

AMINA

The Muslim Women's
Resource Centre

ANNUAL

REPORT

2020-21



**Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.**

Dr. Maya Angelou





Mariam Ahmed, Chief Executive of Amina

It's difficult to speak about this period without mentioning the challenges we have all faced with the impact of the pandemic.

Like many other organisations, Amina staff were suddenly faced with the challenge of working from home. With the restrictions we were no longer able to interact face to face, daily meetings were held online all whilst having to home school our children. From a management perspective, this was nothing like anything experienced before. As the pandemic continued, it became clear that many social issues were being completely exacerbated. From isolation, digital exclusion, homelessness, domestic abuse to financial difficulties. We faced a huge demand for our services yet were faced with uncertainty with the core funding streams for both our Helpline and also Violence Against Women and Girls services.

We were determined to adapt to the emerging issues and provide our vital grassroots services to Muslim and BME women. The passion and commitment from our staff team and volunteers for Amina to support and deliver our services to women was evident. They went above and beyond by helping women in crisis through various means including our helpline, hardship fund, befriending services and financial advocacy services.

Despite all these challenges, we have continued our organisational growth. In fact, we have expanded our staff compliment as the need for specialised services provided by Amina is needed more than ever. In the midst of adversity, we are determined to continue to be the voice, listening ear, advocates for Muslim and BME women and help them on their journey of empowerment and equality.

I thank the staff team, board, funders, partners, community and volunteers for their resilience and commitment.



Sarah Todd, Chairperson of Amina Board

The impact of the pandemic has been felt on all aspects of our lives. We have continued to respond to the effects of the pandemic by adapting many aspects of our organisation, from staffing to service delivery.

We have taken every opportunity to grow, learn and continue being the leading grassroots organisation serving Muslim and BME women.

We will continue to shine a light on the deepening inequalities faced by Muslim and BME women whilst creating a safe and supportive space for women to grow and be empowered.

We are proud to bring to you our achievements as an organisation during these challenging times. The staff team and volunteers have worked relentlessly to support women and continue to be the voice of Muslim and BME women.

On behalf of the trustees, I thank our staff, volunteers, funders, service users, members and partners for their passion and dedication shown during these difficult times.

EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS

Equalities and Human Rights encompasses all our work that seeks to advocate for women in their first contact to Amina. A key part of this work is Amina's Helpline which also includes many services that reach out to women in the community as well as providing a safe place for them to talk.

The Helpline has expanded its services over the past two years to provide support in more specific ways. The Helpline now hosts an Islamic scholar once a week, an immigration law clinic once a month and a housing clinic once a fortnight. The Helpline team also provide continued support to women through their befriending programme, which is significantly supported by our amazing volunteers. This befriending service has been especially important due to the pandemic causing isolation and has allowed women to feel connected and supported in times of distancing and exclusion.

The Helpline is more than just a signing-posting service at Amina. We seek to help and support women as far as they need, which often involves advocating for them as they seek out the services they require for their circumstances. Amina is often reviewed by beneficiaries as “going above and beyond”: we believe we are effectively plugging gaps left by other services and facilitating better service access and community connection.

The Helpline is not simply a ‘wait until someone calls and asks for help’ kind of service. Over the past two years, and because of the effects of the pandemic, the helpline has adopted a proactive approach to the work in the community, providing 186 Ramadan Care Packages to Muslim and BME women all over Scotland. We were also able to hold an Eid Toy Drive where we provided 315 children who were experiencing challenging circumstances with gifts.



Amina Helpline

0808 801 0301



Amina's Helpline is the only national helpline in Scotland for Muslim and BME women that provides a faith and culturally sensitive approach. The Helpline is a free service, and the Helpline number does not appear on phone bills. All calls are strictly confidential and non-judgemental.

There are many services which are part our Helpline service including the Helpline itself, live chat, the Islamic scholars, and befriending service.

Helpline Calls in Numbers

April 2020-December 2021

Total calls: **4298**



Domestic
Abuse



Social
Isolation



Marital
Relationship
Issues



Agency
Information



Mental
Health

Ethnicity of Callers





"Thanking all on the Helpline Team for the lovely care package which was sent to me this week. Some of the items are useful, practical, and informative, and other items are nice treats - all equally appreciated. This was a really nice surprise."

