

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION LEAP EVALUATION REPORT

The Social Innovation Partnership
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GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

This list refers to some key terms and their acronyms that we use throughout the report.

Term	Definition
ESV	Employer-supported volunteering: supporting staff to take part in volunteering opportunities, usually during work hours. It is also sometimes called corporate volunteering.
COLC	City of London Corporation
LEAP	The employee-supported volunteering programme City of London Corporation administers
VIO	Volunteer-involving organisations: organisations that partner with employee supported volunteering to receive volunteers
CBT	City Bridge Trust
By-and-for	Organisations that are led by people with lived experience of the issues that they work on, or people who are part of the communities that they serve.
CV	Corporate Volunteering, sometimes referring to the corporate volunteering team at City of London Corporation

01 CONTEXT

WHY THIS RESEARCH?

The City of London Corporation (COLC) launched their employer-supported volunteering programme, LEAP, in 2020. The programme engages their employees in volunteering opportunities that focus on a social or environmental cause. Each full-time COLC employee is entitled to 14 hours of paid special leave per calendar year to participate in volunteering opportunities during work hours within the Square Mile, London, and beyond.

In line with the COLC's equality policy, programme managers are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for diverse employees to participate in the programme and ensure they are equipped with the confidence and knowledge to thrive. TSIP has been commissioned by the COLC to evaluate LEAP with a diversity, equality, and inclusion focus. This piece of research is intended to enable the programme managers to take a fresh look from a diversity perspective in order to better locate and address barriers that exist for both employees and volunteer-involving organisations.

From the evaluation, TSIP has created recommendations specific to the LEAP programme as well as recommendations that can be adapted by other employer-supported volunteering schemes, to help overcome the current barriers that exist.

02 METHODOLOGY

HOW WE CONDUCTED THE REVIEW

We took a mixed-methods approach to the review, drawing on internally-held data as well as primary research with employees and organisations. The diagram below shows the sequence of activities conducted.

While we sought to reach a variety of organisations and were able to include both small (less than 10 employees) and by-and-for organisations in the research sample, the small number of organisations in the sample is a limitation of the research.

We were also unable to include in-depth qualitative data collection with employees, apart from the findings workshop, and this would also have enhanced the research.



03 INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS OVERVIEW

The key findings throughout the research are sorted into two categories – the enablers and barriers for both COLC employees and VIOs respectively. First, we highlight good practice of the LEAP programme to showcase their positive relationship with engaging employees and VIOs. In our insights we outline:

- The key demographic points of employees who have and have not taken up volunteer opportunities. While we wanted a DEI analysis, we found that the data did not indicate large discrepancies in engagement based on race, ethnicity, or gender.
- What supported employees and made it beneficial to participate in volunteering opportunities.
- What acted as barriers or restrictions to employee participation.
- The motivations for VIOs to engage with LEAP and ESVs.
- The barriers to engagement for VIOs.
- An understanding of what good ESV looks like for them, in their context.

To contextualise our findings, we traced the employee journey of LEAP from registration, onboarding, actual volunteering, and the feedback process to determine how their needs are currently met as well as how their engagement levels could be improved.

For the organisation's experience of employer-supported volunteering, we wanted to understand any disparities that exist between larger charities and smaller organisations where registration and hosting volunteers is concerned.

GOOD PRACTICE EVIDENCED BY LEAP

Both employees and, particularly, organisations, raised some common frustrations with ESV programmes, many of which are already mitigated by the LEAP programme. In this section, we outline key features of LEAP which respond to these common frustrations.

Relational approach and clear communication

Organisations found the introductory call set up by LEAP beneficial as it allowed for a shared mutual understanding. A roundtable participant stated how this start to their process can allow *“both to know what we’re expecting from the relationship.”* They also appreciated setting up ways of working that facilitated this, such as designating a main point of contact with the business. For instance, they note that *“having the same conversation with the same person [prevents] any confusion later down the line on what the agreement and the partnership should be.”*

Meaningful team volunteering

Organisations expressed frustration with the type of team volunteering where corporate volunteers go into a charity and paint walls or conduct other activities that look good but are not beneficial to the organisation. Often volunteers do not have the skills to do this well, and the charity has to ‘tidy up’ after the volunteering opportunity finishes. This might be a good photo opportunity for the corporation but has no benefit to the organisation and may not feel meaningful to employees. As the organisation takes the lead in specifying what opportunities are available and the LEAP team take a relational approach to working with organisations and shaping opportunities, team volunteering opportunities offered via LEAP are both meaningful to employees and useful to organisations.

GOOD PRACTICE EVIDENCED BY LEAP

Flexibility of volunteering opportunities

Both employees and organisations noted that some corporations offer only one type of volunteering (whether team or individual) or have a small, non-diverse shortlist of volunteering opportunities. By contrast, the breadth of possible opportunities offered by LEAP—including team and individual volunteering and supporting employees' existing volunteering—was appreciated by both employees and organisations. From our survey data asking employees to state *'the most useful part of the programme'* one respondent indicated *"breadth of opportunities - suitable for different skill sets, confidence levels and availability (employee survey respondent)."*

Matching volunteers to organisational needs.

