



## Civil Society Consulting CIC: Review of our work during the Covid-19 pandemic



After a period of CIC dormancy, we refocused our energy to support organisations during the pandemic and our earned and grant turnover went from **£16,831** in 2020 to **£145,299** in 2021.



We have worked with **127** civil society and faith-based organisations during the pandemic, strengthening performance, business planning, impact reporting & governance; generating income and improving communications. **146** organisations and individuals accessed our online training, webinars and social solidarity activities.



Since March 2021, we have supported **54** ethnic minority-led grassroots organisations through 'Steps to Recovery' with free one-to-one consultancy.

## What we do?

**Civil Society Consulting CIC** (CSC) is a not-for-profit consultancy. Under our flagship initiative Steps to Recovery, we mentor grassroots organisations to develop into strong, resilient and more effective organisations, thanks to expertise in fundraising, organisational capacity building and development, communications, social and community research, and evidence-based policymaking.

We also provide a high quality, affordable people-oriented consultancy service to social sector organisations. Thanks to our academic, multidisciplinary, down-to-earth team and our 'north star' of sustainable social development, we are experts in carrying out action-oriented social research, formulating meaningful reports and policy recommendations, and pitching it to different levels of decision-making.

## Our work during the Covid-19 pandemic

Civil Society Consulting (CIC) believes in helping people in the way that we know we can by lending our skills to urgent social issues.

Ethnic minority communities were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The same was true for the organisations that support them. At the beginning of the pandemic, **87%** of small ethnic minority-led community organisations were at risk of permanent closure within three months. This compares to 10% of the charity sector as a whole.

To contribute to tackling this inequity, CSC developed a simple initiative to provide (primarily) minority organisations with one-to-one consultations and follow-up support that builds confidence and capacity. Our flagship programmes have been **'Steps to Sustainability'**, which later graduated into **'Steps to Recovery'**.

## Who do we work with?

Our team is experienced in engaging directly with communities, including social action and faith leaders, community groups, CICs, charities and faith-based organisations, local authorities, housing associations and statutory bodies. We are experts on developing community research into evidence-based policy recommendations and we develop methodology that ensures suggestions are practical and appealing for those at all levels of decision-making and service delivery.

### Message from the team:

**“ We're delighted that our CIC, along with our national and regional partners (like Strengthening Faith Institutions, Together Middlesbrough and Faiths Forum London), have now supported well over 100 organisations across the country during the pandemic, so they may long continue to support the most marginalised groups within society.**

**As well as offering one-to-one bespoke support packages for organisations. We've been offering workshops for diverse communities, centering on funding, communications, income generation, governance, and theory of change.**

**We've launched an online Wellbeing & Connection Book Club to celebrate everything going on in our civil society and faith networks. Lastly, we launched a project to collect 'Stories of Togetherness' over the lockdown months, detailing amazing stories of how local groups have been bringing people together.** ”

# The Team



**Mark Ereira-Guyer** —  
Founder Director

[mark@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:mark@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Natasha Ereira-Guyer** —  
Director

[natasha@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:natasha@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Francesca Godfrey** —  
Director

[francesca@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:francesca@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Jordan Blyth** —  
Designer & Director

[jordan@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:jordan@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Sadia Akram** —  
Advisor (Northern England)

[sadia@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:sadia@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Simon Pickering** —  
Webinar leader & fundraising support

[simon@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:simon@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Yasmin Jiang** —  
Communications, research  
& fundraising support

[yasmin@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:yasmin@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Razack Olla Iginla** —  
Film support

[olla@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:olla@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)



**Munashe Munyukwi** —  
Project Support Officer

[munashe@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk](mailto:munashe@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk)

## Our expertise includes:

Fundraising and Income Generation | Impact Evaluation  
Community Engagement | Needs Assessment | Communications  
(including Social and Behavioural Change Communications)  
Social Research | Organisational Governance | Policy and Programme  
Design | Training and Mentoring | Strategy and Operations

## During the pandemic we have been kindly supported by:

OSTRO  
FAYRE SHARE FOUNDATION

SFI | Strengthening  
Faith Institutions

Campaign to  
End Loneliness  
CONNECTIONS IN OLDER AGE

COMMUNITY  
FUND

# What People Say About Us



**“CSC’s COVID-19 briefing pack is incredibly useful on all fronts, a complete survival kit!”**

**Glynis Donovan —**  
Executive Director, Redbridge Carers Support Service

**“We received help and support we thought it was very beneficial from Civil Society Consulting, this helpful in getting Lottery fund grant for our Community Garden project in Southbank, Redcar.”**

**Azad Mohammed —**  
Saabat Gallery CIC

**“Civil Society CIC helped to develop our impact report which proved to be an invaluable tool in helping our organisation present itself to funders.”**

