

PARGITER TRUST FUND

END OF PROJECT REPORT

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562

**Direct
Beneficiaries**

VOICE4CHANGE ENGLAND, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PARGITER TRUST, AWARDED 9 ORGANISATIONS £43.5K IN GRANT FUNDING, ENABLING THEM TO CARRY OUT HEALTH, WELLBEING, ADVICE, AND TRAINING SUPPORT WITH THOSE AGED 65 AND OVER IN BLACK AND MINORITISED ETHNIC (BME) COMMUNITIES.

BELOW IS AN ALPHABETISED LIST OF OUR GRANTEES AND A SUMMARY OF THEIR PROJECTS.

AFRO INNOVATION GROUP, LEICESTER

£5,000

The organisation ran a befriending project supporting isolated migrants, refugees and asylum seekers through weekly visits and engagement to encourage independence and improve wellbeing. Beneficiaries had digital literacy sessions on how to do tasks online such as shopping, sending emails, making a GP appointment, accessing information, and connecting with others.

AFRICAN WOMEN IMPACT UK, WALSALL

£5,000

Digital champions conducted in-person sessions teaching IT skills to elderly refugee women, enabling them to socialise with friends and family online and reduce isolation and loneliness.

CHINESE COMMUNITY WELLBEING SOCIETY, BRISTOL

£5,000

Funds enabled the set up monthly support groups for Chinese and East and South East Asian elderly. The sessions were delivered both in-person and online to accommodate individual needs and provided a space for engagement and social interaction.

DAY-MER TURKISH AND KURDISH COMMUNITY CENTRE, LONDON

£3,664.61

The organisation ran digital training sessions, yoga classes, arts classes, and breakfast clubs for those aged over 65, providing service users with routine and structure, creating a social environment where they were upskilled and made connections with other people to reduce loneliness.

ISLINGTON BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION, LONDON

£4,900

Digital champions conducted in-person sessions teaching IT skills to elderly refugee women, enabling them to socialise with friends and family online and reduce isolation and loneliness.

MASJID AL QUBA, LEICESTER

£5,000

The organisation offered social engagement and support needs sessions to male beneficiaries aged between 65-75 from low-income households who suffered social isolation. The funds allowed Masjid Al Quba to engage with the senior citizens directly to identify any pressing needs, offer support and/or signposting, as well as providing a safe space for 1-2-1 interaction.

NOVIHA UK, LONDON

£5000

This grant addressed the intergenerational gap through skill-sharing and social interaction, with young people aged 18-25 teaching digital skills to older people from Black and Minoritised communities. The project upskilled both the volunteers and the beneficiaries, equipping them with knowledge that will last beyond the lifetime of the project.

SPORTS4HEALTH CIO, LONDON

£5,000

Funds were used to run table-tennis, softball, and badminton sessions for LGBTQ+ beneficiaries aged 65 and over who feel excluded from mainstream activities. The project reduced loneliness and isolation whilst improving mental and physical health.

THE FLOWHESION FOUNDATION, LONDON

£5,000

Multi-lingual staff hosted a series of workshops designed to educate and provide tools on how to deal with stress, low mood, and depression. Sessions were aimed at women aged 65+ and reduced isolation amongst this group, with additional support on offer where needed.

WHAT WENT WELL?



01 Volunteer Impact

Organisations received an increase in volunteers from older members of the community, with ideas on how to organise dedicated local events for older people.

Tech tutoring - several participants had completely lost contact with close family members and had been alone for between 5-9 years. With volunteer intervention, connections were established with family members and now regular contact is kept through video calls on phones.

Bi-lingual staff/volunteers ensured that the users could better communicate and make it more accessible for them.

A Board Member, who is a retired GP, volunteered to join the sessions to provide reassurance/support/guidance to those who felt more physically concerned about increasing their physical activity levels.

Afro-Innovation Group was able to engage 15 trained volunteers in this project, but the full number of volunteers is reported to be 30.

Intergenerational project by African Women Impact UK increased a number of volunteers interested in supporting project related to the digital inclusion for older community members.



