

SANGHA



WHERE RIVERS MEET NETWORK (WRMN)
EVALUATION REPORT
(MARCH 2023 – APRIL 2024)

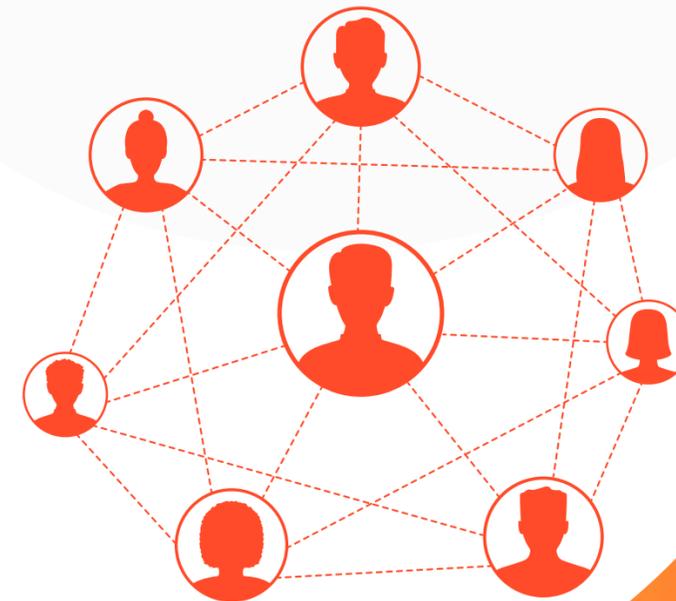


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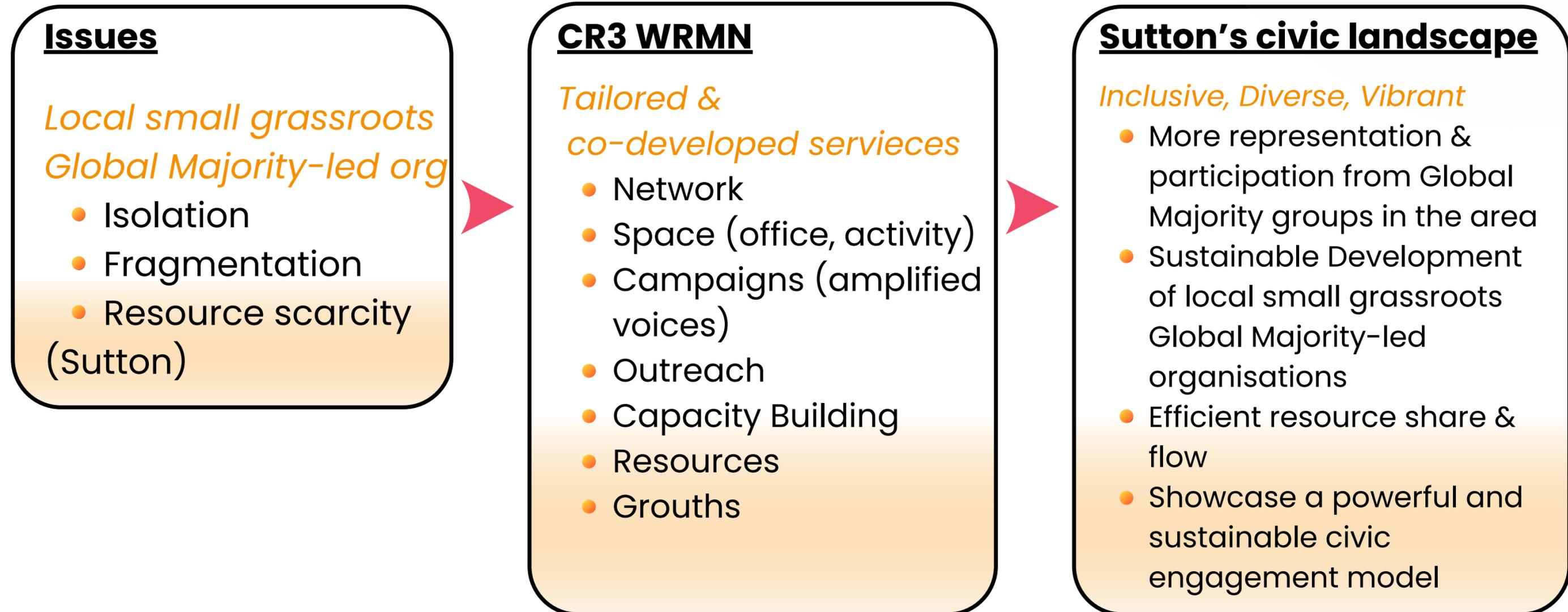
INTRODUCTION:

