

COMMUNITIES RISING



YR 2 REPORT

2022-2023

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Thank You

***names have been changed throughout this report to protect the confidentiality and privacy of our community members**



COMMUNITIES RISING

Aims to mobilise the voices, skills, actions and networks of survivors & communities to build sustainable change around VAWG from prevention to recovery

ACT UP

Build and consolidate social activism to make change happen

CONNECT UP

(Re)-connect women with themselves and with each other to identify their gifts, strengths and stories

SKILL UP

Building capacity through trust, skills and knowledge, empowering survivors, professionals & communities to better support those affected by domestic abuse

SPEAK UP

Amplify voices of communities to play an active role in ending Domestic Abuse/Violence Against Women and Girls (DA/VAWG) through conversations, learning and raising awareness

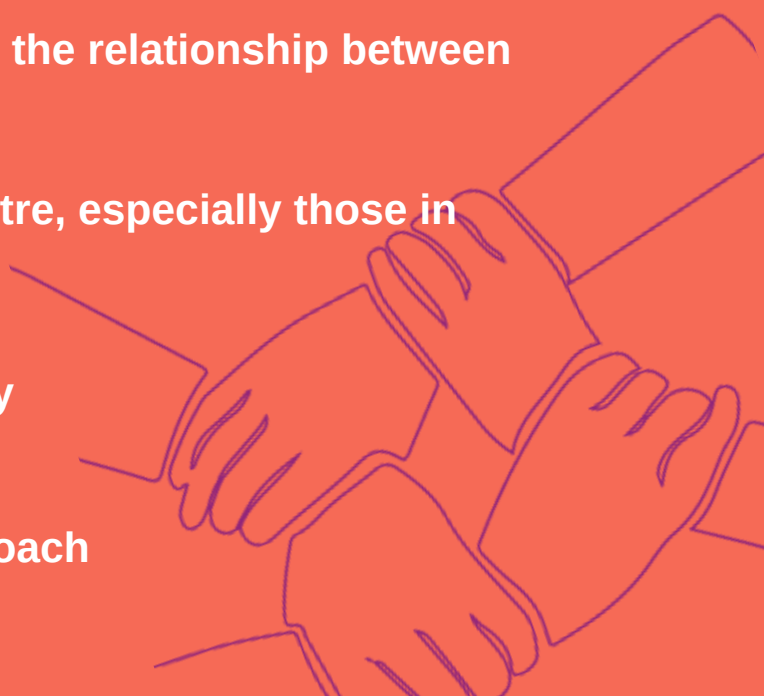
A REMINDER OF

OUR MISSION

Communities Rising (CR) began in September 2021. It was launched at the Communities Rising Conference, which celebrated the ending of the Big Lottery Community Engagement and Building Project (BLCP) and the beginning of the CR project, entrusted to carry out the communities' vision.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Community-led, Community-focused, Community-building
- 2 Building trust and capacity, creating sustainability for survivors, communities and partners
- 3 Strengths-based, solution-focused, needs-led, trauma informed and holistic
- 4 Redefining and rebalancing the relationship between professionals and survivor
- 5 Voices of women in the centre, especially those in margins
- 6 Reconnection and Recovery
- 7 Feminist participatory approach



PROJECT MANAGER INTRODUCTION

It has been a pleasure to become the new Project Manager and to join the Communities Rising team in Year 2. All those involved with the project show a huge amount of passion and commitment to the vital community work the Lottery Community Fund has allowed RISE to bring to life. This was evident in the overwhelming support we received at the community lunch, which was my highlight of the year.

I continue to be totally inspired by the survivors we have the privilege to walk along side and seeing these women blossom and flourish in their personal and professional endeavours.

**"THIS PROJECT IS SO GREAT
I AM OUT OF CRISIS NOW BUT STILL
NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD MY HAND"**

As we reflect on year 2 of the project, we have seen significant activities and pieces of work come to fruition.

- The Community Ambassador Programme has been re-written and successfully rolled out.
- It has been fantastic to see the Community Connectors ideas develop into amazing projects.
- We have seen the successful pilot of Women RISE Rooted, the nature re-connection programme, which has been able to facilitate the beginnings of the first paid Change Maker Role.
- Our partnership work to better support women with multiple disadvantage, older women and disabled women is going from strength to strength.
- We are thrilled to have recruited a new group of researchers to capture the survivor voice in year 3.

We are still very much prioritising the work with Black and Minoritised communities and in the absence of the specialist worker we are being creative in our approach to keep this vital work at the centre of the project. We delighted to have seen the successful completion of the Women of Colour Wellbeing Group (funded by ROSA), which we are excited to be further embedding into the project in year 3.

A challenge in the first 2 years of the project has been securing a community hub. As is the flexible nature of the project we will continue to explore creative options to meet this need, which may take the form more of a satellite model.

What is clear is continued need for an asset based community approach, which we are seeing the direct successes of enhanced health and wellbeing and increased safety, resilience and independence of survivors of domestic abuse.

KEY YR 2 STATS

**42 DISCLOSURES OF DA
IN THE COMMUNITY**

**500+ CAPACITY
BUILDING SESSIONS**

**115 ONE-TO-ONE
CLIENT SESSIONS**

**9 NEW
CONNECTORS
TRAINED**

**20 NEW
AMBASSADORS**

**7 NEW
RESEARCHERS
TRAINED**

**51 DROP-IN
SESSIONS**

**200+ HOURS OF
SATELLITE
SERVICES**

ACT UP

Act up focuses 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.



Our First Communities Rising Network Event

To help develop our activism strand as part of our Communities Rising project, we held an event in October 2022 for Ambassadors, Connectors and other RISE community members to come together to network, share ideas, galvanise, get to know each other and celebrate our work together.

This included a seed planting workshop which was delivered by a community connector. We also had a screening of a film, Shattered, which was donated by the filmmaker Diana Vargas based around her own experience of domestic abuse. Following the screening we hosted a discussion with attendees about the issues raised in the film.

Changemakers

This programme will offer paid opportunities to survivors of domestic abuse. They will focus on engaging their communities in issues that ignite their passions, with the aim of opening up debate and creating a positive culture change for women affected by domestic abuse.

A previous Connector is working with us on the Changemaker Programme, this will develop the peer led focus of our Women RISE Rooted Project. Weekly supervision sessions have enabled us to walk alongside this piece of work as a pilot Changemaker project providing a space to reflect and to gauge what is needed for the programme in terms of support, resources and training.

ACT UP TRAILBLAZERS

As we move towards establishing a Changemaker programme in 2023 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 meaningful consultation about the Changemaker programme can only happen when participants have been given the space to reflect on their journey, community, individual assets, goals and aspirations.

They have taken the lead in the development of 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. It combines their own experiences with insights, reflective tools and activities created by our community researchers and storytellers.



"We are Zahra* and Lucie* 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."

