

MAYOR OF LONDON

**London Community
Story: Researching
Community
Collecting during
COVID-19**

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**Greater London Authority
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Executive Summary

This report looks at 160 projects and activities which have been identified as having collected and recorded Londoners' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic through creative and non-traditional material. Initiated by a wide range of organisations and institutions, the analysis of these projects and activities provides information on trends, patterns and gaps on target audiences, themes, locations and other factors.

The majority of gaps identified are seen in groups of people and communities whose were less involved in projects and activities and whose voices were not extensively targeted through projects and activities. Children and young people's experiences tend to be more prevalent than older people's in the gathered material. Ethnic minority groups, who have disproportionately been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, are less targeted in collecting COVID projects than initially expected, especially London South Asian and South East Asian communities. Similarly, vulnerable people, such as prison populations, sex workers, LGBTQ+ communities, women, victims of abuse who are generally more vulnerable to COVID-19 related mortality and consequent negative, social and psychological impacts of lockdowns and other restrictions, are rarely targeted in collecting projects and activities. These outcomes, amongst others, would suggest that the GLA Community Engagement Team should work with relevant organisations to gather missing experiences and explore other forms of non-traditional collecting practices

Considering the substantial number of projects which local councils have initiated or supported/collaborated on with other organisations and institutions in their respective boroughs, it is proposed that the London Community Story Programme could be expanded and extended to work with London local authorities.

Lastly, the wealth of information that has been gathered, through many diverse and creative materials by an extensive range of London institutions and organisations, leads to the recommendation of launching a London Community Story accessible database (in addition to, or separate from, the database for those awarded the grant). Such a database could be accessed by policy makers, funding bodies and civil society organisations, institutions, organisations and individuals for work or leisure reasons. This vast amount of qualitative data could influence and provide relevant information for the 9 Recovery Missions, inspire other institutions and organisations and increase community engagement between governing bodies and Londoners.

Project Brief

The Community Engagement team at the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned this report to identify and examine past and present projects which involve collecting Londoners experiences of COVID-19 through a variety of creative and non-traditional materials. The purpose of the report is to:

- provide an overview of projects and activities which record Londoners COVID-19 stories and experiences.
- outline who is responsible for these projects and activities (individuals, museums, community groups, charities, community interest groups, non-profits, other institutions and organisations).
- analyse the voices of individuals/groups/communities targeted in the projects and activities.
- highlight obvious gaps in the collected data which can inform future programmes
- geographically map out projects and other activities which record COVID-19 stories and experiences across Greater London.

The data provides insight into trends and patterns in COVID-19 collecting projects and activities that have been carried out in London from March 2020 to March 2021. Reflections and final suggestions on how to navigate these projects and activities for specific next steps in the Community-Led Recovery Programme, targeted missions, suggestions etc. will be discussed later in this report. In particular, this report provides information relevant to the London Community Story (LCS) Programme, one of the two strands of the Community-Led Recovery programme.

Project Context

The Community-Led Recovery Programme was designed to address the health and social inequalities and injustices that emerged during and due to the pandemic, by giving communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 the opportunity to voice their experiences to shape London's recovery. This is being done through two grant schemes proposed by the GLA:

- **Community-Led Action Grant** offers grants of up to £9,000 to initiate social action projects which gather new insights.
- **London Community Story Grant** offers grants of up to £1,500 to organisations with existing projects which capture Londoners' experiences of COVID-19, supporting them to be presented and shared to a wider audience.

The application deadline for both grants was the 19th of February 2021 and the workshops for the successful grantees are to take place in spring 2021. Twenty community organisations with existing projects which capture Londoners' experiences of COVID-19 have been awarded the London Community Story (LCS) Grant, helping them to present and share their creative material with a wide audience.

There are multiple benefits of recognising, supporting, collecting and analysing this type of existing material. Firstly, this approach enables communities who are less represented in traditional data to have their stories highlighted and to share them using their medium of choice. Secondly, it provides policy makers, funding bodies and civil society organisations who are seeking data on the impact of COVID-19 on London's diverse communities with a ready pool of qualitative data. Thirdly, the creative and non-traditional material (examples include films, poems, photographs, diaries, drawings etc.) introduces a range of data which presents facts and figures, but also incorporates the emotions, feelings, cultural values, views, needs and aspirations of Londoners which are often absent in quantitative data. This type of qualitative data renders the adverse and disproportionate effects of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis on London communities more tangible and visible, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and fair recovery programme.

The LCS programme intends to offer those involved in collecting projects guidance and support with processes of interpretation and analyses. This is to ultimately empower the voices collected in projects to influence the London Recovery process and the COVID-19 Recovery Missions, as well as other policy makers, funders and civil society organisations.

The 9 Recovery Missions were formulated by London's business and community groups together with the Mayor and leaders of London Councils for all of London and aim to work towards a fairer, greener and more resilient London. These are:

- **A Green New Deal** - Tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all.
- **A Robust Safety Net** - By 2025, every Londoner is able to access the support they need to prevent financial hardship.
- **High Streets for All** - Deliver enhanced public spaces and exciting new uses for underused high street buildings in every Borough by 2025, working with London's diverse communities.
- **A New Deal for Young People** - By 2024 all young people in need are entitled to a personal mentor and all young Londoners have access to quality local youth activities.
- **Helping Londoners into Good Work** - Support Londoners into good jobs with a focus on sectors key to London's recovery.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing** - By 2025 London will have a quarter of a million wellbeing ambassadors, supporting Londoners where they live, work and play.

- **Digital Access for All** - Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025.
- **Healthy Food, Healthy Weight** - By 2025 every Londoner lives in a healthy food neighbourhood.
- **Building Strong Communities** - By 2025, all Londoners will have access to a community hub ensuring they can volunteer, get support and build strong community networks.

Project Relevance

The relevance of this additional LCS research report is to explore projects and activities which collect COVID-19 stories through creative material that include and go beyond those who applied and were aware of the LCS Grant. The LCS Grant was open to all user-led community, voluntary, faith, cultural, grassroots organisations, whereas this study wishes to incorporate projects and activities initiated by a wider range of London institutions and organisations, including charities, universities, museums, local authorities, community and faith groups, community interest companies and non-profits. The aim is to create an overview which includes all types of collecting projects, in addition to other activities which record Londoners' voices.