Often organisations feel it's rare that there's a match between what's being offered and what their needs are. In our survey, organisations expressed how they would like corporations to survey the specific needs of their organisation upon partnering, so they can be clear about which of those needs they can meet and position their volunteers to deliver against them. From the outset of the registration process for employees and VIOs, the Corporate Volunteering team ensures that employees best maximise their volunteering time for themselves and the organisation receiving them by outlining needs and interests from the beginning.

03a INSIGHTS: Employees

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION EMPLOYEES

Key findings from the survey: demographics and engagement

- The employee survey saw 177 respondents, 67% of whom had not registered with LEAP compared to 33% who did.
- Groups found to be **most active** in volunteering:
 - 45-54 age group (39% volunteered, compared to 33% of the whole sample)
 - People holding grade D-F job position (37% volunteered, compared to 33% of the whole sample)
- Groups found to be **least active** in volunteering
 - Survey respondents holding grades A-C job roles (24% compared to 36% for Grades D-F and 33% for Grades G-J)
 - 25-34 age group
- No significant differences in volunteering percentages by ethnicity, religion or gender
- Disabled employees were no less likely to volunteer than their non-disabled counterparts (although overall % of disabled employees in survey less than 10%)
- People don't use the full allocation of paid special leave towards volunteering:
 - Only 30% of employees who volunteer used 12-14 hours
 - 41% of those who did volunteer used 4-7 hours
- Majority (70%) took up one opportunity
- People who registered but didn't find opportunities struggled to find opportunities that matched their interests or availability

COLC EMPLOYEES AND LEAP



1. Promotion of LEAP by CV team
2. Register opportunity in Thrive
3. Gain approval from line manager
4. Sign up to opportunity on Thrive
5. Log volunteering leave in City People
6. Start volunteering

1. Promotion of LEAP by CV team
2. Registration to Thrive and browse opportunities
3. Gain approval from line manager
4. Sign up to opportunity on Thrive
5. Log volunteering leave in City People
6. Start volunteering

1. Promotion of LEAP by CV team
2. Key contact liaises with CV team
3. Options sent
4. Opportunity confirmed
5. Individuals in the team sign up to the opportunity on Thrive
6. Log volunteering leave in City People
7. Start volunteering

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees who volunteered referenced several benefits to them and their work that they had gained from volunteering. These include:

Developing relationships with colleagues (team volunteering)

Survey respondents noted how *“meeting colleagues from other institutions and departments”* and *“the opportunity to develop ties with colleagues and with the community at the same time”* were highlights of the programme. It may be particularly beneficial for employees to meet colleagues that they would not usually encounter in their day-to-day work. For instance, an employee remarks: *“I actually found a new role in the City through volunteering and meeting colleagues from other departments too.”*

Sense of meaning and purpose

Participation in LEAP supported employees to feel a sense of meaning and purpose. Some employees noted in the survey that they were *“pleased that there is indeed an opportunity to volunteer and at working times,”* and that *“helping a good cause”* was the most positive aspect of their participation.

Developing skills and knowledge of the community

Some employees had developed new skills through LEAP, while others focused on learning more about the organisation and/or the community they serve. The two survey responses below were comments on the most useful aspects of LEAP:

- *“Learning about the organisation I volunteered at, hearing about them made me more invested in them.”*
- *“Giving me the ability to become a better and more useful volunteer. The opportunity I took in work hours gave me more insight and skills to support the charity outside work hours.”*

