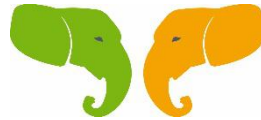


Social Effectiveness Research Centre



South Riverside Community Development Centre: Believe/Credu II Project

Year 2 Evaluation Report

(January 2024 – January 2025)

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I. Introduction and Methodology



Believe/Credu
Weekly Timetable (Women only)

Mondays
10am Move It Monday Walk meet @Brunel Street, CF11 6ES

Tuesdays
3.30pm-5.30pm Renew & Recycle @Riverside Warehouse, Machen Place, CF11 6EQ (child-care for children 5+ available)

Wednesdays
10am-12pm Read & Write Sessions @Brunel Street, CF11 6ES
10am-12pm Intro Into Social Care @Brunel Street, CF11 6ES from Wednesday 29th January (8 weeks)
12pm-1pm Friends & Neighbours (FAN) English Conversation practice @Brunel Street, CF11 6ES

Thursdays
10am-12pm Basic Sewing @Riverside Warehouse, Machen Place, CF11 6EQ
10am-12pm Intro Into Human Rights from Thursday 30th January (8 weeks)

Fridays
10am-12pm Digital Literacy- Brunel Street, CF11 6ES

Other training
Monday 20th January 10am, CV & Interview techniques @Brunel Street, CF11 6ES

These sessions are for clients of the Believe/Credu Project
email sharon@srcdc.org.uk for further information

  @SRCDC  @SRCDC_Cardiff www.srcdc.org.uk 

“SRCDC helped me to learn new things, interact with new people and encouraged me to know about other cultures including Wales. [I am] now working full-time at a local nursery and training to become a [local] walk leader. I am also taking confidence-building cycling lessons to enable me to ride to work. Thank you SRCDC and the team for these great initiatives for women.”

Year 2 participant, Believe/Credu II project

Believe II (or ‘Credu II’ in Welsh) is a project delivered by South Riverside Community Development Centre (SRCDC). The project began in January 2023 and will run until January 2026. It is a continuation of an earlier project (also called Believe/Credu) that SRCDC ran between May 2019 and May 2022.

As its predecessor project also did, Believe/Credu II works with Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women aged 25 or over who are unemployed, have caring or parenting responsibilities, and/or who lack formal qualifications or employability skills. In doing this,

Believe/Credu II seeks to achieve the following key impact, as recorded in its project logic model (or 'theory of change'), namely that: *"Black, Asian and other ethnic minority women living in South Riverside have improved employability and quality of life."*

Again as its predecessor had been, the Believe/Credu II project is funded through a grant from the Henry Smith Charity's 'Improving Lives' fund. This will provide £179,900 in financial support in total over the project's three-year lifetime. The six priority areas of activity that the fund seeks to support are as follows:

- Help at a critical moment
- Positive choices
- Accommodation/housing support
- Employment and training
- Financial inclusion, rights and entitlements
- Support networks and family.

The two areas that Believe/Credu II is primarily funded to address through its activities are the fourth and sixth areas in this list (so 'Employment and training' and 'Support networks and family').

All of the participants in the second year of Believe/Credu II, as had also been the case for its first year, were drawn from local Black, Asian or other minority communities in South Riverside or surrounding areas in Cardiff, most often from communities of South Asian (especially Bangladeshi) or African origin living in the area.

In Wales as a whole, rates of economic inactivity are much higher for Asian or Asian Welsh/British (36.4%) and Black/African/Caribbean Welsh/British (42.4%) women than for White women of any nationality (24.2%), with other ethnic groups or those with mixed ethnic backgrounds also having higher rates of economic inactivity (at 24.5% and 31.6% respectively).¹

Non-White groups conversely also have lower employment rates than White groups, with women with Asian or Asian Welsh/British ethnicities the lowest at only 54%, with White rates almost 20% higher.²

¹ Llywodraeth Cymru/Welsh Government, 'Labour market analysis by protected characteristics (Annual Population Survey): April 2004 to March 2021' (16 December 2021), p.26, available at: <https://www.gov.wales/labour-market-analysis-protected-characteristics-annual-population-survey-april-2004-march-2021-html#87060> <accessed February 2025>.

² Ibid, p.22.

