

Supporting communities,  
enterprising minds and active citizens

# ANNUAL REPORT

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JUNE 2015 to MAY 2016

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## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SECRETARY**

The success of ACCM (UK) this year has seen its operations and demand increase and its service delivery expanding very quickly due to the hard work Trustees, staff and volunteers have put into connecting with communities, professionals and service providers. The central discrete location of the office and meeting rooms means that more and more users are now visiting to seek help, get involved or participate in our activities or just drop in to meet others and share experiences. As Secretary, I can proudly state that the continued strong delivery of services and healthy state of the project is due to the leadership of the Director, with the support and inspiration of her team of staff, volunteers, users, supporters and funders. As a member of the Board of Directors / Trustees, I have seen our duties and responsibilities expand due to new activities developed, , as users request more services in new areas, such as counselling and legal advice that is being provided in house. On behalf of my fellow Board members I would like to say we are delighted to be part of these new developments.

Key to 2015 / 2016 was the uncertainty of whether ACCM (UK) will continue to do the great work without securing new long term funding especially to cover revenue such as staff salaries from September 2015. The Director can also be commended for spending and committing her time in 2015/2016 completing funding applications and securing a new three year grant from Big Lottery Fund. In 2015 to 2016 year we also secured crucial new smaller grants from the Bedfordshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, The Allen Lane Foundation, Wixamstree Trust and St Andrews Church. These new grants enabled ACCM (UK) to start providing in house legal and counselling support that was not available before despite high demand for it.

This year saw an increase in demand for our services and an expansion in delivery of activities, and events, strengthening of our networks and partnerships especially in new areas of work with older people who have multiple needs and issues. In 2015 the Government's release of new laws to strengthen existing Forced Marriage (Civil) Act 2007 making it a Criminal Act, and the FGM Protection Orders and FGM Mandatory Recording and Reporting saw ACCM (UK) responding to high demand for information, training and families finding themselves on court which has not happened before especially regarding FGM. The services of our counsellor and legal advisor have been evaluable since these new laws came into force in 2015.

Expansion from one day a week to two days a week delivering ESOL and IT programmes shows the increasing demand for this valuable service to our users. Our continuing partnership working with Bedford College as providers of our courses is now permanent as both benefit with signposting users and trainers to each other.

ACCM (UK)'s work and good practice continue to contribute to Government and local authority consultations and policy strategies including the Home Office FGM Forum and the All Party Parliamentary Groups on issues relating to all forms of violence against girls and women.

We continue to develop and support our established overseas partnerships in Europe and Africa and hope to develop work and strong relationship with local communities in these countries when funding resources are secured.

As Board of Directors with expertise of our own, we support ACCM (UK) by sharing our expertise, good practice and information including referral of clients such as to the African Well Woman Clinic at Guys and St Thomas' run by myself. The Chair provides support with legal issues and most importantly finding new partnerships, links or networks. The treasurer helps with accounts and finances to ensure they are being kept in accordance with Charities Commission or Companies House Terms and Conditions. As majority of our users are victims of abuse one of the Board members advices on Safeguarding issues from her experience as a Social Worker.

Though we have now secure a three grant the issue of long term sustainable funding concerns us as all Charities are competing for the same shrinking pot of grants. I am happy that our work and progress is in line with a number of the Governments' policies in health and illegal harmful traditional practices that have emerged and we will continue monitoring funding sources as they arise and keep applying. As Board members we will ensure that that we continue to be proactive and provide support to staff and volunteers to develop new services and secure new sustainable long term funding to meet the increasing needs of our beneficiaries. Our working towards Quality Mark ISO901 and Continual Professional Development (CPD) Certification will improve ACCM (UK) standing with Funders and contracting for public contracts.

On behalf of my fellow Board members, I would like to thank the Director, staff, volunteers, users and supporters and most importantly our funders especially Big Lottery, St Andrews Church and Bedford Borough Council, who have made it possible for the project to continue being successful. I look forward to committing myself as Secretary and serving ACCM (UK) for another successful and fulfilling 2016/17.



Dr Comfort Momoh M.B.E  
Secretary

## **REFLECTIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

### *A challenging but successful year*

The year 2015 to 2016 was very challenging but successful year for ACCM (UK). ACCM (UK) continued to undertake its local work in Bedford as well as continuing to expand its work outside Bedford, into Luton, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and UK wide on illegal harmful traditional practices.

As Director I have continued to manage the project and supervise staff with the support of the Trustees and the Administrative Officer who now undertakes more duties and responsibilities including supervising Volunteers whilst managing day to day management of the project.

As main fund raiser 2015 to 2016 was very difficult and challenging year as the main grant from Big Lottery was ending in September 2015. This meant that majority of the whole of the year was spent completing funding applications to various potential Funders spending the majority of my time looking for and applying for funding to build up our reserves as well as securing new contracts and grants for long term sustainability, or at least for three or five more years from October 2015. Our main grant was now from Bedfordshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioning that we were very grateful of Mr Olly Martins for enabling us to have this grant to support victims of illegal traditional practices and domestic violence from minority communities. Other small grants were secured from Awards for All, Bedford Borough Council, Allen Land Foundation, Wixamstree Trust and St Andrews Church to whom we are grateful for the benefit of our beneficiaries.

In August Trustees talked to staff to inform them the main grant from Big Lottery Fund will end in September 2015, and that if no new funding is secured by end of September 2015, then the project will have to use its Reserves to ensure the project continues until March 2016. Trustees and the Director were confident that the financial situation was temporary and that new funds will eventually come through. Trustees agreed that from October 2015 to March 2016 paid staff including myself the Director will have to take a pay cut and as we were all committed to the project we agreed to the pay cut. We continued to work with our existing partners including the two trusted grassroots organisations, The Polish Bedford Integration Centre and Multi Heritage Organisation. We also continue to be members of Victims' Partnership Group being set up by the Bedfordshire and Luton Office of Police Crime Commissioner for victims of crime.

Our work in 2015 to 2016 continued to build on existing programmes and while introducing new areas of need, such as legal services, as was identified and recommended by our users and independent evaluators. This has meant that, as Director and trainer, I attended over 103 meetings locally and nationally. There was no travel internationally this financial year due to funding concerns as we needed to maintain our reserves. I provided over 26 training sessions to professionals and communities with majority on illegal harmful traditional practices and people trafficking.

