

SECOND ROUND FUNDING REPORT

REFUGEE SUPPORT

small grants



**CHURCH
URBAN
FUND**⊕



Dec 2022- July 2023

In December 2022, with consideration of the success and reach of the first round of the Refugee Support Small Grants Programme, Benefact Trust extended this scheme with the addition of a £140,000 grant. The grant enabled the continued delivery of the refugee micro-grants programme for a second round, to support the outreach work of churches and Christian organisations for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees.



Grants awarded

£129,499.68
awarded in grants,
37 projects
received funding
proposed to reach
4562 refugees

Applications for Second Round

66 applications

50 of the organisations had not been previously funded by CUF or Near Neighbours

£251,514.83 requested by:

- 25 Anglican Churches
- 12 Free churches
- 6 Pentecostal churches
- 6 Methodist churches
- 6 Catholic Churches
- 4 Baptist churches
- 2 Christian general charities
- 2 United Reformed Church
- 1 Orthodox Church
- 2 no faith organisations

- The average grant size was £3,499.99
- 11 projects were aimed at both Ukrainian and Afghan refugees
- 16 projects focused exclusively on Ukrainian refugees
- 10 projects focused exclusively on Afghan refugees



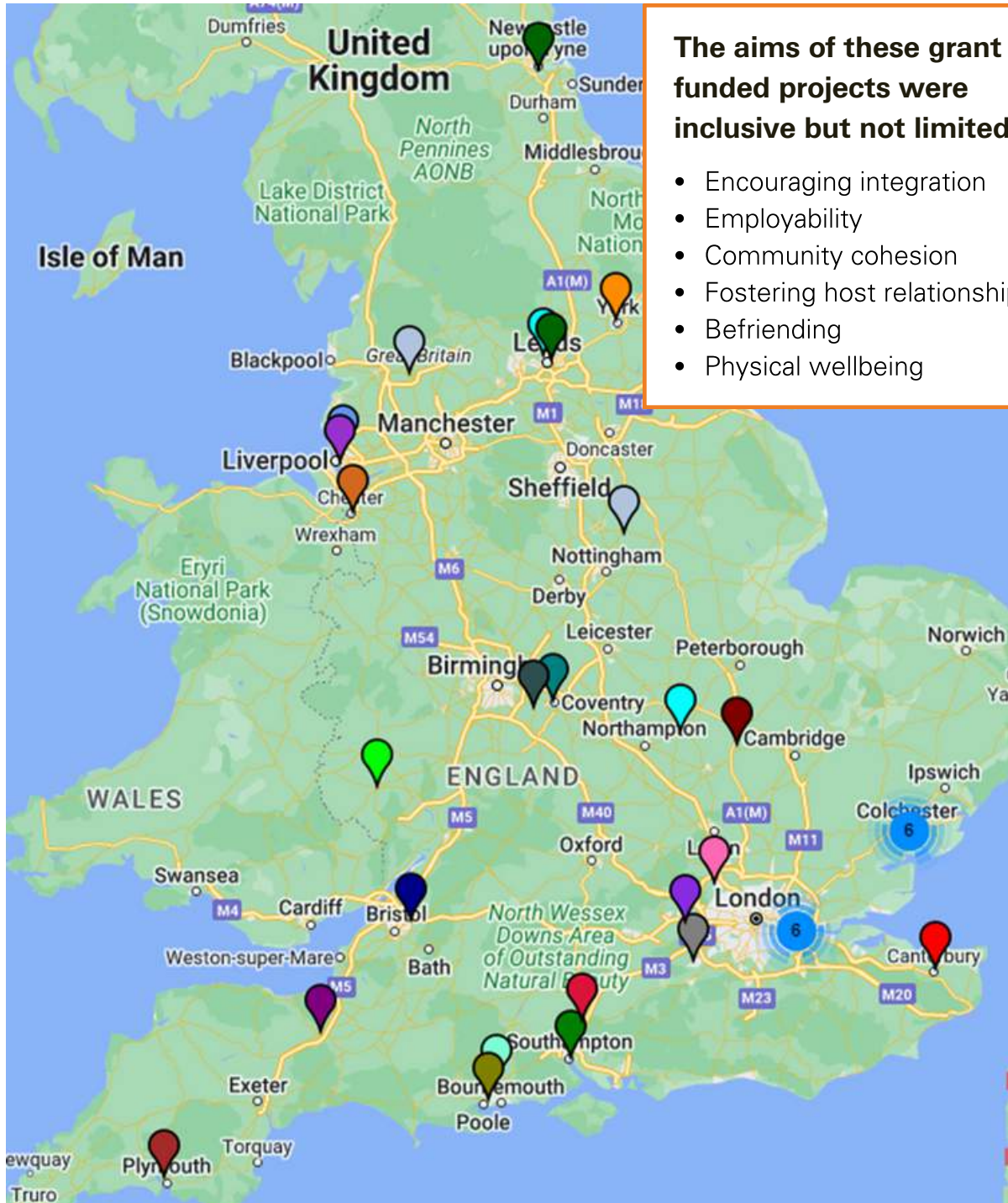
Applications were more likely to come from the most deprived areas in England with 31% of applications coming from areas in the 1-20% deprivation quintile.

