



ROUTES ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2020 OVERVIEW & REPORT

WWW.ROUTESCOLLECTIVE.COM

OVERVIEW

Routes was founded as a direct response to the additional barriers faced by women who are seeking safety in the UK.

Routes is a stepping stone from where people are, to where they want to be. We want every woman to have the chance to lead a joyful, fulfilling life. We help people to access the jobs and education that they want, find social connections and start to build community, improve language and digital skills and access culture here in the UK.

Asylum seekers and refugees in the UK face additional barriers to living comfortable, happy, and fulfilling lives. Many women are isolated, living in poverty and unaware of or unable to access opportunities that are available to them. Many women face destitution leaving them with low confidence and low aspirations.

We are on a mission to connect communities and champion women, through 1:1 mentoring programmes and confidence-building creative workshops

We exist to support refugee and asylum seeking women by countering the hostile asylum system, bringing women together to support one another in spaces of joy, welcome and patience. All of these things lead to improved wellbeing, and ultimately leads to people living happier, more fulfilled and integrated lives.

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, and the pandemic has impacted greatly on refugee and asylum seeking women. For more information on this, please read the excellent report from [Sisters Not Strangers](#).

We are proud to have continued our delivery throughout the lockdowns. Though some of the ways we have delivered our work have changed out of necessity, the engagement and impact of our work remains strong.



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

64

women engaged in our work over the year. This is a mix of women joining new programmes for the first time, and women engaging with our ongoing community opportunities

421

hours of 1:1 mentoring, delivered all over London and online. This time was spent supporting mentees to find jobs, apply to universities and scholarships, build confidence and future aspirations and improve communication skills

28

online creative workshops delivered throughout lockdown

32

mentees successfully graduated from our mentoring programme

MENTORING PROGRAMME

32 women successfully completed the programme this year, and 20 more who have started are due to complete in 2021.

Of the 32 graduates:

9

mentees' goals were in employment, including finding a job, interview technique and CV support.

19

mentees' goals were related to accessing university courses and scholarships.

4

mentees wanted to work on building new skills - mostly digital skills or English.



On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being achieving their goal, on average mentees moved from a 2.5 to a 7 by the end of the four months with their mentor.

85% said their confidence improved over the course of the programme

75% said their networks improved because of the programme

90% said they wouldn't have made the same progress without their mentor

100% feel more hopeful about what they can achieve in the future because of participating in the programme

STORIES

Diana

Diana joined the programme just after receiving restricted right to work in the UK, and so spent the first bit of time working with her mentor on what she would like to do from the list of allowed jobs. After settling on social work, the rest of the time was spent working on university applications to study so that she can work as a social worker. By the end of the programme Diana had been accepted onto a course and, despite only being able to meet online, both her and her mentor felt they had built a strong friendship.



Alia

Alia was looking for a job in the environmental field, climate change and sustainability, having studied environmental science in Syria. She felt like she was facing big barriers in the UK due to a lack of professional networks here and the lack of experience job-hunting in the UK.

With her mentor's support, she took a two-pronged approach, applying for jobs and a masters degree at the same time. The 1:1 support from her mentor gave her access to resources and networks that she hadn't had before and in just four months she had a job offer and a place on a Masters!

Though it was a tough decision, she decided to take the job and defer her university place until next year.

Yasmin

Yasmin was struggling with low confidence around her spoken professional communication.

It was holding her back from taking opportunities that she was more than capable of thriving in. We paired her with a mentor from a large consulting firm, who frequently has to present to clients and colleagues. They worked together on what successful communication looks like, and also managed to secure Yasmin a free place on a full day public speaking workshop. Yasmin now takes a leadership role in a charity that she was previously a beneficiary of.