Additional research has also found that job applications from people with ‘white-sounding’ names are 74% more likely to get called for an interview (or receive other kinds of positive responses in relation to a given job) than people with ‘ethnic minority sounding’ names.³

Black, Asian and other minority ethnic individuals are also over-represented in low-paid and precarious jobs, as well as under-represented in senior positions, and more likely to be overqualified than their White British counterparts.⁴ Partly as a result of this, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women are more likely to be self-employed than White British women.⁵

Research has found too that most ethnic minority groups in Wales are economically less secure in general compared to the White population of the country. This is partly due to ethnic minorities’ positions of disadvantage in relation to employment, which result in both ethnicity and gender pay gaps, as well as a higher rate of persistent poverty among Black, Asian and other minority ethnic households.⁶

Ethnic minority women in Wales had been already hit disproportionately by austerity and welfare reform even prior to the coronavirus pandemic.⁷ These pre-existing issues were then exacerbated significantly by the effects of the pandemic. Women in Wales were more likely to have lost their job due to a business closing down because of COVID than men, with 18% of women experiencing job loss for this reason compared to 11% of men.⁸

The data also showed that in general Black, Asian and other minority ethnic people were twice as likely to have lost working hours compared to White people (48% versus 23%).⁹

Finally, and considering barriers to employment even more widely, other research has found that experiences of violence and abuse for some minority ethnic groups can feed into the way they feel about their local area, leading to a sense of isolation. According to the research, “[b]arriers to accessing healthcare, sport and leisure exist, particularly for people from [Black,

³ A. Sippitt, ‘Job applicants with ethnic minority sounding names are less likely to be called for interview’ (Full Fact, 26 October 2015), available at: <https://fullfact.org/economy/job-applicants-ethnic-minority-sounding-names-are-less-likely-be-called-interview/> <accessed February 2025>.

⁴ H. Turkmen, ‘Triple Glazed Ceiling: Barriers to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Women Participating in the Economy’ (Chwarae Teg, July 2019), p.11., available at: https://chwaraeteg.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/TGC-Barriers-to-BAME-Women_full-report.pdf <accessed February 2025>.

⁵ Ibid, p.13.

⁶ Ibid, p.18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ M. Evans, ‘Half of mothers in Wales are struggling to make ends meet’ (WEN Wales, 25 March 2021), available at: <https://wenwales.org.uk/press-release-half-of-mothers-in-wales-are-struggling-to-make-ends-meet/> <accessed February 2025>.

⁹ Ibid.

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Asian and other minority ethnic] groups or for whom English is an additional language”, something which “can further compound feelings of loneliness and not belonging”.¹⁰

Members of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities also reported higher rates of anxiety and feelings of isolation in comparison with rates reported by their White counterparts; one in four people from ethnic minority groups reported being lonely in Wales in 2017/18, for example, compared to one in six of those who were White.¹¹

In order to continue the work begun by its predecessor project to provide redress against these kinds of issues, Believe/Credu II seeks to achieve the following outcomes in its support for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women:

- Beneficiaries of the project will have increased soft skills (including communication, teamwork, problem solving).
- Beneficiaries of the project will have improved digital skills relating to the workplace.
- Beneficiaries of the project will demonstrate increased use of functional English and/or increased levels of literacy/numeracy.
- Beneficiaries of the project will have improved understanding of the financial implications of transitioning into work.
- Beneficiaries of the project will be closer to the labour market as a result of the project.

The project sought to achieve these outcomes in part by fulfilling a series of annual output targets relating to those outcomes. The following table outlines those targets for the planned three-year lifetime of Believe/Credu II as a whole, along with the project’s actual performance against those targets at the end of its second year:

WHOLE PROJECT OUTPUT INDICATORS (TOTAL TARGET NUMBER FOR YEARS 1 TO 3 COMBINED)	ACTUAL NUMBERS ACHIEVED (BY THE END OF YEAR 2)
• 120 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries will be supported to improve	83

¹⁰ E. Ogbonna et al, ‘First Minister’s BAME COVID-19 Advisory Group: Report of the Socioeconomic Subgroup’ (Welsh Government, 22 June 2020), p.6, available at: <https://gov.wales/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-covid-19-socioeconomic-subgroup-report> <accessed February 2025>.

¹¹ Ibid.

their employability and quality of life over the lifetime of the project	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries will have had work experience opportunities 	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries per project year will have taken part in volunteering 	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 Black, Asian and/or other ethnic minority women beneficiaries per project year will have secured employment or a regular volunteering role 	20

As can be seen from the table, Believe/Credu II has made a promising start in relation to its first output indicator, being slightly ahead of target by the end of year 2 in terms of overall participant numbers. It is also exactly on target in relation to its fourth indicator, which may be seen as the most important of the four, especially as the good performance against this indicator has mainly been down to higher than anticipated numbers of project participants finding paid employment. The project has struggled more with its second and third output indicators, although, as will be seen later in this report, this has not appeared to impact negatively upon the project's outcome indicators in quantitative terms to date. Achieving these two indicators as well nevertheless remains something for the project to work on as it moves into the final year of its initial planned lifetime.