Pictured: Together Kent-
Together One Arts Healing
Session with Afghan refugees

SPREAD OF THE 37 SECOND ROUND REFUGEE GRANT PROJECTS

Round 2 Refugee Support Grants
Interactive map [here](#)

As with the first round of funding the second round of projects awarded reflect the ecumenical range of application groups. The grants have been a key support for the work across a range of churches and Christian charities to address the evolving need of the Ukrainian and Afghan refugee communities nationally.



The spread of project locations across England encouraged the reach and accessibility of this Small Grant funding and support for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees.

SMALL GRANTS EVALUATION SURVEY RESULTS

63% of projects reported 'The Grant was crucial for delivering our activities'
The additional 37% reported that 'The Grant provided extra resource to help us deliver these activities'

27/37 project survey responses received
27 grant funded projects reported actively supporting
2081 Ukrainian refugees and
586 Afghan refugees in total during the second round funding period.

Reported impact for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees



81% of projects strongly agreed that the refugees they worked with 'connected with other refugees' during the project.

63% of projects strongly agreed that the refugees they worked with 'were more aware of support/services in the local community.'

52% of projects strongly agreed that the refugees they worked with 'have been able to access ongoing support/have been signposted to longer term support.'

66% of projects strongly agreed that the refugees they worked with 'felt more settled in the local community' by accessing the project.

70% of projects reported their activity would continue to run beyond the period of the grant.

6365+ volunteer hours were mobilised during the first round of Refugee Small Grant projects

Organisational Impact on Christian projects involved

70% of projects strongly feel that their organisation is better respected in the community

63% of projects strongly feel they are now better placed to respond to future challenges.

48% of projects strongly agreed and 48% somewhat agreed that they had developed new partnerships with other local Churches or Christian organisations

56% of projects strongly agreed that their organisation has more knowledge and experience of fundraising or project management



WINDSOR BAPTIST CHURCH- ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD, THE SOUTH EAST



Quotes from Ukrainian refugees participating in the project

"I come every day, I want to cook for you everyday"!!

"Thank you for everything you are doing for us, we appreciate it so much, it is very special".

A space for peer support, promoting a greater sense of autonomy, increased confidence and practical support for Ukrainian refugees were key themes of the grant funded activities at Windsor Baptist Church.

Changing working patterns of Ukrainian refugees and gatekeeping by the local council were cited as challenges. However, the church sought to publicise their activities and the support available through WhatsApp and Facebook which are proven avenues of good communication with refugee communities.

The Refugee Support Small Grant supported:

- A weekly after school family support group, attracting 12 Ukrainian families.
- A weekly drop-in session for up to 15 Ukrainian adults.
- Easter and May half-term craft activity sessions.
- Twice-weekly cooking sessions led by Ukrainians to serve the weekly activities.

