



freedom from abuse & violence

COMMUNITIES RISING

FINAL REPORT

2021-2024



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INTRODUCTION

Introduction from Jo Gough, the Chief Exec of RISE

I have the great pleasure of introducing our Communities Rising End of Project Report in the 30th Year of RISE – this is both a celebration and a moment to reflect how far we have come and how far we still have to go – it launches the voices of our communities and the women survivors living in these communities – they are leading, and we will walk alongside amplifying their voices building a future where all women and girls can live freely from domestic abuse.

The energy to make this project happen is testament to these women - it was organised, facilitated and driven by our community members as RISE Ambassadors, Connectors, Researchers and Change Makers. We thank them and our many supporters, contributors and partners in the RISE community. They have stepped up and shown dedication to ending violence and abuse for women, children and LGBT people.

Before saying more I want to honour the RISE Change Makers - women survivors who have taken up paid roles at RISE with a mission to change lives – they brought a positive buzz and fresh energy. Through art, research, poetry, dance and activism their passion and ideas - laughter, cheers and calls to end patriarchy - has set the tone for our future. A special thank you goes to these six powerful and gifted women.

So on to the project - the RISE Communities Rising Project was conceived in 2014 and born in 2016 previously called the RISE Big Lottery Community Project and funded through the Lottery Women and Girls Fund. I can still hear the calls from the women in our RISE Voices group telling us they wanted to be more involved and wanted to be activists. This went right to my heart as a true believer in a concept called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and so we decided to create a pioneering project that built on the 'gifts and strengths' of the women survivors and the communities around them. We wanted to strengthen the local community response as well as building capacity where women experiencing complexity, older women or those living with disabilities or from black and/or racially minoritised heritage had been previously let-down. We built Assertive Outreach (for women experiencing complexity), Older and Disabled people support as well as a Women of Colour service working alongside community partners including: BHT, Hangleton and Knoll project, Bridging Change, Possibility People, Speak Up, Blatchington Court Trust, Equinox, Impact Initiatives, TDC and Hour Glass.

After thousands of expressions of interest to the Big Lottery Women and Girls Fund RISE was one of very few securing funding for a four-year project which was evaluated nationally. We worked with some of the biggest names in our field including Prof Liz Kelly and Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs OBE as well as Women's Aid and Imkaan (Black Feminist organisation). After this first project we moved to phase two with funding through Lottery Reaching Communities to further develop this work with communities and survivors in the lead. With this report we are marking the end of this project but we intend to ensure its legacy will not be lost.

We launched the RISE 5-year strategic plan and our new RISE Values in 2024 - both embedded this work by focussing on us [Walking Together, Giving Voice, Building on Strengths and Creating Community with survivors whilst Being Ambitious and Pragmatic in our work](#). RISE is deeply committed to bringing about this change which we have demonstrated by developing a new survivor-driven 'Big Picture' (our theory of change) informed by the belief that freedom from abuse and violence is possible.

Over the last thirty years, records suggest that we've supported an average of 1500 people each year, a total of around 45,000 people – that's equivalent to half the population of the Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven constituency. We believe that the reality is higher, that most abuse goes under reported and hidden. 45,000 is 45,000 too many.

This report marks a moment in our history that reorients us back to our main mission. We know that in our communities, on our streets and in our homes women and children and LGBT people are harmed but we also know that in our communities we can heal and recover together. Communities Rising is a demonstration of that togetherness. So I hope you will read this report and join with me in celebrating and healing together.

I want to thank our staff, our volunteers, and our Board. We are grateful to our partners and funders including the National Lottery, Fulfilling lives, Changing Futures and Dodgson Trust who have committed to transforming harmful social norms in our communities, and giving voice to women and girls.



SPEAK UP

The aim of Speak Up was to encourage communities to use their voices to play an active role in ending domestic abuse through conversations, learning and raising awareness.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

A free course for anyone regardless of gender, background or identity over 18 with a connection to Brighton and Hove. Participants learn how to provide supportive responses to survivors first time round, challenge victim blaming and break the silence. Ambassadors become part of the solution.

132

**Domestic Abuse
Community
Ambassadors**



REASONS TO BECOME AN AMBASSADOR

- Gain confidence to respond
- Monthly newsletter
- Optional 6-weekly network socials
- Learn new skills for your CV
- Domestic Abuse is everyone's issue

NOVEMBER 2023 PROGRAMME - UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX



KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Whilst continuing to run the programme for anyone and everyone to attend, we also facilitated specific sessions and targeted attendance for particular audiences.

Men

Hairdressers

Students

Bar staff

SPEAK UP

Community members, not professionals, are the first to know about domestic abuse. But a lack of understanding and confidence can make people unsure of how to respond.

NEWSLETTER

Ambassadors signed up to our mailing list to receive our monthly newsletter with project updates, opportunities, news stories and book, tv and film recommendations.

Ambassadors were also welcome to share their own stories and recommendations.



NETWORK MEETINGS

After completing the programme, ambassadors were invited to join in our optional 6-weekly network meetings and socials. We alternated these between in person and online.



AMBASSADOR FEEDBACK

"I had a great conversation with my parents last night about the training and they both raised things about my past relationship and now being able to recognise what was happening and why I wasn't able to talk to them about it while I was in it. The training was worth it for that conversation alone"

"I really enjoyed the course. It was really refreshing to be in a room with different viewpoints"

"The instructors were also amazing - knowledgeable and inspiring, great listeners but also skilled at delivering feedback"

SURVIVORS WELCOME

We encouraged survivors to make their own decisions about when they were ready to participate in the ambassador programme. Approximately half of our participants were survivors and have valued the programme as part of their recovery.



SPEAK UP

TRAINING DELIVERY LOCATIONS

We aimed to deliver all Ambassador programmes in accessible community spaces, putting our work back in the heart of the community. Those marked with an X have had training based there.



TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- To ask questions you want to ask, free of judgment
- Recognise signs of abuse, discuss myths and move beyond stereotypes
- Offer strategies for how to support survivors and create safe spaces
- Become better equipped for how to respond to disclosures
- Be able to signpost survivors to support

KEY LEARNINGS

1 Despite tailored and targeted campaigns – men have been difficult to engage in the training.

2 Running the programme in person in different community locations is appreciated by those attending.

3 Participants love the embedded intersectionality of the new programme.

4 Consistency works when trying to engage communities – keep showing up and people will come.

ACT UP

Act up focused on galvanising and consolidating the social activism of the community. Survivors and community members need support and guidance, and a trauma-informed, nurturing network and community, to turn this spark into action.

CHANGE MAKERS

The Change Maker programme (2024) has offered paid opportunities to survivors of domestic abuse. We focus on engaging communities in issues that ignite their passions, with the aim of opening up debate and creating a positive culture change in our community.

One of our Change Makers, with a connector background has worked with us at the plot to develop the peer led focus of our Women Rise Rooted Project. Another Change Maker has been instrumental in developing research outputs and Walk Together training.



6

Changemaker positions

COMMUNITIES RISING NETWORK

We provided spaces and newsletters for community members to come together for networking, discussion, workshops and connection.

12

Community Network Meetings

Monthly Newsletters



RECLAIM THE NIGHT BANNERMAKING WORKSHOP WITH FEM POW

10

women came and made banners to take to the demo



ACT UP CAMPAIGNS

Over the period 2023-24 we have been delighted to support two active campaigns created by our community members with the aim to amplify the voices of survivors and make a stand for the right to freedom from domestic abuse.

IN SMALL WAYS WE ARE MAKING BIG CHANGES(2023)

As part of the 2023 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, a group of our Change Makers organised a workshop event for our community members. The inspiration for this event was stories and craftivism – the idea that even on a small scale we are all engaged in small acts of resistance. The power of making these acts together, in community, is what makes us feel strong.

We are very grateful to our partner Brighton and Hove Libraries for giving our voices a central stage – disrupting the public space of Jubilee Library with our quiet activism.



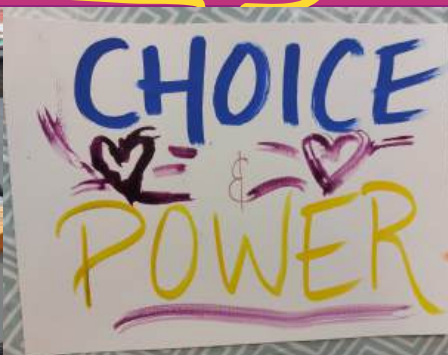
BUS STOP: #STOPABUSE (2024)

In April of this year our Change Maker team began working hard on a new campaign #StopabusE – which we hoped to launch in the Autumn.

Had a very fun, creative time, engaging and getting to know others on a similar journey has been very inspiring. I need to just do it!

It was a very safe space- I felt held and seen- visible. There was no pressure I was glad I came.

Yeah baby - Inspiring collective camaraderie.



ACT UP TRAILBLAZERS

Over the past year we have learnt that the transition from a volunteer role or a Connector project can feel like a daunting prospect. Two of our community members felt that to support this process the space to reflect on the journey, community, individual assets, goals and aspirations would be beneficial. They took the lead in creating a Stay Involved Workbook. The workbook offers a personal, strong supportive community voice to walk alongside women as they plan and take their next steps.

WORKBOOK EXTRACT

"We are Emma and Maddie and just like you we have been on a journey through the RISE service. We took all the help that RISE offered and we needed it. We are now in a much better place, have learnt so much and want to pass this on - to you and others like you. We want to see change, we want to see others heal and grow. We cannot change what we have been through but we can be voices in the dark, showing a light and guiding others to find themselves and get their lives back. This workbook is co-created with RISE and us, real life survivors. In fact we are more than that - we are thrivers, and you can be too."



ACT UP CHANGEMAKING

"When I am working with people at the Plot, whether that be my own creative clay and well-being sessions or co-facilitating groups with someone from Rise I always feel that nature is holding us all and helping us unwind, process and heal."

We are surrounded by trees; the green nurtures all of us and there is so much life - birds, butterflies, dragonflies, bees and even a squirrel or a mouse running through! We are part of nature and it is powerful and liberating to remember our wild, deeply natural selves."



ACT UP: THE CHANGEMAKER PROGRAMME

Welcome to the Change Maker Programme!
The Change Maker programme was a team project about making change in our community – to free women and girls from violence and abuse. It came out of the Communities Rising initiative that RISE has developed. All the members of the team are survivors of abuse.

WE ARE THE CHANGE MAKERS

Our team models Asset Based Development; bringing different gifts and strengths to make a combined effort. We use our heads, hearts and hands to think, feel and do what we believe in.



We met weekly and workshopped ideas together, reaching decisions through consensus.

We are singers, poets, writers, gardeners, artists, actors and much more!