This report acknowledges that one of the intended features of the LCS Programme (and the Recovery Programme in general) is to specifically focus on London communities who were most adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and those who cannot be reached through mass engagement because they face barriers such as racism, digital exclusion, language, insecure immigration status and mistrust of public institutions. Arguably, extending the scope to all institutions could weaken this overall aim. However, providing an overview of data allows these more targeted and specific projects to be analysed in their broader London social context. Equally important to note is that institutions, through their community engagement efforts, target community and group experiences. This is often done through co-curation, dialogues and other activities, ensuring that communities and groups can tell their stories through their medium of choice.

These benefits are seen to be particularly relevant for two reasons:

(The following claims are based on data and information from the Rapid Evidence Review, 2020, conducted by the University of Manchester and commissioned by the GLA, and the Map of Community Views generated by the GLA Community Engagement team with London groups and community leaders).

1) To highlight the myriad of (disproportionately adverse) experiences of Londoners during COVID-19

London has been one of the cities worst affected by COVID-19 in terms of both health and the broader impact on existing social and economic inequalities. The risks connected to COVID-19 infection, complications and mortality, as well as in relation to the negative economic, social and psychological impacts of the response to the pandemic are suffered unevenly across protected characteristics and socioeconomic positions. Moreover, COVID-19 and its consequences builds upon and amplifies existing inequalities through lockdowns and restrictions. The diversity of London's population in relation to ethnicity, migration, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation and socioeconomic position make these issues particularly pressing in London. A few examples of these systemic inequalities include, Black and Asian Minority Ethnic communities (BAME) who are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 due to their line of work, often being frontline jobs. Data shows that the virus has a deep impact on groups such as Somali, Bengali and Pakistani Londoners particularly because of housing arrangements challenges. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities struggle with the challenges around education. Simultaneously, there has been an upsurge of hate crimes, racism and discrimination towards specific groups in London which include East and South East Asian Londoners, London's Islamic communities, London Orthodox Jewish communities and LGBTQ+ communities.

2) To collect representative data

Limited evidence tackling the issues mentioned above is currently emerging from academic, think tank and policy sources. With the exception of data and reports on ethnic inequalities, which itself is limited, little attention and funding is currently being granted to comprehend how the pandemic has impacted those with other protected characteristics. There is almost no research on the experiences and issues faced by disabled people, homeless people, LGBTQ+ people and other vulnerable groups. This report aims to gather experiences that were voiced by or in collaboration with groups with a wide and inclusive range of Londoners.

Research Approach

An exploratory approach was adopted to gather data on the projects and activities which record Londoners' COVID-19 experiences and stories. This investigative methodology allowed the scope of the study to be more clearly defined once the data collection had already begun, permitting the data to guide the method. The initial material gathered enabled patterns to emerge, highlighting trends and gaps, which cross referenced with existing literature and data, helped steer the initial broad search in a more targeted manner. The overall research process can be seen as a funnel-like approach. This dynamic approach was deemed necessary due to the short time frame of the research.

Data Collection

In accordance with the rules and regulations outlined by GOV UK, all research was conducted remotely. The initial aim was to discover what collecting projects had been carried out through an online search and then contact organisers/those involved to find out more about their endeavours, whilst simultaneously contacting institutions and organisations without online evidence of collecting programmes to see if they had been involved in recording experiences. However, this proved not to be feasible due to the restricted time and the difficulty in exchanging information in a relatively quick fashion (due to limited time, people being busy, on leave, furloughed and cultural and heritage organisations and institutions being physically closed).

For this reason, all data was gathered through an online search which specifically targeted organisations and institutions with pre-existing/ongoing collecting projects and activities. Occasionally, other online sources which discussed projects were used, however, the majority of data was collected by exploring the specific organisation and institution website. Specifically, collecting projects and activities could be found under 'project' sections and 'blog' and 'news' sections if they had already been archived. Occasionally, social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) were used to retrieve and guide information.

The decision to focus not only on projects which specifically set out to collect COVID experiences was a result of an initial search, where it became immediately evident that organisations and institutions were recording COVID-19 stories for other creative and functional purposes. These include competitions, well-being sessions, festivals, information videos, online programmes etc.

Due to the large volume of material which can be discovered doing an online search and the short time frame in which the research was conducted, collecting data was loosely divided into two often overlapping phases.

Phase 1 Systematic Overview

In the first research phase, all London museums and universities were scrutinised. This was done due to a convenience factor as their projects and activities generally tend to be more easily accessible and discoverable. Simultaneously, community organisations, non-profits, community interest companies and charities in every London local authority were to be identified, listed and then researched. However, it soon became apparent that the latter method was too time-consuming for one researcher due to the high volume of organisations per London local authority and risked leaving out organisations and institutions which operate across London boroughs. An initial list of 60/70 projects were detected in this first phase.

Through the analysis of this collected data a series of categories, patterns, trends and gaps emerged leading to a more targeted and rapid approach in the second phase.

Phase 2 Targeted Approach

Combining the initial information from existing findings and data (*specifically, the Rapid Evidence Review 2020, University of Manchester & GLA, Map of Community Views, GLA Community Engagement Team, demographic data from GLA Data Store*) the following categories were identified adopted as filters when conducting the online search:

- Age (Children, Youth, Older People)
- Ethnic Minority
- Health & Disability
- Religion & Faith (Christian communities, Jewish communities, Muslim communities, Sikh communities, Buddhist communities, Hindu communities and other)
- Vulnerable groups (Homeless people, Isolated people, LGBTQ+, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants, Sex Workers, Women)
- Low income & Unemployed
- London Borough/ Area

An example of how this worked was: in the first phase it became evident that the majority of projects targeted children and youth rather than older people. The correlation between digital exclusion, isolation and older people was mentioned in multiple sources. Therefore, organisations (primarily non-profits and community groups) whose beneficiaries are older

people were targeted. By doing this online search a couple of collecting projects and activities were discovered, however, remained few.