WORKBOOK EXTRACT

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2022, we launched a Communities Rising page on Instagram. This is an important tool for us to spread information and awareness about our events we organise and attend, recommendations from our Feminist Culture Club, and vital information about the realities of Domestic Abuse. We also link this to the RISE social media channels, events and campaigns.



@communitiesrising_

157

Followers

62

Original posts

+22%

Monthly engagement

CONNECT UP

Connect aims to (Re) Connect women with themselves and with each other to identify their gifts, strengths and stories so they can walk together moving from surviving into thriving.

The Community Connector and Community Researcher opportunities are two ways in which survivors can get involved in Connect Up.

The Connector programme continues to grow and develop and is an opportunity to connect with, learn from and be inspired by other survivors and community members. The programme has been developed to support women to identify and build on their gifts and strengths, which can then be utilised to make a difference in areas identified by the women in the communities that they feel a part of.

We continue to use a variety of methods to increase awareness of and access to the Community Connector opportunity, through flyers, social media, as well as through internal communications, for example clients completing therapy and looking for new opportunities as they move through their recovery journey may be referred or signposted by the therapy team at RISE.

Interested participants are invited to an initial information session to explain more about what to expect and ask any questions they might have. We continue to offer these sessions both on zoom and in person, as we recognise that this increases accessibility for community members to attend.

RECRUITMENT

18

Expressions of interest

2

Online information sessions

2

Community information sessions

9

Training attendees

GET INVOLVED PROCESS

Any woman who is interested in the role of Community Connector or Researcher is invited to take part in the Get Involved process.

Building on learnings from year 1, we have worked hard to develop our Get Involved process so that it better supports and articulates our understanding of the healing journey as this rarely takes a straight line. This conversation is ongoing and recognises the need for flexibility and is an opportunity to reflect on whether it is the right opportunity and at the right time.

Throughout involvement we discuss and offer a range of community opportunities and trauma informed support that the women can get involved with. At times they will decide to move in a different direction that is a better fit in terms of their interest and support needs.

9

Researcher GI sessions

16

Connector GI sessions

Communities Rising Project

Changemakers

Community
Connector
Programme

Community
Ambassador

Community
Events and
Wellbeing
workshops

Community
Research
Programme

Circle

Communities
Rising
Volunteer

Storytelling

Staying
connected

Women of
Colour
workshops

RISE wide
opportunities

RISE wide
support

TRAINING

In the last year we have delivered two rounds of Connector training. Group training content includes:

- Understanding trauma, self-care and safety
- Exploring our relationship with feminism
- Identifying individual gifts and strengths/assets
- Community Mapping
- Vision and Mission Building

"This has been a well thought out and brilliantly executed series of sessions so far. I applaud RISE for being fabulous yet again."

Although we have moved back to in person training post pandemic, we recognise that this can be a barrier to some participants in attending, so we have introduced hybrid training with the option of attending online if this is preferable. During the sessions the participants take part in activities, group work and discussion, sharing and learning from one another throughout. They are provided with journals and art materials to creatively explore ideas and map out their vision.

A Trauma-Informed Communities Rising Approach

At RISE we understand that working out the right 'stage' in your journey can feel hard. We know recovery journeys are not a straight forward path. It can feel like more of a spiral - back and forth. We have highlighted some key elements in our project to help you work out the best fit on your journey.

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.



Thanks to our trauma-informed approach, Connectors are able to produce new ideas and initiatives. In the past year, these initiatives have included:

- Peer supportive space specifically for women from Colombian and Black and Minoritised communities to have conversations, connect with each other and explore issues related to DA.
- Birth Doula collective and raising awareness of DA in pregnancy
- Community Skillshare bank
- Workshops and exhibitions to empower survivors to share story and explore journey through art.
- Trauma informed fitness, health and nutrition coaching

1

round of in person training

1

round of hybrid training

5

sessions per round

"I like all the sessions as they help me reflect on what I want to achieve regarding my project and it is good to share with others and that way get encouragement and support."

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

Following the training, Connectors are invited to take part in workshops or sessions and the women can choose which opportunities they wish to take part in. These are a mixture of practical skill building workshops, as well as coaching, peer support and networking opportunities.

- Business Clarity
- Grant Writing
- Social Media
- Anchored Decision Making

In the last year we have offered 5 workshops via external facilitators and have connected the connector community to external resources to help grow their idea and initiatives. We welcomed the community engagement manager from B&H council to a group session. We have provided one to one support for website and social media with the opportunity to have a spotlight on the RISE and Communities Rising social media platforms. Ongoing one to one support is provided by the Community Builder, and these sessions are tailored individually to the connectors needs.

5

connectors received one to one specialist social media and website support

10

online one to one connector support sessions

12

community one to one connector support sessions

THE CIRCLE

The Circle was established to offer useful skills or just a listening ear, support the RISE Connectors' visions, collaborate, network and encourage each other to make a difference. Initial interest has been slow, and we have been consulting our community members so that we can shape this opportunity for our Community Connectors to support them to manifest their vision in the way that best works for them.

INTEGRATING AND CONNECTING

Community Connectors have access to an online workspace to connect which is a place to share and find out about opportunities. We support connectors to integrate within the wider Communities Rising community so that other members can benefit from the amazing skills the Connectors have.

For example-

- Eloise* delivered a workshop at a network meeting for ambassadors and connectors and will also be delivering a workshop as part of the Ageing Well festival in 2023.
- Paula* invited members of community to take part in a workshop to explore collaborative creation through painting and movements, which was also an opportunity for her to gain experience and build portfolio.
- Lela* was supported to deliver a wellbeing session as part of the Ageing well festival in September 2022, and is now supporting the WRR sessions as a facilitator.
- Rayan* teaches classes in somatic yoga and is offering donation based access to RISE community.



Ageing Well, September 2022

CREATIVE AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

We held a consultation with community members to shape the way forward for creative and reflective practice at the end of 2022. We held two initial sessions solely for Connectors and have then invited both Connectors and Researchers to attend the most recent two sessions as a space to connect and learn from one another, further establishing the Connect community. The sessions are facilitated by an excellent external facilitator from In-Align and supported by the research lead and community builder.

Creative and Reflective practice is:

- A safe space to celebrate successes, triumphs and hurdles jumped in relation to their projects/ research activities
- A space for community members to reflect on and engage critical thinking about how their assumptions, biases and life experiences, including being a survivor of domestic abuse, may be impacting their project/ research activities

The external facilitator is trained in TRE and includes some grounding breathing exercises as well as embodied exercise practice in the sessions as a way of releasing any tension or stress build up through exploration of the topics and conversations that take place. Creative materials are also used to express, process and explore thoughts, feelings and ideas.

The sessions have all been in person in community settings due to the nature of the activities, and are held at different times to be inclusive, we recognise that this may exclude some and are exploring ways to include those that are unable to attend.