- ▶ The **Where Rivers Meet Network (WRMN)**, part of the Civic Roots 3 programme, is designed to forge **a meaningful network among small, Global Majority*-led, grassroots organisations in the Sutton Borough**. This initiative addresses their daily challenges of isolation, fragmentation, and resource scarcity. These obstacles are deeply rooted in historical and institutional racial inequalities but have been rapidly intensified by the COVID crisis and the cost of living crisis.
- ▶ The Where Rivers Meet Network, which began in early 2023, aspires to **respond to these challenges** and catalyse **a transformation within Sutton's civic landscape**. The long-term ambition of the network is to unleash the civic potential of Sutton, creating **a vibrant civil society** where Global Majority groups and marginalised communities can actively participate in volunteer work and civic activities, **confront inequalities, and overcome isolation**.



**Global Majority, as a result of in-depth group consultations, is the preferred term by participants of this project over BAMER, as it more accurately reflects their identities.*

THEORY OF CHANGE LOGIC FRAMEWORK (SIMPLE VERSION)





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Number of:

Local partners

5

Successful campaigns

1

Organisation health check completed

5

Capacity building training

5

People accepted training

45

Partnership building meetings

6

Large-scale public consultations

4

Participants in public consultations

260

Secured project co-delivery opportunities

3



OUTCOMES

- ▶ Following the delivery of significant outputs as outlined on the previous page, the project has made substantial progress toward its objectives. The successful campaign, including public consultations and strategic collaboration with the council, has led to the securing of essential spaces (an office, a training room, and activity areas) within the borough for further development of the network.
- ▶ Additionally, capacity-building training was meticulously developed based on comprehensive organisation health checks and consultations, covering vital and urgently needed skills such as fundraising, volunteer recruitment, monitoring and evaluation. These initiatives have paved the way for achieving six main outcomes, reflecting the project's strategic goals.

The key outcomes include:

- Expanded outreach of network with the formation of a strategic five-partner network
- Amplified Voices and Secured Spaces for Global Majority Groups
- Enhanced Organisational Capacity
- Increased understanding of local needs through large public consultations
- Increased utilisation of local services
- Increased Civic Participation through innovative civic participation model

Each outcome contributes significantly to our overarching goal of fostering a more inclusive and dynamic civic community.

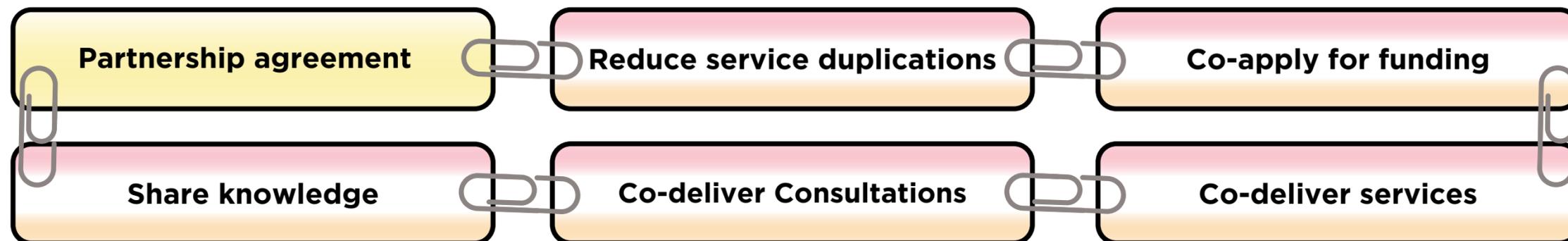
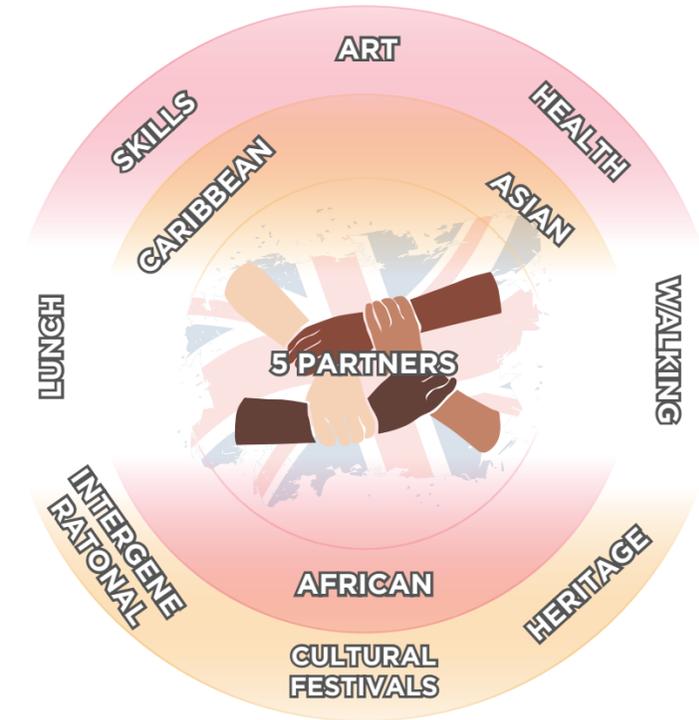
OUTCOME 1