In terms of activities, Believe/Credu II's work with its participants in year 2 continued to be composed of three strands, as it had been in year 1. The first strand was individual support, for instance case-by-case help relating to job applications or interviews, the finding of volunteering roles, the sourcing of work experience placements and so on. The second strand comprised group activities aimed at helping the project's participants to increase their skills, confidence and social connectedness. Working together, both strands then provided the precursor to the project's third strand of activity, namely that of directly supporting participants to take the ultimate step of beginning employment, a work placement or a regular volunteering role.

Group activities offered in year 2 included the following:

- Read & Write English Language classes
- CV and Interview Techniques workshop
- Introduction to Social Care and Introduction to Human Rights career workshops

- Sewing classes / Renew & Recycle sessions
- Digital Literacy workshops
- Childcare courses (in partnership with Cardiff University)
- Get Cooking course (with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board)
- Barista training (through partnership with Cardiff Council)
- FAN (Friends and Neighbours) Group – regular conversation group in English (in partnership with the FAN Charity)
- Numeracy classes
- Move It Monday walks/Lowland Walk Leader Award training (with Partneriath Awyr Agored)
- Introduction to Law module (in partnership with Cardiff University)
- ‘Meet the Boss’ days with the Education Workforce Council, the Welsh Rugby Union and other organisations
- International Women’s Day celebrations with the Red Cross, Pedal Power, Let’s Interpret and other partners
- Tour of BBC Wales
- Visits to Grow Cardiff and the Welsh Rugby Union (Principality Stadium tour).

In terms of the methodology used in this evaluation, this year 2 report has made use of a mixed methods approach, utilising quantitative elements from the project’s records of its first two years, including its reports to funder and activity records for each of the 83 participants it has had in those first two years. A bespoke outcomes survey for the evaluation was also completed by a sample of 20 year 2 participants, meaning a total of 40 Believe/Credu II participants have now provided further quantitative and qualitative feedback for this external evaluation. These questionnaires were then augmented by an evaluation focus group attended by 12 project participants, plus a separate semi-structured interview with project staff.

The following year 2 external evaluation uses all of these sources to first consider the progress of Believe/Credu II against each of its intended outcomes. It then looks at the more unexpected outcomes and key learning points to arise from the year, before finally drawing some conclusions about the first two years of the project as a whole.

II. Outcomes 1 to 3 – Increased Skills



“The English lessons [...] helped me gain confidence. I now have a housekeeping job.”

Year 2 project participant, Believe/Credu II

The first three outcomes Believe/Credu II seeks to achieve are all related to developing the work-related skills of its participants. Specific skills areas targeted include ‘softer’ skills such as teamwork, communication or problem solving, as well as ‘harder’ ones relating to English, maths or digital literacy.

In quantitative terms, 92% of project participants taking part in the evaluation survey had improved their soft skills (outcome 1 of the project), against a target to be achieved by the end of the project of 80%. For harder skills, the same percentage (92%) reported increased confidence in literacy and/or numeracy (outcome 2 of the project), against an end of project target of 70%. Finally, 69% reported improved digital skills (outcome 3), against an end of project target of 80%

As things stand at the end of its second year, the project is therefore on course to exceed its first two skills-related outcomes, but still has more work to do to achieve its third skill-related outcome (digital skills). Numerous participants fed back to the evaluation that that they had not achieved this outcome simply because they had not chosen to attend its digital skills class yet and/or that they knew they had ‘more to do’ in relation to their computer skills, so this seems an achievable goal for the project to achieve by its close.

On the whole Believe/Credu II therefore seems to have been quantitatively successful in its first two years in relation to its skills outcomes. As was the case with year 1 of the project, there was also evidence suggesting this was true in qualitative terms too in year 2: as part of the external evaluation process, participants in year 2 continued to be asked to identify the most important change (or changes) the project had led to for them.

Again as had been the case in year 1, and despite the project working with a completely new cohort of participants in year 2, it was noticeable that the majority of the answers to this question centred around skills development in one way or another.

