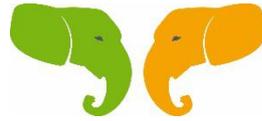


# **Social Effectiveness Research Centre**



## **South Riverside Community Development Centre: Believe/Credu II Project**

Final Evaluation Report

(January 2023 – January 2026)

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## I. Introduction and Methodology

Support for women over 25 with caring responsibilities from the diverse community of Canton, Riverside & Grangetown to get closer to finding work ?

How do we do this ?

**WHAT IS THE BELIEVE/ CREDU PROJECT ?**

- Read & Write class
- Community ESOL Assessment
- Digital Literacy
- A taste of Riverside
- Riverside Blend
- FAN Group
- WRU matches
- BBC visit
- Rowing project
- Interpreting apprenticeships
- Pop Ups

The infographic features a blue background with white text and images. On the left, there is a photo of three women walking on a bridge. In the center, there is a photo of a group of people sitting around a table in a classroom setting. The text is arranged in a structured layout with a central question and a list of activities.

*“The Believe/Credu project supported me greatly and equipped me with the right training. I took full advantage of the courses provided, which helped me secure a good job. This truly changed my life, giving me confidence, financial stability and the hope to build a better future for myself and my family.”*

Year 3 participant, Believe/Credu II project

Believe II (or ‘Credu II’ in Welsh) was a project delivered by South Riverside Community Development Centre (SRCDC). The project began in January 2023 and ran until January 2026. It was a continuation of an earlier project (also called Believe/Credu) that SRCDC ran between May 2019 and May 2022.

As its predecessor project also did, the new project worked with Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women aged 25 or over who were unemployed, had caring or parenting responsibilities, and/or who lacked formal qualifications or employability skills. In doing this, Believe/Credu II sought to achieve the following key impact, as recorded in its project logic model (or ‘theory of change’), namely that: *“Black, Asian and other ethnic minority women living in South Riverside have improved employability and quality of life.”*

Again as its predecessor had been, the Believe/Credu II project was funded through a grant from the Henry Smith Charity's 'Improving Lives' fund. This provided £179,900 in financial support in total over the new project's three-year lifetime. The six priority areas of activity that the fund sought to support were as follows:

- Help at a critical moment
- Positive choices
- Accommodation/housing support
- Employment and training
- Financial inclusion, rights and entitlements
- Support networks and family.

The two areas that Believe/Credu II was primarily funded to address through its activities were the fourth and sixth areas in this list (so 'Employment and training' and 'Support networks and family').

All of the participants in the three-year lifetime of Believe/Credu II were drawn from local Black, Asian or other minority communities in Riverside, Grangetown, Canton and surrounding areas in Cardiff. Most often they came from local communities of South Asian (especially Bangladeshi) or African origin living in the area.

In Wales as a whole, rates of economic inactivity are much higher for Asian or Asian Welsh/British (36.4%) women and Black/African/Caribbean Welsh/British (42.4%) women than for White women of any nationality (24.2%), with other ethnic groups, or those with mixed ethnic backgrounds, also having higher rates of economic inactivity (at 24.5% and 31.6% respectively).<sup>1</sup> Non-White groups conversely also have lower employment rates than White groups, with women with Asian or Asian Welsh/British ethnicities the lowest at only 54%, with White rates almost 20% higher.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Llywodraeth Cymru/Welsh Government, 'Labour market analysis by protected characteristics (Annual Population Survey): April 2004 to March 2021' (16 December 2021), p.26, available at: <https://www.gov.wales/labour-market-analysis-protected-characteristics-annual-population-survey-april-2004-march-2021-html#87060> <accessed February 2026>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.22.