**Folasade Sangowawa —**  
Taste of Africa

**“Mark understands civic society and how the faith sector operates. Despite the challenges that the lockdown presented, he immersed himself with our work, taking time to understand our organisation’s unique needs and bringing relevant ideas and solutions. Providing the right balance of support and challenge combined with clear, concise communication and actionable plans helped create consensus and generate momentum as trustees and staff developed our new strategic plan with energy, shared purpose, and direction.”**

**Geoff Sweeney —**  
Derby Multifaith Centre

**“On behalf of all the trustees of Luton Roma Trust may I thank you for all the invaluable time you and your team gave to our charity. I do feel that we have identified the key areas we need to address going forward. Above all, your encouraging and non-judgemental approach encouraged us all to be really open as the process went forward.”**

**Martin Burrel —**  
Luton Roma Trust

**“The support provided focused on drafting and designing a community engagement survey and writing a report and a press release. Everything was so helpful and professional. The support we got was excellent.”**

**John Kabuye —**  
Ubuntu Multicultural Centre CIC  
(Middlesbrough)



# What People Say About Us

**“It would be no exaggeration to say that working with Mark and the team at CSC has been transformational for Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland! As with many small charitable organisations, we have had a tough 2020 and needed additional capacity to get us back on track. CSC have helped us to source appropriate funding opportunities; develop Webinars to support local organisations; improve our communications and social media presence; carry out a COVID Impact Survey with our community; firm up our future strategic direction; and much, much, more! All of the team are a pleasure to work with, knowledgeable, efficient, and responsive – couldn’t ask for more. With CSC as a lifeline, we enter 2021 in a much stronger financial and strategic position.”**

**Kate Jeffels —**  
Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland

**“All in the team were approachable and professional. Was great to have the open lines of communication with Mark, and to feel that CSC fully supported 4Wings work and wanted us to do well. Special thanks to Sadia, the interviewees felt she was friendly, approachable and easy to share their experiences with.”**

**Ciiku Sondergaard —**  
4 Wings CIC, Liverpool

**“Civil Society Consulting CIC, has been most valuable, combining clear thinking with purposefulness. Working collaboratively on several different commissions, the outcomes have had both immediate benefits and established sound pathways into the future. The robust challenges have been shared gracefully and ensured sustainable growth. The team recently completed a review of our partnership development work to tackle modern slavery and human exploitation in our charity’s area of benefit.”**

**Deanne Dixon —**  
The National Lottery Community Fund

**“The consultancy team have been amazing. The support has ranged from open and honest discussions, to producing excellent resources, identifying potential funders and supporting with the applications and introducing WMO to the funders, providing advice and their skilled communications have allowed us to think clearly about the future and what is needed.**

**We have been able to access online webinars and training.**

**Although the pandemic has hit WMO hard financially, I am confident that the support and input from the Civil Society will allow WMO to recover and go from strength to strength.**

**We are immensely grateful for the energy, time, effort and skills the team have used to support WMO.”**

**Aline Macready —**  
MultiCultural Centre

As a CIC and Social Enterprise, our income model has continued to be a mixture of grant funding (from our own initiatives) and trading income (from commissions).

# Our flagship initiatives

## Steps to Sustainability (S2S)

Ethnic minority communities are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The same is true for the organisations that support them and this became clear within weeks of the March 2020 lockdown. To contribute to tackling this inequity, CSC developed a simple initiative to provide (primarily) minority organisations with one-to-one consultations and follow-up support that builds confidence and capacity.

We initially rolled out S2S using our reserves and 'Awards for All' grant; a few months later, thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund emergency funding (via the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) and Strengthening Faith Institutions (SFI) partnership, our model for social impact in ethnic minority communities was scaled up and continued for six months.



## Steps to Recovery (S2R)

'Steps to Sustainability' was a highly impactful initiative. Building on its successes, CSC developed a six-month support programme to reach more organisations, with increased bespoke support per organisation.

The 'Steps to Recovery' (S2R) programme was funded by the DLUHLG (formerly Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government) and commenced in mid March 2021 as part of the Government's **'Community Champions'** programme, managed by **Strengthening Faith Institutions** and **Ostro Fayre Share Foundation**, that supports and empowers grassroots organisations, community and faith leaders. The programme was designed to make them stronger so that they can better share public health information within their communities and tackle vaccination hesitancy.

As a part of Steps to Recovery, we have created resources for the most common challenges being faced by the organisations we are working with including 'how to guides', info sheets, and other resources on basic charity administration and best practices. A separate review of the work undertaken and outcomes secured has been produced by the team.

The National Lottery Community Fund has awarded us 18 months of modest funding to further enhance and continue the highly successful Steps to Recovery programme to the end of 2022. This will further support social action leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds to strengthen their organisations serving vulnerable communities badly hit by the pandemic.



# Our commissioned work

The following are the projects and assignments we were commissioned by other organisations to deliver during the pandemic.

## Mind:

NHS England were seeking to improve the support new and soon-to-be mothers are accessing during the perinatal period, i.e., during pregnancy and/or the first two years after childbirth. We (Civil Society Consulting) were commissioned via the mental health charity BLG Mind to carry out this social and community research and policy analysis in Bromley and Southwark.