- Care Package Recipient

As circumstances are always changing, it is important for the Helpline team to continue to be training in ways that equip them for the advice and services they may be offering, as well as participating in research and advocacy events to create more accessible information and support on a lot of the issues experienced by our clients. Here are some of the spotlight events and training sessions over 2020-21:

Decolonising the Mindset

282 registrants who were primarily teachers/educators or policy makers signed up to discuss institutionalised racism in the Scottish Education system.

WEN Climate Change Workshop



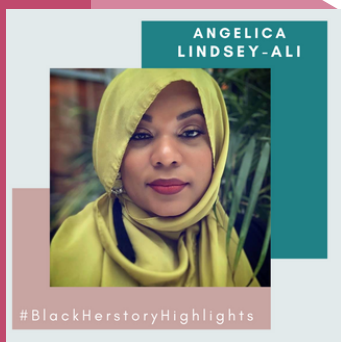
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

10 women fed into a discussion on the New Green Deal being submitted during COP26.

Black History Month Social Media Campaign

During, UK's Black History Month, we celebrated some Black women changemakers on our social media.



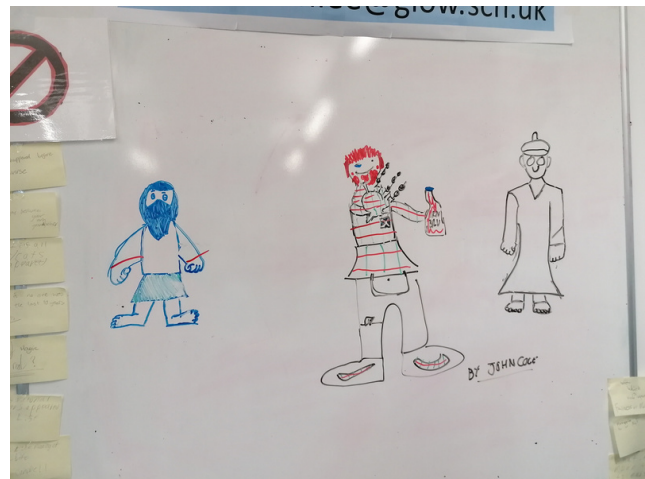
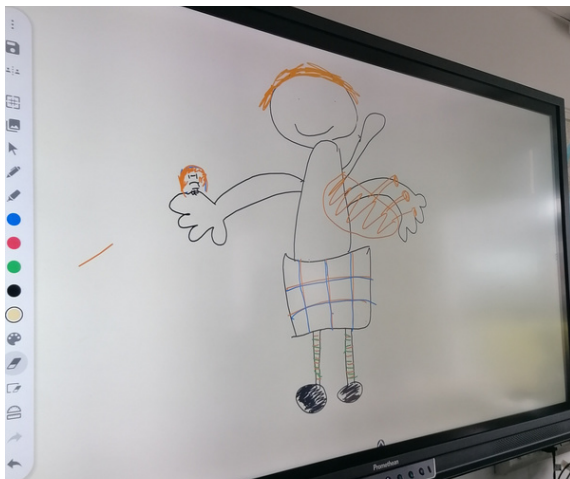
Elephant in the Room

Partnered with the 'Elephant in the Room' campaign at Queen Margaret Union at Glasgow University to raise awareness of Muslim and BME women's experiences of mental health, and to promote the Helpline as one way of accessing faith and culture sensitive support.

We were pleased to receive continued funding from the Scottish Government through the Equality and Human Rights (EHR) grant in October 2021. We recruited 3 new helpline team members in November 2021. The beginning of the 3-year EHR fund is a very exciting time for the helpline team and Amina as a whole.