For example, several evaluation participants in the sample named specific skills as the most important outcome they had gained from the project, whether *“good communication skills”* in the words of one participant, or English skills in the words of several others:

- *“My English language has improved. [I g]ain more confidence.”*
- *“Greater understanding speaking language.”*
- *“More confidence in English (Read and Write class).”*
- *“Improved my understanding.”*
- *“I ha[ve] a better understanding in learning English.”*

One participant identified improved digital skills as the most important change for her, commenting that *“I have enjoyed very much digital literacy,”* and adding that *“I have learned a lot [...], for example Microsoft Word and Powerpoint”*.

Other participants in the evaluation simply identified skill development in general as the most significant change the project had caused for them, such as one who commented that *“[the project] is important to me because I develop my skills and share with different people”*.

Further comments made by participants in their feedback also identified skills development as an important part of the project for them:

- *“For me it was very important because I learn many skills and I have learned a lot in my classes.”*
- *“Yes I improve my communications too.”*

- *“I really like the project and [the] facilities [it provides] to gain new skills.”*
- *“More of training and experience and developing my skills.”*

Overall, as the following case study of one year 2 Believe/Credu II participant illustrates, skills development has remained an important part of the project for the women taking part in its second year, just as it had been for the different cohort of women participating in its first twelve months.

BELIEVE/CREDU II: YEAR 2 CASE STUDY – Increased Skills

Mousumi* (Believe/Credu II participant, Asian/Asian British background)

“When I first joined Believe I was on a zero hour contract working sometimes only two hours a week. I spoke to [the Believe/Credu II coordinator] about my interpreting skills and started [to] volunteer [...] as a teaching assistant/interpreter.”

“An opportunity [was also found by] Believe for me to apply for a job coordinating [a local community] project for one month [...]. I loved coordinating the project with my colleague [...] and liaising with the coordinator [of another project]. I also wrote a report at the end of the project.”

“I then found out that [a local organisation] were advertising for a post as a Community Connector. I applied for this with the help of Believe and was successful. I am now working 14 hours a week as a Community Connector and childcare two hours a week and interpreting two hours a week.”

“I am very proud of finding 14 hours work which is permanent for two years and I am helping other people, which makes me feel happy that their voices will be heard and this will go to Welsh Government to improve policies. This gives me more respect in my community and has increased my confidence.”

* Name changed for confidentiality reasons

III. Outcomes 4 to 5 – Better Understanding of the Transition into Work & Closer to the Labour Market



“I needed this programme as I was preparing for a job interview and by attending the lessons it has given me confidence.”

Year 2 project participant, Believe/Credu II

The fourth outcome Believe/Credu II aims to help its participants achieve is to support them to gain a better understanding of what happens financially when entering work. In quantitative terms, 39% of project participants completing the evaluation survey said they had gained a better understanding of this transition because of the project. This was against an end of project target for the whole three years of 25%.¹²

The fifth and final outcome that the project seeks to achieve is to help its participants feel closer to the labour market because of the project. As noted in the year 1 external evaluation report, this could be in relation to any stage of a participant’s career journey. For instance, a participant could be seeking their first ever paid work, or they could be seeking a better job than the one they already had, or they could simply be seeking any kind of work experience, including voluntary work, to take themselves closer to their employment goals.

¹² The target percentage for this indicator was renegotiated by the project with its funder at the end of year 1, and reduced from 75% to 25% as a result.

In quantitative terms, 82% of project participants taking part in the evaluation survey reported being closer to work because of the project, against an end of project target for the whole three years of 90%. While this is a relatively small shortfall against the target, and one which matches exactly the 8% of the participants in the evaluation who answered 'Don't Know/Not Sure' to the question of whether they felt more likely to find work now because of their involvement in the project, a member of the project's staff did observe in their evaluation interview that the cohorts in years 1 and 2 of the project had differed in terms of their baseline skill and qualification levels, with in her view the participants in year 2 generally coming with lower starting points and more challenges to overcome than those of year 1.