HOW WE WORKED TOGETHER

OUR CAMPAIGN

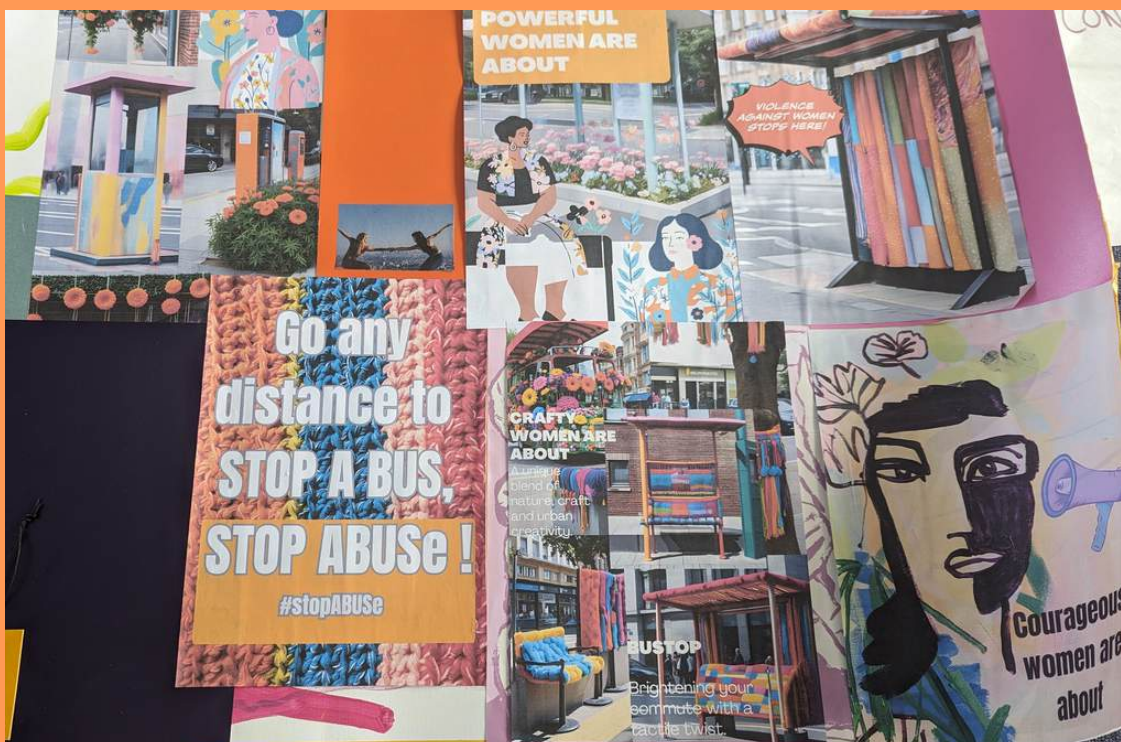
We co-creatively applied the problem tree exercise to narrow down issues we each felt strongly about. Some of the key issues and insights we brought to the table:

- teaching autonomy,
- feminising our city,,
- telling our own stories,
- accessing nature and claiming spaces.

To narrow it down to a single concept we looked for commonality and mapped out the major issues, arriving at at one central idea for our campaign!



Our campaign aimed to raise awareness and combat harassment and abuse that occurs in and around our city bus stops, focusing on the bus stop, as a symbol of women’s agency, whilst targeting issues of safety from violence, intimidation, and abuse #Stopabuse.



ALL ABOUT OUR CAMPAIGN

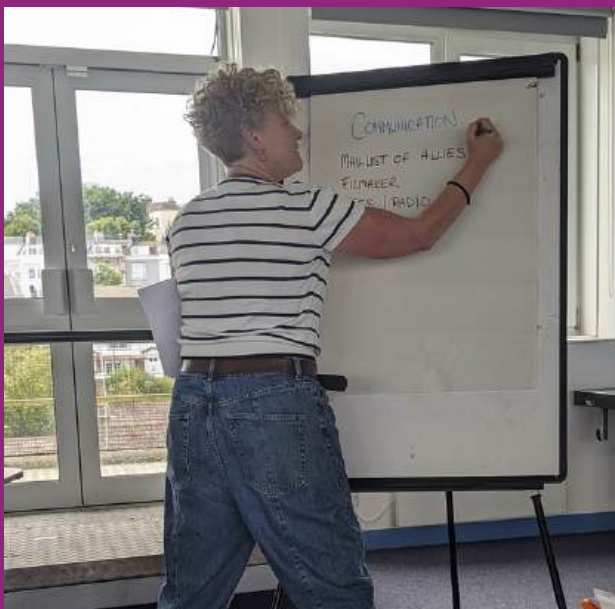
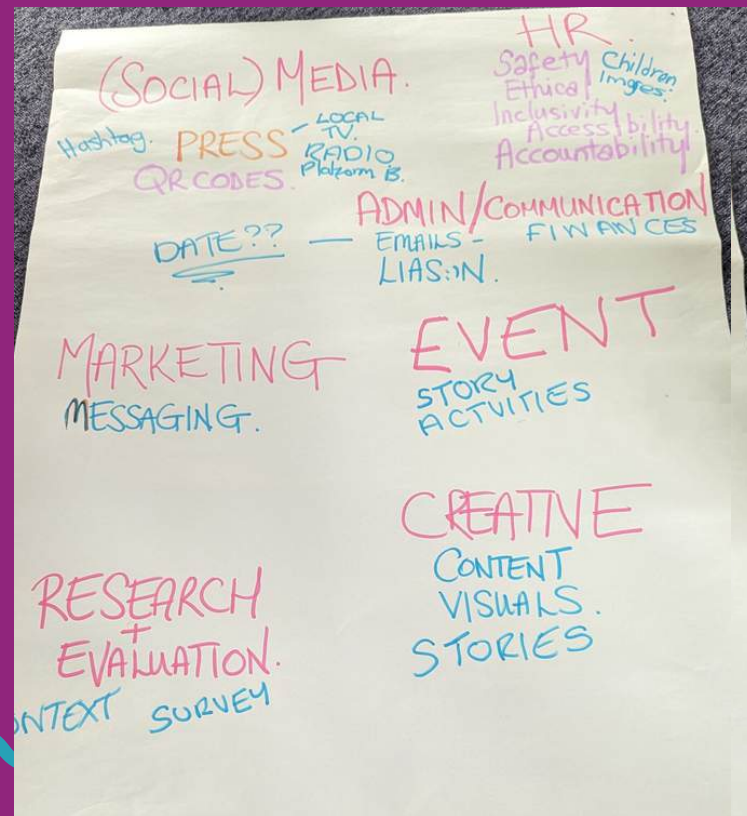
CAMPAIGN PLAN- WE SHALL CREATE A CRAFTIVIST INSTALLATION, ENHANCING THE BUS STOP WITH KEY MESSAGES, WHILST OFFERING AN IMPACTFUL ENGAGEMENT SPACE TO HELP SOFTEN AND REFRAME THE URBAN DISCONNECT. THERE WILL BE LINKS TO A QR CODE DIRECTING YOU TO THE RISE WEBSITE WHERE YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR CAMPAIGN.



