Report 2022

The network of international women Brighton and Hove

44
LANGUAGES

Afrikaans
AMHARIC
ARABIC
Bahasa
Indonesia
Bengali
BULGARIAN
Cantonese
DARI
English
Farsi
FILIPINO
FRENCH
Gambian
German
Greek
GUJERATI
HINDI
Hungarian
Italian
Japanese
KRIO
KURDISH
Latvian
Malay
Norwegian
ORISSA
OROMO
Polish
Portuguese
Punjabi
PUSHTU
SHONA
Sinhalese
Sorani
Spanish
Swahili
SWEDISH
Tamil
TELUGU
Thai
Tigryan
TURKISH
URDU
xhosa

56
COUNTRIES

Afghanistan
ALGERIA
ARGENTINA
Bangladesh
Brazil
Bulgaria
CANADA
CHILE
China
Colombia
Czechoslovakia
EAST TIMOR
EGYPT
Eritrea
Ethiopia
France
GAMBIA
GERMANY
Greece
Hungary
India
INDONESIA
IRAN
Iraq
Japan
Jordan
KENYA
KURDISTAN
Kuwait
Latvia
Lebanon
LIBYA
MALAYSIA
Morocco
Norway
Pakistan
PALESTINE
PERU
Poland
Portugal
Rwanda
SAUDI ARABIA
SIERRA LEONE
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
SUDAN
SWEDEN
Syria
Thailand
Turkey
UK
VENEZUELA
Wales
Yemen
Zimbabwe

THE NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN
FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE

Introducing our first Report

It is a great pleasure to offer you our first Report, to share some of what we have achieved and tell you of our future plans.

We started The Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove in 2017 as a response to the call of many in the City, who, as women who were not born in the UK (including refugee and migrant women), told us of the barriers they face in re-establishing their and their families' lives and achieving their ambitions.

Our starting point was the straightforward and inclusive approach that enables all of us who identify as 'International Women' to come together in a 'safe space', share our resources and support one another. This approach is the bedrock of how we do things and fundamental to the successful outcomes of our different projects.

Equally as important, is removing barriers that might inhibit women participating in our activities. So, we have a simple approach of asking women to let us know their preferred way of being kept in touch and invited to events. We try and meet transport costs whenever we can. Our Wednesday morning 'drop ins' at Jubilee Library are a successful way of staying connected and of new women finding out about us. We are thrilled that has helped the Library become a 'Library of Sanctuary', now sharing its inclusive and innovative approaches with other Libraries up and down the country. We are privileged to receive and grateful for the never-ending support and practical help of Jubilee Library who have given us a home; our thanks to Julie O'Neil, Norah Carr and all the Library staff.

We prioritise delivering activities which women tell us they would like to do. We ask and we listen, and we do that regularly. Then we plan and resource those projects. As we enjoy each other's company, whether it is sewing, walking, planting or cooking, we identify ways in which we can help resolve a problem or meet a need. Of course there is then much follow up work behind the scenes, sometimes with referrals to a more specialist organisation, often leading to substantial new initiatives, as described in this report.

THE NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN
FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE

We are more than 300 women from 56 countries who speak 44 languages

Our Activities and Events



Our Voice heard in City life

Census Champions and we actively encouraged compliance with registration requirements following Brexit. We participated in the city wide survey of the disproportionate effects of Covid, inputted into consultation on the future of the Downland and now take part in the Anti-Racism Advisory Group. We appreciate these opportunities.

Managing Personal and Family Health

A programme of small group sessions with NHS specialist staff was firmly established pre-Covid and covered topics such as nutrition and diet, women's personal health, G.P registration and access to healthcare services. Disrupted by Covid restrictions, we quickly responded with weekly online zoom sessions, personal messaging, emails and Facebook postings, with health information and the delivery of weekly food parcels and essential supplies. We reduced isolation, alleviated hardship and helped understanding of public health information. Trustees becoming 'Vaccination Champions' helped maximise vaccine take up.

Equally important was to show our appreciation of the NHS. Led by creative volunteers, 'Bags of Hope' were sewn and delivered, each with a personal message of support and filled with nice treats for doctors, nurses and staff in Sussex County Hospital.