EXPANDED OUTREACH OF NETWORK WITH THE FORMATION OF A STRATEGIC FIVE-PARTNER NETWORK

Over the past year, the project has developed a network consisting of five partners (small, Global Majority-led, grassroots organisations in the Sutton Borough).

As a result, the network now has **extensive outreach** to the **Asian, African, and Caribbean** communities. The network's services have expanded to include **social clubs, lunch clubs, art and theatre performances, dancing, walking, tour groups, cultural festival celebrations, intergenerational activities, heritage conservation, and education.**

The partnership has been built on the foundation of democratic discussion and mutual respect. All five partner organisations have engaged in extensive discussions, culminating in a partnership agreement that clearly outlines the network's purposes, partner obligations, and risk management procedures. Partners have developed advanced **collaboration relationships**, including discussions on avoiding service duplications, co-applying for funding, co-delivering services, co-delivering public consultations, and sharing cultural, organisational, and digital knowledge, etc.



The network has been warmly welcomed by the partners, with **100% attendance** at each partnership meeting. All partners are satisfied with the network's initial initiatives and development and have expressed unanimous interest in collaborating over the long term. **100% of the partners reported feeling genuinely heard within the network.**

In the next stage of the project development, the network will include more suitable partners, following the outlined criteria and procedures in the partnership agreement.



(i) For details of the five partners, please see the following pages...

CURRENT NETWORK ORGANISATIONS: (PAGE 1/2)

PLACE AT MY TABLE (PAMT) – NETWORK LEADER



Founded amidst the 2020 pandemic, Place At My Table (PAMT) has established deep roots in Sutton, rapidly addressing the pandemic's challenges by crafting a comprehensive support system for the community's most vulnerable, particularly individuals over 70. Through strategic local partnerships, PAMT has since deployed essential services in Sutton, including mobile hot meals, Zoom exercise classes, and a support hotline for isolated elders from **Global Majority backgrounds**, benefiting around 500 individuals annually. PAMT is featured by its equity-led and culturally sensitive approach, exemplifying the strength of community resilience and solidarity.

SANGHA

Sangha is a local charity in Sutton, providing crucial support, especially to **Indian elderly women** and support service users to reduce loneliness. Established 25 years ago, Sangha's activities, include weekly Monday lunch gatherings, chair yoga, and social games, catering to around 45-50 members each week. These events, alongside special celebrations like Diwali and Christmas, offer companionship and cultural connection, which is particularly significant for women who moved to the UK in the 1970s with limited English and supporting networks in Sutton. However, Sangha faces challenges with only 1-2 core unpaid staff, struggling to manage its activities and resources efficiently.