We looked at the key questions we would have to answer to progress with our idea. We had to think about what message we wanted to put across.

Where we go from here: These could be displayed as word clouds:

- Creation of Bus Stop
- Exploring partnerships with bus companies.
- Collecting Change Maker stories
- Creating a Survey.
- Creating a page on RISE Website with linked QR to bus stop.
- Dividing up the campaign workload





THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF THE CHANGEMAKER TEAM MEMBERS REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY OF THE CAMPAIGN



In May, we started looking at the problem trees and thinking about what the key feminist issues were. This involved working through the problems and breaking them down. It was a really interesting experience as it made us talk about a lot of different issues. Those of us who might not have felt like they were from feminist backgrounds, expressed how eye-opening the discussions were for them. However, we also felt a bit overwhelmed by the sheer scale of our problem trees, focusing on different areas of abuse. Maybe there wasn't enough time to process some of that work as we were on quite a tight agenda.

June brought us to a point where we got all our ideas together and began starting looking at key themes. We were a diverse group—different ages, experiences, different barriers and points in our feminist journeys really. One of the things we talked about was 'haggling out' The idea of being an older feminist woman and the differences faced by older and younger feminist women, from invisibility to attracting a lot of attention and abusive comments. As a team, we wanted to reach all of the parts and areas. We spoke broadly about the things we cared about, and questioning whether our work should also address men and boys. We didn't want to miss out on opportunities to connect with the broader conversation. Although we were largely democratic, some members wanted a more radical, grassroots direction, so it was about finding the balance between the professional roles we held at RISE, and some of our stronger activist leanings which would mean we didn't really follow rules books.



We moved towards July 10th and the Communities Rising event, and that was very exciting. It felt like it brought everything together, good to have a focus and a date.

The event itself was a powerful moment for us. People described it as a culmination of everything we had worked towards. One person mentioned how emotional it was, saying, "I cried, and I never cry." It was a shame we weren't all present, but certainly we were there together in spirit collectively. I think that for those that weren't there, that was a disconnect point, and on a personal note, I found myself divided between holding a workshop space and wanting to engage in deeper conversations about the bus-stop and our work. It was a bit overwhelming, but also incredibly fulfilling.



After the high of the event, reality set in. July into August was quite a hard time, there were bumps in the road and a lot of obstacles. The team changed shape slightly as some members needed to pause, and we were trying to catch up with our goals. There was a sense of scaling back and prioritising what we could achieve. We had the key roles and tasks set out, but some of the conversations that we expected to be having with key partners weren't there. Brighton & Hove bus company didn't respond as expected and we had to adapt. There was some conflict about what to focus on, and what was most important as a lasting legacy. The discussions were around tidying things up to a comfortable place, and collating, but also having enough action and material to be able to reopen the campaign in the future if achievable. A time of reflecting on where we were and working out how to wrap it up

In September, we began thinking about consolidating everything on a website—a place where the campaign could live on and potentially be revived in the future. The survey was designed, the web page would be launched, and the bus top installation was ready to go as and when. There was a sadness that we hadn't got where we had wanted to, but there was also pride in all the work that had been done and what had been achieved. Relationships had been built, and there was a shared energy that we knew would keep the group moving forward.



One constant throughout the project was the care we showed for each other. Whether it was through small moments of breathing exercises or sitting in a circle to strategize, the group's support was a highlight for many of us. Personally, this project was a first in many ways—it was my first time working in such a community-focused, deeply understanding environment, with these shared experiences. To come into something like this and work in this way has just been so mind blowing to me, it's been so pivotal and arriving at just the right moment in my life. To know that this exists, and not just to know it but be immersed in it and be a part of it. I feel that once you have that, you have to always have it, and that's really powerful.



Link to Survey :

WE ARE THE CHANGEMAKERS



ACT Up: A Trauma-Informed Communities Rising Approach

At Communities Rising we understood that working out the right 'stage' in a survivor's journey could feel hard. We knew that recovery journeys are never a straight forward path, but can feel like more of a spiral - back and forth. We highlighted some key elements for working with survivors in our project to better support them through the opportunities available.

Walking with you

Whatever path you choose, the Communities Rising team will be there to help you think about whether it feels right and the support in place is a good fit for you.



A Space for Wellbeing

At RISE, we understand the subject of domestic abuse can affect us emotionally and physically. We offer different well-being opportunities for our community members. Activities, movement, nature and storytelling are part of this work.



Taking Part

We offer lots of ways to take part in Communities Rising because we understand there is no one size fits all, and circumstances might change. You might start as a volunteer or a connector - or you might prefer to take part in a workshop.



Feeling Connected

We know that women feel strong when they are connected to others who understand and accept them and their journey. That is why we offer different ways for you to be part of our community.



Voice and Action

We want our community members to be able to make sense of their experiences and that of other women. We see community activism as part of the healing process. When we 'amplify voices' we look for ways to make everyone feel safe, included and inspired.



The aim of Connect Up was to (re)-connect women with themselves and with each other to identify their gifts, strengths and stories.

WOMEN RISE ROOTED

Nature Re-Connection programme for survivors.

Over the final 6 months there were 2 more rounds of the programme which took place in March-May and June-July. We also launched the quarterly Women RISE Rooted Community events at The Plot. One during the June Solstics and the other in the Autumn Equinox. The intention was to invite women who had completed the programme back into an ongoing, nurturing community focusing on connection to Self, community, heritage and nature

5 GROUPS

25 PARTICIPANTS



Connection to nature

Connection to heritage

Connection to community

Connection to self (Mind, Body, spirit)



CONNECT UP: COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

CONNECTOR PROGRAMME

Community Connectors are survivors of abuse. They were supported to identify their gifts and strengths to make a difference in areas they are passionate about and initiate projects in their own communities.

