



WALTHAM FOREST 2019

THE
AGENCY
INTERIM
REPORT



LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE

MAYOR OF LONDON



WALTHAM FOREST
LONDON BOROUGH
OF CULTURE 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 WHAT IS THE AGENCY?

Background
What sets the Agency apart?
The Territory

14 IMPACT

Key Outputs
What do we measure?
Social Impact on Young People
Unexpected Outcomes

07 HOW DOES IT WORK?

Overview of delivery
Cycle 1: Cycle of stimulus
The Panel
Cycle 2: The Incubator

19 LEGACY

The Projects
Organisational Change

WHAT IS THE AGENCY?



WHAT IS THE AGENCY?

The Agency is a creative entrepreneurship programme for young people in Waltham Forest as part of the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2019. It provided development opportunities to help young people gain the skills they need to develop social change projects where they live. The scheme was led by Battersea Arts Centre and run by Blackhorse Workshop in Walthamstow.

This intense programme helped develop the creativity and fresh ideas of young Londoners. As well as project management and business skills, they learned how to network and develop creative ways to solve problems. By the end of the course, they were ready to bring their entrepreneurial ambitions to life, delivering their social change projects with and for the community in which they live.

The Agency in Waltham Forest joins other Agency projects across the UK in Battersea, Manchester, Cardiff and Belfast, and the original programme in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Through the agency, I learned that you can use your creativity to overcome challenges and that creativity is not always something to do with art.

-Tauheed, Agent



BACKGROUND

The Agency works with young people aged 15 to 25 from some of the most deprived areas in the UK to create social change projects based on the needs they identify in their communities. The programme began in 2013 through a partnership between Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), Contact and People's Palace Projects (PPP).

Since the pilot year in 2013, it has had a significant impact not only on the young people who have taken part but also the organisations and communities that enable them to realise their ideas. We aim to be truly representative of the local area, working with young people who are driven and ambitious with lots of ideas, as well as those who may not think they have anything to contribute to their local area, in order to drive social innovation from the ground up.

The Agency is not only a tool for individual empowerment and social mobility, but has the potential to provide an emancipatory education to drive social innovation and solve systemic social problems. The programme does this through constructing a safe space for young people to think critically about the world and their place in it while devising ways they can turn their ideas and dreams for change into a reality.

The programme is based on Agência de Redes para Juventude, founded by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2011.

WHAT SETS THE AGENCY APART?

