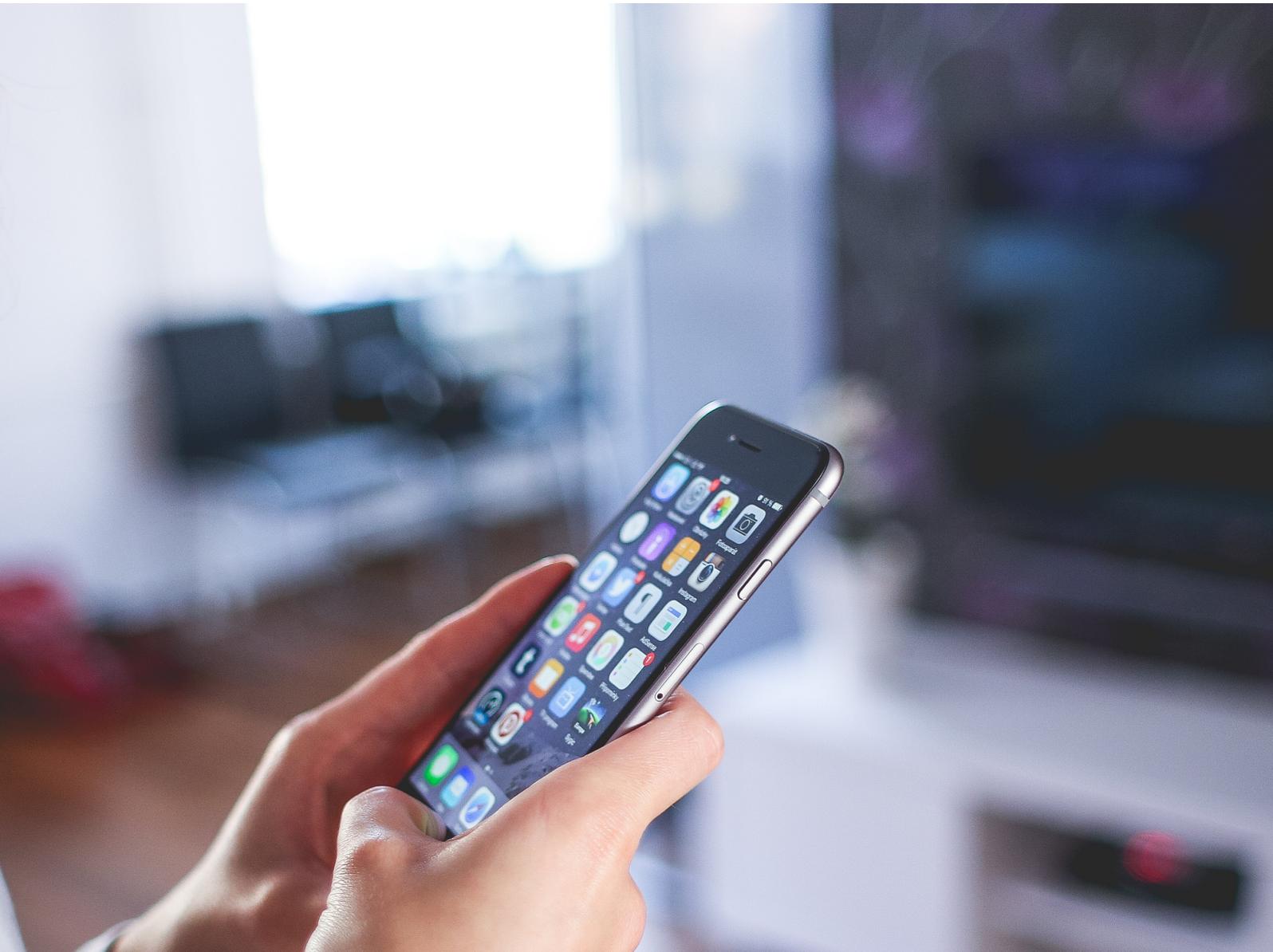


# R.I.S.E Project

Re-engage, Inform, Support, Empower



Prepared by  
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**Yasmin Akhtar**  
**Director -**  
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6 months into what will remain an exceptional phenomena through history, never to be forgotten, we take this opportunity to reflect on our work through these testing times and share GOAL's vision for the next 6 months.

COVID-19 has proved to be the greatest challenge many of us have ever faced in our lives, whether that has been challenges at work, home or personal mental health. The pandemic has also presented new opportunities to achieve work-life balance, exploring creative ways to engage most 'hard-to-reach'; breaking barriers to learning, digital and non-digital skills.

In March 2020, GOAL had to go back to the drawing board and re-engineer its work to what was to be the 'new norm'.

GOAL's success has always been in its ability to work at the heart of the community, addressing the needs of the community by working in close partnership with local organisations, providing flexible working / learning hours, access to crèche and bilingual tutors.