LEARNINGS

Recognising success is not always project based. Setting up a community project is a huge task and at times plans and ideas change so a flexible approach is necessary.

Supporting survivors in identifying their skills and strengths, can help to build confidence and resilience, empowering women to set and work towards goals of their own choice. This could be utilising their assets within an existing project or initiative, getting involved in activism or awareness raising, or looking for work within their area of interest. Some connectors may get involved and take part in the training but then move on to use skills, passions, and strengths in a way that is right for them.

Morgan* who joined in wave two of the Communities Rising project as she was passionate about advocacy for survivors involved in the legal system has since gone on to train as an advisor for the Citizens Advice Bureau.



Emma* trained in the first wave in 2022 and has since stepped back from the connector programme but said that the programme had been instrumental in her moving forward with her life. It has helped to 'give me my life back' She has since identified that she doesn't want to put any pressure on herself and thanked the programme from helping her move in the right direction.

Sadie*, who joined as part of the BLCP and *Pip who got involved as part of the second wave of the Communities Rising project have both now moved into work within the DA sector for other organisations, one as a housing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor and the other as a specialist Black and Minoritised worker.



The Community Connector programme is an open-ended opportunity. At times Connectors pause involvement but the opportunity is there to re-engage when ready.

- Libby* got involved as part of the first wave of connectors in the communities rising project but then had to take a step back due to family priorities. A year later she has re-connected and is now participating in opportunities and networking with newly joined connectors.
- Ada* became a connector as part of the BLCP, but over the last 2 years has had to maintain focus on work and life commitments, however she recently attended a training session with new connectors as she still hopes to develop her project idea when the time is right for her.

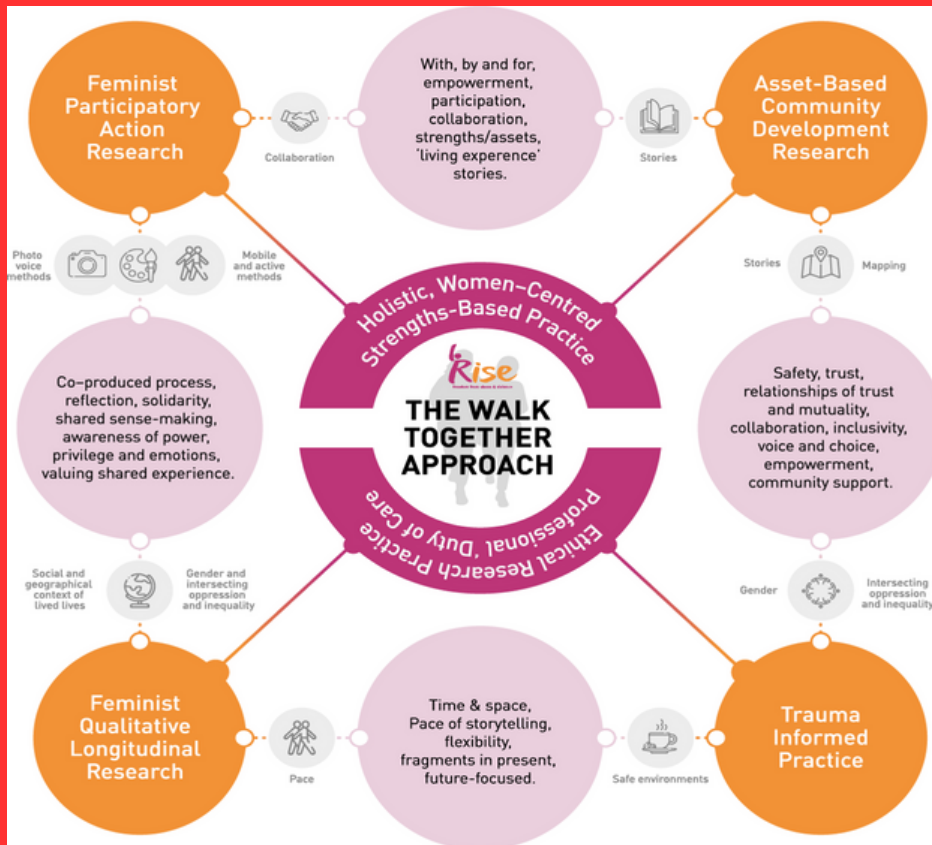
VOLUNTEER

We recruited one Connect Up volunteer in year 2 who joined us in January 2023 for 6 months and she became a real asset to the team. She provided much valued support to various aspects of the Connector programme and the wider project, including recruitment, supporting facilitation of training and meeting and greeting community members at the Community lunch in July. Ella was a student studying politics and international relations and was looking to gain some experience working in the charity sector.

"Volunteering at RISE has helped me to learn about what working at a charity/non-profit might be like as a full-time job and has helped me to learn that it is a career path that I am interested in. I really value all that I have learnt through my time volunteering at RISE and working with the team"

RESEARCH

Connect builds on the legacy left by a pioneering group of community researchers who over 2017-21 collaborated with RISE and the women we support in order to build knowledge about the experience of freedom from violence and abuse. This has resulted in a clear research approach to fit with the needs and experiences of our community.



In March 2023 we recruited a new generation of Community Researchers to generate new knowledge about the expansion of freedom from abuse with a focus on community spaces and places, relationships and activism. Reflecting our wider community we have taken care to ensure that this opportunity has reached women from diverse backgrounds including two Black and Minoritised Researchers, the experience of multiple disadvantage and disability. All of our researchers are educated to degree level (although this was not a requirement) and bring a significant wealth of skill and expertise alongside lived experience of domestic abuse.



ACCESSIBILITY

Building on learning from the Umbrella Lockdown Community Research Project (2021), we wanted to make sure that we offered both online and face to face training to make it more accessible. This has been the case for disabled members and those juggling childcare at home. The Researchers have worked together to look for ways to make online spaces feel safe and comfortable.

RISE Community Researchers' Drop- In Guidelines



Privacy and Confidentiality

Ensure you are in a **private space** with no people in the background. If you do have people in the background or possible interruptions check with the group first.

Don't record the session without permission. Give people **option** to turn screens off for recording



Taking Part

Give time at the start to **check in** with everyone and time to **check out** at the end.

Use emojis so that people **feel heard** when they talk.

Use the chat and **hand gestures** (hand up) to ensure you get a turn to speak.

Invite speakers and bring things for discussion, like articles. Work on documents together.

Go for a dog walk together and share dog stories and cuddles!

Group Facilitators

- Lucy Hadfield (Research Lead)
- Volunteer Coordinator TBC



Take care of group well-being

Allow people to have screens off if they want to attend but not feeling up to face-to-face.