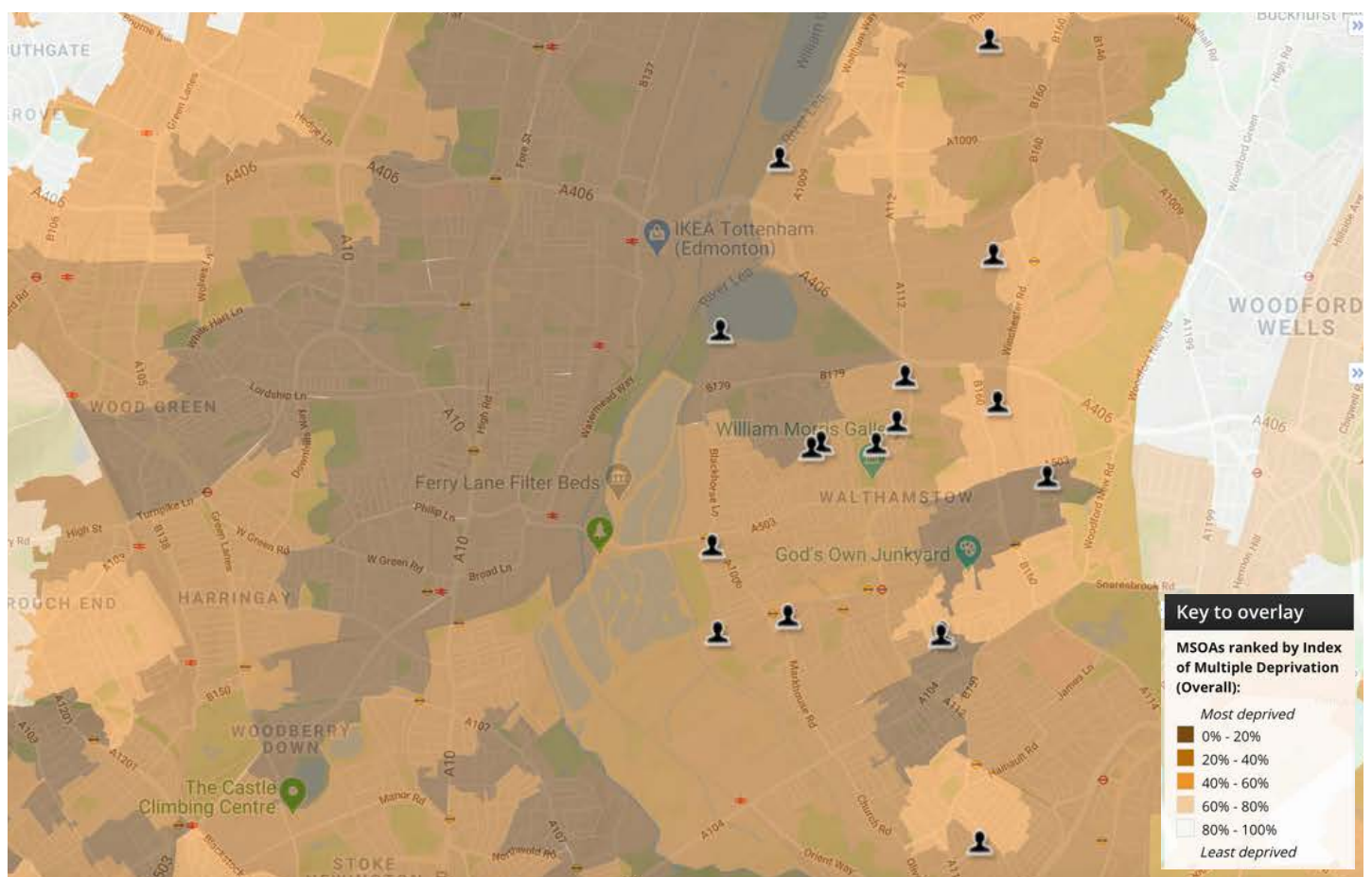
1. The Agency methodology **puts young people from some of the most deprived areas of the UK at the centre of social change**, using an asset-based approach to achieve **sustainable, local change** through young peoples' life experience, community resources, culture and passion.
2. The Agency supports young people on an individual level to **improve their opportunities** but also creates a collective force for systematic change, **mobilising young people around social issues** they care about.
3. The Agency **changes the way cultural and community organisations work with young people** by adopting more inclusive, co-created, collaborative working practices across their organisations.
4. The Agency uses **creativity as its key currency** to unlock innovation, helping young people to **achieve their potential** and future success in education, employment and enterprise.
5. The Agency is a **tool to create robust networks** within a locality where young people, cultural organisations and communities work together around shared goals and values.



THE TERRITORY

BLACKHORSE WORKSHOP

Blackhorse Workshop is a public space dedicated to making and mending, just half an hour from the centre of London. They offer open access to a fully equipped wood and metal workshop. Their mission is ‘to become a socially pioneering world class centre for making’. Machinery support is on hand from highly skilled technicians, and here you can build or fix anything from broken chairs to theatrical sets, bikes and furniture – and where you can grow your startup with the support of industry expertise and a community of makers.



SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRITORY

Blackhorse Lane falls within the Higham Hill Ward. This area is undergoing rapid re-generational change – which is bringing improvements to the public realm but arguably creating alienation between people as the economic gap between old and new residents widens. This is already evident in growing gang culture in existence in the area. Blackhorse Workshop wanted to engage further with people from the surrounding estates to better understand the role their space can play as a venue for young people.

Blackhorse Workshop came to the hostel that I used to live in. I have some mental health issues, and I got to a point in my mental health where it would have been helpful to start doing something on a regular basis, that I may have not been able to do previously - to work on confidence and get used to being in groups and having things to do. I was looking into doing some volunteering work, but the Agency offered me the opportunity to learn some skills as well as possibly do something good for the community at the end - so I decided to take it.