EMPLOYEE ENABLERS

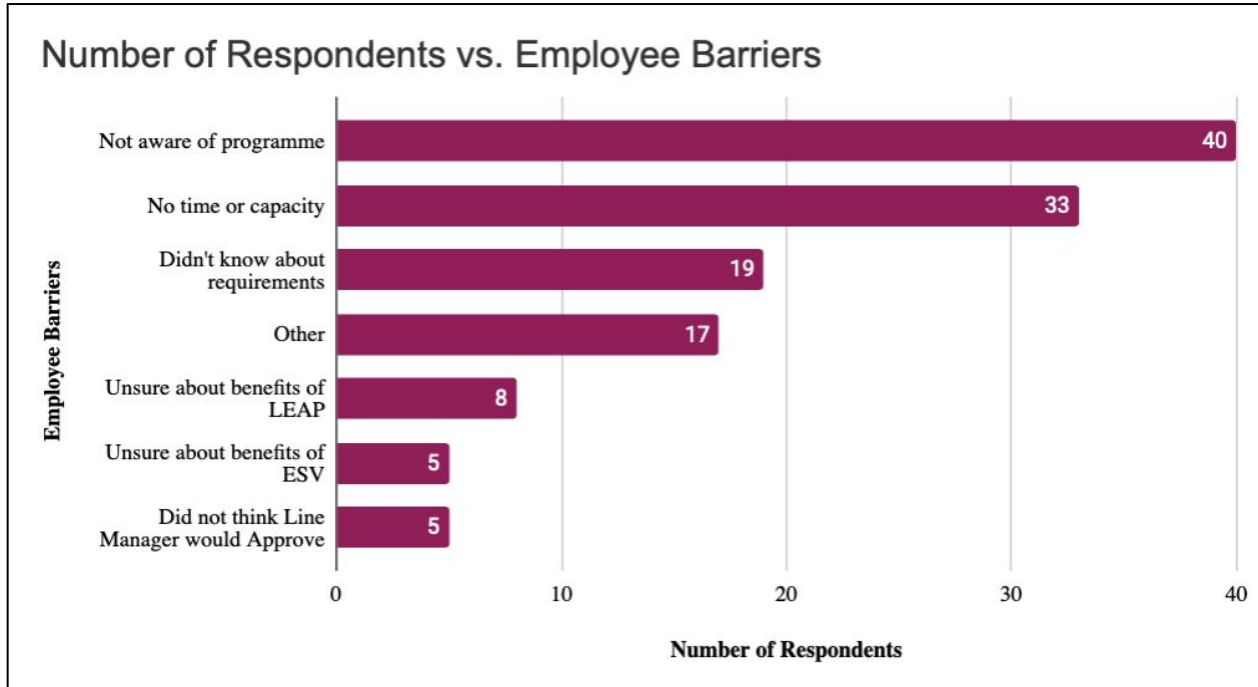
Some employee comments also focused on how LEAP creates the right environment for fostering volunteering participation.

Structural enablers:

- Providing paid special leave for employees to take up volunteering encourages them to register with LEAP. As employees don't have to sacrifice their personal time and are not penalised for taking time off work, they report it *“makes [them] feel good to work somewhere that actively encourages volunteering and makes it possible to do so during the working week.”*
- The programme is well organised, with clear and accessible information provided to employees. Employees that did participate in LEAP noted how it was easy to navigate onboarding of the programme: *“it was really well organised and [we] received clear communication throughout.”* Having the volunteer days organised for them reduced administrative frustration that can prevent involvement. Once employees gain awareness of the programme, navigating LEAP is cited as relatively straightforward.
- The different volunteering format choices – between individual or team volunteering – were accommodating towards employees' needs, especially as team volunteering is quite favoured by those who have participated in it for its social networking and relationship building benefits.

EMPLOYEE BARRIERS

In our survey, respondents were asked to list what they found the main barriers to LEAP registration to be. We found that awareness and capacity are currently the two largest barriers.



EMPLOYEE BARRIERS

Awareness of the programme

There is a general lack of awareness about the programme itself amongst employees. Nearly 50% of respondents who did not volunteer were unaware they could use paid special leave for volunteering they already do, and 70% of these said that if they had known, they would be more likely to participate in LEAP. Survey respondents also indicated that more knowledge/promotion about the programme would have helped them register: *“Visibility of regular headlines of specific opportunities, and the skills required, would get me thinking about it more.”*

In conjunction with the lack of awareness there is a lack of clarity on the parameters on participating in LEAP. For instance, some employees were not clear on whether volunteering in their local area (which may be outside Greater London) was allowed and what types of organisations they are allowed to volunteer for. The confusion surrounding the programme restricts employees from registering.

Range of Opportunities Offered

There is an appetite for more diverse opportunities than what is currently being offered, specifically:

- More opportunities suited towards cultural/diverse topics
- More small-scale and micro-volunteering opportunities
- More opportunities for team volunteering (40% of survey respondents who had volunteered took up team volunteering)
- Inclusion of local charities that are close to the workplace

EMPLOYEE BARRIERS

Manager support and workload issues

Employees are unsure about how their management would receive them taking time away from their work duties to volunteer. While they feel that their managers wouldn't outwardly deny or disapprove of their request to taking volunteering leave, they don't think it would be genuinely supported either. An employee notes how *"our management team being more encouraging with us volunteering our time, and being more lenient with allowing us time to do it"* would make registering for LEAP less of a barrier. This is felt across all job grades with people occupying more senior roles also mirroring these concerns: *"I am new to the corporation and have joined at a fairly senior role so do not know how this will land with my line manager."*

There is a concern over managing capacity and workload with regards to taking leave. Employees are conscious of time constraints and managing their responsibilities stating *"it is difficult to find the time alongside competing work pressures"* and expressed worry that registering to volunteer, despite the benefits they might gain, would lead to an imbalance in their work-life later on. For instance, an employee remarks: *"If I took 14 hrs paid time to volunteer, I would have a 14hr backlog of work that I would need to catch-up on in my own time."*

Technical or Administrative Issues

The registration and monitoring system received mixed reviews from employees. Some found it easy and accessible, while others found it strenuous in some areas. Specifically, logging volunteer hours and registering volunteering opportunities sourced outside of LEAP were the biggest areas of concern.

