



# Supporting organisations to sustain or grow their impact

Findings from the Youth Fund evaluation

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## Overview

Renaissi were appointed to evaluate Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Youth Fund in June 2016. This is the second of three published papers to share learning on key themes:

1. [Core funding](#)
2. **How organisations have sustained and grown their impact** (this paper)
3. [Asset-based working with young people](#)

We will also publish an [Executive summary](#) of key findings across all themes explored in the evaluation.

### About the Youth Fund and this paper

The [Youth Fund](#) was launched in 2015 to provide core funding for organisations whose main purpose is to help young people (aged 14-25) in the most precarious positions, where making the transition to adult independence is most challenging. To be funded, organisations must work with young people experiencing disadvantage in a way that recognises and builds on their strengths and potential, which Paul Hamlyn Foundation refers to as an 'asset-based approach'. Eligible organisations can apply for up to £60k of funding over two years.

Between 1st June 2015 and 1st June 2019, the Youth Fund provided 129 grants worth a total of £7.5m. The Fund is still open to new applicants. To be eligible to receive funding from the Youth Fund, organisations must demonstrate how the grant will help them to sustain, **prepare to grow, or grow their impact with and for young people**. This requirement means that organisations must have a clear purpose in mind, and be able to articulate how investment in their core functions will ultimately lead to positive impact.

Organisations can take many different routes to achieving impact for young people. This paper explores how organisations supported by the Youth Fund have invested in a range of areas, to pursue a strategy for achieving impact that works for them. The paper presents:

- How organisations supported by the Youth Fund sustained or grew their impact
- A simple tool for mapping different investment strategies, and how those led to impact
- Some examples of the 'routes to impact' that different organisations have taken
- How Paul Hamlyn Foundation have used this tool to inform their decision-making
- Some advice for organisations working with young people who want to use this tool to help plan their approach
- A full-page version of the tool in the Appendix, which you can use to plan your own 'route to impact'

## What is meant by sustaining or growing impact?

By accepting applications to ‘sustain’ or ‘prepare to grow’ impact, the Foundation acknowledges that **growth is not always possible or desirable**. Consolidating current levels of impact may be a better strategic choice for organisations that have recently experienced instability, loss of funding from other sources, or risk seeing their impact diminish for other reasons. It is also important to note that the Fund aims to grow *impact*, which is not the same as organisational growth – there is no requirement or expectation for organisations to grow in size or develop new programmes, unless this approach is right for them.

## Types of investment to sustain, prepare to grow or grow impact

Organisations have used their Youth Fund grant to invest in and develop three broad areas of work, to help them sustain or grow their impact with young people:<sup>1</sup>

1. **Organisational resources** – to buy time for senior members of the organisation to focus on strategic development, or new approaches to income generation, with the aim that this will ultimately lead to greater impact.
2. **Work with young people** – to improve or expand the organisation’s programme delivery, or to develop the organisation’s approach to asset-based working (ABW), either to enhance their impact or impact more young people than previously.
3. **Influence** – to engage in advocacy, campaigning or other work that influences policy and the external context in which young people live, ultimately impacting young people beyond the organisation’s immediate sphere.

The following diagram depicts the three areas of work against a spectrum of sustaining, preparing to grow or growing impact with young people. A full-page version of the diagram can be found in the Appendix.

