

CoRe₂₀₁₇

The CoRe (Community Resourcing) programme is an established skills based volunteering project that launched in 2009. It brings together local community organisations with volunteers from Macquarie Group and Slaughter and May, supported by the BIG Alliance (Businesses for Islington Giving). Over six months, the organisations and volunteers collaborate on projects that contribute to the charities' key strategic priorities. The aim is to help them become more sustainable and make progress that would not otherwise have been possible.

"BIG Alliance facilitates a wide range of employee volunteering opportunities that look to harness the skills available in our member companies to benefit the borough of Islington. The CoRe programme is arguably the highest impact programme we run. At BIG, we believe volunteering is a mutually beneficial experience and the CoRe programme typifies this. Providing volunteers with the opportunity to use their expertise in different environments and develop new skills while making a meaningful impact on their local community is a powerful experiential learning opportunity, with great potential for an individual's personal development. "

Max Rowe, Director
BIG Alliance

Volunteers say the CoRe programme provides the opportunity to:

- develop and stretch existing skills by working in a different setting
- be challenged to think creatively to find low cost solutions
- be energised by experiencing the passion and commitment of the charitable sector
- develop a better understanding of the communities that are our neighbours
- see a business process through from the beginning to end
- develop leadership skills within projects
- understand a different way of working that gives perspective on your own
- work on a project with colleagues you don't normally interact with, broadening the understanding of the business

Community organisations say the CoRe programme provides the opportunity to:

- make rapid progress on a piece of work that is important
- gain the insight that comes from people looking at your organisation with a different viewpoint
- be challenged - the questioning enables reflection, which there is rarely time for
- work collaboratively with the team of volunteers, which builds personal and organisational confidence
- benefit from highly skilled, analytical and organised volunteers

CoRe in numbers in 2017



Charities
8



volunteers
55



Total Leverage
£61,300



Volunteer Hours
1,220+

Volunteers who would recommend the programme to colleagues: 94%

Charities who would recommend the programme to others: 100%

CoRe Framework in action

Deep Dive workshop

Kick starting the CoRe programme, the Deep Dive workshop seeks to scope out the proposed projects. Using volunteers' analytical and strategic planning skills, the purpose of the half day session was to:

- help community organisations test the validity of their project ideas to ensure the level of support provided by CoRe was appropriate;
- examine what is achievable for the community organisation and volunteers in terms of capacity and skills;
- clearly define the objectives of the project for each organisation and volunteer team;

The community organisations' end of programme feedback showed that the Deep Dive was invaluable in ensuring that the projects had the best possible start, saving volunteer and charity staff time. Volunteer feedback also showed how they benefited from participating in the session:

"I improved my leadership and project management/strategic planning skills."

"It was a chance to practice project management skills and to do something that feels rewarding."

"I benefited from working in a team with a very diverse knowledge base in order to develop a sustainable solution."

CoRe Programme (six months)

Once the project plans are collated from the Deep Dive, the CoRe project teams are assembled. Volunteers meet their charities and begin the six month project.



"It is all coming together now - it could mean everything to us - future funding is crucial."

Speak Street

"It gave a different perspective - we live and work in a bubble and to see how super enthusiastic they are about what they do - it makes you think about things a little."

CoRe volunteer with Leadership Through Sport and Business



"This was a huge learning curve for us - the meetings and conversations were hugely valuable. We talk about diversification of income - but have had to really look at what this means"

Betknowmore UK

"Working with colleagues who are outside your usual group is interesting, seeing how other members of the group approach problems."

CoRe volunteer with Freightliners City Farm



Impact

The projects delivered all produced high level outputs:

- Business analysis and business plan
- Business operations analysis
- Business options study
- Marketing plan and support
- Financial analysis
- Fundraising strategies and materials
- Recruitment pack
- Website development

Projects: What were the outputs?

Betknowmore UK

Researched and produced a database of

- healthcare providers with contacts
- trade unions with contacts
- Content for marketing brochure
- Local sponsorship strategy with contacts
- Sponsorship pack

Bright Sparks

Financial analysis and recommendations

- Report for Trustees
- Operational review
- Health and Safety
- Recruitment
- Marketing plan
- Social media plan

Freightliners City Farm

- New website developed
- Marketing package for corporates
- Researched corporate contacts
- Development of “pitch” materials

Islington Boat Club

- Successful application for a grant to develop new website
- Developed design and content with web site provider
- Refreshed charity’s mission statement

Leadership Through Sport and Business

- Review of fundraising strategy
- Development of content for introductory materials
- Researched corporate contacts

Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation

- First business plan
- Scoped Quality Marks
- Fundraising strategy and three funding applications
- Supported and hosted first partners event

Prospex

- Feasibility study for alternative education provision:
- Financials
- Statutory framework
- Analysis of demand and competitors
- Researched partners
- Produced “how to” guide

Speak Street

- Developed materials for marketing
- Pitch documentation developed
- Design of materials
- Financial analysis for costing services
- Fundraising through crowd sourcing



Volunteer learning and development

Volunteers reported that the project had an impact on their own personal development. 94% said they used **negotiation, problem solving** and **strategic thinking** skills throughout the project.

