



LOST IN TRANSLATION NO MORE

– EVALUATION REPORT –

WOMEN LEARNING
FOR LIVING PROJECT

–

8th OCTOBER 2012–7th OCTOBER 2015

JUNE 2015

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation

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ABOUT KMEWO

KMEWO (Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation in Britain)

Aims & Mission:

To relieve the distress and suffering of Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African women (referred from now on as KMENA) and their children in necessitous circumstances resident in the UK and in such parts of the world as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

To promote the human rights of KMENA women through providing information, research and organising conferences and seminars on human rights issues.

To promote equality of opportunities of women particularly those within the KMENA communities resident in the UK and elsewhere by providing information and educating the general public on such matters.

KMEWO (Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation in Britain) was established in 1999 as a self-help organization initially to provide help and support to Kurdish women from Iraq, Iran, Eastern Turkey and North Africa who came to UK to flee civil wars, state and gender persecution, domestic violence and honour killings. Women arriving here exchanged one set of problems for another: they were all new to the Western culture and the British way of life, they had very little money on arrival and were not able to find jobs. Their problems were further compounded by their inability to speak English, problems with their immigration status, health and education for their children.

It was in response to these problems that a few dedicated and visionary women with determination and drive formed the Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation (now KMEWO). Initially they started giving advice and Para-counselling and peer support, two days per week, from a small office in Archway. As news of KMEWO's services spread within the community, demand grew and soon they were working five days per week. The opening of the Peckham office follows swiftly thereafter and coincided with the establishment of the Middle Eastern Centre for Women's Rights (MECWR) – a sister organisation with particular interests in Middle Eastern Women's issues. Working alongside MECWR (in a partnership which has lasted over 6 years until 2008) has meant that KMEWO's client group now extends to Arabic speaking women from Middle Eastern and North African countries. KMEWO has been providing one to one advice and information whilst MECWR has been providing networking opportunities, publications, campaigning and raising awareness on HBV (honour-based violence).

The growth in the demand for the services continues unabated and KMEWO strives to collaborate with like-minded organisations to be able to expand its workload and the area of work to include support to all women who need it.

The four main areas of KMEWO's work are:

1. Empowerment of women through:

- **One to one support:** advice and advocacy, interpreting and translation, distribution of information through newsletters, website and national media, crisis intervention, working with MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAS), police and refuges.
- **Dedicated Advice Line:** providing advice, signposting and referrals on welfare benefits, family law, immigration, citizenship, health and education to name a few.
- **Education and training:** volunteering and employment support, provision of a wide range of regular training delivered from various 'women only' environments within the community, awareness raising sessions specifically on FGM, Honour Based Violence (HBV), forced marriages, workshops and seminars.
- **Involvement:** through participation as Management Committee members, in focus groups and as volunteers in campaigning and lobbying for better changes in policies directly affecting them; amongst other things, KMEWO provides up to date information via its quarterly Kurdish Newsletter, Arabic-English language magazine (Al-Nisa) and multilingual website

2. Assisting and informing mainstream service providers and policy makers:

- by providing and producing information and training tools on Forced Marriages, Female Genital Mutilation and Honour Based Violence. In particular, our DVD 'For Honour and Love' and 3 Training Manuals on HBV, FGM and forced marriages have been used in London by several local authorities and nationally to train and inform staff, volunteers and others who may be involved in providing services to women.
- by sitting on various HBV and Domestic Violence (DV) working groups within the Home Office, Islington and Southwark local authorities and other boroughs, Metropolitan Police,
- by responding to consultations on domestic violence, honour-based violence, FGM refugee women and other issues.
- by organising conferences and seminars for professionals raising awareness of cultural and religious backgrounds of HBV and women's rights issues.

3. Spearheading campaigning and lobbying movements for positive changes in policies:

In August 2014 KMEWO organised a Parliamentary Meeting on Honour Killings hosted by Jeremy Corbyn MP and attended by over 100 people: this resulted in an Early Day motion which was put forward to MPs to sign and support. KMEWO also led on the European campaign 'Justice for Dunya' – demanding justice for a 15 year old child-bride from Iraqi Kurdistan who was brutally killed by her polygamous husband.

In 2006, following from the honour killing of Banaz Mahmoud, KMEWO co-led the Combating Honour-Based Violence Forum, a coalition of women's organisations in conjunction with key players such as the police, social services, health authorities and politicians.

4. Contributing towards establishing cohesive communities:

by collaborating with a wide range of organisations to deliver projects and bring communities together. We have delivered projects in partnership with Sunnyside Gardening Project, British Red Cross, Turkish Speaking Women's Group (IMECE), Middle Eastern Centre for Women's Rights (MECWR), Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre, Muslim Welfare House and Finsbury Park Mosque.

Background to the Big Lottery Project

KMEWO developed the idea for the 'Learning for Living Project' out of the successes of the 'Women Volunteering Project' funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation (2009-2012) and the 'Up-skilling Women Project' funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (2010-2012). Through these two projects we worked with hundreds of isolated and vulnerable women who usually suffer from multiple layers of violence and oppression because of DV, HTP and many cultural and religious barriers which prevent them from asserting their rights and stand up to violent relationships. We built solid working relationships with several mosques and religious groups including one church for Ethiopian women and gained the trust of the women we worked with; at the end of the projects, we were still faced with continuous demands from women requesting a variety of educational courses and training to develop their skills. In addition, the feedback from women service users of our advice and support work throughout years clearly indicated that those women who moved on from violent relationships with KMEWO's support now wanted to access better education and life opportunities. Some women had aspirations that, on the surface, sounded more modest: to build their confidence to use mainstream services such as health services e.g. GPs, libraries, public transports more independently and yet, for them these small steps were huge leaps towards personal freedom.

When outlining activities, outcomes and aims of the Learning for Living project we were therefore informed directly by KMEWO's service users and the needs expressed by the women who were going to use its services in the future.

In 2012 **KMEWO** was awarded funding from the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities programme to help and support Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African women who experience domestic violence and other human rights abuse. The project aims to offer women opportunities to learn English and essential life skills to improve their confidence, resilience and ability to navigate systems and to improve access to new opportunities for themselves and their children through participation in education, volunteering and employment.

Big Lottery Project's rationale

The Big Lottery Community Access to Lifelong Learning programme has funded the development and running of community based learning hubs that have provided new learning opportunities for people in disadvantaged communities across the UK.

These learning hubs are based in a wide range of locations such as supplementary and primary schools, community centres, religious institutions: all these locations have been identified as places where people who would not normally access more formal learning settings, would gather. There are many reasons why learners, and in particular women from disadvantaged backgrounds do not feel able to utilise mainstream educational sites: lack of knowledge of opportunities available; lack of confidence in making enquiries to find out more about courses; lack of language skills and cultural or religious reasons. The Big Lottery has a long track record of supporting community learning: quantitative and qualitative evaluation of its funded projects helps it assess the impact of the various projects in the promotion of lifelong learning, what works and what should be changed in the future and inform decisions on what projects to be funded in future. In particular, this evaluation analyses the project's impact in engaging learners, track their progression and identify outcomes for themselves (gaining access to information, improved confidence and improved life skills) and their families. The following case study illustrates the reality of many women who are caught between old traditions and the need to adapt to a modern world: for many it was too easy to be 'hidden away' and live a parallel life cut off from mainstream activities even in a city like London:

Horiya* came to England from Morocco 35 years ago when her husband secured a job at the Moroccan Embassy in London. She brought up 5 children here but despite this never learnt to speak English: when asked why, she couldn't offer a real explanation just mentioning vaguely that 'there was always something holding me back'. Now in her 60s and in ill health, she relies heavily on one of her daughters to attend doctors' appointments and to keep her company. She finds herself isolated and with no friends because 'my husband never wanted me to have friends and always told me not to trust people': the only place she would visit regularly was the local Mosque. When Horiya's daughter found out about the KMEWO courses available at the Mosque, she suggested to her mother that should attend some of the ESOL classes to improve her language skills and make the most of simple things such as enjoy TV programmes, use public transport independently and being able to take a more active role in the management of her health. Horiya embraced the chance to meet with others and developed a keen interest in attending her classes. She eventually integrated well although she was very shy and did not at first mingle with other students easily.

**not her real name*

1. Introduction by Sawsan Salim, KMEWO Director

Since its beginning in 2012, the 'Learning for Living Project' funded by the Big Lottery has contributed significantly to KMEWO's mission: to help Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African women with issues related to human rights abuse, to build and develop their confidence, to access the welfare benefit systems and to achieve essential employability skills. The project far exceeded our expectations and, through close collaboration with many stakeholders, we have been able to achieve great results. We hope this evaluation has been able to capture and highlight some of these results but more importantly we have tried to give women who took part a voice and report their experiences as they have chosen to share them with us.

The need is still great and we are committed to support our clients in every way although we recognise that they have to find their strength within to change difficult situations and tackle problems which may seem insurmountable: we can offer our help, share our experiences and facilitate access to the right information.

This project would not have been possible without our funders' generous support and my gratitude and appreciation goes to them in the first instance. I also gratefully acknowledge our many partners' and stakeholders' contributions and the dedication of KMEWO's staff and volunteers. Because of continuing and raising demand on our services, KMEWO is committed to find ways to increase the support we offer our clients.

Lastly, thank you to the women who took part and continue to inspire us: we hope they can look forward to a brighter future.

Sawsan Salim
KMEWO's Director

Forewords:

Gona Saed, Project Manager

Great achievements for KMEWO, peer organisations and our communities in London! over the past 3 years, we have fulfilled our promise to have a positive impact on women's lives and building their confidence.

More women have accessed this project than we expected and progressed to further education, volunteering and employment: our work is placed at the heart of the community and has reached those who are hardest to reach.

Women's stories have corroborated our concerns that large numbers of women fall in the gaps between the mainstream services and community representation we started to fill that gap. We have created a safe, comfortable, culturally sensitive and engaging learning environment for women at places exactly where they wanted and felt they belonged but we also instigated changes by pushing their boundaries so that they experience the tastes of integration and being part of the wider society, of learning and achieving.

