



Acknowledging Youths

Acknowledging Youths is a community interest company that supports young people in Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Westminster to succeed in the world of work. It does this by connecting those out of work, education or training with mentors, coaches and trainers who help them explore and pursue their goals.

Acknowledging Youths' CEO, Danny Barnes, came across JET online. Aware of the challenges of developing a measurement framework for a small charity staffed mainly by volunteers, he leapt at the chance to be involved.

JET has enabled him to realise his aim of measuring young people's journey from start to finish: *'previously, we mostly gathered operational data, for example, the number of young people who started the programme. We had no structured way of understanding how people progressed along it. JET has been instrumental in helping us do this.'*

Acknowledging Youths began with step one of the framework: developing a theory of change. The process provided a really clear summary of the project which made the task of prioritising outcomes and selecting the right tools straightforward. The charity was then able to develop a survey tailored to its work, with only minor adjustments to the standardised tools in the JET Pack, which it quickly began to use.

'The surveys received a positive reaction from everyone—staff, volunteers and young people', Danny says. *'We will continue to use them for the existing programme as well as implementing them from the start with new projects. We are looking to try and embed JET across the whole organisation, including mapping theories of change for all our projects.'*

The JET resources enabled Acknowledging Youths to implement a robust measurement approach despite a lack of internal expertise and resources. But its reliance on volunteers raises the important issue of continuity. The volunteer who led the work on developing the theory of change and implementing the questionnaires did a wonderful job, but has now left the organisation, leaving a gap in knowledge and the need to find a replacement.

Data analysis presents another challenge. The surveys generate lots of interesting data, but staff and volunteers do not possess the skills they need to get the most out of it. Organisations like Acknowledging Youths would benefit from support on how to analyse and report findings. An online tool could be the answer, Danny suggests: *'it would reduce use of paper and make data collection and analysis easier.'*

Acknowledging Youths is already using data on how young people progress through its programmes to develop and improve its work. It has also been able to demonstrate its value to funders, as Danny describes: *'all funders now look for organisations to demonstrate the outcomes they're working towards, and JET has helped us to do this to a standard we couldn't have otherwise achieved.'*