

EVALUATING: Do It For Real

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Impact and learning report

This impact and learning report builds on key evaluation questions around the impact, performance and learning of **Do It For Real**, a programme funded by **Comic Relief** and **Spirit of 2012**.

The purpose of this evaluation was:

- 1) To understand what difference our work and the work of social entrepreneurs makes.
- 2) To explore what we learned from the programme.



Introduction

What we set out to do

Building on the positive spirit inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, UnLtd designed Do It For Real to encourage young people to enact their ideas for social change. We wanted to support young social entrepreneurs to develop and grow social ventures, creating positive outcomes for themselves and their local communities. Funded by Comic Relief and Spirit of 2012, we designed the programme to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence of 331¹ young people. To achieve this, we worked over three years with 25 expert partners to find, fund and support young social entrepreneurs both directly and through a network of young volunteers. The volunteers were previous UnLtd award winners who helped us to broaden our reach by finding applicants beyond our existing networks and directly supporting them through the application process.

Purpose of this evaluation

We undertook this evaluation to help us understand how the programme performed against its objectives and anticipated outcomes. As part of our commitment to being an organisation that uses learning to improve our work, this evaluation is also an opportunity to reflect on what went well and what didn't go as expected.

To do this we used a mixed methods approach, which included surveys and in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs, volunteers and partner organisations. (See Appendix 1 to learn more about our approach to evaluation).

Objectives	Outcomes
1. To empower more social entrepreneurs to start well and thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young social entrepreneurs and volunteers develop skills and confidence to act for social change.• Social entrepreneurship helps young people to address their own personal and social challenges.• People are inspired and empowered to get (more) involved in their communities.• Social impact in the community as a result of ventures.
2. For social entrepreneurship to be widely recognised as a career and progression option, alongside further and higher education and apprenticeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social entrepreneurship is recognised by social entrepreneurs as a career and progression option.
3. To improve the wellbeing of young people and challenge perceptions of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People's personal wellbeing increases through participation.• Positive change in the perception of disabled people in communities (by both disabled and non-disabled people).
4. To explore any unintended consequences and identify key learning highlights from the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of a 'Learning Loop', ensuring the evaluation informs delivery and vice versa as the programme develops.

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Programme highlights

We are pleased to be able to share the following highlights which emerged from our evaluation, and where to go for more information:

• **UnLtd and Do It For Real partners reached a more diverse group of social entrepreneurs and volunteers than UnLtd does when working alone (pg. 4-5).** Building on learning from previous programmes, we worked alongside locally-rooted partners and a diverse group of volunteers to widen the pipeline of social entrepreneurs beyond UnLtd's existing networks, and reach those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and disabled people. As a result, we reached proportionately more young people from a BAME background (33%) or disabled (8%) than other UnLtd programmes do on average (26% and 6% respectively).

• **UnLtd and partners made 341 awards (total of £483,117) to young people and provided them with support to start well and thrive.** As a result, 83% of social entrepreneurs developed their skills such as problem-solving, self-management, leadership and communication (pg. 7). This, as well as the recognition and validation they received from being part of the programme, contributed to boosting their confidence (a key support need for young people identified by this evaluation).

• **Increased skills and confidence allowed social entrepreneurs to test out their ideas and grow their social ventures (pg. 8).** Support from UnLtd and partners allowed early-stage social entrepreneurs to develop the skills and confidence to test out ideas and overcome shared challenges, such as accessing funding. Several social entrepreneurs were also able to grow their venture during the programme by accessing next-stage awards, developing strategies to scale, and make their venture sustainable.



• Although the level and type of impact varied considerably, **social entrepreneurs were able to create social impact in their communities and bring young people together, creating a youth-for-youth culture (pg. 10).** Do It For Real social entrepreneurs were able to reach 9000 individuals in their communities through their ventures. They were particularly interested in empowering other young people, providing services like housing and work experience to help people meet their basic needs (see case studies on pg. 11-12).

• By paying attention to what didn't go as expected and listening to the reflections of social entrepreneurs (pg. 13), **we were able to generate useful lessons and recommendations (pg. 14-16).** These lessons will enable us to better support young social entrepreneurs in future programmes by addressing their specific support needs, building on their potential, working more effectively with partners, and better evidencing wider social impact.

The Do It For Real Model

We worked with partners and volunteers to make our support more accessible to entrepreneurs who we wouldn't have reached working on our own. As a result, Do It For Real supported a more diverse range of young people (see Table 1), providing 341 awards² and 6 to 12 months non-financial support which included one to one support, training and networking.

1. Do It For Real support model

Our Do It For Real partners were a range of like-minded organisations, including education institutions and youth organisations, that shared our ambition and played an active role in finding and supporting young social entrepreneurs. As well as using their local networks to find applicants, they made cash awards (adopting UnLtd's award system) and provided support designed to meet the needs of young people.

We also engaged with volunteers from UnLtd's network of alumni, who were deeply embedded in the communities we wanted to reach, but who we had limited access to, particularly in relation to socio-economic disadvantage and disability. Interestingly, we ended up working with an ethnically diverse group of volunteers (67% BAME), which highlighted the intersectionality between ethnicity and deprivation.³ Working with our alumni to extend our existing network was a new approach for UnLtd and brought a greater number of marginalised and disabled young people into our pipeline than our usual approach (see next page). Volunteers mainly found applicants within their existing networks and were able to establish trust-based relationships with them according to the interviews we conducted.⁴

2. UnLtd's support to partners and volunteers

We supported partners to develop the skills, capacity and infrastructure needed to make awards to young people. Partners working with disabled young people had the opportunity to access and pitch for additional funds and resources to support any additional needs.