Many had of course already started that journey and took great steps but were still facing other barriers and needed extra support which we were able to supply 686 women participated in 95 activities (as of April 2015), the majority of working age. Women who used our services did not only learn English or IT or extra employability skills but also socialised and had fun with other women, made friends , started to build a support network , accessed **KMEWO's** other support services, got to know women from other communities and learned about different cultures and customs.

Some found a stronger political voice and participated in demonstrations and groups advocating for changes in policies. Thinking about all this, I feel very proud to be part of the KMEWO team that made all this happen and I am very thankful to all those who supported us on the way.

I look forward to continuing our good work confident in the knowledge that it is appreciated and needed and that we can build on the foundations we have laid over the past 3 years.

Gona Saed

Learning for Living Project Manager

Zekiye Kartal, Development Worker

As the project's Development Worker, I am involved with the logistics of organising the courses, liaise with tutors and recruit women. Working with our clients, I have learnt a lot about their every day's difficulties in making independent decisions on things affecting them and their families' lives; over the last 3 years I had many personal conversations with our learners and have realised how committed they are to change this and improve. Once women start attending the courses, they quickly realise that their own education has a big impact on the way they handle the management of the household and the children's upbringing: as their confidence improves so does the ability to deal with challenges they are confronted with.

The women we work with need to be eased into learning: this does not always come natural to them if education was not high on their family's agenda. A crucial part of my work therefore has been to motivate and encourage them and provide smooth access to our activities. I am glad I had the opportunity to support the women participating in this project but I am aware there are many others out there which we have not reached yet. I would like to thank all the women who attended our courses for the trust they continue to show KMEWO: to see their confidence and ability grow is very rewarding.

Of course, this success would not have been possible without the excellent cooperation of our teaching partners, learning sites and many other stakeholders that helped us along the way. Particular thanks must go to our Director Sawsan Salim – without her vision this project would have never been started. Last but not least I thank Gona Saed for her continued support and teamwork.

Zekiye Kartal
Learning for Living Development Worker

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Introduction

This project HAS made a difference: it has reached, supported and in many cases transformed the lives of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of women by becoming the gate opener for them to access health, education and social systems, training, volunteering and employment opportunities.

The majority of women from Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African communities who were engaged in the project came with layers of issues: immigration problems, lack of confidence, cultural and religious barriers, domestic and honour based violence, alienation and isolation from wider society. They had to deal with a historic baggage of controlling, gender-related discrimination which they consciously wished to address: they needed the right opportunity at the right time at the right place and this project provided just that.

Building on KMEWO many years' experience, this project has developed the right approach to connect effectively with hundreds of women: this was achieved by working with the target community, building trust, collaborating with women, faith, refugees and BAMER groups.

This report:

- describes the profile of the women accessing the project.
- outlines their challenges and activities they undertook.
- highlights their learning and achievements through case studies and examples.
- shows what worked well in the project's approach.
- lists the lessons learnt and subsequent recommendation for improvements.
- accentuates the added value achieved by women, KMEWO and other partners and stakeholder.

2.2 Project's Key Findings

- **Need for continuity**

There is a continuing need for community based learning provisions which facilitate learning opportunities for those who would otherwise not have the skills or confidence to access mainstream further education: 38% of participants attended more than one activity

- **Flexible and sensitive provisions**

Flexibility of course delivery is essential to access – different venues, times, types of course are all important factors in facilitating women's attendance: it is crucial to fit their learning around their family commitments and that it takes place in familiar surroundings (such as places of worship or community centres) where women feel secure

- **Need to support isolated women**

Women who have lived in the UK for many years continue to be ignored and forgotten:

because of barriers such as lack of language skills and cultural differences, they fall in the gaps of mainstream service. They often only access a basic level of essential and primary services due to their lack of knowledge of the UK system: KMEWO aims to bridge this gap.

- **Improved awareness of women's needs for life skills**

Women from disadvantaged backgrounds are aware of their need for improved life skills (language, IT, confidence skills) and the impact these have on their every-day lives; they are increasingly under pressure to get to grips with technology to access online services in an ever-faster moving system and many are stunned by this new and alien world.

- **Evidence of increased confidence amongst women after project intervention**

Women's confidence improve dramatically in line with their achievements: about 80% of participants reported feeling more confident and motivated to move on to further learning, volunteering or employment.

- **Recognition of social and cultural barriers**

It is a fact that many women still face opposition from their families or communities to attend classes in mixed sex settings such as colleges or they are unwilling to do so because of their strict upbringing: it is important to provide 'safe' opportunities for learning.

- **Need for holistic, individual support for women**

Women present with a multi-layer of problems ranging from oppression to exploitation and being under the control of partners or the cultural groups they belong: a flexible approach is needed to make a positive and effective difference, such as offering long-term support.

- **Effectiveness and achievements of the project**

Given the right opportunities, most women flourish and their inner strength surfaces: they are eager to make progress and move on and draw inspiration from others around them. They are able to stand up for themselves and with encouragement are happy to embrace new technologies and find information for themselves.

- **Need to provide progression tools for women to enter employment**

Following from the attendance to courses women demanded opportunities for work based skills such as sewing, catering, child care, and teaching assistant as these are the perceived as professions which fit well with family life and for which they feel more qualified/experienced.

- **Improved accessibility**

Women can use the project as a gateway to access a plethora of services which suit their individual needs: advice and support on domestic violence issues, welfare benefits, educational system and others.

- **Need for widening participation opportunities**

By increasing **KMEWO's** capacity to deliver to new venues pan London such as women's refuges.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Introduction

The **Women Learning for Living Project** enables KMEWO to deliver a range of services in direct response to the expressed needs of its service users and so far has focused on 4 clear outcomes:

Outcome 1 – Women develop a better understanding of the work, social and educational environment and can make informed choices.

Outcome 2 – Women develop improved ability to access information, mainstream support and to navigate a range of service provision.

Outcome 3 – Women improve their confidence and employability skills.

Outcome 4 – More survivors of domestic violence claim their welfare benefit entitlement.

The aim of the project has been to provide practical opportunities for the women to access courses and additional support, sometimes for the first time, in safe environments such as schools, mosques, community centres. It is a well-documented fact that the keys to integration in a new country are language skills, orientation to the country (health, welfare, education) and, more increasingly, life skills such as computer skills which allow access to a wealth of information and employability skills which prepare women for volunteering or employment: this project aimed at providing activities to develop such skills. In addition, many of KMEWO's beneficiaries lack confidence, suffer from isolation, are unaware of the learning opportunities and welfare benefits they can apply for: these factors contribute to their feelings of helplessness and the project sought to help them find the support to break free from the situation they find themselves in.

3.2 Outline of Users and Target Clients

Since 1999 KMEWO has been actively working with female victims of domestic violence and other forms of human rights abuses within the Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African communities.

The aim of this project has been to support these women to learn English and other essential life skills to improve their confidence, resilience and ability to navigate systems to improve access to new opportunities in education, volunteering and employment for themselves and their children.

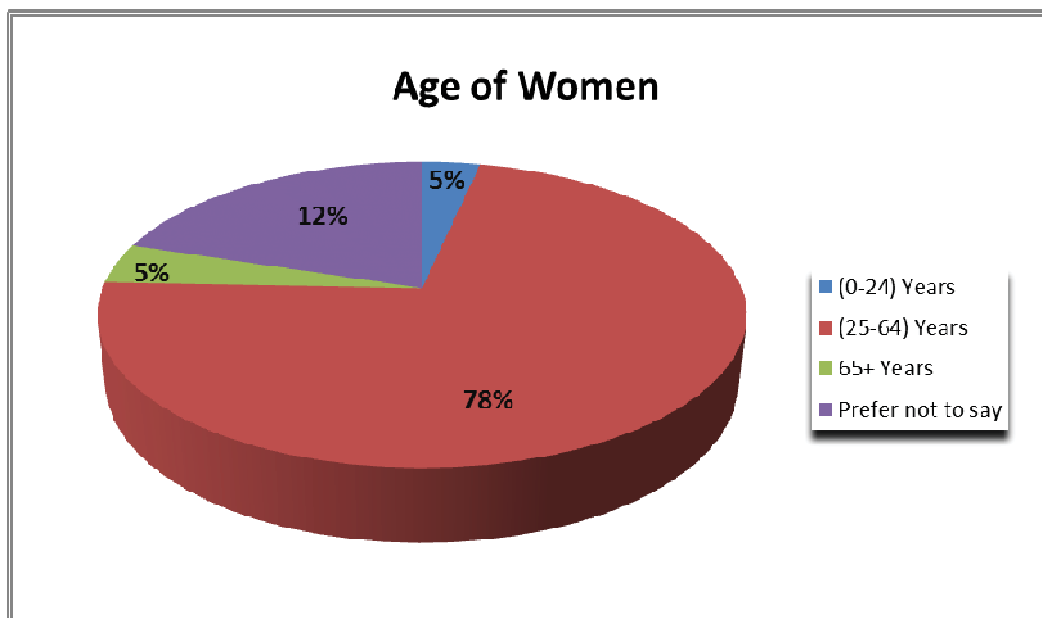
The women and girls to whom this Project has been targeted face a number of issues which significantly impede them from achieving their potential, integrate within the wider communities and become less isolated: in many cases they are struggling to understand an environment and culture vastly different to those they were used to and have difficulties in keeping up with their children's life experiences.

When added to their poor command of the English language, years of religious and political persecution, domestic violence or having to deal with controlling behaviour by their husbands, threat of honour killings, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, they have understandably lost their confidence and require advice and support to help them change their situation. Within these communities there is a high level of illiteracy and unemployment,

understandably lost their confidence and require advice and support to help them change their situation. Within these communities there is a high level of illiteracy and unemployment, poor housing and a sense of alienation particularly amongst women and girls. These factors all give rise to a breakdown of family unit which also impact adversely on the children. Because of their difficulties in interacting with statutory and mainstream agencies, many women are 'hidden' and are therefore deprived of the benefits and support to which they are entitled.

