

# **The Evaluation Exchange: A case study of a university-community collaborative approach to evaluation**

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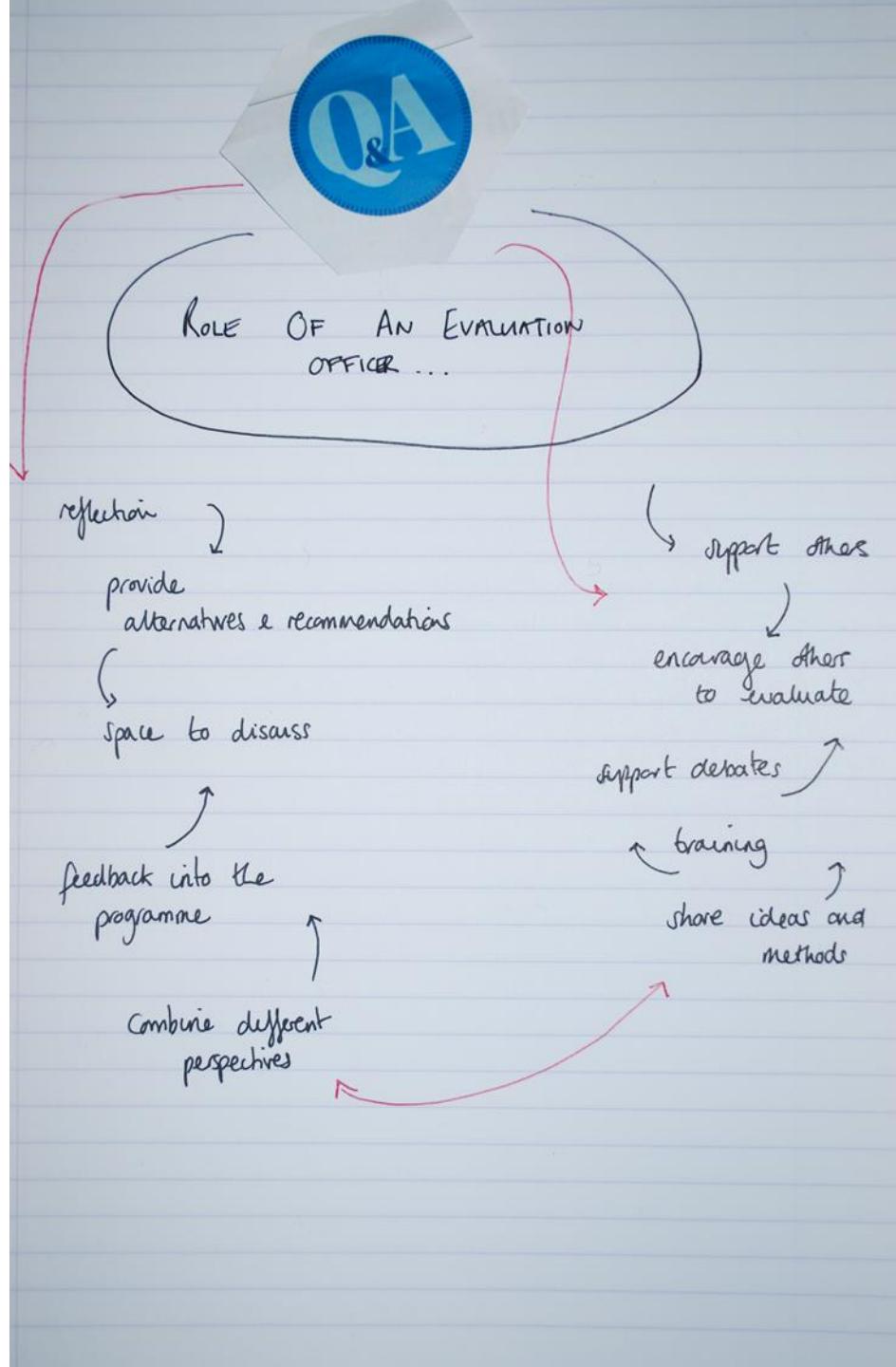
Why did you decide to come to this session?

