Quotes from participants who took part in the I Belong initiatives:

**Learn to Row participant**

*‘I thought the idea of a diverse group was amazing. I didn't initially think any of my friends would be interested in rowing but a few were and it gave us the opportunity to try something new. People from our background don't really row so there were many occasions where others walking along the canal saw us and took out their phones to capture a group of Black people rowing. They were probably in disbelief to see us rowing.’*

**Indoor rowing participant**

*‘I am the only woman on the course and the oldest at 72 years. I’m really enjoying it and it has increasing my fitness. I over did it a bit in the second week trying to keep up with the men so the instructor who is very good, sent me some exercises to do at home. I was the instructor’s nursery teacher! I’d like to keep going and learn to row.’*

**Drop-In on the water sessions participant:**

*‘I loved it, I would jump at the opportunity of doing this more often if there was one!’*

**Drop-In coach:** *Across 7 weeks and 13 sessions, a number of people came down to Lea Rowing Club to try rowing for the first time. These were all people who were local to the club – many had walked past and seen other people out on the water, or heard about the sport from a friend, and wanted to give it a go.*

*A lot had to be crammed into the hour-long sessions: introductions, safety briefings and a quick demonstration before participants were allowed on the water. Despite this short amount of time, the progress achieved by some was incredible! The small group size (generally 2-4 people at a session), a not too busy river, and everyone being in individual boats really contributed to this. As coaches we could spend more time giving each person feedback and they didn’t have to worry about timing or other issues that arise in boats with multiple people, just themselves.*

*By the end of a session, most were rowing at full slide using their whole body and were able to sequence their movements fairly well, on top of navigating along the river. For those that attended multiple sessions, improvements were seen each time and they were able to be challenged with more technical aspects of rowing to work on.*

*At the end of each session almost everyone remarked that rowing was harder than it looked and required a lot more coordination than expected, but then went onto ask about how they continue and try more rowing! A few have already started training in this year’s novice intake, which has been great to see and the club is looking at how to get more to continue their rowing journey.*

**Engaging Diverse Groups workshop participant:**

*Halima flagged lots of things we could improve and which I had already wondered about, it has really driven home the problem we have of communicating with members effectively. If we can’t get our members informed how can we ever have the right conversations with people who aren’t members yet? Very useful learning.*

*‘The workshop was great, and I thought gave us some excellent points to consider. As Halima said, we need to be clear about what we want to achieve and why we are doing it.’*