



Evaluation of the Comic Relief and
Paul Hamlyn Foundation Tech for
Good Programme

July 2019

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Tech for Good programme provides dedicated funding and capacity building support to enable not-for-profits in the UK to make the best use of digital technologies in delivering more effective, sustainable and scalable services. The programme also aims to inspire other organisations to join and grow a wider tech for good 'ecosystem' by sharing the approach and its learning on the Tech for Good Hub (<http://techforgoodhub.co.uk>) and through Funders Learn Tech learning events for funders interested in finding out more about the world of tech for good.

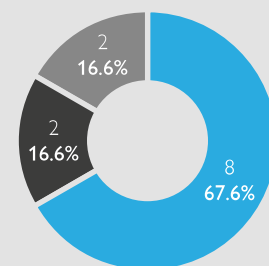
Evaluation

The 14-month evaluation of the Tech for Good programme started in February 2018 and included both formative and summative elements, reflecting on the outcomes achieved by the 2016 and 2017 Tech for Good cohorts respectively and comparing the 'journey' of the 2018 cohort with the first two years of the programme. The evaluation was built around 3 questions based on the Tech for Good programme [theory of change](#):

1. To what extent has the Tech for Good Programme been successful in generating the intended outcomes for participating not-for-profits?

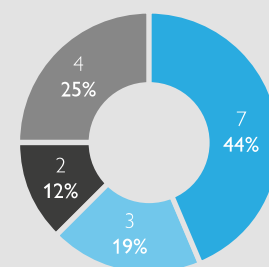
Overall the Tech for Good programme was successful both in supporting a majority of not-for-profits to develop digital products and services that created (or showed the potential to create for the 2018 cohort) outcomes for their beneficiaries and in building capacity within participating not-for-profits, particularly in relation to embedding digital ways of working within the wider organisation.

Status of 2018 cohort products or services



- MVP released and in testing
- MVP currently in final stage of testing
- Still in development, have not yet developed a MVP

Status of 2016 and 2017 cohort products or services



- Final product or service released and still in use
- Products or services are about to relaunch in a different format
- Products or services are no longer running
- It was not possible to contact the not-for-profits

In relation to the **development of the digital product or service**, overall the majority (67%) of the 2018 Tech for Good Cohort had released a MVP that was in the final stages of testing or released to the public and the majority were satisfied with the stage they had reached and optimistic about the potential of their digital product or service even if this differed from expectations or was delayed in some way.

From the 2016 to 2017 cohorts that were reached for the evaluation (12 from the 16) 58% of digital products or services were still running in some form, and 25% of the not-for-profits were using the content and learning from the digital products or services that were not running to address the same problems for the user (e.g. through non-digital services).

Although the availability and quality of outcome-related data varied, the not-for-profits from the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Tech for Good cohorts could provide evidence for a range of outcomes, from **expanding their reach to a significantly larger number of beneficiaries, providing a more flexible service and increasing the wellbeing of beneficiaries**.

One of the strongest outcomes to emerge from the evaluation from the Tech for Good programme related to an increase in the organisational capacity of participating not-for-profits, **particularly in relation to applying the concepts of user-centred design and/or agile development methodologies to their wider non-digital work**. They also expressed increased comfort and abilities in using digital practices/ terminology and there was a positive influence from the programme, on their further development of new digital products, services and strategies.

From the 2018 cohort, 3 (25%) not-for-profits had already **received further funding for their digital products or services**, 3 (25%) anticipated covering their costs through internal budgets and 4 (33%) had explored models for generating commercial revenue. Sourcing ongoing funding continued to be a challenge for the 12 (from a total of 16) not-for-profits from the 2016 and 2017 cohorts interviewed for the evaluation. This was due to the relative lack of funding for digital projects, the competition for the limited funding and the limited resources of small teams to engage in fundraising. 3 (25%) of the not-for-profits interviewed from the 2016 and 2017 cohorts had found further funding, 1 (12%) had secured ongoing commercial funding and several had incorporated the costs of running their digital product or service into their internal budgets.

