



Kailo Framework Resources

# Developing Programme Theory



**Developing programme theory for a place-based, systems change approach to adolescent mental health: A developmental realist evaluation**

## Background

When exploring young people's mental health, the Kailo programme focusses on understanding the influence of a specific place or community. Kailo aims to understand how factors in the community which are outside a person's immediate control, such as transport or crime rates, can influence their mental health, so that these can be changed. These factors are called social determinants.

*For more details about how Kailo works and the stages of Kailo, see our summary: **A community-based approach to identifying and prioritising young people's mental health needs in their local communities.***

## Aims

This paper describes an evaluation to explore how Kailo has worked in Newham, London, and Northern Devon, two very different parts of the UK where Kailo has been set up. It is a realist evaluation, meaning it goes beyond asking "has Kailo worked" and asks "how and why has it worked, for whom, and in what ways".

## Methods

The evaluation used lots of different methods to gather information including: reviewing other similar research; reviewing Kailo documents; observing Kailo activities and meetings; and two rounds of interviews and focus groups with Kailo team members, local community leaders and young people.

The researchers analysed all this information to form ideas about how and why Kailo works. Each statement presents a **context**, a **mechanism** of how change is happening, and an **outcome**. In realist research, these are called CMO (context-mechanism-outcomes) statements.

These CMO statements are then combined to come up with an "initial programme theory" about how Kailo is working, which can be tested in future research.

A Young People's Advisory Group shaped the research, to make sure it stayed relevant and accessible for young people.



## Key Findings

Twelve CMO statements about how and why Kailo works in Newham and Northern Devon were developed, which fit into six themes:

- 1) **Alignment:** When the Kailo programme and local priorities are the same, communities are more enthusiastic about Kailo and more likely to use Kailo ideas in their own organisations.
- 2) **Time:** The Kailo team taking time to get to know local communities in a flexible way builds trust and respect and helps Kailo understand local need better.
- 3) **Credibility:** Involving trusted community members in Kailo helps the programme seem more credible, so people are more likely to get involved
- 4) **Accessible spaces:** Creating safe, inclusive and accessible spaces for young people to talk about mental health, potentially for the first time, helps them feel valued and encourages honesty and confidence. This gives young people a sense of community, helps them gain new skills, and motivates them to keep sharing ideas.
- 5) **Building shared understanding:** Kailo can help bring young people and community leaders together and create a space for people to think in the same way about what young people need.
- 6) **Creating change that hope is possible:** Kailo can show young people they are important by using their feedback to make changes to issues in the community which impact on mental health. Professionals who champion Kailo's work can also motivate other organisation to keep engaged with Kailo.

## Lessons Learned

All the CMO statements were combined into one theory for how and why Kailo works. In summary, the theory says that:

By focussing on wide, societal impacts on mental health, and lining these up with local priorities, community approaches which empower community members to get involved in

creating change have the potential to make a big difference to systems which currently have a negative impact on young people's mental health.

## Reference

Forthcoming