



Routes

ROUTES ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2023 OVERVIEW & REPORT

WWW.ROUTESCOLLECTIVE.COM

OVERVIEW

Our vision is for refugee and asylum seeking women to have access to the opportunities and resources they need to build meaningful and fulfilling lives, and for employers to be equipped with the knowledge they need to lead with inclusivity and compassion.

The oppressive asylum system in the UK denies people who seek safety the opportunity to build meaningful lives. By reducing autonomy, limiting access to opportunities and keeping people in poverty for extended periods, the asylum system erodes confidence and limits aspirations. These factors disproportionately impact women, who are often caregivers or held back from participating in mixed gender spaces due to cultural barriers.

While the majority of these women wish to find work, existing circumstances make it difficult for them to navigate the job market to apply for suitable roles, despite many having transferable experience that could help solve the skills gap across various UK sectors. On top of legal barriers, bias is also a key factor contributing to refugee women being employed at half the rate of those born in the UK.

Routes supports these women with meaningful programmes, cross-sector partnerships, and individualised support that prioritises autonomy. We seek to help refugee and asylum seeking women build confidence, learn new skills and tackle obstacles to reach their goals. Our vision is of a future where people seeking safety in the UK are afforded access to opportunities and networks that they need to build meaningful and fulfilling lives, the ability to choose their future path, and the resources they need to reach their full potential.



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

67

women engaged in our programmes over the year. This is a mix of women joining new programmes for the first time, and continuing development through additional opportunities

552

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

7

alumni mentees were trained as mentors as part of our innovative new Reverse Mentoring Programme

46

mentees successfully graduated from our mentoring programme

MENTORING PROGRAMME

46 women successfully completed the programme this year



**proximity to goal
moved from 4 to
8 over the
duration of the
programme**



**74% of people
started a job or a
course within six
months of their
mentoring**



**97% of people
increased skills and
knowledge during the
programme**

We understand that our programme has a deep impact on the women we support. In order to measure the depth of impact we have defined three depths of impact: transform, enhance, improve. Our aim is that at least 85% of women we work with will sit in the enhance and transform categories. As you can see, in 22/23 95% of participants sit in the enhance and transform categories.

Improve

5%

those who improved their self confidence, but did not move 3 points towards their goal or start a job or a course

Enhance

21%

those who moved at least 3 points closer to their goal on a scale of 1 to 10, but did not start a course or a job

Transform

74%

those who have started a job or a course during, or within 6 months after graduating from the programme

MENTORING PROGRAMME



**92% of people
improved their self
confidence**



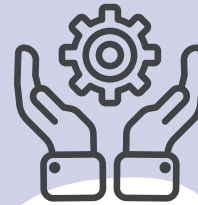
**92% of people feel
equipped to apply
for opportunities**



**89% of people feel
confident in the
future**



**82% of people
expanded their
networks**



**89% of people
feel supported
practically**



QUOTES



“
During this course I
discovered myself
”

“
It has given me new insights and perspectives about life in general. I have learned a lot about applications and how to make them stand out. As a result of the support I got from my amazing mentor, I was able to secure a job that I enjoy. I was also able to come across different training opportunities, which I am looking forward to starting them in the near future.
”

“
”My mentor was always there trying to convince me that I can do it and I am able to. She believed in me.”
”

“
“The mentoring programme has really opened my eyes to seeing things, opportunities and what I already have and know in a different light.
”

It has helped me to recognise and appreciate all the small little things and contributions to society that I have done and made in the past and in the present as well.
”

“
“It helps me to build my confidence to apply in university and to be prepared about the work, interview.”
”



PARTNERS

Routes supports women with experience of the UK asylum system to access fulfilling work and education opportunities, whilst simultaneously training professionals across sectors to become inclusive leaders through increased understanding of different realities.

Thank you to all the organisations who supported their employees to mentor with us this year. As a mutually beneficial programme for both mentor and mentee, the impact we have on our mentors taking part in the programme is also important to us.



**Coaching skills
improved in 85%
of mentors**



**Relationship
building skills
improved in 76%
of mentors**



**Communication
skills improved in
68% of mentors**

71% of mentors reported feeling more open minded, 68% reported feeling more reflective and 62% reported increased empathy. We think that all these skills and personal attributes are important for creating more inclusive and compassionate leaders across sectors.



REVERSE MENTORING PROGRAMME

In 2022 we developed a new reverse mentoring programme, and ran a pilot programme in partnership with UBS.

This programme was an opportunity for alumni mentees of our flagship programme (women from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds who have previously worked towards their goals with the support of a Routes mentor) to develop their professional leadership skills, by becoming a mentor to a senior leader from UBS. Their mentees, UBS Managing Directors, would be mentored across five 1-hour sessions, supporting them to reflect on their own leadership style, connect to their values, and become more inclusive and compassionate leaders.

83%

Identified self confidence, leadership skills, time management and confidence approaching new people professionally improved through the programme

67%

Identified their professional communication skills improved over the course of the programme

50%

Identified that they had developed skills to support someone else's development, team work skills and skills for leading meetings

When breaking down the leadership confidence that was built through this programme, individual confidence in a professional setting grew 10% within the cohort, confidence telling their professional story grew 20% and confidence in their leadership ability grew 13%.



"The skills that I gain through the programme are essential to my personal and professional development, these skills are going to be useful to me in day-to-day communication and they will help me to pursue my career in the UK. I am more confident now and I built a professional connection which I am sure it is a good start to enter a professional business environment."

THE ROUTES COMMUNITY

As well as our programmes, we provide continued support for our ever-growing alumni community. This is really important to us as we know that we are supporting people with long term goals. This year our support included:

- Access to bursaries from the City and Guilds Foundation. We supported alumni to apply for bursaries of up to £5000 to cover course fees and access costs (childcare and travel money) for vocational courses that will support them into employment.
- The Routes Community WhatsApp group. There are currently 108 women in this WhatsApp group, who are former mentees and creative workshop participants. We share opportunities, courses, programmes and more from other organisations in the sector to ensure that our alumni can take up further opportunities that interest them
- 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. It currently has 220 entries.
- The Routes jobs list, a mailing list where we advertise jobs that may be of interest to our community. Any alumni who are job seeking can sign up to the list and any organisations wishing to recruit refugee talent can post their job.

As we look ahead, our alumni support is something we are invested in expanding. We want to design a deeper programme of alumni support, ensuring that the impact of our mentoring programme continues.





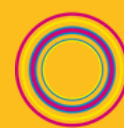
Photo from our End of Programme celebration with our cohort of mentors and mentees in Summer 2022

Huge thanks to all our supporters and funders this year!

**EQUALLY
OURS**



UBS



school for
social
entrepreneurs



CITY & GUILDS
FOUNDATION