## Today's talk:

- Context, drivers and motivations
- The UCL/Aston-Mansfield Evaluation Exchange
- Case study of Caritas Anchor House
- Achievements, learning and observations from our practice
- Next steps

# Context:

## Role and qualities of an Evaluator



## Drivers and motivations: UCL

- publically-engaged university, expansion into east London
- collaborative approach to engagement
- researchers and students keen to develop skills and experience



# Drivers and motivations: Aston-Mansfield and the voluntary and community sector

- grow, develop and sustain community groups in Newham
- demand for accountability and evidence of impacts
- desire for evaluation at organisation level, in term of learning and reflection



## Incremental steps to....

- enhance understandings of evaluation
- build skills and experience
- encourage others to engage in evaluation practice



**= build evaluation capacity**

# Evaluation Capacity Building

“... involves the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies to help individuals, groups, and organisations, learn about what constitutes effective, useful and professional evaluation practice. The ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice – where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyse and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action.”

Preskill and Boyle (2008) A Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building, American Journal of Evaluation, 29 (4), 443-459

# Aims of the UCL/A-M Evaluation Exchange:

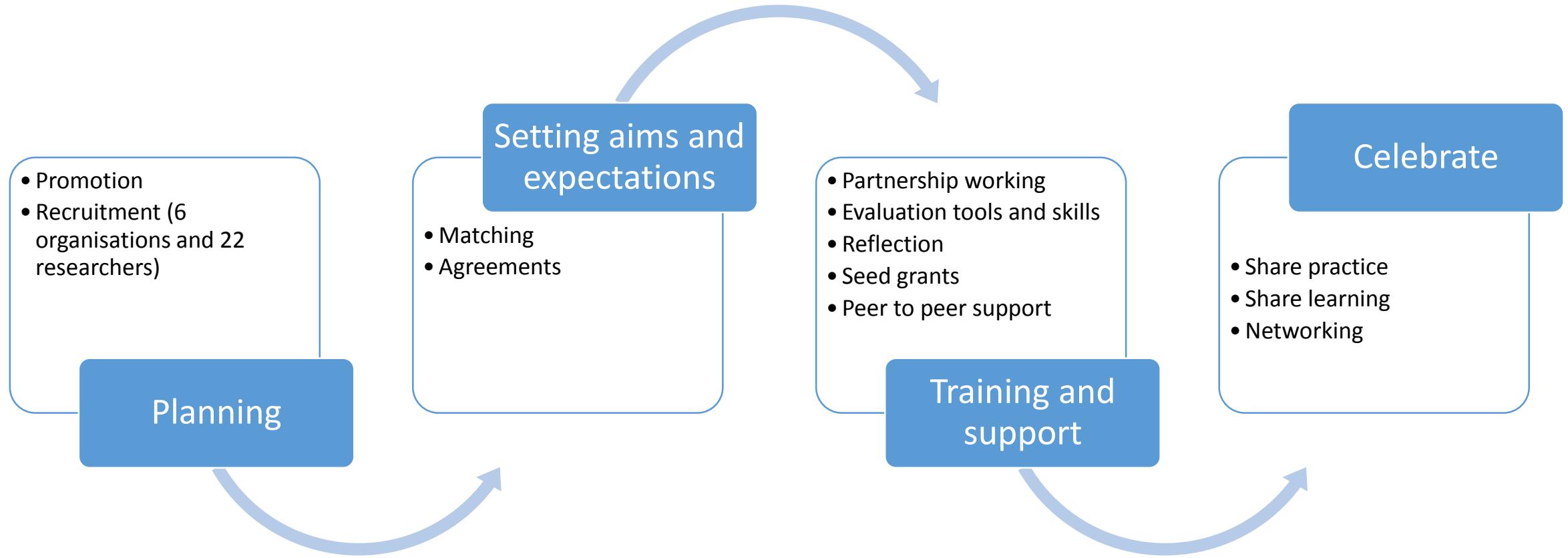
Share  
knowledge  
and build  
capacity

