

Creating Ground

IMPACT REPORT 2024/2025

Creativity for Wellbeing, Connection and Change

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FOUNDER'S FOREWORD



This report gives me the opportunity to look back at what we have achieved in 2024-2025 and reflect on where we want to go next, as we enter into our 10th year.

I am so proud of the organisation we are today. I can see all our key values clearly reflected in all our work and so much growth in everyone who comes to CG and in us as a community.

The value that definitely stood out for me this year is 'strength in unity'. I hope you can also notice it vividly when reading this report.

We have demonstrated strength in unity in our creative activities where our members have shared their skills and welcomed new women with kindness and openness; in our creativity for wellbeing sessions where we have embarked on a journey to explore our feelings, share our emotions and with bravery find new ways to look after ourselves and improve our wellbeing; in our social action work where together we have used our difficult stories to engage in conversation with key stakeholders to influence change at local and national level, especially around housing, access to health services and sanctuary.

We have collaborated with so many key partners and received support from different funders as you will see in this report.

Receiving an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Greenwich this year was so meaningful and special as I shared the joy and pride with many of the women from CG. Despite a difficult year on a personal level, I stayed strong thanks to the unity, solidarity and support from all the women who come to CG, my team, all our partners and supporters.

My wish for CG this year is to grow deeper roots to become even more stable and robust, to be even more grounded to be able to face different challenges and welcome joyfully and strongly new opportunities.

What I wish for myself, for the team, for all CG women and leaders and for the entire organisation is to use that strength to become even more present, authentic, active and alert: to use every opportunity, every day to be the best we can be.

Laura Marziale, Founder and Director

WHO WE ARE

Creating Ground CIC was set up in 2016 to create spaces for cross-cultural learning and sharing, and to create more connected communities through the arts and educational projects.

Our work is collaborative and led by migrant women, many of whom have been impacted by the UK hostile environment and who want to take action, using art and creative methods, to create stronger communities and to become agents of change.

WHAT WE DO:

**Creative projects using
drama and the arts**

**Social action projects
and campaigns**

Research and Evaluation

**Professional
Development Training**

MAIN PROJECTS IN 2024/2025:

Dance - weekly dance sessions led by partner Protein Dance at Brookhill Children's Centre

Creatively Together - weekly creative sessions that included special day trips

Online Yoga - weekly accessible, gentle online yoga sessions

Creativity for Wellbeing - weekly creative sessions focused on wellbeing and connecting to local services

My Creative Skills - weekly creative sessions to further develop skills

Stronger Together - weekly meetings to work on *#NoticeUs* campaign and focus on Stronger Together Leaders' development journeys

Stronger Together Forums - series of forums to bring together different stakeholders to further *#NoticeUs* campaign and discuss other issues related to Temporary Accommodation

Understanding Policy Making - weekly history project with UCL for Stronger Together Leaders

Theatre in Action - weekly theatre sessions to develop performances to accompany *#NoticeUs* campaign and tackle health inequalities

Community Action & Leadership training - bespoke courses run by Stronger Together Leaders for new members interested in becoming community leaders

Greenwich Migrant Community Research Forums - series of forums to map services used by migrant communities in Greenwich as part of MigRefHealth project