Additional research has also found that job applications from people with ‘white-sounding’ names are 74% more likely to get called for an interview (or receive other kinds of positive responses in relation to a given job) than people with ‘ethnic minority sounding’ names.<sup>3</sup>

Black, Asian and other minority ethnic individuals are over-represented in low-paid and precarious jobs, as well as under-represented in senior positions, and more likely to be overqualified than their White British counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Partly as a result of this, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women are more likely to be self-employed than White British women.<sup>5</sup>

Research has uncovered too that most ethnic minority groups in Wales are economically less secure in general compared to the White population of the country. This is partly due to ethnic minorities’ positions of disadvantage in relation to employment, which result in both ethnicity and gender pay gaps, as well as a higher rate of persistent poverty among Black, Asian and other minority ethnic households.<sup>6</sup>

Ethnic minority women in Wales had been already hit disproportionately by austerity and welfare reform even prior to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>7</sup> These pre-existing issues were then exacerbated significantly by the effects of the pandemic. Women in Wales were more likely to have lost their job due to a business closing down because of COVID than men, with 18% of women experiencing job loss for this reason compared to 11% of men.<sup>8</sup>

The data also showed that in general Black, Asian and other minority ethnic people were twice as likely to have lost working hours compared to White people (48% versus 23%).<sup>9</sup>

Finally, and considering barriers to employment even more widely, other research has found that experiences of violence and abuse for some minority ethnic groups can feed into the way they feel about their local area, leading to a sense of isolation. According to the research, “[b]arriers to accessing healthcare, sport and leisure exist, particularly for people from [Black,

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<sup>3</sup> A. Sippitt, ‘Job applicants with ethnic minority sounding names are less likely to be called for interview’ (Full Fact, 26 October 2015), available at: <https://fullfact.org/economy/job-applicants-ethnic-minority-sounding-names-are-less-likely-be-called-interview/> <accessed February 2026>.

<sup>4</sup> H. Turkmen, ‘Triple Glazed Ceiling: Barriers to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Women Participating in the Economy’ (Chwarae Teg, July 2019), p.11.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> M. Evans, ‘Half of mothers in Wales are struggling to make ends meet’ (WEN Wales, 25 March 2021), available at: <https://wenwales.org.uk/press-release-half-of-mothers-in-wales-are-struggling-to-make-ends-meet/> <accessed February 2026>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

*Asian and other minority ethnic] groups or for whom English is an additional language”, something which “can further compound feelings of loneliness and not belonging”.<sup>10</sup>*

Members of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities also reported higher rates of anxiety and feelings of isolation in comparison with rates reported by their White counterparts; one in four people from ethnic minority groups reported being lonely in Wales in 2017/18, for example, compared to one in six of those who were White.<sup>11</sup>

In order to continue the work begun by its predecessor project to try to redress these kinds of issues, Believe/Credu II sought to achieve the following outcomes through its support for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women:

- Beneficiaries of the project will have increased soft skills (including communication, teamwork, problem solving).
- Beneficiaries of the project will have improved digital skills relating to the workplace.
- Beneficiaries of the project will demonstrate increased use of functional English and/or increased levels of literacy/numeracy.
- Beneficiaries of the project will have improved understanding of the financial implications of transitioning into work.
- Beneficiaries of the project will be closer to the labour market as a result of the project.

The project sought to achieve these outcomes in part by fulfilling a series of annual output targets relating to those outcomes.

The following table outlines those output targets for the overall three-year lifetime of Believe/Credu II as a whole, together with the project’s actual performance against those targets:

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<sup>10</sup> E. Ogbonna et al, ‘First Minister’s BAME COVID-19 Advisory Group: Report of the Socioeconomic Subgroup’ (Welsh Government, 22 June 2020), p.6, available at: <https://gov.wales/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-covid-19-socioeconomic-subgroup-report> <accessed February 2026>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

**SOCIAL EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH CENTRE  
BELIEVE/CREDU II PROJECT: FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

| WHOLE PROJECT OUTPUT INDICATORS<br>(TOTAL TARGET NUMBER FOR YEARS 1 TO 3<br>COMBINED)   | ACTUAL NUMBERS<br>ACHIEVED<br>(BY THE END OF YEAR 3) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>120 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries will be supported to improve their employability and quality of life over the lifetime of the project</li> </ul> | 120  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries will have had work experience opportunities</li> </ul>  | 30   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries per project year will have taken part in volunteering</li> </ul>  | 40   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries per project year will have secured employment or a regular volunteering role</li> </ul>                           | 32   |

