

Young people in policy-making – brief for learning partner

Background

In January 2020 we launched a call for proposals for work to support young people to influence policy that affects them, and so redress power imbalances in how policy is made. More information on the call-out objectives, priorities and eligibility can be found here: <https://www.blagravetrust.org/our-work/funding-young-people-in-policy-making/>.

We are looking for a learning partner who can work alongside ourselves and funded partners to support them to act, reflect and improve their work as a cohort. The focus will simultaneously be on facilitating partners to reflect and learn about their own work and act on what they find, and on synthesising the information that comes out of that reflection to inform a wider audience of policymakers, facilitators of young people and young people themselves.

Access to people and information

Partners will be funded to work together as a cohort, and will come together at three points over the first year to share approaches and learning. Helping facilitate these meetings and supporting partners to reflect and improve on their work will be a key part of the learning partner role, whilst gathering data and making connections.

The learning partner will also be supported to set up site visits and conversations with partner staff, young people and policymakers involved in the funded projects.

The Blaggrave team will be able to provide information on the processes and models that partners are using to create platforms for young people to influence policy; the policy issues they are working on and the outcomes are they aiming for.

The policy manager at Blaggrave will also look at what other sources of evidence and examples of models for youth influencing exist, with a view to determining whether there would be value in some international literature review and/or future more in-depth research on this to sit alongside the learning work.

Learning questions

Our starting point for questions to be addressed through this work is outlined below, based on our understanding of the field and initial conversations with current Blaggrave partners and potential future partners. However, these will depend on final decisions on what gets funded, as well as input from those partners on what they would prioritise for this learning piece. We propose that to ensure full joint ownership over the learning, this should be discussed and agreed at the first convening.

Immediate (initial year):

1. What are partners doing (what models for creating change, what policy issues in focus, what policy outcomes being pursued)?
2. What are they learning about how young people can have policy impact, and what changes are they making to their work as a result?
3. How are young people being supported to influence?
4. How does this support affect their experiences of being involved in policy-making processes?
5. How useful is the funding: what level and type of funding is needed to support this work; how can we maximise the impact of our resources in years to come.

Longer term (groundwork to be laid in initial year so we can answer these questions in the second/third year of funding)

6. What factors lead to policy impact when young people are involved?
7. (How) do policy decisions look different when young people with experience of relevant issues have been involved in making those decisions?

We want to ensure that young people have a positive experience of this work and to learn about how to best support them to do so, but an evaluation of impact 'on' young people in terms of their personal and skill development is not in scope for this learning work.

The audience

We are committed to ensuring that what is learnt is shared and has an impact beyond the immediate boundaries of the funding programme.

There are three potential audiences for this work:

1. Organisations supporting young people to influence policy: we want to support those already doing this work and those interested in starting to learn about and build on good practice
2. People involved in making policy more widely: to learn more about the impact of working alongside young people in this way, and how to do it well
3. Ourselves and other funders interested in this type of work: how can we best target and structure limited resources to have impact in this area

Any output from this work should be accessible to young people, but we are not aiming for it to be in itself a resource for young people looking to influence policy.

What we are looking for

We are seeking an individual or organization to act as our learning partner, who has:

- Knowledge and credibility in the fields of policy-making processes and of working alongside young people in relevant spaces

And is:

- Skilled in a range of research and facilitation methodologies
- Analytical and reflective
- Comfortable facilitating groups of adult professionals and young people at convenings
- A skilled listener, and able to draw together, analyse and present back what they hear
- Understanding of our objectives and priorities, while able and willing to challenge us and work alongside funded partners to determine what we can achieve with this learning work and how best to go about it

Timelines

- Learning brief published/open for proposals: w/c 7th Feb
- (Deadline for grant proposals: 25th Feb)
- Deadline for learning partner proposals: 9th March
- 16th March
- Conversations with learning partner applicants: w/c 26th March
- (grant funding decisions made by early April)

- Learning partner decided by mid-April: as soon as possible after grant funding awarded.

The initial learning partner contract will be for one year, with the expectation that we extend for a further two years depending on the timescales of the work being funded. We would hope to use the findings from the first year of the programme to inform any future iterations of this funding.

Budget

Up to £30,000 p/a.

Budgets should include supporting set-up and attending 3x convenings over the course of the year, which would ideally happen face to face.

Next steps

Please contact Philippa Knott Kos (Philippa.kos@blagravetrust.org) with your proposal by 9th March. We would like to see an overview of how you would approach the work, your skills and credentials, and details of two referees in no more than 1,500 words. Your overview should cover:

- Your approach to this work and how you would structure it, including budgeting for different elements
- Your reflections on the research questions and whether/how you would tackle them
- Your experience and knowledge of policy making and youth leadership/participation
- Your recommendations for how we structure and release this work to ensure maximum usefulness to the audiences mentioned above
- Examples of your track record of carrying out work of this nature (can be submitted as links or attachments).

We are likely to follow up with additional questions and a virtual or face-to-face conversation to discuss your proposal further.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have before submitting your overview. Please contact Philippa at the above address to set up a call.