NUMBERS TO SHARE

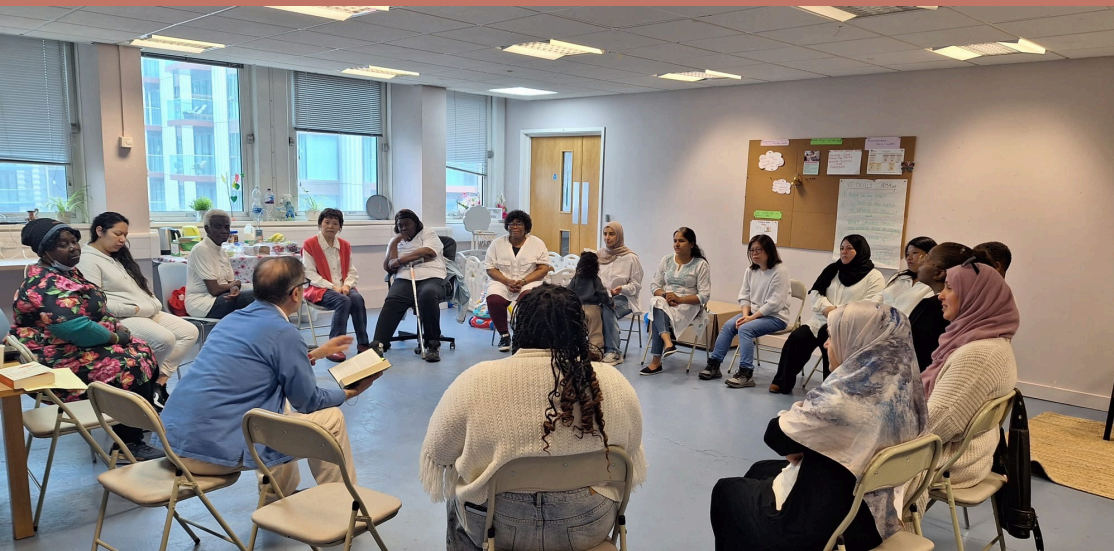
- 4000+** audience members heard us sing our *#NoticeUs* campaign song at national Citizens UK events
- 1033** online views of our Creative Outputs
- 400+** visitors to our Refugee Week event at Queen's House, Royal Museums Greenwich
- 329** hours of regular creative activities
- 157** key stakeholders, decision-makers and community members attended our 3 Stronger Together Forums
- 34** new participants joined our various projects
- 31** different countries of origin represented across our projects
- 3** new Creative Outputs: a song, a performance and an animation
- 1** strong, united community



At Creating Ground we have found love, succour, strength, and so many positive things... I am appreciating all my new found friends and family in Creating Ground.



SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN PICTURES



MAY Moving in to SET Space and having our own space for our activities and workshops



JUNE Taking over the Queen's House, Royal Museums Greenwich for Refugee Week 2024 showcasing UCL History Project



JULY Stronger Together Leader Fatiha addressing Angela Rayner at Citizens UK General Election Assembly



JULY Laura's Honorary Doctorate from University of Greenwich for her contribution to public service in the Greenwich community

SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN PICTURES



AUGUST *Bodies of Water* performance with Actors Touring Company and other migrant organisations



DECEMBER Filming *Count Yourself Lucky* performance as a training tool for NHS Local Neonatal & Maternity System



DECEMBER Coming together for a Festive Party at our own space in SET Woolwich



MARCH Screening *Snow Inn Hotel* animation at our Stronger Together Forum

OUR COMMUNITY



CREATIVITY FOR WELLBEING: How we have used creativity to improve our wellbeing across all our projects at Creating Ground



No matter what difficulties we go through outside, when we come here we always laugh.



Many of My Creative Skills project members have been using their new skills acquired in the sessions to improve their wellbeing outside of the project, e.g. using crochet as a mindful activity to do at home

This year we've been able to run regular projects every term focusing on using creativity to improve our wellbeing, to support each other, and to learn about local mental health and wellbeing services. Thanks to support from [University of Greenwich](#), [KeolisAmey Docklands Fund](#), [Greenwich Mental Health Hub](#) and [The National Lottery Community Fund](#).

Thanks to funding from [Greenwich Healthier Communities Fund](#) and support from [Brookhill Children's Centre](#), we've also been able to run regular movement sessions including Dance with partner [Protein Dance](#) and Online Yoga. These have been hugely beneficial in improving physical health, especially for those who would have otherwise faced barriers in accessing such sessions. Participants have also reported the positive impact on their mental health from engaging in physical activities, as the two are so connected.



I enjoy dancing, being physically active, learning different dance steps from different countries and how to express our thoughts and emotions by using different parts of our body.



IN CONVERSATION WITH KAREN

Stronger Together Leader and Ballon Decorations Master



"Being with Creating Ground made me feel like I'm a part of something, part of a family... You sit, you eat, you laugh, and that's family ... The friendships are more than a family because the things that you relate about there, you don't really relate about with family."

"You feel valued, wanted. People there show me so much love and I don't have to feel like I'm disabled because the way they do things for me lets me know that 'yes, you're a part of us'."

“

I'm where I wanted to be, I'm at a place that I want to be and a place that wants me to be there.

”

"I wouldn't say I'm good at reading... not confident, and being with Creating Ground it makes you feel that whether you can or can't read, it makes you feel more confident, it gives you that push. You know that you're not going to be left out. It gives you the chance to pick up and makes you learn."