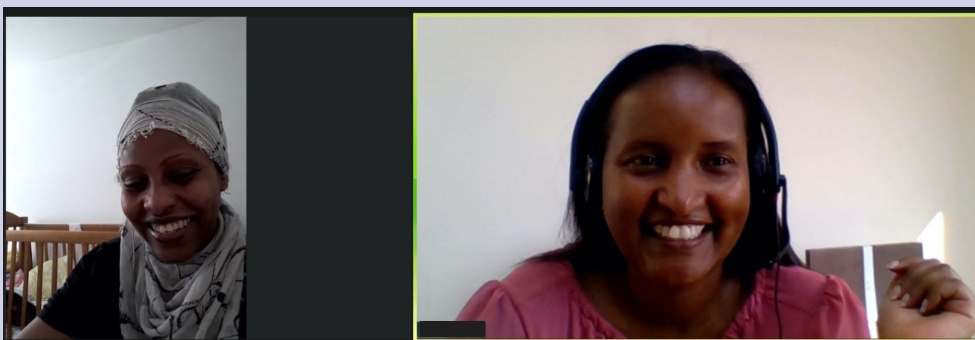
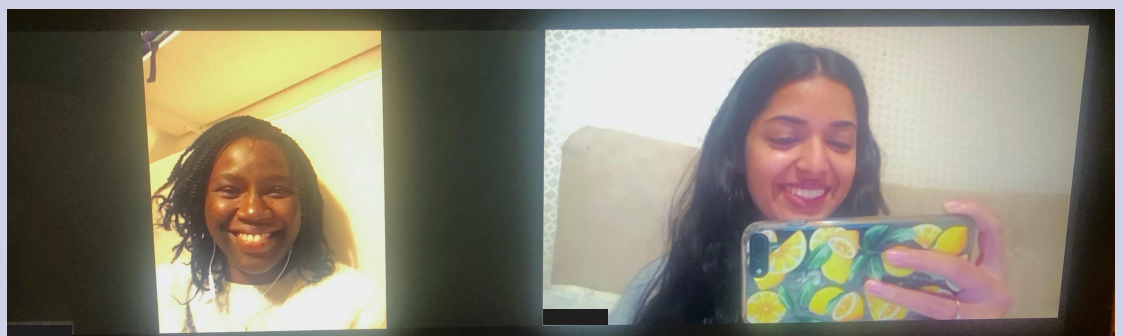
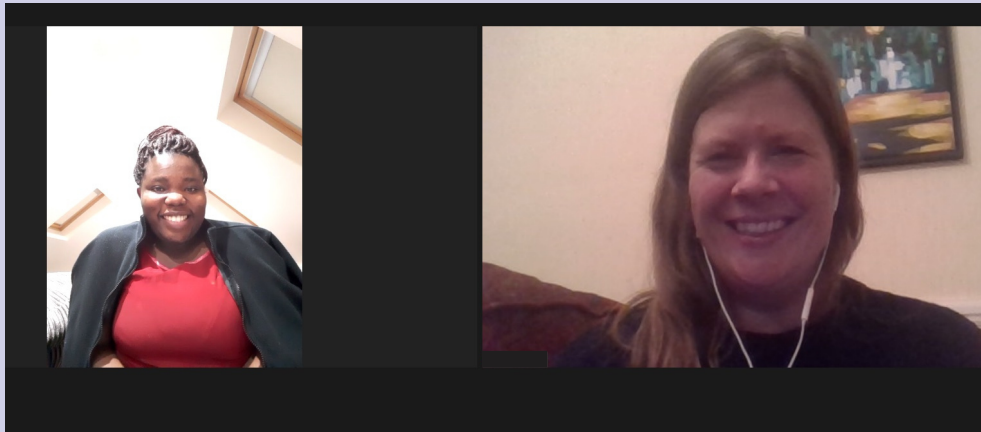


COVID19

Covid-19 meant our all of our programmes had to move online from March 2020

In response to the lockdowns, we had to quickly find a way to provide wifi and laptops or tablets for those who were living without these in their homes. Unfortunately this is the reality for many refugee and asylum seeking woman.

We were proud to be able to launch our first online programme in April 2020, only three weeks after the first lockdown began. We are so pleased to see that mentors and mentee have been connecting online all year, and that the impact of these programmes has not been affected by the limitations of working online.



PARTNERS

Our mentors joined us from a wide range of businesses across sectors. This reflects the diversity of our mentees' goals.

Thank you to all the organisations who supported their employees to mentor with us this year.



Lankelly Chase



CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

This year we delivered 28 workshops online, bringing women from our community together during the Covid-19 lockdowns

28

women signed up to
our weekly creative
workshops delivered
online

17

women were
supported with digital
access needs (tablets or
data costs) to enable
them to connect
digitally during the
pandemic

14

women on average
joined each workshop

100% felt more confident in themselves after taking part in the workshops

100% felt more connected to other refugee and asylum seeking women due to the programme

90% of participants recorded an increase in their happiness after each weekly workshop

100% felt more creative because of participating in the programme

100% said they were interested in joining more cultural activities in the UK after taking part



Results are based on 13 women who completed the evaluation forms

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

I like workshop because they give me confidence before when I was in the community i was shy [but] now I'm okay.

It was exciting. I learned how to make a short story on my own, I really enjoyed it

Today's workshop was magical. I tapped into my creative side all thanks ☒☒
☒☒☒☒

I learnt how to not be apologetic when doing my public speaking and I learnt how to warm my vocals and to know my first line

I enjoyed the workshop, and the laughs we had as a group. It helped me feel emotionally happier.

I'm always looking forward to Thursdays and learning new things every week. Thanks and keep on putting a smile on the women faces.

I really enjoyed participating in todays workshop. I have been able to test out my skills and use them in different creative ways to share with everyone.