03b INSIGHTS: Organisations

VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

Below we highlight key points from our organisations survey:

- Of those who had registered to partner with LEAP, the majority had been registered between 6 months to 1 year
- Most organisations come to hear about LEAP via the CBT or the COLC website
- LEAP partners who had received volunteers were more likely to rate the registration process as easy compared to those who had registered but not yet received volunteers (63% versus 50%)
- 79% of LEAP partners who had volunteers said they are looking for volunteers with a specific background
- The backbackground organisations reported to search for in volunteers included:
 1. Lived experience for by-and-for organisations (additional needs or disability for a disability servicing community)
 2. Knowledge about the organisation's mission (e.g. climate change for Climate Ed)
 3. Skill requirements to match their services provided (e.g. Higher educational qualifications for a tutoring service)

Organisations that attended our roundtable ‘Good Practice on Employee-Supported Volunteering’ were varied in scale. Approximately 13 organisations attended and not all were LEAP or ESV partners. Seven of these organisations self-identified as small charities (0-20 employees), with the rest being medium or large organisations.

Volunteer-Involving Organisations and LEAP

01

ENTRY POINT

- Organisations are either referred by CBT or another route usually unknown to CV team
- They contact CV team and have their introductory call

02

APPLICATION

- CV team sends registration link
- Organisations must fill out due diligence form and questions about their organisation and volunteering practice

03

THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION

- Third party verifies them from a due diligence perspective.
- CV team double checks
- Need to include public liability insurance

04

REGISTERING

- Organisations upload opportunities on the platform which the team makes live.
- More opportunities can be uploaded to the platform whenever.

05

FEEDBACK

- After the opportunity finishes, organisations are sent a feedback form by the Thrive platform - to give them a chance to feed back on their experience of receiving volunteers.

VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS: ENABLERS

Benefits VIOs note to partnering with LEAP or other ESV programmes:

Diverse skill sets

Often, organisations note how the volunteers they receive are helpful and energized to be there and how this is an advantage for them in itself. Volunteers often bring a diverse range of skills, expertise, and perspectives to an organisation. For instance, a representative from the roundtable notes: *“They get on with it. And I, I love that because it's almost like a sort of fresh perspective of someone just coming in with completely fresh eyes who doesn't have any of the, the baggage that, that we might have.”* This can be useful for organisation's internal work or service delivery.

Increased Capacity

LEAP encourages employees to independently select an opportunity that interests them rather than view it as an assignment. Volunteers can provide additional capacity and resources to support the organisation's activities. They can take on tasks and projects that might otherwise be challenging to accomplish with limited staff or budget. Organisations note how this *“provides an opportunity for people who want to do something [to] do something”* and how their presence actually helps build their capacity as an organisation: *“for us as an organisation, [the volunteers are] frontline staff, they're absolutely crucial.”*

VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS: ENABLERS

Structural enablers:

Contributing to the operating costs of VIOs

Ideally ESVs make a significant financial contribution to volunteer involving organisations through donations. This contribution not only honours the planning and costs associated with properly hosting employee volunteers, but also acts as an important source of unrestricted income for operational costs or otherwise. Particularly for smaller charities, this can be really valuable in terms of allowing them to partner with ESVs. E.g. *“So the actual contribution that the corporates make for a kind of per head donation really helps to actually cover the costs of running the site and kind of keeping the gates open.”*

Consistent and engaging communication

Organisations emphasise that genuine and engaging communication from the ESV is important to building trust and making sure organisations feel understood in their limitations and needs. For instance, a roundtable participant states: *“And so it's trying to sort of have a two-way narrative because I think also from the the organisation standpoint, understanding what the company wants to get out of this as well is important.”* Having a key contact person in the CV team ensures that two-way communication is open and accessible.

VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS BARRIERS

The top three barriers to organisations according to survey data are:

1. Organisations not having the time or capacity to manage volunteers
2. Organisations are not aware of the programme
3. Organisations are unsure of the benefits of partnering with a corporation

Additional barriers to organisations partnering with LEAP and ESVs more broadly are stated below.

Mis-match of needs

For organisations that are searching for individual volunteers, many are looking for long-term commitments or a minimum set contract. As most employees volunteer for less than 12-14 hours, it doesn't serve smaller organisations which often require longer time commitments. One representative of a small organisation notes: *"I guess for me...what I would want is [for the] corporate to understand that it is an ongoing relationship"* with an *"agreement on expectations."*

Inauthentic engagement

Not specific to LEAP but a general frustration that organisations emphasised with employer-supported volunteering was the lack of genuine engagement from the corporate's side which can lead to *"tick-boxy"* relations. Organisations noted how a hesitation they have towards partnering or engaging in employer volunteering schemes are how it can feel tokenistic at times because of how they don't account for their individual needs or feel listened to. As there is a growing movement for greater social responsibility within the corporate sector, organisations are wary of how a one-size fits all approach is often used to engage with them. Showcasing a *"genuine desire to actually engage"* is what organisations fear are missing from corporations.

VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS BARRIERS

Power Dynamics

During our roundtable many organisations discussed the power dynamics they have to navigate when partnering with an ESV. Organisations listed multiple factors that can produce and maintain this barrier, such as the reliance on funding, corporations not valuing the commitment or promises they have made to organisations, lack of accountability, and lack of understanding of this power dynamic on the corporation's part. A relational approach was strongly advocated by both employees and volunteer sector organisations to circumvent these power dynamics.

Administrative Burdens

For instance, organisations expressed frustration for when they have to register themselves as an opportunity: *“there's a bit of a trend towards people using systems that kind of try to push all of the work back on to you... to organise the day.”* This additional labour put on organisations can result in them costing the VIO more than they are gaining. Other examples include expending a lot of time and resource into inducting a volunteer (which also eats up their time allotted to volunteer using paid special leave), managing back end costs, and having to coordinate with other users if misunderstandings occur.

04 RECOMMENDATIONS

QUICK WINS FOR VIOs

This section of the report focuses on recommendations for the City of London Corporation. We have split the recommendations between 'quick wins' and more complex programme changes. These recommendations are not mutually exclusive.

Cut down on administrative burdens for the VIO. This could include booking team volunteering dates in advance for the whole year. Having visible dates set in stone can limit the back and forth of trying to find a date. *"What would be very useful for us...an ongoing relationship with companies that come back multiple times throughout the year, and book their dates in advance for the whole year."*

Ensure that VIOs are paid for team volunteering opportunities. 41% of employees surveyed had participated in team volunteering, with highly positive feedback. Employees expressed they would like to see more team volunteering opportunities and ensure they are beneficial for organisations. Crucial to that is financially compensating organisations that host these 'team away days' or team volunteering opportunities to recognise the labour associated with maintaining these opportunities.

Continue working with senior stakeholders from VIOs to reflect on how partnering with LEAP can work for them. As the CV team is already doing this, they can deepen these relationships to establish a clearer understanding of how they can match an organisation's needs. As noted by a roundtable participant, organisations want to feel that corporations are investing time into understanding them: *"Ideally the org supplying employee volunteers surveys the needs of the group they're offering support to, so they can be clear about which of those needs they can meet and position their volunteers to deliver against them."*

Create testimonials and case studies for VIOs. Organisations wish to better understand the benefits of partnering with LEAP. Organisations expressed doubt over what is doable across a 14 hour time cap, and over how individual or team volunteering could be helpful in different contexts. For instance, an organisation who hasn't registered with LEAP was doubtful over what can be achieved with the short time frame: *"We're a CBT grantee with access to this programme, but haven't registered for it. It would be useful to have some examples of what they think they can deliver in just 14 hours. Other than possibly redecorating a space for those orgs who have one (we don't), it's hard to identify how a frontline service provision could make use of this kind of opportunity."* Providing examples of a VIO's positive partnering journey can provide a sense of assurance or confidence in for organisations interested in partnering while simultaneously clearing up any confusions or concerns they may have.

QUICK WINS FOR EMPLOYEES

Improve promotional materials and internal communications for employees. A clear issue for employees was that many people didn't know about the programme or that they could use their paid special leave for volunteering they already do. Promotional materials can also help undo the historic understanding of the programme and highlight the new features of it. Examples from our 'Findings Workshop' that COLC employees provided included: flyers with a QR code that takes them to the LEAP information page, advertisements that highlight the benefits of the programme, strategically displaying comms e.g. notice boards and toilet doors.

Host learning and sharing sessions for employees to talk about the benefits of the programme. Employees are more likely to participate in the programme if they hear from their peers about how their experience was and what the potential benefits are e.g. skill development, morale boosting or spending time with other colleagues. This can also be used as an opportunity to share insights from their involvement as well as determine their needs for future involvement in LEAP. Examples from our 'Findings Workshop' that COLC employees provided included: blog posts, using diversity and wellbeing networks, videos on the intranet of peoples experiences.

Integrate LEAP more broadly into the employee journey to encourage Grades A-C posts. Examples include making employees aware of LEAP during their induction process, providing updates about the programme to 'all staff' meetings, and incorporating it into employees' annual appraisal process or first year objectives, while still retaining the voluntary nature of the programme.

Showcase and spotlight specific volunteering opportunities. Although employees may know of LEAP, they may not know much about specific opportunities. In line with better promoting the programme, it would benefit employees to have examples of the types of opportunities available as sorting through the database to find a match can take a while.

Streamline the online process to make it easier for employees start to finish. In our employee survey, there were mixed results for how accessible people found interacting with the online system. Many found it positive while others had specific frustrations, e.g. the system for logging volunteer hours could be easier to work with, the booking system experiences technical issues sometimes, and the registration first step could be more efficient.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME DESIGN

The recommendations below reflect conversations with the City of London Corporation around the focus of LEAP and potential changes in the design of the programme itself.