As can be seen from the table, Believe/Credu II achieved its target for its first output indicator (overall participant numbers), and overachieved slightly for its fourth output indicator (number securing employment or regular volunteering), which may be seen as the most important of the four. This is especially the case given that the good performance against this indicator was mainly down to higher than anticipated numbers of project participants finding paid employment rather than high numbers of volunteers. Indeed, the project overachieved against its fourth indicator despite slightly underachieving against its third output indicator, which was specifically around taking part in volunteering. The project also struggled with another related indicator, namely its second one (takeup of work experience opportunities). The reason for the shortfall in relation to these indicators was, according to project staff, because many participants, especially in the latter two years of the project, were starting from such a low base in terms of skills that they were having to come to project classes several times a week for things like basic English skills, leaving them very little time for work experience placements or volunteering.

In relation to activities, Believe/Credu II's work with its participants comprised three strands. The first strand was individual support, for instance case-by-case help relating to job applications or interviews, the finding of volunteering roles, the sourcing of work experience placements and so on. The second strand comprised group activities aimed at helping project participants to increase their skills. Working together, both strands then provided the

precursor to the project's third strand of activity, namely that of directly supporting participants to take the ultimate step of beginning employment, a work placement or a regular volunteering role.

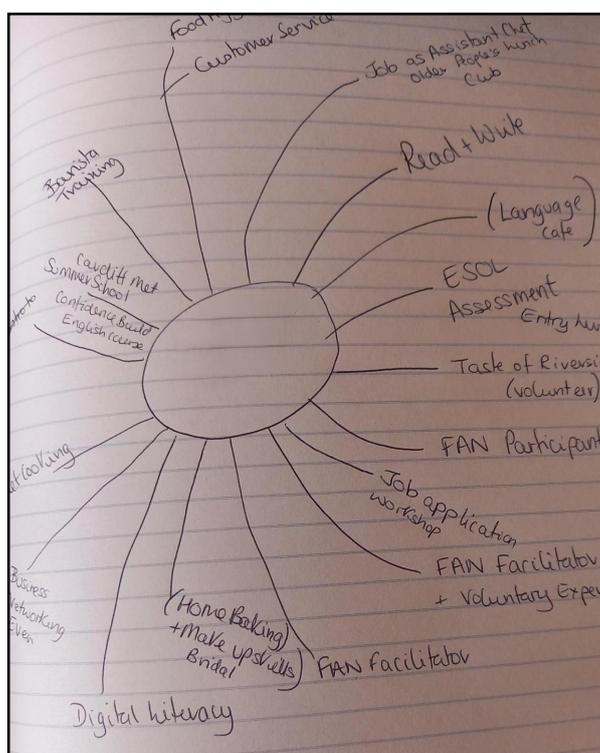
Group activities offered in year 3 included the following:

- Read & Write English Language classes / Handwriting classes
- CV workshops
- Life in the UK courses
- 'Be Your Own Boss' events (with Cardiff Council and other partners)
- Sewing classes (producing fabric bags for the Riverside Pantry foodshare scheme)
- Digital Literacy workshops
- A Taste Of Riverside cooking groups
- Riverside Blend/Barista training (through partnership with Cardiff Council)
- FAN (Friends and Neighbours) Group – regular conversation group in English (in partnership with the FAN Charity)
- Numeracy classes
- Move It Monday walks/Lowland Walk Leader Award training (with Partneriath Awyr Agored)
- 'Meet the Boss' days with the McLaren Construction Group, Rhostio Coffee Shop and other organisations
- International Women's Day celebrations with Wales Rugby Union, Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University and other partners.