The project activities focus on language skills, job-seeking, housing support, children's education and alleviating fearfulness and homesickness.

Windsor Baptist Church has built a growing understanding of the ways in which they can support Ukrainian Refugees considering both the need to integrate and retain identity. The church found cooking together served to strengthen a sense of community for Ukrainian refugees alongside material provision and increased cohesion with members of the established Windsor community.



VINEYARD 53 - CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER, THE NORTHWEST

"I have learnt so much about the Afghan culture, the difficulties and trauma the women have faced, but also seen their resilience and courage in the face of all their difficulties. I have loved seeing the compassion and love given by the team of older British women, who knew very little about the Afghan culture or what to expect as they offered their time and skills. It has been a complete joy to see friendships develop between these two very different groups of people."

- Tracey Guthrie, Project Lead

A Refugee Support Small Grant enabled Vineyard 53 to continue facilitating their weekly refugee women's group with Afghan refugees living in a local bridging hotel in Chester. With the funding they were able to scale up their offer and provide more structured sewing activities by purchasing 10 new sewing machines and additional sewing equipment. After consultation with the women, making a traditional Afghan dress for themselves and their daughters and fabric in specific colours was selected and ordered for their dresses.

Vineyard 53 had volunteers from a variety of churches (partnering through welcome churches) in addition to some volunteers from a local sewing group. On average 25 ladies came each week over the 10 weeks of the project (April – June 2023). A total of 40 dresses were completed.

25 of the Afghan women participating in the project completed a survey:

- 100% Strongly agreed they felt less isolated in their hotel rooms since coming to the sewing group
- 96% Strongly agreed they felt more comfortable practising speaking English since coming to the group

"Two of the women who came were professional seamstresses in Afghanistan. They took the lead in supporting the other women in the hotel and have had opportunities to make a number of clothing items during the week. They are currently considering how they would start their own business (Seamstress / alterations / repairs / making new clothes) when they find their own accommodation.... Being part of the group has given them an opportunity to think through how they may run their business and what they need to get set up."



CHARIS- SOMERSET, THE SOUTHWEST

A Refugee Support Small Grant enabled CHARIS to address the lack of English language beginner classes for newly arrived Ukrainian refugees in the Taunton area of Somerset. CHARIS established 3 beginner classes per week for Ukrainian refugees at the CHARIS centre in Taunton, which were run from 1st March, 2023 through 30th June, 2023.

52 Ukrainian refugees attended the classes and developed strong peer group relationships as a result.



The feedback from the project at CHARIS was very positive and the classes met an evident need for those Ukrainian refugees seeking to learn English at a beginners level. CHARIS prompted external activities to assist with the development of English language skills in real life settings alongside the classroom based lessons. These activities included trips to the Museum, Library, Cricket Ground. The project also ran theatre workshops with singing and drama, all in English.

At least 6 of the Ukrainian Refugees involved in the classes have found employment, including two who have set up a local Ukrainian café.

"Teaching the Ukrainians has been so rewarding and fun! My favourite aspect was helping them put on their first short play, acting out a simple Ukrainian parable in English, complete with some homemade costumes!"
- Lisa (English teacher at CHARIS)

Quotes from Ukrainian refugees participating in the project

Kristina "We loved the course, the teachers were so helpful!"

Olga: "It really helped me. I especially liked the drama and the trips to the town! I feel so much more confident now."



WOMEN ARISE, LEEDS, WEST YORKSHIRE

"I do love women Arise because it gave me a great chance to get familiar with new ladies from my country. Now I'm in touch with them I can get help and advice from them about some issues which I'm facing here regarding my kids, home, and personal issues. I'm so happy to have lots of friendly friends who we have many things in common which causes me to feel UK is my home."

Quote from Afghan Refugee participating in the project

A Refugee Support Small Grant enabled Women Arise to develop weekly wellbeing sessions engaging with Afghan refugee women living in two bridging hotels in Leeds. ESOL classes were a central resource of the sessions alongside activities and support focusing on the mental health of the women who had been living in the hotel for over a year.