A more focused and joined up agreement for the VIOS, COLC, and volunteers. Encouraging volunteers to register for opportunities is only half of the equation – the other is ensuring that volunteers follow through with their commitments, and have the skills, awareness and capability to support the organisation’s services or team. An apprehension smaller organisations have is thinking volunteers will last minute be a no-show, and corporations will expect to pay for fewer people than actually turn up on the day. To ensure accountability and that the time of the organisation feels valued, creating a terms and conditions for opportunities would help mitigate these concerns. While LEAP provides good two-way communication between COLC and VIOs and employees and organisations, this measure can strengthen the understanding of roles and responsibilities amongst all three parties.

Develop a robust top-down push from senior management to encourage employee engagement. Only 35% of employees who didn’t volunteer feel their Line Manager would be supportive of them taking part in LEAP. Notably survey respondents felt that while managers and more senior staff didn’t speak against it, they didn’t have much enthusiasm for it either. Having management be more supportive, informative, and encouraging would boost the registration of employees to LEAP, and potentially close the gap between lower grade jobs and middle grade jobs. In conversation with COLC employees from our Findings workshop, workload demands continue to be a factor in people generally feeling hesitant about taking their leave entitlements. Thus, more explicit support from a management leadership level to encourage individual volunteering can make taking one’s leave entitlement whether that be paid volunteer leave or annual leave a lot easier.

Adjust the volunteer leave offered to include more days and time outside of working hours. Charities note how 14 hours for volunteering is not enough as sometimes their training is longer than this amount. Employees echoed this sentiment, stating how they want *“for it to be longer and able to take off more days throughout the year”* and that *“It would be good to have more days to volunteer.”* However, the majority of employees who volunteered in our survey did not take up the full allocation of the volunteering hours. Opening up the offer can allow people to make a volunteering opportunity work for their workload. More days would reduce conflict for team volunteering and individual volunteering, not having to choose between the two.

05 CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

LEAP, administered by the Corporate Volunteering team of City of London Corporation, provides employees the opportunity to volunteer with an organisation of their choice for up to 14 hours per calendar within their usual working hours. It aims to support voluntary organisations meet their needs, and facilitate the personal and professional development of its employees by connecting them with VIOs and other employees. The programme occupies an interesting position of tending to both parties and serving as the bridge between them. While the programme is tailored for the employee experience, COLC also recognises how it must play a role in the success of voluntary organisations outcomes to achieve employee results.

This evaluation indicated positive impact for employees, especially driven by their improved connection with interests and personal development, social and professional networking activities, and ability to capitalise on opportunities. While the purpose of this research was to undertake a DEI analysis, we found that there was no large discrepancy between race, ethnicity, or gender for LEAP volunteering impact. However, the most prominent disparity we found shows higher grade jobs—and older age groups—as more likely to volunteer compared to employees from lower pay grades. Future evaluations would benefit from including a social class analysis. For volunteer involving organisations, the outcomes included increased capacity and improved operational functioning provided by COLC funding and enthusiastic volunteers.

CONCLUSION

TSIP's recommendations to address the barriers to employees and VIO partners include light touch design changes ranging from the provision of more accessible and straightforward promotional materials, reviewing the outreach elements of the work, and collaborating with relevant stakeholders, such as grade A-C posts and VIOs. We also recommend a stronger focus on establishing a top-down approach to encourage employee participation in volunteering, and restructuring the programme to allow for more flexibility that would benefit both employees and organisations.

Our findings from the evaluation also highlight sector-wide trends based on our conversations with voluntary sector organisations. Considering the role of corporations, more work needs to be done to support the involvement of partnered organisations as well as to create an environment and recruitment process smaller organisations can find more accessible. In particular, power dynamics and capacity burden remain a prevalent issue for ESV schemes. On challenging these issues, the CV team and CBT may consider the ways it can use its influence to provide more of a basis for voluntary sector organisations to disrupt power structures in the sector.

06 APPENDICES

EVALUATION APPROACH

In phase 1, we distributed online surveys for employees and volunteer involving organisations to understand the demographics of employees who have participated in LEAP and those that have not, barriers to engagement for employees and VIOs, what good ESV looks like for VIOs. The employee survey saw 177 respondents, 67% of whom had not registered with LEAP compared to 33% who did. The organisations survey collected 37 respondents of which 12 had not partnered with LEAP, 9 have partnered with LEAP but are yet to receive volunteer engagement, while 16 VIOs have partnered with LEAP and received volunteers through the programme.

To ensure a wide reach for both surveys, the Corporate Volunteering team at COLC distributed the employee survey to all volunteers within the LEAP programme, to staff who have signed up to receive details about volunteering through their e-news, connected with staff diversity networks, posted it on their intranet homepage, on their internal social media feed and put up posters in some areas of their buildings. The organisation survey was sent to all organisations registered with the LEAP programme, sent out in a bulletin to all CBT funded partners, shared with businesses via CBT social media, and via TSIP social media.

In phase 2, we followed up our data collection with a roundtable of thirteen volunteer involving organisations – some who have participated in employee-supported volunteering, specifically with LEAP, and some who have not. Seven of these organisations self-identified as small charities (0-20 employees), with the rest being medium or large organisations.