This was an interesting and challenging year with regards to staff and volunteers. With new funding from Allen Lane Foundation and the OPCC's Victim Fund we were able to recruit a qualified Solicitor to start providing legal advice in house. This was great news for our users who now felt there was a qualified solicitor of minority background who understood their needs and how culture and religion controls their lives. I continued to support staff, however, the role of supervising and overseeing Volunteers was passed on to the Administrative Officer who now manages their rota systems, timesheets and expense payments. We continue to hold

monthly meetings, sometimes whenever an issue presented itself where we share good practice, and sort out issues of concerns and how we can best address them. The most important concern was how we worked with other organisations without being taken advantage off. It was agreed that we needed to make our position clear and that other organisations acknowledge our contributions and each event. Our work with the Italian Senior Citizens Group, the Conduit Day Centre residents and The Ghanaian Family Group continues to grow and our work relationship is now stronger. However, it was sad to see Bedford Borough Council close Conduit Road Day Centre and move the users, mainly elderly Asian people mainly white elderly centre that they were not happy with as the Council wanted to save the £100,000 due to budget cuts. Our Youth Groups continue to grow and now that we have games available for young people to get active they are now even keener to come to our Friday evening and Saturday afternoon activities. Funding concerns did not allow us to develop services or run activities to meet new identified concerns such as eye problems, sickle cell thalassaemia and arthritis.

Having spent the whole year completing funding application I was very pleased that we secure small grants from Allen Lane Foundation, Wixamstree Trust and Awards for All. Most importantly we did manage to secure the 3 year grant from Big Lottery in February 2016 enabling us to sustain our project and continue to do what we do best for our users.

As Director, I continue to be involved in various consultations including the Home Offices FGM Forum and other Government Departments. The Department of Health's new Mandatory Recording and Reporting Policy is getting good results as recent data in March 2015 showed increase in cases on FGM or FM reported to the authorities but we still don't have a successful prosecution on FGM. In my opinion the FGM Protection Orders and Mandatory Recording and Reporting are more or less victimising mothers by reporting them on grounds that because they have had FGM their female children are at risk. While there is a risk that the female child is at risk there is no proof that the mother, despite being a victim herself, will actually perpetuate the crime as they are very much aware of the law.

As one reads through the report it will become clear, that as a project, 2015 / 16 has been a busy year running activities and providing services to meet the needs of our users in particular legal advice that we provided in-house. We still have a lot of unmet needs and we hope that with the extension of our Big Lottery Fund Grant we will be able to start delivering services to meet the unmet needs by 2019.

### ***Looking at the future***

Securing the new 3 year Big Lottery Fund gives ACCM (UK) long term sustainable funding. Our success in securing public contracts to deliver public services will enable us to engage with more hard to reach communities to make a difference to their lives. However, contracting environment is very challenging and competitive that we will need the support of a fund raiser or bid writer. There is also potential for partnership with another organisation though they are risks of being taken over due to our small size.

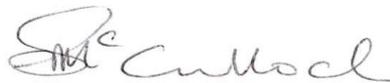
As our research and feedback has identified new health issues that were not being tackled before, we will continue to work closely in partnership with statutory service providers, professionals and other grassroots organisations to develop better services that are more user-friendly, accessible and relevant to the majority of disadvantaged communities in Bedford and surrounding regions. I am very pleased to see the success of Bedford as One a programme started by ACCM (UK) develop into a mainstream project managed and supported by Bedford

Borough Council. Bedford as One is bringing together people from all backgrounds and faiths to meet and share experiences and work together towards a better Bedford.

Although our relationship with Bedford Borough Council is now of landlord and tenant, we are still in talks as to how we can achieve our goal of developing the Woburn Road property into a Community Hub or Centre for the benefit of Bedford citizens. We are determined especially to take over the whole Woburn Road building including what was previously Conduit Road Day Centre now closed to expand our work.

We will continue to develop our links with our international partners in Europe, where I am a Board member of EURONET – FGM. I will also continue to develop our working partnership with our African partners in Uganda, including Rural Child Care Uganda (RUCCA) where I have managed to bring on board lead officers from two UK Universities, University of Bedfordshire and Institute of Education at UCL, which will raise our profile and improve our funding application opportunities. This partnership will be important not just for our African Partners but also for local work in the UK as University of Bedfordshire staff are our partners who will be available to support, monitor and evaluate ACCM (UK)'s local programmes.

With the project now going for another 3 years and beyond, with a team of dedicated staff and volunteers and supported by a great team of Trustees, we have had a successful though challenging 2015/16 year. This has been made possible with full support from our users, supporters, funders, especially Big Lottery Fund, and everyone who has used our services. I look forward to successfully taking ACCM (UK) further into 2016/2017 and beyond.



Sarah McCulloch  
ACCM (UK) Director

## THE PROJECT SO FAR

### What we did

The Trustees / Directors continue to oversee the whole project, managing of finances by monitoring, authorising payments, checking all payments are in order, signing cheques and responding to communication relating to the project. The Board met 4 times a year at our Bedford offices. The Chair and Treasurer continue to visit our offices in person to talk to staff and volunteers, with the Chair attending some of the events to meet users or participants and making sure the events have been planned and run efficiently and meeting our aims and objectives.

The project progressed with continuing funding from our main funder, Big Lottery Fund – Reaching Communities and was supplemented by new grants from Bedfordshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, Awards for All, Allen Lane Foundation, Wixamstree Trust, Bedford Borough Council and St Andrews Church of whom we are grateful on behalf of our beneficiaries and users. We are also grateful to Big Lottery Fund – Reaching Communities for extending our main grant for another three years from April 2016. Our work in 2015 and 2016 target men more than in previous years and continued to build on successful existing programmes such as Italian Senior Citizens Group, the Conduit Day Centre residents and The Ghanaian Family Group while developing new work in delivering in house legal advice services. The African Caribbean Youth Group continued to use out offices until they moved out in March 2016. Our new work included providing in-house counselling and as users have gained confidence in talking about their experiences and feeling confident to talk to someone we have seen an increase in demand for counselling.

2015 to 2016 saw a lot of exciting news and activities in which the Director, staff and volunteers got involved including initiating Bedford as One that has now become mainstream project Managed by the Council. This has been a success thanks to Sat Paul our Male Volunteer / Outreach Worker. Bedford as One has been successful in bringing together people from different backgrounds and Faiths to work together, share experiences to make Bedford a better place promote diversity and community cohesion.

This year ACCM (UK) undertook fewer large public events as we concentrated on ensuring users had the best service and support on the final Big Lottery Funded programme with funding ending in September 2015. Majority of 2015 and 16 funding was to deliver one to one support especially legal and counselling services where we had a higher than usual demand. We did organise and run events including a health and safety in the home event attracting over 500 men in Queens Park alone, FGM, FM and Honour Based Violence Conference for professionals with over 110 attending and our usual local International Women's Week celebration attracting over 50 ladies and professionals. We continue to work in partnership with other organisations, professionals and service providers, including being a major partner in Bedfordshire Victims Partnership.