We provided training and support to our volunteers in the form of a residential induction, a dedicated point of contact at UnLtd, resources to support social entrepreneurs, and expenses covering up to £1,500. We also made available an online platform –the SEE Platform– to facilitate networking between volunteers, partners and UnLtd staff.

3. Increased diversity of reach and support

We aimed to reach social entrepreneurs either from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with disabilities by working with partners and volunteers in the manner outlined above. As Table 1 in the next page shows, we were ultimately able to bring together a more diverse group of social entrepreneurs, partially due to the linkages between deprivation and other sociodemographic categories such as ethnicity, age and education.

3. Increased diversity of reach and support (cont.)

A full analysis of reach and diversity must take into account variations between UnLtd and its partners as well as the young nature of the cohort.⁵ However, our data suggests that as a result of working with partners and volunteers in this way, we were able to support more people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups (33%), people with disabilities (8%), and people without a degree (64%) than in our average award-making (see Table 1).⁶

Interestingly, this also brought together a more ethnically diverse group of social entrepreneurs, due to the links between ethnicity and deprivation sketched above. By supporting more young social entrepreneurs either from BAME groups and/or with disabilities, we were able to reach those young people who are more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) according to national data.⁷ Moreover, our data shows not only that more people from BAME groups applied to UnLtd for a Do It For Real award (34%) than our average (31%),⁸ but that BAME applicants were more successful than people from white communities in their applications (42% compared to UnLtd's average: 29%).

These results should also be linked back to the support social entrepreneurs received from volunteers during the application process, highlighting the benefits of this type of pre-application support in making our awards more inclusive.

On the other hand, the data shows a lack of diversity when looking at our highest level of awards,⁹ where eight went to social entrepreneurs from white communities and seven to those that have a degree. As part of an issue that we have acknowledged across UnLtd's programmes, we are reviewing our outreach, application processes and overall support to make them more inclusive, especially regarding late stages of the award journey.

Finally, data in Table 1 highlights that a high proportion of Do It For Real social entrepreneurs didn't have a degree or above compared to UnLtd's own benchmarks. Although we believe this is in part indicative of the programme's reach and diversity, a significant number of entrepreneurs were below the average age of graduation in the UK (20-21¹⁰), signalling the possibility that some social entrepreneurs could have been in the process of studying for a degree.

Table 1 Demographics of Do It For Real social entrepreneurs and volunteers

Programme	DIFR 2015 - 2017			Other Programmes 2016 - 2017	UnLtd
Cohort	Award Winners			Volunteers	Award Winners
Awarded	Partners	UnLtd	Total: Partners & UnLtd	DIFR Volunteers	UnLtd Comparison Sample
	273 Awarded ¹¹	68 Awarded ¹²	341 Awarded	49 Volunteers	464 Awarded
% Female	51%	45%	50%	38%	56%
% BAME ¹³	30%	43%	33%	67%	26%
% disabled	10 %	1.64%	8%	9%	6%
% Not having a degree or above ¹⁴	68%	45%	64%	32%	33%
% Unemployed	3%	5%	5%	9%	5%

6

Interesting things about Do It For Real

Young people¹⁵

were the main social group who benefited from the services of Do It For Real social entrepreneurs. Young social entrepreneurs helped and inspired other young people in areas like mental and physical health, community building, capacity building and skills development, access to education and employment, according to survey and interview responses. This created a youth for youth culture in communities.

341

awards were made by UnLtd and partners to support young people to start up and grow their ventures. 10 of these social entrepreneurs were able to grow their ventures (and potentially their impact) during the programme by receiving the next level of awards,¹⁶ showing that Do It For Real worked as a learning journey and an opportunity to progress their ventures.

59%

of social entrepreneurs reported an improvement to their networks. However, interview responses showed that they often benefited from making better use of their existing networks. *"I found the young people in my networks, through social media, through my school. I would introduce myself and show them my work"*. (Daniel, social entrepreneur supported by Blastbeat)

83%

of social entrepreneurs developed their skills as a result of the award. *"I feel more confident because I've been able to achieve what I wanted to achieve which is good. I feel prepared for work and what I do now, I enjoy working with people, I enjoy the fact that I can be my own boss and work whenever I want or when the demand is there. I feel a lot happier because obviously having a disability sometimes makes it quite difficult and applying for work it can be quite difficult as well so being able to utilise the skills from all my education has been very useful and transferrable"*. (Simon, social entrepreneur supported by Youth Action)

90%

of social entrepreneurs felt more confident to act for social benefit. As they told us, they were particularly interested in supporting other young people: *"There's nothing more powerful than empowering young people"*. (Sandy, social entrepreneur supported by Social Ark)

9,000

people were reached by Do It For Real social entrepreneurs during the programme. In spite of most ventures being early stage, young social entrepreneurs were able to create social change in their communities, often by creating opportunities and inspiring other young people.

Impact: Helping young social entrepreneurs to start well and thrive



We set out to empower more young social entrepreneurs to start well and thrive. Data shows that Do It For Real achieved this mainly by supporting social entrepreneurs to increase their skills and boost their confidence. Increased confidence and skills led them to test out new ideas and grow their ventures as a tool for social action. Moreover, 90% of young Do It For Real social entrepreneurs reported feeling more able to create social change because of the support they had received.

1. Increased skills and confidence

According to survey responses, 89% of Do It For Real social entrepreneurs developed their skills, including problem-solving, self-management, leadership and communication skills. All social entrepreneurs interviewed as part of the evaluation highlighted that new skills and knowledge also contributed to building their confidence.

Our qualitative data suggests that young people often need more specialised support when compared to the adult social entrepreneurs we support, especially in areas such as confidence and relationship building. Do It For Real social entrepreneurs told us that receiving an award contributed to increasing their confidence as they felt that their ideas and projects were being validated and recognised by UnLtd and partners. According to interviewees, this created a positive cycle where confidence led to their first success as an entrepreneur, which in turn further fuelled their confidence.