Highlights for 2021 included:

- Working in partnership with the Equity Working group at South Lanarkshire council - this allowed the opportunity to work with them in the future on recruitment and retention of BME staff.
- Created and delivered training for Cruse Bereavement Scotland - very positive feedback was received.
- Chapter to Chapter Dialogues with Side by Side, an interfaith gender justice initiative. Amina is currently involved in the Scotland chapter of Side by Side and are setting it up to be hosted by Interfaith Glasgow from 2022. This was an opportunity to discuss what other countries are doing to work towards gender justice in faith communities.
- Completion of “What Makes a Woman of Faith” Focus group report on 30th November.
- Schools work included delivering workshops at Mearns Castle High to navigate difficult conversations around topics relating to race and religion



School workshops

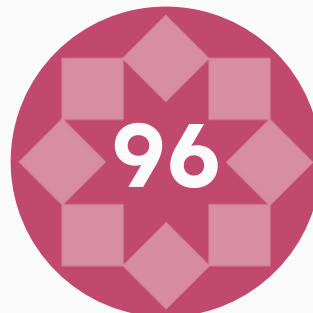
Total calls to other **Helpline Services**

Alima and Shaykh on the Helpline

These are Islamic scholars who understand the rights of women in Islam. They provide a key role by using Islam to empower Muslim women to take certain difficult decisions in their lives e.g. to leave abusive relationships.



Alima on the Helpline Calls



Shaykh on the Helpline Calls

Befriending Service

Amina is committed to tackling social isolation and offers a weekly telephone support service to women. We train volunteers and offer this service in some of the main community languages, and this has increased our engagement and community reach.



Befriending Calls

VAWG

Our ending Violence Against Women and Girls work continued over 2020 and 2021. We were delighted to receive funding to recruit a Women's Rights' Caseworker to advocate for BME women and girls experiencing abuse of all kinds in Scotland. Despite continued restrictions due to the pandemic, our prevention work gained a huge amount of exposure with many workshops and discussions taking place online. our work online engaged over 45,000 people. Working with professionals in mental health fields and Muslim women scholars, we have explored the complexities behind spiritual abuse, forced marriage, self-care, gender-based violence, and support available to abuse victims.



We have launched several campaigns under You Can Change This to highlight what actions we can take to prevent and end gender based violence, including our short film featuring male ambassadors from Muslim and BME communities who took a commitment to playing an active role in ending violence against women.

We have delivered training to a number of organisations such as: Glasgow Women's Aid, Zero Tolerance and The Prince's Trust. Training included discussions around spiritual abuse in the Muslim community and barriers facing Muslim women in accessing services.

As restrictions lifted near the end of the year, we were able to hold an in-person event to commemorate the victims of honour-based abuse with a candle lit vigil as part of 16 Days of Action.



Candle lit vigil and exhibition

Here are some of the spotlight events over 2020-21:

(Mis)Matched

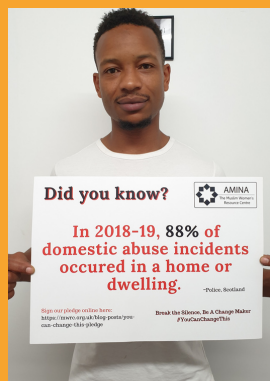
We ran a 4 part series on Facebook live exploring the safety of Muslim marriage apps, discussions on positive relationships, marriage contracts and divorce (focusing on triple talaq). Guests included Shaykh Amer Jamil, Elena (Empowerment Project), relationship counsellors and an award winning film maker, Shazia Javed.

Secrets and Lies

Canadian Muslim female scholar Dr Ingrid Mattson joined Amina for a discussion on spiritual abuse, focusing on 'how to prevent and respond to abuse and exploitation by those holding religious power, knowledge and authority in the Muslim community'.

You Can Change This

We were pleased to launch our You Can Change This pledge online on our website. We have asked Muslim and BME male ambassadors to commit to play an active role in ending violence against women.



Facebook Live event Sexual Consent in Muslim Communities

With a view to raise awareness about consent, and challenge misconceptions around sexual violence. The event covered the concept of consent, consent culture, barriers to good consent, BME perspective on consent and consent from a faith perspective using hadith and qur'anic references to challenge myths that BME communities may have.



Amina Women's Rights Caseworker

This service started in October 2021 and allows women to be practically supported in issues such as domestic abuse, mental health and women with no recourse to public funds.