Nevertheless, this notwithstanding, more than four out of every five participants feeling closer to the labour market as a result of the project is still a reasonably high proportion to have achieved, and there were plenty of answers relating to this outcome among the most important changes participants had experienced through the project, as identified by the participants themselves. For instance, some participants were focused specifically on interviews, identifying the most significant change as their getting a job interview and improving their English, or that the project was able to help them prepare for a particular interview. Other participants, meanwhile, were more general about the most important change they had experienced because of the project:

- *"It has helped me through the right way into the right path. It builds up my confidence."*
- *"[Having] experienced domestic abuse, I [would] like to inspire women and work for organisations who help women in that situation. I will start volunteering and work my way up."*
- *"I got much experience – thank you."*
- *"I am building up my skills and looking for a job. I have done the food and barista courses – I would like to be a baker."*
- *"I want to get a certificate and be qualified to go out into the job world."*
- *"I like to keep learning and build my knowledge so I can find better jobs."*

- *“The Believe-Credu project has helped me to get learning and training. Thank you so much for giving me [the] chance to go through training.”*

As it was in year 1, however, it is the case study evidence collected by the project in year 2 that provides the most complete picture of how a participant could move not just closer to, but also onward within, the labour market because of Believe/Credu II’s support, as the following example illustrates:

BELIEVE/CREDU II: YEAR 2 CASE STUDY – Closer to Labour Market

Tazin* (Believe/Credu II participant, Asian/Asian British background)

“I am in my mid-thirties. I am from Bangladesh. One day I came to SRCDC just to check if they run any event for toddlers, then I met [the Believe/Credu II coordinator] and she asked me about myself and encouraged me to be an interpreter.”

“I attended International Women’s Day at the Warehouse and saw somebody who was talking about her interpreting experience. I then spoke to [...] the Let’s Interpret coordinator [a partner of the Believe/Credu project]. After a couple of days she called me to start the course, once I finished the course I was able to find a job as an interpreter.”

“I have also enrolled on the ‘Career In Child Care’ course and the ‘Career in Law’ course as I believe these will help me with my interpreting work.”

“The most important thing happened with me that now I am working as an interpreter with a linguistic agency – thanks to SRCDC.”

* Name changed for confidentiality reasons

IV. Unexpected Outcomes and Key Learning Points



“This [project] improved my stress and anxiety. I always have a smiley face. I have recently applied for a job [...]. I hope I am successful and look forward to [the] future.”

Year 2 project participant, Believe/Credu II

To look finally at those outcomes achieved by Believe/Credu II in its second year that were not part of the group of indicators set for the project at its start, **increased general confidence** (over and above increased skills or an increased belief in the possibility of finding work) remained the main outcome reported by participants.

As had also been the case in year 1, a general improvement in confidence was cited by many participants in their evaluation feedback as the single most important change caused by the project, for example in the following answers to this question from participants:

- *“I am more confident.”*
- *“Improved my confidence.”*

- *“I am more confident and more expressive about my opinion.”*
- *“Build up my confidence.”*
- *“The most important change [has been] my confidence build, I am going out more on my own, [I] handle the situation.”*
- *“My confidence level and communication increased.”*
- *“Important thing for me is gaining knowledge and confidence. I had the opportunity to talk about FAN group on the radio.”*

Along with the participant quoted at the start of this section, who felt the most important change for her related to the **improved mental well-being** she had gained through the project, other outcomes that might have been less expected for a project focused on moving ethnic minority women closer to the labour market included the **sense of community and potential reduction in social isolation** it created in some cases – as one focus group participant put it, *“I am coming regularly to improve my English, I try to attend as many [of the project’s] classes as I can – we all encourage each other, everyone enjoys it”*. Finally, when it came to **miscellaneous unexpected outcomes**, one focus group participant reported that *“I have more interest in opening a book and learning”* because of the project, while another identified the number one change for her as being that *“I am most proud of becoming a very good cyclist”*.

One of the most interesting aspects of all when it came to the evaluation feedback from year 2 Believe/Credu II participants, however, was how similar the key learning points contained within it were, despite the project working with an entirely different cohort of participants in year 2 compared to year 1. Once again the **importance of opportunities for English practice** to Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women in making them feel able to take up work and volunteering roles came through more strongly than perhaps any other single point, for example in the following comments made by participants in the evaluation about their future goals:

- *“I would like to improve my English, especially UK English – I would like to be a teaching assistant.”*
- *“I am building my skills. I am learning English. I would like job in childcare.”*

- *“I need to attend classes and improve my English and talk more, and then go for a job and have confidence.”*
- *“My main objective is to learn English well and then later on when I’m confident look for a job.”*
- *“I want to improve my English and get qualifications and be a translator, also improve my computer studies.”*
- *“I am looking for a job. I want to improve my qualifications and my English, but I can only speak my first language at home, so it is difficult to practise.”*

Similarly, the **need for the project to be proactive** in finding things like work experience or volunteering placements for its participants came through as another key finding once more in the output statistics (as discussed on page 5 of this report) in year 2, and just how challenging finding such things can be more a relatively small project like Believe/Credu II.