"I'm proud about being a Housing Officer in the play and being the midwife in *Count Yourself Lucky*... Going to school, I always see they're doing plays and they have their scripts and I always said to myself I wish I could be in one of those plays, but because of my reading ability, I said I don't think that those are for me, but being with Creating Ground, especially with Erene, she will say, 'Karen, you can do it, take this paper and do it. I know you can do it. Go home and study it. I know you can do it.'"



“

In the sessions we have a good laugh and it makes you feel happy going home.

”

CREATIVITY FOR CONNECTION: How we have used creativity to connect within Creating Ground and our wider community



- Dancing as part of Protein's Refugee Week Celebration with over 100 community members
- Singing our *#NoticeUs* song at Citizens UK Mayoral Elections Assembly and General Election Assembly to over 4000 audience members
- Bringing together over 350 members of Greenwich Council, community members, and local organisations at our Stronger Together Forums and performances
- Hosting a Refugee Week event at The Queen's House, Royal Museums Greenwich with over 400 visitors that day!



I have made new friends, have become more sociable, connected with people I would have never met normally.



100%

of creative project participants said that attending the projects made them feel part of a community



IN CONVERSATION WITH PHILOMINA

Stronger Together Leader and Jollof Rice Expert



"I've learned a lot of things, arts and crafts, many things ... the little things that we do, drawings, using clay to mould our faces, all those things will make you focus and concentrate. It will take your mind off thinking, take your mind off every other thing that is disturbing your head ... you will just be focused on that thing. It will bring you back together. And that is what I really really really appreciate."



I feel better and happy because I meet friends, I meet other people. We encourage each other, even if you cannot, when things are tough, we encourage each other.



"Because of my ill health, mental health, I was not even able to walk... they sent me to different therapies... It was not really giving me what I really want. But the dancing at Creating Ground now that I go and it's every week ... I go on a Monday, then throughout the week, I make sure I move here and there. And when I come home, I start dancing ... So it has boosted my strength, my energy, has put me back. I can now walk... If people are moving, I can move with them. Before I couldn't be moving. If I was walking, I would be crying because of the pain. Everything was as if everywhere was so hurting me, but now I'm okay."



Creating Ground has really brought me back to life... it has really revived me.



CREATIVITY FOR CHANGE: How we have used creativity to create change at a local and national level

3

new creative outputs co-created to support our #NoticeUs campaign including a song, a theatre performance *Home In A Bag*, and a short animation *Snow Inn Hotel* with theatre maker and facilitator Erene and artist Lucie

42

audience members of key stakeholders and community partners pledged to take action in response to Plumcroft Primary School students' asks to improve Temporary Accommodation

theground.org.uk/creative-outputs

Influencing our partners in Lewisham

As part of our #NoticeUs campaign, supported by Trust for London, we worked with Greenwich Council to successfully secure WiFi for all Temporary Accommodation (TA) residents. This milestone was a significant step toward improving living conditions and connectivity for those in TA, and now Lewisham Council have agreed to do the same!

We are so proud that our work has had this influence, and so proud to have such incredible partners like Lewisham Refugee Migrant Network as allies. Action by action, step by step, together and stronger, creating meaningful change.

Snow Inn Hotel



Snow Inn Hotel is an animation co-created with Plumcroft Primary School students as we felt the need to show the impact of living in TA from the children's perspective.

We have created something that can be used to support our #NoticeUs campaign and national campaigns. We've already shown it at a forum with Greenwich Housing Officers and at Trust for London and Citizens UK's TA Report Launch event to key national stakeholders. We will keep using it now to raise awareness and to ask for the change the children wanted.

"Breath taking" "Excellent" "Amazing and powerful"

"It was incredibly touching - and very impactful"

The outcomes from the forums:

- Action plans of solutions co-created by everyone in the room
- Working on Storage as a solution through online workshops co-planned and co-facilitated by Stronger Together Leaders
- Running creative reflective sessions for Greenwich Council Housing Officers

Thanks to [Disrupt Foundation](#) for making these forums possible.



I enjoyed being given the time and space to discuss the issues raised and hear from both sides in a relaxed environment.