36

Cases

Sep-Dec 2021

"Thank you so much.
I was so scared
they were going to
send me back
because I have no
one and I am scared
of my husband"



"Thank you very
much, you have
helped me and I
thought no one
could help me"

"You have been
so helpful Farah,
you are so lovely
and friendly and
helped me
feel safe"

EMPLOYABILITY

There are many ways that Amina seeks to provide access to practical and employable skills for women. Whether this is holding ESOL classes, keeping women digitally included or helping to educate women on the benefits system. It is imperative to our mission to empower women that we provide women with the information they need to access support when they need it. We received funding to run three informative workshops where we addressed sources of support in families, women's financial rights within Islam and the benefits system along with other sources of support. These workshops were all attended well and involved many of the participants asking for help and advice with further difficulties in their circumstances.

ESOL

Our ESOL classes have continued over the period of 2020-2021, as well as IT classes in collaboration with Glasgow Life. ESOL is still our most requested class since the start of our online provision. The ESOL classes allow women the space to be able to develop their literacy and English conversational skills- which is something that many of our women said they wanted to improve.

We have delivered over **250 hours** of ESOL learning since July 2020. As a result of high demand for ESOL provision; Amina partnered with WEA (Workers Education Association) to deliver a 10-week block of ESOL classes to 13 women in Glasgow. In addition to this ESOL is delivered weekly with beginners and advanced sessions which is open to women all over Scotland.

We started running ESOL beginners and advanced sessions in October 2020, since then **278 women** have attended ESOL for Beginners and **272 women** have attended Advanced ESOL classes.

ESOL Feedback

"I liked everything. I made progress with most of the skills. I would like to do more vocabulary learning and grammar. I liked using zoom and canva. I like online learning and would like to do another English course."

"I would like to learn more English"

"Learned a lot, made new friends"

"I want to learn more English. If I learn then I would like to become an Urdu Teacher."

Digital Inclusion

Our Digital Inclusion work was designed around developing literacy skills of BME & Muslim women, help them develop their conversational English skills. Our aim was to allow women to participate in classes, develop and learn new skills as well as practicing their English. The Digital Inclusion programme were structured to be able to consult with the women regularly and in 'real-time' and where we could continue in responding to their needs directly. For many of the women attending a Zoom class was a scary and daunting prospect but many of them have remarked about how easy they find getting online and they are doing it independent of help.

The team had been working tirelessly to provide a suite of online classes, workshops and certificated courses. The online programme was launched mid-July 2020 and by the end of 2020 we had received a total of 122 registrations from women all over Scotland.

In order to promote digital inclusion and remove barriers for those unable to afford internet access, Amina MWRC started a tablet-loaning service whereby 30 Samsung tablets (with data) were issued to women who did not have access to a device which would allow them to get online.

We asked women what classes they were interested in attending, they were given a list including ESOL, Mental Health, Webinars, Chai Time and IT for beginners. We also asked women what they wanted to get out of joining sessions, they were given a list of choices where they could choose more than one option.

73% said they wanted to **improve their English.**

68% said they wanted to **make more connections.**

42% said they wanted to get **information about jobs and or training.**

83% said they wanted to **make new connections.**

79% of women **had used Zoom before** or had someone close by who could help them access the classes.

Since July 2020 we have been running a series of online classes via Zoom, Monday to Friday.



Chai Time

Chai Time started in December 2020 to create a space for women to be able to come online, chat with and make connections with other women and receive information. Chai Time has been designed to be an informal space that isn't led by a tutor or staff member with a fixed agenda. The women in Chai Time have a safe space where they can talk about a variety of topics- conversation with purpose. Chai Time runs on a weekly basis with women joining from all over Scotland and we have had 133 women attend Chai Time sessions since they began in December 2020. We have also invited speakers to come and guest on Chai Time, this year we have had representatives from NHS Scotland to speak to our women about the Corona Virus vaccine and Breast Screening.