Women and girls in those situations were motivated to take part in activities on offer for various reasons: many of them were no longer '*full-time mothers only*'. When they were so they could not afford to pay for childcare and had to wait for all their children to start full-time education in order to have some time for themselves during the day and they now started to think about their own personal development and the next phase of their lives. Others had previous work experience or established careers in their country of origin and taking part in the project was an opportunity to appraise their options and decide how to move forward. Others took the offer of practical help on matters such as interpreting their children's school reports, consulting health practitioners, applying for benefits, helping their children in decisions affecting their future such as choosing a school. Often women had never experienced attending a job interview, going to see a doctor or attending a parent's meeting on their own and needed to work on their confidence levels to be able to tackle these life experiences; for most attending classes also gave them the additional advantage of socialising with others and forging new friendships.

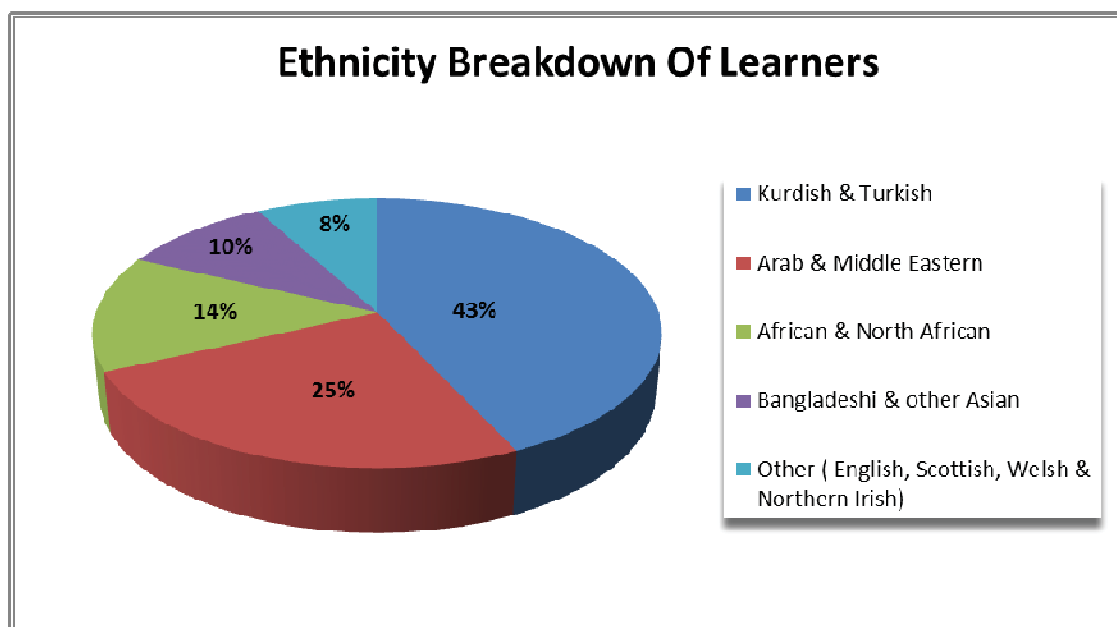
There was a small age discrepancy amongst participants which meant that some women were at different stages of their lives in planning either a future career or a return to work after raising a family; however the majority of participants were of working age.



Age of women	Number
(0-24) Years	34
(25-64) Years	536
65+ Years	34
Prefer not to say	82

To date (April 2015):

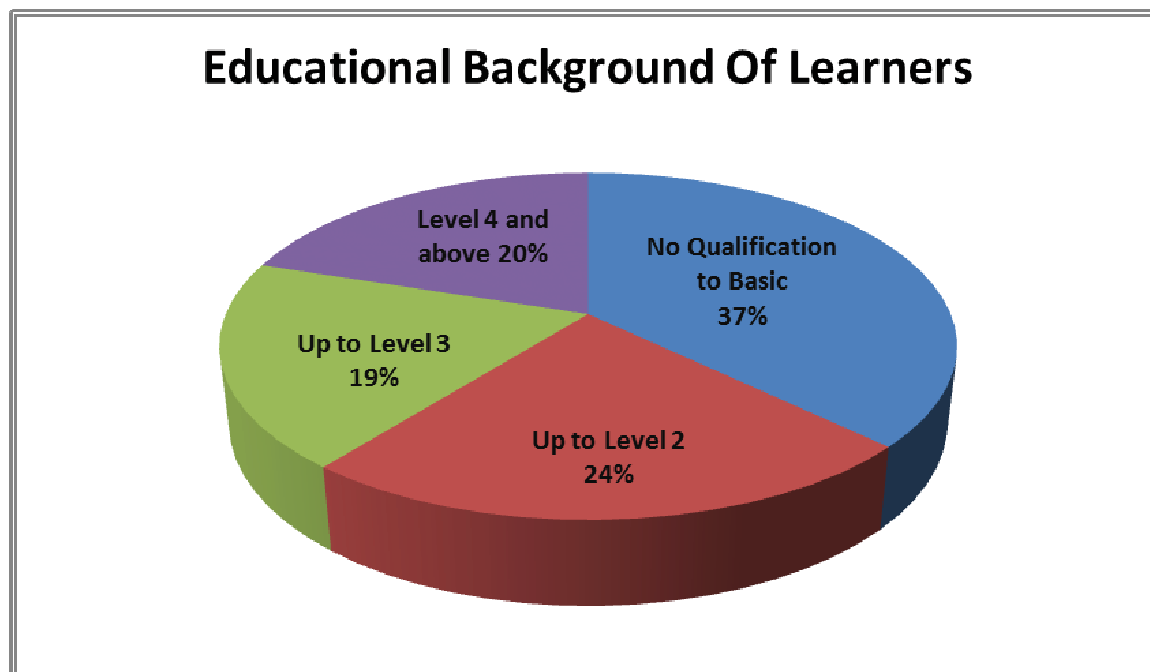
1. Participating women's ethnic backgrounds were as follows:



Ethnicity Breakdown Of Learners	No. of learners
Kurdish & Turkish	295
Arab & Middle Eastern	171
African , North African	96
Bangladeshi & other Asian	69
Other (English, Scottish, Welsh & Northern Irish, Eastern European)	55

The majority of participants were women from the target group, of Kurdish, Turkish, Arab, North African origins; however it is worth noting that the project succeeded in attracting 18% from other backgrounds thus contributing to dialogues between women who would otherwise not have met.

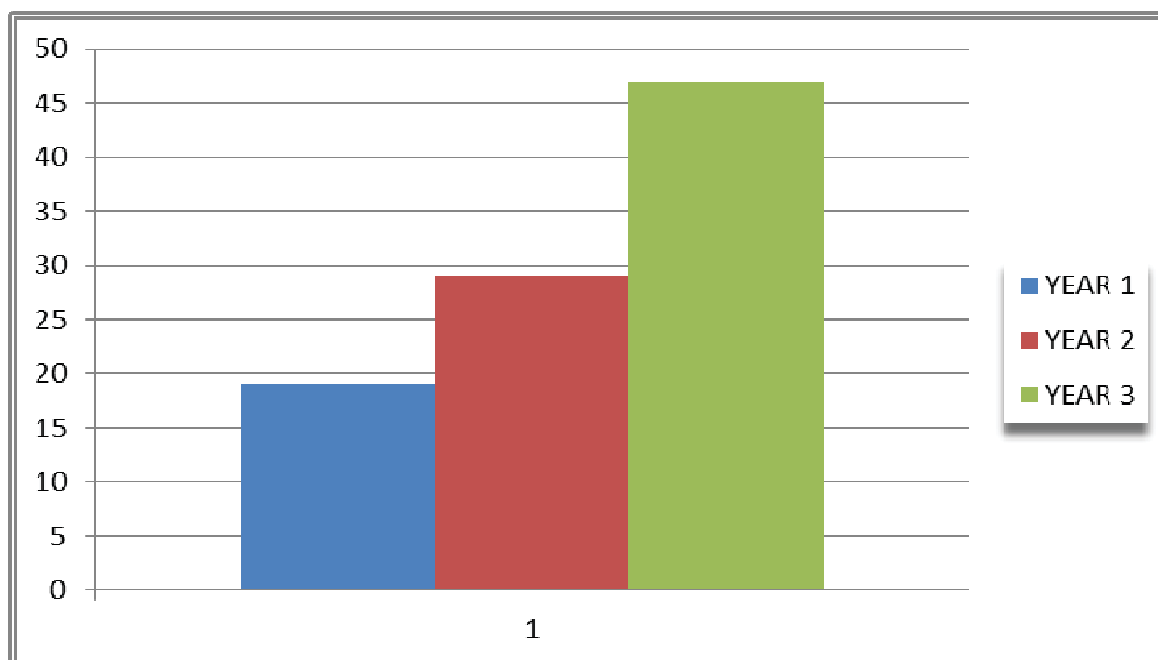
2. There was a fairly even split of educational backgrounds covering all ranges of the spectrum: 38.6% of women were either illiterate or had received very basic education in their countries of origin, 20.8% of participants had degrees and masters from either the UK or abroad. Almost half (44.5%) had received some formal education at equivalent Level 2/3.



Educational background of learners	Number
No Qualification to Basic	254
Up to Level 2	164
Up to Level 3	130
Level 4 and above	138

3. 93 participants had experienced domestic violence and sought advice on their benefits entitlement. The number of women in this category increased steadily year on year (Year 1= 17 ; Year 2= 29; Year 3 =47) as the project became better known to women and other agencies working with them, therefore referrals increased.

NUMBER OF WOMEN ACCESSING THE PROJECT WHO HAVE REPORTED EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



YEAR	Number of DV victims
1	17
2	29
3	47

4. Amongst all participants, a total of 24 community languages were used: 43% of women spoke Kurdish, 30% Arabic, 12% Turkish, 7% Bengali, 8% other languages*. This gives an idea of the complexity of needs of participants from such varied backgrounds but all women were welcomed to the classes by other participants and quickly integrated.

5. Other languages spoken included several African languages (Lingala, Tigrinya), Asian languages (Tamil, Pushto), and Eastern European languages (Latvian, Georgian, and Romanian) amongst others.

