation, youth work skills, marketing, bid writing and equality and diversity. The most popular were virtual working and safeguarding.

In addition to these, 18 youth workers received training in Skills Builder, 12 received training in Information, Advice and Guidance (with a specific employability focus) and 5 received training in how to use the Upshot database.

All youth workers we spoke to agreed that the support provided by London Youth has been excellent, with staff being responsive, flexible and accommodating, particularly with the challenges posted by Covid-19.

“London Youth are great – every week they send us new information and something for the young people to get stuck into. I can’t really fault them – they’ve been really good to work with” (youth worker)

“The London Youth team have been incredibly supportive as have the Upshot team, I would like to thank [them] for their patience and care at a particularly challenging time, being in contact with compassionate people who can think outside the box has helped things to feel less daunting.” (youth worker)

Case study: Young person

“I started in September 2019 and at the time I was really keen on volunteering and was on the hunt for a job. I popped into the centre one day as my brother goes into after school club and someone introduced me to [youth worker] who told me about Future Talent and it just sounded amazing. He explained what it was about and it just sounded exactly what I wanted – I wanted something to boost my confidence. I really enjoyed when we had a session at Barclays – the life skills sessions were so enlightening. There were things I hadn’t been spoken to about before or didn’t know about.

At the time I was looking for anything – I was a bit interested in youth work – I’m interested in football. I did have an interest in the charity sector but didn’t realise how much of an interest I had until I did the programme. So now I’m looking at the charity sector. Before I wasn’t really keen at looking at the education sector but now I feel working with young people would be really interesting. Anything to do with the civil service – there’s quite a range of things I’m interested in now. It’s sparked so many different interests and I didn’t realise I could actually pursue a career in them.

I think I’m still quite optimistic. I do know that people like me have lost their jobs, but I know that other things are out there. There is still support out there – charities like this are still working. At the beginning I was disheartened and all the uncertainty made me anxious. But I do feel that the whole thing has been a bit of a wakeup call. I feel like the world needed to slow down a little bit – at the start it was alright as it gave me time to slow down and think and I wasn’t sure what I wanted. It’s given me time to think about things.

My confidence has grown massively- I didn’t like talking to people I didn’t know before, especially talking in front of a large group. Now I will still be a little nervous and I have to give myself a little pep talk – but before I wouldn’t have been able to do it with so much confidence. Now it’s so much easier to talk to people I don’t know, talk to a group, even just talking to people at a family event. I feel like I’ve matured a bit. In the past I might have had a hissy fit [if I was asked to do something I didn’t want to do] but now I will just do it. I think I’m better at communicating now – written and verbally. I’ve learnt basic skills as well – putting a piece of writing together. I might have a task to do and I realise what I’ve learnt.” (young person)

What difference has the project made?

Hard outcomes

Overall the following outcomes have been achieved for Future Talent participants, which represents a significant proportion of the cohort:

- * 199 young people participated in work experience
- * 29 young people found full or part time employment
- * 182 young people progressed into future skills development/ accredited learning

Improving confidence and self-esteem

One of the biggest needs faced by young people in Future Talent is lack of self-confidence. Youth organisations have identified a number of elements of Future Talent that help build confidence and self-esteem. These include group work, trips, project work and other activities that take the young people out of their comfort zones.

"They have given me lots of opportunities that I can participate in and it's helped me meet new people and build up my confidence, work out of my comfort zone and experience new things" (young person)

The one to one mentoring support, ensuring that the programme is tailored to meet young people's needs is also helping to build self-esteem.

As a result, the proportion of young people who feel they have a number of good qualities has improved from 83% who agreed before taking part, to 96% agreeing at the end.

For those young people who completed both baseline and end point surveys:

- * 32% reported a positive change in their

response to 'I feel I have a number of good qualities'

- * 31% reported a positive change in their response to 'I have a positive attitude towards myself'
- * 21% reported a positive change in their response to 'I have a lot to be proud of'

"Some of them have grown in confidence as to who they are and who they will talk to – mixing with young people from other boroughs, they have made friends with people that on paper they wouldn't make friends with. To see that has been a big benefit. Especially being in lockdown and living in London, kids don't leave their own areas, if you live in south you don't have friends in north London unless you go to uni. But some of these kids have friends in north London. They have grown in confidence and know what they want to do now or what they don't want to do. One young person went from saying she doesn't like people but she's made one friend on FT – I know if I invite one of them the other will come too." (youth worker)

Improving skills

For all skills measured by Skills Builder, the proportion of young people with low scores has reduced, and high scores have increased, particularly for skills related to 'aiming high', 'creativity', 'listening' and 'speaking' skills.