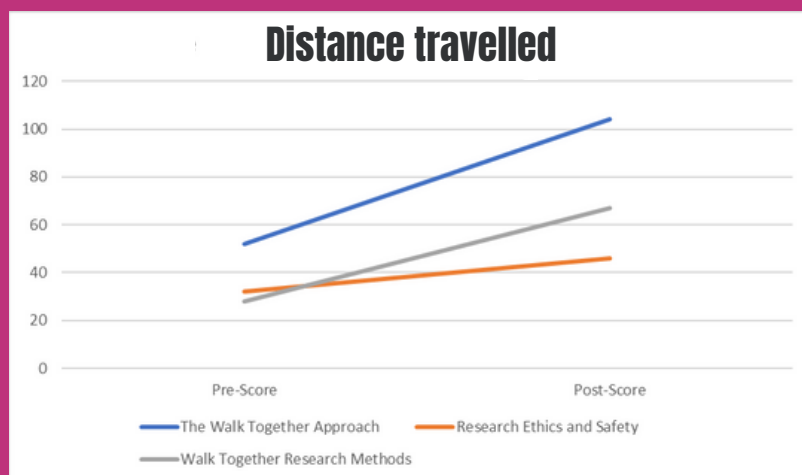
Things that make you feel comfortable. A warm drink, blanket, pets.



TRAINING & SUPPORT

The Walk Together training package includes:

- Trauma, Self-Care and Safety
- The Walk Together Approach
- Research Ethics and Safety
- Research Methods
- Community Space, Connection and Action
- Designing A Research Project
- 1:1 Supervision with Research Lead
- Drop in Online Space



In July 2023 all 7 of our Community Researchers completed our Walk Together training programme. This consisted of 4 online and 1 face to face session. As the graph shows, participants experience a significant expansion of knowledge around the Walk Together approach (100% increase) and research methods (140% increase), despite pre-existing academic research training. This indicates the innovative nature of our work. Participants also valued the opportunity to reflect on the significance of their own lived experience of domestic abuse, in both the research they encounter and with regard to intersectionality.

Great examples and room well held. It's so good, thank you.'

The training felt safe, like everyone could speak and no-one dominated the room. Felt clear, warm, unity'.

Key Successes

- Safe and accessible spaces for learning
 - Connection with others
 - Expanding reach of knowledge
- Embedding legacy of community voice in practice
- Working with both online and face to face spaces.

RESEARCHER JOURNEY

Currently we are working our way through 1:1 'Stay Involved' evaluation sessions with our Researchers. This is to capture the shift in their key strengths (skills, gifts and passions) and their sense of distance travelled related to self-efficacy, resilience and community. We are also revisiting our Get Involved questions to ensure we have the right fit. Even over such a short period of time, our researchers are reporting a significant shift in their sense of community or belonging through their participation in the research workshops, drop in space reflective practice and the community lunch. For one participant this sense of belonging extended to the wider staff team and the feeling that, she could also work in the sector in the future.

There is a real value of just being with survivors, that sense of community is so powerful now. I was surprised how much I enjoyed the learning sessions. There is a real community feel because we are all working towards a common aim.'

NEXT STEPS

All 7 of our Community Researchers wish to continue volunteering in year 3, with an interest in research with women experiencing multiple disadvantage, the judicial system, connection with nature, storytelling in Black and Minoritised community groups and the stories that are inspired through communal cooking. Our first steps towards the creation of these projects began at our Community Lunch where researchers were able to connect with frontline staff and partners and meet community members.

We will continue this matching process by inviting Researchers to contribute to the wider Communities Rising evaluation, building in our Walk Together research tools and approaches. This will enable them to build connections and design their projects around the needs of our community.



WOMEN RISE ROOTED

RISE have worked in close partnership with At Home In The World to deliver Women RISE Rooted (WRR). This offers an opportunity for nature re-connection for VAWG survivors and all women to build a connection to Self, Nature, Community and Heritage to heal and move towards wholeness. WRR programme is underpinned by theories and frameworks offered by Intersectional feminism, Ecopsychology, Ecofeminism, Trauma/ Polyvagal Theory and Psychosynthesis and employs The Way of Circle to model the principles of the programme.



Our weeks include:

- Relationship, Reciprocity & Community
- Womanhood
- Telling our Earth story
- Sit spot contemplation
- We understand how life cycles relate to us
- Challenges that have been handed down to women through generations
- Exploring our personal relationships to nature
- How we can gain strength from nature
- Reflection

Connection to nature

Connection to community

Connection to self (Mind, Body, spirit)

Connection to heritage

"My connection to nature strengthened immeasurably. I noticed so much, the significance of the space, the shift as the season opened up, all of the life and growth, my appreciation has grown, my sunflowers are growing too! It was a wild and beautiful discovery, and a space I can return to throughout my future".

SKILL UP

THE AIM OF SKILL UP IS BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH TRUST, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE, EMPOWERING SURVIVORS, PROFESSIONALS & COMMUNITIES TO BETTER SUPPORT THOSE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

We recruited the Community Capacity Building Lead in August 2021. We continue to roll out RISE's Community Capacity Building Model with professionals who work with marginalised women. This skills up workers to better identify, assess and assist those affected by abuse. Adding to our already strong Disability partnerships with Possability People, Speak Out, Blatchington Court Trust, we now have a partnership with Macmillan Horizon Centre. Our Assertive Outreach worker has two strong partnerships with Equinox, a women only hostel in Hove, and Housing First, a branch of St Mungo's. We continue to offer training, consultancy, advocacy and systems change work to those trusted professionals that already have a relationship with women that other services struggle to reach across our city.

DUE TO CAPACITY, SKILL UP AND SPEAK UP WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO REACH EAST SUSSEX.

Relying on the knowledge and networking expertise of the Rita Project for our East Sussex work, we have been unable to expand our reach as hoped. The Rita Project has closed its doors and without another sustainable, reliable contact in the area, we are unable to provide the wrap around support service, Ambassador Programme, and roll out the Capacity Building model.

SKILL UP...

in Brighton and Hove, however, continues to go from strength to strength.

ASSERTIVE OUTREACH WORKER

8

Champions Meetings

The Assertive Outreach worker hosted eight Champions Network meetings since her recruitment in November 2022. These meetings offer professionals from all multiple disadvantage organisations the opportunity to update on services, network and learn more. Recent meetings have hosted Surviving Economic Abuse to discuss the impact of economic abuse on survivors.

28

Champions

Consistency of these meetings since recruitment to the post has meant that Champions Meetings have gone from strength to strength. Attendance has been increasing and requests to join the network continue to come in.

15

Disclosures

The Assertive Outreach Worker has joined up with a local charity, Crew Club in Whitehawk, one of the most disadvantaged areas in Brighton. Attending their walk and talk once a month, there have been at least 15 disclosures since January 2023.