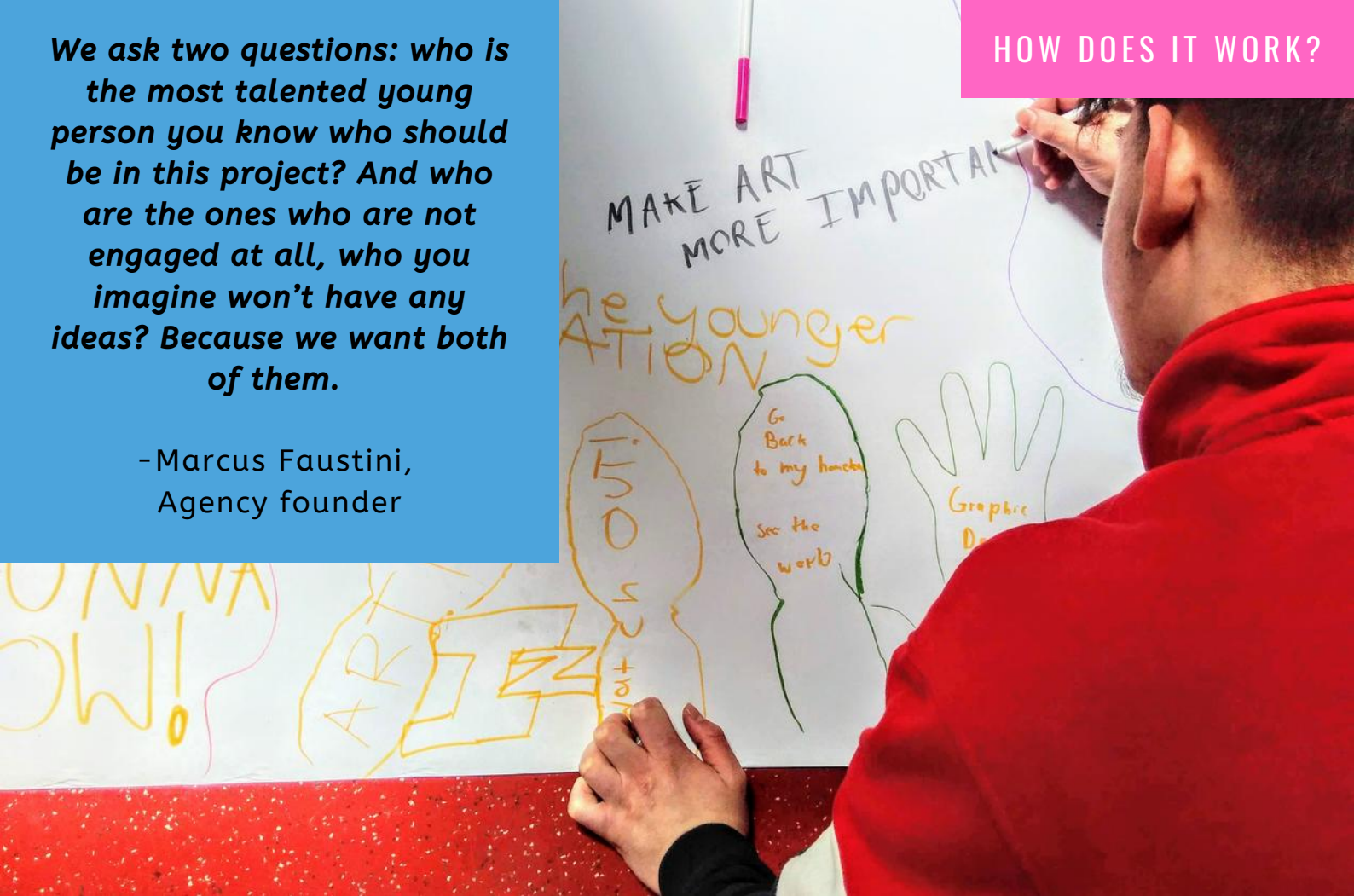
- Alfie, Agent



**HOW DOES
IT WORK?**

We ask two questions: who is the most talented young person you know who should be in this project? And who are the ones who are not engaged at all, who you imagine won't have any ideas? Because we want both of them.