"I was definitely excited to attend all the workshops, every workshop was a step closer in my journey, and coming out of every workshop I felt a lot more confident, I felt like I was developing skills that I never had and I was more knowledgeable about this career that I was about to embark on and exactly what social entrepreneurship entails. It made me confident". (Moses, social entrepreneur supported by Social Arc).

As a result of the impact the programme had on their personal growth, some Do It For Real social entrepreneurs told us that they started considering social entrepreneurship as a career option after the award: *"Since I started, it has completely changed my life. By helping me to become a social entrepreneur it has completely changed my career path, where I see myself in the future, what I value. It has fundamentally changed me as a person".* (Ben, social entrepreneurs supported by UnLtd).

Acknowledging the power of programmes like Do It For Real to help young people shape their future, one social entrepreneur suggested increasing the presence of UnLtd and other support organisations at universities to *"help those students that don't really know what to do after they finish".* (Duncan, social entrepreneur supported by UnLtd).



"The Do It For Real programme was a unique opportunity to go full time on my venture and...Do it for Real!"

Duncan, social entrepreneur
supported by UnLtd

2. Increased capacity to test out and develop early stage ventures

Together UnLtd and partners supported early-stage social entrepreneurs through 227 Try It and 106 Do It Awards¹⁷ (see Table 2 in appendix) to test out their ideas and develop social ventures. Do It For Real volunteers highlighted the quality and sophistication of some of these ideas:

"The thing that I'm proud of is seeing young people interested and they have so many amazing ideas that can help society. Proud to hear the ideas. I wish I could recommend all of them". (Belise, volunteer).

According to qualitative data, funding was a particularly important element of support in making social entrepreneurs' ideas a reality, as it enabled them to take the first steps. These included conducting research, buying the materials and resources for their first workshop, reaching out to potential customers or creating content for the first time.

"As with all early stage projects, funding was crucial so it basically gave us the time and resources we needed to actually conduct a lot of this research and other important things". (Jack, social entrepreneur supported by Uncaged ventures).

Later-stage ventures also faced a number of challenges on their journey to sustainability, including accessing further funding, evidencing their impact, or maintaining their teams. In spite of this, 79% of social ventures supported as part of Do It For Real were still running twelve months after their support ended.

3. Growing and sustaining social ventures

The bespoke support provided by UnLtd and partners enabled social entrepreneurs to take their venture to the next stage in different ways. As application data shows, 10 entrepreneurs managed to catalyse growth by applying for the next level of award, whilst others managed to access other sources of funding. In addition, seven of those we interviewed (24) told us that the award gave them the opportunity to develop new strategies to scale their venture and make it sustainable.

For instance, one social entrepreneur we interviewed revealed that it was whilst he was sat in a Do It For Real workshop that he had the idea to expand his food-related venture into new sectors. At least three of those we interviewed were looking for future funding to continue delivering their services.

As a result of focusing on the strategic development of their ventures, three social entrepreneurs we interviewed reflected on the possibility that social entrepreneurship was likely to play a significant role in their career options.

Kerry and Shannon Ward – Just Hands On Prints



Kerry and Shannon Ward are sisters who set up a social venture called 'Just Hands On Prints'.

Shannon was in an abusive relationship as a teenager and now suffers from anxiety and depression. Shannon's anxiety became so bad that she struggled to leave the house: *"My biggest challenge was getting out the door in the morning. I didn't want to face anybody. It was tough to even be human. I just wanted to stay in bed"*. Shannon's mum encouraged her to join a local support centre for women. Just for Women helps break the cycles of poverty, lack of education, mental health, domestic abuse and long-term unemployment.

Kerry has Autism and was told she wouldn't be able to pass her exams or achieve the same things as other girls her age. She has repeatedly proven people wrong, initially by passing all her GCSEs and then going on to gain a distinction at college and has just secured a place at the University of Northumbria. Like her sister, Kerry has also found support for her anxiety from Just for Women.

At the centre, Shannon and Kerry attended craft sessions and also enrolled on an eight-week social enterprise course delivered by Social Enterprise Acumen CIC. They both discovered a talent and passion for designing and creating prints on fabrics.

Inspired by the course they decided to join forces with six other young people and to sell their wares at a local market. A Do It Award of £4,000 enabled them to purchase a stall, printing machinery and various craft materials. Shannon recalls that the group have played an important role in her recovery; *"When I first started at the centre I was very anxious about talking with people and could never have talked to strangers on a market stall. The group have become my friends and we really support each other. When I'm with them it's OK to not be OK sometimes. I started doing the stalls for them but now I do them for myself. I've really come out of my shell and come back to myself. I feel like I'm moving forward personally and in employment"*.

The group meets regularly to design and make lino prints which are turned into bags, t-shirts, cushions and bunting. They take orders for personalised items and have regular stalls at local markets and events. As well as selling their products to sustain their venture, they also focus a lot of time and energy on raising awareness. Their promotional material and labels explain that their products are handmade by women with mental health difficulties and they are happy to share their story with customers who come to the stall.

They encourage people to get involved with the project, which is particularly aimed at young women who are becoming adults and struggle with mental health problems. Being part of the venture has allowed them to learn valuable transferrable skills, gain customer service experience, learn how to function in a team, meet deadlines and cope with multi-task environments. The young women have also gained in confidence and ambition. Kerry says: *"With Autism I sometimes struggle to understand body language and tone of language. Doing this has really helped my confidence with communication. I'm better at expressing myself and getting people to understand me..... I am beating the expectations of people, showing them I am a person and not just a label"*.