SUTTON AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN CULTURAL ORGANISATION (SACCO)

SACCO (Sutton African and Caribbean Cultural Organisation) is dedicated to enhancing community engagement for **individuals of African and Caribbean heritage in Sutton** and its neighbouring areas. With a mission to empower members through intergenerational activities, SACCO offers a diverse range of leisure and enrichment activities, including Friendship Friday for social and lunch activities, cooking events, and educational trips. Monthly social sessions are held at Sutton Civic Offices, providing a welcoming space for community connection. Currently, SACCO has almost 100 paid members, alongside a significant number of additional unofficial members or service users. Despite its achievements, SACCO faces challenges related to its small size and limited resources. With a core team comprising 1 paid part-time staff member and fewer than 10 staff and volunteers, SACCO faces an urgent need to improve its capacity, increase its visibility within the community and expand the volunteer pool.

CURRENT NETWORK ORGANISATIONS: (PAGE 2/2)



5 ASIDE THEATRE



5 ASide Theatre, established five years ago, is dedicated to empowering intergenerational groups through the medium of theatre. This organisation champions **the black perspective**, using theatre to challenge institutional racism and provide a voice for those historically overlooked or mistreated, inspired in part by the injustices highlighted by the Windrush scandal. The theatre offers history workshops, theatre performance training, and career training in performance skills and drama facilitation in Sutton, all free of charge. During school holidays, it also provides sports activities and free healthy meals for children, aiming to foster confidence and passion in public school students. For older students and adults, it offers career training and performing opportunities, using theatre as a tool to engage with and reflect on the history of the UK's African Caribbean communities. A notable success was a sold-out show in 2020 focusing on the lives of five Africans in Sutton during the 18th century. 5 ASide Theatre provides 30 training sessions annually, significantly benefiting the elderly community and supporting around 130 participants. It relies on freelancers to deliver services and is in need of scaling up its capacity.



AFRICAN CARIBBEAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION (ACHA)



The African Caribbean Heritage Association (ACHA), a volunteer organisation established 12 years ago in Sutton, focuses on enhancing the lives of individuals over 50. ACHA aims to connect people of **African and Caribbean heritage but welcomes members from all cultural backgrounds**, hosting weekly events that include lunches, exercise sessions, games, bingo, and creative activities for mental health, as well as trips to the seaside and theatre. Regularly, 20 to 25 members engage in these gatherings, with a total membership of 40 from 14 different countries, mainly of Caribbean and African descent. Although ACHA primarily targets those over 50, it predominantly attracts women over 60. Like many small, grassroots, Global Majority-led organisations, ACHA faces challenges related to resource scarcity, impacting its ability to sustain fundraising efforts and reach out to wider community.



*Partners developing the network core values
(Photo: June 2023)*



*Partners co-delivering service - Art & Heritage Event
(Photo: September 2023)*



*Partners co-delivering service - Health Talk - Nutrition
(Photo: April 2024)*

Quotes from partners:

“—

“Being part of this network feels incredibly supportive. Now, I can have my fundraising proposals proofread and our events promoted more broadly. It’s great to know we’re all supporting each other.”

“Joining this network has been a game-changer. Before, whenever there was funding up for grabs, we’d all end up competing for the same small pot of money—so much time wasted. Now, we plan together, work together, and it’s just so much more efficient. It really feels like we’re all connected.”

—”

OUTCOME 2

AMPLIFIED VOICES AND SECURED SPACES FOR GLOBAL MAJORITY GROUPS

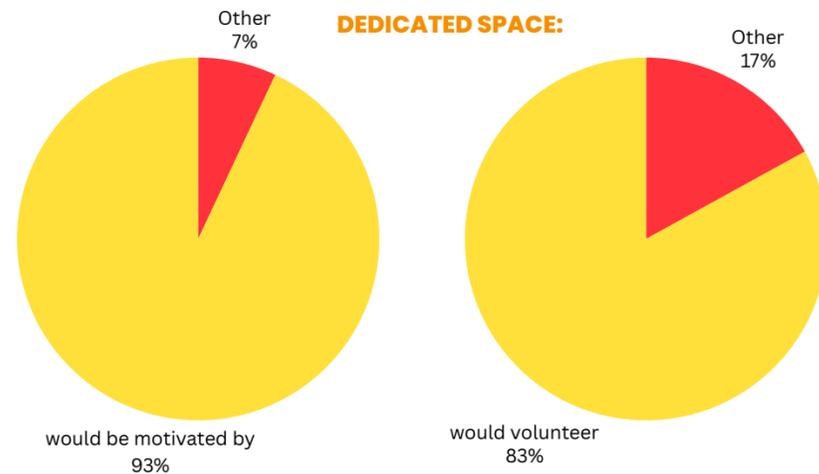
Through **five in-depth interview consultations** with partners and **two large-scale consultations** (n=190) with community members, the project identified a need for a **space dedicated to Global Majority** groups in the borough. This space is envisioned as a base to develop the civic society structure.