18

Community
Connectors
trained



CONNECTOR PROJECT ACTIVITY

- Art workshops and exhibitions for survivors
- Trauma informed health and nutrition coaching
- Social clubs for women and families
- Mindfulness and visualisation.
- Connecting to selves and others through inner reflection
- Self Care as activism Social Media campaign

WHAT OUR CONNECTORS SAY

'I have reclaimed my power and can see the beauty even more in the women I have been surrounded by. Their confidence and resilience makes me want make my project work for our community'

'I'm reminded by the experience how powerful it is for women to make space for other women and raise other women up. This is what the world needs.'

'My confidence in approaching and collaborating with others has grown alongside a grounded sense of things really are possible'



COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

WORKSHOPS FOR CONNECTORS

Including...

- Self-Care & Safety
- Vision and Mission Building
- Business Clarity
- Grant Writing
- Story Telling for Social Media
- Anchored Decision Making

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Connect Club was developed as a space for Connectors to meet and connect with one another. A place to share skills, , try out project ideas as well as take part in crafting activities and socialise. These sessions were held monthly in community settings .

An online workspace was available to share opportunities and update each other with project plans and developments.

Connectors have shared skills and offered each other support at at project pilot sessions and events



5

Community
Connector
Trainings

14

Connector
workshops
delivered

10

Connect Club
sessions

10

Community
Connector
Projects

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

In July 2024, Community Connectors were invited to deliver wellbeing and creative activities to other community members at the Communities Rising Celebration event in July 2024. This event brought all the strands of the project together to celebrate the successes of the project and reflect

on the learnings. For the Connectors, this was an opportunity for them to trial and showcase their project ideas, make connections and deliver their gifts and strengths to the wider community. The content for the event was either delivered by or arranged by Community members, with a dance performance provided by our partners South East Dance.



COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Throughout the three years of the project, Connectors asked for opportunities to support each other with their gifts, skills and strengths expressing that this increased feelings of value, collaboration, and a sense of community. Community members told us they value the network and connections that have been created through the Connector programme. They feel this is a place they belong and feel safe, seen and supported.

I feel more connected, greater sense of belonging, sense of purpose and believing in my abilities.

Knowing myself I didn't think I would feel such an attachment to the women I have met and would love to continue meeting more of the women and collaborating with them

During the final months of the project, work with the Community Connectors focused on launching projects into communities. In total, 26 survivors were supported throughout the 3-year project to identify their individual gifts and strengths, 18 community projects were initiated or supported, with each project having its own individual community impact.



CONNECTOR RESOURCE PACK

In the final weeks of the project one of the Community Connectors and the Community Builder worked together to design and create a resource pack for the community connectors to support the continual development of their projects. There were contributions from the connector community as well as external partners and supporters. This pack can also be shared with other survivors moving forwards.



SUSTAINING THE COMMUNITY

Since 2016 we have built up a substantial community of survivors and supporters who are still connected to RISE and each other. To help sustain the connections made, we have decided to continue use of the online platform Workplace, as a place for connectors, researchers and changemakers to stay connected, share ideas, opportunities and resources with each other .



SOUTH EAST DANCE PARTNERSHIP

Before the end of the project, we began development on a partnership with Southeast Dance who have secured funding to provide 10 free dance sessions to our community members over a 12 month period. They also provided performers for our end of project celebration event. This partnership will be sustained by the community lead at RISE beyond the end of the project



WALK TOGETHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Communities Rising project gave us opportunity to re-visit our (2016-21) Walk Together Research, passing on the legacy of research knowledge and living experience to a new generation of community researchers.

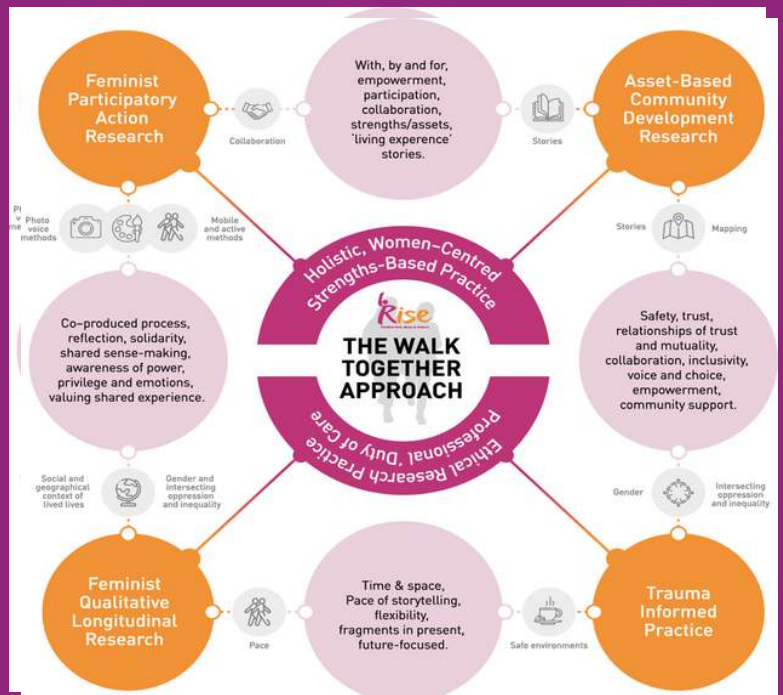
WHAT OUR RESEARCHERS SAY

It's so good!
Thank you!!!

I feel empowered,
lots of education
on trauma and
grounding.

I felt really safe like
everyone could speak.
Felt so clear, warm and
sense of unity.