In terms of the methodology used in this evaluation, this final evaluation report has made use of a mixed methods approach, utilising quantitative elements from the project's records of its three-year lifespan, including its reports to funder and activity records for each of the 120 different participants it had over the course of that lifetime. A bespoke outcomes survey for the evaluation continued to be completed in year 3, meaning a total of 53 Believe/Credu II participants overall provided additional detailed quantitative and qualitative feedback to this external evaluation over the project's lifetime. These questionnaires were then augmented by an end of project evaluation focus group attended by 25 project participants, plus a separate semi-structured interview process with project staff.

The following final external evaluation uses all of these sources to first consider the progress of Believe/Credu II against each of its intended outcomes over its whole lifetime. It then looks at the more unexpected outcomes and key learning points to arise from the project, before finally drawing some conclusions about the overall experience of the project as a whole.

## II. Outcomes 1 to 3 – Increased Skills



*“Yes, it's changed my life. In [my country of origin], I didn't work and was very shy. Through the Believe project I improved my skills and I get job working at the older persons lunch club as an assistant member of staff.”*

Year 3 participant, Believe/Credu II project

The first three outcomes Believe/Credu II sought to achieve were all focused on developing the work-related skills of its participants. Specific skills areas targeted included ‘softer’ skills such as teamwork, communication or problem solving, as well as ‘harder’ ones relating to English, maths or digital literacy.

In quantitative terms, 94% of project participants taking part in the evaluation survey reported improving their soft skills (outcome 1 of the project) during the lifetime of Believe/Credu, against a target to be achieved by the end of the project of 80%. For harder skills, 92% reported increased confidence in literacy and/or numeracy (outcome 2 of the project), against an end of project target of 70%. Finally, 70% reported improved digital skills (outcome 3), against an end of project target of 80%.

The project therefore overachieved in relation to its first two skills-related outcomes, but fell slightly short in relation to its third one (digital skills). Numerous participants fed back to the evaluation that the reason they had not achieved the digital skills outcome was simply because they had not chosen to attend the project's digital skills classes yet, sometimes acknowledging at the same time that they knew they had 'more to do' in relation to their computer skills.

On the whole Believe/CredU II therefore seems to have been generally successful in relation to its skills outcomes, at least in quantitative terms. There was, however, also qualitative evidence from the evaluation to support this. As part of the external evaluation process, participants in year 3 were asked (as the previous cohorts had been for the evaluations at the end of both earlier project years) to identify the most important change or changes that the project had led to for them.

As had been the case in both year 1 and year 2, and despite the project once more working with a completely new cohort of participants in year 3, it was noticeable that the majority of the answers to this question centred around skills development in one way or another, just as they had also done in previous years.

For example, several evaluation participants named specific skills as the most important outcome they had gained from the project. Progress in English was by far the most frequently mentioned change, though improvements in computer skills and communication skills in general were also cited:

- *"Good communication and good English skills."*
- *"I can understand and speak English better than before and have made new friends."*
- *"I am getting better at reading."*
- *"I did valuable courses like Barista, Human Law, Sewing, Fabric Printing and Health & Nutrition."*
- *"I like the Read and Write class and the interpreter helps me."*
- *"The most important thing is for me to [be] using computer, which I learned in 2025."*

One participant simply mentioned skills in general as her most important change, along with the social aspect of the project, commenting that *"I make new friends and learn some skills."*

