



PCAP

Improving lives through education,
leadership and engagement

Impact Assessment Report

Loved, Accepted, Heard Project
April – October 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our charity, the Policy Centre for African Peoples (PCAP, charity registration number 1131139), was founded in the UK in 2008 to enable African and disadvantaged people of all ethnic origins to improve their lives through education, leadership and engagement. To fulfil this mission, we deliver projects in the areas of education, leadership development and social engagement.

Following several surveys throughout 2020 highlighting the disproportionate toll of Covid-19 on the lives and mental health of black women in London, and in accordance with the aforementioned mission, PCAP partnered with the Thelma Matilda Alves Foundation (TMAF) in 2021 to develop a pilot project aimed at supporting the mental health and wellbeing of women of African and Caribbean descent in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, and Westminster over 6 months. The project, called **Loved, Accepted, Heard**, received a grant of **£4,978 from the Greater London Authority (GLA)** for implementation between April and October 2021.

Over these 6 months, we were able to deliver 5 workshops on mental health, wellbeing, and self-care, and 12 wellness and motivational sessions, with a total of 153 programme participants. Participating in this programme provided many women with the opportunity to connect with others, share their experiences, and make their voices heard.

The present report outlines the overall impact of the project and details the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from Loved, Accepted, Heard. Our charity is utterly committed to building on the evidence gathered and the lessons learned to strengthen its capacity to fulfil its mission and consolidate its positive impact in terms of improving the lives of African and disadvantaged people of all ethnic origins.

NARRATIVE REPORT

1. About

Following the overwhelming demand for better healthcare provisions for black and other ethnic minorities from the respondents to the Covid-19 recovery surveys we carried out throughout summer 2020, we designed the project **Loved, Accepted, Heard**, to support the delivery of appropriate mental healthcare services for 250 women of African and Caribbean descent in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, and Westminster over a 6-month period. Such support would enable them to overcome the trauma and loneliness they experienced due to systemic racism, social isolation, and Covid-19. We partnered with the mental health charity Thelma Matilda Alves Foundation (TMAF) to develop this project.

Loved, Accepted, Heard

Do you live in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, or Westminster?

Have you been affected by racism, social isolation or grief caused by Covid?

Are you a woman of African or Caribbean descent?

The new Loved, Accepted, Heard programme offers you:

- Support tailored to your needs
- Wellbeing and motivational sessions
- Opportunities to connect with other women with similar experiences.

Contact info@pcap.org.uk or 07765 4142 74 for registration and more details.

PCAP Improving lives through education & engagement

Thelma Matilda Alves Foundation

SUPPORTED BY MAYOR OF LONDON



2. Project Progress against the Original Aims and Objectives Outlined in the Application

We were able to:

- Successfully carry out social media campaigns to demystify and address mental health among black and other ethnic minority communities and meet our target of having approximately 2,000 indirect beneficiaries.
- Deliver 5 workshops on mental health, wellbeing, and self-care, and 12 wellness and motivational sessions, with a total of 153 programme participants (less than the original 250 target).
- Elevate the voices of our beneficiaries and provide them with opportunities to connect and share stories.
- Develop our partnership with TMAF; successfully pilot this project, leading to an effective proof of concept; strengthen our programme development skills, and raise PCAP and TMAF's profile.

3. Use of Grant

We used the grant for the items listed in the original budget including outreach and publicity, staff, resources, monitoring and evaluation.

4. Key Achievements from Partnership Work

Thanks to this partnership, TMAF developed its DBS disclosure infrastructure following help from PCAP; it also improved its project management capacity, including financial reporting. TMAF also developed its ability to write a partnership agreement, and greatly expanded its network of contacts.

**Thelma
Matilda
Alves
Foundation**



This partnership enabled PCAP to increase its knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing: mental health and wellbeing elements are now included in all PCAP's programmes, and PCAP gained 3 qualified mental health professionals as volunteers.

Our organisations have been able to develop a theory of change and impact assessment tools in relation to wellbeing, mental health and self-care. Furthermore, both PCAP and TMAF now have the capacity to expand and deliver this programme in the long term. In addition, PCAP is now part of Ahead Together SC1, a partnership including Lambeth and Southwark Councils, 3 local NHS Trusts, King's College London and Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation to improve health outcomes for local the communities.



5. Challenges

One of the main challenges we encountered was time: we realised that 6 months was not enough time for the project to fulfil its full potential. Covid-19 also proved very challenging: the pandemic restrictions forced us to abandon the delivery of our face-to-face sessions, and this reduced the number of our direct beneficiaries, from the planned 250 to 153.