We continue to provide ESOL for non-English speaking migrant communities and IT for beginners as these classes have become popular and we now run classes two days a week instead of one. There is a demand for learners to take their Citizenship tests but we have to refer them on to Bedford College for advanced and Citizenship course where over 10 are said to have achieved certificates. This work continues to be delivered in partnership with Bedford College who continue to provide Trainers and Tutors. As majority of our learners are women who have no UK status, learning to speak English and use of IT empowers them with confidence that is leading to better career, training or volunteering opportunities outside the

home, and becoming independent of their husbands and families. This programme needs to continue as long as ACCM (UK) still operates in Bedford.

As the funding environment has become very competitive ACCM (UK), is adapting and looking at different ways to secure long term sustainable funding including registering with Local and Central Government to bid for contract work to deliver local public services in health and wellbeing, health prevention and tackling domestic violence against girls and women. Our new extended three year Big Lottery Fund grant that started in April 2016 gives us an opportunity to look for other sustainable funding form elsewhere within the next three years. We will look towards next year's application to Bedfordshire Office of Police Crime Commissioner for victims of crime for 2017 round and continue to apply to other funders such as Lloyds Bank Foundation and BBC Children in Need for our youth programme. This includes looking at Partnership working with another charity or organisation we can trust. With the closure of the Conduit Day Centre by Bedford Borough Council and leaving the ground floor space of our building available, ACCM (UK) now is determined to have talks with the Council to take over the whole building and secure support funding to develop the building into a Community Hub through Asset Transfer. This we hope will be a project that we can use to develop to raise funding for our long term financial sustainability as the services we may develop in ground floor will be fee paying services such drop in day care for older people.

In 2015 the government issues new laws and polices including FGM Protection Orders in October 2015, FM Marriage Civil Law 2007 became a Criminal Law 2015 under the Police Crime Act 2015 and FGM Recording and Reporting 2015 came into force. Whilst these have been welcome to ensure children and those at risk of FGM or FM are protected there is still no prosecution on FGM issue. There have also been complaints from parents and communities who feel persecuted because they have a girl child; as the mother has been through FGM, the girl child seen as at risk. ACCM (UK) has supported two court cases and five other cases where parents have found themselves in court on ground that their daughter is at risk when they have not even considered the act and feel persecuted. This is an issue of concern that ACCM (UK) have written to the Department of Health and Home Office to request for clarification as to why innocent, and also victims, are being persecuted even when they had not even spoken about or thought about FGM for their daughters. This matter should also be raised at the next FGM All Party Parliamentary Hearing to be held in June 2016 in London.

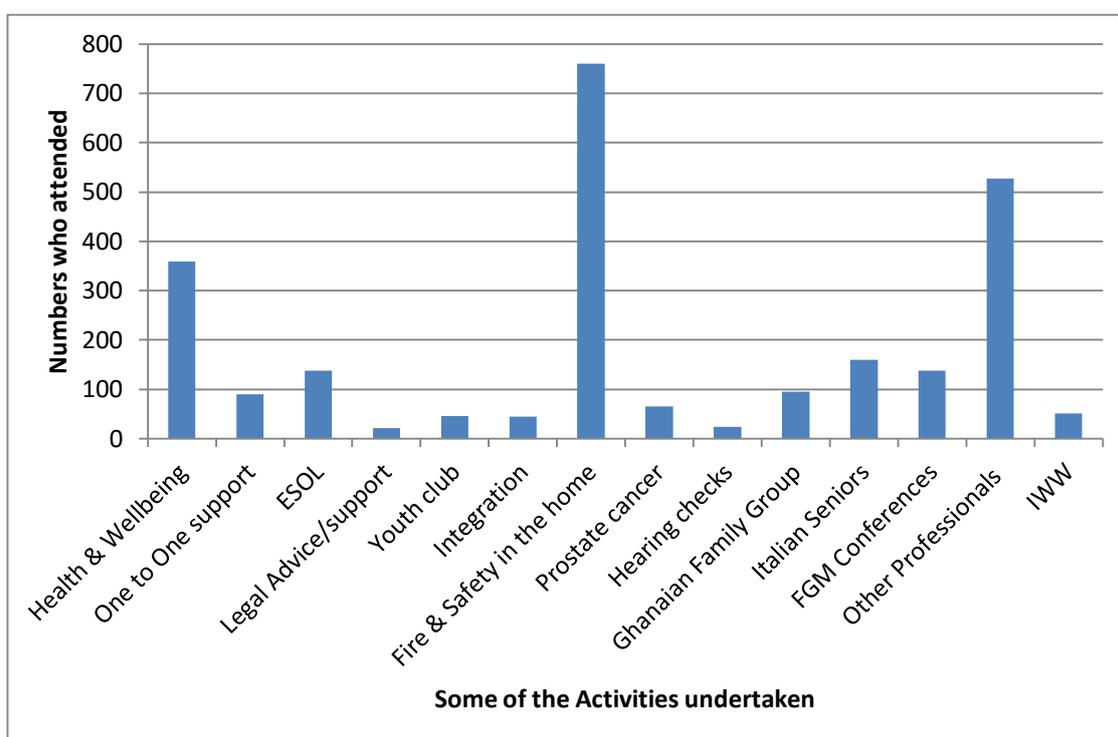
The Department of Health's new Mandatory Recording and Reporting Policy is getting good results as recent data from hospital and GPs show over 2000 new cases recorded however they were all victims who had FGM done before they arrived in the UK. This brings into question whether FGM is really happening in the UK if not case has been reported or recorded. The NSPCC continues to provide a Help Line 0800 028 3550 for victims or those at risk to phone in for advice or support, however there are some questions as to its effectiveness as there has been no one coming forward with information that has led to a prosecution.

### **Working with Beneficiaries and Professionals:**

2649 beneficiaries have benefited from our activities and work (1638 women, 1016 men). Of the 2649, and over 75% of the beneficiaries were of Asian with majority of White other being of Italian background.

Majority of our beneficiaries in 2015 to 2016 were women who made up 61.65% of our beneficiaries, down from over 70% in 2015/16 as we targeted men more this year than previous years. As women find it much easier to use or seek help and support from our services and activities whether on a one to one or as a group we have done more out in the community using Religious centres to target men and with attendance of 38.35%. The majority of our male beneficiaries were of Pakistan background followed by Indian and White Other. In our previous events we had targeted men of Indian background however this year we have done more with men of Pakistan and Bangladeshi origin in Queens Park, Castle and Cauldwell.

