

MEETING: 11/09/23

REF: 20372

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Anchor Programme**

<b>Imkaan</b>	<b>Adv: Khadra Aden</b>
<b>Amount requested: £1,202,515.67</b>	<b>Base: Islington</b>
<b>Amount recommended: £1,202,900</b>	<b>Benefit: London Wide</b>

**Purpose of grant request:** To support Imkaan's core functions through its policy, research, and advocacy work to challenge systemic issues in the violence against women and girls' sector.

**The Applicant**

Imkaan is a registered charity (number 1105976) based in London that works to address issues such as domestic abuse (DA), forced marriage and 'honour-based' violence across the UK. Its current model emerged from a joint initiative by Newham Asian Women's Project and Brent Asian Women's Resource Centre, and initially only provided support to refugees working with South Asian women. In 2004 the organisation broadened its reach as it evolved into a politically Black<sup>1</sup>, anti-racist, social justice organisation working to support minoritised women and girls, i.e., women and girls which are defined in policy terms as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME).

Imkaan continues to provide second-tier capacity support to a membership of specialist frontline services that work to prevent, and respond to, violence against women and girls (VAWG). Membership is free of charge and member organisations, varying in size and capacity, provide a diverse range of services including refuge accommodation, housing and welfare advice, outreach, women-only spaces, health services, legal services, therapeutic services, and women's empowerment groups.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Imkaan has not received previous City Bridge Trust (CBT) funding, however one of their current funders, The Oak Foundation, has provided a reference that describes the organisation as a vital 'anchor partner,' which has delivered impactful work and research, and has provided the funder with useful insights into the most pressing issues facing the VAWG sector.

Although a national organisation, London is a major focus of Imkaan's work as the city with by far the greatest ethnic diversity in the country<sup>2</sup>, and a place with a long history of Black and minoritised women developing 'by and for' services. Imkaan has a strong track record of working with London-based organisations across 17

<sup>1</sup> Political Blackness encompasses all women whose herstories originate from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, including the indigenous peoples of Australasia, the Americas and the islands of the Atlantic Indian and Pacific Oceans. <https://www.imkaan.org.uk/by-and-for>

<sup>2</sup> *Ethnic group, England, and Wales: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics (2021):* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=London%20remains%20the%20most%20ethnically,%2C%203.7%20million%20in%202011>

boroughs, including areas with high levels of deprivation such as Hackney, Lambeth, and Brent. It also works closely with statutory bodies to improve policy and practice responses to BME women and girls, such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), as well as mainstream organisations in the VAWG sector, such as Women's Aid.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted BME communities, member organisations were able to continue delivering vital services to BME women with the support of Imkaan. This support was particularly vital to women excluded from and unable to access universal support, particularly individuals with no recourse to public funds<sup>3</sup> (NRPF) due to immigration controls. As well as providing capacity support to specialist services, Imkaan has undertaken vital research on the current funding arrangements and challenges facing BME led VAWG organisations in the UK. Imkaan's research has helped to create change in the funding and commissioning landscape, most recently highlighted in its evaluation of Comic Relief's 'Supporting and Sustaining Specialism Programme,' which provided important evidence of the crucial role played by BME led 'by and for' organisations. Imkaan's work and the research it has undertaken over the past few years has also had systemic impact on the policy landscape, as evidenced by its work drafting an Alternative Bill that influenced the governments Domestic Abuse Bill, now the Domestic Abuse Act 2021<sup>4</sup>.

Over the next decade Imkaan would like to use this CBT grant to build on its achievements to date and to ensure that those in positions of power in London will better understand the needs of BME women and girls when considering key policy and spending decisions in the VAWG sector. Imkaan is applying for core funding to provide long-term financial stability to its strategic aims by contributing to the salary costs of four senior roles (proportionate to London benefit): the Executive Director (0.2 FTE), Head of Advocacy (1 FTE), Head of Research & Evaluation (0.8 FTE), and Head of Membership, Training & Sustainability (0.8 FTE). By providing sustainability to these roles, Imkaan will strengthen its work on advocacy and influencing, policy analysis and development, research, networking, and capacity support to its members, bringing about systemic change.

London based organisations make up 40% of Imkaan's membership, and much of its work is focused on policy and influencing which, even when undertaken at a national level, impacts positively on London's BME women. The assessor is satisfied that this grant (which is covering 40% of some key salaries plus some other core costs such as staff training, impact, and evaluation etc.,) represents an amount proportionate to London benefit.

The funding will enable Imkaan to:

- Collect London-wide data on the abuse risks and experiences of BME women and girls to reveal trends on the most pressing issues. Data will be used to create evidence-based policy recommendations, which will be delivered to

<sup>3</sup> Over a million people in the UK are affected by an immigration condition called 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF), which excludes them from accessing most state benefits and services, including Universal Credit, Child Benefit and social housing.