Create a  
network

Connect  
for mutual  
benefit

Enhance  
researcher  
skills and  
experience

# Structure of the programme:





Caritas  
Anchor  
House

The  
Magpie  
Project

IROKO  
Theatre

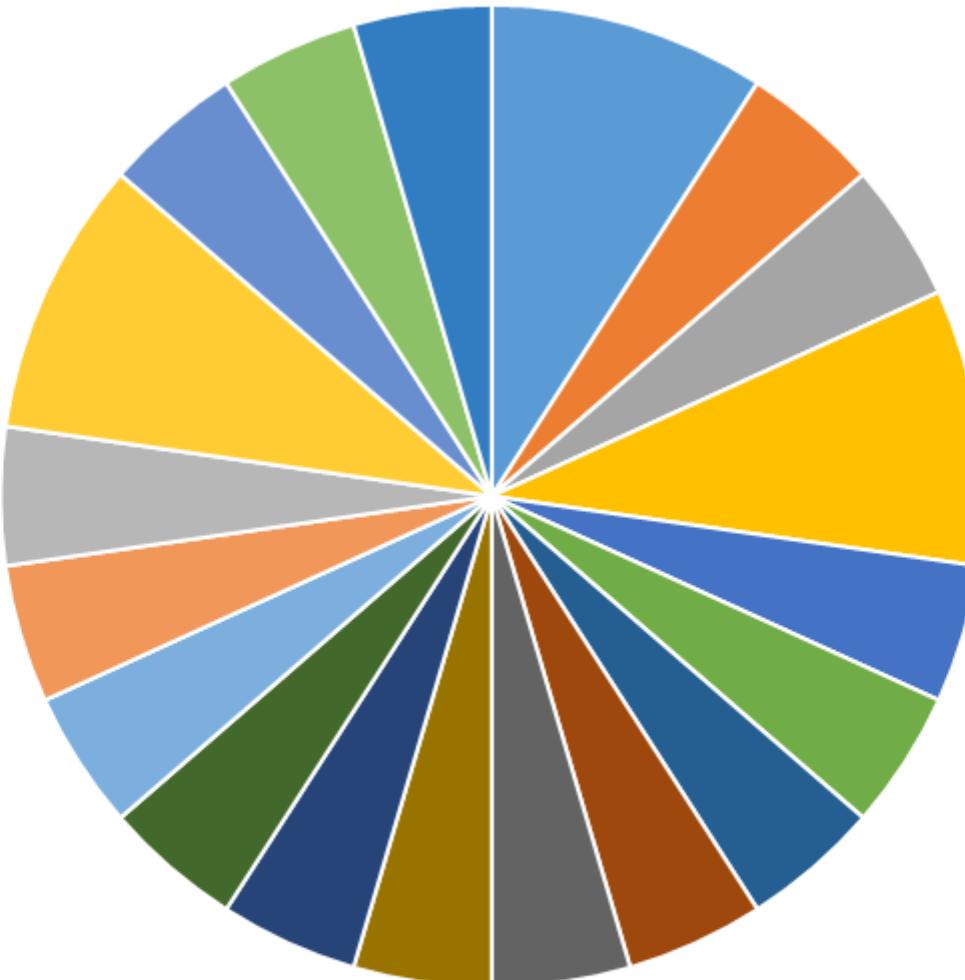


The  
Renewal  
Programme

Modern  
Arnis

Alternatives  
Trust

# Researchers involved:



- Epidemiology and Public Health
- Division of Psychiatry
- Dept of Experimental Psychology
- IOE
- Institute of Child Health
- Clinical Education Health Psychology
- Bartlett School
- Department of Philosophy
- LMCB
- SSEES
- UCL Cancer Institute
- MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing
- Institute of Archaeology
- Division of Medicine
- Dept Applied Health Research
- Engineering
- Institute of Child Health
- History of Art
- Geography