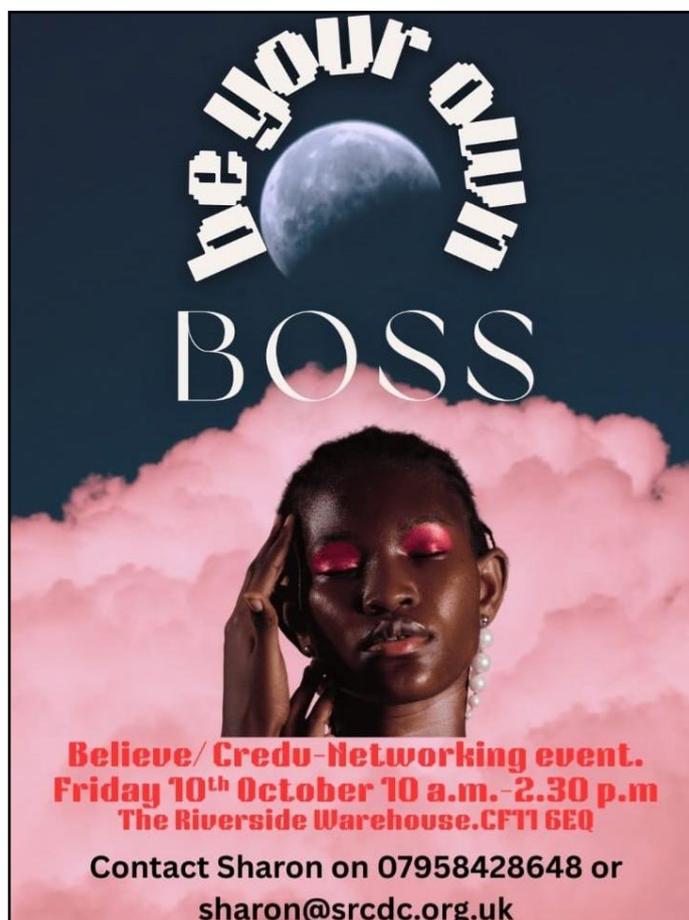
Another evaluation participant likewise drew attention to the communal aspect of the Believe/Credu II project, whilst also mentioning skills development. As she put it, *“I learned as [part of] a community and [am] getting better at writing”*.

Finally, a third participant in the evaluation linked this skills development explicitly to the broader challenge of finding work. In her words:

*“I have attended many courses like Human Rights, Sewing, Fabric Print and Barista [with the Believe/Credu II project]. There are many changes [for the better] in my communication [skills] level. It helps [me in] seeking [a] job. This project [helps me go] to my next level.”*

Overall, Believe/Credu II’s holistic approach to skills development looks to have formed a crucial starting point for enabling its ethnic minority women participants to engage and support each other as a precursor to then stepping out into the jobs market by themselves. This appears to have been an important ingredient in developing the skills of project participants to such a level that the project was ultimately able to overachieve against its most important target, namely the number of its participants finding work.

### III. Outcomes 4 to 5 – Better Understanding of the Transition into Work & Closer to the Labour Market



*“I got huge help from SRCDC and [the Believe/Credu II coordinator] to find jobs. I got contacts where I have started training as well [...]. Now I am happy to announce that I got a job in a nursery school, and all the training and guidance [the project provided] helped to get that.”*

Year 3 participant, Believe/Credu II project

The fourth outcome Believe/Credu II sought to help its participants achieve was to support them to gain a better understanding of what happens financially when entering work. In quantitative terms, 44% of project participants participating in the evaluation over the lifetime of the project said they had gained a better understanding of this transition because of the project. This was against an end of project target for its whole three-year lifetime of 25%.

The fifth and final outcome that the project aimed to achieve was to help its participants feel closer to the labour market because of the project. As noted in previous evaluation reports, this could be in relation to any stage of a participant's career journey. For instance, a participant could be seeking their first ever paid work, or they could be seeking a better job than the one they already had, or they could simply be seeking any kind of work experience, including voluntary work, to take themselves closer to their employment goals.

In quantitative terms, 84% of project participants taking part in the project's evaluation processes during its lifetime reported being closer to work because of the project, against an end of project target for the whole three years of 90%. According to project staff, the shortfall was the result of the different cohorts the project worked with in each of its three project years. The year 2 external evaluation report had already recorded staff's observations relating to the lower starting point overall of that year's cohort (compared to the year 1 cohort) in areas such as baseline skill and qualification levels, and consequent higher need levels when it came to skills development. In the view of project staff, this trend then continued in year 3, with participants in the project's final year generally having starting points even further away from the labour market, and from the skills levels needed to find work successfully, than those of the year 2 participants had been. (It is also perhaps worth noting too that the point within each year that a participant joined the project varied, and that many participants in each year's cohort were not necessarily involved with the project from the very beginning of that year. Recruiting in this organic, need-responsive way worked well for this project in the view of staff, but they also felt a future version might want to consider recruiting all participants in one go at the very start to maximise the chances of a successful outcome for every beneficiary.)