Community members expressed that such a space would enable them to socialise, volunteer, and learn new skills. Partners highlighted that it would facilitate connections with other organisations, foster innovative projects, reduce office rent stress, increase organisational presence, and thus expand the volunteer pool and membership base.

Utilising rich quantitative and qualitative data, the team crafted an **evidence-based proposal**. This document summarised the collected data and detailed how such a space could benefit the community.

After collaborating with the council, the network has successfully secured a space. The new facility includes an office, a training room, and easy access to an activity room. As anticipated by community members and partners, this setup will significantly **boost their motivation to volunteer and participate**.

Community Voices



"... having a dedicated office or hot desk space is also important for our organisational maintenance. Ideally, we would require 25 hours per week for administrative tasks, fieldwork, research, scriptwriting, and providing a meeting space for production coordination and networking. Frequent meeting space is essential for the smooth production of dramas, as it allows designers, actors, and other team members to discuss their needs and coordinate resources effectively."

5 ASide Theatre (Interview: July 2023)

"... having a larger, shared office would immensely help. Our current space is shared, small, crowded, and lacks room for proper coordination and discussions among the team. We envision a shared space for network organisations. This change would encourage better collaboration and provide adequate space for our coordination and administrative tasks. ... Additionally, having adequate storage space is crucial to alleviate stress caused by the current crowded conditions."

SACCO (Interview: July 2023)

"... having a dedicated space for meetings, training, and intergenerational activities would be greatly beneficial. Having a larger area would allow us to organise various activities without interrupting each other, and a kitchen would be helpful for intergenerational activities like storytelling. ... This would need more imagination. Some of our members cannot join the events because of their babysitting duties, or men generally are not interested in some games we do. A bigger space might change it and provide more functions."

ACHA (Interview: July 2023)

Campaign

- Report
- Meetings
- Colaborations

A space secured

April 2024

- Hill House Sutton St. Helier
- Office
- Training room
- Easy access to an activity room



A base for a thriving civil society

Small grassroots
Global Majority-
led organisations
in Sutton

- ▶ Space for activities
- ▶ Reduce cost
- ▶ Enhance work experience
- ▶ New connections and innovations
- ▶ Increase visibility

- ▶ More volunteers
- ▶ More beneficiaries

▶ **Important features:**
proposed by local communities

- Accesibiliy
- Amenities (wifi, toilets, lift)
- Flexibility
- Indoor & outdoor space
- Safety
- Additional staff support



*Training room for the network
as a result of the campaign
(Photo: from the official
website of Hill House)*



*The activity room is easily
accessible to the network as a
result of the campaign
(Photo: the network partners
co-delivering an event in the
hall, April 2024)*

OUTCOME 3

ENHANCED ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

So far, all the partners have completed a thorough **Organisational Health Check**, which confirmed previous research on the challenges faced by local, small, grassroots, Global Majority-led organisations. These include **a lack of strong structures and relevant policies**, which, in the long term, inevitably **inhibit their fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and service delivery**, further **marginalising Global Majority voices** and presence in the area.

Based on the results of the Organisational Health Check and in-depth one-to-one and group consultations, the partners co-developed an **organisational capacity-building plan** based on their daily and organisational situations and needs, covering areas such as safeguarding, fundraising, monitoring, and evaluation.

Currently, the project has delivered **five training sessions**, including one accredited course, covering areas such as fundraising planning, fundraising preparation, volunteer recruitment, trustee recruitment and training, case studies, and leadership.

As revealed by the Organisational Health Check, one of the partners has prioritised website development. The project is currently in the process of assisting with this and developing a website. As revealed by the training process and the health check, some organisations are **struggling to recruit** suitable volunteers; the network is currently initiating a campaign to support this cause.