To define the features of the categories this report followed the institutions and organisations' involved in collecting projects and activities definition. For example, older people are understood to be those over 65 year olds as specified by the majority of discovered collecting projects and activities.

Data Analysis

As highlighted in the section above the analysis of the collected data occurred simultaneously with the collection of the data. Ultimately all data was organised in a table (Google Sheets) to inspect the following categories:

- Type of organisation or institution
- Target Group
- Material type
- Theme/topic
- London Recovery Mission it may correspond to
- Which lockdown/period of the pandemic it corresponds to
- The geographical location (London Borough/ Area) the project was done in or intended for
- If project/ activity consciously intended to collect experiences or did inadvertently

These were chosen in accordance with the project brief, previous findings and data and results from data trends.

The data has been quantitatively organised in tables and graphs to illustrate trends, patterns and gaps (*Section 3*).

A total of **160** projects and activities are considered in this report.

It is important to note that all information was gathered from online sources and not directly from individuals and communities involved in the projects. Therefore, data may not be up to date and may be incorrect. Additionally, the short time frame of this study implies that some other important projects and activities are very likely to have been missed. However, the double approach provides grounds for confidence in the initial hypothesis, conclusions and suggestions drawn. All reflections and discussions (*Sections 4,5,6*) are exclusively based upon the data collected from the 160 projects and cross referenced with GLA data and reports, thus implying that collecting other data from projects and activities may alter the findings.

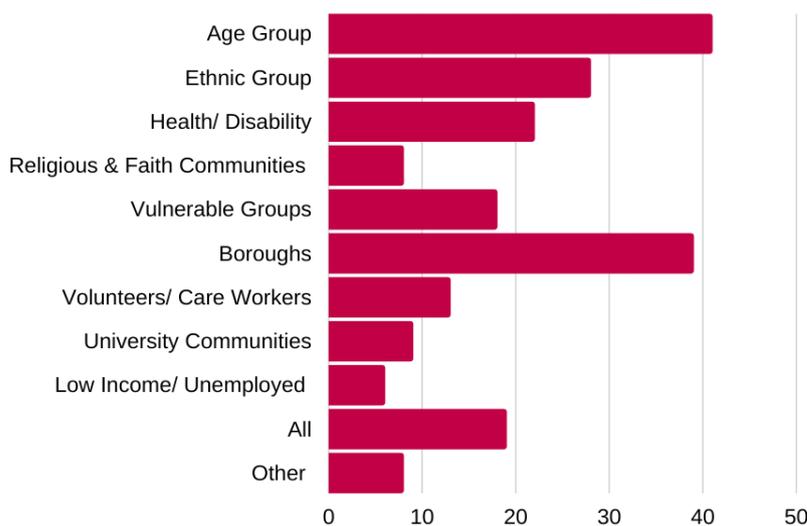
Findings

Target Groups

This section looks at the participants, audiences and groups who were involved in and/or took part in the projects and activities and whose experiences and stories are recorded. These groups have been identified and clustered together as the following for sharing a defining characteristic, they are: **Age Group, Ethnic Minority Group, People with Health Conditions and Disabilities, Religious & Faith Communities, Vulnerable Groups, Borough Residents.**

It is important to note such clear-cut categorisation is not always a complete reflection of someone’s social identity, which is often composed by overlapping and intersecting defining features, identifying multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage. The interconnected nature of social categorisation means that the overall sum of target groups is more than number of projects, as a project may be analysed in relation to two or more target groups (for example, multiple projects focus on BAME women and therefore provides data for two subgroups, Age Group and Ethnic Minority Group and thus increasing the prejudices and inequalities endured). Moreover, many projects and activities participants focused on various target groups.

Number of Projects per Target group



AGE GROUP

Children	8
Youth	29
Middles Aged People	1
Older People	7

ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP

British Black African	2
British Black Caribbean	4
Somali	1
South Asian	1
Bangladeshi	2
ESEA	1
Korean and Tamil	1
Filipinos	1
Arab	1
Latin American	3
Irish	1
GRT	1
BAME	10

Some of the ethnic minority groups mentioned belong to other broader groups also mentioned above. The decision to note them down as individual categories was to avoid generalising.

RELIGIOUS & FAITH COMMUNITIES

Christian community	1
Muslim community	3
Jewish community	1
Mixed faith groups	3

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS & DISABILITIES

Autism, ADHD	3
Learning difficulty, Dyslexia	1
Mental Disorder, Dementia	1
Learning Disabilities	7
Physical Disabilities	2
Mental Health	5
Physical Health	7

BOROUGH RESIDENTS

Barking & Dagenham	1
Barnet	2
Bexley	1
Brent	2
Bromley	2
Camden	4
Ealing	2
Enfield	1
Greenwich	1
Hackney	1
Haringey	1
Harrow	1
Havering	1
Hillingdon	1
Hounslow	2
Islington	1
Kingston upon Thames	1
Lambeth	1
Lewisham	1
Newham	1
Redbridge	1

Richmond upon Thames	3
Sutton	1
Tower Hamlets	2
Wandsworth	2

*projects which specifically target communities and residents who live within a specific Borough or in London.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Homeless People	2
Isolated People	3
LGBTQ+	2
Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants	4
Sex workers	2
Women	5

VOLUNTEERS, CARERS, HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Carers	7
Health Care Workers	5
Deaf Interpreter	1
Volunteers	3