Overall, 77% of young people who took part in Future Talent improved their scores against at least two skills.

"I got to meet new people and learned different transferable skills which I can benefit from and I've also completed my cv which I will be using when applying for a job as well as gaining different certificates that will help me stand out." (young person)

Skill	Number/% improving score	Average change in score
Aiming High	119 (81%)	1.4
Creativity	90 (71%)	1.2
Leadership	107 (68%)	1.4
Listening	90 (71%)	1.4
Problem Solving	76 (60%)	0.8
Speaking	90 (71%)	1.5
Staying Positive	131 (80%)	1.8
Teamwork	152 (77%)	1.8

Youth workers also feel that Future Talent has helped improve young people's resilience.

“The program has been amazing for me so far, I have met plenty of people who have been kind to me since we started, I never knew how much we had in common and how many mutual friends there have been throughout this programme. It has helped shape me mentally in a different way to what I was before, I've seen myself not giving up as easily and focusing more on the better than the worse. I understand that when I apply for jobs, it's okay to expect rejections, maybe even a lot. The main thing is that I keep applying and finding ways to make myself more employable” (young person)

Improving knowledge and aspirations

Survey data shows that the majority of young people start the project with ideas around career options (74%), and this has increased slightly to 79% by the end of the project. 22% of young people who completed both a baseline and end-point survey changed from not having any ideas (or not knowing) to having ideas about what type of job they would like to do.

Feedback from young people and youth workers demonstrates how Future Talent has helped provide young people with information and guidance about the range of different

career opportunities available to them.

Providing a range of opportunities through the Inspire and Work Experience strands has helped to better inform young people about the options available to them.

Survey data shows that the majority (over 90%) of young people taking part in Future Talent feel that finding a job that pays well and finding work that interests them are both important. There is also no real change to these views as a result of taking part in the programme, which shows that Future Talent is generally engaging young people who have positive attitudes to work.

“Some are ambitious, but none have the right people to support them and get behind them. They want to work and do great things - and they often get that from seeing their family life being a struggle and they want more” (youth worker)

Survey data shows that aspirations have improved, with the percentage of young people who feel that they will be able to gain training or a university place, find a job in their chosen field and be successful and get ahead increasing as a result of taking part in Future Talent. And the percentage of young people who had low aspirations at the start has also decreased.

Of the young people who completed both a baseline and end-point survey:

- * 52% report that they feel more likely to gain training or a university place
- * 45% report that they feel more likely to find job in chosen field
- * 33% report that they feel more likely to be successful and get ahead

There is also some evidence that the project is helping to divert some young people away from gang culture and crime. In particular, the Inspire sessions are helping young people speak to people who have similar upbringings to themselves and show them what is possible.

“For our girls its been a fantastic opportunity –

for young women that confidence element of going out, gaining skills, having those networking opportunities, building their CVs. They had feedback from people in suits and it was very daunting but the feedback was constructive. They had mock interviews with people who are very professional -it was such an opportunity for growth and what they got out was a real sense of direction and motivation and confidence. And they have all come away with a clear idea of what they want to do, or they have their steps mapped out in terms of experience, learning and developing skills. To build the stepping stones towards their career.” (youth worker)

“The programme was great I learnt a lot about myself and made new friends along the way. I also feel that I now have a clearer idea about what my future will look like as future talent has brought forward different opportunities for me to get involved in.” (young person)

Outcomes for members

The main benefit for youth organisations has been the funding to help them build in focused and structured employability support for young people. Youth workers themselves are building skills and confidence in delivering this type of support and the organisations are learning the best ways to deliver employability support to this age group in engaging ways.

“Our confidence has grown over the period of delivering the Future Talent programme. We now have a strong team in place who have the required experience to deliver this activity effectively. We have also improved our resources over time (e.g., improving IT facilities young people can access, project delivery resources and materials) and have a strong base of employer partners who are keen to provide support and can complement our work in this area. We therefore believe we are well placed to deliver employment-based activities for young people moving forward.” (youth worker)

As well as helping employers to achieve their CSR objectives, being involved has helped to improve understanding of more obscure industries and boost brand awareness, and help engage new audiences/customers, as well as benefit the individuals involved in delivering the support.

Employers also appreciated being able to share their experiences with the young people.

There is also some evidence that supporting youth organisations can help break down perceptions and change attitudes towards younger people.