In addition, the projects that have been or will be co-delivered by partners in this network also bring resources and opportunities to the partners, which will enhance their outreach, portfolios, and relevant skills accordingly.

Out of the training participats:

100%  training matched their daily needs very well

100%  found the training material practical and helpful

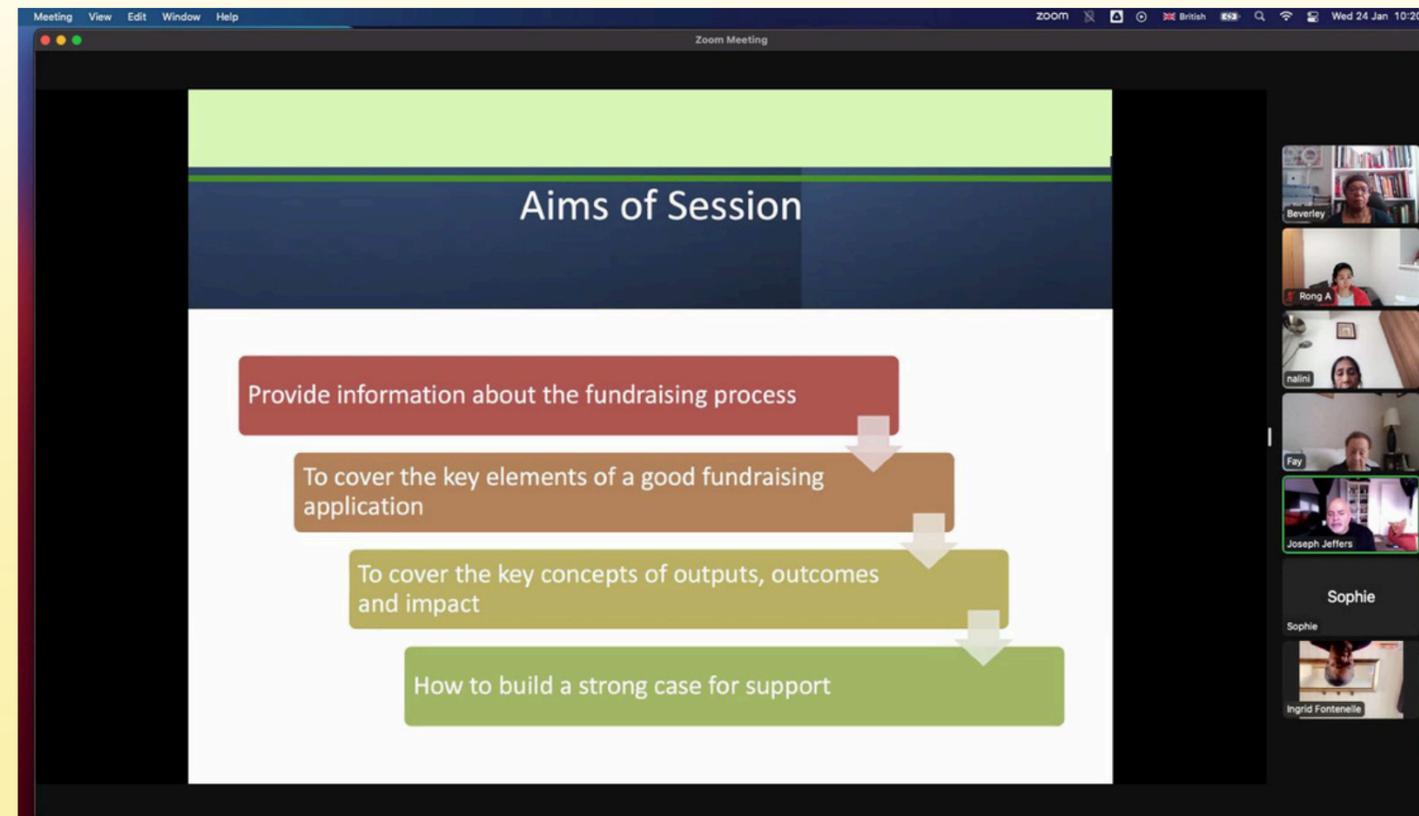
100%  feel more confident in areas such as fundraising planning, volunteer recruitment, and leadership