So, the challenge ahead was how we replicate our offline success to online services.

In April 2020, GOAL launched the R.I.S.E (Re-engage, Inform, Support & Empower) project; to once again do what we did best and that was the delivery of initiatives that meet the need of the community we work in. Over the last 6 months GOAL has re-engaged / engaged with over 200+ service users (young and old).

GOAL was fortunate enough to access number of funding streams to realise the R.I.S.E project. We are eternally grateful to all the funders, without whom we would not have been able to access and support those in need during these difficult times.



Hodge Hill  
 Neighbourhood Network  
 Scheme (NNS)

**TESCO** Bags of Help



**GOAL will continue to work with local partners**, funders and service users to build on its current work as well as developing programmes 'Think Outside the Box' that meet the needs of the communities we serve.

GOAL will continue to build and develop on current initiatives through the R.I.S.E project.

Additional three new programmes launched as part of the need identified through our current work include:



### **Parent & Toddler (P&T)**

Stay and Play sessions re-engineered and delivered online, using Zoom.

Structure for the sessions enables both the parent and the child to follow a set routine, giving time to prepare resources.

All resources are delivered by GOAL to ensure there is an equalizer amongst all the parents taking part in the sessions.

Activities are chosen to support many aspects of child's development but most importantly for parent and child to have fun and enjoy some special time together.



### **Bumps & Bundles (B&B)**

Bumps & Bundles group was setup to support mums feeling lonely and isolated during the pandemic.

The informal group allows mums to meet virtually over cup of tea and discuss, share and learn from each other. For some, its a great way to get access to health professionals through GOAL whilst others enjoy meeting new mums and learn from each other.



### **Tuition (aged 5 - 11)**

Tuition sessions for children aged 5 to 11, specifically those coming from disadvantage backgrounds; targeted support providing children with an opportunity to catch up with 4½ months of lost learning during the pandemic.

# 150+ service users contacted through welfare calls

Thanks to  
Neighbourhood Network  
Scheme / Heart of England  
Community Foundation



- **51% of our service users were feeling very low on their first call from GOAL in April 2020.**
- **Resounding 88% of service users strongly agreed that welfare calls were helpful stating:**

*"Eased my worries"*

*"When I received a call, I felt 'there is a world out there'"*

- **78% of service users strongly agreed that they felt much happier after receiving the call from GOAL.**

*"The first phone call I received, I was over the moon that there was someone out there who cared."*

*"It was nice to know that someone was interested in my well-being."*

*"The regular calls helped me to progress towards a healthier outlook which made me feel more relaxed."*

*"I don't really speak to anyone outside of my family, so this was a refreshing change."*

*"I felt happy that in this critical time someone out there was thinking and cared about me and my family."*

# 22 gardening kits delivered to most vulnerable / isolated individuals

Thanks to  
Tesco Bags of help & Awards  
for All



## 10 devices distributed to most isolated

Thanks to DevicesDotNow & Good Things Foundation



### AGAINST ALL ODDS

Rabia's sheer enthusiasm and thirst to learn has been her driving force, breaking all barriers and overcoming challenges with technology!

Rabia came to GOAL having led a very difficult life. She was abandoned by her mother in Pakistan when she was a baby. She was looked after by her aunties and uncles.

Rabia was diagnosed with diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Initially, she was supported by her uncle with all her hospital appointments. Her cousin (aunt's daughter) also went to the hospital with her to translate as Rabia could not read, write or speak English..

During the lockdown, she became immensely stressed, felt quite depressed and isolated. She was unable to communicate with anyone other than her aunt and cousin who she lived with. She didn't even have a basic phone. Her aunt who was understandably mourning the death of her husband was also depressed. Her cousin was now busy working from home, so couldn't spend much time with her with her learning. All her access to learning had come to a halt. She occupied her time by practising her writing skills. Rabia ran out of writing paper, so was unable to practice her writing and as she was vulnerable and classed as 'high risk', she was unable to leave her house.

She qualified for a device. Initially, there was a great concern as due to lack of literacy and digital skills, she would struggle to use the device but through pure perseverance and determination and continued support from the GOAL team, Rabia has, in such a short period of time, managed to learn how to make video calls, text, send audio message, take photos and send photos using WhatsApp.

She has also learnt to use YouTube for entertainment and exercise videos to help her with her medical conditions. She uses the internet to search for information and can access documents using her email facility.

Rabia has also started to access GOAL online English classes using the



## COMPANION IN A DIGITAL DEVICE!

Amina came to GOAL having recently moved to the area after fleeing difficult circumstances. It was very much evident from what she was describing that she was very lonely and by attending classes and doing voluntary sessions with GOAL kept her busy and gave her somewhat of a social life she craved.