REMAINING GROUPS

University Communities	9
Low Income, Unemployed	6
All**	19
Other***	8

** All = a non-specific target group, a project and activity open to anybody.

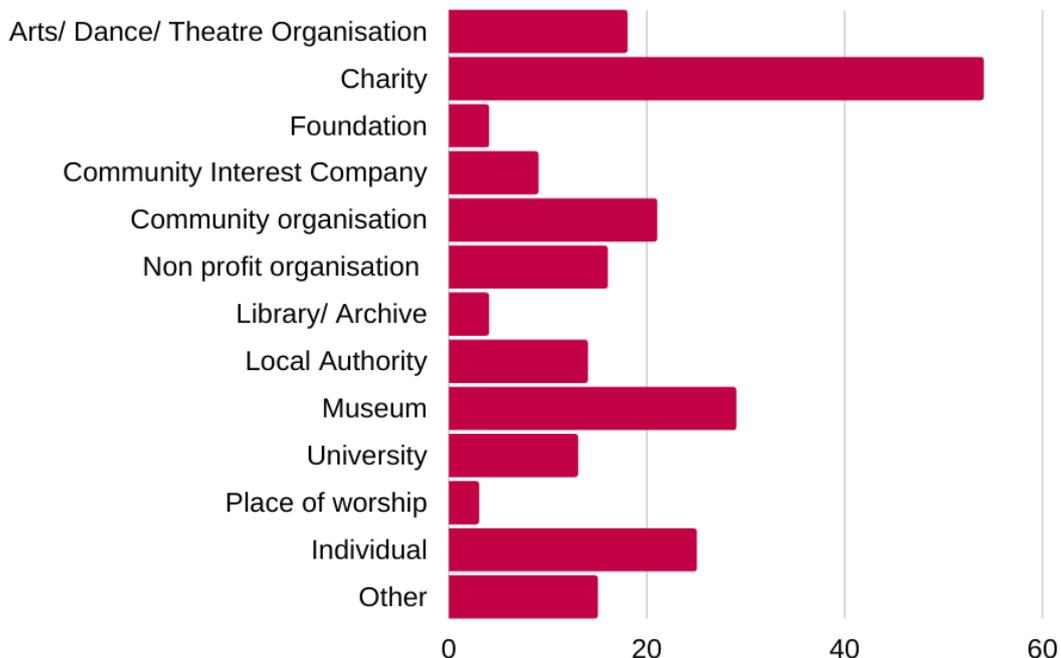
*** these are: artists & artistic communities, community leaders, Freemasons, mixed staff & N/A

Types of Institution and/or Organisation

This section illustrates the type of organisations and institutions who organised and/or proposed projects and activities. These are: Arts, Dance & Theatre organisations, Charity, Foundation, Community Interest Company, Community organisation, Non profit organisation, Library/Archive, Local Authority (Council), Museum, University, Place of worship, Individual and Other (businesses, broadcasters, education centre, film institute, gallery, housing organisation, radio channel and print media).

It is important to clarify that many organisations and institutions can be in multiple of the categories above. In total 47 of the projects and activities were organised by organisations and institutions who belong to more than one of the above categories. For this reason the sum of the different types of institutions and organisations does not correspond with the number of projects.

Also, the type of initiator was ascertained using an online search rather than contacting organisations and institutions directly, rendering this data less reliable.



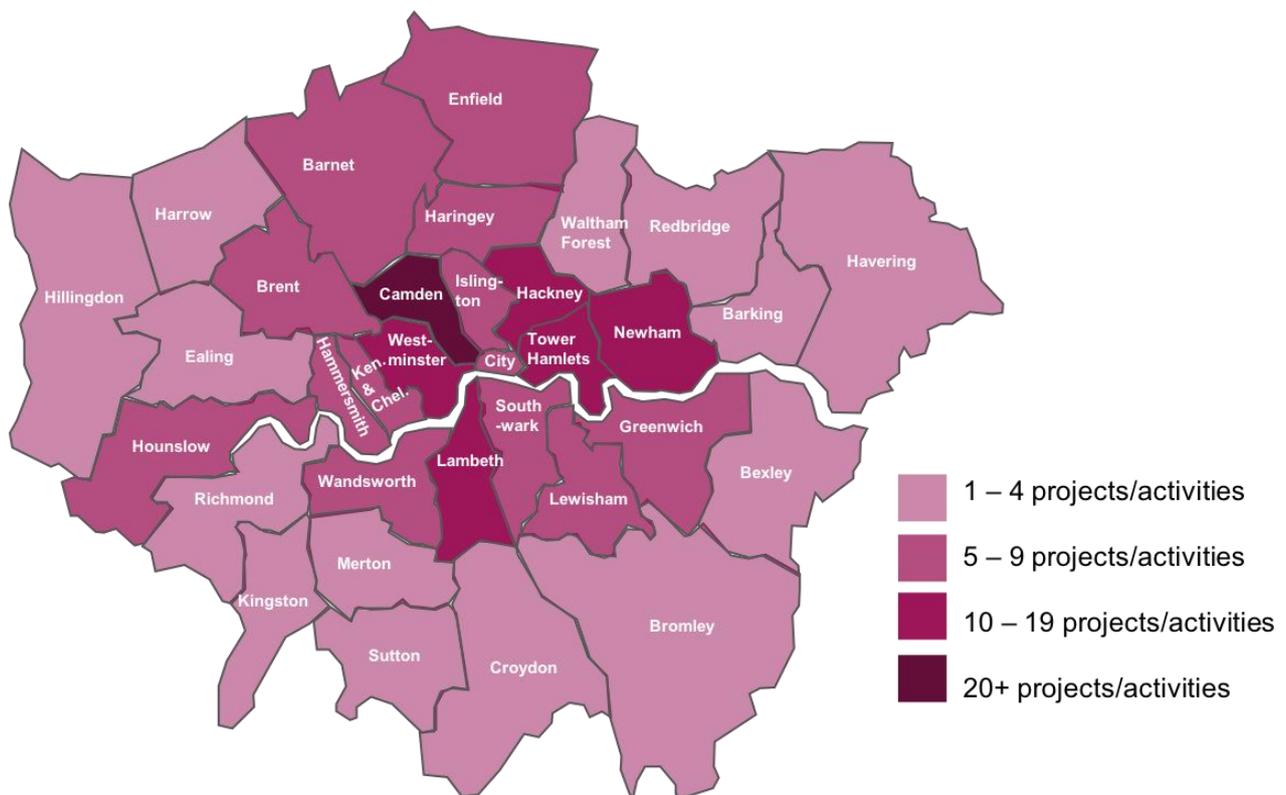
Project/ Activity Location

This section illustrates the area of London (local government district) the projects and activities target. A small number of projects do not necessarily correspond to where the projects and activities took place as this information was not easily discoverable, but to the location of the institution and/or organisation.