85%  would like to strengthen their knowledge in social media

50%  would like to improve their websites



*Training Session on
Case Studies
(November 2023)*



*Training Session on
Fundraising
(Jan 2024)*

OUTCOME 4

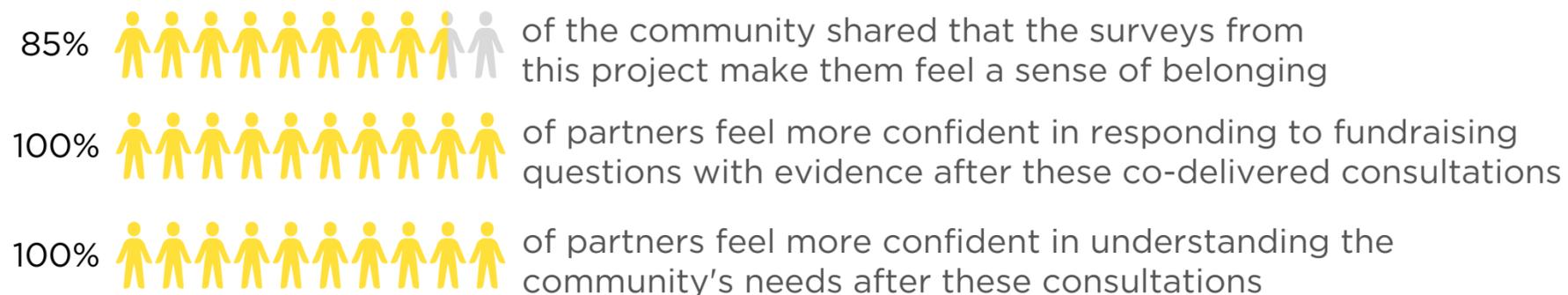
INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL NEEDS THROUGH LARGE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The project has conducted **four large-scale public consultations**, reaching out to a total of **290 local community members** from Global Majority backgrounds.

The surveys and interactive feedback boards have gathered useful data from service users in areas such as:

- The sense of representation in the borough.
- Factors affecting their civic participation and volunteering.
- The needs or preferences for sports activities.
- The needs or preferences for art activities.
- User experience or challenges with NHS services.
- User experience or challenges with digital services (e.g., NHS).
- Baseline data including demographics, living situations, financial circumstances, and sense of loneliness.

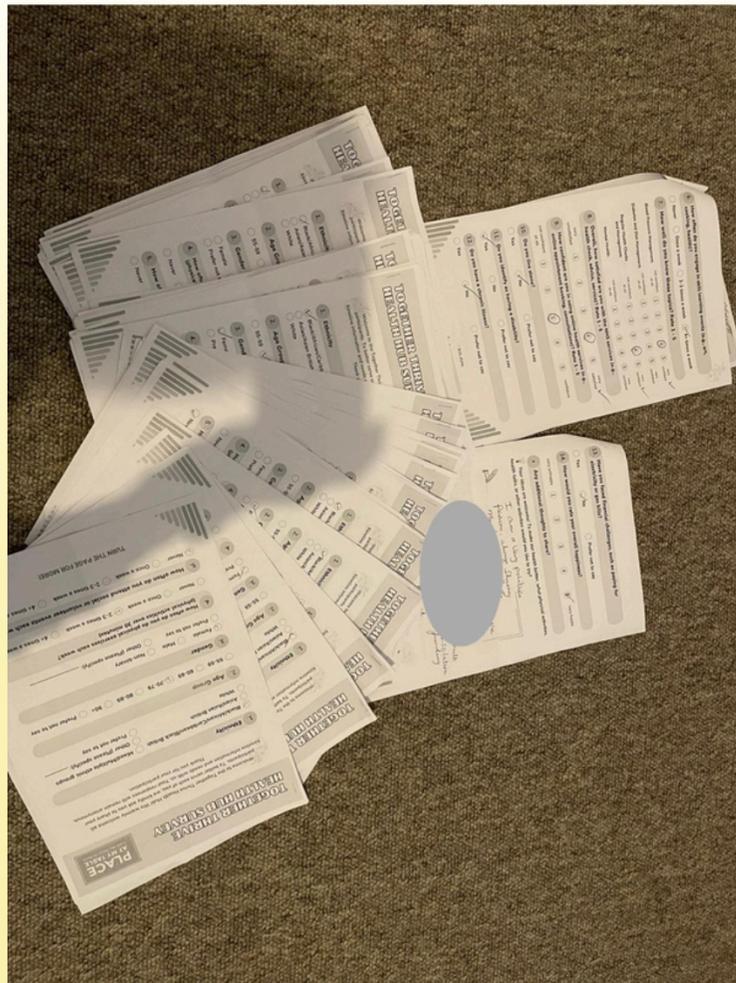
This data has already supported the securing of a dedicated space for the network. It will also inform partners and the network in areas such as fundraising, project design, and volunteer recruitment. Overall, **it provides local community organisations, the council, CVS and other public service institutes (e.g. NHS) a clear snapshot of the needs of local Global Majority groups, which are not usually available in Sutton.**