Collaboration Opportunities 02



Chinese Community Wellbeing Society held several workshops in combination with other projects, which enabled them to hold larger workshops as costs could be shared as well as further opening opportunities for the community to meet with others. They also contacted partners in Hong Kong and Taiwan to obtain relevant books in suitable languages to further populate their dementia library, which loans out materials for community use.

Noviha UK partnered with Unity Centre of South London, Positive Community Networks and Ghana Nurses Association and have set up a strong foundation for future projects.

African Women Impact UK reported an unanticipated outcome of the project in increased interest of local business to support digital inclusion provision for older people which is more likely to lead to the future collaborations.

Afro-Innovation Group has been working with the Voluntary Action South Leicestershire to listen to the voice of their users and help to shape this project based on the feedback provided. This Befriending project has been running for over 5 years but the Pargiter Trust funding helped to shift the focus to the elderly over 65 specifically.

03 Peer Support



- Participants in **Noviha UK**'s digital project have established a lively social media network where they share information and ideas and keep in touch regularly with one another.
- Forming of friendship groups and socialising outside of the project.
- Organised walks in the local park set up by participants to encourage family and friends to be active.
- The project delivered by **African Women Impact UK** facilitated knowledge-sharing between more tech savvy participants and those who needed more support developing the digital literacy skills.
- **Afro-Innovation Group** helped their elderly beneficiaries maintain their independence with the help of Befriending Volunteers. The cohort was able to establish a meaningful connection with their peers and many reported feelings of looking forward to the Befriending activities. Some of their general activities included all ages, therefore they had increased opportunities to develop friendships with wider group of people from the local areas.



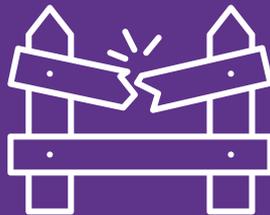
Improved quality of life – people feel valued, independent, able to ask for help



Reestablishing of familial connections



Improved physical and mental health and positive lifestyle changes



Reduced barriers to engagement for older people



Reduced isolation and loneliness through socialising and the formation of friendships/ peer-support groups



Improved community cohesion and a sense of belonging



Activities as a gateway to building trust and identifying further beneficiary needs



Improved access to advice, training and facilities by working with selected partners to deliver specialist support, or referring beneficiaries to other support services offered



Narrowing the skills gap between generations by digitally upskilling older people



Prevention of long-term and more complicated consequences of untreated illness, unsupported bereavement, and financial difficulties



Increase in confidence and self-reliance



Raising awareness around the available services in the area for the migrants, refugee and asylum seekers

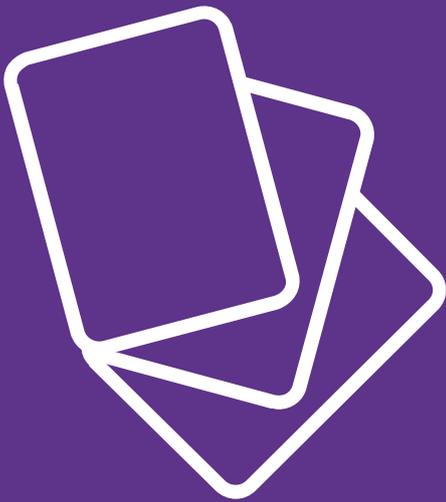


Improved access to self-care focused sessions designed for the hard-to-reach users due to their cultural and language needs



Increased access to 1-2-1 counselling services to help with the healing of life's challenges

05 Resources



The Flowhesion Foundation used flash cards for the users to take home and practice techniques and it was an effective resources for their users. Many users kept their diaries to record the effect of used techniques, recording their food intake and skills learnt at the sessions.

African Women Impact UK developed for the delivery of the digital training sessions a range of training materials specifically tailored to the needs of over 65 BME women. In addition, the group also created curriculum and project design, all of which will be reused for the future projects and are available to their services users.



WHAT DIDN'T GO SO WELL?



01 BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

Several groups found participants were reluctant to join in-person and/or meet in large groups despite the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

Offering informal socialisation sessions (e.g., coffee mornings) allowed participants to build their confidence and allowed them to feel they were in a leading role.