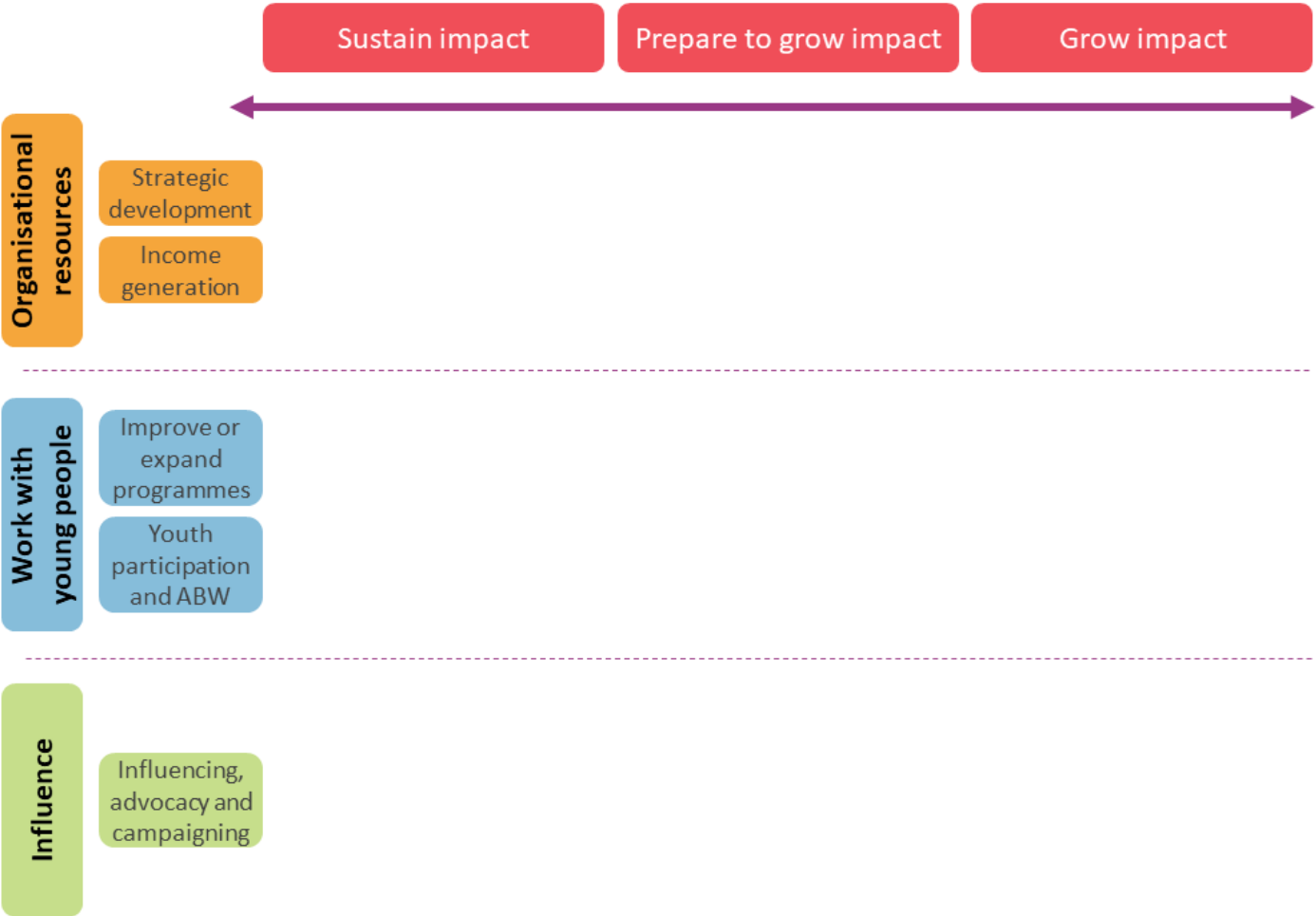
Some types of investments may directly lead to impact, for example expanding an existing high-quality programme so that more young people can access it; others may be more indirect, for example investing in strategic development time which should ultimately help the organisation to be more effective and impactful.

Most organisations funded by the Youth Fund invested their grant in one or two of the three broad areas (described above) at most, but with the intention that this investment would ultimately lead to sustained or greater impact in other areas of work as well.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The first and second areas of work relate to how organisations have spent the grant; see *Core Funding: Findings from the Youth Fund evaluation* (September 2019). The second and third areas relate in the main to how they work in an asset-based way; see *Asset-based work with young people: Findings from the Youth Fund evaluation* (Sept 2019).

<sup>2</sup> See *Core Funding: Findings from the Youth Fund evaluation* (September 2019) for more information on what organisations chose to spend their grant on.