# Case Study: Caritas Anchor House

- MOTIVATION OF A RESEARCHER

Didn't realise I was useful outside academia

Increasing sense of social responsibility

Injection of something different after 8 years postdoc research

Wanted to work as part of a team, rather than v boundaried research role

Slight disillusionment with 'pure' research

# Case Study: Caritas Anchor House

- SETTING/PARTICIPANTS

Voluntary Service Organisation (VSO)

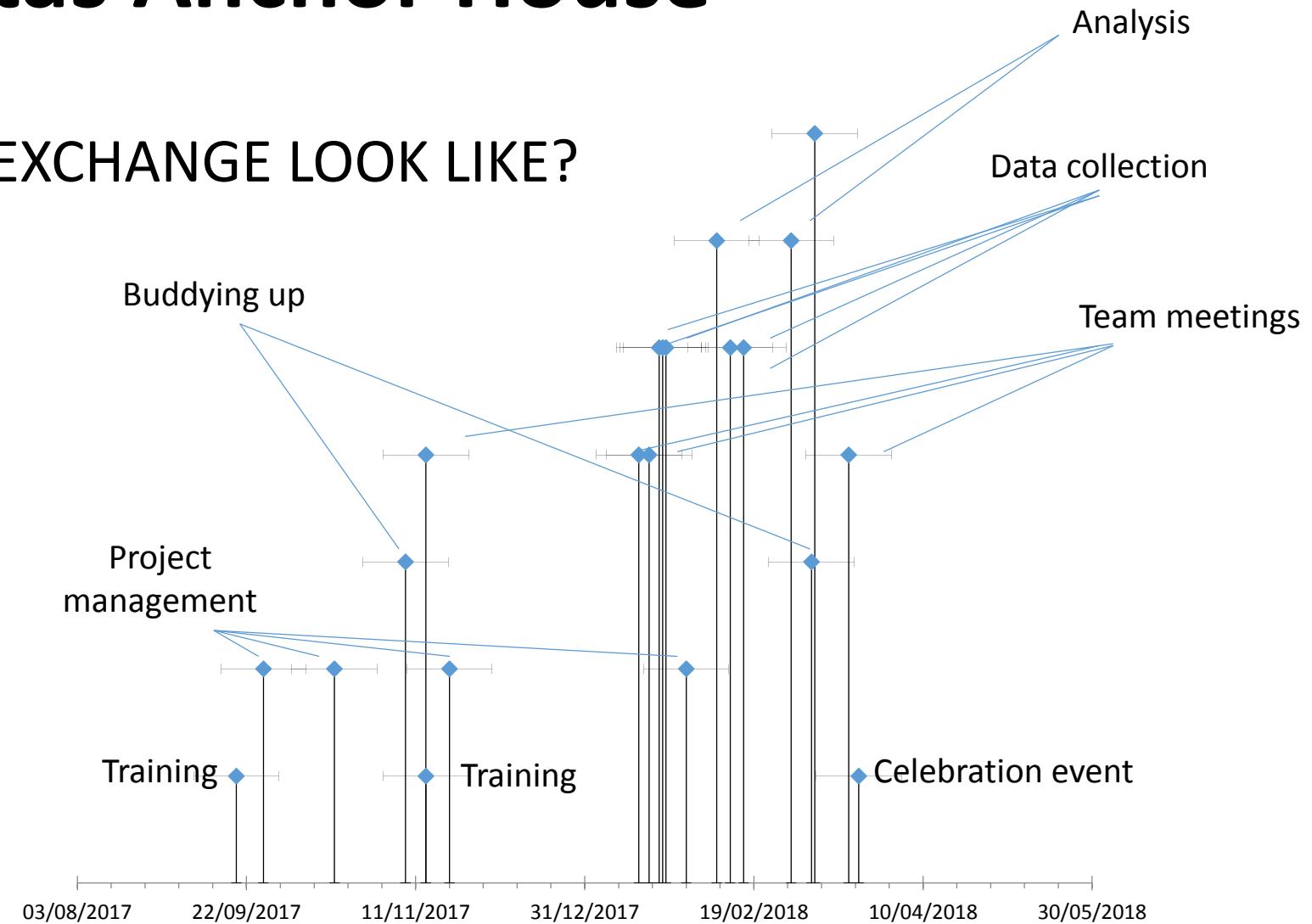
Single-site homeless service charity in Newham  
One of the most deprived of London's boroughs