**Chart showing some of the activities run between June 2015 and May 2016.**



A total of 91 beneficiaries were given one to one support, including counselling, legal advice, information on various issues of concern, or just a listening ear or given a shoulder to cry on. 61 were victims of hidden cultural practices and domestic violence; over 10 of them were victims of female genital mutilation. Of the 19 men supported 4 were adult victims of childhood sexual abuse, afraid to go to the authorities for fear of stigma or rejection from the family and community due to honour but determined to seek help and support from ACCM (UK) as they trust the organisation. This year we supported 10 families fleeing domestic abuse 4 families went into new housing and successfully helped 6 victims to bring up divorce cases. We also helped one father to build his confidence to fight his ex-wife in gaining access to his children through referral to Parent courses and family support programmes.

Our capacity to listen, provide positive support and working with other service providers such as Independent Domestic Violence Association (IDVA) and Bedford Borough Council Housing Teams to improve the position of victims, has meant that we are trusted to deliver results. This has seen increasing numbers of victims of domestic violence, forced marriage or

female genital mutilation or those who have already been subjected to these practices coming forward to talk to us.

The publicity and anxiety amongst practicing communities has led to a surge in requests for training from professionals and communities needing advice and support. The following awareness activities and information giving have been undertaken on harmful cultural practices:

- Throughout the year we have supported 126 individual victims of female genital mutilation from around the UK. 63 were referred to Specialised FGM Clinics, 4 are from Bedford and are still being supported by ACCM (UK) through counselling.
- We have supported 10 by providing letters of support for asylum claims on grounds of protecting their daughters.
- ACCM (UK) continues to support and help The Gambian Community in Birmingham to develop their Women and Child Care Group with funding application and project development to continue growing and campaigning against violence against girls and women.
- Supported 2 families in Luton with information and provided reports to support their court cases on FGM Protection Orders
- Continued to support our partners in Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester with on-going information on FGM especially updating them on new laws on FGM Mandatory Recording and Reporting, FGM Protection Orders that into force in July and October 2015.
- Attended Pan Bedford and Luton FGM Conference in February 2016 with a survivor to give critical review on their launch of their FGM Pathways Policy
- Organised and provided training 560 professionals around England in partnership with other agencies including Safeguarding Teams, Health and the Police on female genital mutilation. Majority of these training events were organised by various Local Authorities and Councils or professional bodies themselves
- Organised one major FGM, FM and HBV conference in Bedford for 110 professionals people in partnership with Bedford Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
- Provided information for media publicity including supporting 3 students with their research thesis on FGM
- Recruited 3 new champions / volunteers, one of whom was a user, and continue to support them with training to ensure they are up to date with legal and human rights changes to continue providing information and support to their communities.
- The Director is still a Board member of the European FGM Network based in Brussels though the organisation has not been proactive in 2015/2016.
- ACCM (UK) supported victims of forced marriage majority of whom are victims of domestic violence who were supported, with information, confidence building, counselling and legal advice.

In 2015 to 2016 we concentrated our parenting sessions in Kingsbrook Children's Centre with 7 parents attending all 10 sessions. Sessions have been delivered that offer parents ESOL, keeping children safe, physical activity, better communication, listening, safety in the home and healthy eating. This programme will now be rolled over to more Kingsbrook and Kempston Children's centres due to demand and may collaborate with Family Support Group in Cauldwell to deliver these sessions. Three Fire Safety at Home events, included men most of them fathers, were held at locals Religious and community centres attracting over 760

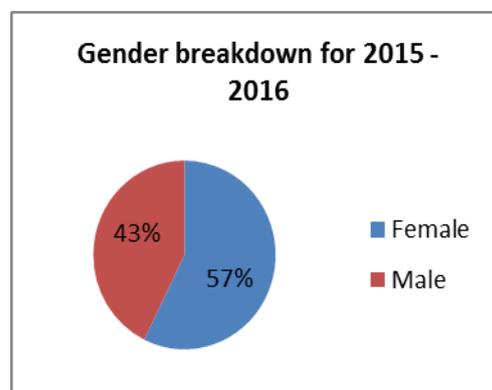
attendees with over 26 families registering for fire and smoke alarms to be fitted into their homes for free by the Bedfordshire Fire Brigade.

A total of 138 women attended and benefited from ESOL sessions in the year 2015/16 and majority are now confident in speaking English. 10 said improving their English has led them to secure paid employment and 23 are considering taking formal education or training. More than 65% said they want to do volunteering work when they are confident enough to speak English in public; one has joined ACCM (UK)'s volunteering pool. IT is now part of the ESOL programme instead of stand-alone course which now includes Employment and Job Searches with support from Job Centre Plus staff. Learners who were more proficient in English were signposted to Bedford College for advanced English course leading to Citizens as we no longer offered this facility. Majority of our female learners, said learning how to use social media through the IT courses, has opened up new communication channels especially using Skype as they now communicate with family overseas. We continue to be supported by Bedford College Trainee Tutors and one independent Tutor, with support of volunteers and staff from ACCM (UK), for ESOL as class numbers have increased.

### **Results from our Mini Survey undertaken in April to July 2015**

Results and feedback from our mini survey on the Health and Wellbeing of our users, whether attending our activities, talks, conferences or receiving one to one support, had made a difference in their lives continued to feed into our action plans and activities for the year June 2015 to May 2016. We did run similar activities though targeting men more than previous years as men were hard to engage due to their lack of time. Religious and community leaders co-operated more with us especially offering their community halls and publicising our events. Their support enabled us to reach out to 1110 men compared to 762 for 2014 to 2015 year.

Popular events attended were talks on health and safety at home and prostate cancer.



### **Bedfordshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Grants**

We were fortunate to secure two grants from September 2015 to March 2016 and were then extended from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund:

- Commissioner's Community Safety Grant for the project titled "***Supporting young people from minority backgrounds in Bedford.***"
- Victims Commissioning Fund for the project titled "***Supporting victims of illegal harmful practices and sexual abuse in Bedford.***"

The projects were delivered in Bedford over a period of three and six months respectively, both ending in March 2016. Through a variety of educational and social activities, events, information

and counselling services, ACCM(UK) intended to provide support to young people of minority ethnic backgrounds, in personal and social development to help build confident and active citizens. As well as providing assistance, emotional support and counselling services for victims of sexual abuse and illegal harmful traditional practices in Bedford. Together with raising awareness within the community on domestic abuse, sexual abuse, grooming and other forms of child abuse to foster changes in attitude in illegal harmful traditional practices.