THE ROUTES COMMUNITY

This year, we started thinking deeply about the ways in which we can support our community beyond our two existing programmes. So far, we have:

- Created a Routes Community WhatsApp group. There are currently 49 women in this WhatsApp group, who are former mentees and creative workshop participants.
- Created a Routes Community Newsletter. This newsletter was created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. From May 2020, 9 newsletters have gone out - sharing stories of our programmes, links to online activities that might be of interest and resources for wellbeing, confidence building and learning new things online.
- Created the Routes Resources Database which is full of organisations, opportunities and things to read, watch, listen to and learn from. It is regularly updated by Routes and contributed to by those who use it.
- Hosted an end of year celebration event for women who have joined any of our programmes this year, attended by 38 women.
- Begun exploring opportunities within Routes for gaining volunteering and work experience. This resulted in our first Community Writer, who was supported by a Communications expert to write a blog on a topic she wanted to platform. She chose to write about her journey growing in confidence as a migrant in London.
- Started developing our governance structure to include an advisory group and a new, larger board. The advisory group will be made up exclusively of women who have been a part of our programmes.

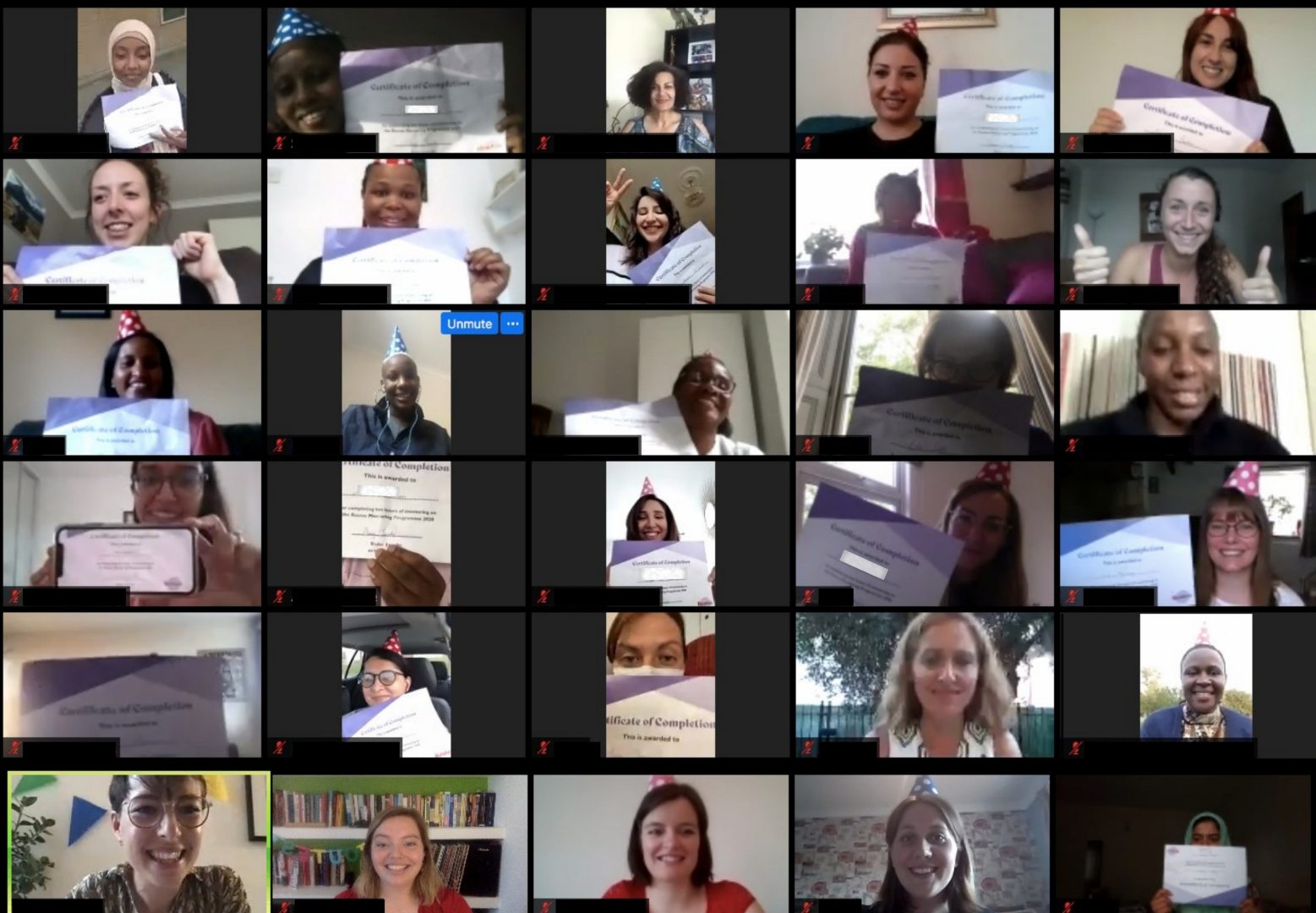


Photo from our End of Programme celebration with our cohort of mentors and mentees in Summer 2020

Huge thanks to all our supporters and funders this year!



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