Kerry and Shannon were supported by Social Enterprise Acumen, one of 25 Partners on the Do It For Real programme: www.socialenterpriseacumen.co.uk

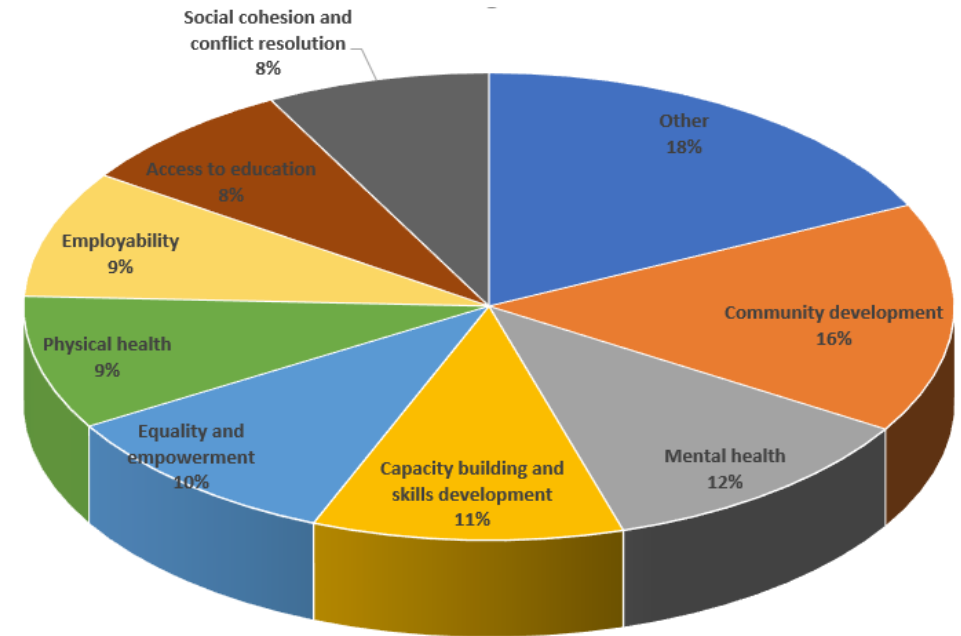
Impact: Inspiring and bringing young people together

In the course of evaluating Do It For Real, we have been keen to understand how young social entrepreneurs create social change. We found that most of them have done this by working with young people; 24% of Do It For Real ventures worked directly with other young people under 19 (see fig. 2. in appendix). This has created what we have called a youth-for-youth culture within their communities, a concept which also came out in numerous examples given to us in interviews with young social entrepreneurs.

Social entrepreneurs sought to help young people in their communities in a variety of ways, including building their confidence, challenging their perceptions of failure, or engaging them with their human rights. Often this work was with those from deprived areas or with complex needs. They did this by providing support on issues like mental and physical health, community building, capacity building and skills development, access to education and employment, and helping people to find a way to meet their basic needs (see case studies in pg. 11-12 and fig. 1).

Social entrepreneurs' existing networks proved to be key in reaching out and inspiring other young people: *"I found the young people in my networks, through social media, through my school. I would introduce myself and show them my work"*. (Daniel, social entrepreneur supported by Blastbeat).

Figure 1: Issues Do It For Real social entrepreneurs are tackling¹⁸



Our interview data also shows that this wasn't a one-way interaction, with some social entrepreneurs reporting, in interviews, having been influenced by the lives and experiences of young people in their communities as well: *"Being around these young people and seeing actually how willing they are at getting help, it's changed me as a professional as it's good to see so many young people who are up for a project like this"*. (Kyle, social entrepreneur supported by Manchester Young People's Theatre Ltd T/A Contact). By inspiring young people and bringing them together, Do It For Real helped to create a youth-for-youth culture in the communities where it ran.

In addition to benefiting young people, Do It For Real social entrepreneurs told us that they were able to create a wider impact at community level. This included reaching 9000 people and bridging intergenerational gaps through bringing people from different ages together to discuss social issues relevant to their communities.¹⁹

D'Angelo Ferlance-Oduye –DeeRiginal



D'Angelo started making music when he was just 14, after being inspired at school during a music class which focused on writing song lyrics: *"It was like moving from passenger into the driving seat. Writing lyrics and making music was a feeling of release, of expression. Like fresh air"*. D'Angelo studied Performing Arts at college and performing under his stage name, DeeRiginal, he went to open mic nights, music seminars and entered talent competitions.

He was invited to enter a competition run by Do It for Real partner Blastbeat Education UK. Blastbeat is a registered UK charity which has developed a multi-award-winning social enterprise programme that leverages young people's interest in music and sports to engage them in learning life skills and more. Participants are exposed to alternative career paths and opportunities as they learn by doing via an event management and creative social enterprise creation programme.

DeeRiginal went on to win this competition and was inspired to start his own social venture which supports young people who are at risk of going down a path of self-destruction.

D'Angelo does this by offering mentoring support and inspirational talks to young people at festivals, events and at his local college.

D'Angelo explains: *"I'm passionate about young people & making them aware of how self-destructive their actions can be. Young people are impressionable and can accept labels and negative expectations of them without being aware that they have a choice, so they often choose the wrong path, normalising mental and emotional abusive behaviour as well as physical. Finding themselves caught up in a draining lifestyle which becomes routine; they end up doing something bad because it feels good. Doing something for the thrill of it without considering the consequences. I work with these young people who start off with an 'I don't care. I don't see the point' attitude and I encourage them to think for themselves. Young people need support to discover a new train of thought and a new path"*.

D'Angelo grew up in Pimlico and explains that much of his upbringing has set him on his current path: *"I've lived my whole life on a council estate between multimillion- pound houses. It's supposedly one of the best places to live in the country and some people have so much money but some people have none. This can affect people's state of mind. It's given me a unique perception of the world seeing the clash of the rich and the poor. I understand conflict and contrast and I build this into my music"*. D'Angelo writes lyrics that are insightful and moving and resonate with the struggles young people are facing. He uses his music and his performing arts experience to connect with people.