UCL researchers:

Faculty of Brain Sciences  
Bartlett School of Architecture  
MRC Unit for Lifelong Health & Ageing  
Biochemical Engineering department

# Case Study: Caritas Anchor House

- WHAT DID EVALUATION EXCHANGE LOOK LIKE?



# Case Study: Caritas Anchor House

- Film outputs....

Trailer for the methods

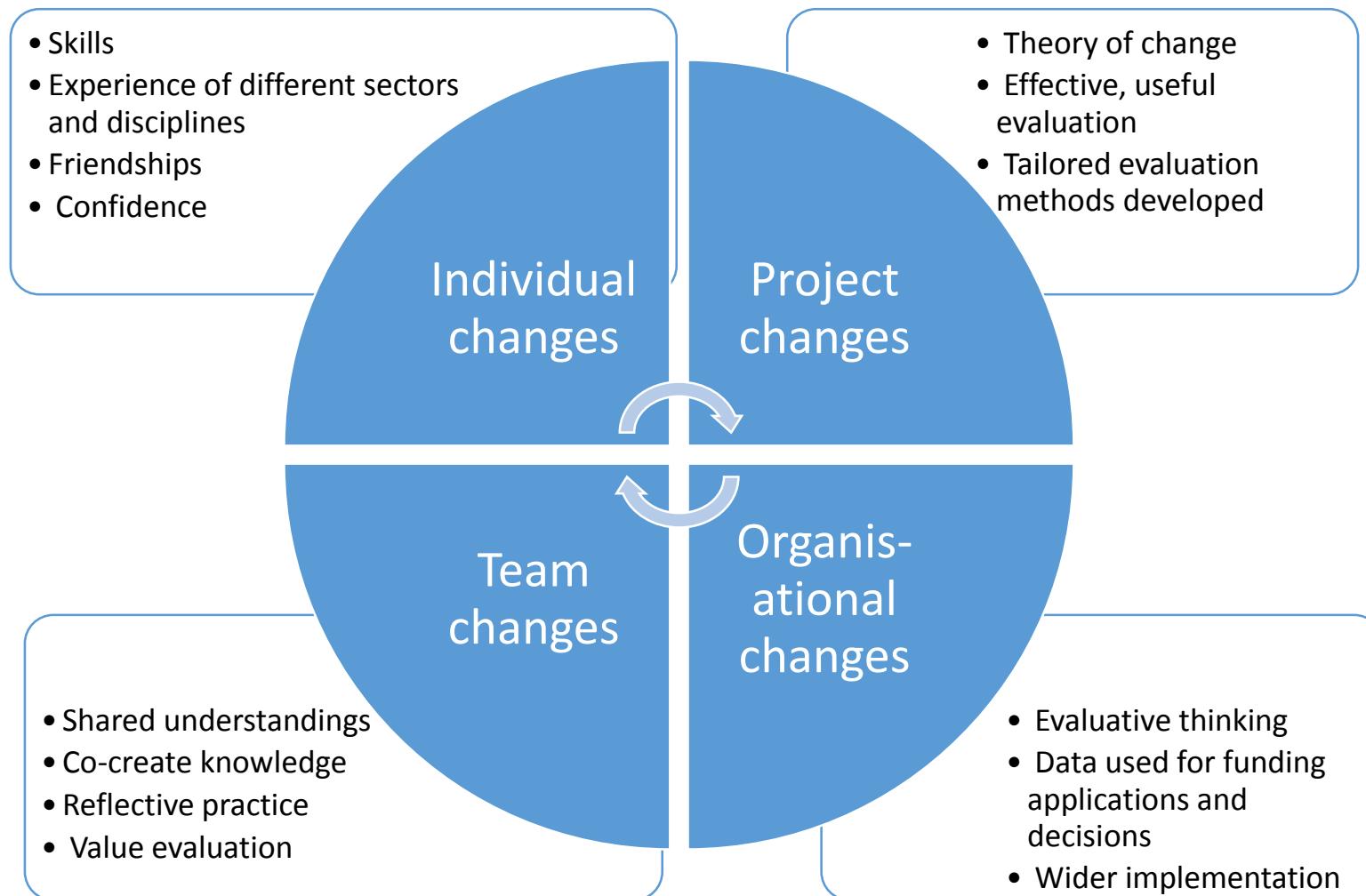
Film of participants' experiences

# Achievements and learning

*“What do UCL researchers and voluntary sector workers have in common? We both want our work to have a positive impact on society by using solid evidence about what works”.*

*(Researcher involved in the Evaluation Exchange)*

# Observed outcomes:



## **The Magpie Project: “For us it has been instrumental in the following ways.**

- Doing our theory of change and monitoring and evaluation framework so early on in the life of the charity made it easier to define our purpose and manage our growth
- Impress funders such as Trust for London and Children in Need, who had not seen such a young charity with such a defined monitoring and evaluation framework before
- Helped us to form partnerships with other organisations to further our aims and build in a positive feedback loop where monitoring and evaluation is designed in to the system of service delivery from the start rather than being an add on
- Helped us implement improvements to services to mums and minis measured against our theory of change”.