-Marcus Faustini,
Agency founder



OVERVIEW OF DELIVERY

RECRUITMENT

The Agency targets a diverse mix of young people that is representative of the demographics of the territory, not only the most driven and ambitious ones. The Agency goes to places where the young people are and it asks them to be part of the solution in their community. They are asked if they have a business idea; what they are passionate about; or what they would like to change about where they live. From their very first contact with the programme, they are spoken to as young people with ideas, potential and agency over their lives.

Blackhorse Workshop built relationships with local referral partners to identify those most in need and also promoted through usual channels including local youth centres, schools and groups. The team gave presentations at Stephen House, supported living for 16-21 year olds, and at the Limes Community and Children's centre.

The Agency also takes a street-level approach to actively seek out young people. Blackhorse Workshop employed local young people through Wandsworth Young Ambassadors and Agency alumni from BAC to meet young people who were not engaging in other programmes.

CYCLE 1: CYCLE OF STIMULUS

Initially I had no clue, I didn't know my idea. I didn't know what to do with my idea in the beginning. I had to use hope and faith to follow my ideas.

-Azreal, Agent

The first, 12-week cycle uses a theatre-based, creative methodology to help young people develop their ideas starting from their desire for change in their local areas and using specific tools developed by Agency founder Marcus Faustini, adapted to a UK context. They focus on cognitive skill- building through developing the logistics of the ideas with support from facilitators and community groups they aim to work with, whilst also developing the non-cognitive, social and emotional capabilities necessary to bring these projects to fruition. These 'soft skills' such as agency, communication, and creativity have been linked to improved longer-term employment and educational success.

The aim of this cycle is to enable Agents to take an idea based on a need they identify in their community; articulate it; defend it; find support for it through different networks; and pitch it alongside other young people's ideas, host organisations and industry professionals on the day of The Panel. Each Saturday through the first cycle, the Agents are introduced to a new tool designed to help them to generate, develop and strengthen their idea, while in the Saturday sessions these tools are explored using creative tools and practices.





To summarise, these sessions include:

- **INNOVATIVE IDEA GENERATION** - Developing ideas and expanding their notions of what's possible through creative workshops
- **SOCIAL IMPACT**- Each project needs to highlight and address a specified need identified by young people in their communities
- **RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION** with communities - every project needs to consult with communities and obtain 50 signatures before it is pitched for funding from The Panel.
- **NETWORKING** - Identifying and opening up local networks, using creativity to build networking skills
- **DEVELOPING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET**- key to success in resourcefulness running their own projects but also in future careers and education.

Agents receive a stipend for taking part which helps to counterbalance hidden privileges of being able to take part in unpaid work, helps with travel and food, and provides disposable income for them to spend on themselves and their projects.

At the end of this cycle, young people pitch their ideas to a panel of industry experts who decide upon three projects which will be awarded £2,000 of seed funding and move on to Cycle 2. Agents who are not awarded funding for their projects are encouraged to join other successful projects to stay engaged with the programme.

Applicants pitch for £2,000 + an additional 16 weeks of support.

THE PANEL

The 3 selected projects will each receive £2,000 towards a pilot of their idea, working with the support of a specialist producer to help bring their vision to reality.

The three selected projects were:

Non-Stop Boxing by Tauheed Hussain (aged 15)- A boxing club aimed at diverting young people away from violence and getting involved with knife crime.

Essence by Faith by Faith Agba-Butler (aged 16), Rennie Tapper (aged 15) and Azreal Simonson (aged 15)- A series of workshops and a natural hair treatment for afro-black hair, aimed at young women with the aim of building confidence, self-love and countering the use of carcinogenic products.

Ignite by Dorea Nengese, Tori Allison-Powell and Asiya Kigozi (aged 16, 15, 15)- Responding to the lack of real life skills learnt in school, this trio have developed a 10-week programme of sessions for young people where they can learn everything from budgeting and finance, first aid trauma skills and ways to deal with conflict.

The judging panel included local Councillor Ahsan Khan, Clare Lovett from the Greater London Authority, David Bryan Chair of BAC, local resident and award-winning designer Shaz Madani, together with BAC Agency alumni, Osmond Gordon-Vernon.

Ignite is an embodiment of everything I stand for. Within my project, I can express those passions.