When mentoring or giving talks D'Angelo tells his personal story which inspires and resonates with the young people and sparks conversations about themselves and their own path in life: *"My whole life has been trial and error. I've made mistakes and I've learned from them. What's important is to tell your story in your own way, being yourself is how you stand out (...). I've had personal struggles with self-doubt and social anxiety. Overcoming these has been a constant process but winning Blastbeat and getting the Do It for Real Award and being given the opportunity to pursue something I am so passionate about is really helping. I've developed coping mechanisms of vocalising or writing down what's troubling me and turning it into music"*. This is now something he teaches to others. D'Angelo wants to make his mark on the world through constructive, positive change and his positive music and social venture is helping him achieve this.

D'Angelo Ferlance-Oduye has been supported by Blastbeat, one of 25 Partners on the Do It For Real programme: www.blastbeat.org

Meghan Meg Doherty – Fat Macy’s



Meg always knew she wanted to do something that made a positive contribution to society. She participated in volunteering projects at university but often felt disconnected from the impact.

After graduating she joined the Year Here programme, a 10-month fellowship connecting participants with placement opportunities that help them build an understanding of how social problems hit the people they hit hardest and then support to design solutions that actually work for the people who need them.

One of Meg’s placements was at a homeless shelter. Without a background knowledge of homelessness she went in with her eyes wide open and eager to learn: *“not knowing anything meant I had to ask the stupid questions and I got the honest answers”*.

Meg found that many of the residents wanted to move into their own place but that there were many barriers in their way. The average stay at the hostel was 2 years and this was paid for by housing benefit so long as the residents worked less than 16 hours a week.

If residents worked more than this then their benefits would be reduced and they would have to pay for their accommodation, making it impossible to save money for a deposit to rent a place of their own.

“People get stuck. Most people only leave the hostel after being evicted, losing their benefits, going to prison or moving in with a girlfriend or boyfriend”.

Meg saw real positivity and enjoyment for many of the residents when they were working in the hostel’s kitchens. With the spark of an idea Meg spent nine months developing a social venture proposal called Fat Macy’s. After a successful pilot in a cafe in Brick Lane, Meg pitched her idea and was awarded a Do It Award of £5,000 through the Do it for Real Programme.

Fat Macy’s is an internship and professional work experience scheme for young homeless residents of the North London YMCA. Participants are trained in hospitality and catering and receive a Level 2 Food Hygiene qualification. Fat Macy’s run 10 supper clubs a month and are also subcontracted to provide catering for events.

Rather than directly receiving a salary, the young people get £10 per hour of work at the events paid into a fund for a deposit on a permanent flat. Once they have completed 150 hours they are able to apply to the housing deposit fund which will then be paid directly to their new landlord.

There is a range of additional support built into the programme including help to find a flat, gain their driving licence, support to open a bank account or apply for ID, help with their CV, job applications and interview skills, plus general mentoring support. They work closely with the keyworkers within the hostel and have also partnered with Settle, another Year Hear-supported venture that help people to move out of housing association properties into privately rented homes.

Reflecting on her UnLtd award, Meg recalls: *“Getting initial buy-in, getting people to take a leap of faith was one of my biggest challenges. All you need is one person to take a chance. Having someone believe in what you’re doing has been so important. People who have understanding and experience who believe you can succeed”*.

For Meg it’s important that the residents help to shape the venture, and is giving the young homeless people ownership, ensuring they actively take part in the decision making. Meg’s aim is to create a model which can be replicated in hostels or with homeless people across the country.

Social entrepreneurs reflect on wellbeing

We noticed that wellbeing was important to a wide range of Do It For Real social entrepreneurs and our partners, so we set out to try and better understand the relationship between running a venture and a young entrepreneur's wellbeing. Knowing that we might need to adapt our support in the future, we conducted a short survey on social entrepreneur's wellbeing,²⁰ and at the end of the programme we asked social entrepreneurs:

- How does being a social entrepreneur impact your wellbeing?
- What are the main factors that affect your wellbeing?
- How could we support you in the future to better handle your wellbeing?

Interestingly the results showed that Do It For Real social entrepreneurs felt less satisfied, less happy, and more anxious than they did before they received the award.²¹ These results are aligned with evidence from the wider social entrepreneurship sector and self-employment in general.²² Qualitative data from interviews with social entrepreneurs gave us the opportunity to better understand the complex relationship between social entrepreneurship and wellbeing.

When asked about the impact that working on their ventures had on their personal life, particularly looking at happiness, satisfaction and anxiety levels, most of the social entrepreneurs interviewed agreed that it had been stressful due to two main factors: lack of time (most of them were working part/full-time in addition to their projects) and financial insecurity. However, they all agreed that there were two sides of the story; as working on their social enterprises, though often stressful, had also increased their determination and motivation.

"It is a double-edged sword. On the one hand I benefited: I managed to clarify what I believe is possible and expanded my skills and experience. On the other hand, the life of a social entrepreneur is very tough psychologically, it's very demanding, often there's not enough support, nor acknowledgment of how difficult it is, unless you speak to other social entrepreneurs, which is not always possible. You often spend 16-18 hours working, without being able to bring food to the table, it can be isolating not having a team around. I have had several low points, because it's so tough, especially financially (...). However, all this made me more resilient". (Ben, social entrepreneur supported by UnLtd).

As this suggests, working on their ventures during Do It For Real helped young social entrepreneurs to develop the skills and resilience to better manage their wellbeing.