All of this notwithstanding, however, having more than four out of every five participants feel closer to the labour market as a result of the project is still a respectably high proportion to have achieved over the lifetime as a project as whole, with, as noted previously, many participants getting jobs as a result of their involvement with the project, including in year 3 the following roles:

- *"Assistant chef."*
- *"Cafe assistant and part-time reception cover."*
- *"Interpreting."*
- *"Midday supervisor."*
- *"Factory worker."*
- *"I got a sewing job as a part of the Believe project."*

As had also been the case in previous years of the project, however, it is the case study evidence collected by the project in year 3 that provides the most complete picture of how a participant could move not just closer to, but also onward within, the labour market because of Believe/Credu II's support. The following example illustrates this process in detail:

### BELIEVE/CREDU II: YEAR 3 CASE STUDY – From Increased Skills to a Career

Saima\* (Believe/Credu II participant, Asian/Asian British background)

*"[...] Believe has played a major role in shaping both my personal and professional journey. [...] I took part in interpreting courses that helped me build confidence and strengthen my communication skills. From there I became more involved by joining the cycling group, facilitating the FAN group and supporting different community activities."*

*"Believe also supported my professional development. I received training [...] which enabled me to teach digital literacy and help others build essential skills. I participated in many International Women's Day events, which inspired me and connected me with strong and supportive women from diverse backgrounds."*

*"One of the most important influences in my journey was the project leader at Believe, who became my mentor while I was studying for [a professional qualification]. Her guidance and encouragement helped me stay focused, grow as a practitioner and believe in my own potential."*

*"Thanks to the opportunities, training and continuous support I received from Believe, my life has changed in a powerful way."*

*"I was able to secure a job [...] where I support people every day, and I also began teaching GCSE students, something I am truly proud of."*

\* Name changed for confidentiality reasons

## IV. Unexpected Outcomes and Key Learning Points



*“Believe has not only helped me build skills – it has helped me build confidence, leadership and a meaningful career. It has empowered me to support my community and be a role model for others.”*

Year 3 participant, Believe/Credu I project

To look finally at those outcomes achieved by Believe/Credu II in its second year that were not part of the group of indicators set for the project at its start, **increased general confidence** (over and above increased skills or an increased belief in the possibility of finding work) remained the main additional outcome reported by participants. The comment from one year 3 evaluation participant that *“[m]y communication level and confidence level increased”* (in response to the question of the most important change was that the project had caused for her) was one example of this in the project’s final year.

As noted earlier in the section on skills as well, **greater social connection** and **sense of community** were further outcomes of the project that some participants identified as the most important change for them arising from the project, even though such aims were not explicitly mentioned in the project’s outputs or outcomes targets.

The external evaluation reports for previous project years had also identified other unexpected, or at least not explicitly anticipated, outcomes for Believe/Credu II participants. These included **improved mental well-being** in general, as well as **greater interest in learning** and (in one particularly specific outcome!) *“becoming a very good cyclist”*.

In terms of key learning points from the project as whole, however, and looking not just at year 3, but over the whole course of Believe/Credu II's three year lifetime, probably the most important seems to have been **the diversity of starting points** that exist among ethnic minority women when it comes to closeness to the labour market, something particularly drawn attention to by project staff and also evident in the project's case studies (for instance, the one that concludes this section below). In relation to this, there is also the question discussed in the previous section of this report of whether it is better to have **formal cohorts in place at the beginning** of the whole project, or at the start of each project year, versus the more **ongoing, organic recruitment model** this project used. There appear to be pros and cons for both models, but the question is an important one that any future iteration of this project should certainly consider, as should any similar work that might take place elsewhere.