Word of mouth promotion and the use of volunteers to reach those who were isolated encouraged more people to join.

Creation of pamphlets on different aspects of computer learning that participants could take home to supplement and continue their training at home.

Transport and caring responsibilities (for grandchildren) were reported as a barrier to access the activities.

The group offered 'free shuttle' services to increase the accessibility and the timetable offered sessions at different times and areas.

Some of the participants had not been active for long periods, so coming back to a more active lifestyle regularly increased the fear of 'overdoing it'.

In this case, the group invited one of the Board members who is a retired GP to attend the sessions and was able to offer some reassurance, answer questions/concerns which helped their attendees to open up. It added some extra value to the project.

02 COST OF LIVING CRISIS

- The crisis is likely to have contributed to an increase in the number of people attending sessions to access a 'warm space' and reduce heating costs at home.
- Some organisations continue to struggle with securing funding to cover core costs and hire staff on a permanent basis.
- A decline in donations and an increase in demand for services
- Some volunteers have reduced their hours to secure part-time work, as they have their own costs to address.
- Costs of transport to include those living in the suburb areas of the city and help those who struggle to provide it for themselves.



NATURAL DISASTERS 03



- The earthquake in Turkey in February impacted the Turkish and Kurdish residents of North London.
- It was noticeable that mainstream providers had little capacity to provide general or culturally sensitive services, such as counselling, with long waiting lists for beneficiaries to be seen.

LESSONS LEARNED

PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE
&
THE COMMUNITY

MASJID AL-QUBA

noted that their support sessions would often run over as volunteers felt insensitive cutting conversations short without offering some kind of reassurance or solution. Future projects need to allow additional time at the end of each session to offer extra support where it is needed and to tidy up the venue. So, in future projects they will hire the venue for an extra 15 minutes to accommodate this.

As a large and well-known organisation within the local community, they highlighted the need for more volunteers trained in mental health matters, well-being and knowledge of additional resources available to be able to help more within the community.

CHINESE COMMUNITY WELLBEING SOCIETY

pointed out the need for specialist expertise and knowledge in fundraising. By securing regular/long-term funding, they will be better able to plan and work with partners to address community issues.

ISLINGTON BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION

identified that the informal working relationships they developed through their socialisation sessions remains an asset that will continue to benefit the local people. However, there is a need for further resources to increase their capacity e.g., to have more staff and trained volunteers who can be recognised as “community champions”.

NOVIHA UK

learned their broadband bandwidth was inadequate to serve the whole class of participants. They therefore called individual participants at home to take them through the tasks. They currently do not have funding to upgrade their broadband as a long-term solution.

They also recognised that using participants’ perspectives of understanding lessons to augment strategies adopted by tutors provided more successful outcomes in delivery of lessons and achieving tasks.

AFRO-INNOVATION GROUP

has been experiencing increased demand for their services for the elderly and the group seeks to recruit more volunteers to support the provision of befriending. On the other hand, the group reported being challenged by the increased cost of utility bills and other running costs while the funding has not reflected the inflation enough.

THE FLOWHESION FOUNDATION

learned that their users were keen to learn about different techniques via YouTube videos. The group is looking into piloting 'Mind, Body, Souls' sessions that will incorporate the use of online resources.

SPORT4HEALTH

learned that there is better value in bringing in qualified or experienced people when working with vulnerable people. For instance, the group had a Mental Health First Aider volunteer involved in the delivery to ensure that they would notice and support those who may be experiencing challenging times mentally.

Several groups noted that mainstream providers had little capacity to provide general or culturally appropriate services, or that many services were inaccessible due to language barriers.