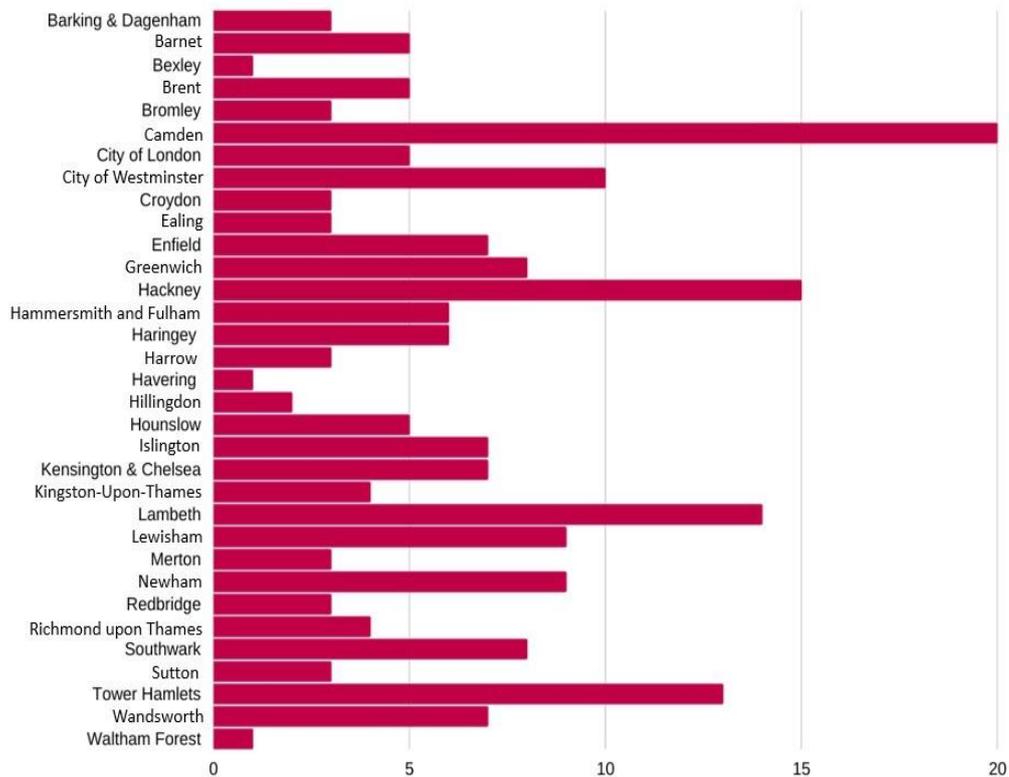
The research attempted to focus exclusively on projects and activities based in London. However, a minor number of projects which include Londoners’ experiences also include UK and International experiences.

A total of 28 projects focus on London as a whole and 25 projects are spread across multiple boroughs. Projects in multiple boroughs consider all boroughs in the final sum, therefore, the sum of the projects per borough is more than the number of projects.

Map of projects/activities per borough*



*Excluding projects and activities which operate across all of London



Breakdown of Projects/Activities per Borough

Barking & Dagenham	3
Barnet	5
Bexley	1
Brent	5
Bromley	3
Camden	20
City of London	5
Croydon	3
Ealing	3
Enfield	7
Greenwich	8
Hackney	15
Hammersmith & Fulham	6
Haringey	6
Harrow	3
Havering	1

Hillingdon	2
Hounslow	5
Islington	7
Kensington & Chelsea	7
Kingston upon Thames	4
Lambeth	14
Lewisham	9
Merton	3
Newham	9
Redbridge	3
Richmond upon Thames	4
Southwark	8
Sutton	3
Tower Hamlets	13
Waltham Forest	1
Wandsworth	7
Westminster	10

Pan London	28
London, UK	9
London, UK, Other	3

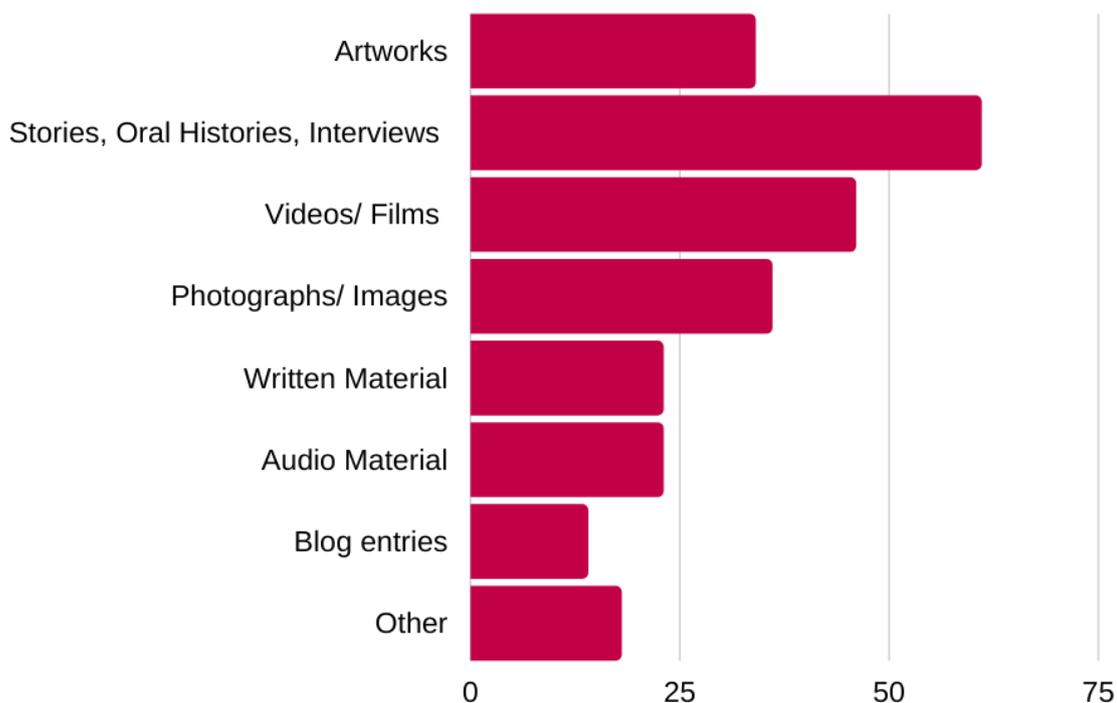
Material/Content

This section illustrates the type of material that has been collected both in terms of type and theme/content. It explores the question of whether the content was purposefully collected to be recorded or not. Lastly, it briefly looks at the connection between projects and the GLA 9 Recovery Missions.