50

One-to-Ones

The Assertive Outreach worker has had 50 one-to-ones with clients over the past year. These are sessions run in the community, meeting clients where they are and following their lead. Providing holistic support, clients have visited museums, developed their interests and continued telling their story and reclaiming their identity in the best way for them.



Despite finding new premises, due to a loss of funding, No Second Night Out, a branch of St Mungo's have been unable to continue their partnership with the project and have closed their doors. However, with one closed door, a window opened, and our Assertive Outreach Worker has been able to create a brand new partnership with the Housing First branch of St Mungo's.

Unfortunately, the whole of St Mungo's are currently on strike and have been for over a month, which impacts the work we are able to do with their professionals. Yet, even before the strike started, our worker picked up several new clients, provided numerous hours of satellite working at their offices and provided consultation on dozens of cases. As soon as they return from strike, training will be scheduled to continue rolling out the Capacity Building Model with their staff.

5

current active
clients

The Assertive Outreach Worker has been picking up clients who are at high risk of harm and/or homicide and due to their experience of multiple disadvantage, it is important we keep the caseload small. This means she is able to work holistically, flexibly and compassionately with her clients and be strengths-based and led by the client themselves. Capacity wise, she is able to take 1 - 2 more referrals.

"I enjoy spending time with you doing things I enjoy and not just talking about DA as this helps me not feel overwhelmed and you listen to me and don't judge me like other services have"

"I love spending time with you, and you work so hard but never rush me and thanks to support am starting to sort out debt (caused by economic abuse) and feel more positive about future"

CLIENT FEEDBACK

A keen networker, our Assertive Outreach Worker has been using her skills to build new connections across the city, and reach more women for short term support and advice.

POSSABILITY PEOPLE

Utilising the partnership our own Community Outreach Worker has, the Assertive Outreach worker met with a DA Champion to build on accessibility knowledge in the city to better support a Disabled client who is a wheelchair user to access the community.

OFF THE FENCE

Gateway Women's Centre provides a welcoming, safe space for women going through a time of crisis or emotional difficulty. Our worker will be hosting a drop-in once a month, as well as delivering staff training around domestic abuse and managing disclosures.

BRAMBER BAKEHOUSE

Bramber Bakehouse works alongside victims of domestic abuse, survivors of human trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees to break the cycles of poverty, violence and disadvantage. Our worker is currently assisting their new contact in Brighton to navigate the city and decide the best way to work together.

INSPIRE

Inspire is a multi-agency partnership lead by Brighton Women's Centre supporting women with multiple vulnerabilities at all stages of involvement in the criminal justice system. Our worker has been in talks with several agencies supporting women under probation and those in recovery from substance misuse and will be delivering an empowerment programme in year 3.

CREW CLUB

Walk, Talk, & Play at The Crew Club starts with a 1k led walk followed by a play session for children. The sessions also provide parents with regular times to meet, a place for their children to be active and engage in playful activities that they could not do at home. Our worker attends this session once a month to provide support and advice to the women attending.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER - BLACK AND MINORITISED COMMUNITIES

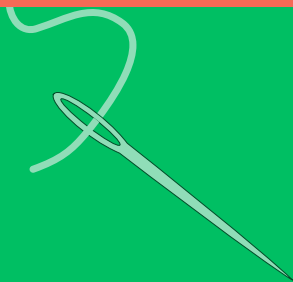
Our Black and Minoritised Communities Worker left her post in August 2022. We have faced challenges in recruitment and have now modified the name of the role to align more with our other Community Outreach Worker, who specialises in Disabled and Older women's needs. We hope to have recruited for this role by Autumn 2023.

Our work with Black and Minoritised Communities is still incredibly important to us. We have had the pleasure to continue working closely with the previous Communities Rising project manager in her new community role(s) and we have been as creative as possible to keep this vital work going in the absence of the related post.

SEW AND GROW

A 6-week sewing course bringing together a collective of women keen to amplify their skills or learn new skills. In partnership with Sew Fabulous.

This year we reached 4 new women, and have had expressions of interest from 8 new women for the next sessions in Autumn 2023.



"I feel confident in myself"

"This space is a blessing"

"I'm so happy to learn new things"

TELLING OUR STORIES

In year 3, we will be continuing our previous partnership with New Writing South. Having recruited several facilitators, they will provide short courses, which will enable women in the group to come together and improve their wellbeing through storytelling.

Our hope is that this important work will be carried out with Black and Minoritised women, and later in year 3, will be delivered to women who experience multiple disadvantage, and disabled or older women.

WOMEN OF COLOUR (WOC) WELLBEING GROUP

Survivors are incredibly resilient individuals. However, life can be very challenging and how we deal with these challenges can affect our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. These sessions are intended to support women understand their own personal stress response and to share some practical tools to help them manage their stress and increase their resilience and well-being.

The course is a 6-week program and 5 programmes have been delivered in partnership with In-Align and funded by ROSA in the last year. The program has been delivered by sharing knowledge and information on stress and resilience as well as some essential physical based exercises, such as breath-work, self-massage, stretching, mindfulness and the therapeutic tremor, also known as shaking, all great ways to help us to access resilience.

The intention for year 3 is to further embed this vital and bespoke programme into the project and related community offer, with both a peer support and psycho-educational element.

"There is nothing else like this in the city...this is a life line for Women of Colour who are attending the group"

"I feel so calm after doing that (practice), I do not feel as if I just had that conversation (about DA)"

COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER – OLDER WOMEN AND DISABLED WOMEN

Relationships and connections are being rejuvenated and going from strength to strength - with the addition of a new partnership and close to our worker's heart, is the Macmillan Horizon Centre. From help with money worries or how you're feeling, to complementary therapies, Macmillan provide a warm welcome for anyone at any point in their cancer experience.

**POSSABILITY
PEOPLE**

13 champions

**BLATCHINGTON
COURT TRUST**

6 champions

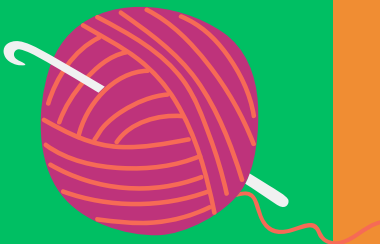
SPEAK OUT

5 champions

**MACMILLAN
HORIZON CENTRE**

8 champions to
be trained in Y3

Building community connections is a key element of the Outreach Community Worker's role.



KNIT & NATTER

The Community Outreach Worker attends a weekly Knit & Natter at the Hop50+ cafe to build trust and relationships with Older Women in the community, and raise awareness of the conversation around domestic abuse.

HEALTHY RELATION -SHIPS

The Community Outreach Worker has developed a healthy relationships workshop for visually impaired young adults, in partnership with Blatchington Court Trust. We have adapted the usual frameworks and exercises to be inclusive of the experiences of disabled people – with a focus on having power, control and choices in relationships with a caring dynamic including with parents.