The other most important learning point, just as it had been in the year 1 and year 2 external evaluation reports, was the **importance of opportunities for English practice** to Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women in making them feel able to take up work and volunteering roles. Numerous participants brought this up once more in year 3, with comments such as *"I would like to continue learning English"* or *"I am learning to read and write more but need more practice"*.

More opportunities for English practice also came through strongly in the **general suggestions/requests from participants** for any future iteration of the project that might run:

- *"I would like to learn English."*
- *"Looking for more activities that involve young children."*
- *"I would like to practise more on computers in the Digital class."*
- *"I would like [a] driving theory class and more English class[es]."*
- *"More classes."*

Another key learning point echoing across the lifetime of the project was that **one size does not fit all**, and not every participant was able to benefit from the project. As one year 3 participant put it, *"I really like the project but I did not see in my life that much change – before I study, but now I do voluntary [work]"*. Another year 3 participant gave some practical suggestions for how any future iteration of Believe/Credu could be improved, commenting that *"I think the project is really helpful, but I would like to see more practical session[s] and real life examples to support learning"*. Counteracting these views, on the other hand, were the many year 3 participants who saw no reason for change, as exemplified by one participant who fed back in response to the question of whether any changes were needed as follows: *"No, I am thinking they [Believe/Credu II staff] are doing very good at their job and I [am] happy with them."*

Finally, it was once again stressed by both project staff and participants that **unexpected is not the same as accidental** when it comes to Believe/Credu II's outcomes. Throughout the lifetime of the project, its social aspects – and above all the gentle but comprehensive ramp up to training and employment that it provided (by offering initial activities that were not always directly work-related, but then also further activities that were much more directly focused upon work, training or education) – was seen as the key to its success, despite the immense difficulties and barriers its participants could sometimes face.

### BELIEVE/CREDU II: YEAR 3 CASE STUDY – Barriers to Work / Skills Development

Forozan\* (Believe/Credu II participant, Asian/Asian British background)

Forozan came from Afghanistan after her husband was murdered by the Taliban because a close relative of his had worked as an interpreter for the British Army. She had given birth to nine children in Afghanistan, but only six of them were still alive. She had not been allowed to access medical interventions for any of these births in Afghanistan.

Alongside these traumas, Forozan was also struggling with pain in her wrist as a result of surgery that she had been allowed to access, undergone in Afghanistan without the use of any pain relief. She described being held down by a man sitting on her arm while a mobile phone torch was used as light by which to perform the surgery.

Introduced to the Believe/Credu II project, Forozan underwent an ESOL assessment and is now attending English classes twice a week. She is also attending the gym once a week to reduce the high blood pressure she suffers from as a result of the stress she has been through. The Believe/Credu II coordinator helped get her benefits reviewed, and as a result the DWP are reconsidering a recent reduction they had made to her benefits.

In the view of one member of the Believe/Credu II project staff: *“Finding a job is a longer process for some participants, and a trauma informed approach is equally as important as achieving outcomes. [Forozan] is not yet ready to look for work and will need to access some therapeutic support in order to help her move forward.”*

\* Name changed for confidentiality reasons

## V. Conclusions



*“I [have] always [...] benefited from this project and I want it to be continued.”*

Year 3 project participant, Believe/Credu II

Taking the three years of the Believe/Credu II project as a whole, the project has had many successes, ranging from the amount of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women it has been able to support, to the kinds of outcomes it has been able to achieve. Especially for the many participants that it was able to help find work, often for the first time, it was highly effective. In some cases its approach took participants all the way from never having worked to a whole new career.