"The award has given me the opportunity to do a project I'm really passionate about and by giving me that opportunity it's actually meant that my own mental health has improved. It's helped with my wellbeing as it's allowed me to do something I really enjoy"

Kyle, social entrepreneur supported by Manchester Young People's Theatre Ltd T/A Contact

Looking across all the interviews, they used different strategies to achieve this, including greater resilience, mindfulness, finding balance and support from people they know.

"When I first started at the centre I was very anxious about talking with people and could never have talked to strangers on a market stall. The group have become my friends and we really support each other". (Social entrepreneur supported by Social Enterprise Acumen).

Several interviewees highlighted that we could improve our support to social entrepreneurs by helping them to manage their wellbeing. As well as specific training on the skills mentioned, support on time management and regular wellbeing check-ins from their award manager were flagged as possible ways to do this. One social entrepreneur also highlighted the need for support organisations such as UnLtd to be clear and honest with social entrepreneurs including what to expect regarding the challenges of the journey ahead in order to better manage expectations.

What didn't go as expected

Almost every programme will encounter unexpected challenges or surprising results. In this section, we explore some of the challenges UnLtd experienced delivering Do It For Real and what we changed as a result.

#1 Effectively supporting social entrepreneurs took partners more capacity and time than expected

Evidence: We underestimated the amount of time and resources that would take Do It For Real partners to support social entrepreneurs. Each partner had to design and implement a process for making awards to social entrepreneurs, without any specific funding from UnLtd to do so. Implementing these processes impacted on partners' delivery capacity, especially those without previous experience in award-making.

Our response: We recognise that partners have additional support needs (financial and operational) and that needs can vary between partners. We are exploring different approaches to selecting and working with partners that take a partner organisation's experience, track record and capacity into account. We also learnt that a shared understanding about roles and expectations between UnLtd and partners from the outset is paramount.

#2 Reaching and engaging with young people successfully required more creativity and resources than we anticipated

Evidence: Our programmes usually reach social entrepreneurs from different ages and backgrounds. When working with young people, we noticed that our standard approaches weren't having the same effect. Some partners had more experience in engaging with young people than others, but that wasn't reflected in our approach.

Our response: From the beginning we wanted young people to shape the programme. Based on the specific support needs they voiced, we made several changes during the delivery of the programme (also see #3). Changes included restructuring the type of awards available.²³ We also learnt that young people have different communication preferences and we need to adapt to this, for example not relying on email to communicate. We need to pay more attention to how we manage relationships with young people and involve them in the design and governance of youth programmes.

#3 Social entrepreneurs and volunteers needed more support in specific areas

Evidence: Overall, social entrepreneurs and volunteers valued the support they received from UnLtd and partners. Volunteers appreciated the flexibility of their role, however they also felt that clearer goals and more guidance would have helped them to support more social entrepreneurs through the application process. Similarly, social entrepreneurs said they would have benefited from more support on building new networks and connecting with peers.

Our response: We decided to change the type of events we had planned and delivered more residencies during the programme to provide social entrepreneurs more opportunities to support each other and learn as a cohort. According to our overall data, social entrepreneurs particularly value peer support so allocating time and resource to offer this improves the quality of our offer.

#4 Planned tools and methods were not always effective to collect data and evidence impact

Evidence: Responses from programme participants for requests for data was unexpectedly low, as shown by the overall low survey response rates (21% for the End of Award survey).²⁴

Our response: We explored informal ways to collect data, such as using events for individual and focus group discussions, which helped us to collect additional data. In order to make our analysis more robust, we used in-depth interviews to explore data trends, particularly around social entrepreneurs' wellbeing.

What we learnt from working with young people

We've learnt lots from working with young people during the Do It For Real programme. In this section we draw out some of our highlights and also propose some recommendations for UnLtd, funders, and other actors in the sector to consider when they are working with young social entrepreneurs.

#1 Trusted partners play an important role in reaching and supporting young people: Partner organisations are well-placed to reach a more diverse group of young social entrepreneurs, can build closer relationships with them, and provide geographically specific support.

Recommendations

- Work with trusted, community-rooted partners when a programme has specific aims around reaching a particular group.
- Different partnership models can help to achieve different goals. Identifying the expertise of partners and matching it to the right model enables us to provide bespoke support to social entrepreneurs.
- Making the most of partnerships requires clear expectations, tested processes, dedicated resources, and a strategy for relationship management to be in place from the outset.

#2 Building on the energy and potential of young people: Working with young people can have a significant impact on their personal development and future careers, and has a positive impact on other young people and their communities more broadly.

Recommendations

- Take an asset-based approach when working with young people. Use existing networks, find ways to reach out to and identify potential young entrepreneurs and build on lived experience.
- Ensure young people are embedded in the design, delivery and/or governance of the programme.



#3 Addressing specific support needs of young social entrepreneurs: Young entrepreneurs have specific support needs in areas such as confidence and relationship building. It takes time to build trust and requires specific knowledge, resources, and attitudes from support organisations.

Recommendations

- Don't underestimate the resource this takes. Allocate resources to train and develop staff to create a safe environment for young people. Explore bespoke ways to engage with and support young entrepreneurs.
- Work with locally trusted partners who have strong relationships with young people (also see #1).
- Allocate time and specific activities to build trust between and with young people.

#4 Social entrepreneurs' wellbeing: Social entrepreneurs' activity can often increase their levels of stress and anxiety, but can also contribute to their happiness and resilience. Supporting social entrepreneurs to better handle their wellbeing requires expertise, additional resources and specialist activities.

Recommendation

- Include specific support to help social entrepreneurs better handle wellbeing. This can include regular check-ins, mentoring and coaching, funding to cover living expenses, and managing expectations for the journey ahead.