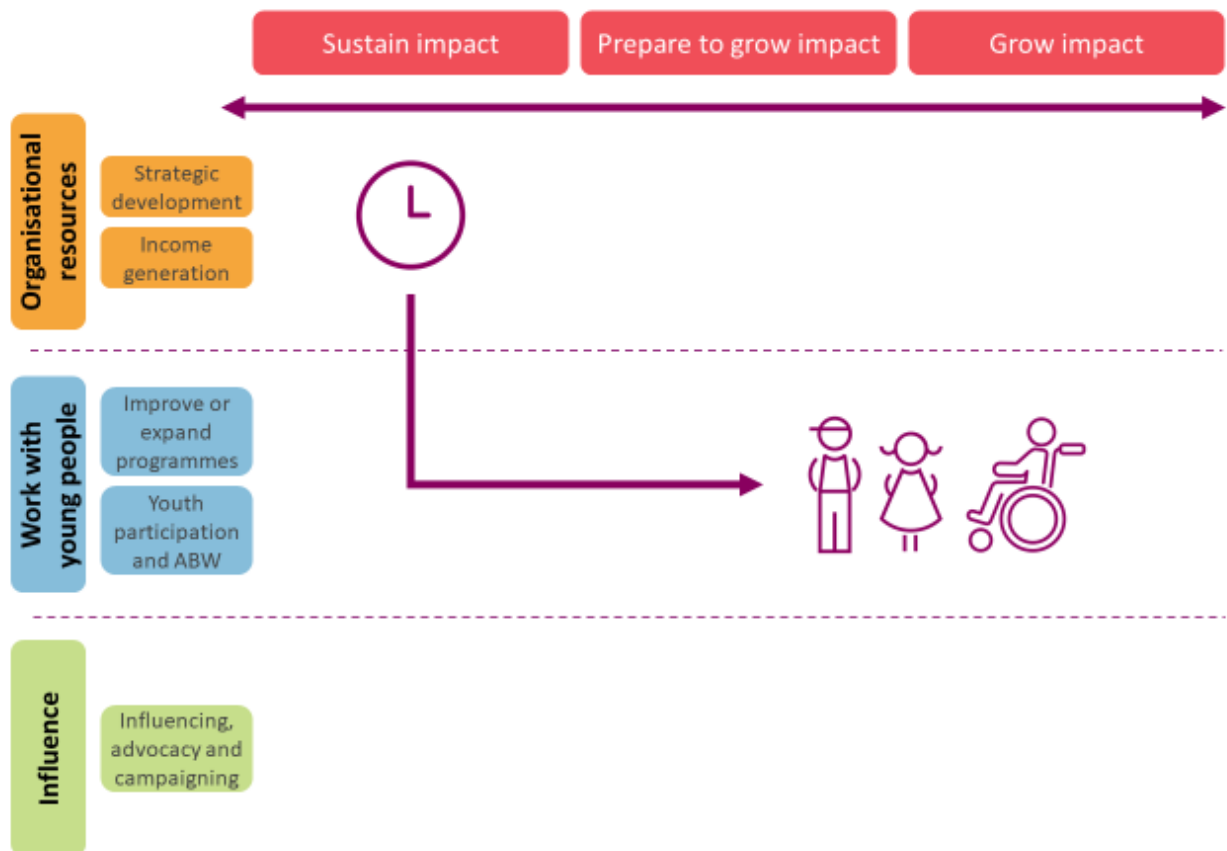
*“We used this opportunity for us to sustain our current practice, improve and make it better, and equally look at where we want to go next, and in what areas we want to grow to meet demand and new emerging issues with service users.”*