<sup>4</sup> From the Margin to the Centre Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Alternative Bill October (2018): [https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d\\_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebfeca2e.pdf](https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebfeca2e.pdf)

leaders through strategic advocacy work including influencing, strategic communications, events, and strategic litigation

- Support its existing London frontline service delivery members to enhance their profiles and local influence as part of a cohesive movement-building initiative
- Imkaan will also increase its membership to become more visible and pertinent in all London boroughs and to better influence policy decisions related to abuse, community safety, equality, immigration, and other relevant areas in the capital
- Develop a new research, policy, leadership, and activism programme with and for young BME women and girls to increase diversity in the VAWG sector
- Dedicate time for organisational development work, moving away from being reactive to focusing on its strategy and sustainability, providing the organisation with increased capacity to reflect and plan, and to co-develop Imkaan's strategy with its members
- Resource Imkaan's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work as it continues to make the case for anti-racist approaches within the wider VAWG sector

Imkaan's proposal fits well with the criteria for the Anchor Programme:

- It is a user-led organisation with 100% of the staff, senior managers, and Board of Trustees from BME backgrounds
- As a second-tier organisation, Imkaan has over two decades experience of providing capacity support to over 67 BME frontline organisations
- Imkaan has a good track record of delivering work with the values of intersectional Black feminism working under a social justice and anti-racism, framework addressing wider structural inequalities, recognising how interlocking oppressions including age, class, caste, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and migrant status among others impact the lives of women and girls and create barriers to rights and resources for them
- Imkaan has a strong track record of delivering equitable practice, and deep understanding of systems change. It has also achieved change at a systemic level, most notably on the work it led which had an outcome on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

### **London's VAWG sector**

According to recent research, funding arrangements for VAWG support services are fragmented, complex, and difficult to understand<sup>5</sup>. Typically, organisations working in the sector rely on commissioning, trusts, and foundations for funding, which is often highly competitive. This in addition to a decade of austerity (resulting in diminished funding available for refuges), the covid pandemic, and increases in the cost of living, means the sector is now in crisis mode. This picture is even more dire for specialised 'by and for' organisations supporting BME women and girls.

Alongside being survivors and victims of domestic or sexual abuse, BME women and girls are also often survivors or victims of racist abuse that they have endured from

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<sup>5</sup> Funding for Support Services for Victims and Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls in London: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/crime-and-public-protection/sexual-and-domestic-violence-including-vawg/funding>

individuals, groups, and systems across society. Generic and statutory-led models of support provision are found to be less effective for BME women and girls subjected to complex and intersecting forms of harm. BME women are more likely to disclose and feel safe with specialist organisations where they may feel better understood and heard without discrimination. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office (DAC) found that 78% of BME survivors felt safer accessing support from 'by and for' service providers<sup>6</sup>. As part of its work on systems change, Imkaan has delivered training sessions to overcome this challenge and has worked with a broad cross-section of funders, as well as practitioners in voluntary and statutory organisations, to better understand the effects of domestic violence on BME women and girls.

## Financial Information

Year end as at 31 March	2022 Signed Accounts £	2023 Draft £	2024 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	2,156,146	2,064,548	965,847
Expenditure	(1,004,294)	(2,080,455)	(965,847)
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>1,151,852</b>	<b>(15,907)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Reserves:</b>			
Total restricted	1,099,920	1,140,236	1,140,236
Total unrestricted	556,773	500,550	500,550
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>1,656,693</b>	<b>1,640,786</b>	<b>1,640,786</b>
Of which: free unrestricted	535,160	478,937	478,937
Reserves policy target	489,338	489,338	489,338
Free reserves over/(under) target	45,822	(10,401)	(10,401)

Imkaan's income has shown a steady increase since 2018, with a drop in income and expenditure reported in 2019/20. This drop was due to a truncated financial year as the charity moved its end of financial year from September to March. A review of the charity's most recent accounts (for year ending March 2022) shows the organisation to be in good financial position. For year-end 2021/22, the organisation's free reserves stood at £535,160, slightly exceeding the free reserves target to hold between £244,669 and £489,338 (equivalent to three to six months' expenditure).

The anticipated decrease in income in 2023/24 relates to the end of Imkaan's onward grantmaking through the Tampon Tax, on behalf of Comic Relief and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). The reduced income is also due to the charity ceasing its role as the fiscal host of the Tallawah Project<sup>7</sup> on behalf of the Oak Foundation. Despite this drop in income there is confidence in the financial viability of the organisation.

## Funding History

None.

<sup>6</sup> A Patchwork of Provision, Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2022): [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Suvivors\\_Summary-Report\\_Nov-2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Suvivors_Summary-Report_Nov-2022_FA.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.projecttallahawah.org/>

**The Recommendation**

***£1,202,900 over ten years (£106,200; £109,100; £112,100; £115,100; £118,300; £121,500; £124,900; £128,300; £131,900; £135,500) towards Imkaan's core costs to support its policy, research, and advocacy work to challenge systemic issues in the violence against women and girls' sector.***