Material type

A vast array of different types of creative and non-traditional material were collected in the 160 projects and activities and have been organised in these categories: **Artworks** (animations, drawings, art installations, paintings, sculptures, illustrations, sketches, digital artworks and drawings, digital collage, self-portraiture and fine art), **Stories, Oral Histories & Interviews, Videos & Films** (both short and long, documentaries, series of videos and films), **Photographs & Images, Written material** (diary entries, letters, poems, written pieces, reflections, prose pieces), **Audio material** (recordings, stories, songs, podcasts, radio, tunes, sound work), **Blog entries** and **Other** (broadcast, dance, decorations, t-shirt prints, phone calls, text, exhibition, newspaper, magazine articles, social media posts, emails, posters, banners, hand-written signs/notes, preventative measures, objects, cultural projects, quilts, statistics, storytelling sessions, survey).

Many projects and activities collected an array of different types of materials. For this reason there will be more entries per material type than the actual number of projects.

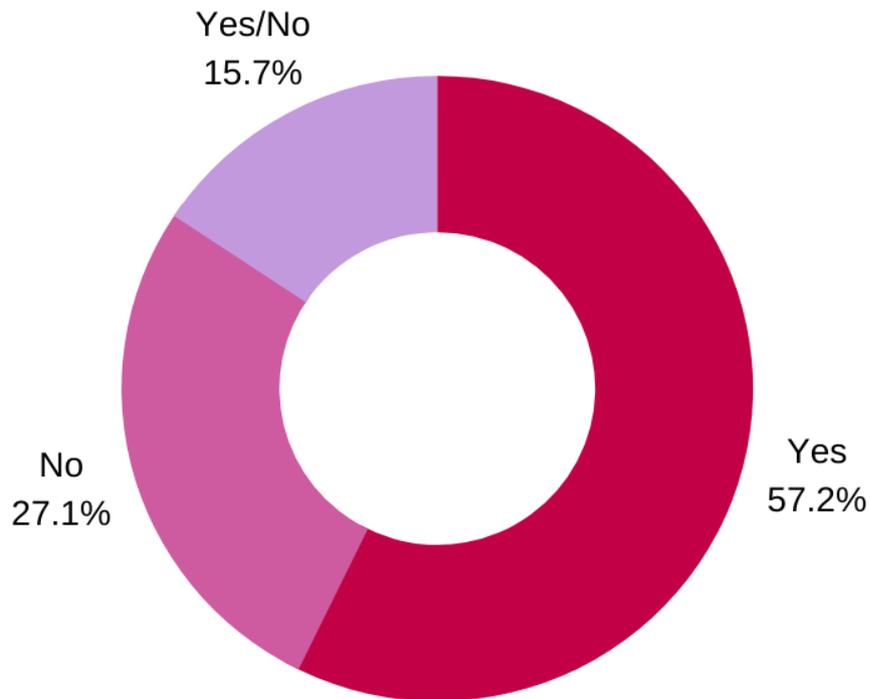


Material Content

This report does not analyse the specific material collected in each project or activity, therefore, making it difficult to quantitatively organise the wide range of content collected and the wealth of information. It is possible to ascertain that a majority of topics explore people's personal experience of lockdown. Many topics are specifically relevant to the type of organisation and institution and to the group they target (see above 3.1 and 3.2).

The majority of projects and activities which gather COVID-19 experiences occurred during the first lockdown. Ongoing projects and activities, and projects and activities which span the entire pandemic time, make up less than half of the project. Less than 10 projects and activities touch upon the second lockdown.

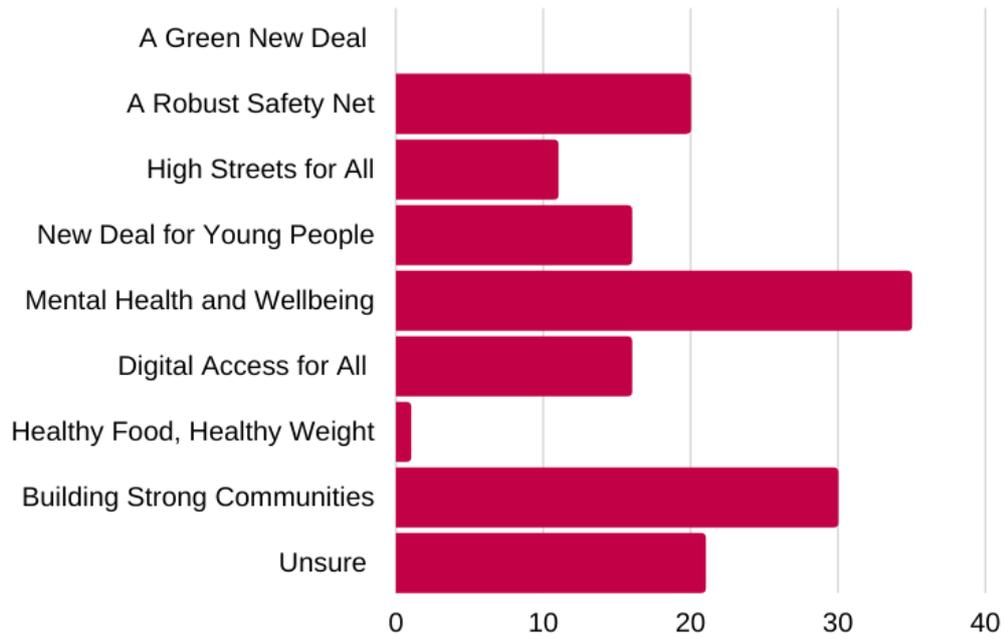
Intention to collect COVID-19 stories and experiences



Not all projects and activities set out to collect COVID-19 stories and experiences. Projects and activities which recorded COVID-19 stories and experiences inadvertently are: commissioned performances, art projects, community engagement activity and programmes, competitions, creative projection, exhibitions, festivals, classes, local programmes, online events, playwriting project, research project, fun activities, therapy workshop, community celebration, conferences, talks, mental health support groups, online media programmes and writing activity workshops.

