

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of a Pilot of a Cascade Training Model for Voter Engagement

The UK Democracy Fund is seeking an evaluator to work with the us and two of our grantees (the Ubele Initiative and Community Organisers) to evaluate the success of a voter registration model we are testing. The evaluator will identify insights and learnings from the project, and produce outputs which can share the findings more broadly to support other organisations to undertake voter engagement work.

The indicative budget is a maximum of £12,000 for the evaluation and maximum of £2,000 for the toolkit. We expect the evaluation to extend over 14 months, commencing in November 2026.

1. Background

The UK Democracy Fund (the Fund) is a pooled Fund initially set up by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (JRRT) in 2019 and supported by a group of committed funders, including several charitable trusts. The UK Democracy Fund is now hosted by the [JRSST Charitable Trust](#).

Independent and non-partisan, the Fund is helping build a healthy democracy – one in which everyone can participate and where political power is shared fairly.

Our experience of funding community organising approaches to voter registration

Since 2019, The UK Democracy Fund has funded several pilots testing different types of community organising approaches to voter registration with different communities. These pilots demonstrated that trust is the single most important factor, but it takes considerable time and resources to build.

These pilots have also confirmed the importance for particularly marginalised groups of face-to-face, deep, trust-based engagement. A sustained and ongoing conversation about democracy and power is more effective than a stand-alone conversation about voting.

However, as a small fund with limited budget we are keen to identify a route to have impact with a larger range of voters, but in line with the financial resources available.

So far, we have funded two attempts at scaling, including through a national faith-based organisation and through a peer network of local organisations across two cities, both of which proved effective.

2. The project

Testing scale through training and utilising existing organising infrastructure

The Fund has awarded grants to the [Ubele Initiative](#) and [Community Organisers](#) to work in partnership to develop and test a democratic engagement curriculum and to roll it out through their existing networks of community leaders and then the wider community using a cascade mechanism. Each organisation will do this in a slightly different way, which reflects their existing ways of working. All the activity will be non-partisan.

Community Organisers will be working with community associations in North Birkenhead and Luton. In each area they will train at least 10 community organisers using the curriculum who will then work with people who interact with the services provided by the community association (e.g. foodbanks, playgroups) over the course of the project and persuade them to register to vote.

Ubele Initiative will lead the work in Haringey, where they will recruit 10 community organisers from their network. They will adopt a cascade mechanism with two tiers. Each community organiser will hold a workshop with between 30 to 80 community members, who will themselves complete a voter registration application. Each of these community members will then be supported to get up to three close contacts (e.g. family members, neighbours, friends) to complete a voter registration application.

Expected timeline of the project

The project will run from 1 November 2026 until 31 October 2027 (12 months).

Purpose of the Evaluation

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent and rigorous assessment of the pilot and to generate actionable learning for future programming.

Expectations of Evaluator

Specifically, the evaluator will work with the Fund and our grantees to:

- Develop a methodology and plan for the evaluation
- Finalise our learning aims and evaluation questions
- Build in opportunities to capture insight throughout the project

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- Input into the processes for gathering quantitative and qualitative evidence
 - Provide advice and support for tracking voter registration numbers
 - Conduct interviews and use other opportunities to capture qualitative insight
 - Review and evaluate all evidence
 - Ensure all applicable ethical, safeguarding, and data protection requirements are met through the evaluation

They will then produce:

- A full evaluation report for the Fund, the grantees and their relevant Boards
- An external-facing learning report for wider civil society and Government including case studies and quotes (possibly co-written with grantees)
- If the model proves capable of delivering voter engagement at scale, a toolkit for organisers or funders who may want to use this model, which includes information on costs and advice on how to apply for funding for this work from local community foundations
- At least two video calls to present findings to the UK Democracy Fund's Advisory Group and other key stakeholders

What we hope to learn

1. The extent to which the pilot achieved its intended voter engagement outcomes and at what cost.
2. The effectiveness of the curriculum and training model in transmitting knowledge, skills and confidence to trainers and volunteers.
3. Whether and how participation in the intervention influenced voter knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and/or behaviours of potential voters, including:
 - a) voter registration,
 - b) other forms of democratic engagement,
 - c) sentiment towards democratic engagement,
 - d) how these were impacted by demographic or other factors,
 - e) further barriers to participation identified,
 - f) and key factors that encouraged or led to engagement?
4. Analysis of the two different models, and the contexts in which they were used.

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5. Across both models, what elements were effective and which less so?
 6. The reach and inclusiveness of the interventions, including whether they engaged groups that are traditionally less likely to participate in electoral processes, and if appropriate, provide further information about these demographics.
 7. Identify if and where adaptation or variation occurred across demographic groups, locations, trainers, or other factors.
 8. The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the model, and potential for scale, including potential future costs for further roll out.
 9. What needs further testing or research, and suggest what adaptations may be required if this model is to be adopted by other organisations.
 10. Lessons and recommendations relevant to potential adaptation and scale-up.

3. Responding to these terms of reference

Interested evaluation teams/commissions should submit a short proposal demonstrating:

A) Your experience and skills

- Understanding of our evaluation needs, the project, and experience working with community leaders and diverse communities including communities experiencing racial inequity.
- Insight into the voter registration context and challenge, and insight into how this evaluation and its findings could be useful making elections more equitable.
- Understanding of how to manage this evaluation and its outputs in a non-partisan way.
- Expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methods
 - Must have experience of using sensitive approach to gathering qualitative data on sensitive subjects from a diverse range of people.
 - Must have experience of quantitative data collection and analysis, including budget and demographic data
 - Experience of collecting and analysing voter registration application data and other electoral data would be desirable.
- Examples of public-facing writing to demonstrate ability to communicate effectively to a wide audience.

B) Your proposed evaluation methodology

- Proposed methodology and evaluation design
- Proposed approach to assessing the cascade mechanism used by each organisation
- Proposed approach to measuring outcomes and attribution
- Proposed sampling strategy
- Ethics, safeguarding, and data protection approach
- Proposed approach to cost-effectiveness/value-for-money analysis
- Risk and mitigation strategy
- Workplan

C) Your financial proposal

Please share a budget, including staffing and consultancy rates and any other costs e.g. travel. Your budget proposal should include as a separate amount the cost of developing a toolkit.

How to apply

Final deadline for proposals is **Monday 9 November at 12 noon**. Proposals will be considered on a rolling basis so please apply at the earliest opportunity. Please send your proposal and CV to DemocracyFund@jrsst-ct.org.uk.

If you have any questions, please email DemocracyFund@jrsst-ct.org.uk.