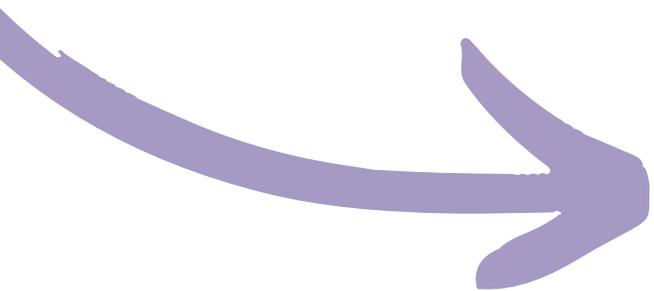
DAY-MER TURKISH AND KURDISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

highlighted that they did not have a project coordinator. Therefore they relied upon volunteers who organised the classes, completed registration forms, and followed up beneficiaries to ensure retention. While this information and the activities themselves as well as the improved presence of older people helped them to maintain developing services for older people as a priority, the lack of staffing capacity to oversee and develop such services has been underlined through this project experience. Securing such staff and sessional staff to provide a minimum of activities for the older people group will provide the basis to develop specialist services for them.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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Day-Mer Turkish and Kurdish Community

Centre used a combination of reserves, subsidies from participants and donations to maintain their activities until the end of June 2023 with hopes to have secured structured provision to start from Autumn 2023.

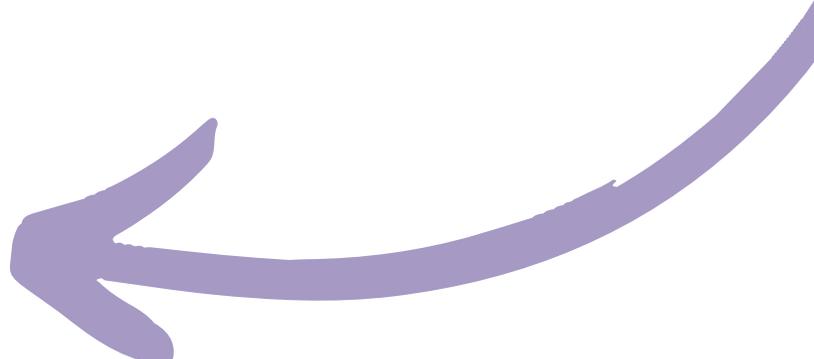
Islington Bangladesh Association

have developed partnerships with NHS University College London Hospital, Health Watch Islington and Nafsiyath, which will help them continue to provide events for older people.



Noviha UK will continue to run computer literacy and social media workshops and have already secured £5,000 from Wandsworth Council to do so. They have also developed a contingency plan for fundraising, which centres on donations from participants.

Chinese Community Wellbeing Society continue to fundraise and work with other internal projects and external partners to organise and run workshops.





Sport4Health will continue to provide their activities to the older participants while raising funds for the long-term continuity of the project. If they cannot secure funding, the activities will be stopped and resume once the funding is in place.



Afro-Innovation Group will continue provide the Befriending services BASE Plus Project, although the funding is not aimed specifically at the 65 +, it will allow their cohort to access the provision. The group continues to work towards securing more funding as the demand increases including during Autumn and Winter the warm space provision.

African Women Impact UK – due to high demand for the basic IT Skills provision, the activities will be running with the support of the member's contributions, individual donations and the support of local businesses. The group keeps applying to secure funding for future delivery.



The Flowhesion Foundation will continue to run one more program for 15 users with the help of volunteers if there is demand.

Those who are unable to continue cite a lack of funding:

Masjid Al Quba has no funding to continue their project but notes that the beneficiaries have been continuing to meet up for walks on a twice weekly basis. Communication via a WhatsApp group set up by volunteers and trustees is also being used daily and provides the opportunity to keep in contact with those who participated in the project.

WHAT DID THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY?

V4CE
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CHINESE COMMUNITY WELLBEING SOCIETY

“I’m glad we received the project leaflet on the first week we arrived at Bristol. It feels so connected to meet other families from Hong Kong who are in similar situation. My mother also feel less stressful now that they have made some new friends here.”

“It’s really nice that the sessions are delivered directly in Cantonese without any interpretation. This way I feel much more relaxed to raise any questions and doubts, not worried that it’s a misunderstanding due to my limited English capacity.”

“Since we started receiving help from CCWS, our whole family feels supported and reassured. We are no longer confused about the English culture and can better enjoy our new life here in the UK.”