MUMS CLUB

The Community Outreach Worker, in partnership with Speak Out, led a self advocacy & empowerment group for mums with learning disabilities who have experience of the care system. Together we made a foster care passport for mum and baby placements to help with the transition of moving into somebody else's home.

ACCESS-IBILITY

The Outreach Community Worker works alongside her partnership organisations to develop more accessible methods for domestic abuse provision, centring the needs and voices of the communities she works with. For example she has developed an easy read DA support plan template, and is often consulted by staff members about implementing accessible methods and language into daily practice.



SPEAK OUT DROP-IN

The Community Outreach Worker attends Speak Out drop-ins across Brighton & Hove for people with learning disabilities. They are an informal and social space, and many people have felt comfortable to disclose instances of abuse which have sparked healthy group conversation around self care, boundaries and autonomy.

CHAMPIONS NETWORK

We are discussing amendments we would like to see in the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 to better represent Disabled people's experiences of Domestic Abuse. In particular – the addition of Unpaid Carer under the personal connection clause. We believe recognition of the intimacy in a sustained relationship with an unpaid carer would open up much needed support pathways for people being controlled and exploited in these relationships. In year 3 we aim to explore how we can contribute to this on a parliamentary level.

DROP-IN

41

Thanks to funding from the Dodgson Trust in addition to the Community Fund, in year 2, the drop-in has seen 41 women and provided short term advice and support.



Our Community Capacity Building Lead has built a strong relationship with the Brighton and Hove library service in this time. She was invited to take part in the library service away day in March 2023, after staff requested an information session about what we provide. Coined their "speed dating" event, the Capacity Building Lead hosted 3 groups of staff to raise awareness of domestic abuse, the drop-in service and why it is needed. Staff were engaged, asked intuitive questions and said they left feeling empowered and better informed.

We have worked hard on using the most appropriate language for advertising. Flyers from our most recent print run are now being distributed around Brighton and Hove to raise awareness of the service, and contain clearer language around eligibility criteria.

We have also partnered with older people's charity, Hourglass whose focus is on the abuse and neglect of older people. They attend our drop-in on the first Monday of each month to provide their own specialist knowledge to those who need it.

Free One-to-One Drop In

For women experiencing domestic abuse who are:

- living with a long-term health condition
- living with an impairment
- neurodivergent

and/or

- women aged 55+

Every Monday 10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Hove Library, 182 - 186 Church Road, Hove, BN3 2EG

- Talk through your concerns
- Receive free advice
- Discuss your options

For more information:

Communities@riseuk.org.uk

 Rise
COMMUNITY FUND

 COMMUNITY FUND



THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER HAS DONE:

42

One-to-one's in the community with clients in the past year. Three new clients have come through the service this year.

5

Clients have been supported this year. Four of which are active and one completed their support.

These one-to-ones have included:



- Understanding abusive behaviour
- Gaining safe and appropriate accommodation
- Accessing child protection and maintenance
- Reducing isolation and building support networks
- Advocacy with other professionals
- Understanding their rights
- Finding work, education and volunteering opportunities

"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"

"Thank you for everything you have done for me and my kids and for keeping us safe."

CHANGING FUTURES



Funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and the National Lottery Community Fund, Changing Futures (CF) aims to improve the way that local systems and services work for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage.

RISE were approached in 2022 by Brighton and Hove City Council and recruited a Domestic Violence & Abuse Worker (DV&A) for the CF team. It was decided that due to the nature of the programme and the people Changing Futures supports, the worker would sit best with the Community Capacity Building Lead, in Communities Rising.

The DV&A Worker has settled in well to her role in the multidisciplinary team and at RISE and has worked closely with our Assertive Outreach Worker to support several clients.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Community Capacity Building Lead relaunched Community of Practice (CoP) and Case Review to support caseworkers in RISE who are working with clients. Whilst we use a strengths-based, needs-led approach, and have more scope to walk with the client through the system to get the support they need, this brings up different issues, obstacles and dynamics.

This group acts as case review, peer support and a CoP. It also acts as a reference group to develop an external feedback system to inform systems change and best practice outside of RISE. Each session has designated time for resource and information sharing, as well as brief questions. In future this may be a space we can use for relevant professionals to come meet with us and share updates.



SPECIALIST TRAINING REQUESTS

LUNCH AND LEARN - DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

A member of the Disabled Workers and Carers Network reached out to their steering group requesting a lunch and learn session on the topic of domestic abuse and disability. As the most suitable speaker with particular knowledge around the relation between domestic abuse, disability, neurodiversity and caring, the Community Capacity Building Lead delivered a 45 minute presentation with a 15 minute Q&A. Over 50 members of Brighton and Hove Council attended and the recording is left available for viewing at a later date.

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THE CHURCH - ST PETER'S

The Community Capacity Building Lead attended several focus groups at a local flagship church in Brighton. They were looking to see how they could continue meeting the needs of women in the city, following the closure of their cafe and hope centre, Bloom. After her contributions to these sessions, she was asked to if she would attend one of their Staff meetings to give some training to St Peter's staff on domestic abuse and how they can respond. The session was attended by 30 - 40 church staff members. They discussed domestic abuse and the correct terminology, the Church of England policy on domestic abuse and how scripture can be misinterpreted. The session ended with dispelling myths and how to respond to both survivors and perpetrators.

"Thank you again so much for giving up your morning yesterday, you are such a passionate and clear communicator and the information you gave I know has been really well received by the team."



SKILL UP - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

51

To assist with our aim of creating a wide network of support across Brighton and Hove, the Champions meetings chaired by our Assertive Outreach Worker and our Community Outreach Worker will now be merged. This will provide our total of 51 professional DA Champions with the opportunity to network with others outside of their field of expertise, and make new connections which could support their clients in future. These meetings will be held monthly.

450

The Skill Up stream has had a whopping 450 capacity building sessions in the past year. This includes staff members providing on the spot upskilling sessions, consultations and conversations about domestic abuse in our partnership organisations as well as out in the community.

172

Our Skill Up team have spent 172 hours in the past year working in a satellite service. This has provided opportunities for clients and staff members to ask questions and get support and advice on the spot.

160

In the past year, 160 professionals have been trained by our Skill Up staff. From domestic abuse and managing disclosures training, to disability and domestic abuse. In the church, we have reached a wide range of professionals to raise awareness and build capacity.

SPEAK UP



The aim of Speak Up is 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

Following the departure of the Community Engagement Lead, the decision was made to develop our own training package and move away from Ask Me. With intersectionality at its core, developed in coordination with community members, the new Community Ambassador Programme was launched in May 2023.

Developed and led by our Community Capacity Building Lead, 3 cohorts of the new programme have been delivered in community locations across 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.