The roundtable discussion asked the VIOs to identify their wants and needs from an ESV opportunity, as well as reflect on any barriers or friction areas that exist for them. From the surveys and roundtable, we produced an initial set of findings and recommendations. This was then tested in our 'Findings workshop' with COLC employees who reflected on our insights and further developed our recommendations.

ROUNDTABLE + FINDINGS WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

For our roundtable with organisations on 'Good Practice on Employee-Supported Volunteering' we took our participants on an idea creation journey to design their ideal ESV.

The findings workshop built on the roundtable activity to reflect on our insights and preliminary recommendations. The questions posed to COLC employees were:

1. How might we make it easier for employees at earlier stages in their career (Grades A-C) to register for LEAP?
2. How might we make team volunteering opportunities worthwhile for both employees and organisations where it's appropriate?
3. How might we raise awareness about LEAP in a way that has a wide reach?
4. How might we create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for VIOs to disrupt power dynamics?

The following slides are the jamboards from these workshops. Slides 37 and 38 are from the roundtable, while slides 40-43 are from the findings workshop.

Organisation's Roundtable Workshop

What are some non-negotiable features for your ESV?

Individual volunteer would need to show a personal interest in the charities objectives

It has to fit in with what we have in place already as a volunteer programme. We aren't going to create anything special for the corporate.

All volunteers must have a degree to volunteer

Must have regular communication - via meetings, email and opportunities to deliver online information sessions to promote our opportunity.

Understanding of essential confidentiality - e.g. the safeguarded nature of our venue / unable to take photos with youth members etc

A clear commitment to working with young people

That you will guarantee a certain number of volunteers to support an event, say 80%, so if you commit to 10 volunteers at least 8 will turn up on the day of those

What would make it successful?

Consistency volunteers - same people coming back

Clear terms of engagement/JD/role

Benefit to individuals involved - skills, knowledge, empathy, socialisation

Clear advantage to both charities and corporates in terms of a time saving, effective brokerage function

Genuine 'partnership' approach to remove the power imbalance discussed earlier

Longer term commitments

Opportunity to recruit individual volunteers from specific cultural / linguistic communities eg Bengali speaking

Maybe have DBS checking done by the ES volunteering programme prior to matching vols with opportunities?

Understanding of the impact volunteer support

Define parameters and flexible items of what your programme offers and includes

Clarity around minimum time commitment and whether there is an option for it to be extended if mutually agreed

What subjects you can tutor in. The volunteer can decide what subject - i.e. Maths, English, Chemistry

Time commitment for each particular volunteer opportunity. Flexible from one day to years

Willingness for volunteers to complete pre- and post- activity questionnaires

If you volunteer with us and give us the required hour per week, you can probably do that hour at any time that suits you and the client.

Who would you like to include? How can we make sure of this?

Would need to fulfil the same criteria we have for ethical donors etc

Ideally local companies, as we are concerned with the green spaces in west london, in particular the 3 boroughs we work in

Any businesses, organisations, professional institutions and universities - the larger the institution/business, the bigger their audience and reach.

Shared values, clarity around the type of businesses we'd like to work with

Any organisations that have similar mission and ethos to our charity..

STEM focused organisations

Organisation's Roundtable Workshop

What are some non-negotiable features for your ESV?

Funding

Long term ongoing assistance - at least 6 months, of, in our case, weekly support for an hour.

Time commitment - minimum of 20 weeks. Must engage with our training, onboarding and DBS checks.

Minimum commitment of 6 months

Clarity over the volunteering needs / what they want from the session and clarity over community partner needs to match those

Flexibility around activity-circumstances change quickly.

Volunteer agreement and expectations from individuals as a volunteers

Reliability - if they say they are going to turn up, they turn up. Any drop out - the donation is still paid.

What would make it successful?

Matching potential volunteers with interest in charities objectives

Clarity on other charitable partners; if they have a national education partner already we will refocus our vol opps away from that

Clarity as to HOW the volunteers are recruited; we can make the opportunities we need vols for work to suit that format.

Realistic expectation setting of the volunteering offer and requirements with back up from the corporate CSR team

Impact gathered from the event from beneficiary and volunteers

An understanding of what our organisation does (i.e. some basic research / understand our aims, values etc)

We make our opportunity as flexible as possible of when they can volunteer - days and times each week.

2 days minimum - one day at the beginning and one day a month later to work with the same YPs and observe their development, confidence levels etc

If the person coming has passion for what we do.

An understanding of how much time & effort it takes to organise a corporate volunteering day

Understanding the interests of the employee volunteers and what they hope to gain from the experience

Clarity around exactly what each side will

The volunteers are keen to engage in the activity - no looking at work emails!

Define parameters and flexible items of what your programme offers and includes

Extensive on boarding and a chance to volunteer 'on the front line'

Immensely rewarding work helping someone who is visually impaired. We ask only one hour of your time per week.

Socially responsible / ethical business partners

A mix of teams and individuals / mix of business skills and team challenge

One off and regular opportunities

Both team and individual volunteering

Enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff who understand why they are there

Flexibility of when individuals can volunteer each week - times.

