

**Learning visit report  
Shpresa Programme 12834**

<b>1.1 Date of visit:</b> 18/10/2018	<b>1.2 Name of visiting Funding Manager:</b> Joan Millbank	<b>1.3 People met with:</b> LN, Manager AA Adult learner
<b>1.4 Programme Area &amp; Outcomes:</b> English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) - More people accessing mainstream services and more people participating in the wider community		
<b>1.5 Purpose of the award:</b> £71,200 towards a Development Worker plus project running costs to provide ESOL classes for isolated and vulnerable Albanian-speaking women, many of whom are victims of domestic abuse.		
<b>Grant start date:</b> 01/04/2016		<b>Grant end date:</b> 01/04/2019
<b>Project progress and difference made</b>		
<p><b>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</b> 120 women from Albanian refugee/migrant communities will have improved levels of English speaking, listening, reading, writing and comprehension</p> <p><b>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</b> 120 women from Albanian refugee/migrant communities will have increased confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p><b>2.3 Project Outcome 4:</b> Women from Albanian refugee/migrant communities will access mainstream services and become more integrated in the local community.</p> <p><b>2.4 Project Outcome 3:</b> The local community will be enriched by the contribution that these women are able to make.</p> <p><b>Progress made:</b> In the last year the borough spread, range of learning venues and number of ESOL classes has increased while the length of the learning year has been reduced to provide the flexibility for change. Shpresa currently provides 6 two-hour ESOL classes per week over 36 weeks per annum. Classes accommodate learners' needs from pre-entry level to Level 2. Learning achievements are certificated. As most learners are aged 22 to 35 years, peer-run creches have been put in place to support their access. Classes have a 99% retention rate and many learners go on to volunteer within the charity, classes or venues where the classes are located. Some have secured employment in partner organisations including Solace and Newham Adult Learning Centre. Learning is enhanced through organised visits to public institutions (e.g. schools, town halls, health centres), which incorporates travel on public transport, and which builds the women's knowledge and confidence.</p> <p>Learners complete user questionnaires at the start, mid-point and end of each course and an external evaluator helps Shpresa analyse the monitoring returns. The charity has prioritised collation and analysis of user information (including compliance with GDPR) to comprehensively track each learner's progress and involvement. A theory of change is being developed.</p>		

Some learners are recent arrivals on migrant visas; other have refugee status. An estimated 30% have been victims of trafficking and a further 20% are known to have experienced domestic abuse (through referral from Solace Women's Aid).

### **Impact and learning: Funding Manager comments**

Your officer met with the manager of the organisation and a learner who now volunteers within the charity.

- 1. Impact:** The grant is helping Shpresa to deliver important ESOL support to women who benefit greatly from learning English. It is also providing a means for the charity to access vulnerable women who the charity has found might not otherwise be allowed (by husbands/family) or feel able to connect with the organisation, and benefit from its range of support. It has helped Shpresa to be recognised as a trusted organisation within the Albanian-speaking community which, the organisation highlighted, does not have a tradition of community involvement nor community volunteering.
- 2. Learning:** The predominant age profile of the learners has meant that Shpresa has had to provide creches to support participation. It has been achieved to date in a creative low-cost way by setting up reciprocal peer support i.e. one class of learners provides informal childcare to another class of learners. The women are supported to meet creche requirements and receive a certificate of competence. The experience has helped the women recognise that they have core skills which are useful to others and which has – for some – led onto employment opportunities.

The funding has helped Shpresa to learn a lot about the needs of trafficked and abused women within their community and in general; they have shared their learning with other organisations through briefings and training, and to build collaboration e.g. Home Office, local GPs, social workers.

Shpresa has learned that whilst monitoring and measuring requires time away from direct delivery, it is essential to do to understand and evidence their work.

- 3. Knowledge:** While it is accepted best practice that ESOL should be delivered in classes made up of people with different mother tongues, Shpresa's experience demonstrates the importance of being more flexible perhaps at the start of the learning process in order to get engagement and to give added value.
- 4. Total assets:** The organisation would welcome information on other possible funders and advice on fundraising. It would also welcome networking with groups doing similar work. It would appreciate access to creche funding.