2. Have changes made to the Tech for Good programme in 2018 led to increased efficiency and effectiveness compared to 2016-17?

The **changes to the Tech for Good Programme in 2018** - extending the length of the programme to 9 months, putting in place lighter touch reporting and providing more consistent and structured non-financial support through a single point of contact (CAST)- were well received by participating not-for-profits, with particularly positive feedback for the support from CAST.

There were a number of similarities in the journeys taken by not-for-profits across 2016-2018, with the majority forming a positive working relationship with their digital partner (particularly where there was an existing relationship with the digital partner and/ or they already had experience of working on tech for good projects) and receiving strong support from within their organisations.

3. How can the tech for good ecosystem be strengthened and what role could Comic Relief and Paul Hamlyn Foundation play in this?

Although feedback was received from a relatively small sample of both the users of the Tech for Good Hub and attendees at the Funders Learn Tech events **participants gave positive feedback on both initiatives**, particularly in relation to learning more about the topic of tech for good and in relation to connecting and discussing related issues with other organisations (in the learning events). The number of users of the Tech for Good Hub also exceeded expectations at the start of the project.

A range of stakeholders involved in the Tech for Good programme also provided guidance on how to engage more funders in supporting tech for good e.g. training and support to build the confidence, knowledge and skills of grant managers in how to assess applications relating to digital products or services.

Recommendations for future Tech for Good programmes

The report provides a range of recommendations on page 47 and 48, advising that Comic Relief and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation:

1. Provide more structured support in relation to contractual and partnership arrangements between not-for-profits and digital partners
2. Consider setting more stringent guidelines for the digital partners that not-for-profits can partner with
3. Provide fundraising support and guidance to all 'alumni' Tech for Good not-for-profits
4. Use the fundraising support to keep in touch and start to build a community of alumni Tech for Good not-for-profits
5. Conduct a debrief with the Tech vs Abuse and Tech for Good evaluation teams to explore synergies and differences
6. Build a stronger alignment between the monitoring and evaluation conducted by Comic Relief/not-for-profit and any future external evaluation
7. Consider promoting examples of the use of user-centred design from the Tech for Good programme to not-for-profits working outside of the tech for good ecosystem
8. Take the Funders Learn Tech events on tour around the country to seek to engage with more local and regional funders
9. Run a workshop with a small group of regular attendees at the Funders Learn Tech events to further flesh out the guidance in this report on engaging funders in tech for good
10. Update the theory of change to reflect the learning from this report

Glossary

Tech for good¹

“Tech for good is a community of people, projects, organisations and funders promoting the role of technology to improve social, environmental and economic outcomes. Tech for good is the intentional design, development and use of digital technologies to address social challenges.” Joe Roberson (on Hacker Noon)

Minimum viable product (MVP)

“A minimum viable product (MVP) is a development technique in which a new product or website is developed with sufficient features to satisfy early adopters. The final, complete set of features is only designed and developed after considering feedback from the product’s initial users.” Technopedia.com

User Centered Design

“User-centered design is an iterative design process in which designers focus on the users and their needs in each phase of the design process. UCD calls for involving users throughout the design process via a variety of research and design techniques, to create highly usable and accessible products for them.”

Interaction-design.org

Agile Development Process

“Agile software development refers to a group of software development methodologies based on iterative development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing cross-functional teams. Agile methods or Agile processes generally promote a disciplined project management process that encourages frequent inspection and adaptation, a leadership philosophy that encourages teamwork, self-organization and accountability, a set of engineering best practices intended to allow for rapid delivery of high-quality software, and a business approach that aligns development with customer needs and company goals.” cprime.com

¹ Throughout this report ‘Tech for Good programme’ is used for the funding programme that is the focus of this report and ‘tech for good’ (lower case) for the wider topic of tech for good described on this page