*(Organisation supported by the Youth Fund)*

## Examples of organisations' 'routes' to impact

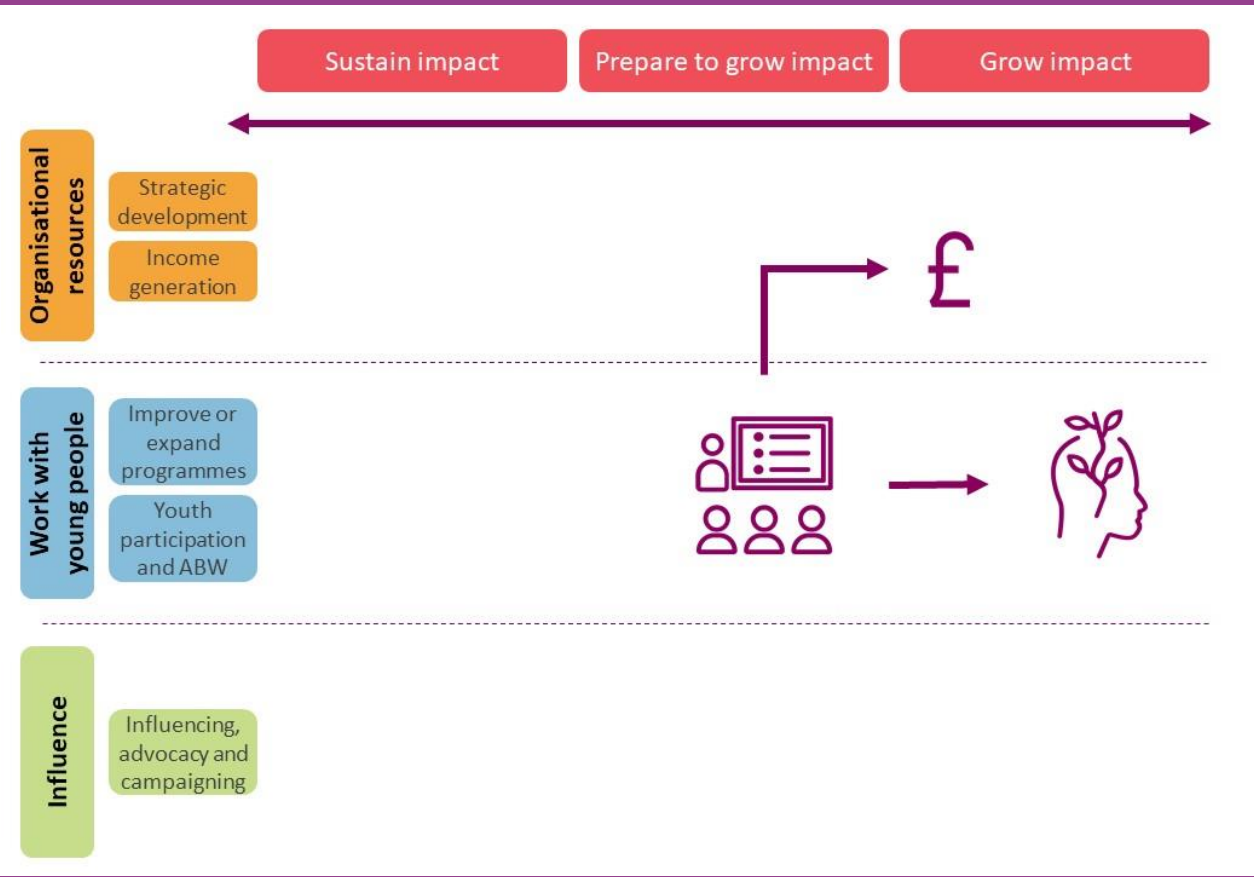
Organisations had a range of different strategies to sustain or grow their impact through investing in different areas of work. The following provides some fictional examples, based on common themes in the Youth Fund cohort.

