

Yaarana Project

December 2023

Funded by:



Hodge Hill
Neighbourhood Network
Scheme (NNS)



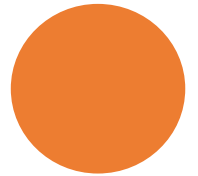
Introduction

Yaarana (Friendship) project was a new initiative catering to men, primarily aged 50+, from the South Asian community. It aimed to establish a local, friendly, and trusted environment where participants could access support and connect with others in a safe and supportive community space.

Yaarana project was funded by Neighbourhood Network Scheme Hodge Hill, supported by Go-woman! Alliance CIC and delivered by Birmingham Tours CIC

The community lacked a safe spaces for men to gather. Parks, particularly in winter, pose challenges including objections from other users and safety concerns due to rats and vermin. This scarcity of suitable spaces leaves men, especially those over 60/70, vulnerable.

The Yaarana project aimed to fill this gap, providing a warm, safe, and trusted environment for men in the South Asian community to connect and receive support.





Language barriers contribute significantly to the isolation of many individuals. Despite residing in the UK for an extended period, some have only basic English skills, posing challenges in tasks like completing forms or interacting with agencies.

The lockdown has exacerbated isolation, leading to a loss of confidence among those who previously ventured out occasionally, now refusing to leave their homes. The Yaarana project recognises and addresses these language-related barriers to enhance inclusivity and support for the affected individuals.



The 'Yaarana' project looks to address issues around health and social well-being by collaborating with community health practitioners.

- Healthy eating awareness will be promoted through various initiatives.
- Social participation by creating a safe and welcoming space for men. This initiative will enhance self-worth, diminish feelings of low well-being, and cultivates a positive 'can do' attitude among the participants. The dual focus on health and community involvement makes 'Yaarana' a holistic and impactful project.





Project delivery

The consistent engagement of service users over the lifespan of the Yaarana project reflects a strong and sustained impact on the community. The fact that most of these users are regular participants, accessing at least two sessions a week, underscores the project's significance and relevance in their lives.

This level of ongoing engagement suggests that the Yaarana project has successfully met the needs and preferences of the community, fostering a sense of belonging and satisfaction among the service users. The commitment of these individuals to participate regularly indicates the project's effectiveness in creating a supportive and inclusive environment that resonates with its target audience. This consistent attendance also implies a positive and meaningful influence on the overall well-being and social engagement of the service users.

The successful implementation of health checks, especially with the addition of equipment like the vibraxis machine and exercise bike encouraged regular physical and health checks.

The Yaarana project has demonstrated remarkable success in fostering social participation and promoting holistic well-being within the community. By bringing together diverse groups, including the men's group, cricket enthusiasts, and gardening enthusiasts, the project has created a collaborative platform for sharing experiences and building connections.

The initiative to teach men how to track their health using a blood pressure machine reflects a proactive approach to preventive healthcare.





The overwhelming demand for the Yaarana project's sessions, well exceeding the initial targets underscores the critical need for the services it provides.

The collaboration with Birmingham Tours, leveraging volunteers to support the increased demand during the challenging winter, showcases effective community partnerships and a commitment to meeting the evolving needs of service users.

Conclusion

The Yaarana project's pioneering nature in an area with a traditionally perceived "hard-to-reach" demographic showcases a commendable commitment to inclusivity and community service. The project's success in bringing together three distinct groups despite cultural rifts signifies its effectiveness in bridging divides within the society.

In conclusion, the Yaarana project's success in engaging a "hard-to-reach" demographic and uniting diverse groups underscores the importance of community consultation and continuous learning. This approach not only ensures the project's relevance but also establishes a foundation for sustained positive impact within the community and set the firm foundation for future work.



Transformative Impact on Mr Naweed's well-being through Yaraana project's Advocacy Service

Mr Naweed, grappling with the profound effects of the cost-of-living crisis, faced not only financial strain but also emotional challenges. Anxiety, depression, and a lack of confidence became a pervasive part of his life due to the escalating prices, social isolation, and the pressing concern of meeting basic needs without additional income in the household.

The combination of financial strain and social isolation created a daunting atmosphere for Mr Naweed. The cost of living crisis not only affected his ability to pay for bills and food but also took a toll on his mental well-being, resulting in anxiety and depression. The lack of social participation further intensified his feelings of isolation and contributed to a decline in confidence.

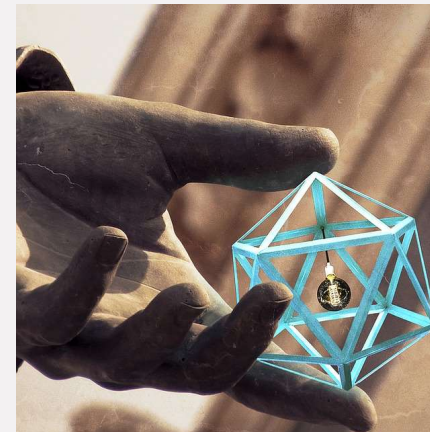


Upon engaging with the Yaraana project, Mr Naweed discovered the advocacy service, a crucial support system offered by the project. Recognising the multifaceted challenges he was facing, he decided to seek assistance through this service.

During the advocacy appointment, Mr Naweed candidly shared his financial and emotional struggles. It was during this session that he learned about the Eco Grant scheme. Initially, he doubted his eligibility for the program but soon realised that he qualified for assistance.

Utilising the Eco Grant, Mr Naweed took steps to enhance the insulation of his property, leading to a significant reduction in utility bills. The financial relief not only eased the burden of meeting basic needs but also had a cascading effect on his mental well-being. The newfound financial stability positively influenced his mental stress and overall living standards.

Mr Naweed's journey exemplifies the holistic support provided by the Yaraana project. Beyond addressing financial concerns, the advocacy service played a pivotal role in alleviating his emotional struggles, fostering a sense of confidence, and rekindling social participation. The successful utilisation of the Eco Grant not only eased the immediate financial pressures but contributed to a transformative positive impact on Mr Naweed's mental health and overall quality of life.



Mr Kaur's Journey with the Yaraana project



Mr Kaur, a 94-year-old gentleman, found himself grappling with the challenges of social isolation and deteriorating mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic. With limited social interactions, his only ventures outside were for essential appointments, often reduced to virtual encounters.

Isolation took a toll on Mr Kaur's mental well-being, leading to heightened loneliness and anxiety. His once vibrant social life became a distant memory, replaced by a sense of seclusion within the walls of his home.

Mr Kaur's life took a positive turn when he discovered the Yaraana project. This initiative provided a lifeline for individuals like him, offering a supportive community and a safe space to connect with others.

Upon joining the Yaraana project, Mr Kaur experienced a remarkable transformation. He began walking to the center, contributing to a significant improvement in his physical health. The once-aloof gentleman rediscovered the joy of socialising, engaging with locals and rekindling friendships. The project became a beacon of hope, alleviating his feelings of loneliness.

The Yaraana project emerged as more than just a physical destination for Mr Kaur. It became a vital source of emotional support, addressing his anxiety issues and fostering a sense of belonging. Mr Kaur now describes it as an amazing safe space for him and his newfound friends.

Mr Kaur's journey exemplifies the transformative power of community initiatives like the Yaraana project, especially in challenging times. The project not only revitalised his physical and mental well-being but also rekindled the spark of social connection, proving that age should never be a barrier to a fulfilling, engaged life.