WALK TOGETHER RESEARCH APPROACH



TRAINING & SUPPORT

- Trauma, Self-Care and Safety
- The Walk Together Approach
- Research Ethics and Safety
- Research Methods
- Community Space, Connection and Action
- Designing A Research Project

7

Community Researchers trained

1:1

support from Research Lead

Weekly online drop in space to share ideas and link with frontline staff

It's not just local. We need to be thinking global and linking with my recent research in India.

It's more intimate. You have more time to get to know how to best communicate

It feels much more done with than done to. People might feel less taken from.

WALK TOGETHER

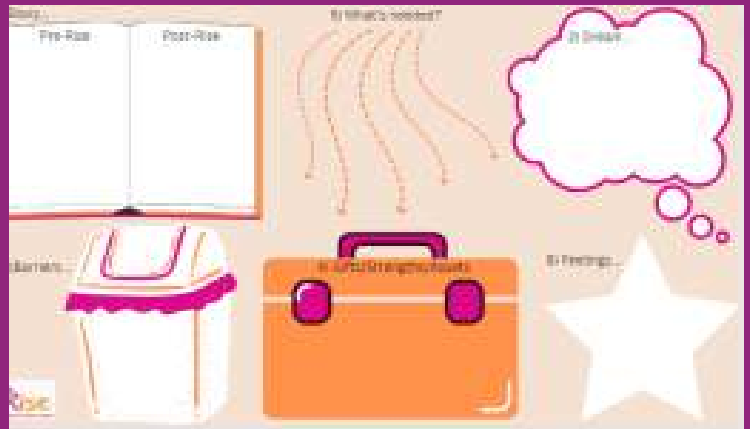
The Walk Together research team have developed a package of evaluation tools that can be embedded in frontline work and capture the views of professionals and community members. This helps RISE to understand what works in supporting communities to heal from and end violence against women and girls.

EVALUATION WORKSHOPS

We explored the key aims and objectives of the Communities Rising Project to establish key evaluation questions.

We then created:

- A survey for professionals and interview questions about capacity building
- An observation template and creative activities for groups
- Reflective tools and creative activities for survivors



PUTTING TOOLS INTO ACTION

Our researchers have been busy interviewing professionals, observing and taking part in community groups and walking alongside women accessing support, to really understand what is needed and what works. We have worked closely with community outreach workers to capture the voices of rarely heard women in our city.



Talking to partners and front line workers showed clearly the positive impact that capacity building had for survivors. I really enjoyed attending the meeting. It left me really fired up and energised, and really glad to be part of this work.



The Walk Together programme in its second iteration, has achieved the purpose of creating specific and condensed evaluation tools for Communities Rising and future community projects. Reflecting past learning, it is the storytelling aspect of this work that has been most successful with survivors on the frontline. What we have learnt from the community researchers in this project is that exploring the experiences of rarely heard women and bringing their needs to the centre of our work has provided a parallel space for community researchers to feel safe, accepted and able to give voice to the experience of domestic abuse.



JUST LIFE PEER RESEARCH

In July, we started the Just Life Peer Research Consultation. Just Life worked with Peer Researchers to create a manual for undertaking Peer Research. This manual was shared with us to test and unpick its efficacy for conducting Peer Research with survivors of Domestic Abuse. We got together a group of four Peer Researchers who were connected with the Communities Rising project in a Voluntary capacity. The Peer Researchers had previous experience of undertaking community research with the Walk Together strand. Our Research Lead and Community Outreach worker delivered the Just Life Peer Research Modules over the course of three months. While delivering the module, we consulted with the Peer Researchers and provided feedback to Just Life. We found that the Just Life manual on conducting Peer Research wasn't attuned to working with survivors of Domestic Abuse. We suggested that the manual should use more inclusive language and methodologies to conduct research. Additionally, we found that their module on Intersectionality did not centre Black women's voices. We also suggested that the manual not use linear storytelling methodologies as that will be triggering for survivors of domestic abuse. Additionally, we demonstrated more trauma-informed methods of conducting research and ways of holding survivors of abuse while researching alongside them.

SKILL UP: COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORK

The Community Outreach Worker supports Older Women & Disabled Women to access appropriate & meaningful support for Domestic Abuse.

HOVE LIBRARY DROP-IN

Weekly 1-1 support for Older and/or Disabled Women. "A much needed space for women who have previously not been seen or heard."



125
survivors supported

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

The Community Outreach Worker creates visual and/or easy-read support plans that make sense for her clients, and consults other agencies on best practise.

411
capacity building sessions

ADVOCACY

The Community Outreach Worker passionately advocates for the voice, experience and needs of Older and Disabled Women to be front and centre of discussions around womens safety, rather than an after thought.

SPEAK OUT MUMS CLUB

A self advocacy & empowerment group developed with Speak Out for mums with learning disabilities who have experience of the care system.



Part of the B&H Older Person's Network & the Hop50+ Knit & Natter to amplify Older Women's voices

Hourglass

Speak Out

Possability People

Macmillan Horizon Centre

Blatchington Court Trust

CLIENT FEEDBACK

"You are the first person who has believed me and been patient with me. You understand my disability and make me feel calm when I get overwhelmed"

SKILL UP: ASSERTIVE OUTREACH WORK

The Assertive Outreach worker supports women with multiple & complex disadvantage, and challenges the stigma they face when accessing services.

CREW CLUB WALK AND TALK

Attends a service for communities experiencing multiple disadvantage to confidential advice around Domestic Abuse concerns, or just a good chat. This has allowed 4 Survivors reach out for support and leave abusive partners.



163
hours of client work

CHAMPIONS NETWORK

The Assertive Outreach Worker and Community Outreach Worker hold monthly champions meetings to support frontline workers from 14 agencies around Domestic Abuse cases, networking and training.

EMPOWERMENT

The Assertive Outreach Worker has delivered Empowerment Groups for women at Equinox and Cascade Recovery.