-Dorea, Agent



CYCLE 2: THE INCUBATOR

The aim of the 16-week Cycle 2 is to teach practical project management, planning and business skills alongside bespoke support with an individual producer who guides the Agents in building their projects and piloting them in the local area. It focuses on:

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY SUPPORT through community partnerships, 1-on-1 mentorship and professional networking meetings

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT- practical skills in resource building, developing networks and being creative in approaching them

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT- self-confidence, self-efficacy, perseverance, motivation, creativity and resilience: just a few of the skills necessary to deliver projects. Some of the specific skills sessions include:

- o Business planning and scaling
- o Branding and marketing
- o Budget spend and best practice
- o Evaluation and impact
- o Facilitation

BECOMING LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES - working with other young people, partners and local groups to implement their ideas

MAKING PROJECTS COME TO LIFE - becoming skilled producers and project managers to make their projects happen

This is the cycle where the agents turn their ideas into projects, laying the foundation for a potential long-term intervention implemented within the community. Agents develop their ideas into social enterprises with the support of lead organisations, industry experts, local people and businesses. Through piloting their projects, by the end of this phase agents also learn to evaluate their projects through gathering integral feedback that then impacts the future development of their projects.

Young people who complete Cycle 2 have the continued support of organisations if they choose to continue running their projects beyond the specified length of the programme.

CYCLE 2 AT BLACKHORSE WORKSHOP

Expert sessions that took place:

- Meg Peterson, Agency Lead Evaluator- evaluating projects
- Fezzan Ahmed- business planning
- Hayel Wartemberg, Word on the Curb- marketing and branding
- Sharie Omoragbon, Wandsworth Council- creating a budget
- Anna Braybrooke- facilitating session

Essence by Faith

The project received mentoring support from BAC Agent Sydney Sylvah founder of Sydney's Naturals, and from freelance heritage curator Korantema Anyimadu. Faith attended training sessions in cosmetic making at 'Naturally Thinking' and support in registering her product from Blackhorse Workshop.

Workshops delivered:

- Royal College of Art for Black History of Month, on Creative Identity (30 participants)
- Gnome House on Black Heritage (15 participants)

Ignite

Mentoring received: From Samantha Blake from 'All In The Planning', a Waltham Forest based events management company

Workshops delivered for 30 young people:

- Workshop 1: First aid trauma with Street Doctors
- Budgeting with Loretta Hoy, Project Manager of Future Creatives at Waltham Forest Council
- Workshop 2: Healthy Relationships run by Split Banana
- Workshop 3: Debating workshops facilitated by Ignite

Non-Stop Boxing

Mentoring received from Kazadi Mwamba –Boxer based in Waltham Forest

Workshops delivered: 2 workshops at East London Boxing Club for 40 young people



I used to have serious anger problems but I have come a long way. If I was the same person I was a few years ago, I would have popped off. I feel like I now know how to deal with people in a more professional way.

-Faith, Agent



IMPACT

KEY OUTPUTS

- 19 young people took part in Cycle 1
 - 316 hours of creative training sessions
 - 25 hours of mentoring time
 - 20 new networks made
 - 725 community members consulted on project ideas
 - 10 social projects pitched
 - 3 social projects funded
-
- 10 young people took part in Cycle 2
 - 128 hours of producing support
 - 130 participants took part in activities led by agents