4. EVALUATION

4.1 Methodology

In order to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, a combination of methods were used which best suited the service users of the project. Whenever possible, participants who had expressed an interest in getting involved in the project were engaged in the gathering and analysis of some of the data and they received appropriate training on confidentiality, methodology, interviewing techniques, data analysis. KMEWO was thus able to offer valuable volunteering opportunities and service users were able to employ existing skills and develop new ones.

Methods used included:

- **Data desk analysis**

This provided background project information and quantitative data to measure predicted outcomes and outputs against actuals achieved.

- **Collection and analysis of feedback and course evaluation forms**

All participants were asked to complete feedback and evaluation form at the end of each course; those clients whose English skills were poor were supported in this when possible although not all participants agreed to this. 790 feedback forms were collected (some clients attended more than one course or activity).

- **Informal feedback**

We recognise that for some participants it was difficult to express in writing their thoughts and ideas and therefore we tried to capture comments made by the students attending courses and events through conversations and discussions facilitated by KMEWO staff and volunteers.

- **Focus groups**

5 focus groups took place in a variety of settings; with the help of a facilitator or two, participants were encouraged to express their opinions and perceptions about the support and training they had received throughout the life of the project. Facilitators were not involved in the delivery of training to ensure impartiality and to give participants the opportunity to talk freely; facilitators spoke community languages when necessary to ensure there were no language barriers.

- **Telephone interviews/tracking**

68 telephone interviews took place whilst tracking participants' progression; of these, 20 women were interviewed face to face over the lifetime of the project.

These interviews were conducted to include as many participants as possible; especially those who may have found difficult to find the time to attend focus groups. When necessary, **KMEWO** arranged for an interviewer who spoke the same language of the participant to conduct the interview to allow maximum freedom of expression. who spoke the same language of the participant to conduct the interview to allow maximum freedom of expression.

- **Case Studies**

Each quarter, at least one client was selected as case study; 20 participants were interviewed to give an insight into their background, current situation and future aspirations. All were asked for, and gave permission to use their stories and photos where available. Some of the case studies and many of their comments have been included in this evaluation.

- **Tutors interviews**

Most of the tutors who delivered the training courses have been involved with KMEWO and its service users for many years and have therefore developed a thorough understanding of the participants' needs: some tutors were interviewed to capture their knowledge and experience.

These are some of their comments:

"...the strength of the organisation seems to be its ability to deal with a wide range of women and issues. They can communicate with everyone from university-educated... professional women to illiterate...housewives, including victims of domestic violence. [KMEWO] work on a wide range of issues, from FGM to getting housewives out of the house and into ESOL classes"

ESOL Tutor

"Most of the ladies I met in the lessons are so keen to learn how to use a PC not only for fun, as I thought at the beginning, but for finding a real job and feel active members of society"

IT Tutor

"When it comes to job satisfaction it is difficult to beat the feeling that you are actually making a difference to women's lives by enabling them to free their thoughts and giving them a platform to express themselves: you can see that some of them are bursting to share their experiences. We all learn from each other"

Confidence Building/Employability Skills Tutor

It is worth noting that the evaluator was also involved in the delivery of Confidence Building, Employability Skills and IT courses and has, therefore, first-hand experience of the project and she has drawn on this experience to reflect and analyse it. Great care has been taken to ensure she was not involved in, or participated in focus groups and interviews of participants who have attended her classes to ensure all service users gave their honest opinion of the courses.

- **Feedback from other stakeholders**

Community coordinators were asked to give their comments on their working relationship with KMEWO. See page 45 – Collaboration with other agencies.

4.2 Monitoring project impact and effectiveness

The programme successfully recruited and exceeded the number of participants outlined in the proposal, especially when it recruited directly through institutions (such as primary schools) and supplementary schools run by the Kurdish community.

When collaborating with other external organisations and relying on them for recruitment however (community centres, children's centres) this was not always successful and responses varied.

So far (April 15) the project has delivered in excess of **95 activities** (courses, workshops, outings) with more than **1084 beneficiaries** (this includes women attending more than one activity. The actual number of individual women signed up to the project up to April 2015 is 686 with 6 more months to run (target for full project is 700).

Number of women* achieving specific indicators as a result of attending activities:

INDICATORS ACHIEVED	YEAR 1 to 3 (up to April 15) ACTUAL	PROJECT TARGET
Number of women who can answer multiple choice questions on health and education issues	215	150
Number of women who have attended alone a parents' meeting at their children's school	203	210
Number of women volunteering, attending children's schools activities and starting to look for paid employment	226	250
Number of women who began reading at least one daily paper and listen to radio news	419	555
Number taking part in role plays about accessing NHS services	239	270
Number who have started asking important questions about work and social & educational systems in UK	317	390
Number who have successfully completed mock interviews and job assessment tests	151	150
Number of women with new confidence and knowledge to complete benefits entitlement forms	149	100
Number of women who completed assessments to determine their confidence through oral reports, written assignments and portfolios	185	210
Number of women with basic understanding of what benefits might be available to them	202	240
Number of women accessing information about different benefit, legal and educational matters	212	225

* As of April 2015 – the project has still 6 months to run so it is predicted that most, if not all targets will be achieved and exceeded by then.

The project offered a variety of courses as set out in the application. See table below and Appendix C for more details of activities, venues and number of participants.

ACTIVITY	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3 To (Apr15)
ESOL training courses at E1, 2, 3	14	14	10
Employability Courses	2	3	2
Literacy (L1 and L2)	3	4	2
Confidence Building Courses	1	3	1
IT courses including Word and Excel	3	3	4
Workshops*	6	6	5
Group outings to libraries, museums and other places of interest **	3	2	4
Total for each year	32	35	28
Total for the reporting period			95

* The workshops covered topics chosen by the women and reflecting their personal interests and need for more information: welfare benefits entitlement and reforms, parenting skills, personal budgeting, FGM.

** Group outings provided excellent opportunities for women to practice in real life situations a variety of confidence building activities: women visited their local libraries, signed up to become members for the first time and borrow books, DVDs and other learning material as well as being introduced to the IT facilities of the library which they can access free of charge. Other outings included museums with ESOL learning materials; cafés where they practised ordering food and coffee; using the tube where they planned their journeys using maps and were told about the different tickets available for purchase.

4.3 Achievements and learning experiences

- The enthusiasm of participants came through loud and clear and was proved by the high attendance rates of courses. In fact one of the main aim of the project was to improve the confidence of women participants and, judging from all feedback collected, this was achieved across the board. It is always difficult to quantify such outcomes and they can really only be captured through direct contact with the women and by observing seemingly small shifts in their behaviour. One of the tutors wrote:

"The beauty of community-run...classes is that they serve a variety of purposes. Once women commit themselves to attending a class, they don't just learn English. They learn about British culture, customs and holidays. They learn how to manage themselves independently and deal with the G.P., their children's schools, the Council, etc. They come out of isolation, meet women from other backgrounds, develop friendships, go on trips to new places and generally open up their lives. This is what has happened in the KMEWO's classes. Some women have been lifted out of depression by coming to class, meeting new people and learning English. Women who were illiterate or had only attended primary school in their native country had serious doubts about their ability to learn anything new, but found out that they could learn and learn well. This has transformed some women's lives. A lot of the women also have personal problems. In the class and with the support of the women from KMEWO, they can get help with their problems. Sometimes it helps just to be with other women, sharing stories and experiences. KMEWO deals with all ages, from very young women to pensioners. They all mix together in the classes and become family to each other."

ESOL Tutor

- Referrals to KMEWO welfare benefit and domestic violence advice services have increased sharply within this project. As part of their introduction to the courses, **KMEWO's** services are described to women and information material distributed: through word of mouth women refer each other and often approach KMEWO's staff seeking advice.
 - Several women remain active members of KMEWO after completing courses: they carry out outreach and publicise KMEWO's services to women. The project has increased the human resources capacity of KMEWO although it is also putting a strain on members of staff who need to support and train the volunteers. There have been many examples of positive outcomes reflecting newly found confidence in women to seek help and address issues affecting them directly.
-

Case studies

Nabila* attended classes in 2013 at Muslim Welfare House; she has been a regular visitor to KMEWO's office since, sometimes escorting other women who need help and advice and helping with translation and peer advocacy: her confidence has clearly grown over the past couple of years and she is researching courses in Community Interpreting with the view to obtain a qualification.

Nadia* reported to KMEWO that many women had a negative perception of social services present in their local mosque; with the support of KMEWO staff Nadia put together a questionnaire in English and Arabic asking 36 women about their experiences with social services. The results were fed by KMEWO to Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) subgroup at Islington Council which in turn fed back to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Child Protection working groups. As a result, mainstream services are more aware of the specific needs of different communities and offer more appropriate and tailored services.

Rihana* started attending ESOL classes, quickly completed E2 and E3 then moved on to IT, Word and Excel and finally completed an Employability Course. Rihana started volunteering with KMEWO almost from the beginning and contributed significantly to admin work in the office and in particular to this evaluation: she analysed a huge amount of data then designed and created the charts used throughout this report. She also helped in the organisation of the Graduation Event which took place in June 2015 and was attended by over 50 students of the Learning for Living project. Rihana says that KMEWO has become her "*second family*" as she does not have a family of her own here in the UK. She continues to attend KMEWO's office twice weekly to gain more admin experience and hopes to find a job soon.

* *Not their real names*

- Women spoke about the courses they are attending to others in different community centres and mosques, so other centres approached KMEWO for courses and activities through hearing from local people: this raised KMEWO's profile and networking opportunities though sometimes KMEWO was not able to provide courses due to limited capacity.

KMEWO was able for the first time to discuss issues of domestic violence and Honour Based Violence with women at the mosque and supplementary schools. Providing LFL activities allowed us to build the trust of these communities and eventually to discuss sensitive issues such as FGM and Honour Based Violence through information sessions

giving out many of the home office campaigning publications on combating forced marriages and FGM which otherwise would not have reached its intended audience.

