

DMNW TMBC Digital Inclusion: Hidden Gems Project Report



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Period of delivery: June 2022 – July 2022

DMNW identified a need for basic computer understanding as well as e-learning for the local groups of women from the ethnic minority communities via our own community consultations and waiting lists. Due to the challenges and barriers they faced they have been finding difficult to progress in life, in their our learning journeys. These barriers included, not limited to, the lack of education, language barrier, limited knowledge about technology, no access to resources / equipment, childcare barriers, time and cost.

With the funding from TMBC, we listened and worked with local women from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Hyde to remove barriers to education and engage in our TMBC funded, digital inclusion Hidden Gems project.

We delivered:

Activities	Number sessions	Attendance	Session evaluations:
1. 2 cohorts Employability computer course.	14 sessions (3hr sessions) (7-week course)	16 women attended in total (2 groups of 8 learners)	 Evaluation - computer course.do
2. Weekly Community Learning Hub (Drop in)	6 weeks (2.5hrs session)	20 individuals' learners (10 were new to the project, 10 accessed from the computer course) Total no. of attendances: 25	 Session evaluation community hub.doc

Employability computer course.

The sessions focused on employment based basic computer course which ran for 7 weeks, covering various topics (see attached session evaluation). We ensured these sessions used various learning styles to meet the needs our learners. We included activities, discussions, and demonstrations. We completed individual learner plans to track learning journeys. We ensured our tutors were bilingual, experienced in delivering training as well as having cultural awareness of the women they were delivering to.



All 16 learners showed great enthusiasm and willingness to learn and have expressed the benefits and knowledge they have acquired from the session. Learners fully enjoyed the sessions and the contents that was covered. They were pleased to learn the new knowledge and were interested to do additional courses like this soon. At the final session we celebrated the end of the training and delivered a presentation on other opportunities where women can access to continue their learning journeys. The course had 99% retention rate.



Feedback from the learners highlighted the effectiveness of the facilitation of the sessions, teaching and communication skill of the tutor. They found the tutor to be approachable. Women also told us that having a bilingual tutor meant that women were able to communicate effectively and learn, removing the barriers of language and low confidence.



3 ladies attended the computer class and community learning hub to help with their business they are currently developing – they brought along some of their food to share with the learners at the last session.

"I learnt about Instagram which will help my business. I can open my business pages now"

Referrals and signposting / Partnerships:

Throughout the activities we actively signposted and referred women to both internal and external services.

- All 16 women signed up for further training opportunities within DMNW.
- 2 women were referred to PCREFURB to access laptop and equipment.
- 2 ladies were referred to DMNW to explore setting up their own business
- All women were given information on external e-learning opportunities specifically around health and safety, safeguarding and social care.
- 4 ladies were given information to contact TACE for higher level of English courses. However, all 16 registered on our waiting list our conversational ESOL course in Hyde.
- All women were registered to attend our internal employment workshop coming up in September.
- All women wanted to continue coming to the community learning hub at the end of the course, as they felt this was beneficial to continue to practice what they learnt and to help develop further digital skills and confidence for future employment.

Weekly Community Learning Hub

We delivered weekly drop in hubs which was led by a paid bilingual casual worker and a lead volunteer to support other women to practice and build their digital skills. The drop-in supported 20 individual women of women who accessed the sessions more than once. 10 of women accessed because of attending the computer class.

The women came to access support around internet, using laptop, creating cv, online job search, Instagram page, Facebook post for businesses as well as other employment support. Women took information home and brought any questions to the next sessions.

- One lady came just to practice using her skills that she learnt on the computer course such as typing, browsing the internet etc.
- Some women accessed the hub to come in and use the laptop for applying for jobs, if they needed help or light guidance, lead volunteer and staff were at hand to support.
- 3 ladies came to carry out some job search and together we were able to find some vacancies, few were able to apply online successfully, where others struggled due to language barrier. These women are now on a waiting list for ESOL courses both within DMNW and signposted to Tameside College.



The ladies were happy with the support from the facilitators and other women. However, some required more support than others, specifically on a one to one basis. These women have been referred to DMNW one to one support for employment.

“Hub is very friendly environment to come to learn and improve my digital skills.”

“I started to volunteer and am very happy I have started as I wasn't aware that I have skills to support women.”

Due to the success of the hub, we will continue to run the weekly sessions during the summer holidays and monitor demand going forwards. This is the first activity that we have kept open during the school holidays.

Volunteers

We recruited 2 female volunteers who supported the community learning hub, taking it in turns. The volunteers reported in positive wellbeing, increase in confidence and socialising skills. Due to the experienced gained via this volunteering opportunities, one of the volunteers now feels confident in applying for a casual worker position at DMNW. This will be the first time she is applying for a job in her life.

Progress against outcomes

Ultimately, we were successfully in meeting all our outcomes that we originally set for this pilot work.

1. We successfully engaged 26 women from minority communities, increasing engagement from targeted hard to reach groups in community based digital inclusion projects.
2. 100% of the women that attended the activities of this programme reported increase in accessing digital skills courses as they found it accessible, local, culturally sensitive, within term time, and the addition of a bilingual experienced tutor made it easier for them to learn and communicate effectively. "Thank you for arranging computer course locally with bilingual staff. It was very useful we learnt lots of new skills"
3. 100% of the women that engaged reported in improved digital skills for use within their personal life and potentially for future work purposes. They told us that they now feel confident in using social media to communicate and link with their family and friends that they do not see as often. Those that attended to support with their own businesses reported that the skills they learnt will be applied when they are looking to expand or set up their businesses. "Our teacher was really good and friendly. The zoom class was very good – I can link with my friends and family. I hope there will be more courses like this in future"

Case Study: AC

AC came to UK in 2000, after completing her secondary school qualification in Bangladesh, she got married and immediately moved here in Hyde. She was responsible for running the whole house including her ill elderly mother-in-law and a sister-in-law who had down syndrome. She struggled a lot as she was very young, married and then had so many responsibilities. Her focus was her family. AC found about the course from her friend and decided to register for the computer course. After attending, AC felt more comfortable and started to think about doing other courses delivered by DMNW. AC is always willing to learn, and she is a very hard working. She has now signed up for other courses with DMNW including food hygiene & first aid. AC was then referred to WEA and is looking to start her teaching assistant course.

"I now feel confident enough to go out, meet new people and support the local community". She is now a registered volunteer at DMNW and supporting with community events and is one of the lead volunteers supporting to run the weekly community learning hub. "If I didn't know about DMNW I would not be doing all these trainings and volunteering, I feel happier and grateful for DMNW staff and volunteers encouraging me to take the next step". AC is a hidden gem in our community, and through these localised, bespoke and targeted interventions, we were able to find her, support her and now she has started her journey to developing herself, the world is her oyster!