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This research aims to inform year 2 of the Step Up programme, through developing understanding of best practice in innovation in similar contexts, producing insights for applicants and decision makers in year 2.

**CONTEXT**

The “Step Up!” AstraZeneca Young Health Global Grants programme was launched in 2018 with the aim of extending the reach and impact of the AstraZeneca’s community investment activity in public health for young people.

It targeted innovative projects addressing public health outcomes, health promotion and health advocacy in line with WHO research.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

A theory of change was developed to ensure the programme maximised and focused on its intended impact.

These included impacts for beneficiaries, business and wider societal impacts.

The theory of change is set out at the end of this presentation.

**SMALL GRANTS**

The programme offered small grants (up to $10k) for projects focusing on early-stage innovation, using the NESTA innovation spiral framework.

Each applicant was asked to state which stage of the innovation spiral their project covered, also explaining what was new about their approach.

**THIS RESEARCH**

This research **scans the horizon** for best practice in relation to social innovation with a view to informing the programme strategy. It also aims to understand **what works in supporting tech innovations**.

Findings will be used to **inform our grant decisions** around what leads to innovation and social change.
HORIZON SCAN: FINDINGS

Our research found 4 themes that inform thinking on what works in funding social innovation programmes. These cover the need for tailored support, developing the innovator themselves, adopting a scaling “mindset” and having suitably focused measurement.

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<th>SUPPORT INNOVATION</th>
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<td>Innovations require different forms of support depending on their stage of development. The current design of the “Step up!” programme is best aligned to methods which target stages 2-4 of the innovation spiral: accelerators, prototyping, scaling and improving standards of evidence.</td>
<td>Funders should invest in the innovation and the innovator. Financing is only one aspect of support. Business management, capacity building, strengthening networks and marketing and communication capacity are crucial for success and scaling (growing) innovations. Many new ventures fail, and so it makes sense to take a longer term approach to supporting innovators.</td>
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<td>Tech innovations typically need extra support. Software development and app-building require expertise, time and capacity, often requiring guaranteed longer-term funding.</td>
<td>By providing non-financial support and development opportunities for young innovators, “Step Up!” has potential to create more social impact. Even if their current project fails, young people might use the experience to come up with future ideas.</td>
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<th>FOCUS ON SCALING</th>
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<td>A longer term, strategic focus is essential for successful scaling. If scaling is an objective, then innovations should be clear from the outset where they intend to take their project, perhaps asking “what's the more ambitious objective this innovation seeks to achieve?”.</td>
<td>Setting the right goals and marking clear milestones for an innovation are essential for tracking progress and building evidence.</td>
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<td>Lessons from public health innovation demonstrate that partnerships with public services help innovations to avoid duplication, become more immersed in the problem they're addressing, whilst creating a clear pathway for referral.</td>
<td>However, onerous or poorly-evidenced measures waste time and money. Innovators need to make sure to only measure things which are meaningful. Best practice in impact measurement can be applied to the programme, encouraging applicants to show they understand value, growth and impact.</td>
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In an operating model to “make social innovation stick”, former Chief Innovation Officer at USAID, Ann Mei Chang, shares insights based on interviews with over 200 mission-driven organisations for her book “Lean Impact”. For social innovation to stick 3 things are key - goal, agility and markers:

- **Innovations** need a “measurable, audacious goal” based on what is needed for lasting (not incremental) change.
- **Agility** emphasises the need to accelerate learning through feedback loops, measuring what is quick, meaningful and actionable.
- **Markers** are meaningful measures of performance, which focus on answering questions in three key areas: value, growth and impact (see below).

**Examples**

Fund for Shared Insight's **Listen for Good** seeks to build high-quality feedback loops between non-profits and their clients. Their small grants and technical assistance help client-facing non-profits implement a five-question survey based on the Net Promoter System. Nurse-Family Partnership, a non-profit that supports first-time mothers, heard that their clients wanted more flexibility in scheduling appointments. As a result, they **fast-tracked a tele-health pilot** as a backup option when busy schedules or weather prevented in-person home visits.

**Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator** is committed to tackling the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa by matching disadvantaged youth who have never held a formal job with employers seeking qualified talent.

Many workforce development organizations are satisfied with celebrating the number of people trained or placed, Harambee focuses on retention in jobs, following-up their job seekers via text messages every four months for two years to keep tabs on critical outcomes such as retention rates and promotions.

When it became clear that high transport costs were a major factor in attrition, Harambee increased their emphasis on proximity when making candidate placements.
KEY FINDINGS

The Inclusive Economy Partnership (UK Government and NESTA - the innovation foundation), aimed to support innovation with a clear focus on collaboration and learning.