- By employing sessional ESOL and IT teaching and crèche workers from mostly Refugee or BME background, the project has contributed to enhanced employment opportunities for many women. The project employed amongst others: 1 Greek IT teacher, 1 Indian- African ESOL teacher, 1 Arabic speaking teacher, 5 Kurdish, Bangladeshi and Arabic crèche workers. Being taught by women of similar backgrounds inspires women to ask questions about their careers and to emulate them as they are an example of freedom and self-fulfilment.

4.4 What worked well:

Participants' feedback clearly showed that women acknowledge their varying needs to upskill and appreciate the opportunity to be able to do so in a safe environment:

- all classes were offered to women only.
- classes took place in venues which were convenient in location and timing to ensure women were able to drop off and collect their children from school.
- when necessary a crèche worker was engaged to look after the participants' children.
- classes generally followed school term timing however some started at different times in the year to meet demand.

"When I found out about your courses.... the best thing is I didn't have to wait for months to start attending like in the [local] college. I could start in about 2 weeks!"

- access to courses were open to all women, whether established for many years in the UK, newly arrived with uncertain immigration status or even with no recourse to public funds: **KMEWO** was able to offer opportunities to all.
- Many women, whether newly arrived or established for a number of years in UK, have ESOL needs. For some this was the first opportunity ever to learn in a semi-formal environment and they were unable to read or write in their own language, let alone in English: they were understandably very nervous about joining a class as they did not know what to expect. Moreover, they lacked confidence in their learning abilities and needed to be constantly and sensitively reassured.

"I tried to enrol at the local college but their enrolment form was so difficult... I took it away to complete but never went back. At KMEWO it was easy and someone was there to help me"

- Others were fearful of institutions because they were still in the process of regularising their immigration status and did not want to divulge the private information asked for when enrolling, or showing their passport. KMEWO staff and tutors were able to allay their fears:

“The tutor did not ask to see my passport and I could talk to her about [my need for] immigration advice. They told me I could call the office to make an appointment to see specialists who could help me, and they did”

- **KMEWO’s** organisational structure and the experiences and language skills of both Project Manager and Development Worker meant that the organisation was very well positioned to provide maximum understanding of the client group and gain their trust quickly. In addition KMEWO was able to rely on a pool of experienced tutors in tune with the needs of this vulnerable group and who were able to make them feel at ease right from the beginning thus improving their learning.
- Women with high educational background needed some support to quickly find their way around the UK system and move on to employment and/or further training; some needed signposting to agencies such as NARIC to start the process of accreditation of prior learning from their countries of origin. It was very important for some women to be able to pick up again their career of choice which in many cases was interrupted because of difficult family situations or because they had to flee their countries.
- The social aspect of the project was a crucial element: many women live an isolated and sheltered life with little or no opportunity to partake in activities outside the home; their lives are centred on the needs of their children and close family and the choice of doing something for themselves is often taken away from them. Attending classes gave them the perfect opportunity to regain some control over their lives and build the confidence to continue to do so.

Women felt a great sense of pride and achievement in obtaining their Certificates of Attendance and this was clear during the Graduation Events which took place regularly.

KMEWO Director, Sawsan Salim (second from left) with students from the Learning from Living project, June 2015.



790 feedback sheets were collected from students at the end of their courses / outings and the overwhelming majority (85%) expressed satisfaction with their activities (very satisfied or satisfied); significantly, 80.4% of women stated that they felt their confidence had improved and 86% of women who attended ESOL and IT courses felt they would like to attend more classes to improve their skills further.

4.5 Lessons learnt and recommendations

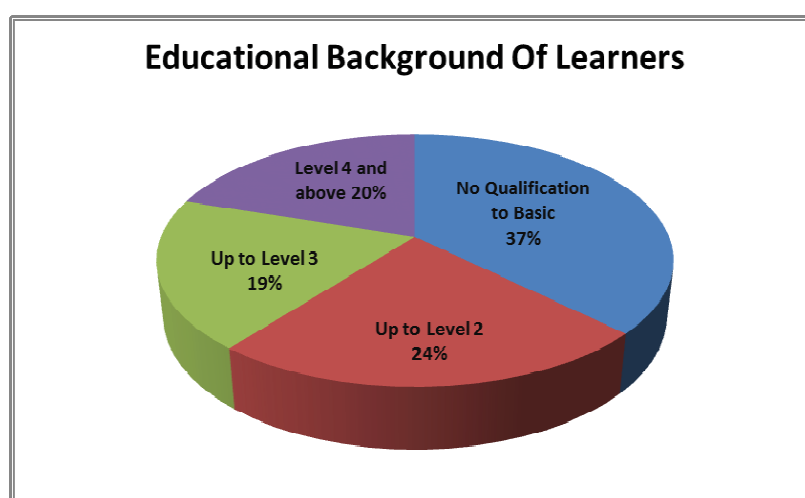
1. Addressing the different needs of participants:

KMEWO continues to receive requests to provide its services and courses by women who attended previously and by other organisations: the demand is still very much in evidence and is fuelled by women's desire to learn and improve. Inevitably perhaps for such a large group of women there were huge discrepancies in the needs of participants to the project.

On the one hand, for many women attending classes was a new experience as they had little or no formal previous education.

On the other hand many other participants were highly educated, having gained degrees in various disciplines (accountancy, science, literature etc.) either in their countries of origin or in the UK, but still needed support in developing their confidence, plan for the future and access employment.

The majority of women, however, fell in the largest middle ground, having perhaps a good enough level of life skills (English, Maths, IT) to enable them to successfully apply for jobs or volunteering but lacking the experience and confidence to do so (see table on page 34). Clearly working with women covering all ranges of abilities posed huge operational and practical challenges. The Development Worker in particular was approached by students after classes and had to address additional queries regarding further education, volunteering opportunities, personal health, Job Centre notifications and personal issues (family and children, pregnancies, problems in relationships...) and this put at times additional pressures on her in terms of workload management. The need for more individual attention was recognised and addressed also in IT courses where more participants needed a lot of 1-2-1 teaching: as a result, IT classes from the 3rd year of the project had a smaller number of students which proved beneficial. It is important that in future projects the target number of women to be recruited is realistic to ensure enough time is allocated to follow up their learning and academic development.



To make the project financially worthwhile, all classes offered had to attract a minimum number of participants: this number was set at 10 however it was sometimes decided to run classes with as little as 6 participants if they showed commitment. The necessity to reach a minimum number of participants meant it was not always possible to ensure homogeneity of abilities and this had an adverse effect in class management with tutors trying to keep students of very mixed ability interested and engaged. Inevitably students on both ends of the spectrum experienced some frustration and this impacted on their learning and caused some learners to drop out of the courses. This was especially clear in the ESOL classes with a number of students taking part in focus groups and interviews commenting on this:

***KMEWO** should separate beginners and improvers in the English courses as for now the beginners hold the class back – that is not fair”*

“ I want to feel that I am progressing, that I move up to a more difficult class; if new students join later in the course sometime the tutor has to start again”

KMEWO was aware of this difficulty however it took the view that being able to offer classes in convenient, women-only environment justified the trade-off sacrifice. ESOL and IT tutors conducted assessments at the beginning of the courses to assess learners’ levels and when possible split the learners in two different level classes. This however presented tutors with an additional challenge: women were asked to attend class on a designated day but they were still keen to come along to the other class because they wanted more learning hours and perhaps because they wanted to join their friends. Tutors did not feel they could refuse them but this inevitably gave rise to some confusion. In a particular venue (Kurdish Advice Centre), the tutor volunteered to run additional classes to help those who needed more support but the students did not attend as they still preferred the larger class – possibly because of the social aspect of learning. It is worth noting that community centres and such likes have an ‘open door’ policy which means that women could freely turn up to events and join in activities.

Recommendation 1: “Women learning for Living Project” should move into its Phase 2 and seeks funding for it, because the demand for services is on-going. Lessons and recommendations from Phase 1 of the project should be incorporated and implemented in any Phase 2 of the project but also cater for different type of demands; besides providing classes at local venues for fewer students to give more individual attention, KMEWO should bring them together in a separate, common venue for added support. If students are invited to attend classes on a different site this would help in keeping the various levels of learning separate (see also Recommendation 4 below).

Although students benefitted greatly from interaction with others in the class (indeed many commented that the social aspect of attending classes was highly appreciated) for some at the beginning of their journeys their need for longer, more intense and bespoke support was evident. We were able to offer some students (not all because of lack of resources) at least one 1-2-1 session to check on their progress on the course and help them plan for future goals.

Students highly valued the opportunity to talk to tutors privately and opened up about additional problems they may have been facing.

Recommendation 2: it would be very beneficial for ALL participants to access more frequent one to one support (such as mentoring/coaching service) to help them to really develop and make that leap to a higher level. For example some students needed extra support in preparing for examinations and encouragement to think about their personal and professional development.

One of the challenges reported by the Project Manager and Development Worker is the lack of boundaries demonstrated by some of the students. This can be explained by the fact that many women are unfamiliar with concepts usually developed outside their home environment, i.e. time keeping, keeping confidentiality, using negotiation skills. These are social and professional skills vital to those who wish to take up employment yet they take time to develop. Although participants are provided at the start of each course with information sheets setting out expectations and responsibilities, it seems that this message does not come across strongly enough.

Recommendation 3: KMEWO should introduce a 'Learning Agreement/Contract' to be signed by the student outlining what she should expect from the courses and her role and responsibility whilst attending classes thus helping draw boundaries and maximising commitment.

2. Offering specialist courses in response to diverse and expressed needs:

As a result of attending classes, women started asking important questions about working and volunteering in the UK – sometimes for the first time – and gaining qualifications in the UK.

Many women would benefit from attendance to intensive and longer classes in ESOL (Entry level 1 to 3) and IT (beginners).

Those with no qualifications or only overseas qualifications were acutely aware of the fact that they needed to gain accredited qualifications and expressed a wish to do so, especially those qualifications directly related to employment: Customer Service, Childcare, Food Hygiene.

There was a distinctive group of students who, after attending ESOL/IT/Employability classes were clearly ready to access work-related courses.

Recommendation 4: KMEWO should offer different 'learning packages' suitable to the various learning levels of students.