8/8 SURVIVORS SUPPORTED HAVE NOW LEFT PERPORTATORS

3 perpotrators are now in prison, 1 survivor now has 3 year restraining order, 1 perpotrator is now excluded from area. 1 survivor was able to keep her baby and re-build her life. All have grown in confidence and safety.

158
capacity building sessions

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

Providing training, consultancy and tailored workshop facilitation to organisations in the Assertive Outreach sector.

Crew Club

Equinox

St Mungos
Housing First

Gateway
womens
service

SKILL UP:BLACK & MINORITISED COMMUNITIES WORK

The Black & Minoritised Communities Worker builds relationships with marginalised communities across Brighton and Hove.

WOMEN OF COLOUR WELLBEING GROUP

A recovery toolkit course for women of colour survivors to come into conversation with their bodies and build on tools to manage trauma.

TELLING OUR STORIES

A creative writing workshop in partnership with New Writing South to explore story telling

SEW AND GROW

A 6-week sewing course in partnership with Sew Fabulous to help women build upon or learn sewing skills



IMPACT

112

BAM activity group sessions



Led a successful donation campaign to get culturally appropriate food stocked in local food banks.

203

hours of community work

52

client 1-1s

Raised awareness and de-stigmatised FGM in the VAWG sector and worked to empower survivors

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Sew and Grow is the highlight of my week

The RISE BAM worker's voice is essential for the change that needs to happen in FGM

SKILL UP: WOMEN OF COLOUR WELLBEING



Women of Colour Wellbeing Group

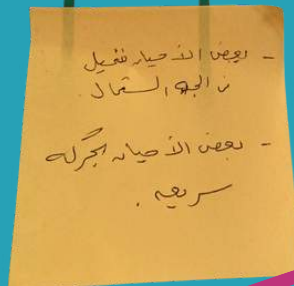
36

wellbeing sessions delivered

THE RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

As a survivor it is good to be reminded that you are already an incredibly resilient individual. However, life can be very challenging and how we deal with these challenges can affect our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Women of Colour wellbeing group supports survivors to understand their personal stress response and shares some practical tools to help manage stress and increase resilience and well-being.



Women of Colour group is my space. It is very important for me to attend this group. It is my group!

Before I joined the group, it was as though I was sleeping. I was somewhere else. Not in my own body. But now I feel very different. It as though I have woken up. I can identify my stress. I feel when I am stressed, and I can manage it. It's a miracle!



SKILL UP: TELLING OUR STORIES

TELLING OUR STORIES



Telling Our Stories project began in 2015 as a collaboration between Hangleton & Knoll Project, Hangleton & Knoll Multicultural Women’s Group, RISE and New Writing South to create safe, trauma-informed spaces for women to share their legacies/stories in whatever form they wanted to.



The group became a starting point to connect through the medium of diverse storytelling. All the women had made long, complex journeys which crossed countries, cultures, and people. Described by one participant as “reconnecting memories”, vivid descriptions of those memories were relayed. All the stories had threads in common and showed the incredible resilience and strength of the participants. Powerful legacies to hand on.



We were telling our stories about child birth. Child birth can be a challenging traumatic experience. But all mothers felt satisfied with their own achievement.

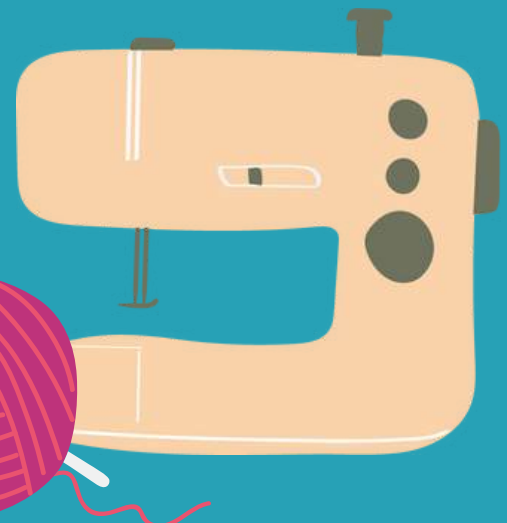
SKILL UP: SEW AND GROW

Sew & Grow

Sew & Grow is a community group for ethnically minoritised women to provide a 6-week sewing course to build and learn new skills as a collective. It provides a warm, welcoming, and safe space for women to learn alongside each other. By the end of the 6 weeks they will each have a bag or a tunic to take away that they've made. Sew and Grow helps women with skill development, and at the end of the course they get a certificate of achievement to enhance their CVs.

62
sessions held

Thank you RISE for supporting DA survivors get more self-esteem. When I go out of my house, I feel confident to talk to others. Without this group, it wouldn't have been possible. My kids are proud of me.