It is an accelerator + grant finance for model development, with introductions to corporate and civil society organisation partners - they call this ‘Partnership in innovation’.

The model below illustrates the importance of non-financial support and commitment from other actors in the system to help the innovators succeed.

IMPACT AND APPROACH

Well regarded and successful accelerator supporting 18 innovations over 6 months, including £20k funding each.

At the end of September 2018, social innovators estimate that they have generated £650,000 in grant support/ income over the six-month programme – above and beyond what they would normally generate in that period.

In 2018/19 50,000 additional people will now benefit from projects in three priority areas of social need:
- fairer and more informed access to financial services;
- access to services that support mental health, and
- improving young people’s access to the job market.

The Partnership placed a strong emphasis on non-financial support, including building networks of delivery partners, support to build management skills, scaling and building capacity as well as support through communications and events.
The Leading Edge fund focuses on tech solutions, recognising the need for innovators to be supported through failure and to focus on future potential and ideas.

**KEY FINDINGS**

The Leading Edge Fund reports these lessons from funding social tech projects:

- **Give space** - The fund supports fellows to think (and act) big by providing general support funds. Flexible, unrestricted support allows fellows the space to reflect and focus creativity on pursuing their boldest ideas.

- **Time to fail** - To get rid of restrictions and requirements that often stifle long-term thinking and ground-breaking ideas, the fund does not require measured outcomes. Fellows share their failures and successes with their cohort and with us during regular retreats.

- **Support the leader and not just the project** - Fund is agnostic when it comes to affiliation. Fellows can be leaders or founders of staffed nonprofit organizations, solo operators, employees of public systems, or individual activists. Fund focuses on potential and ideas.

- **Movements thrive on connections** - Fund aims to foster a network of activists who can support each other rather than compete. Non-financial support including retreats where fellows share ideas, get hands-on training to build their capacity, seek other funding & develop personally. Fellows also have had the opportunity to collaborate on issues and projects during retreats.

**ABOUT THE FUND**

Leading Edge Fund is a three-year fellowship launched by the Rosenberg Foundation and the Hellman Foundation in 2016 to support cutting-edge, social change ideas.

The Fund gives grants to encourage tech solutions and community leaders, funding $250,000 in general support over three years to take on pervasive inequity and justice within communities in California, US.

Grantees are called “fellows” and receive individualized technical assistance in program development, fundraising and strategic communications, executive coaching, and annual convenings and networking opportunities.

The focus is on the leaders, rather than the success of their idea, accepting the risk that some of their ideas may fall short, but future ideas may flourish.
EXAMPLE FOUR: STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE

NESTA have a long-established programme to understand the role of evidence in social change. An appropriate standard of evidence should be used for promising ideas that might lack measurement expertise or investment.

KEY FINDINGS

NESTA have a long-established programme focusing on “useful evidence” in social and public policy.

They have developed a Standards of evidence framework which reflects the reality that different organisations have variable access to useful data, evidence and proof of impact.

This model helps address important innovation questions, such as:
- Is an innovation doing any good? Is it even doing harm?
- Is the status quo just as good as the innovation? It provides a robust framework for choosing the right approach to understand whether an innovation is working or showing promise.

For “Step Up!” a key consideration when assessing applications and deciding on awards is what standard of evidence the programme can realistically seek, without constraining potential innovations and innovators?

Giving guidance to potential applicants enables them to consider the potential impact of their project and – if necessary – look to create better evidence as part of the project.

THE FRAMEWORK

The robustness of the data and evidence for early-stage and new interventions is unlikely to be strong.

For example, a level 5 would require a manualised model that has demonstrated that it works, based on more than one independent evaluation. Levels 1 and 2 seems more suited to innovation projects.
CONCLUSIONS

- Funding innovation projects needs to reflect the context and the support needs of the innovator.
- Innovations require different forms of support depending on their stage of development.
- Funders should invest in the innovation and the innovator.
- A longer term, strategic focus is essential for successful scaling.
- Innovators should only measure meaningful “markers” of value.
- “Step Up!” will be taking account of these findings where possible.
THEORY OF CHANGE FOR “STEP UP!”

The thinking in this report is being reflected in the programme theory of change

**INPUTS**
- Programme aims and structured application process
- AstraZeneca engagement
- Small grants

**OUTPUTS**
- Early stage, innovative projects
- Led by, involving young people
- Focusing on health promotion and NCD risk factors

**OUTCOMES**
- Case studies
- Promising approaches
- Potential future collaborations
- Community of social innovators empowered to do more

**INTENDED IMPACT**
- Extended health and wellbeing reach for beneficiaries
- Positive impact for young people involved
- Future innovations by innovators
- Learning about what works