Quotes from participants who wrote additional comments and suggestions:

“
“The idea of a dedicated space for the Global Majority in the borough is long overdue.”

“Being part of a global group gives me a sense and feeling of belonging. Good to get out to socialise with everyone, stops me being indoors feeling lonely and isolated, gives me a feeling of belonging.”
”



*Survey responses
(Photo: April 2024)*



*Consultation Event
(Sep 2023),
Participants had the
surveys on their tables*

OUTCOME 5

INCREASED UTILISATION OF LOCAL SERVICES

So far, the project has functioned effectively as **a signposting hub**, coordinating and sharing local free resources with partners who were previously unaware of these opportunities.

One partner is now developing a website free of charge, thanks to this initiative. Additionally, two partners have begun working with the local Community Voluntary Service (CVS) to enhance their volunteer recruitment efforts.

Furthermore, as partners in this network **collaborate and reduce service duplications**, they have been able to offer **more high-quality and diverse services with increased capacity to the local communities**.

The project is currently in the process of expanding relationships with local NHS service providers. This expansion is expected to **unlock additional resources for the partners in the network, which will, in turn, benefit the Global Majority groups in the area** by improving access to health services and related community support. This enhancement of resources and support is designed to strengthen the overall effectiveness of our network's outreach and impact on the community.



*Partners co-delivering
diverse and unique
services
(Photo: April 2024)*

OUTCOME 6

INCREASED CIVIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE CIVIC PARTICIPATION MODEL

As the project embarked on an exploratory journey, all partners have integrated their empowerment and democratic practices into the network. Over the past year, partners have developed a model to engage civil organisations, build networks, and transform the civic landscape.

Several principles and values have been practiced and highlighted in the journey (Year 1):

Cultural Sensitivity:

- After consulting with partner organisations, replaced 'BME' with 'Global Majority'
- Incorporated culturally relevant dance and music into consultation events

People-Based Approach:

- Covers lunch and travel expenses for workshop participants to ensure there are no financial barriers to participation.
- Consent, privacy and autonomy.

Collaborative Project Development:

- Co-developed with all stakeholders, establishing agreements and organisational plans that consider everyone's input equally.

Immersive Practice and Learning:

- By including case studies, hands-on projects, and field visits to successful organisations in neighbouring boroughs, the project ensures that all members have equal opportunities to learn, grow, and apply new skills in real-world settings.

Research and Empowerment:

- Research from the project's design through to delivery and monitoring, ensuring that our initiatives are rigorous and evidence-based. The empowerment research approaches – a safe and supportive space for everyone.



Field Visit to ASKI, a Croydon-based organisation (Aug 2023)

NEXT STEPS...

- **Secure Funding:** Application submitted to the National Lottery to support a coordinating role for the network, facilitating collaborations, shared space usage, and enhancing the presence of a Global Majority-led network in Sutton.
- **Utilise the Gained Space:** Fully leverage the acquired space to facilitate more innovative practices and boost civic participation among Global Majority communities.
- **Co-deliver Local Projects:** Collaborate on three local projects (NHS – Health Consciousness, Art Council – Sutton Literary Festival, Heritage – Black History Month) and potentially one more in 2024 – 2025.
- **Expand the Network:** Currently discussing potential expansion with local Hong Kong groups and understanding South Korean groups.
- **Initiate Campaigns:** Launch campaigns in 2024-2025, such as addressing health inequalities.
- **Expand Volunteer Pool**
- **Continue Capacity Training:** Maintain ongoing capacity training courses with partners.