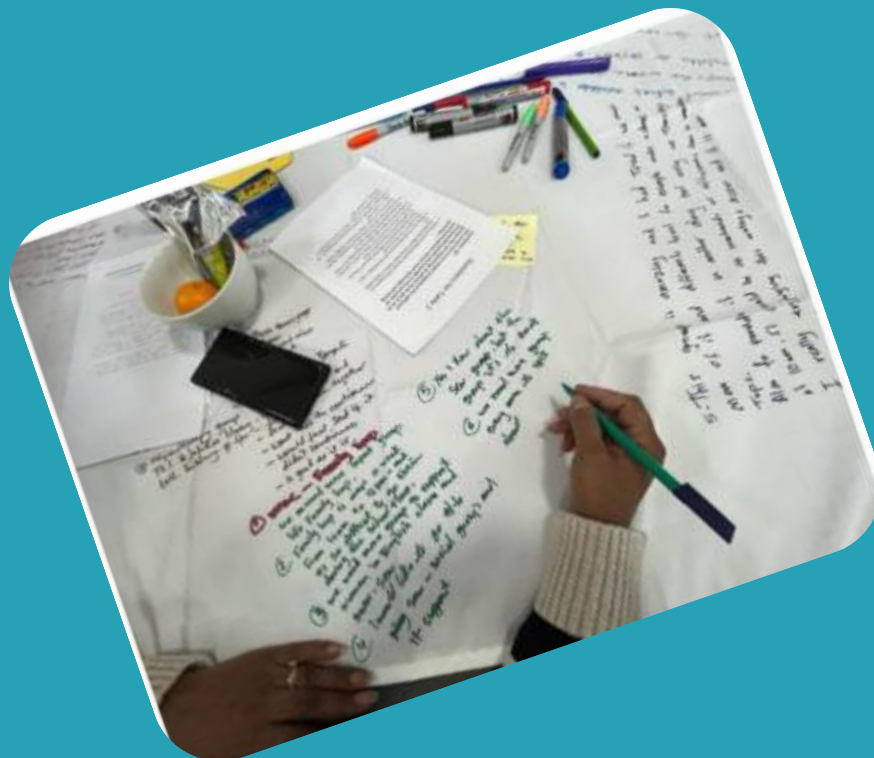
26
community members reached

SKILL UP: FINAL MONTHS

In the final months of the project, we facilitated five additional sessions for the Women of Colour Wellbeing group. The extra sessions enabled us to take on two new participants who were struggling with ongoing domestic abuse. The participants had specialist needs rooted in the intersection of the abuse they endured as well as navigating institutional inequalities being women of colour. The trauma wellbeing group enabled them to access casework support from the Community Outreach Worker for Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communities. Further, by engaging with the additional sessions offered at the end of the project, the women were able to gain knowledge about their bodily stresses emanating from experiencing domestic abuse, while at the same time finding community and a safe space to disclose shared experiences of abuse. Additionally, the Women of Colour community group organised a 'Rest Experience' for their wellbeing work. In the final months of the project, the group facilitators undertook the mapping of professionals, services, and community groups available within Brighton and Hove for Women of Colour around domestic abuse. The mapping enabled the facilitators to then organise a 'Gathering Voices Event' for which professionals, community members, and survivors who were women of colour were invited for a consultation of the needs of the communities for services in Brighton and Hove.

In the final months of the project, six extra sessions of Sew and Grow were conducted. This enabled the Communities Rising project to reach more community members from Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communities. Alongside this, we set up a new sewing group with Hangleton and Knoll Multicultural Women's group, thereby creating a new partnership and reaching more community members.

At the same time, we were able to organise two additional Sewing Storytelling Workshops. These workshops were intended to be a collaboration of the Sew and Grow and Telling Our Stories community groups. For the workshops, all the community members who had engaged with Sew and Grow and Telling Our Stories were invited. This collaboration enabled building a wide women of colour community affiliated with the Communities Rising project.



**SOME FINAL WORDS FROM JUST A FEW OF THE
MANY WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED
THROUGHOUT THE 3 YEARS OF THE COMMUNITIES
RISING PROJECT**

I am grateful that this project was available for someone like me, someone with a lot of trauma and triggers and who struggles to function in ordinary settings, someone who has a past of dealing with abuse and thought there wouldn't be a way out. I'm grateful that this programme enabled me to safely experience life that has nothing to do with abuse and enabled me to focus on my bright future and allowed me to work on something for myself. - Community Connector

The Woman of Colour Resilience and Well-being group not only helped with my ongoing issues, but also empowered me to trust the power and tools that I have.

I realised that here are women just like me, who feel the things I have felt, who have said enough is enough and have gotten their spirit back - I realised that the women in RISE are the biggest part of my community because what has happened to me has had the biggest impact on my life, and that it has had nothing to do with my race but my gender - Community Connector

it has been really refreshing and empowering to be with other like minded women who get it, you can talk about the nuanced experiences so freely and people just get it, you can speak freely and received freely - it is really liberating and empowering. - Community Researcher

The Woman of colour group gave me knowledge about the techniques and tools to deal with stress. The support I received from the group helped me with self-development. I don't speak English, but the group has empowered me to access support in Brighton and Hove regardless of the language barriers.

People have said they can't believe they've got this opportunity to come and talk face to face. After lockdown everything was online, you have got to go through this route then that route. Months and months before you get an appointment. So they are like, absolutely can't believe this service is here. I had a young mother a few weeks ago, came in with her little one, and she said, oh my god this is life changing.' - Library worker re the Older and Disabled womens Drop In

it's the best that ever happened to me as my illness can be very isolating, people don't know how to handle people that are ill. It can be dis-heartening, so this was a different experience. - Community Connector

Every moment and every person, that encouraged me, praised me, worked with me, supported me. It is all a part of the person I am now.

I am elevated from thriver to super thriver and will continue to maintain and grow. That's what I'll take with me. - Changemaker

I want to do more, to keep working in this sector and do more. I am really fired up. I think this passion has intensified through my work at RISE. It has given me somewhere to put it. - Community Researcher

Overall experience has been life changing. I feel like it has done so much for me personally. It is the first time I have been around people who have been through what I have. I feel seen, accepted and not judged. I have received genuine care and love from people who don't know me who have given me more acceptance than people who know me my whole life. - Changemaker

. It's been a reminder to me that we're all so much more than victims. We're highly intelligent creative people who are really making a difference in the world. - Community Connector

It's been an opportunity to remind myself who I am... It's been really beautiful, like planting a seed and watching a flower grow - Community Connector

The community groups are a safe space for me. I wouldn't share my problems with people but because the women in the trauma wellbeing group are going through the same thing, I feel open to share with them. I feel safe and supported. For me, Friday is my time when I can share and know that I will be heard without judgement.

I'm reminded by the experience how powerful it is for women to make space for other women and raise other women up. This is what the world needs - Community Connector

"I've become more active on social media as well (Twitter) around this issue."

"I have challenged victim blaming in the workplace to great effect"

"I have felt more confident to compassionately support the people who have spoken to be about their experience of abuse."

- Community Ambassadors on their increased capacity to speak out and raise awareness on DV issues following the community ambassador training



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