“I’m young and open minded, and didn’t have any preconceptions of the young people, but for older people in my organisation, going into youth clubs would be really beneficial for them. Some older people I work with just think that if young people want a job then they should just apply. They don’t understand the barriers to employment for young people nowadays. It’s been good to explain this to my colleagues – it’s why projects like this are important.” (employer)

Case study: Young person

“It was recommended and I was interested as I wanted to improve my CV and improve my skills as a person. I’m 17 and I’m in 6th form at the moment. I want to be a personal trainer – I want to improve people’s lives and see them grow. I guess I decided this when I was on Future Talent. I am creating my CV so that’s helped me and it’s got me focusing on the future as I have a CV now. It’s not fully completed but I have one. I was surprised about how much I could put on it. I could put on how I’m a hard worker, what I’m aiming to achieve with my grades. I had help on how it should be structured, what it should look like and what I should write.

I wanted to try and improve my skills and gain new skills. Mostly I’d like to improve my social skills, social interaction skills. And focusing as well – sometimes I drift a bit. I wrote down what characteristic I’d like to gain or improve on – one was self-confidence, focusing and interacting more, going more out of my confidence zone. I was nervous at the start. I definitely feel that how well I articulate myself has improved a lot, and how confident I feel has improved. It’s been really useful. More doors have opened because of [youth worker]. I don’t really get that help anywhere else – I don’t get help work-wise in 6th form.

I definitely feel like I have a bright future ahead. I’m feeling hopeful.” (young person)

Conclusions

The Future Talent programme was a pilot, an opportunity to test new ways of working around delivering employability support to younger age groups from disadvantaged groups. The global pandemic that started half-way through the programme's delivery has had a significant impact on London Youth, member organisations, employers and young people and as a result has affected how the programme has been delivered and what has been achieved. Despite these significant challenges, the programme has achieved its overall goal; to learn from the pilot and determine what works best to support young people on their journeys into the world of work.

Key learning from the programme has been:

- * The importance of a flexible delivery model which enabled a range of organisations to work to their strengths, embed the support within existing structures and respond to changing needs in light of Covid-19
- * There have been high levels of participation, but lower levels of engagement across all areas of the programme; although more young people were signed up than the original target and took part in a range of different activities, engagement across the four elements of the programme has been variable, with Covid-19 severely affecting engagement levels
- * The programme has been successful at reaching the target groups through targeting members that work in specific boroughs and working with members who are experienced at reaching and supporting vulnerable young people
- * Despite the significant challenges of Covid-19, the programme has been able to continue delivering with members able to build on their existing relationships with young people to ensure both immediate (crisis and welfare) needs were met, as well as providing a focus on wellbeing and future plans. The use of Zoom and other

online platforms has been successful for many members, however some young people have lacked hardware, WiFi or the confidence to engage in this way

- * Employer engagement has been the most challenging element to deliver during the pandemic, however in-house work experience days have worked well for some members. London Youth's contact with larger, multinational organisations and the brokering support they have provided between members and employers has been invaluable.
- * Overall there have been high levels of satisfaction and evidence that Future Talent is making a difference with the majority of young people improving their skills and Inspire sessions helping young people to learn more about different career options and be exposed to new opportunities, helping to change attitudes, motivation and confidence levels. The work experience strand of the programme has helped young people to put the skills they have developed into practice, as well as helping them to identify potential career options and build their CVs.

Future Talent has left a legacy of learning within members and London Youth into how to deliver employability support for young people. The benefits of working with grassroots organisations means that Future Talent has been embedded within existing support structures so young people will continue to be supported. All member organisations involved in the pilot are keen to continue and are looking at ways of mainstreaming employability support of this nature within their organisations.

It is important to recognise that the barriers that young people will face as a consequence of Covid-19 will only increase in the next few years; projects like Future Talent will become even more important as young people continue to face uncertain futures.

Recommendations

We recommend that London Youth consider the following when designing future similar programmes:

- * Retain the four elements of the programme
- * Build in more flexibility around the programme KPIs; work with individual members to identify what KPIs are most appropriate for their delivery models
- * Provide more support for employer engagement, particularly larger employers. Build on the successful brokerage support by creating a bank of work experience placements that youth workers can tap into as required
- * Consider making tools like Skills Builder and Upshot optional, rather than mandatory elements of the programme, and use them as ways of building capacity of youth organisations, rather than just administrative or reporting requirements
- * Consider the monitoring and reporting requirements at the start and do not make significant changes to these during individual member involvement
- * Provide more support on virtual delivery; including opportunities for organisations who are more experienced to share learning with those that are less experienced
- * Linked to the above, consider the need for provision of more hardware that organisations can distribute to young people, to ensure that everyone has the ability to engage in remote support