Both projects recorded an increase in attendance numbers and feedback from participants was positive. Information and training was given to individuals groups, groups, professional and statutory agencies. Unexpected outcomes were dealt with effectively: as other agencies requested more or different activities. The project supporting young people actually received extended funding to enable ACCM (UK) to put on additional activities up to July 2016; these were still in progress at the time of the report. This proved there was still the demand for activities and future work was sustainable. Subsequently the findings of the evaluation were that ACCM (UK) was successful in relation to the aims and objectives of the projects and recommendations were made to maintain development of the services and seek further funding.

Participant feedback also reflected changes in behaviour and attitude as evident in the snapshot of recorded quotes:

- *“I like coming here because it is the only place I learn about relationships, rights and the law that protects me from traditional practices. I have also learnt how to talk to my family without sounding challenging.”* 18 year-old
- *‘Wow, I cannot believe I am able to do without my phone for 30 min but I have!’* 18 year- old
- *“Cool, somewhere to chill out.”* 19 year-old boy
- *“I am calmer, better listener than before”* Mrs F mother of four

Achievements in supporting victims of illegal harmful practices and sexual abuse in Bedford.

This was a project funded by the Bedfordshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner that was funded for six months to end of March 2016 and was extended to July 2016 with extra funding.

In addition to health and wellbeing programmes that highlighted health issues that impacted on victims from illegal harmful traditional practices, including mental health, we undertook 8 specific talks on human rights, domestic violence, forced and child marriage (FM) and female genital mutilation (FGM). Here participants gained knowledge and community awareness was raised about harmful traditional practices. The African Caribbean Youth Group and Asian Girls and Young Women Group also received talks and information on these subjects, ensuring more age groups were made aware of the issues. 4 out of the 6 Asian male victims of childhood sexual abuse continue to receive support and counselling. These victims suffered or felt they could be rejected by the family and community if they spoke about their experiences. Suffering from lifelong depression or mental health issues that are now being addressed through various support services. Using a male volunteer helped as male victims are more at ease to talk. 68 people 3 of them male who sought advice or information were of victims of domestic violence.

Over the year of 2015 to 2016 we provide legal advice to 21 people an increase of 70% from previous year. This increase was due to securing extra funding from Bedford Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and Allen Land Foundation that paid for a qualified Solicitor to be employed part time and offering advice and support in house. Some of the cases involved courts especially as victims felt they could break free or gained confidence to divorce their violent partners or families they lived in.



**LEGAL  
ADVICE**

**Do you need legal advice?**

- Legal matters
- Domestic abuse
- Child safety
- Honour based violence
- Forced marriage
- And any other issues

**If so, ACCM (UK) is providing FREE surgeries for 30 minutes where you can get legal advice and representation.**

**Call: 01234 356910 for an appointment at  
3A Woburn Road  
Bedford  
MK40 1EG**



ACCM UK

ACCM (UK) First Floor, 3A Woburn Road, Bedford MK40 1EG  
Tel. 01234 356910 Mob. 07767 164808

#### Feedback from users:

- *“Thanks Rehana you are like an angel who came into our Mum’s life as she was so bad. She is better, happier and has made new friends as she can now speak English after attending your ESOL course.” Ms P aged 14*
- *“I never thought I had rights and that I can leave my dangerous situation and start again. Thank you for advice I will start divorce.” Mrs B*
- *“Thank you so much for supporting us. My husband and I are now confident to deal with our in laws with having to fear of honour as we now know our legal rights and the law.” Mr and Mrs M*
- *“Thank you for the counselling and confidence building. For the first time in seven years I told my mother in law not to pester me about taking my children to have FGM done.” Mrs O*
- *“I can now leave my daughter with a friend and go out like shopping as I never did before due to fear that my ex-husband and his family may come from Nigeria will abduct for FGM.” Ms*

#### A visit from Mr Olly Martins – Bedfordshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

As we were funded by OPCC, Mr Olly Martins, he was able to visit ACCM (UK) to meet users and victims of harmful traditional practices and other forms of abuse.

This visit to meet users was crucial and important in building bridges between the Police and vulnerable women who fear contacting or speaking to the police. The users were able to ask questions and raise concerns as to why they feared the Police and found them unsupportive or that they lacked understanding of cultural and family issues relating to minority

communities. Mr Martins reassured them that things were now going to change as he will make it his duty to improve how Police Officers related to them especially when they were most vulnerable from abuse. One victim of domestic violence did have a one to one conversation with Mr Martins who was shocked about her violent experiences that he promised to do more for ACCM (UK) to ensure such victims received the support they needed to improve their lives and that of their children.



Picture showing Mr Olly Martins – OPCC speaking to some of the victims of all forms of abuse.

*A copy of all evaluation reports are available on our website.*

### **Partnership with Local Community Police Officers**



We also undertook a lot of work to support our Community Safety Police Officers. This work was important as our users, majority of them vulnerable women needed to meet police officers to reassure them that they can seek help or talk to a police officer with fear of implications.

In the picture is one of the Community Police Officer with ACCM (UK) staff and volunteers at ACCM (UK) offices. Bedford

### **Bedfordshire International Women’s Week**

We continued to run Bedford International Women’s Week activities at our ACCM (UK) offices this year in partnership with our local Community Police Officers and supported by Bedford Health Watch Teams. We organised a day’s celebration with bring and share theme that included activities, yoga, and talks for our users with 98 women attending. We feel this is a more successful approach to celebrating women’s international achievement than the costly all Bedford events of previous years.

### **Italian Senior Citizens Group**

The Italian Senior Citizens Group has grown and become established with varied numbers of attending weekly lunch, yoga and dancing sessions. After holding events at ACCM (UK)'s offices for a while the groups decided to move back to the Italian Church's hall that had easy access as some were not keen on using the stairs or the lift. On most weekly sessions, we have on average 45 people attending, especially when they have yoga or tai chi on.

Lunch club is also very popular as they have an elderly Italian musician who plays and sings good old memory lane Italian songs and many pair up to dance. The group though wish to expand their activities to outdoor walks and trips far afield they still prefer yoga and localised indoor activities. They plan for another trip in the summer 2016 and they are looking at places of interest.



Italian Senior Citizens listening to a health and wellbeing talk

### **Ghanaian Family Group**

This Family Group continue to grow with members now numbering around 100. We continued to support them with health talks, and information particularly on male health and vaccinations. In partnership with Terence Higgins Trust we continued to provide tests on HIV /AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Another Ghanaian Group that used to meet elsewhere has now moved to use ACCM (UK)'s offices two days a week and will be joining in with the Family Groups on their one a month meetings.

We hope that the success of these two groups will lead to more family groups from other African or even Asian communities setting up to bring communities together especially reaching out to help young men.