Stronger Together Forums



Count Yourself Lucky



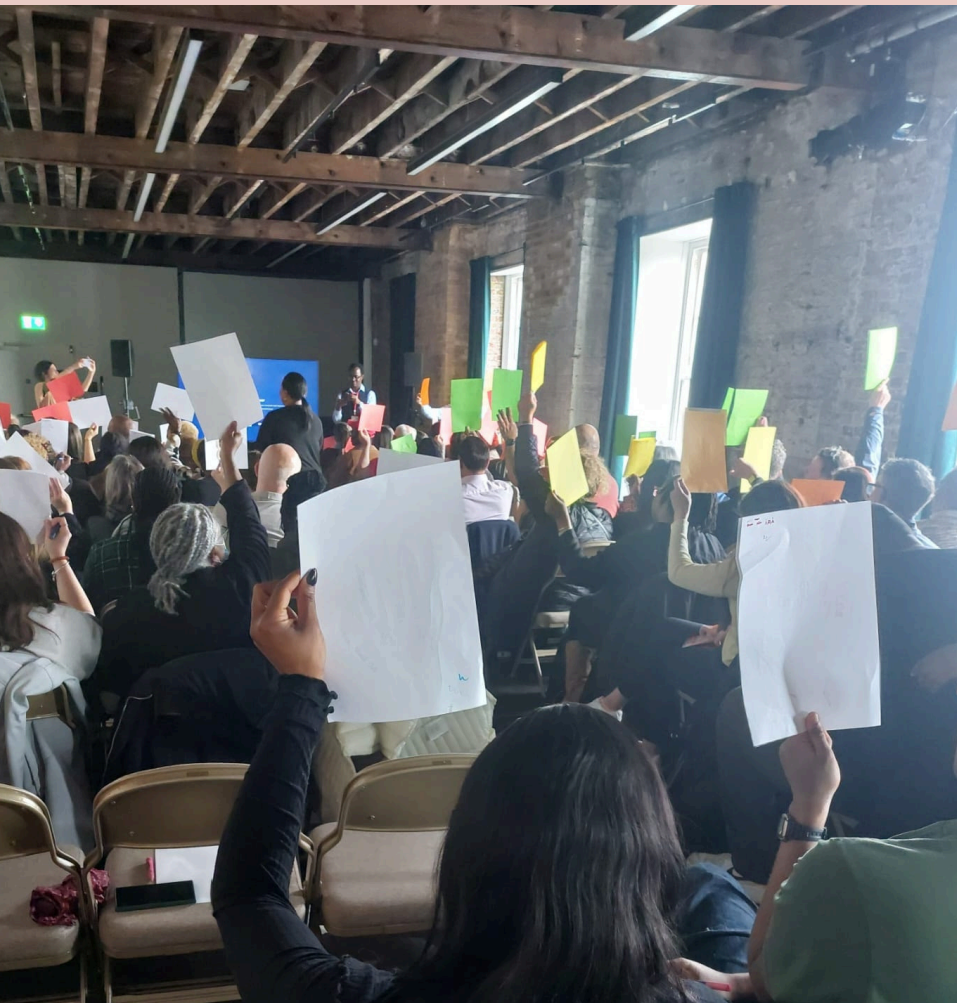
Inspired by our research project in 2023 exploring the barriers migrant women face in accessing maternity care services, we co-created a performance *Count Yourself Lucky* based on the lived experience of migrant women. Following the performance's positive impact, [South East London Local Maternity and Neonatal System](#) commissioned us to film the performance to be used to support staff education and training, and to be distributed more widely to raise awareness and spark meaningful conversations that drive real change.

"By using the learnings from this performance women and birthing people, their families and healthcare professionals can work together more effectively for better maternity and neonatal care in south east London."

([South East London Local Maternity and Neonatal System](#), April 2025)



At Greenwich Council we think that learning from people with lived experience is important... we've been able to do this through the fantastic work of Creating Ground. The **Stronger Together Leaders** at Creating Ground... are professional, knowledgeable and **know how to build strong relationships with people that work for the council** at all levels, from frontline officers to directors in order to effect improvements and change for the wider community. They are good at working with politicians locally and nationally. They are **trained to work in creative and relational ways that are collaborative and help Council staff** to remember how important it is to treat every single person that comes through our doors as homeless as the individuals they are and to be mindful of the needs of children going through homelessness.