The Refugee Support Small Grant enabled:

- Partnership working with the council to run wellbeing activities and discussion groups.
- Partnership working with Touchstone Mental Health Support worker who also supported as an interpreter.
- ESOL classes at Women Arise (hosted at Bridge Community Church) with support from Iranian volunteers who can speak Farsi and provide support for the women engaging with their tutor.
- Refugee week activities at Women Arise with speakers, activities and food, providing a welcome and opportunity to share stories.

Refugee week activities were key events in the running of the project. Kaneez Khan, the local Near Neighbours coordinator, and a local councillor spoke at an event hosted by Women Arise at Bridge Community Church. 80 individuals attended from different community groups with 24 Afghan Women and 7 of their children from the hotel. This was an opportunity to show support to the women and establish community links beyond the hotels for the women who noted feelings of isolation as a particular challenge.



Women Arise have now been able to connect with the council workers working to house the families and establish a good link with them. When families are housed in Leeds, the council will encourage them to come to Women Arise in September to access the ongoing programme of activities and support.

Photos taken at the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church Bexleyheath Spring Fayre

Deep Dive: Second round Refugee Small Grants

Building on our findings from the first round 'deep dive' visits, the second round deep dive provided an additional opportunity to gain further insight into the development of refugee support projects. Establishing spaces for peer support was notable within the second round as refugees who are further along in the resettlement process support newer arrivals. The importance of shared experience as a foundation for community building should not be underestimated. The stories and qualitative data from these projects complement and add depth to the quantitative data collected from the second round Small Grant Evaluation Survey results and stories shared with us by projects.



Project included as second round deep dive visits:

- Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church
- Christ First Watford
- Emmaus Transformation Trust (The Lighthouse Ukrainian hub)

As both Ukrainian and Afghan refugee projects become more established, themes such as increased trust, growing relationships with host churches/organisations and growth of community and integration were significant. From interviews, we heard and observed the significant ways the second round funding had enabled the progression of key aspects of refugee support projects. These activities are developed from a foundation of local knowledge and acute understanding of the need of refugees locally by project leads.



CHRIST FIRST WATFORD



As part of the Welcome Church network, Christ First Watford has been providing regular support and activities for over a year to 300 refugees from Afghanistan who are currently residing in an isolated hotel. They have also been working in partnership with the local city council to help refugee students settle into school, organizing school uniform and school equipment for children. The Refugee Support Small Grant was used to provide a youth club, ladies driving lessons and access to a sport facility where participants can play football, volleyball and cricket practice. The project had a key focus on mental health and wellbeing support as well as integration with many Afghan refugees staying at hotels for far longer than they would have foreseen. During the CUF deep dive visit Andy, a project lead, shared the importance of the grant funded youth provision at the project for the wellbeing of young Afghan refugees.

Pictured: Space for young Afghan Refugees to socialise developed by Christ First Watford

‘The biggest thing is the relationships we have built with the refugees, they consider us as friends and have managed to build mutual trust. The relationship goes beyond the hotel and we are helping them once they have left the hotel. Some are moving to other areas in the UK and we keep in touch with them on WhatsApp. We are keeping in touch with about 10+ families that have left the hotels. We have become a community. This project has really helped us to provide Afghan refugee kids a safe space play and have fun. The transformation of the hotel to include a play area is an amazing achievement we are proud of. We now see 20 kids all giddy and smiling, lining up to access the youth centre and its provisions.’- Andy (project lead)

STORY

‘We arrived at the hotel, me, my wife and our 5 kids, my wife was pregnant too. We saw there was some activities and I asked how to get involved. We found out about the project and the church from word of mouth.

We never expected to be in the hotel for a long time. There are so many restrictions in a hotel especially for young kids and people. The best part is the activities for the young kids, there isn’t much to do in the hotel but the youth services here are amazing. They have helped us with our kids offering them fun activities for them to do and also as we welcomed a new baby they helped us with baby essentials. When we arrived, we didn’t have much at all, no baby equipment or essentials, the church provided these for us. My son plays football in the sessions now and we cheer him on.’