In total ACCM (UK) Trustees, staff and volunteers attended over 300 events, training sessions and meetings over the year. Majority of events attended were training or meetings covering violence against girls and women. Over a third of training sessions attended were for staff or volunteers to improve and gain new skills and knowledge on various subjects related to our work.

## **Government Policy**

ACCM (UK) is a member of various Cross Government Forum including FGM Forum, FM Unit and Domestic Violence.

This period from May 2015 to June 2016 the Government issues some new Legislation including:

1. The Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order (Relevant Third Party) Regulations 2015.

The FGM Protection Order has been modelled on the Forced Marriage Protection Order (provided for in Part 4A of the Family Law Act 1996). Local authorities are currently specified as relevant third parties for the purpose of applying for Forced Marriage Protection Orders. This supports their duty to protect children and investigate the welfare of vulnerable persons in their area. This reasoning applies equally in the context of FGM Protection Orders. In particular, being able to apply for a FGM Protection Order, without first needing to seek leave of the court, should assist local authorities, through their social services units, in protecting actual or potential victims of FGM.

1. FGM Mandatory Recording and Reporting Legislation October 2015

FGM Mandatory Recording and Reporting duty was introduced via the Serious Crime Act 2015, following a public consultation. The duty will require regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police. It came into force on 31 October 2015.

This legislation has caused a few problems to families who have found themselves on Court without even knowing why they are there and or what crime they had committed. Majority of cases were reported to the Police or Social Services because the mother has been through FGM and it was assumed that the daughters were therefore at risk of harm. In the three cases ACCM (UK) has been involved in there was no risk to the girl children though we supported the families with awareness raising and information one of the mother was referred to a London hospital for treatment for FGM implications. .

## **How our information and good practice is shared**

The results from our work and good practice are being shared at all levels, with the community, professionals, service providers and policy makers through:

- Training and giving out information at meetings, training and events organised either by ACCM (UK) or other agencies.
- Continue to support our developed community groups such as the Italian Senior Citizens and Gambian Family Groups enables us to raise awareness and share information about our work and other agencies.
- Ensuring the two youth groups get established with peers as leaders supported by ACCM (UK).
- Attending meetings and sharing information and good practice especially at cross Government Forums.
- We share our information with Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and any other Local Authorities; NHS Commissioners, service providers, local Councillors and MPs who are interested in our work.
- We have participated in international, National and Local Consultations or Policy reviews on violence against girls and women, health and social care during the year. The Director attended two events in Europe on FGM and a trip to China on seeking information on how China ended foot bidding culture and sharing her own work on public health and other cultures outside China.
- The Director took part in various Government Consultations on Female Genital Mutilation over the year majority of them for Department of Health about Mandatory Recording and Reporting which became legal policy for all professionals. We continue to provide this information during our training or circulating all relevant information by email
- Our updated website now has most of the information about our work. We are still reviewing the information and updating it as it becomes necessary. The Annual Report will be put on our new website and will be made available at request as well as at events where we have a stall.

## **Opportunities and challenges**

### **Opportunities:**

The Year 2015/2016 was very challenging when it came to raising funding to sustain the project. We were lucky in securing a new three year grant from Big Lottery Fund – Reaching Communities. We can now start looking ahead to 2019, doing what we do best in supporting vulnerable communities by delivering services that continue to make a difference to their lives and Bedford as a whole. We are looking into expanding our services into new fields especially if we manage to take over the ground floor space in our current offices.

With staff and volunteers now established, trained and passionate to continue in their posts, we still have the capacity to continue our work and do more as we have established relationship with our communities. We still need to secure new funding to recruit new staff if our expansion of services can be realised or achieved as we now have yet more demand on our services to tackle mental health, all forms of abuse and legal advice.

Our partnership with Bedford College continues to grow with more ESOL and IT sessions planned for new areas such as Cauldwell and Kempston. We now have users in Queens Park, Cauldwell and Castle at higher levels of ESOL and those wanting to take advanced ESOL or Citizenship tests are being signposted to Bedford College. As demand for ESOL has increased we now run three classes a week and have to start putting some people on waiting list. Our partnership with Religious and Community Centres continues and we hope that we will expand new work targeting more men and more parenting sessions including Hate Crime.

Our work relationship with service providers and statutory bodies such as the Clinical Commissioners, Public Health teams, Bedford Healthwatch, Local Authorities, Bedford Hospital, Terence Higgins Trust and GPs continues to grow as demand for health services grows. Concerns in early appointments for GP services has meant that we are seeing more people complaining about ill health and not being able to see their GP. This has led to our teaming up with Healthwatch Team and local Pharmacists to provide health checks and advice on how to reduce ill-health.

We now work closely with our statutory service partners who continue to support our work through delivering some of our activities, as speakers in such subjects as mental health, prostate cancer, flu – jab vaccinations, diabetes or health checks. Being part of our service delivery has enabled them to engage with and to reach out to grassroots communities on public health issues or to raise awareness about current health or social concerns including updating ACCM (UK) or communities on new legal issues or policies such as Safeguarding. We continue to undertake joint events and conference whenever possible.

As members of various Government Forums, we continue to provide up to date information on our work and feedback from users to inform Government Policy and legislation.

Our setting up of Bedford Faith Together project that has now been developed into Bedford as One Project is another success in how we can bring communities together such as all Faith Groups, HealthWatch and Equality and Diversity Teams at Bedford Borough Council.

Our work and partnership with large Charities, such as MIND, Polish and British Integration Centre, Terrence Higgins Trust and Citizens Advice Bureau, who run services for target communities but struggle to engage with minority communities continues to grow. Our 3A

Woburn Road office being strategic continue to enable us to be closer to large charities especially MIND, based at 3 Woburn Road and our target communities. Due to increasing number of users needing counselling we now provide most of this service in-house. We are planning to have two staff trained in counselling as they speak various languages to provide support to our users as this will help reduce waiting times and expand our work in this area.

We are still supported by our Local Councillors and MP and we hope to engage them in to support our discussions with the Council regarding taking over the whole building to develop a Community Hub for community use. We are also seeking more information from Locality about Community Assets or Turning a public building into a community use asset. As we have now completed our Version 1 Business Plan we can move to serious fund raising and talks with the Council.

### Challenges:

Since moving to 3A Woburn Road demand for our services, support and information continues to increase with demands identified in our evaluation reports, user's needs and requests proving very challenging to meet or achieve due to limited staff and funding resources. Majority or new services and needs are coming from our new older, younger and male users with specific needs such as demands for only gentler and yoga sessions by older users, support and counselling for users with mental health is another areas in great demand with difficulty finding non English speaking qualified counsellors. Young people want more high powered sessions such as swimming, kickboxing and outdoor activities all of which require staff and extra funds to make them worthwhile. As one cannot just get young people to, for example, have one swimming session to keep active they will need more than at least 5 sessions to benefit health wise.