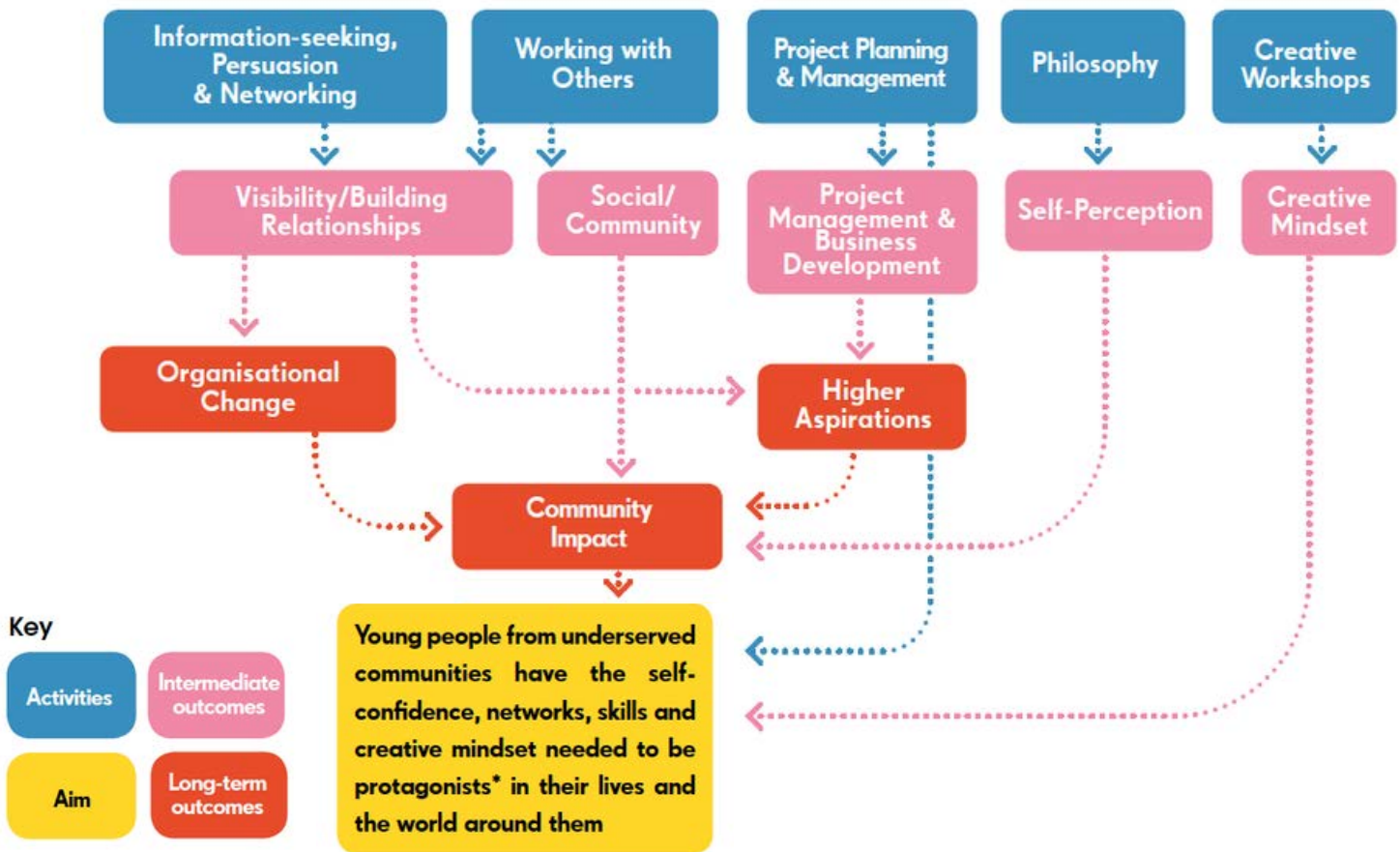
Mentors and Networks included:

Kazadi Mwamba- former Kickboxing Champion; **Joshua Wehner**- Director of Flames Basketball; **Samantha Blake**- local event planner from All in the Planning; **Korantema Anyimado**- Curator of the Black Hair & Heritage in Waltham Forest; **Birdsong London**- ethical fashion brand; **DAM Digital**- designer ; **Coach Bright**- education social enterprise; **Split Banana**- sex education social enterprise; **Sydney's Naturals**- natural products line; **The Record Shop**- musical production social; **Kin Design**- interaction designers

***WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PROTAGONIST IN A CITY?**

1. Young people are more part of the economic life of the city by seeking employment, having an entrepreneurial mindset and building resources in their communities
2. Young people develop their creative abilities through a culture of creativity embedded in the programme, giving them the tools and mindset to find solutions in other areas of their lives
3. Young people are more included in the social life of their city, breaking down stereotypes they have about their community and negative perceptions communities have about young people

THEORY OF CHANGE



WHAT DO WE MEASURE?