## Our observations along the way:

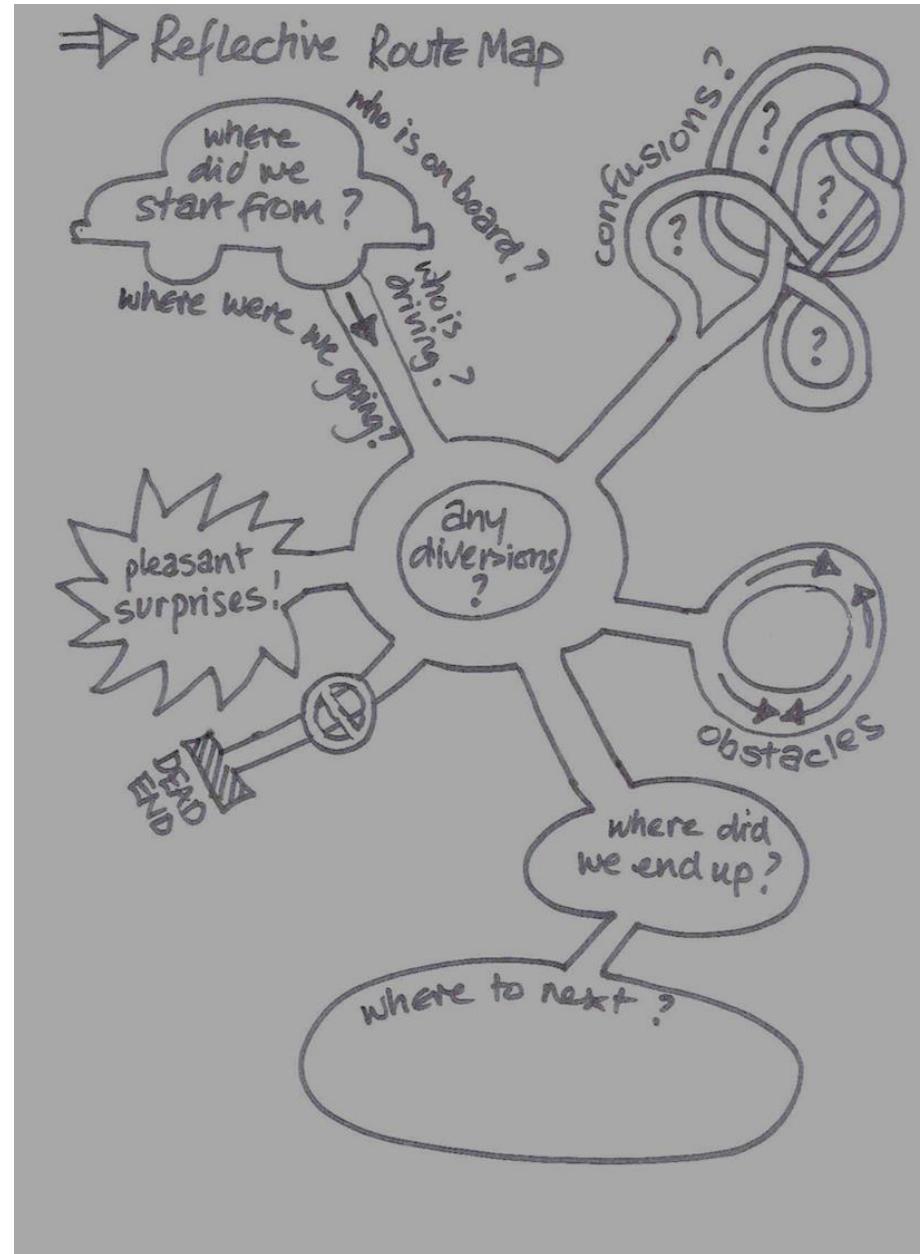
- genuine partnership working and one that has clearly benefited the organisations and the researchers involved
- demanding time-wise for the teams but our sense is that those involved feel it's a worthwhile investment
- readiness to evaluate and capacity of the organisation was a key factor

## Our observations along the way:

- competing demands of all involved
- multi-disciplinary teams brought many benefits