6. Biggest Learning

Our biggest learning was the validation of our methods (including storytelling, African wellbeing and relaxation techniques) from our supporters and beneficiaries. We were quite apprehensive at the beginning because PCAP and TMAF were not as well-established as big mainstream mental health charities. But we got overwhelming support from our target beneficiaries, and this is illustrated by the fact that we got invitations from African Caribbean societies in universities in South London and delivered 2 workshops to them.

7. Elements' Value and Support Improvement

The Organisational Strengths Review for each partner, and the consultancy support to the partnership, which we received from the Foundation for Social Improvement, were both very valuable to PCAP and TMAF: our charities learnt a lot and have greatly benefited from these elements in terms of self-knowledge, project management, organisational assessment, and partnership. The incubator support offered to our partnership could be improved by offering more support tailored to the specific needs of each charity.

Our recommendation would be for the funders to consider including core funding in future calls for applications: a lot of the small organisations lack basic infrastructure, and core funding could help fill this gap. Also, most organisations led by ethnic minority groups deal with cross-cutting issues that are best tackled in a holistic way, and through the flexibility that core funding provides.

THEORY OF CHANGE

About

Through this project, we were able to develop a Theory of Change where we identified the necessary short-term, medium-term, and long-term changes required to achieve our intended impact of improved mental health and wellbeing for women of African and Caribbean descent. Given that the project ran for no more than 6 months, only the short-term changes are captured in this report. As we seek to extend and expand this project in the future, we hope to achieve the medium and long-term changes identified below.

Short-Term Changes

The following short-term changes were achieved:

- 93 women and 60 female students of African and Caribbean descents increased their knowledge on mental health and wellbeing. Their understanding of common symptoms of anxiety and depression improved as well as their awareness of self-care techniques.
- 100% of the participants reported in the feedback forms that they knew where to go for help and support following the 5 workshops, and knew more about the local services and helplines available to them.
- 100% of participants in the 12 wellness and motivational sessions expressed satisfaction, and 95% stated their newly acquired awareness of the power of collective storytelling and story sharing, and African-inspired wellbeing techniques.

Medium-Term Changes

We have identified the need for these changes in the medium-term to strengthen our impact:

- Increased confidence of students/women to engage with and tackle their mental health and wellbeing. Women should have more confidence to seek help and potentially respond to minor triggers.
- Women/students have improved access to mental health and wellbeing services.
- Mental health charities become more confident to seek support/ advice from PCAP and TMAF and collaborate with them.
- Stakeholders are convinced of our evidence-based wellbeing techniques, and ability to help people.

Long-Term Changes

We have established that the following changes are required in the long-term to consolidate our legacy through this or similar projects:

- Participants have increased self-esteem. Their belief that they can overcome their problems should be increased and any level of shame felt regarding their wellbeing should be decreased.
- More women of African and Caribbean descent receive culturally relevant support. They should feel that they received empathy when supported and understanding of cultural differences which may impact their mental health and wellbeing.
- Wellbeing and self-care courses are co-created with churches/ community leaders/ NHS trusts/ local authorities.
- PCAP/TMAF are commissioned to provide long-term mental health and wellbeing programmes.

CONCLUSION

Our biggest learning was the validation of our methods (including storytelling and African wellbeing and relaxation techniques) from our supporters and beneficiaries. To help increase our body of evidence regarding our African-inspired relaxation and wellbeing techniques, we intend to work with psychologists and academics on future projects revolving around wellbeing and self-care.



**FIVEWAYS
HEALTH
DAY**

Thursday 4 November 2021 / 11am to 3pm

With a free hot lunch served at 12 noon and free IT help (computers, tablets and phones) throughout the day.

Stay fit and healthy as we head in to winter with:

- Health advice and support
- Blood pressure checks
- Help with maintaining a healthy weight
- Vaccine advice
- Mental health and you
- Keep fit starter sessions

**Myatts Field North Community Centre,
24 Crawshay Road, London, SW9 6FZ**

For more information about this event or want to book a stall for future events
email: tjactiongroup@gmail.com or ring 07799 621 582.

Logos for partners: Fiveways, PCN, PCAP, irMO, CHIPS, BRITIXON ENERGY, mlg, mfp, and a vertical logo for 'OUR OWN SUNSHINE'.

While we redesigned the Loved, Accepted, Heard project so that it could be delivered online, the ongoing pandemic has continued to pose difficulties for us. We did not reach our intended target of 250 women and instead had 153 participants. We have learned that we need to make more effort to engage people who are not online.

To increase PCAP's reach, we have already started to consolidate links and collaborate with local organisations that can help us recruit more beneficiaries from the local community. An illustration of this is the Fiveways Health Day we co-organised in November 2021 in partnership with several Lambeth-based organisations. Our recent rental of an office in Lewisham will greatly contribute towards the acceleration and strengthening of this process.