The overall aim of The Agency is for **young people from underserved communities to have the confidence, networks, skills and creative mindset needed to be protagonists* in their lives and the world around them.**

We use a social impact approach to measure change in the lives of young people who take part in the programme. Outcomes measured are based upon the theory of change above. The key outcome areas we focus on are:

1. Agency/Self-efficacy
2. Creative problem solving
3. Networking and building relationships
4. Presentation
5. Project management skills
6. Organisational change and Community impact

SOCIAL IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

All of our data collection methods are based on social science research, gathered at a baseline (Week 1), midpoint (Week 12) and endpoints (Week 28) in the delivery cycle.

AGENCY/SELF-EFFICACY

67% of young people improved their sense of Agency by an average of 12%.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

58% of young people improved their creative problem solving skills by an average of 3%.

NETWORKING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

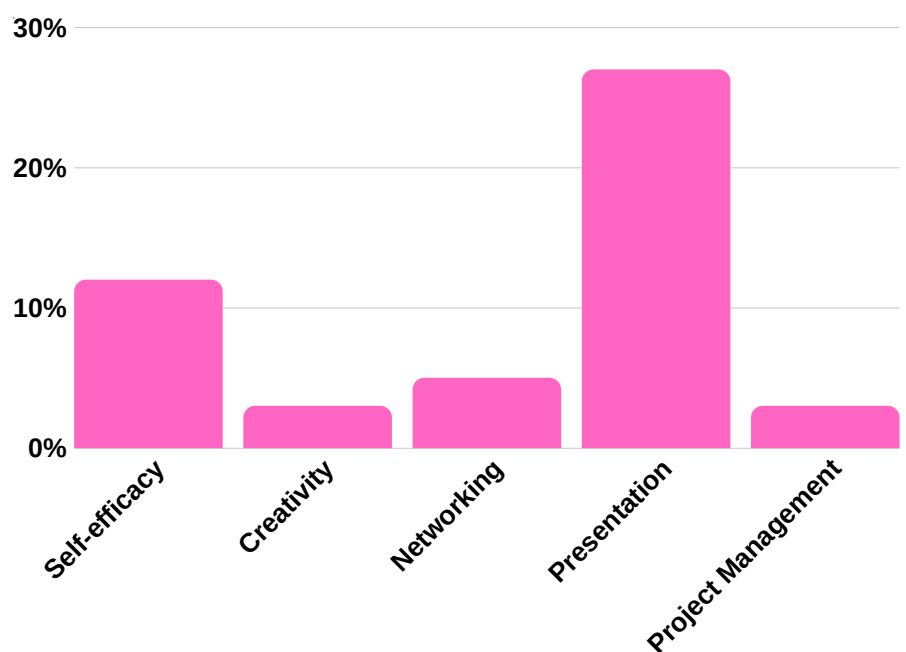
67% of young people improved their networking skills by an average of 5%.

PRESENTATION

91% of young people improved their presentation skills by an average of 27%.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

58% of young people improved their project management skills by an average of 3%.



Do you see your community as a place of opportunity?

BEFORE THE PROJECT

No, not much help, support and opportunities for young people. Not enough tools for government help us.



AFTER DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE PROJECTS

Yes, If you meet the right people.

Sometimes, but you have to look very hard.



Currently, yes, as I am working to better the community itself.

No, because there aren't enough resources for younger people aged 18-30 years old. Not enough support for homeless people and people with mental health issues.



Yes, a lot of opportunities have cropped up in the last 6 weeks.

Kinda, but I feel like these opportunities need to be advertised more.



Yes, you just have to be willing to go out and look for them.

No, because it is a dried up community no opportunities for growth.



Yes, I do because of this project.

UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

Shared Learning and Impact at National Gathering

The Agency held a National Gathering and Marketplace at the Houses of Parliament on Thursday, 24th October, 2019. The event was hosted by Marsha do Cordova MP and led by young people who have been through the Agency programme from locations across the UK, including Agents from the Waltham Forest. Tauheed and Faith from Waltham Forest spoke to over 100 high profile guests about their experience of their borough and their business ideas created to tackle pertinent local social issues. The Agents also ran a Marketplace where they were able to present their business ideas and seek additional networks, resources and funding from the attendees.