#5 Future plans and long-term impact: Participating in programmes like Do It For Real and developing ventures can positively affect a social entrepreneur's attitude to their future and career path.

Recommendation

- Work with educational institutions (for example schools, colleges, universities) to increase the awareness about social entrepreneurship as a career opportunity for young people.

#6 Evidencing wider impact: Evidencing impact beyond award winners takes time and resources as it requires different data sources and methods.

Recommendations

- Use a variety of methods to evidence wider impact (e.g. collecting data from alternative sources, including the beneficiaries of social entrepreneurs).
- Create networks and share learning with others in the sector to understand what works and increase collective impact.
- Ensure time and resources are built in to support social entrepreneurs and partners to evidence impact.

Where we are now

We are excited to share how we are integrating some of our learning from Do It For Real with other best practice to improve both our support to social entrepreneurs, and our approach to evaluation. These include:

✦ Pioneering diversity and inclusion in supporting social entrepreneurs:

Findings from Do It For Real feed into a wider change UnLtd is undertaking to make our support more inclusive, based on years of experience delivering programmes. We are committed to be pioneers at embedding diversity and inclusion within our organisational culture, processes, support offer and relationships, both internal and external. As highlighted by Denise Ramsey, our Director of Awards: *"UnLtd are committed to embedding a design for inclusion. We aim to engage people in critical thinking to understand and challenge the root causes of inequalities and grow powerful new leadership for transformative change. UnLtd have committed to Inclusion training for the organisation which will enable each individual to understand power, privilege, equality, equity and justice. We have a dedicated Inclusion team which will sit across all departments of UnLtd. Most importantly we are reviewing our products, services, behaviours and values in line with inclusion".*

✦ Addressing specific support needs:

Do It For Real has allowed us to better understand specific support needs and ways of communicating young social entrepreneurs have. From Do It For Real and other work UnLtd is currently delivering, we specifically learnt about how young people with disabilities wish to communicate with us. As a result, we are working with Scope and other partner organisations with expertise in this area to shape our future work.

✦ Evidencing wider impact:

We have created a new role within our Research and Impact team to work directly with social entrepreneurs to evidence impact. We are also developing more innovative methods to collect impact data from different sources (including people from the communities that benefited from social entrepreneurs' services).

Appendix 1: Our approach

As we often assess complex or uncertain issues, our evaluation is based on the following complementary approaches:

- 1) **Theory-based evaluation:** our Theory of Change helps us to demonstrate our impact and the impact of social entrepreneurs.
- 2) **Developmental evaluation:** Developmental evaluation helps us to capture real-time feedback/insights during programmes, thus facilitating a continuous development loop.

These approaches help us to focus our evaluation on impact and learning through key evaluation questions around impact, performance and learning (see Table 2 for the specific evaluation questions).

Table 2: Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question (KEQ)	Area of focus	Evaluation Question
1	IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What impact did the programme have on partner organisations, social entrepreneurs and communities? What impact did the programme have on social entrepreneurs, volunteers, partner organisations, and communities? How was this impact achieved?
2	PERFORMANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective was the programme implemented? What didn't go as expected?
3	LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did we learn that could inform the design of future programmes and the support to partner organisations and social entrepreneurs?

We used a mixed methods approach to answer the KEQs and collected a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. We collected data using: qualitative monitoring forms, surveys and interviews with social entrepreneurs, volunteers, and partners, as shown in the following table.

This provided us with valuable insight from social entrepreneurs, volunteers and partner organisations on a wide range of issues (programme's impact on social entrepreneurs personal growth, evidence of the programme's outcomes in communities, examples of the social impact generated by social entrepreneurs, quality of support, challenges faced by social entrepreneurs and partners, etc.), which were analysed using the key evaluation questions as a guide.

Table 3: Main tools and sources for data collection

Data source/tool	Number of data records (n)	Stakeholder	Timeframe
Application data	341 successful awards	Social entrepreneurs (SEs)	Beginning of programme
Baseline survey	166	SEs and volunteers	Beginning of programme
Partner Monitoring Forms	25x6 quarters	Partners	Ongoing during programme
In depth interviews with social entrepreneurs	24	SEs	End of support for SEs, ongoing during programme
In depth interviews with volunteers	10	Volunteers	During programme
In depth interviews with partners	5	Partners	End of programme
End of Award survey for Try It Award Winners	45	SEs	End of support for SEs, ongoing during programme
End of Award survey for Do It/Build It Award Winners	25	SEs	End of support for social entrepreneurs, ongoing during programme
End of Award survey for volunteers	10	Volunteers	End of support for volunteers, ongoing during programme
Partner survey	9	Partners	End of programme
Feedback forms on events	85	SEs and volunteers	During programme

Appendix 2: Tables and figures

Table 4: Breakdown of Do it For Real Awards made by partners and UnLtd to social entrepreneurs

Partners	Try It	Do It	Build It	Total no. of Awards	Total value of Awards (£)
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	1			1	499.52
Beatfreeks	11	4		15	10500
Blastbeat Education UK	7	13		20	44170
Boston College	5	5		10	16474
Cardiff and Vale College	11	1		12	10500
Citizen Coaching CIC	10			10	5000
Hamara Healthy Living Centre	6	8		14	15000
Learn By Design	7	1		8	4970
Manchester Young People's Theatre Ltd T/A Contact	14	3		17	15000
My Life Social Enterprise CIC	12	5		17	13500
North East Social Enterprise Partnership	8	4		12	11000
Omagh Enterprise Company	15	13	1	29	49985
Participate Projects	4	1		5	3442
Sandwell College	3			3	1500
Sheffield Hallam Students Union	12	4		16	19750