Connection to 9 Recovery Missions

These connections have not been made by those either organising or being involved in the projects and activities, but by those interpreting the data. Therefore, this information should be used indicatively as it is subjective and likely to contain errors.



Gaps

To identify gaps in the collected data each section of the findings were scrutinised and cross referenced with GLA London demographic data (more specifically: BAME population per borough, younger/older population per borough, largest migration population per borough), GLA data on community organisations per borough (to indicatively and loosely understand how engaged the boroughs are), COVID cases per borough, GLA data on faith and religious communities and vulnerable groups in London.

Target Groups

The majority of identified gaps belong to the Target Groups section. This is particularly relevant as it may show which Londoners’ experiences and stories are not being recorded, are harder to find, or are being recorded in alternative ways, providing the first step for further studies to be conducted.

Overall Comments:

Middle aged people are rarely (<1) specifically targeted in projects and activities and few (<10) projects and activities target older people.

Ethnic minorities in general constitute a small percentage of data (17.5%) considering the diversity of London’s population in relation to ethnicity and migration and the range of London ethnic minority organisations.

Overall, faith and religious communities are rarely (5.0%) targeted in projects and activities.

Overall, vulnerable groups (with the slight exception of people with learning disabilities and physical health issues) are rarely targeted (11.3%) by projects and activities and represented in the data.

Key workers were rarely (<5) targeted by projects and activities.

TARGET GROUPS	No projects	Less than 4 projects
AGE GROUP		Middle Age
ETHNIC MINORITIES	Indian, Pakistani, Polish, Turkish*	Arab ,Bangladeshi, Chinese, Koreans, Latin America, RGT, Filipino

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS/		Autism, ADHD, Learning difficulty/ Dyslexia, Mental disorder/Dementia, Physical disabilities
RELIGIOUS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES	Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist communities	Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities
VULNERABLE PEOPLE	Prison population, victims of abuse	Homeless people, isolated people, sex workers, women, LGBTQ+, people of low income, single parents
KEY WORKERS		Key Workers
SPECIFIC BOROUGH RESIDENTS/ COMMUNITIES	City of London, Croydon, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Kensington & Chelsea, Merton, Southwark, Waltham Forest and Westminster	

* these may be included in the 10 projects which more broadly target BAME and the 1 project which targets South Asian Londoners.

Type of Institutions/ Organisations

As the report intended on primarily focusing on organisations (137 project) and institutions (63 projects), clear from the data collection method, individuals who initiated COVID-19 collecting projects and activities are consequently less represented in the data (25 projects).

Project/ Activity Location

All 32 boroughs and the City of London have had, or currently have, projects and activities which collect experiences and stories from the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Boroughs with the fewest (<2) projects and activities are : Bexley, Havering and Waltham Forest.

Boroughs with only a few (<5) projects and activities are: Barking & Dagenham, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Merton, Redbridge Sutton.

Projects and activities which operate across multiple boroughs are not too prevalent (<30).

Project Material/ Content

No projects or activities are connected to the recovery mission, **A Green New Deal**.

Only one project or activity is connected to the recovery mission, **Healthy Food, Healthy Weight**.

Observations, Hypotheses and Comments

Reflections on Age Groups

It is apparent that the age groups most targeted by organisations and institutions are children and youth. Younger people are considerably less vulnerable to COVID-19 related mortality, but may be more likely to suffer from the adverse effects of lockdowns and the impact of school closures - increasing the risk of loneliness, living in a hostile environment, being subject to abuse and experiencing poor mental health. This is especially a high risk for LGBTQ+ young people. Additionally, young people may suffer from the economic impact of COVID-19, with an increased risk of long-term unemployment. The array of projects, activities and programmes take these issues into consideration by providing opportunities to be creative and have fun, learn a new skill and provide a space to talk about mental health and well-being. This is possible as younger people generally have access to digital resources and knowledge on how to use digital mediums, making it easier to stay connected when everything moved online. This would also explain why university communities represent a proportionally high percentage of target groups. The data gathered on projects which target younger people could provide useful information for the London Recovery Mission, ***A New Deal for Young People***.

Older people are less targeted than children and young people in projects and activities. Older people are more vulnerable to COVID-19 related mortality, in addition to being at high risk of social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health as a result of lockdowns and restrictions. Limited digital literacy probably plays a part in this lack of inclusion as many services have moved online and stopped face to face contact. In the GLA Map of Community Views digital exclusion emerged as one of the two cross-cutting issues. Moreover, the type of content primarily focused on recording personal experiences and photographs, rather than creating something or learning a new skill. This data could provide useful information for the London Recovery Mission, ***Digital Access for All***.

Reflections on Ethnic Minority Groups

The gaps which have emerged in relation to ethnic minority groups particularly concern South Asian and East Asian Communities. The pandemic has led to an increase in hate crime towards East and South East Asians in London. According to the GLA rapid evidence review, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women are more vulnerable to COVID-19 related mortality compared to white men and women. Although a more targeted approach was adopted to search especially for Indian, Pakistani and Chinese organisations who may have collected projects and activities during COVID-19, little data was found. It is interesting to note that the boroughs with a high percentage of Indian,

Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi populations (Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets Bangladesh and Waltham Forest) correspond to the boroughs with the fewest projects and activities (with the exception of Newham and Tower Hamlets). There is little data on Chinese and other East Asian communities. This data could provide useful information for the London Recovery Mission, ***Building Strong Communities***.