-Afghan refugee, participating in the project

EMMAUS TRANSFORMATION TRUST (THE LIGHTHOUSE UKRAINIAN HUB), WOKING

Working in partnership with the Emmaus Transformation Trust, the grant funding enabled The Lighthouse Ukrainian Hub to deliver self-employment workshops, social media training workshops and alterations, repairs and sewing workshops and a series of wellbeing activities such as arts and crafts. Improving mental health, English language skills and employability are central to the work of the project. A Ukrainian Hosts Group also has a space to meet at the hub where 10-14 hosts attend regularly and share their experiences and support each other in the hosting responsibility.

The Lighthouse has a significant reach with 140 Ukrainian refugees attending the hub during the school holidays. As many of these individuals have now found employment and school places for their children, 90 Ukrainian refugees regularly attend the hub within term times. English classes take place at the hub, a beginners class for older Ukrainians, an elementary and an intermediate class and also 1:1 tuition for teenagers.

Yara who teaches the English beginners class is a Ukrainian refugee from Kiev and came to the UK in May 2022. She shared her experience during the CUF Deep Dive visit:

‘So really my motto with the classes is to like help people and give them that help they need for the language for their everyday life. A lot of my students are already working but sometimes they need the language to communicate with their employers or also with teachers. Mums managing with the school for their children, they will come and say ‘Yara I have a message from the school and I didn’t really understand what they want’, so we can help.’

Peer support has become a key support the Ukrainian hub can provide with those further along in settling in the UK assisting newer arrivals. This is a growing theme across the second round Refugee Small Grant projects as streams of support have become more established.

‘I feel as a part of a big community, it's like a family, a big family and the most important thing for me now is that I feel that someone needs me and I can give something to people. For me this is very important because when I'm far from my country and there are many people there who are fighting for survival for my country to be alive and exist. It's so important for me to do at least something just to progress towards that here, that purpose you know that aim’

STORY



Pictured: Yara at The Lighthouse

UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH (SPRING FAYRE, 21ST MAY 2023), BEXLEYHEATH

“We have a lot of female refugees some older, younger, with kids. We do have a certain age group female over 60, similar to my mom. For this age it's very difficult for them to integrate. So these kinds of events (Spring Fayre) you know remind them of back home and to say 'look, we care about you we want to build a community'. We try to cater for this need specifically and have English classes for 60 plus year olds with a Ukrainian teacher and that's all down to grant help.’

Olesya (Project lead)

Hosted by Christ Church Bexleyheath, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church operates as a meeting point for Ukrainian refugees for traditional church services, social activities, English lessons, craft clubs and yoga classes. Olesya Deyman, the project lead, shared the history of this orthodox church parish established in July 2022 and run on a voluntary basis as a response to the need to Ukrainian refugees to meet together. A 'holistic' approach to supporting Ukrainian refugees meeting spiritual, material and social need, is central to the operation of the church and their work.

Fundraising to support those who remain in Ukraine is a key aspect of the activities of the church and motivation of events like the Ukrainian Spring Fayre attended by CUF. Sharing Ukrainian dishes, selling traditional craft and performances of Ukrainian music were central aspects of the fayre and a draw for Ukrainian refugees based across East London. The shared motivation to do something together to support those back home in Ukraine, is key to convening individuals and strengthening community.

Pictured: Olesya serving food at the event



Feedback from Marina (Ukrainian Refugee and Spring Fayre guest)

‘Events like this (Spring Fayre) bring many Ukrainians together, I’ve been to things like this across London and it is good for our community to be together at this time. Particularly for my mum and dad these places are like a part of home for them and a place to relax and chat. My mum is learning more English all the time but needs to have more confidence to speak sometimes. They are learning English and also with their host family but at an event like this they can chat to everyone and feel at home.’

- The Refugee Small Grant is the first external funding the project has received and has significantly increased the profile of the Ukrainian orthodox church parish