We continue to get invitations or requests to deliver work outside Bedfordshire, but as it not funded we have to charge fees for these services even though many organisations cry poverty due to funding cuts. As ACCM (UK) has a duty of care to ensure professionals or communities are trained and well informed, we continued to support any organisation by providing training or information, even free of charge, if it felt that the knowledge and information given will contribute to empowering, supporting victims or protecting those at risk of harm. As in previous years we will continue to help and support others as much as possible.

Although we have secured a three year grant that will take us to March 2019, we still need to raise more new grants to enable us to achieve our aims and objects especially supporting victims of all forms of abuse and reducing mental health amongst minority communities. The current funding environment is so competitive and based mainly on sub-contracting and or pay-by-result. This new model of funding does not fit our work due to complex needs and pay by results from our experience with TCHC is that you may not be paid in time or at all. There is also contracting to deliver public service for local needs but often small organisation like ours fails to secure these contact as they go to larger organisations who then sun-contract. The best option will be to set up a community Hub and charge fees for services we deliver to raise funding needed to cover activities and support services we deliver. The other alternative is to seek other like charities such as Bedfordshire Victims Partnership or Polish British Integration Centre and bid as a partnership to strengthen our chances of securing contract funding. Although partnership fund raising is the way forward it also has its pitfalls such as the likelihood of being taken over by the stronger charity or fall out due work practice differences, staff, or one partner not meeting their part of the contract.

## ACCM (UK)'S FINANCES AND GRANTS

### Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31st May 2016

#### Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2015	Total Funds 2014
		£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
Activities in furtherance of the Charity's objects					
Grant Receivable	1	1582	103970	105552	109270
Fees and Bank Interest					
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<u>1582</u>	<u>103970</u>	<u>105552</u>	<u>109270</u>
<b>Resources Expended:</b>					
Cost of activities in furtherance Of Charities objects					
Direct Charitable Expenditure		380	6431	6811	4782
<b>Management &amp; Administration</b>					
Office Rent and Services		20	10360	10380	10336
Salaries	3	870	63812	64682	61471
Training		-	1336	1336	2229
Accountancy and Professional fees		100	8328	8428	4186
Volunteer Expenses		-	589	589	1143
Travel & Subsistence		50	1365	1415	3173
Other Administrative		162	4368	4530	7094
Staff Miscellaneous		-	1000	1000	889
Depreciation		-	1059	1059	823
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<u>1582</u>	<u>98648</u>	<u>100230</u>	<u>96126</u>
<b>Net (Expenditure)/Income For the Year</b>		-	5322	5322	13144
<b>Total Funds at 1st June 2013</b>		4268	24991	29259	16115
<b>Total Funds 31st May 2014</b>		<u>4268</u>	<u>30313</u>	<u>34581</u>	<u>29259</u>

## **Future plans and work in progress**

### **Hopes and aspirations**

1. We will continue fund raising until we have satisfactory reserves for long term sustainability of our work programme and to expand our staff and volunteer resources to achieve our goals and objects.
2. Our long term aims is to continue lobbying Bedford Borough Council to secure the current office building, some funding and support, to establish a health and wellbeing centre providing support services, information and running activities for BAME and other vulnerable communities and anyone who needs help in Bedfordshire and beyond. The centre will provide somewhere safe for girls and women who are victims of abuse or fearing abuse to seek help, talk to someone in confidence and gain valuable information.
3. We will continue to provide training, information, keep up the campaign in the UK and overseas on tackling harmful traditional practices until young people and women are safe and free from all forms of harm.
4. There is a strong need to develop work around children and young people as there is no such service in Bedford in particular supporting African Caribbean children and young people. We have established a small group but now require funding to employ a Youth Project Worker to develop this work. This is an area we hope we will be able to secure funding support from BBC Children in Need or from other Government sources.
5. Apply for new grants to support parents locally and from other regions including Luton, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham through our link partners. There has been an increase in requests for help from other regions to provide support to parents struggling with parenting issues or don't understand Safeguarding policies or don't know why their children are getting ASBOs. There are serious concerns, especially amongst the Somali community, many of the parents have sons in prison, need information, support and want to protect younger siblings.
6. Continue running parenting, health and wellbeing events to tackle health, social and economic inequalities in Bedford especially mental health. ACCM (UK) believes that communities or individuals who are healthy and empowered with correct information will improve their social and economic status through training or employment or volunteering.
7. Continue lobbying and supporting the Government and Local Authorities to improve facilities and services for victims of harmful traditional practices and all forms of violence so victims can live a healthy, safe and economically active lives.
8. Build on existing and creating new partnerships for better working partnerships to improve the position of those who are most vulnerable in the community, especially girls and women.
9. Recruit and train more community champions to be trained and equipped to continue working within their communities especially in Luton, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire.
10. Continue to seek funding to develop our area of work with men as there is a definite need relating to child sexual abuse, mental health, substance abuse and prostate cancer problems.
11. Continue to support Northampton Maternity Hospital in developing FGM Clinic
12. Develop our working partnership and relationship with more Religious and Community Centres, as they have been valuable to our previous work, to form legal bidding partnerships to tender or bid for joint funding or contracts.
13. To continue reviewing and improving our website and other project information.

## INDEX

### Musings from staff and volunteers

Reflection Reports

#### *Everyone matter to us!*

We are very grateful to the different organisations for their help and the Big Lottery for the Grant that have helped us carry on with this journey helping people and Sarah McCulloch the Director for filling as many Application Forms as she can so we do not leave them without that help and those who are still to come in need or desperation.

Every year gets busier and busier, people are getting to know and trust us more and more. Some of them come and seat down more next to my desk waiting to be seeing and just talk about their lives, showing us how much they trust us.

It is really gratifying when a marriage can be safe and we have a happy family, we hope we have more and more cases like these ones.

We are here to help and give support, still reaching out as there are loads of people from different communities to guide and help, we have more men approaching us regarding their personal issues, still not easy but we have to perceiver as our objective and aim is to help as many people from the different communities as possible.

We have empowered women so they feel confident to do anything that they want for a better future and having more cases where they start their own business.

People that have been in desperation for years and now have jobs, have moved on and feel confident and positive to carry on in live.

I feel happy to see how much we have changed people's life; they are happy, feel confident and themselves again.

Looking forward to carrying on supporting more people and survivors.