It is important to note that although certain ethnic minorities were not specifically targeted in projects and activities, and the data demonstrates that a relatively small percentage of projects specifically targeted ethnic minority groups, it is likely that many projects and activities initiated both by organisations and institutions collect experiences and stories of London's diverse ethnic minorities. This will probably be evident in the projects and activities that are initiated by Local Authorities for people living in a specific borough due to the different natures of these boroughs. Or projects and activities whose aim was to collect Londoners stories as a whole. Alternatively, as social identities are often intersectional, going through material from another target subgroup will provide material for a different target subgroup.

Reflections on Religious and Faith Groups

This may also be the case for the religious and faith community groups which were hardly targeted in collecting projects and activities. According to the rapid evidence review there are substantial inequalities in risk of mortality according to religion, with Jewish people and Muslim people being at particularly high risk. A reason as to why this report believes that there are fewer projects targeting religion and faith is that efforts and funds are possibly being utilised for sermons, homilies, prayer sessions, celebrations of festivities and well-being sessions. This conclusion is drawn after systematically going through many religious and faith organisation's websites.

Reflections on Vulnerable Groups

The lack of collecting projects and activities due to time restraints, limited funds and staff shortages probably applies to multiple organisations, community interest groups, non-profits, community organisations and charities. The Community Response Survey highlights how civil society organisations find it challenging to meet the demand of, and respond to, the challenges of their beneficiaries who expressly need immediate help due to their financial insecurity, job loss, access to food and essentials.

The use of resources to target immediate and tangible needs may also explain the substantial lack of projects and activities which record vulnerable people's experiences and stories. The rapid evidence review highlights how homeless people, the prison population, sex workers, refugees and asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and how significant inequalities have been identified in relation to these groups. However, there is extremely little relevant data. From the data gathered, it is possible to

ascertain that few experiences and stories of homeless people, sex workers, refugees and asylum seekers are recorded in projects and activities. There is no project which collects London's prison population experience.

More research into the above points could provide useful information for the London Recovery Missions ***Good Work for All*** and ***A Robust Safety Net***.

Reflections on Location

The inner boroughs tend to have more projects and activities per borough than outer boroughs. This result could possibly be due to a higher number of cultural and heritage institutions and community organisations within the inner boroughs. A very preliminary investigation comparing the number of community centres per borough and the amount of projects per borough illustrates an equitable correlation (with the exception of Waltham Forest which appears to have a high number of community centres and very few projects and activities). More research into these two points could provide useful information for the London Recovery Mission ***High Streets for All***.

Reflections of Collecting Experiences

Lastly, the data on collecting projects and activities highlights how many of these did not intend to have a collection of stories or experiences as an output. This also suggests that material was gathered as a fun activity, a creative activity, a communal activity, an introspective activity, a therapeutic activity and/ or a learning activity. Discovering what motivated people to take part in projects could yield some interesting information. More research into this last point could provide useful information for the London Recovery Mission ***Mental Health & Wellbeing***.

Suggestions

In this section a few suggestions and recommended next steps for the London Community Story Programme are presented. In addition to the information gathered in this study, proposals are also based on perceptions obtained from the LCS Sharing Learning Event which took place on March 10th 2021.

Working with Local Authorities/ Councils

Seeing the considerable number of projects which local councils have initiated and supported/ collaborated with other organisations/institutions in their respective boroughs, expanding and extending the London Community Story Programme to work with London local authorities could prove to be advantageous. The benefits would include:

- working with an existing pool of qualitative data which records borough residents' experiences
- increasing community engagement between local authorities and borough residents
- getting borough residents involved in the analysis phase of the collecting project/activities, thus ensuring that the collected material is not only archived but actively employed to influence local and GLA policies, and for other purposes. In addition to ensuring borough residents feel like their experiences count and voices are being heard
- continuing to work with qualitative data, also on a local political level
- testing the hypothesis that the data gathered focusing on borough residents may fill some of the gaps that emerged in this analysis, specifically regarding ethnic minority groups
- cross referencing of the qualitative data with local demographics and locating ulterior gaps
- providing more borough-specific information for GLA policy makers, funding bodies and civil society organisations

Working with relevant organisations to gather missing experiences and stories

Seeing the gap in collecting stories and experiences of vulnerable people, reflected in the gathered data, a suggestion would be to collaborate with organisations who work with prisoner populations, homeless people, victims of abuse, sex workers, asylum seekers

and refugees and LGBTQ+ groups to see if stories and experiences have been recorded (there is a possibility these do exist, but are not accessible or discoverable online), possibly in non traditional ways, and if not, help fund and provide guidance as to how these stories and experiences could be recorded.

Exploring other forms of non traditional collecting practices

As seen in this project, many of the experiences and stories recorded were unintentional. This opens up the idea of how people may tell their story, possibly rooted in generational or cultural differences, which could be important to the Community Engagement Team at the GLA who very much focuses on personal stories. A next consideration could look more into what these alternative forms of collecting practices were and could be, starting with the data collected above. This may possibly provide more data on certain target subgroups such as older people and religious and faith community groups.

Creating an accessible London COVID-19 Community Story Programme database

Given the considerable number of projects collected, the traceable active participation of Londoners in the overview of projects and the enthusiasm of people sharing and listening to other COVID-19 collecting projects during the LCS Sharing Learning Event, a recommendation would be to design a database to include as many projects as possible in addition to, or separate from, the database for those awarded the grant. This study could be seen as an initial extract of the richness of collecting projects and activities that have occurred during the COVID-19 crisis in London, providing new invaluable, accessible and detailed information about Londoners from all walks of life. The benefits would include:

- having a database that policy makers, funding bodies and civil society organisations, institutions, organisations and individuals could access for work or leisure reasons
- having a vast amount of qualitative data to influence and provide relevant information for the 9 Recovery Missions
- inspiring other institutions and organisations to carry out collecting projects which can be a fun, creative, communal, introspective, therapeutic and/or learning activity
- working with organisations and institutions who have collected data and then analysing the data (information on how to do this could be initiated once the LCS grant workshops have been completed)
- working with Local Authorities/ Councils who have collected data to analyse the data (see above)
- working on filling in the gaps by collaborating with relevant organisations and also looking at non traditional collecting practices (see above)
- creating a COVID-19 dataset which benefits all parties and is a creative piece in itself.

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