She lived alone, without a TV or a proper digital device. She spent her time praying and reading books. When she received news that she may be eligible for a tablet through the scheme she shrieked with utter joy. Her first words when she was informed about the tablet were "NOW I HAVE A COMPANION". You could feel her delight through the phone.

Amina now talks about how she watches documentaries and Islamic talks on YouTube and how the device has made such a difference for her, especially during the lockdown.

She is also looking forward to having a go at online shopping, which is a luxury she has never experienced before.

The device has helped her in ways beyond her expectations from the simplest thing like having some background noise to having the freedom to watch what takes her fancy when she likes, to having it as a tool to expand her learning and bettering herself for the future.

During the lockdown she received a very large water bill. With the support of her keyworker from GOAL, she was able to setup monthly instalments. She now communicates with the department using email and does online payments, something she had never envisaged doing before.

As she had recently moved into her property, she hadn't realised that she didn't transfer her voter registration.

When she received a letter from the council, she didn't understand it but understood it was something about voting. She slowly managed to register online and was so pleased that she did it as she knew registering to vote is something that is extremely important.

The device has given her the freedom to continue some normality of life during lockdown, from attending classes, to having a go at online shopping and watching informative videos on YouTube

# DOSTI ladies engaged with arts & crafts - Over 300+ mask adapters delivered to hospitals, local surgeries and community venues

Thanks to  
Awards for All

DOSTI ladies used their craft skills to knit, sew and crochet mask adapters which were distributed to hospitals, local surgeries, care homes amongst other venues for keyworkers working hard through these difficult times. DOSTI ladies doing their bit during the pandemic and the knitting, crochet and sewing continues...



Picture of the mask adapter, modelled by an end user - courtesy of the recipient.

# 11 keyworkers engaged in delivery of the projects



Keyworkers (tutors supporting GOAL service users at the centres), who themselves were battling the 'new norm' came on board to support the delivery of the R.I.S.E project. GOAL implemented strict safeguarding procedures to protect the keyworkers mental health being. This is what they had to say about their experience on working on the R.I.S.E project.

*'Lockdown threatened isolation and my sense of purpose. Participating and supporting learners through the R.I.S.E project has enhanced my personal well-being. I had began my employment with GOAL following a personal decline in my own Mental Well-being. GOAL gave me an opportunity to engage with people and feel part of something which supported my journey towards personal well-being. The R.I.S.E project gave me focus and again a sense of belonging.'*

*'Participation in the R.I.S.E project has been a personal privilege. Witnessing our learners willingness to embark upon online learning has been amazing. A testimony to the saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way" The R.I.S.E project has definitely improved my technical skills and as a result, I am aware of increased confidence in my technical abilities which I feel will encourage continued learning thus a greater sense of self well-being.'*

*'I am pleased I opted to participate in the R.I.S.E project even though it had a lot of challenges for me personally. I now feel more comfortable and established in my present role. It has given me the passion to work harder and improve my skills more.'*

*'Initially I was ill and feeling concerned. I was anxious regarding the current covid-9 situation. The uncertainty caused a heightened state of worry and pressure.'*

*'Yes, I was able to share similar concerns and enabling the learners to share their concerns helped me to feel more confident in myself. Helping others even by them feeling appreciative of the simple welfare took the edge off feeling powerless. It took my focus away of having the pandemic lingering over my head everyday. Made me realise that I should be grateful for what I have as there are people out there in a worse position during this pandemic. It has helped me regain some sense of normality.'*

*'I hadn't used my laptop for over 3 years and using it again has given me the confidence to use my laptop for a range of activities which are difficult to use on your mobile. Now I use my laptop for Zoom, Skype and creating word documents with ease and full confidence.'*





COVID-19 has highlighted the digital divide that exists in our communities resulting to those that CAN and those that aren't able to, through no fault of their own, creating two distinct societies BUT adversity opens up new opportunities and COVID-19 has been no exception.

COVID-19 has clearly highlighted the inequalities that exist in our communities but also the opportunities where once we had service users who were reluctant, due to lack of confidence, limited access to local provisions, compounded by limited literacy skills to engage in any form of digital skills learning, now grasp at every opportunity to learn computers as they crave another human contact during these exceptional times.

This has given GOAL the opportunity to introduce digital skills as part of the whole engagement process from DOSTI ladies logging into zoom to join weekly sessions to our learners preparing for their basic IT qualifications.

A massive opportunity for GOAL to start, build and accelerate our service users' digital skills by providing targeted support to unleash their true potential.

GOAL will continue to build on its current successes, providing both online and offline provisions, enabling GOAL with an opportunity to reach a much wider community, opening up services to those restricted due to travel/transport, family/care responsibilities and lack of literacy skills. Through development of digital solutions, opening doors to those that were once excluded.

*Small steps towards building a more digitally inclusive society!*