47% of volunteers said that they saw some improvement in their ability to **adapt to change**, with the same number also seeing some improvement in their **relationship building skills**.

Volunteer feedback also highlighted the impact of the programme on their personal development:

“I am very linear about how we think of our skills and having this recognition that there is a broad application is very helpful.”

“I deal with corporates all day - it was great to step back and understand a different way of working.”

“It helped me realise that I can do a lot more than my day to day work with my skill sets.”

Case study: Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation (MEWSO)

Focused support leads to confidence and clear outputs

MEWSO was started in 2010 to address the longer term difficulties faced by victims of prejudice, domestic violence and other trauma. MEWSO brings women together who have experienced similar situations. Its core activities are health-related workshops, advice and guidance, counselling in different languages, befriending and networking events.

The project

MEWSO were looking for business support to underpin the successful growth of its activities. It is a small charity with one part-time organiser and sessional counsellors and relies on its volunteers to offer its range of services and activities. It has little capacity to tackle the strategic and organisational planning needed to help it grow.

The project team

The Chief Executive was joined by two volunteers from Macquarie and one from Slaughter and May. The second Macquarie volunteer joined at the half way point.

Achievements

- First business plan developed and agreed by trustees
- Funding application templates created and three applications completed
- Research completed into Quality Standard Marks
- CEO mentored
- Organised and hosted a stakeholders seminar

Impact

The project provided a clear business focus, which was needed. The CEO says that she feels much more confident in leading the organisation forward, particularly valuing the personal support the volunteers provided. In the long term, through developing the first comprehensive business plan that this charity has had, volunteers have helped to provide an ongoing framework for the CEO, a sole employee.

The project provided a challenge to the volunteers. They scoped how to best support a micro-charity in a way in which it can sustain and worked outside their areas of expertise, delivering a suite of positive and lasting outcomes.

“They pushed me a lot and helped me to see through all the ideas to have a business perspective.”

“They helped me define what the organisation wants over the next three years.”

Volunteer profile

Laura McCarthy Cronin, Associate Director Macquarie Group



1. What was your personal highlight of the programme?

Working with the founder of the organisation to design a business plan and strategy to expand the reach of her organisation into more London boroughs in addition to the four she currently operates in.

2. How did you use your skills differently?

It was very rewarding to adapt the various skills we use at Macquarie for the benefit of a charitable organisation, for example analysing the charity's strengths and then reporting these succinctly in funding applications.

Case study: Bright Sparks

Technical financial skills provide efficient business models

Bright Sparks, a re-use and recycle organisation, collect unwanted and abandoned furniture and electrical goods. It renovates and sells items through its shops or to new social housing tenants in need. It operates from a large warehouse in north Islington and has extended into two additional London boroughs.

Bright Sparks is sustained through earned income. There are three income streams: sales in its shop, spot purchase by Local Authorities and recycling of computer equipment for the European Recycling Scheme.

The project

Volunteers worked on a financial, operational and marketing review to support sustainable growth in its trading. The organisation was looking to implement processes to manage cash flow and other issues arising from its expanding business.

The project team

The Managing Director was joined by two Macquarie and two Slaughter and May volunteers.

Achievements

- Financial and business analysis and review
 - Critical analysis document and presentation for the board, which included identified risks and recommendations
- Operations
 - Health and safety review
 - Analysis of end to end business processes documentation to share with staff
 - Recruitment package
- Marketing and social media plan
- Business mentoring for Managing Director

Impact

Clear solutions to the challenges identified at the start of the project have been presented. Some have already been implemented including the withdrawal from a contract that put the business at risk. Bright Sparks ran their first community event in some time, as it felt that it now has the capacity to re-engage with that programme following the work the volunteers had done. The organisation plans to follow through on the planning and recommendations put forward by volunteers. It feels that it now has a pathway that is shared by its board.

“I feel freer - these issues are not weighing us down - they have presented solutions to our issues, we are clearer about what we need to do.”

“It has been eye opening - transformational for us.”

Volunteer profile

Louis Yeboah, Procurement Officer, Slaughter and May



1. What was your personal highlight of the programme?

Visiting the retail shop and warehouse based in Finsbury Park where we met the helpful and dedicated members of staff.

2. How did you use your skills differently?

Finding varied ways to support and contribute to the project. I now have a greater self-awareness of how versatility in your approach can benefit a team.

If you want to know more about the CoRe Programme please contact:

Rachel Engel
T 020 3037 5024
E rachel.engel@macquarie.com

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