Not just in its third year, but as documented in the previous external evaluation reports for its first and second years too, the project was able to help its participants develop their skills and understand the transition to work better, meaning they were ultimately able to move closer or actually into the labour market. In doing this, Believe/Credu II has successfully refined a model of delivery based on holistic support, offering one-to-one support where needed, but combining this with a menu of group activities from which each participant can freely choose the combination that best fits their needs. The added value that the project offers in social terms to its participants, the feeling of being part of a diverse community of women all

working towards similar goals, also appears to have been a key part of this success. As one member of staff outlined in a report to SRCDC's board during year 3:

*"[P]articipants regularly stay behind after the Read & Write lesson and participate in the Friends and Neighbours group. Some participants bring their family members into the Centre to learn with them, e.g. [for the] Life In The UK course. Many participants bring in family and friends to access support around welfare rights, advocacy, family play sessions, stay and play, and encourage [them] to join the Believe/Credu programme. This is usually based upon their own positive experience of having been part of the programme."*

They also added the following observation:

*"Some come to discuss welfare reform and benefits cuts, and advocacy letters have been written in support and some participants have been accompanied to the DWP to advocate [on their behalf] and appeal decisions to adjust their benefits. Networks of support are also encouraged through the WhatsApp group, peer learning and mentoring. Participants are valued for their linguistic skills and a strengths-based approach is practised."*

At the same time, as the project's slight shortfalls against its targets for digital skills, volunteering and work placements suggest, any future iteration of the project will still need to evolve further if it is to have the maximum possible impact on the women it seeks to support. As one member of staff observed, "*[s]ome participants are still on a journey to improve their English and [are] therefore not work or volunteer ready*". In particular, the project may need to become even more holistic in order to realise its full potential as a support method for minority ethnic women in Wales. As one member of project staff put it:

*"[W]e have been supporting women to find work, but in doing that we have also identified the need to sometimes adapt our offer to a whole family approach. Whilst our primary aims are to support women to achieve and find jobs [...], in order for them to be able to do this we also need a secondary plan in place sometimes to support the family to enable the mother/woman to attend classes and achieve."*

Their overall conclusion was as follows:

*"So what all this has highlighted [is] that moving forward we may need to adapt to more of a family approach. The challenges that the members of the community face are barriers, and if [these barriers are] not identified, families can spiral into despair and [become] in need of crisis interventions."*

In conclusion to this report therefore, as the external evaluation reports for previous years also noted, according to the logic model (or ‘theory of change’) created by the project at its outset, Believe/Credu II's key aim was *“to help Black, Asian and other ethnic minority women living in South Riverside and neighbouring areas to resolve issues, improve their awareness of employment and other opportunities, and increase their general well-being”*.

This the project has done, and it has done so despite the continued presence of the many wider contextual factors also noted in previous reports that affect the jobs market – cost of living issues, increasing employment precarity, reduced economic growth and so on. Unfortunately, all of these factors still seems as relevant, or indeed even more relevant, at the end of Believe/Credu II's lifetime, as they did at its start.

The same also remains true of the similarly unresolved structural issues noted in earlier reports as arising from ignorance and unfamiliarity with the barriers that ethnic minority women have to face, additional barriers which other groups in Welsh society simply do not have to overcome in quite the same way. In this aspect at least, it feels like some progress has been made during the three years of Believe/Credu II's existence, for example through things like the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan. At the same time, though, it feels like there is still a long way to go for seeking employment in Wales to become a truly level playing field for minority women.

Overall, however, by staying away from an overly narrow focus on job-seeking alone, and by offering additional support to help with the additional barriers that ethnic minority women have to face when it comes to accessing the labour market, Believe/Credu II, along with SRCDC as its familiar and trusted host organisation for ethnic minority communities, has been able to reach minority women that other more conventional employment programmes almost certainly would not have done.

In conclusion, any project that supports ethnic minority women to improve their lives has to recognise the complexity of those lives, and work accordingly. Believe/Credu II's way of working has enjoyed significant success by doing exactly this in its three years. Judging by the feedback of its participants to this evaluation, it should certainly be considered for further funding to continue to develop its unique way of working for the benefit of minority women, not just in Cardiff, but potentially in Wales as a whole.

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