Improved Wellbeing: with art, creativity, reading and learning, and shared cooking We have happy memories of many shared cooking evenings in the Community Kitchen and of inspiring group projects, all interrupted by Covid.

However, at the peak of the Pandemic between January to June 2021 an innovative project was initiated Marigold Ashwell. Over 40 women from 19 different countries were engaged in 'In This Moment of Time'.

They were inspired through beautiful sets of materials delivered to their homes, weekly videos and on-line teaching all created through the wonderful skills and imagination of Brighton craft practitioner Helen de Chenecey and her colleagues Abi and Lucy. The project resulted in a celebratory and moving exhibition in the windows of Jubilee Library and has prompted the beginning of a new monthly Art Group.

English Language learning

Cathy, one of our Trustees, supports a group of 20 skilled volunteers providing one to one teaching in women's homes. The volunteers supported 21 women during the project, its an important initiative for those who cannot get out to courses or need extra support.

A 'Reading Friends' project, led by colleagues from Jubilee Library was appreciated by many women.

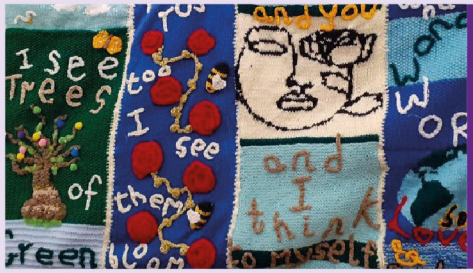
Outdoor Living in the City

The 'window-sill' project lifted our spirits during Covid lockdown: we delivered plants, bulbs, herbs and soil to homes, sharing the results online. Recalling the earlier pleasures of lavender picking, we spent happy times in the summer with the Eco-therapy project in Stanmer Park, led by Liz Ingram. The shared pleasure, improved fitness and mental health that comes from spending time out of doors, led us to develop a 'City Walks' and 'Seasonal Walking' programme; now in all seasons women can talk as they walk, learn about the streets, green spaces, pathways and culture of the City.

Providing Digital Inclusion and Employment

Funded by Sussex Community Fund and facilitated by Sussex Community Internet Project we gifted laptops, training and support to women enabling them to be connected independently, access information, apply for jobs and much more.

The Adult Education Hub of Brighton & Hove City Council together with Ellice Training, has provided more than we could ever have hoped for in terms of 'Next Steps' courses to support women in realising their ambitions and beginning to regain employment close to their qualifications and experience.



We hosted a 'day out' for over 150 women from London: *the 'Women for Refugee Women' organisation*, **welcomed visitors from Sweden and were inspired by a visit from women from Central/South America enroute to the COP 26 conference with their sewn 'Forest' Tapestry.**

The 'Illuminate' Tapestry is a visual representation of the diversity of the City as well as testament to the creativity and talents of all those who made it. By sharing it with others, whether it is in the Dome on International Women's Day or in schools for 'Belonging and Identity' teaching, its message is clear: international women have many stories to share and together we bring those to enrich City life.











Our Future Plans

1 Continue to expand and offer our well-loved, creative projects and all those that bring us together, including those within the 'Outdoor Living' programme, also providing opportunities to enhance skills and qualifications in food preparation and catering. New ideas, include an allotment, taught swimming, water safety and first aid courses.

2 Extend 'safe spaces' for women and appoint a dedicated and skilled Caseworker so that we can better respond to individual needs and enhance our partnership work with specialist organisations. We plan to develop child care arrangements to help more women to participate in events.

3 Restart the well recieved and beneficial 'managing health and increased wellbeing' programme

4 Explore with Brighton & Hove City Council, ways of women's voices being heard in city wide events and help to inform city wide strategic plans. Develop a 'Civic Life' programme that offers understanding and participation in decision making and local democracy.

5 Continue to reduce digital poverty and benefit from Adult Learning and Education courses which offer skilled support and practical ways of enabling women to access jobs and restore careers

6 Establish a Business (social) Enterprise, making the best use of women's creative talents and skills, provides options to work both individually and / or collectively and work towards earning sustainable incomes for themselves and perhaps for the Network too. We are thrilled that this Project starts on 14th March.