We have made **free internet access** available to people living in TA **thanks to this collaboration with Creating Ground** and we have advanced plans to significantly improve the experience of homeless families through our ongoing partnership in many other ways. In April 2025 **more than 80 housing staff joined with Creating Ground** in a local arts centre to watch an incredible animation produced by Years 5 and 6 children with help from Creating Ground portraying life in TA through the eyes of children and to use this as an emotionally informed springboard to bringing about improvements.

We are totally committed to a long, lasting and mutually beneficial relationship with Creating Ground and we can recommend this approach to all local authority homelessness services.

*Shaun Flook, Assistant Director Housing Needs & Tenancy
Housing & Safer Communities, Royal Borough of Greenwich*



LOOKING AHEAD WITH OUR NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



“

I will like to see us build more relationships with policy makers at national level to make a positive change that will promote better temporary accommodation, health and wellbeing outcomes whilst empowering the women and supporting them to achieve their own goals.

Yewande, Non-Executive Director

”

“

We just experienced such a period of growth - lots of efforts blooming in the shape of new leaders, projects and action - strengthening our roots is our obvious next step.



”

“

CG is moving towards the national level to extend our work, especially our campaign. All this success and continuous achievement are due to the commitment, resilience, and perseverance of all the members.

Khadidja, Non-Executive Director

”



I imagine that will be taking some of the great things we do out of instinct and turning it into processes and habits. Systems and frameworks may sound uninspiring, but moving forward with clarity will enable us to move forward and higher together. In the words of Brené Brown, “clarity is kindness” and as we strengthen our roots after a period of growth we can honour the values of Creating Ground and do it together.

Paulina, Non-Executive Director

WHAT OUR ADVISORY BOARD WISHES FOR OUR FUTURE:

Authenticity

Wishes to come true

More smiles

**Collaborative
(biggest strength)**

More success
on national
level

**More women to
bring about
change**

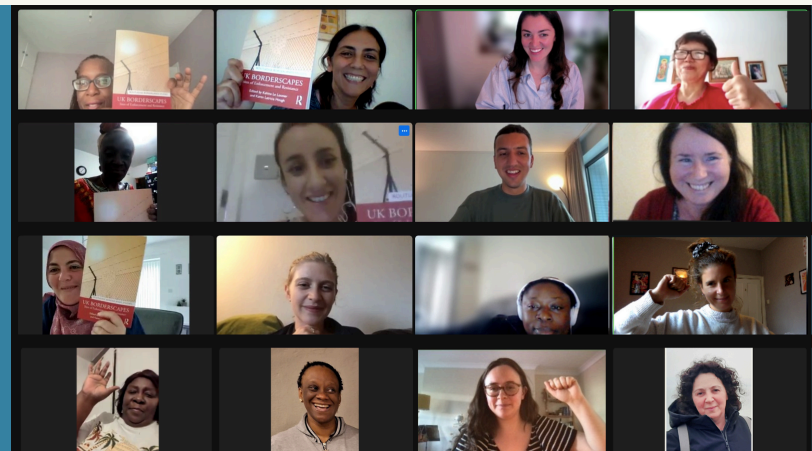
Thoughtful

More laughter

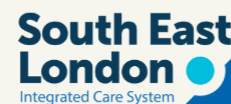
More fun

Genuine

A new
permanent
office



FUNDERS



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

LUCA SILVESTRINI'S

PROTEIN

citizensUK

SET



**HOME
START**
Greenwich

ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

LRMN



HER CENTRE®

WIN

living
refugee
archive

**be
well** hub

NHS

South London
and Maudsley
NHS Foundation Trust



AFRIL
Action For Refugees In Lewisham

ttramshed

**GOOD
FOOD**
in Greenwich

MT
Mike's Table

 **SLRA**




South | London | Listens





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The biggest challenge in writing these reports is trying to squeeze everything in! While that will never be possible, my hope is that it serves as a true celebration of Creating Ground and all the wonderful women who make CG what it is today.

We've progressively been growing in the number of projects we deliver, and thanks to support from People's Postcode Lottery we've been able to record, reflect, and evaluate across multiple activities at a time.

It's such a joy to hear all the feedback from our members and to know we are on the right track, together!

Thank you Laura and all the women at CG for everything I am learning from you each day.



Rose Knight, Project Manager

