

Why work with a learning partner?

BBC
CHILDREN
IN NEED

About BBC Children in Need

- We work with organisations across the UK to create positive and lasting change for children and young people
- We have open core and project funding programmes and a range of partnership and proactive grant programmes
- As at April 2023, we are funding 1,784 projects to the value of £111M

Learning in our grantmaking strategy

- We will always use robust data and community insights to evidence how we work
 - When and where our experience is relevant, we will become more than just a funder - adding value to organisations through collaboration and by sharing skills and knowledge
 - We will support grantees to build networks and work together
- We want to enable organisations to learn and improve their activities, support and services. At the same time, we need to learn from grant-holding organisations to build our understanding of the whole system and ability to influence and embed good practice.

Why work with a learning partner?

Flexible

Where programmes run over multiple years and have various components, it can be beneficial to have a learning **partner** that is able to adapt methods and respond to learning opportunities as they arise.

Action-oriented/developmental

Ideally, learning should be embedded and shaping programme development in 'real-time'. Contrast with final 'looking back' report and recommendations.

Proportionate

Smaller grant programmes - avoiding a rigid evaluative process exploring outcomes. Instead, enabling organisations to share learning in a way that is proportionate to grant size.

Understanding complexity

Programmes are delivered in complex contexts - it is often challenging to attribute outcomes to a specific intervention. Learning partners can adopt an exploratory approach to understand unexpected outcomes or experiences.

Collaborative

Moving away from a model where solely the funder specifies what they want to learn about and moving towards a model where research is co-designed and organisations have spaces to share, learn, reflect and adapt with one another.

Examples

Youth Social Action Fund

Big Sky Wellbeing Programme

Youth Social Action Fund

The Programme:

- A £3 million fund to support organisations to embed youth social action across the UK. This fund will help to build children and young people's confidence and skills, empowering them to take an active and leading role in developing solutions to issues which affect their lives and their communities.

Learning and Evaluation Partner:

- Process and Impact Evaluation
- Learning 'deep dives'
- Network and learn sessions for grantees

Big Sky Wellbeing Programme

The Programme:

- Grants are for activities to support the mental health and wellbeing of children aged 8-13 years living in spatially isolated communities.
- Up to £5,000 for organisations working in rural, remote and island areas.

Learning Partner:

- Action Learning not an evaluation
- Attendees will be asked to bring real life problems, insights and stories to the group
- The Action Learning session (or set) is a series of conversations centred around a real problem, insight or story introduced by an attendee and reflected on by the whole group
- A good session will end with the group coming together around themes that emerge and agreeing what to do about those insights
- The Learning Partner continues to liaise after the sessions to understand how agreed actions have been followed up and whether any support is needed to complement this.

Key questions and challenges



- Who is learning?
- Learning and/or evaluation partner?
- What structure is in place for learning? e.g. planned questions, methods, set timeline, pre-planned outputs
- How do organisations learn?
- Is learning an end in itself?
- How can the Learning Partner most effectively build trust and develop relationships?