- 1. One package should offer ESOL/IT at basic and beginners levels (Introduction, Entry 1, 2, 3) plus life/functional skills; KMEWO should also consider offering longer and more structured ESOL, IT and Numeracy courses up to Adult Community Learning level.**
 - 2. KMEWO should consider becoming an accredited centre, sub-centre and or develop appropriate formal relationships with accrediting centres and deliver courses leading to qualifications in skills such as Child Care, Teaching Assistant, Sewing, Catering, Customer Service, etc.**
 - 3. Before accessing accredited courses such as those outlined in (2) above, students could be offered a term of English support, Employability, Word and Excel courses which would give them access to courses of their choice**
-

3. Analysing and re-evaluating collaborations with other stakeholders:

Recruitment to the courses and support from stakeholders (i.e. other organisations) proved sometimes unreliable but once women started the courses attendance rates were very high with a completion rate of courses of over 85%.

Recommendation 5: KMEWO should consider drawing up a “delivery contract” to be agreed with stakeholders wishing to offer their clients the opportunity to attend courses and events. The contract will state clearly roles and responsibilities of each party in respect of enrolment, outreach, recruitment, feedback and encouraging attendance of learners as well as follow-up of clients, provision of venues, refreshments and equipment, administration and support available to tutors delivering the courses.

4. Allocating enough administrative support to run project efficiently:

The project was allocated a full-time Development Worker [job share] however no additional resources were available for additional admin support to reflect the added numbers of venues and enrolled women engaged in more courses than planned because of continuous demand. In addition, KMEWO offered a number of volunteering opportunities to some of the participants who had expressed a keen interest in gaining work experience and although this provided some additional resources, many volunteers actually needed to be followed closely, trained and supervised by other members of staff, thus adding to their workload.

Recommendation 6: to ensure future courses have provision for appropriate administrative support to guarantee smooth delivery. This should include provisions for follow-up, gathering and recording of information, analysis of feedbacks and continuous evaluation, servicing courses including supporting tutors with preparation of learning materials and liaising with other organisations involved in delivery, dealing with financial matters relating to venues, tutors etc, tracking. At present some of these functions are fulfilled by the Development Worker but additional admin support will allow her to dedicate more time to support students.

5. Recruiting and development of volunteers:

It became very early in the project that one of the most valuable services that KMEWO could offer was to arrange for volunteering/work experience opportunities for participants who were extremely keen to gain practical experience in a safe setting. KMEWO took it upon itself to provide as many opportunities as possible both in its office and by placing women with other organisations.

Some of the volunteers proved ‘job-ready’ and were able to carry on tasks with minimal supervision or intervention; others needed a more hands-on approach and constant reassurance as well as basic training for example in the use of computers and other office equipment. When classes took place in primary schools, several mothers were able to participate in the organisation of school activities such as Winter and Spring Fairs with the support of the school’s Parents Liaison Officers.

Recommendation 7: given that KMEWO attracted over 24 volunteers, it should consider appointing a ‘Volunteers Coordinator’ able to engage and support participants and improve further volunteering opportunities, or at least allocate specific responsibilities to a member of staff who would be responsible for developing this aspect of the work.

4.6 Added value

Women open up to others from different backgrounds

Running courses in 'open venues' such as primary schools made them accessible to other women who did not necessarily belong to the target ethnic group but who nevertheless were disadvantaged: lone parents, long-term unemployed, those isolated or lacking confidence. The courses were the ideal opportunity for women of different backgrounds to get to know each other and start breaking down barriers of diffidence by participating in shared activities: the women often found that they had more in common than initially thought. For example, all were concerned with the welfare of their children and were able to exchange information about additional services available to them. Some women enjoyed the interaction with others outside their usual circles of friendship and asked for opportunities to volunteer in their children's schools to continue to socialise. One of the women attending a Confidence Building course in Queen's Park Primary School was delighted to be involved in the preparation of the children's Christmas party.

Case Study: Sahra A.



Sahra came to the UK from Somalia on her own as a young woman about 16 years ago: here she met her husband and had 4 children, now aged between 6 and 15. Since getting married she has spent her time looking after the family and had little time to pursue other interests. Last year her youngest child started school full-time and Sahra wasted no time in enrolling in an ESOL class: she recognises her need to improve her language skills and confidence as she had, so far, little opportunity to communicate with the other mothers of her children's school friends.

Sahra therefore decided to attend the Confidence Building course offered at Queen's Park School: she is very sociable and appreciated the prospect of interacting with others. Her goals were to practice her English in a group context, use computers, find out about volunteering, write a CV, make friends with other mothers. Sahra participated enthusiastically in group discussions exploring and acknowledging her existing skills and together we completed her CV. On the last day Sahra gave a good presentation on her family history telling us about life in Somalia growing up in a numerous family and enjoying stories told by her parents. The school's Parents Support Worker heard of her desire to volunteer in the school and offered the opportunity to help organise events starting straight away with the Christmas party! Sahra found the course a very positive experience and hopes to build on this – she was very happy that she had been able to give a presentation as she had felt a bit apprehensive about it but with encouragement from the group she accomplished it and felt a great sense of achievement. **(Dec. 14)**

Women gain the knowledge and confidence to deal with their financial affairs

KMEWO's clients may suddenly find themselves in charge of the family finances because of changes in circumstances but do not have the skills to deal with them successfully; money management is usually left to their husbands and women are often in the dark about budgets and, more importantly, about their welfare benefits entitlement. When women flee from domestic violence they suddenly need to deal with benefits agencies, local council, their children's schools, utilities providers and they can find themselves in difficulties very quickly. In recognition of this problem, KMEWO offered additional workshops in Financial Management and Budgeting which were extremely popular. Any new Phase of the project would continue to offer this type of support.

KMEWO can contribute to local initiatives to get people into work

KMEWO is feeding the findings of the Learning for Living project and its work within the community into the Employment Commission in Islington, an independent body set up by Islington Council in 2014 to help tackle issues of work lessens and unemployment and make recommendations on how more residents can be supported into work; KMEWO also gave a presentation about Muslim women's needs and gaps in employability opportunities.

KMEWO is an active member of Finsbury Park Women's Network focusing on ESOL provision and Employability, contributing to the development of employability opportunities for refugees through Islington Refugee Forum.

Learning for Living's Project Manager was one of the Key Speaker at Islington Refugee Forum conference, "Barriers to employment for Refugee communities" held in June 2015 highlighting achievements of women from the LfL project and sharing good practice on how to support women to progress towards employment. Also in June 2015, she attended the 'Celebration and Progression' event for Learning Unlimited Working Men's College in Camden where she also shared lessons learned on the LfL project.

KMEWO's reputation has been enhanced and it was able to build its capacity further by benefitting from the project's success.

KMEWO's work is recognised more in the community, with other funders and commissioners. As a result of providing a number of activities through the Learning for Living project in the borough of Westminster, KMEWO became a member of Kurdish Women Support panel to provide expert advice to Social Service, Child Protection Units and other agencies providing service to support Kurdish community.

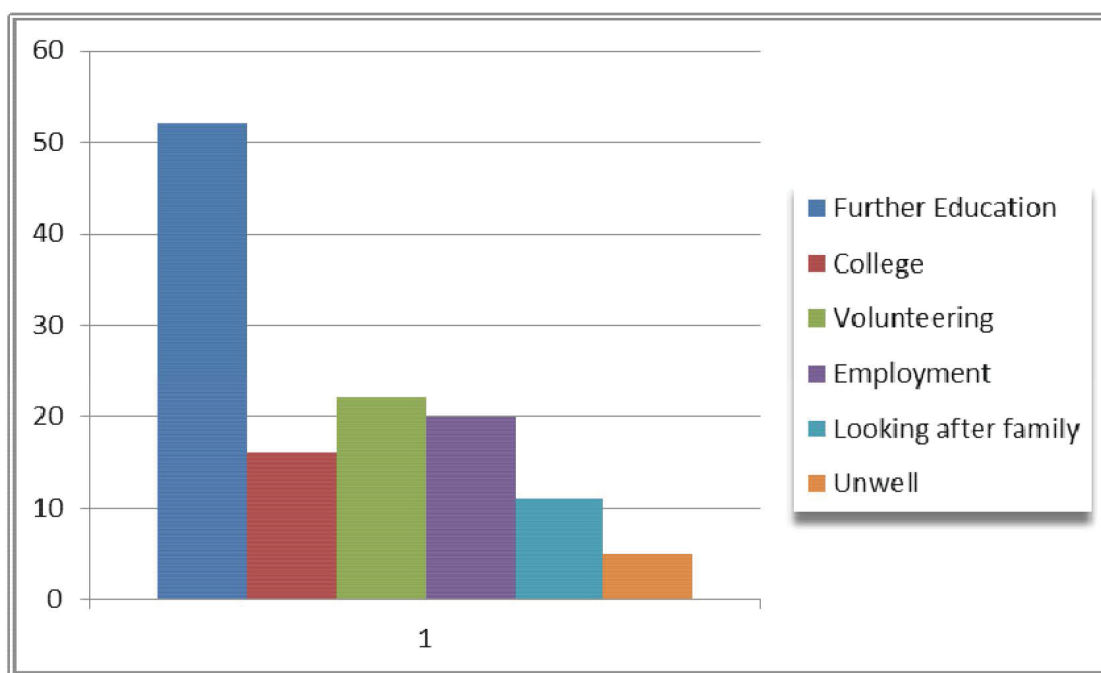
As part of its sustainment policy, KMEWO has to date secured some funding for grants which will allow it to expand the work started through the Learning for Living project and in particular a grant from the City Bridge Trust will allow us to strengthen the management of our organisation.

KMEWO has also secured funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation to provide specific support and advice to women experiencing domestic violence who want to assert their rights and rebuild a better life for themselves and their children: this would complement the work we would like to continue with Phase 2 of the Learning for Living. KMEWO aims to provide a holistic service starting from essential safety and risk management from violence to better education, employment and/ or volunteering opportunities to promote independency for women.

The support will be provided for 6-12 months to more than 50 women a year to help them in their transition into independent living. Some of the most vulnerable women from LfL project will benefit from this new project.