Partners	Try It	Do It	Build It	Total of Awards	Total value of Awards
Social Ark CIC	2	8		10	13400
Social Enterprise Acumen CIC	1	6		7	17980
Social Enterprise Works CIC		2		2	5953
Solutions for the Planet	9	1		10	6360
The Aspire Group	3	4		7	17500
Uncaged Ventures Ltd		7		7	10000
Unloc Learning Ltd	7	1		8	5000
Wellbeing Enterprises CIC	13	5		18	17826.08
Year Here	2	5		7	17500
Youth Action	3	5		8	15000
UnLtd	61		7	68	135307.8
Total				341	483117.4

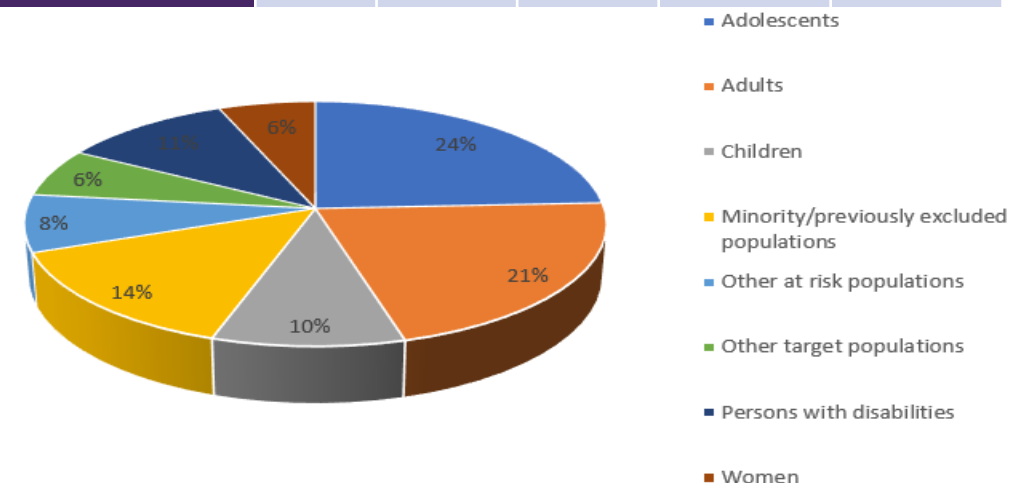


Figure 2: Beneficiary groups supported by Do It For Real social entrepreneurs²⁵

Endnotes

¹ 10 Do It For Real social entrepreneurs received two awards.

² UnLtd and partners supported social entrepreneurs with the following awards: Try It Awards consist of £500 (per project), while Do It Awards are up to £5000. Grow It Awards aim to support a small number of young entrepreneurs with the potential to scale their social action idea with up to £15000. For more detail on award making by UnLtd and partners see Table 2 on appendix.

³ The proportion of ethnic minority people living in deprived neighbourhoods is approximately twice as high as the percentage living elsewhere in a city according to the following study:

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/poverty-ethnicity-place-full.pdf>

⁴ Data from interview responses with volunteers and reflective sessions with UnLtd staff.

⁵ With average age 24.

⁶ For more information on the demographics of social entrepreneurs in the UK, see:

<http://sewfonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-State-of-Social-Enterprise.pdf>

⁷ <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06705#fullreport>. As with volunteers, the diversity of social entrepreneurs we supported may be dependent on factors such as age or geography (for ethnical diversity by region, see: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/ethnicity-in-the-uk/ethnic-groups-by-region>).

⁸ We don't have this data from partners, as UnLtd only collects data on successful awards from them.

⁹ Do It For Real made 8 Build it Awards of £15000.

¹⁰ A graduate is defined as a person who is aged over 20 according to the following governmental report: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/graduatesintheuklabourmarket/2017>

¹¹ Application data from Awards made by Do It for Real between 01/04/2015 and 31/06/2017.

¹² Application data from Awards made by Do It for Real between 01/04/2015 and 31/06/2017.

¹³ Proportion of people who are from black, Asian, mixed or other minority ethnic backgrounds.

¹⁴ We include all university-teaching which forms part or all of a degree: foundation degrees, postgraduate certificates/diplomas, bachelor and master's degrees as well as postdoctoral qualifications

¹⁵ Adolescents, defined as under 19 year old.

¹⁶ Eight of the ten social entrepreneurs who received the next level of awards progressed from a Try It award (£500) to a Do It (£5000). One social entrepreneur received a Build It award (£15000) after completing a Do It (£5000), while another one received a Build It award (£15000) after being awarded with an early stage Try It award (£500). Progression in the early-stage level of awards (from Try It to Do It awards) often happens across UnLtd programmes.

¹⁷ Try It Awards consist of £500 (per project), while Do It Awards are up to £5000. Build It Awards aim to support a small number of young entrepreneurs with the potential to scale their social action idea with up to £15000.

¹⁸ Application data (n=341). Social entrepreneurs could choose more than one option.

¹⁹ Data from End of Award Survey and interviews with social entrepreneurs.

²⁰ In the survey, sent to social entrepreneurs at the beginning and end of the programme, we asked the following questions: Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? We asked social entrepreneurs to rate these on a scale of 0-10.

²¹ According to data, social entrepreneurs' responses didn't vary significantly regarding the following question: Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

²² Andersson, P. (2008): "Happiness and health: Well-being among the self-employed", The Journal of Socio-Economics, Volume 37, Issue 1, pg. 213-236.

²³ The original award-making target included 10 Grow It awards, 90 Do Its and 200 Try Its. During the first stages of programme delivery we realised that this offer didn't meet the needs of the young people, so UnLtd and funders agreed to be flexible with the number of different types of awards delivered (8 Grow Its, 106 Do Its and 227 Try Its).

²⁴ See our approach to evaluation for more detail on evaluation tools and methods.

²⁵ Application data (n=341). Social entrepreneurs could choose more than one option.