### EXAMPLE 1



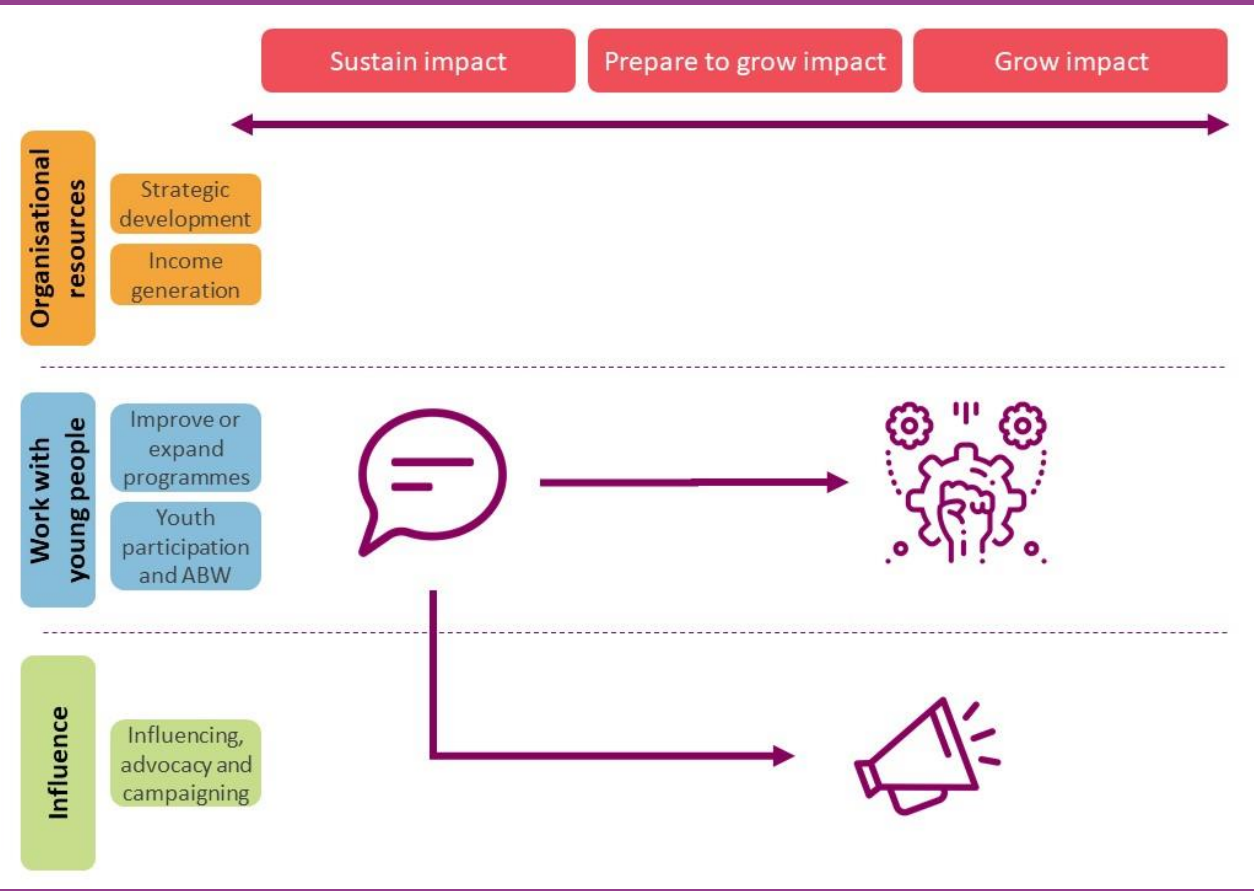
In this example, the organisation invested in their CEO's time for strategic development. This led to the development of a new programme of delivery, which enabled the organisation to grow their impact with a greater number of young people.

EXAMPLE 2



In this example, the organisation invested in developing a training programme for young people to deliver. The young people benefitted from improvements to their confidence and communication skills. The income generated was re-invested in the organisation.

EXAMPLE 3



In this example, the organisation invested in becoming more youth-led. This gave young people a stronger voice, which led to an increased sense of empowerment. It also led to the organisation developing a stronger approach to external campaigning.



## How Paul Hamlyn Foundation uses this tool

Paul Hamlyn Foundation have used this tool to help inform decisions on Youth Fund grants. After reading each application and supporting materials, and speaking to the applicants at interview, Grant Managers use the tool to plot the organisation's proposed 'route' from investment to sustaining or growing impact. This exercise helps the team to clearly visualise and understand how funding will be used, identify applicants that are able to clearly articulate their proposed strategy, and why that approach is needed.

The Foundation does not take a strong view on the strategy organisations should take; rather it funds organisations that have a clear rationale for the strategy they propose. Organisations can adjust their strategy in the course of their funding period if necessary.

*"I feel like the stability [offered by this grant] is a platform to very much deepen what we want to do."*

*(Organisation supported by the Youth Fund)*

## How you can use this tool

If you are an organisation working with young people, you can use this tool to plan your own route from investment to sustaining or growing impact. The tool can be used whether you have received funding from the Youth Fund, are a prospective applicant, or any other organisation looking to sustain or grow your impact with young people.

We recommend that you use the tool to:

- Identify where the investment is or will be spent
- Then plot how this will lead to impact in the same or other areas
- You can use the tool to make sure that everyone in your team understands and agrees the purpose of a particular investment
- Don't overcomplicate by trying to plot more than one or two 'routes to impact' – you can usually achieve more by focusing energy on fewer ambitions

### Contact

For more information about the evaluation and our findings, please contact Alice Thornton, Head of Learning at Renaisi: [a.thornton@renaisi.com](mailto:a.thornton@renaisi.com)

We would like to thank all of the organisations who contributed to a workshop in May 2018 to help us refine and develop this tool.