4.7 Tracking

Tracking was an important aspect of the project and plans were in place for this to be carried out throughout the life of the project although limited admin resources meant clients' outcomes were not always recorded formally. KMEWO has kept in touch with many participants and in March/April 15, a 10% sample of all participants (68 women) were contacted again and their progression recorded – half of those tracked had attended 2 or more classes. Tracking was carried out with the support of 2 volunteers who were involved in the telephone interviews and recording of answers and both proved very enthusiastic and committed to completing the tasks assigned to them. The following chart illustrates the destinations of the 68 students (some students reported more than one destination, i.e. combined studying or volunteering with looking after their families):



During tracking, feedback about the courses was also offered by women: this was very positive especially about the teachers, venue, class environment (*“friendly, warm”*), subjects on offer & the support of KMEWO staff. Learners from Employability, Word & Excel courses were particularly pleased about the courses and felt well prepared for job searches and job interviews: they told us how they experienced a newly found confidence and felt empowered to look for work. ***20 of the 68 women tracked in March/April 2015 took up part-time or full-time employment: this very positive outcome is a testament to the impact that the project had on the participants.***

These are some of their comments gathered during tracking:

"The IT course helped me to find a job; I am much more confident now"

"I liked the teacher, I liked the conversations with the other women; I have learnt a lot about myself"

"I feel more confident in writing in English; [classes] have helped me to improve my English for work"

"I liked the teacher; I liked the venue in my local Library, there's more time for the students there"

"Very useful for job searches; mock interviews helped me to become more confident and to know what to expect"

"Thank you for [signposting me to] the Community Interpreting Course: it is just what I was looking for because that's what I do when I volunteer for my community. I will complete Level 1 in June and move up to Level 2 in September!"

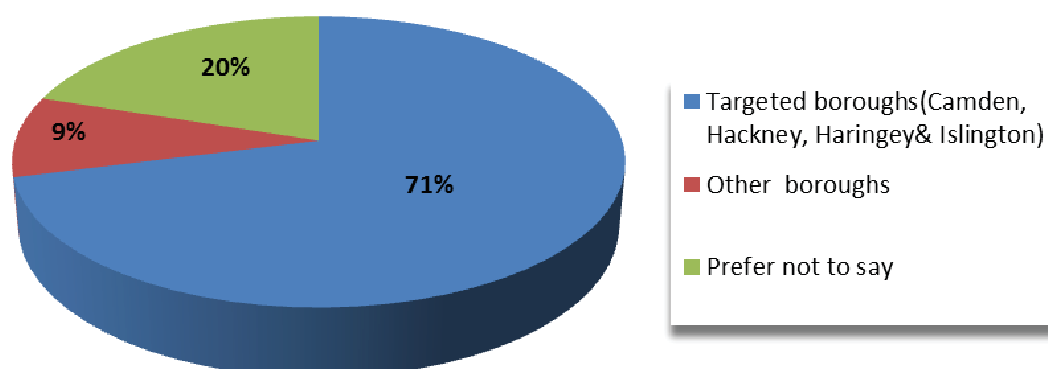
"I was asked to work occasionally as self-employed but I was unsure [what the implications were]....it is much clearer now"

4.8 Collaboration with other agencies

KMEWO collaborated with numerous agencies (see full list in Appendix B) and courses were delivered in 20 different venues: some were identified by KMEWO as appropriate because of the type of women who frequented them; others approached KMEWO and asked for courses to be offered to their clients. The project initially proposed delivery in 4 venues in Islington and surrounding boroughs but this was extended because of demands. KMEWO could not fulfil every request for courses because of limited resources: for example requests from centres further away (such as Croydon) were turned down.

Target boroughs were Islington, Haringey, Camden and Hackney and 71% of women lived there; courses were also offered in Westminster, Southwark and Enfield. At least 9 % of women lived in boroughs outside the targeted ones and a significant percentage (20 %) did not state where they lived (see chart below), however some women are unaware of the boroughs in which they live due to their low literacy level and recognition of the link between their post code and the boroughs. These almost illiterate women are frequent visitors to the Finsbury Park Mosque and St. Mellitus Church in Islington and Kurdish Advice Centre (KAC) in Haringey therefore we can assume that they live within the vicinity of these centres and in these boroughs.

Breakdown of participants by Boroughs



Boroughs		Number of participants
Target boroughs		485 (71 %)
Camden	28 (6%)	
Hackney	48 (10%)	
Haringey	143 (30%)	
Islington	266 (54%)	
Other boroughs		64 (9 %)
Did not say		137 (20 %)
TOTAL		686

Some agencies were very proactive in recruitment (e.g. Kurdish Advice centre in Haringey) and offered good quality facilities (e.g. N4 library in Finsbury Park) but others, after making the initial contact, expected KMEWO to take a more active role in publicising the courses and contacting the clients, sometimes with mixed results. This had an impact on the administration of the project and put a strain on the limited resources available. All Community Coordinators however acknowledged KMEWO's staff effort in the organisation and delivery of the courses:

[The courses had a]Very positive impact on the women who attended them; they definitely benefited from these courses. [The Mosque also had a]more positive impact from the women toward it as now they consider it not just place for prayer but a community centre.

Finsbury Park Mosque

"The KMEWO staff was keen to listen to what the need was in our school. They attended regularly to support the school staff and the mothers involved. They were particularly understanding of the challenges within our setting and helped to support us with these. At no point did I feel that the project was giving me extra work, rather enhancing the school experience for our families.

The KMEWO staff communicated well and any issues were always resolved with their support and diligence. I think [the courses] had a really positive impact [on the women]. They were proud of themselves and enjoyed learning. For many, having a crèche made it possible..., it brought families that would not necessarily have the opportunity to mix, get to know each other and learn together.

The mothers were also proud to show their children how they were learning. [We would definitely like to work with KMEWO again] KMEWO is able to reach often vulnerable and hidden members of the community. Their flexibility and commitment to providing the best and most accommodating service possible makes it an excellent resource for our school community."

Copenhagen Primary School, Islington

"I really enjoyed working with the organization [KMEWO]. They are very supporting, helpful and respectful to busy school timetable. All ladies who worked with me were very helpful, kind and flexible. I really enjoyed working with them. I appreciate the flexibility and the respectful manner towards my busy role in school and the school life.

The mothers who attended course left very happy that they learnt new skills and seemed very proud when received their certificates. I am hoping that KMEWO returns to our school in September. The courses are extremely helpful for our parents and work really well by providing parents with good space to learn."

Newington Green Primary School, Islington

5. CONCLUSION

The positive impact of The Big Lottery Learning for Living Project on disadvantaged women has come across loud and clear during this evaluation.

The project has touched the lives of 686 women and their families and for many this has been a first step towards a more productive and fulfilling life.

Many women came to the project offering a variety of challenges (cultural, education, emotional) and KMEWO had to gain their trust before introducing to them the idea of learning, whilst acknowledging and responding to the needs of women who needed a different kind of support, much more practical and targeted, to help them move closer to their goals.

It is important to recognise the real barriers still present in the lives of women from Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African backgrounds. A holistic approach to learning seems to work best with this group of learners who may present with 'hidden' problems who can prevent learning: KMEWO is in the unique position to be able to provide specific support on matters such as FGM, domestic violence, legal and welfare benefits matters whilst educating and empowering women.

The right staff, with the right set of skills coupled with approachability and professionalism has been crucial to the successful delivery of the programme and the fact that outcomes and targets have been met and in many cases exceeded.

This evaluation has highlighted lessons to be learnt to ensure forthcoming activities have an even bigger impact on their intended beneficiaries but has also wanted to focus on the many positive outcomes and make recommendations for future projects.

June 2015

Appendix A - Acknowledgements

KMEWO would like to gratefully acknowledge and thank:

- The Big Lottery for funding this project and in particular all the Grants Officers who supported us over the past 3 years
- All participants for their valuable contributions – for sharing their life experiences, ideas and comments with us whilst attending the courses and taking part in this evaluation
- All managers, co-ordinators, family support workers, facilitators, community and religious leaders and volunteers for their involvement in the project and its evaluation
- All staff, tutors, sessional workers and others at KMEWO and partner organisations who contributed to the project's success with their hard work and dedication, particularly:

Learning for Living Project Staff:

Sawsan Salim, Director
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Jane Colley
Dirin Hama Karim
Monika Schwartz
Marina Korompili
Ghada Elkady

Volunteers:

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Yasmin Snouci	Soma Rahim
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Majda Soghayroon	Suzan Essah
Siel Devos	Naceria Avirouche
Shafika Hallaz	Sherin Fadullha
Huda Al Busmait	Yasemin Koc Koca
Yolanda Jose	Dilek Koykilar
Claudia Hernandez	Sahar Bernhard
Ezgi N Akarsu	Kum Foowg Let
Sussan Hassan	
Safiya Cumar Muhudin	
Mizda Ahmed Mohammed	
Nadia Moneir ElAnna	

Crèche/ Child minders:

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Parvin Omer
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Partner organisations:

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Nafsiyat (Monika Schwartz)
Blackfriars Advice Centre
(Elena Felices)
Imece (Feride Kumbasar)
Citizen Advice Bureau (Islington)
Citizen Advice Bureau (Hammersmith and Fulham)

APPENDIX B - List of settings where the Learning for Living project was delivered:

Faith Groups:

Muslim Welfare House - Islington
Finsbury Park Mosque –Islington
St. Mellitus Church – Islington

Primary Schools:

Newington Green Primary School – Islington
Copenhagen Primary School – Islington
Queen’s Park Primary School – Westminster
All Souls Primary School – Camden

Supplementary Schools:

Daban Kurdish Supplementary School - Haringey
Goizha Supplementary School – Westminster
Zagros Supplementary School – Islington
Azady Supplementary School – Southwark

Community Centres:

Kurdish Advice Centre (KAC) – Haringey
The Abbey Centre - Westminster
Turkish Education Group – Islington
The Parent House – Islington

Women Only Groups / Services:

Jannaty (Finfuture) – Islington
Nafsiyat - Islington
IMECE – Islington

Local Library:

N4 Library Finsbury - Islington

Parul Monnan
Mariola Reron
Mohammed Kozbar
Hawa Achmet Abdullah
Abdulla Mohammed
Majida Sayam
Siham Kharif
Nick Tranmer
Moya Kopas
Teena Phillips
Shawnem Baram
Duda Boric

Engin Durmaz
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Kezban Hussein
Musterfa Hussein
Tina Saedi
Talal Ahmed
Shawbo Muhamaed
Abed Moftizadeh
Safiya Mohammed
Suzan Essah
Abed Moftizadeh
Haja Osman Ibrahim

Ahmed Khellouf
Toufik Kacini
Sadiq Yusuf
Runak Aziz
Frishta Maroof
Phayza Fudlalla
Sega Habtom
Wezenet Haile
Feride Bayan
Ahu Sukur
Chinar Mohammed
Pat Tulloch
Gaby Antonutto-Foi

Thank you to all those who facilitated the use of the above venues especially:

Appendix C - Activities information list

	Start Date	End Date	Activity Name	Venue Name	Participant's Count
1.	09/09/2012	11/12/2012	Esol Pre Entry	Nafsiyat /Fin Future	15
2.	08/10/2012	10/12/2012	Esol E1	Muslim Welfare House	13
3.	09/10/2012	11/12/2012	Esol E1 Pre Entry	St. Mellitus Church	13
4.	11/10/2012	13/12/2012	Esol E2	Muslim Welfare House	14
5.	03/12/2012	03/12/2012	Outing- N4 Library	Muslim Welfare House	13
6.	06/12/2012	06/12/2012	Workshop- Benefits workshop	Muslim Welfare House	15
7.	08/01/2013	23/04/2013	ESOL E1	Nafsiyat /Fin Future	13
8.	14/01/2013	18/03/2013	ESOL conversation	Muslim Welfare House	12
9.	14/01/2013	16/04/2013	ESOL E1	St. Mellitus Church	16
10.	17/01/2013	14/03/2013	ESOL E1	Muslim Welfare House	18
11.	12/02/2013	12/02/2013	Outing - Café/ English practice	St. Mellitus Church	13
12.	28/02/2013	16/05/2013	IT Basic	Muslim Welfare House	14
13.	06/03/2013	15/05/2013	IT Basic	Turkish Education Group	11
14.	07/03/2013	25/04/2013	ESOL E1	Turkish Education Group	11
15.	19/03/2013	19/03/2013	Workshop- Housing Benefit	Newington Green Primary School	25
16.	20/03/2013	20/03/2013	Workshop- Confidence Building	Jannaty Women's Group	19
17.	11/04/2013	16/07/2013	ESOL E2	Muslim Welfare House	12
18.	11/04/2013	16/07/2013	Literacy L2	Muslim Welfare House	12
19.	14/04/2013	15/07/2013	ESOL E3	Newington Green Primary School	12
20.	23/04/2013	25/06/2013	Literacy L1	St. Mellitus Church	13
21.	02/05/2013	11/07/2013	Word & Excel	Newington Green Primary School	14
22.	02/05/2013	04/07/2013	Literacy L1	Turkish Education Group	11
23.	02/05/2013	04/07/2013	ESOL E1	Turkish Education Group	11
24.	09/05/2013	09/05/2013	Outing- CLR James library	Muslim Welfare House	10
25.	16/05/2013	18/07/2013	ESOL E3	Muslim Welfare House	16
26.	05/06/2013	05/06/2013	Workshop- welfare Benefit	Newington Green Primary School	10
27.	18/06/2013	22/10/2013	Confidence Building	Muslim Welfare House	10
28.	04/07/2013	04/07/2013	Workshop - Benefits	Turkish Education Group	9
29.	10/07/2013	10/07/2013	workshop - Parenting	Newington Green Primary School	7
30.	16/09/2013	14/10/2013	Employability	Newington Green Primary School	13
31.	12/09/2013	07/11/2013	ESOL E2	Muslim Welfare House	11
32.	05/10/2013	09/11/2013	Employability	Goizha Supplementary School	13
33.	04/10/2013	13/12/2013	IT Basic Level	The Parents House	13
34.	01/10/2013	12/12/2013	ESOL Conversation	Muslim Welfare House	13
35.	09/10/2013	18/12/2013	ESOL Entry 2	Fitzrovia Community Centre	9
36.	17/10/2013	17/10/2013	Outing to Jeffry Museum	Turkish Education Group	12
37.	31/10/2013	31/10/2013	Training Financial Budgeting	Caxton House	12
38.	05/11/2013	16/12/2013	ESOL Entry 1	Muslim Welfare House	13
39.	14/11/2013	19/12/2013	ESOL E3	Muslim Welfare House	9
40.	22/11/2013	22/11/2013	Outing- Archway Library	Muslim Welfare House	9
41.	01/12/2013	01/12/2013	Workshop parenting skills	Zagros Kurdish Supplementary school	13

42.	20/01/2014	02/04/2014	ESOL Entry 1	Copenhagen Primary school	11
43.	20/01/2014	31/03/2014	ESOL Entry 1	Muslim Welfare House	9
44.	20/01/2014	31/03/2014	Literacy Basic	Muslim Welfare House	9
45.	20/01/2014	31/03/2014	ESOL Conversation	Muslim Welfare House	13
46.	23/01/2014	27/03/2014	ESOL Entry 2	Turkish Education Group	11
47.	25/01/2014	23/03/2014	Word & Excel	Goizha Kurdish Supplementary School	13
48.	26/01/2014	06/04/2014	Literacy L2	Zagros Kurdish Supplementary School	14
49.	06/02/2014	03/04/2014	ESOL Entry 2	Muslim Welfare House	11
50.	11/02/2014	18/03/2014	Word & Excel	Newington Green Primary School	10
51.	14/03/2014	18/04/2014	Confidence Building	Jannaty Women's Group (Fin Future)	9
52.	14/03/2014	18/04/2014	Employability	Jannaty Women's Group (Fin Future)	7
53.	23/04/2014	26/06/2014	Esol Entry 2	Copenhagen Primary school	14
54.	24/04/2014	26/06/2014	Esol Entry 2	Finsbury Park Mosque	10
55.	24/04/2014	26/06/2014	Literacy L1	Finsbury Park Mosque	10
56.	28/04/2014	30/06/2014	Esol Entry 1	Muslim Welfare House	9
67.	28/04/2014	30/06/2014	Literacy Basic	Muslim Welfare House	9
58.	28/04/2014	30/06/2014	Esol Conversation	Muslim Welfare House	8
59.	01/05/2014	12/07/2014	Literacy Advanced Level	Azady Kurdish Supplementary School	10
60.	02/05/2014	23/05/2014	Confidence Building - Effective Parenting Skills	Jannaty Women's Group (Fin Future)	9
61.	03/05/2014	03/05/2014	Workshop FGM	Azadi Kurdish Supplementary School	12
62.	04/05/2014	04/05/2014	Workshop FGM	Zagros Kurdish Supplementary school	13
63.	10/05/2014	10/05/2014	Workshop FGM	Goizha Kurdish Supplementary school	16
64.	11/05/2014	22/06/2014	Esol Entry 3	Zagros Kurdish Supplementary School	14
65.	17/05/2014	21/06/2014	Confidence Building - Focus on Office management	Goizha Kurdish Supplementary School	11
66.	19/05/2014	09/06/2014	Employability 1-1	Muslim Welfare House	4
67.	25/06/2014	25/06/2014	Workshop Welfare Reform	Copenhagen Primary school	12
68.	24/09/2014	12/11/2014	Literacy L1	Finsbury Park Mosque	12
69.	25/09/2014	11/12/2014	IT Basic Level	Finsbury Park Mosque	11
70.	29/09/2014	15/12/2014	Esol Conversation	Muslim Welfare House	15
71.	30/09/2014	12/11/2014	Esol Entry 1	Komkar	8
72.	06/10/2014	01/12/2014	IT Basic Level	Komkar	19
73.	16/10/2014	11/12/2014	Esol Entry 1	Muslim Welfare House	9
74.	23/10/2014	23/10/2014	Workshop Welfare Benefit	Finsbury Park Mosque	13
75.	10/11/2014	15/12/2014	Confidence Building	Queens Park Primary School	7
76.	12/11/2014	12/11/2014	Outing to Wood Green Library	KOMKAR	10
77.	14/11/2014	13/03/2015	Esol Entry 3	Jannaty Women's Group (Fin Future)	7
78.	16/11/2014	16/11/2014	FGM Workshop	Komkar	9
79.	18/11/2014	17/12/2014	Literacy L1	Komkar	15
80.	19/11/2014	10/12/2014	Esol Entry 2	Finsbury Park Mosque	12
81.	02/12/2014	02/12/2014	Workshop parenting skills	Newington Green primary school	7
82.	09/12/2014	09/12/2014	Workshop FGM	Newington Green Primary School	7

83.	06/01/2015	11/02/2015	Esol Entry 2	Komkar	10
84.	12/01/2015	23/03/2015	Esol Conversation	Muslim Welfare House	14
85.	17/01/2015	14/02/2015	Employability	Daban Kurdish Supplementary School	10
86.	19/01/2015	20/03/2015	Word & Excel	N4 Library Finsbury Park	4
87.	19/01/2015	02/03/2015	Employability skills	Abbey Community Centre	7
88.	23/01/2015	23/03/2015	IT Basic Level	N4 Library Finsbury Park	4
89.	05/02/2015	23/04/2015	Esol Entry 1	Muslim Welfare House	14
90.	10/02/2015	10/02/2015	FGM workshop	Jannaty Women's Group (Fin Future)	18
91.	24/02/2015	24/03/2015	Esol Entry 2 additional hours	Komkar	7
92.	11/03/2015	11/03/2015	Outing to Jeffry Museum	Finsbury Park Mosque	8
93.	16/03/2015	16/03/2015	Outing to use TFL and social at Café' 2	Muslim Welfare House	10
94.	23/03/2015	23/03/2015	Outing Alexandra Park Palace	KOMKAR	8
95.	14/04/2015	20/05/2015	Esol Entry 2	Komkar	9

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