**91 AMBASSADORS
IN THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AREA**

**SO FAR, THE NEW PROGRAMME HAS TRAINED
20 COMMUNITY MEMBERS
WITH ANOTHER 39 SIGNED UP FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMMES**

Whilst continuing to run the programme for anyone and everyone to attend, we also have plans to run specific sessions for particular audiences. In November, we will be delivering the programme to students at the University of Sussex and we will be running a men only cohort to encourage more men to step up.

Our hope is to deliver the programme to beauticians and hairdressers in early 2024 as they often hear disclosures from their clients and do not know how to respond.

FEEDBACK

The training has been developed for delivery in person, and cannot be offered online at present. This is because of the feedback we received from participants, who were longing to feel part of a community again. Those consulted reported a lack of sense of community on Zoom. From the feedback we have received so far about the new programme, this was the right decision and has led to more conversations happening over coffee breaks, friendships developing and community building.

"The most useful aspects were discussions with the others in the group. Hearing other peoples thoughts. Having my beliefs challenged in a safe environment."

"I'm much more aware of the things that make women feel unsure or unsafe in daily life. Helps me be more sensitive"

3

Community
Ambassador

Programmes delivered

12

hours spread over
evenings, mornings
and weekends

6 - 11

participants per
session

MALE SURVEY

The majority of our participants in the Community Ambassador Programme are women. We know that domestic abuse is not just a women's issue - in fact, we would argue that it is a men's issue. We have been encouraged to see more men in the spotlight stepping up to call out misogyny and sexism, but we want to see more men in Brighton and Hove engaging with our programme.

For this reason, our Community Capacity Building Lead developed a survey specifically for men to find out why they may not be signing up already, what would encourage them to sign up and their preferences for where and when.

We asked how could we make our current flyer or another flyer more appealing to men and received a wide range of honest feedback, which has been taken into consideration to build a new poster for the programme, specifically targeting men.

"Most Men in reading that would easily assume someone else will do it, but if they knew that Men were not doing anything it might encourage them to step up."

"Needs to be directed at the target audience and needs a call to action. Content heavy - feels overwhelming. Colour - blues, navy etc would appeal more to target audience. Images - more male focused"

"Currently feels a bit too playful with the people and unclear of focus for men and those who identify as male form the flyer colours and content"

75%

would prefer weekday evenings

Over

50%

would prefer a Community Centre or Pub

72%

want to know more about why men should be involved

MALE MARKETING

Based on the results of this survey, we have created our brand new poster for marketing. By using a diverse group of real life men, not cartoon pictures, colours that attract the target audience and a clear call to action, we hope that this will encourage men to step up and join in.

To match this new poster, we have also adjusted the posters and flyers to attract all audiences, not just men. These will be widely distributed to replace the old marketing and are available in all our brand colours.

The poster is set against a teal background with a red border. At the top left is the 'Rise' logo with the tagline 'It's time we put a stop to abuse'. At the top right is the 'COMMUNITY FUND' logo featuring a hand icon. The main headline reads 'It's time we put a stop to abuse' in large white text, with 'It's time we' and 'abuse' on one line and 'put a stop to' on the next. Below this is the sub-headline 'BE A DOMESTIC ABUSE community ambassador' in white, with 'community ambassador' in a larger font. To the right of the sub-headline is a QR code with the text 'SCAN ME' below it. Underneath the QR code is the text 'FREE TRAINING'. At the bottom left, there is a paragraph: 'It's time to step up. Be a part of the change, be a part of the solution and become a Domestic Abuse Community Ambassador.' Below this is another paragraph: 'To sign up or find out more, scan the QR code or email communities@riseuk.org.uk'. At the bottom right, there is a photograph of a diverse group of seven men of various ages and ethnicities, some with beards, smiling and clapping.

NEW MARKETING



Rise
Freedom from abuse & violence

COMMUNITY FUND

It's time we put a stop to abuse

BE A DOMESTIC ABUSE community ambassador

FREE TRAINING



SCAN ME

It's time to **step up**. Be a part of the change, be a part of the solution and become a Domestic Abuse Community Ambassador.

To sign up or find out more, scan the QR code or email communities@riseuk.org.uk



Rise
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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES



Objectives



- Recognise signs of abuse, discuss myths and move beyond stereotypes
- To ask questions you have wanted to ask, free of judgement
- Offer strategies for how to support survivors and create safe spaces



Objectives



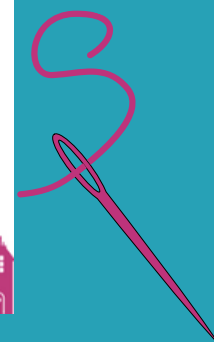
- Become better equipped in how to respond to disclosures of domestic abuse and make sure the survivor gets the right response
- Be able to signpost survivors to support
- Understand the role of a Community Ambassador



Why a Community Approach?



- Explores options for survivors to stay in their relationships if desired, or supports safe co-existence in the same community.
- Equips friends, family members, neighbours, co-workers, or other community members with the skills to provide the best response to a survivor first time round.
- Encourages an end to victim blaming, myths circulating and space for action building.



KEY LEARNINGS

1

If we want men to be involved, we need our marketing to target them specifically.

2

Running the programme in person city-wide 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.

JUST UNDER HALF OF PARTICIPANTS ARE SURVIVORS THEMSELVES

The statistics continue to show we have a lot of survivors attending the Community Ambassador Programme who see this as part of their ongoing recovery. Survivors are never pressured to share their experiences in the room but encouraged if they feel the space is safe for them.

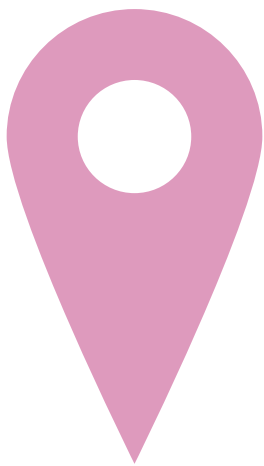
We celebrate their decisions to take part and know when to step back. We know that survivors are the experts in their own lives and their own experiences. We call every participant before the programme starts to make sure they are ready for the content and to alleviate any anxiety they may have.



"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"

TRAINING DELIVERY LOCATIONS

We aim to deliver the training at least once in each department of Brighton and Hove. Those marked with an X have had training based there or scheduled there for later this year.



NEWSLETTER

The Community Capacity Building Lead writes a monthly newsletter, which is sent to all Ambassadors, Connectors, Researchers and Volunteers involved in the project. The newsletter provides updates to services, adverts for jobs and volunteer roles, opportunities for further training as well as book, tv and film recommendations. We also use it as a space to discuss activism and topics we have seen in the media that are relevant to our feminism and activism. This has been a great way of threading the **Act Up** stream through everything we do.