“Back in Hong Kong we normally just visit the hospital whenever we have any health issues. Now I understand things are different here. It’s reassuring to have people guide you through the new system so that you don’t waste time and energy in vain.”

DAY-MER TURKISH AND KURDISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

“I can use Citymapper now; I can find my own way and travel to anywhere I like thanks to the valuable learning provided in your trainings.”

“Going out for physical activities even once a week breaks my staying home habit. I did not miss any classes because I love my class, my classmates and Tutor. Thank you for providing these activities for us.”

ISLINGTON BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION

“I was feeling all alone since the death of my husband couple of years ago. I did not know what to do. I was depressed and all I was doing eating unhealthy food to make me feel better. But since I started to come to IBA’s Tea/coffee sessions, I met other local people, I have two new friends and we share lot of things together. I have also learnt to eat healthy food, do some gardening and enjoying life again.”

MASJID AL QUBA

“I now look forward to my life, not wait for my death”

THE FLOWHESION FOUNDATION

“I am glad I’ve had the opportunity to be involved in these sessions, I am aware of what services are available to me, thank you”

“I am really grateful for the support offered by Flowhession. Having someone who understands my culture and religion and how that was twisted to keep me in an abusive relationship was really helpful for me to start thinking about what happened to me. I am starting to enjoy the mind, body, and soul classes and found lots of the strategies very helpful. I try to do finger breathing exercises daily and log my reflective daily feelings. Thanks to Flowhession for loaning me a tablet.”

SPORT 4 HEALTH

“The last 2-3 years with the pandemic have been difficult for so many people and for those of us who already lived alone it was very hard at times. So I was really grateful for this project. I met some lovely people and made some great friends. I want to do more of these types of things now. There’s no stopping me, I have to make up for lost time!”

AFRICAN WOMEN IMPACT UK

“The Over 65 Basic I.T Support Group has been a blessing in my life. Learning how to use a computer and the internet seemed like an impossible task, but the patient and friendly volunteers made it enjoyable and easy to understand. Now, I can send emails to my grandchildren and even join virtual gatherings on Zoom. The newfound confidence I've gained has lifted my spirits, and I no longer feel left behind in this digital age. This service has truly transformed how I connect with my loved ones, and I'm forever grateful for the support and knowledge they've shared with me” Annette, 72 years old, a beneficiary of the support group.”

HOW CAN WE MAKE BETTER, MORE INFORMED FUNDING DECISIONS?

WE ASKED OUR GRANTEES WHAT SUPPORT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE FROM FUNDERS IN THE FUTURE:



Provide more unrestricted funding so groups can respond more quickly and to be better able to provide whatever support is needed.



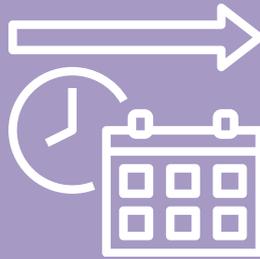
Funding made available for community hubs, especially during winter, to help reduce home costs and create safe spaces for the community to meet, breakdown isolation and support each other.



More funding for charities so we can offer more support to the local community, for afterschool and sports clubs so they can support the young adults and children, for mental health of the elderly so that we can offer them warm, safe and supportive environments to socialise in.



Some financial support in terms of some additional funding to help organisations cope with the rising core costs such as with heating and lighting, purchases of basic materials and resources.



Providing support with core costs on a long-term basis which will provide organisations with time and resources to co-produce community responses is an urgent priority. These organisations not only provide accessible and free services addressing or alleviate community needs but they enable the sustainability of communities through these, which reflects to their self-esteem, aspirations and positive community connections. This is not only important for communities like ours who are in the process of their settlement to life in Britain but for enabling the development of positive and constructive relations between communities which comprise our society.



Provide an automatic uplift or 'top-up' of say 10% to grants that were agreed before October/November 2022.



Quicker decisions making from the funder – on average charities are waiting 3-6 months to learn about the outcomes of the funding.



Cost of Living applications should be more straightforward, if they are too complicated – it's time consuming.