- networks created and learning shared between the 6 organisations
- facilitate and encourage others to evaluate (outside programme)

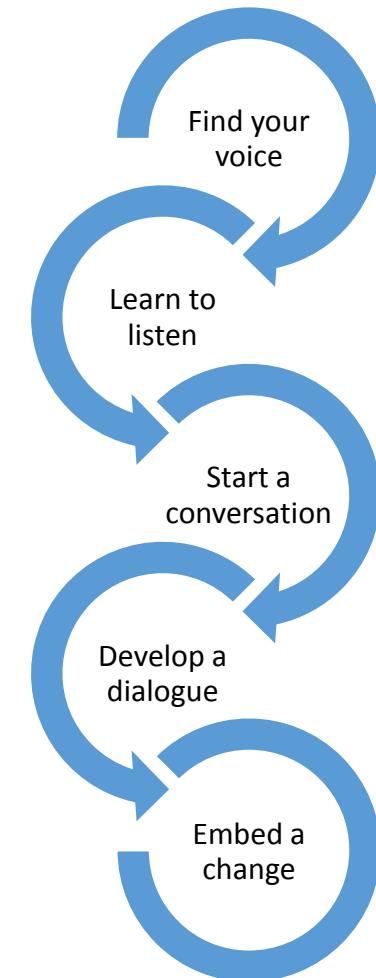
# Outstanding questions

1. How can universities and community organisations collaborate further with evaluation practice?
2. How can the evaluation practice be sustained in these organisations?
3. What are the implications on learning from this ECB approach?



# Next steps

- The Evaluation Exchange (cohort 2)
- The Evaluation Exchange Network



# Thanks and Questions