The event was attended by over 100 people from different sectors, including policymakers, MP's, local government, national and local funders, national press, social entrepreneurs, big businesses and national arts venues. Guests included the Bank of England, Comic Relief, National Lottery Community Fund, Arts Council England, the American Embassy, National Theatre of Scotland, the Kiln and the Head of Culture and Heritage Services London Borough of Waltham Forest.

Alongside the event, the Guardian ran a piece in its Uprising section celebrating the work of the Agents and featuring the Agency at Blackhorse Workshop. The event was a huge success, raising the profile of the Agency, Agents' projects and amplified youth voice.

Inspiration Day for Young People

Agents from across the UK were invited to an Inspiration Day on Wednesday, 23rd October, 2019, led by Agency facilitators and Agência de Redes para Juventude founder, Marcus Faustini, from Brazil. They connected with other Agents from across the UK and shared their creative business ideas for social change, forging a network of young change makers. There was a social event in the evening to celebrate all the young people have achieved.

Planning session in Cardiff

The young people who spoke at the National Gathering and Marketplace attended a planning day in Cardiff before the event. They worked collectively to create a strong message for the attendees, communicating the most important issues affecting youth today. This was a significant moment for them to connect with their peers across the UK. Some of the young people who attended had not previously travelled outside of London.

Agent opportunities

Ciaran won a FA Junior Football Leaders Award, and running a trial session at local football ground despite not winning any funding. Alfie was referred to Makers and Shakers, a free 6-week skills programme at Blackhorse Workshop, and plans on returning in 2020 to make his own musical saw.

LEGACY

THE PROJECTS

At first I never thought it was a space for young people to use. Now I understand that BHW is a space for creative activities and community projects, for people of a wide range of ages and any backgrounds.

– Tauheed, Agent

Since the Agency finished, Blackhorse Workshop have delivered drop in sessions on a fortnightly basis to support Agents in planning their next steps; to spend the rest of their money on their projects; and secure further mentors:

- o **Essence by Faith** will be getting their product tested and attending courses at Naturally Thinking.
- o **Ignite** are looking into project management training courses as well as setting up a business and buying business cards for future use.
- o **Non Stop Boxing** will be buying equipment for use in future projects and will be booking onto a coaching course.



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Through delivering The Agency, Blackhorse Workshop has been able to meet its original intentions for the programme 'to develop the ways in which we work more closely with our community'.

Following its success, Blackhorse Workshop will be delivering a follow up programme, 'Blackhorse Responders', in 2020. The programme is inspired by The Agency methodology, focusing on identifying ways to empower young people to speak out about the issues that affect them. With making at its heart, the project will encourage young people to reflect on where they live and how they feel about their local area to create pieces of work for their community. This first iteration is being funded by the Greater London Authority, and an application has been submitted to local funders including the L&Q foundation that provides affordable housing.

The Agency has also impacted other programmes for children and young people. Working with trained youth facilitators has enabled Blackhorse Workshop's wood and metalwork tutors to learn techniques and skills that facilitate group engagement, which has been particularly relevant to their other work with local Pupil Referral Units and After School Clubs.

The Agency has been transformative for us in terms of how we are shaping the development of our future programme for young people. We now have a better understanding of how we can support young people of this age group, how best to get them engaged and involved, and better knowledge of the local networks already working to provide opportunities for young people in the borough. The methodology of The Agency, and its playful approach in empowering the group was key in bringing people together.

- Harriet Warden, Creative Director
Blackhorse Workshop



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Agency UK is a Battersea Arts Centre and Contact programme devised in partnership with People's Palace Projects

Current partners include:
Blackhorse Workshop, The Kiln National Theatre Wales and Fablab Belfast

Funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund and the Mayor of London

London Borough of Culture is a Mayor of London initiative, supported by the City of London Corporation's charity and City Bridge Trust.

The Agency is a programme originally conceived by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro where it is delivered by Agência de Redes para a Juventude. The UK pilot (2013-15) was funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Report by Roisin Feeny and Meg Peterson.
Report designed by Meg Peterson.



MAYOR OF LONDON



WALTHAM FOREST
LONDON BOROUGH
OF CULTURE 2019



founder funder