Crafts made during Chai Time

CHAI TIME

An online get together where women can practice conversational English, make new friends and learn more about life in Scotland

To register
please call 0141 212 8420
or email info@mwrc.org.uk

WED 10th Nov 12Pm

A promotional graphic for Chai Time. It features a light blue background with a white banner at the top left that says "CHAI TIME" in a handwritten font. To the right of the banner is an illustration of a white teacup filled with orange tea, with a saucer and a sprig of green leaves. Below the banner, there is a paragraph of text: "An online get together where women can practice conversational English, make new friends and learn more about life in Scotland". Underneath that is contact information: "To register please call 0141 212 8420 or email info@mwrc.org.uk". At the bottom, there is another white banner with the text "WED 10th Nov 12Pm" in a handwritten font. There are also some yellow flower petals scattered around the graphic.

Financial Advocacy

Amina's Financial Advocacy Project aims to provide information and support to Muslim and BME families who are struggling with poverty, lack of knowledge, little understanding of the benefits system plus help with sourcing urgent help for women who are in a financial crisis.

Amina's Financial Advocacy Officer has provided one to one support to 125 clients most having multiple issues which included:



Amina Financial Advocacy has referred many clients to other supports including Women's Aid, GP's, Social Work, Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund, Migrant Help, Family Finances Approach Glasgow, Christians Against Poverty, Amina's Legal Clinic and more.

"After going through a difficult time, the wonderful MWRC team did the possible and impossible to wipe my tears and change my sadness to joy, by sorting out my debt issue. I was lucky enough to be referred to Amina by government bodies who trust Amina as much as I do. No words can thank you enough."

Health Issues in the Community and Hate Crime Courses

Amina successfully delivered a Community Development Course and Tackling Hate Crime Training for Trainers course to 29 BME women. The project aimed to build the capacity of Muslim and BME women residing in the Ward 6 area of Glasgow to assist in the tackling of inequalities, develop their skills and confidence, and positively contribute to their communities. The training was delivered in two blocks:

1

The Health Issues in the Communities Accredited course (HICC), supported women to develop the skills and knowledge to understand community development approaches, and gain an understanding of the social model of health, health inequalities, power & participation and community development approaches in health.

2

The Hate Crime Training for Trainers course supported participants in developing their knowledge and understanding of Hate Crime and Legislation. It has empowered participants to deliver training to support women in addressing and reporting Hate Crime, and build their confidence and resilience in tackling these issues.

Participants were awarded SCQF level 7 for full completion of the course.

CREATIVE ARTS

"It was good to learn from other women who are finding ways to cope through the loneliness and isolation."

The pandemic has been a difficult time of adjustment for everyone, but across the country the isolation and severity of the pandemic for minority groups has been extensive. In recognition of this we launched 'Life in the Time', a creative wellbeing project funded by the National Lottery Emerging Futures strand. 8 arts venues around Scotland came on board as virtual venue partners to promote the exhibition and ensuring the exhibition could 'tour' from the Highlands & Islands to the Scottish Borders. The exhibition can be viewed here: <https://life-in-the-time-exhibition.com/>. The project not only provided people with an insight of the experiences of Muslim and BME women in these circumstances, but further created a community of women who were keen to stay in touch with Amina for creative and supportive workshops.

"I have been on my own during the whole pandemic, this is the first time I have met other women from my community"

Our ICE (Inspire, Connect, Enable) group has continued to meet in Dundee. Once in-person events became possible again more and more Dundee-based women have had the opportunity to connect with others in the community and learn new skills. We are currently hosting regular lunch clubs, city walking groups and swimming sessions. In November ICE attracted a record 58 women to our last lunch meet-up of 2021!

"I never knew I could learn something new at my age"

The UNESCO City of Design project has created an opportunity for the group to connect and discover shared experiences living as Muslim and BME women in Dundee as well as showcasing their own skills and interests in art and design in their daily lives. The group have been introduced to professional designer Vinishree Verma, who delivers weekly design skills workshops via Zoom and helps them to co-create a collaborative design for the City of Dundee.

Once a month the group meets in-person ranging from a city tour where each participant introduced the others to the things of interest in her own neighbourhood to an interactive day at Dundee Design Festival where the participants travelled to all four design locations and took part in screen printing, model making and game design to a hands on workshop applying biomimicry skills in practical lamp making. The group will showcase their design project in late Spring 2022 in Dundee.