7 Continue to reach out to new arrivals in the City with regular Friday afternoon (starting on 18th March) 'Sanctuary and Welcome' events at All Saints Church (Hove).

As our membership increases, our challenge is to sustain and expand our successful programme of events as well as consolidating ways of working which builds on the skills of our volunteers.

We all have belief in **The Network of International Women** and its values and aim to secure its future for the benefit of women and families in Brighton & Hove.

Our Finances
and our thanks for all your support

We are reporting before the end of the 2021/22 financial year, so our full financial statement will be published on our website, following an independent review and Trustee approval.

Our Treasurer, Renuka Chandraker, keeps us in good financial order with the very much appreciated oversight by Steve Marshall, an 'Independent Examiner'. Thank you Renu and Steve.

So far this financial year:
Grant income received is **£10,400**

Carrying forward from the previous year is **£8,700**

Annual operating costs are **£760**

Project start-up costs low. Almost all of our income therefore directly benefits women and families.

Huge thanks to all of those who are grant-aiding us now and have done so in the past:

Brighton & Hove City Council
Communities and Hardship Funds
The Co-operative
Sussex Community Fund
RISE
Enjoolata *for also treating members to an evening of ice skating!*

We have also received crowdfunding and personal donations. We make every penny count with all that we do

Our Cornerstone
Volunteers with Kindness and in Partnership

The value of the time, skills and kindness gifted to the Network each day is huge, and is the cornerstone which allows us to make a positive difference to the lives of so many women and their families. At first, we were a small group of volunteers who formed a steering committee and project working groups, some of those later becoming Trustees when, in September 2020, we registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Others have joined since and now many women from the Network volunteer to inspire, lead and help develop and deliver successful projects. We are very grateful to everyone.

Trustees
Fiona Sharpe Co-founder
Kate Howell
Cathy Maxwell,
Renuka Chandraker
Laila Rashdan
Irene Soler
Eugenia Markova
Vivenie Mugunga
Linda Beanlands Chair

Steering group members
Aicha Alhihi, Marigold Ashwell, Lizzie Reading, Siri Areelertworakul, Alison Lesley, Nagla Ballal, Pervin Mehin Candan, Angie Clapham Webb and Charlotte Farrell.

many others help us too
Risza, Yvonne, Silvana, Hafida, Fatena, Nikki, Louise, Miassar, Nancy, Anna, Corinne, and many more

Thank you to you all our volunteers

In Partnership

We are also fortunate to benefit from the incredible generosity of many partners who gift time and expertise to move us forward.

Sarah Springford and Michelle Chamber of Commerce
Angela Rowlands and Lulu Vallings Enjoolata
Amir Bahrami Adult Learning Manager, BHCC
Sue Cleasby Ellice Training
Clare Griffiths The Thrive Effect
Joanna Zara Brighton University
Wendy Mathias and Sallie Another Way
Andy Fairhall Sussex Community Internet Project.

Thanks also to
Lucy Bryson BHCC
Richard Williams, Linda Morrice and Angie Lynn Sanctuary on Sea,
Anita Johal RISE
Yasmin Valli Survivors Network
Sabri Ben Ameur Muslim Forum
Katy Cummings and Public Health colleagues BHCC
Tim Holtam Table Tennis Club
Lisa Dando and Rachel Beck Brighton Women's Centre
Kaye Duerdoth, Cicely and colleagues Trust for Developing Communities
and others too.

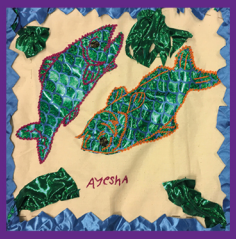
And to our friends
All Saints Church Father Ryan, Andrew, Synne, Father Lee, Helen, David, Sarah and Catherine who are enabling us to welcome asylum seekers in the Hotels, 'store our stuff' and welcome us to tea and cake, Thank you so much.

We hope that we help in the achievement of your objectives too

Brighton & Hove City Council
co op
Freedom from Abuse and Violence Rise
ENJOOLATA FOUNDATION








“All the world is in this room

Yvonne Angriana




















www.niwbh.org

www.facebook.com/intlwomensnetwork

email: info@niwbh.org