NEWSLETTER EXTRACT

Madonna – who watched the 2023 Grammys in February? Madonna was there to introduce the performance of Kim Petras and Sam Smith, after Petras became the first transgender singer to win a Grammy. But how did that get lost in the media fury over Madonna's appearance? At 64, she received a barrage of hateful abuse about her "new face" and the way she dresses but she rightfully took to her social media pages to call out the critics for what the abuse really was - ageism and misogyny. What do you think about how society views women ageing? Why do you think women are given the responsibility of "ageing gracefully"?



NEWSLETTER EXTRACT

Tina Turner – an icon, a legend, a survivor. Tina Turner died last week at age 83 and I for one have been listening to her on repeat ever since. I have always been a fan of her music, enjoying all the renditions of 'The Best' over the years (particularly that serenade in Schitt's Creek, if you know, you know). But my love for her only grew when I came to work in the domestic abuse sector and began to truly understand all that she had to overcome after leaving her abusive husband, Ike Turner. In 1976, she turned up at a hotel in Texas in a blood-stained white suit bruised and with one eye swollen shut. She ended the 1970s surviving on food stamps after her divorce left her with nothing but debt, but she climbed out of the ruins and rebuilt her life into what can only be described as an extraordinary comeback. What a woman.



NETWORK MEETINGS

To ensure our community members have the opportunity to access all facets of the project, our network meetings are no longer just for Ambassadors. These meetings are open to Ambassadors, Connectors, Researchers and Volunteers, further embedding the **Act Up** stream within our work.

The network meetings run every 6-weeks. To see as many people as we can, we do not have a set time for these, but run them at various times throughout the day, on different days of the week. We also alternate between meeting online and in person.

Thanks to the consistency of the meetings, we are starting to see more Ambassadors rejoin the network who perhaps joined 4 or 5 years ago. Our last meeting took place at Al Campo Lounge, a large cafe where people could stop by after work for a drink with us. We used this time to talk about our concerns regarding Andrew Tate and the influence he has on young children as several of the attendees were teachers or worked with young people. However, it was also a space for them to get to know us better, be part of a social community and enjoy some fabulous (non-alcoholic) fancy drinks.

"It's just nice to have a space to meet other people who want the same things I do. I've learned so much from the other people who come as well as your team."

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Lastly, we are finally in a position to recruit for a Volunteer Administration Assistant and Training Co-Facilitator. Giving community members the opportunity to build skills, particularly in training facilitation, will allow our project to be even more member focused.

We hope the new volunteer will be able to begin co-facilitating towards the end of 2023, if recruitment is successful.

CONCLUDING YEAR 2

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

"I found the whole thing totally inspiring/moving and the positive and powerful force of the women in the room was tangible - it was a great honour to meet so many of them and to talk with them."

We were delighted to conclude the year by hosting a community lunch, which 84 people attended. These included community members, funder(s) and partners. We took this opportunity to gather the voice of the community, to hear what was important to them, how things were working for them now and what they wanted us to prioritise in the remaining year of the current project and beyond. You can see the summary of priority areas below. We will be building on all the feedback received and will be reaching out to other community members / groups who were unable to attend to centre their views for the future of the project.

As we go into year 3, we will be further embedding our community offers, centring the voice of our community members and utilising the opportunities for peer led support. We look forward to the start of Telling Our Stories with our partner New Writing South, further embedding the Women of Colour Wellbeing Group, Women RISE Rooted and the Changemaker Programme. We are so excited to see the research and connector projects come to life and roll out of the new male focused Community Ambassador sessions. We will be continuing to look for ways to further link up our work across the project strands to better reflect the survivor journey and further improve the experience of our community members.



ACT UP

1

Paid volunteer opportunities

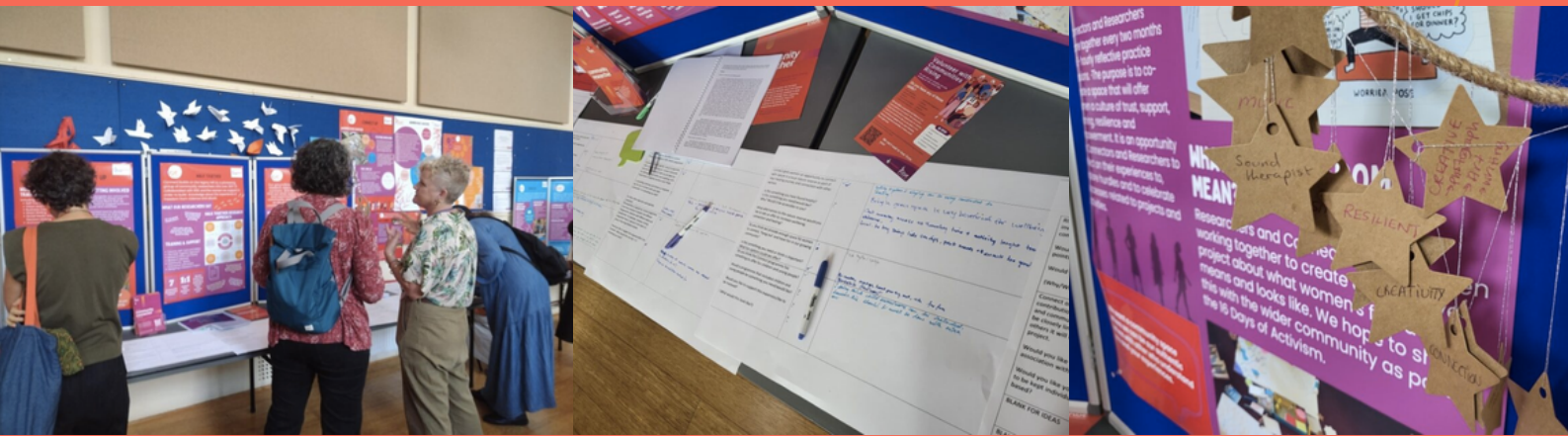
2

Establishing a mentorship scheme within Communities Rising to support action

3

Community activities and events that combine activism with care

"Thank you for inviting us to an event where we could take things at our own pace and for not speaking at us. What an amazing idea."



CONNECT UP

1

Investment in a physical Community Hub

2

More opportunities for fun and hanging out

3

Increasing diversity of community members

SKILL UP

1

Continuation and development of holistic support services offer

2

Working with Early Help services and family hubs to support survivors of domestic abuse and their families

3

A pathway for male survivors

"If we were to put a community event on, we wouldn't get anywhere near these numbers! You obviously have some very engaged community members!"



SPEAK UP

1

Curating an Ambassador Programme for teenagers

2

Develop and implement tailored offer e.g. men, beauticians, hairdressers etc.

3

Increase reach and provision of Community Ambassador training

The Communities Rising
project continues to be
BY AND FOR our
communities

'I am not free while any woman is
unfree, even when her shackles
are very different from my own.'

Audre Lorde

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WITH
OUR PROJECT

Rise
freedom from abuse & violence



RISE
Community Base
113 Queens Road,
Brighton, BN1 3XG.