"This is the only place I can show my true voice"

In Autumn 2021 Amina partnered with Bijli for a new series of creative wellbeing workshops, We Make the Path. Every week a group of women meet with two trauma-informed creative practitioners. The group participate in writing and drama exercises and are developing ideas for a showcase event to be publicly shared in summer 2022. The group meet weekly on Zoom, and once a month in person.

"I never knew this place existed and I have lived here for 2 years!"

At the end of the year, we had our first in-person get together for the Rank funded Community Arts project. After a social lunch the group headed to Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) where the DCA's Head of Learning, Sarah Derrick, gave a brief tour of the Create and Exhibition spaces and planned the project with the group. Over the next six months the group will learn about all aspects of DCA including the Learning, Cinema Programming, Print Studio & Exhibitions department before producing a podcast about their experiences.

LIFE IN THE TIME EXHIBITION

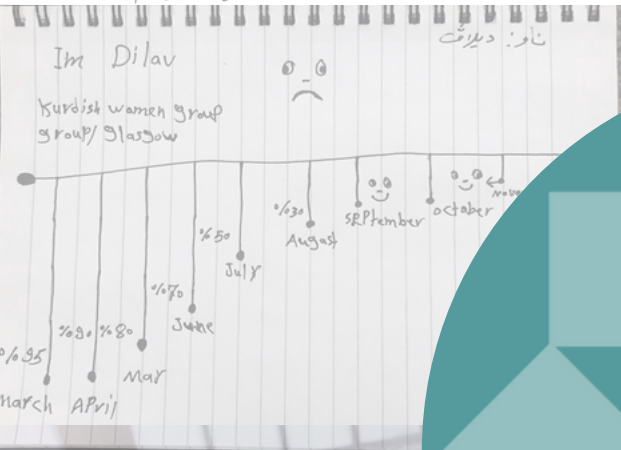
Amina MWRC
Citywall House
32 Eastwood Ave
Glasgow

COVID
KEEP GOING
IT ALL
RIGHT
IT KEEPS COMING
AROUNDS

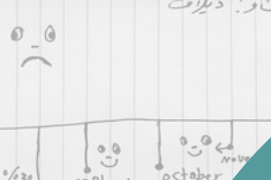
JUST WHEN YOU
THINK IT GOES.

GAI ZNS

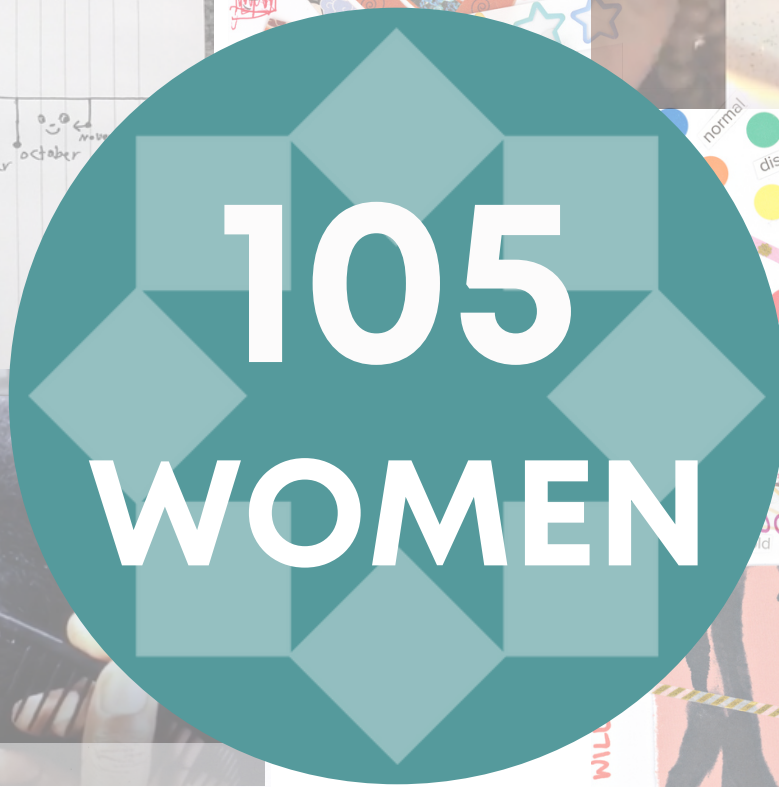
IT BACK
AGAIN.