Jimena Galeno  
Administrative Officer

## Report June 2015 till June2016

I am delighted to be a part of our wonderful Organisation ACCM UK), I would like to take this *opportunity* to thank all the organisation that we have worked with and supported us with our work, most importantly I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to my Director, Sarah McCulloch, and to our funders **Big Lottery Fund**, with their support I was able to deliver the vast amount of knowledge and expertise to the hard to reach communities.

I have been provided with all the necessary training to brush up my knowledge and skills to help vulnerable families. I am now able to train and deliver sessions like teaching to our service users and giving them education on what is acceptable in relationships, parenting courses awareness on sexual abuse, and other harmful traditional practises .I was able to set up Youth club to rebuild those vulnerable teenagers' life's some of these teenagers now have gone back into education and are looking at life in a positive way!

Our health and wellbeing sessions have had a great impact on our service user as this educated them to stand up for their rights and we were able to educate them through ESOL classes to start to rebuild their life's, outcomes have been emulate some of our service users have now started their own business, some have had been able to build their confidence to go to the Police and report the abuse they were facing for many years. Many families have been educated how to live a healthy life, feedback from these families was great some said “ they have changed the way they cook using alternative methods and have become more active “. Some have feedback that it has improved blood pressure levels and diabetes are more in control, now they are able to educate the rest of their extended family to help them live a better life, making healthy choices. We educated women with the help of public health in Bedford on cervical cancer as many women didn't attend their appointments not having the understanding how important these tests are for them, the outcome was great most of the women have a better understanding now and have booked in with their GPs to have the tests.

I have been able to support two clients that were having suicidal thoughts, with the help of other professionals; we will continue to support them for as long as they need our support. Our counselling service has made a huge impact on their lives.

I am grateful that we are able to provide legal advice surgeries to everyone that needs help in forced married domestic abuse etc.

We have taken our students and families to the houses of parliaments to educate them further, they really thanked us for giving them this opportunity, there were all amazed and were really happy.



I feel blessed that people in different communities are now able to reach to us after gaining the trust through our Health and wellbeing programmes. I am very determined to continue to reach out to the hard to reach and make a difference in their lives.

I would like to thank all my colleagues' volunteers, professionals and Sarah McCulloch

Rehana Kosar  
Project Worker – Tackling Health Inequalities

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### **2015/16 has been a varied, enjoyable and educationally rewarding year for me.**

Through maintaining close links with Bedford Collage Teacher Training department I have been able to resource tutors to support ACCM (UK)'s ESOL classes.

Whilst continuing with planning and delivering community health event at our existing partnership base groups, I developed a more structured approach to engage with the cross-section of voluntary, community, and faith organisations to promote 'Men's Health Awareness' programme with the aim of reducing health inequality faced by men within the minority communities of Bedford. The plan has been to establish a continual and sustainable working partnership to deliver talks and presentations on pre identified public health topics. I anticipated this project to run for 2 years to cover a wider community base and to produce the desired outcome.

#### **Basic outline of plan**

- Identify target groups and organisations willing to work in partnership with ACCM(UK). Particular attention to be directed at attracting new organisations to come aboard
- For the project to be productive and produce measurable results I deliberately planned to work with the below listed 5 demographic community groups in this order of:
  - a) Indian background
  - b) Pakistani background
  - c) Bangladeshi background
  - d) Afro Carrabin background
  - e) Eastern European background and more recent migrant groups.

Having developed a sound working partnership with Gurdwaras and Temples used by communities of Indian background, I have also started working with Mosques in Queen's Park which are home for communities of Pakistani background. I am encouraged by the positive response from the Mosque leaders and feel confident of achieving worthy results in the future. The fact that we have comfortably managed to get men and women to sit together in a mosque

and participate in a ‘Diabetes Awareness’ event has invigorated me greatly as I see this as a hugely positive cultural change from the centuries old tradition of men and women segregation.

Another valuable area of community work which sprung out from ACCM(UK)’s staff meeting in July 2015, is ‘ Exploring and Sharing Similarities in Diversity’. This subject has taken a lot of my time. The concept of bringing diverse community groups together, to meet at a venue on natural ground, to share their similarities on a given topic has received enthusiastic support from, Bedford Borough Strategic Partnership, Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Team, Healthwatch Bedford Borough, Bedford Indian Community (BIC), Bedford Council of Faiths and University of Bedfordshire (BCoF). I am humbled by the fact that on this project I represent ACCM (UK) as the founding organisation.

The 2 areas of my work, Health Awareness and Similarities in Diversity, have been complimentary to each other as both involve meeting and working with the same community groups of Bedford.

I am grateful to Sarah for her valuable guidance, Rehana and Jimena for their much appreciated support.

In the year ahead I look forward to further developing and strengthening partnership links between ACCM(UK) and the community groups of Bedford to benefit those in need.



A photo of Sat receiving an Award from Bedfordshire Police taken on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at the Chiltern Hotel, Luton for “Services to Bedfordshire”

Sat Paul  
Male Seasonal Worker / Volunteer

**Photos from some of our activities, events and conferences - 2014 / 15**

**ACCM (UK)'s Stall as used at all events**



**Italian Senior Citizens Group Activities**



Walk in the Chichester Cathedral Gardens



At the Littlehampton seaside



Yoga session – relaxation



A good stretch

ACCM (UK) Coffee Mornings and Health and Wellbeing Sessions



Health and wellbeing talk



Laughter yoga – relaxation exercises



Olly Martins – OPCC’s visit to users at ACCM (UK)’s offices with Director on right



Olly Martins – OPCC with ACCM (UK)’s Chair on far left and staff on the right



Exercises



Cauldwell Women's Group with Community Leader



Staff with some of our Cauldwell Women's group



Busy Bees Groups running Health Easting session



Staff playing EDE Play for Conduit Day Centre users Project



Prostate cancer talk by Prostate Cancer

International Women's Week - Day Celebration – 11 March 2016



Celebrating IWW with dance and music



Bring and share at IWW

ESOL Classes



One of ESOL Class session



One of ESOL Class session



Creative therapy - Sewing



FGM, HV, FM Conference – Mar 16



Opening Guest Speaker – Ollly Martins – OPCC

ACCM (UK) Director giving talk on FGM

Bedford as One – a Project initiated by ACCM (UK) is now mainstream.



Staff with Healthwatch and Community Police Officer at Bedford as One event



The Guardian Launch for FGM Campaign in London – July 2015 attended by the Director

\*\*\* All our reports relating to our Project including Evaluation Reports are available on our website or a hard copy is available on request from [info@accmuk.com](mailto:info@accmuk.com)

**FUNDED AND SUPPORTED BY:**



TCHC

Bedford Borough Council

**St Andrews Church, Cauldwell**

**Bedford Borough Council**

**AND MANY MORE**

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