Thirdly in terms of key learning points, while hard to quantify in some ways, the **importance of the project’s holistic approach** also again seemed important in year 2, just as it had with the different year 1 cohort, both to the range of outcomes its participants achieved and the numbers they came to the project in.

Finally, as in year 1 it seems important again to note that in the view of both project staff and participants, the project’s **unexpected outcomes are not the same as accidental** ones. Just as they had been in its first year, in year 2 the social aspects of Believe/Credu II, and the gentle but comprehensive ramp up to training and employment that it provides (by offering initial activities that are not always directly work-related, but then also further activities that are much more directly work, training or education focused) appear to have yielded success in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Finally in terms of potential learning points in year 2, when it came to suggestions for things **participants would like to see the project do more of** in its final year, support with the driving theory test was the most frequent request. At the same time, however, as a member of the project’s staff pointed out in interview, without there then also being further support from somewhere else to meet the costs of the practical side of learning to drive too, something well beyond Believe/Credu II’s resources, such support would perhaps be of limited use in terms of helping Believe/Credu’s participants find a wider variety of potential jobs.

Other suggestions included having more exercise classes and more trips as part of the project, and making its courses available on different days wherever possible, rather than on just one day, or day of the week, as they generally are.

As with the driving theory suggestion, though, such ideas will have to be balanced by project staff against the limited resources the project has, as other things would have to potentially be sacrificed to implement suggestions like this, and that may not be a trade-off the project feels able to make.

V. Conclusions



“The Believe-Credu II project is a really special one which provides invaluable support for women in the community!”

Kira Philpott (Wales Rugby Union), year 2 project partner, Believe/Credu II

“My story has not yet ended as I am still on the journey to learn English and computers, and I am going to achieve great things.”

Year 2 project participant, Believe/Credu II

In the conclusion to the year 1 external evaluation for Believe/Credu II, the report noted that, according to the logic model (or ‘theory of change’) created by the project at its outset, Believe/Credu’s key aim is to help Black, Asian and other ethnic minority women living in South Riverside and neighbouring areas to resolve issues, improve their awareness of employment and other opportunities, and increase their general well-being.

That same report also noted that, surveying the evidence collated for it as a whole, it seemed that the project has made a promising start in its first year in each of these three areas. This very much remains applicable at the end of the project’s second year too, save that the project is now nearer its end than its beginning, and has a higher level of overall achievement in numerical terms as a result.

As at the end of year 1, there are still a couple of output areas, namely number of participants taking part in volunteering or work experience opportunities, where Believe/Credu II has ground to make up in its remaining initial planned lifetime. It may therefore be worth some more thought, along with that already reported by project staff in interview, as to whether there are any particular structural barriers that are making finding such positions harder for ethnic minority women. It must be noted though, that the project is in a much stronger position when it comes to its target for the number of participants finding jobs, which is arguably the most important output indicator of them all. The same is also true of Believe/Credu II's outcome indicators – while it still has a more work to do in its final year if it is to achieve its targets for increased digital skills and number of participants closer to finding work, it is not far behind against either indicator, so could still well catch up in both areas by its close, and is ahead of target in all its other outcome areas.

At the same time, the many wider contextual factors noted in the year 1 external evaluation report as affecting the jobs market – such as cost of living issues, increasing employment precarity, reduced economic growth and so on – still remain equally relevant at the end of Believe/Credu II's second year. The same is true of the similarly unresolved structural issues noted in the year 1 report arising from sheer wider prejudice, ignorance and unfamiliarity with their needs that ethnic minority women have to face – issues that often appear to be improving at only the most glacial of paces, if at all, and that other groups in Welsh society simply do not have to face in quite the same way.

Nevertheless, as that report also noted, the value Believe/Credu II places not just on awareness raising, but also on problem solving and providing general well-being support as key constituent parts to its approach, does appear to be paying dividends. By staying away from an overly narrow focus on job seeking alone, the project appears able to reach ethnic minority women that other more conventional employment programmes may not reach. This is perhaps the most important thing about the project of all, and should not be taken for granted, along with the fact that general well-being levels among ethnic minority women are affected by far more than just employment status. Any project that supports ethnic minority women to improve their lives has to recognise this, and overall it already seems that Believe/Credu II's way of working is enjoying significant success by doing exactly this.

Dr. Leon Quinn
Social Effectiveness Research Centre
February 2025