Im Dilav
Kurdish women group
group Glasgow



CHAOS
CHAOS
CHAOS



Participated in over **54** workshops delivered between January-March 2021 to create **48** digital artworks exhibited in **4** languages. **50** people attended the online launch event with was supported by **8** national art venues.

Roses are r
Violets an
I hate Co
because
from you.
Miss You.

Thanks To GOD
Still Strong and full of Energy
my feeling March 2020 - January 2021

anxiety worried
anxious
scared
sad
surprised
okay
Numb
accept reality
missing

Gelsya Satih
Kurdish women Community Group

I have been worried about
my country for many years
and I am shedding my love
but I can't get the dust to
bury this painful heart
in it.

My country

BVAR Rashid



146
WOMEN

Attended 6 Inspire, Connect Enable (ICE) events between September - December 2021.

4
WOMEN

Attended two monthly meet-ups, visited two exhibitions and created over 20 'Gelli' print artworks at DCA.

4
WOMEN

Attended 15 design and skill workshops with UNESCO City of Design Dundee.

6
WOMEN

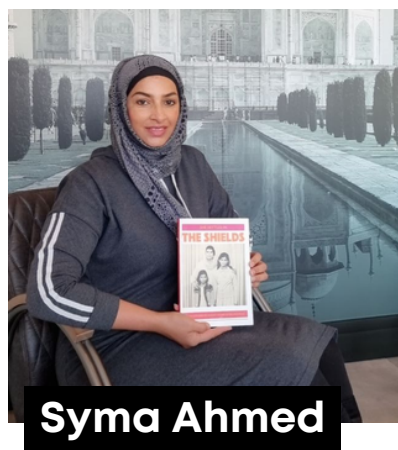
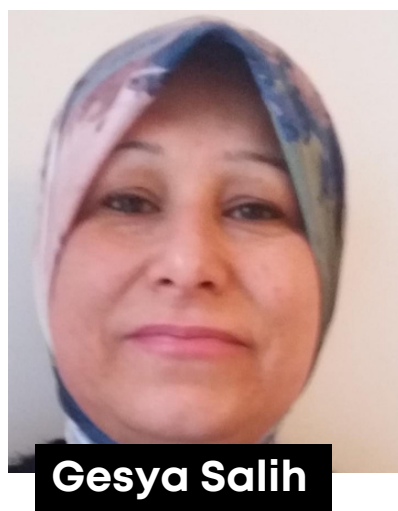
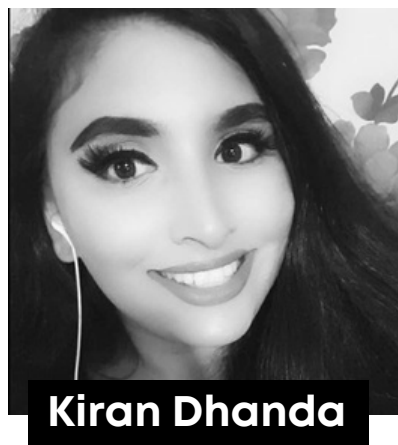
Attended 10 Zoom workshops and one in person session with Bijli's We Make the Path project.



Our Community Champions

We regularly ask people in our community to nominate community champions -someone who contributes to their community in a significant and positive way. We highlight Muslim and BME women in an effort to recognise and celebrate the various contributions of women to the fabric of Scottish society.

Here are just a few of our champions over the last year!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A wide range of organisations have worked collaboratively with us this year, some have donated their resources and shown their approved support towards Amina. The Board and staff would like to take this opportunity to thank all the partner organisations, funders, volunteers, individual donors and corporate bodies for their significant and valued contributions and support to the charity.



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



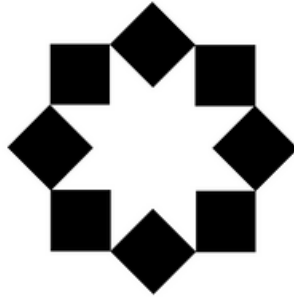
Communities in Control

Scottish Sadaqa
CHARITABLE TRUST



COMIC RELIEF





AMINA

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Scot Charity No: SC027690