Varied types of engagements that meet the needs of the organisation, not just the corporates

Organisations with a strong LGBTQ+ allyship so there is an immediate 'connect'

Partners who don't just want to tick a volunteering completed box. Enthusiasm to help the cause

Long term relationship with particular corporates

Any one who is interested or motivated to help young people understand what the world of work is like, from skills needed, careers choice, recruitment

Staff from different levels of the organisation and different roles

ROUNDTABLE ATTENDEES

1. Middlesex Association for Blind
2. Climate Ed
3. Hammersmith Community Gardens
4. Big Alliance
5. Young Enterprise
6. Sculpt UK
7. Access Project
8. The Entrepreneurs Club
9. Stephanie City Farm
10. Doctor's of the World UK
11. Link Up London
12. Free2be
13. St. John's Hospice

How might we make it easier for employees at earlier stages in their career (Grades A-C) to register for LEAP?

Encourage all line managers to make their reports aware of the LEAP opportunity

Introduce the concept in induction process

Creating a stronger commitment to volunteering for new starters and wider team

Allowing employees to recommend organisations for LEAP to use?

More team volunteering days (on condition that a payment is made to the hosting charity). At CBT team vol days are always oversubscribed and well received.

A volunteering bonus day. A third day of paid volunteering for this group of employees.

consider and look at options with the mgt around cost to the department ie if a Security Officer takes a V day the cost of covering on someone on OT

Holding short meetings every now and then to introduce employees to some of the organisations available through leap and create that initial relationship and pull factor to on board

Ensure there is an incentive for line managers to encourage their team to volunteer

Mix up style of communications to reach staff who may not be desk-based

A number of our Grade A-C colleagues are non desk based - communications on volunteer opps outside of the norm staff newsletter, intranet, etc

Choice. A broader range of volunteering opp's may increase engagement.

If we want to embed a culture of volunteering within the organisation, could it be built into objectives/ appraisal process?

Make it an expectation or at least strong recommendation that they should undertake volunteering in their first year - feed into objectives.

Staff have options of what tasks they can do at volunteering so it is a welcome break from usual working day

How might we make team volunteering opportunities worthwhile for both employees and organisations where it's appropriate?

Ensure all organisation are paid for hosting the volunteering day

Make payments to the hosting org the norm

Employees can share skill set with organisation so they can take advantage of their abilities

Ensure good match from the start in terms of skills/experience offered by organisation and VIOs needs.

As travel costs will incur to and from volunteering in and around London, perhaps subsidising travel costs for employees.

Maybe the organisation needs to set a precedent that the team of volunteers need to stick around until all tidying up is finished!

For employee benefit... Prioritise outdoor opp's to get employees out of the office and maximise wellbeing value of volunteering.

Create broader choice of volunteering opp's to maximise the success of a 'match' between volunteer and hosting org.

Set clear expectations from the beginning about any future funding arrangements between CoLC/ BHE and the organisation

Perhaps the organisations can be clear with what skills the employee volunteers will gain from their volunteering experience

Greater support for the organisations running volunteering day

Ensuring that there is a diverse range of opportunities and for people to learn things outside their initial scope and knowledge

Consider appointing a 3rd party org to broker relationships between COL employees more 'committed' to volunteering and VIO's. Creates quality, structured relationships

Separate organisations based on the different benefits they could provide for team volunteering

It would be nice if the volunteers are aware how much work the organisation puts in to hosting them as a team, so that they offer to stick around until the whole task is done

How might we raise awareness about LEAP in a way that has a wide reach?

Could we use screensavers/home screen?

More comms in the building - posters, visuals

More advertising around office space?

Regular comms (photos, videos, text)
Advertising should demonstrate the benefits

Use noticeboards and toilet doors

Posters in mess rooms

prioritise helping out grass roots orgs as they have access to the least resource

Stronger partnerships with high-profile charitable organisations (e.g., Prince's Trust)

case studies

Case studies

provide case studies of positive experiences

blog posts to raise interest

Use them in posters

drop the acronym - make it very simple to know what it is

Look at creative ways of communicating to those who are not predominantly desk based or do not have CoLC devices, eg. QR codes on posters for own devices,

Staff newsletters, mgmt briefings, team talks

QR codes allow people without a CoLC device to access things

Showcase a video on the intranet

The interesting bit is the opportunities, not so much the programme as a whole. Is there a standard item that introduces new opportunities?

Induction

videos on intranet of people's experiences

Example: showcase a great team volunteering event in an all-staff meeting

Top-down messaging

Part of staff induction process

Perk listed on job vacancies

Recognition for people who organise team vol days

Incorporate volunteering into coaching conversations that managers have with staff, or into appraisals - whilst making sure that it still feels voluntary

Using diversity networks and wellbeing ne
Reduce overwhelm - too many networks
Be mindful of people's voluntary time

Highlight opportunity in interview

How might we create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for VIOs to disrupt power dynamics?