Through surveys, 1-to-1 interviews, and focus groups, we reached mums and soon-to-be mums to find out their stories. Our work involved uncovering and evaluating the barriers women face in accessing perinatal mental health services logistical, emotional, cultural, psychological, as well as what kind of support is most game-changing. We identified valuable policy entry points and formulated evidence-based policy recommendations for NHS England, which have been presented in two in-depth, quality reports for the local perinatal teams of Bromley and Southwark.

## BD\_Collective: Assessing the Impact that Covid-19 has had on the charitable sector in Barking and Dagenham

In June 2020, CSC engaged with the social sector in Barking and Dagenham (LBBD) to assess Covid-19's impact on the sector. Amidst the positive and adaptive response in the community, LBBD has been hit hard, especially when we consider longer-term. The CSC team collected and analysed trends, experiences, views, and ideas to help plot recovery, a trailblazing initiative commissioned by BD\_Collective. The report sought to guide policymakers and funders who want the best for the borough - enabling them to make decisions that will have the most impact.



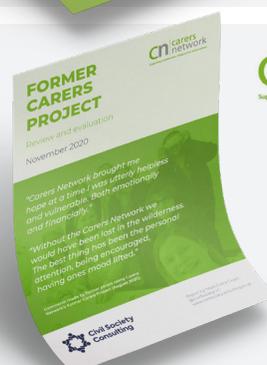
## Campaign to End Loneliness: Creating a Loneliness Learning Programme

CSC created a learning programme to raise awareness and understanding of loneliness including how it manifests in people and communities and how to tackle it. Participants of the programme will come away from the training with their own loneliness reduction action plans tailored to their community's specific needs and strengths. With expertise in education, psychology and research & development, CSC devised an accessible, interactive, and inclusive curriculum and delivery plan. CSC are currently planning to roll out the programme nationally in 2022.



## Carers Network: A people-led approach to assessing organisational impact

Evidencing success is a crucial ingredient to ensuring a charity's on-going viability, whilst also demonstrating impact, value for money and to examine how improvements can be made to project delivery. Carers Network, a charity that supports carers across West London, commissioned us to support them to do this. We put Carers Network's beneficiaries at the heart of this exercise, carrying out one-to-one consultations with delivery staff and partner organisations, collecting case studies from beneficiary interviews and an extensive survey of project beneficiaries.



## Derby Multifaith Centre: Organisational strengths and Governance Review

Commissioned by the well-established Multi Faith Centre based at the University of Derby, Civil Society Consulting assisted Derby Multi Faith Centre with an organisational strengths and Governance Review to establish how best to improve overall performance and scope future developments as they adapt their work in times of Covid-19 recovery. The team was tasked with guiding them in the production of a governance improvement plan, linked to an ambitious and fresh five-year business plan, strategy, and budget.



## Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland: A cocktail of support

The levels of poverty in Middlesbrough are the highest in the country; Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland (TM&C) tackles a wide range of social issues including poverty, loneliness, homelessness, food insecurity and other challenges faced by children and families. In November 2020, with fundraising support from CSC, the organisation secured a major grant from the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund to scale up its work and formed a collaborative partnership with us.

CSC supported them with marketing, community engagement, and strategic support. With our help, TM&C have also secured a grant from Power to Change, with which we delivered social media and Income Generation webinars to local organisations in TM&C's network. We were also commissioned to evaluate TM&C's impact as an organisation, which will be useful for their future funding proposals.

Also, as part of our partnership, TM&C have helped us find minority-led charitable organisations to become beneficiaries of our Steps to Sustainability initiative - with positive outcomes.



## Transforming Communities Together: Evaluating local initiatives and partnerships to end human exploitation and modern-day slavery

Transforming Communities Together (TCT) is a regional charity working with individuals, faith groups and communities in the Midlands and the Black Country on a range of social issues.

With partnership development funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, TCT commissioned us to review and assess recent anti-modern slavery and human exploitation action in the region. We also examined recent efforts to raise awareness, and the role of strategic partnerships in reducing human exploitation and supporting victims after it has happened. Alongside this, we have contributed to TCM's business planning, project development, and fundraising support.



## Safe Soulmates: Monitoring and Evaluation

Cambridgeshire-based Safe Soulmates is an organisation which helps adults with additional needs to find and nurture friendships and romantic love in a safe way, free from online and real-life abuse.

Civil Society Consulting CIC is working with Safe Soulmates CIC to provide evaluation consultancy, advice, and expertise over the course of its two-year National Lottery funding period.



# We've worked with 127 organisations during the pandemic (since March 2020)

1. 4-Wings Northwest CIC, Liverpool
2. Aldar Foundation, London
3. Alkauthar School of Birmingham
4. Amal Project Teesside
5. ARISE Training CIC
6. Awakening Minds CIC, Rochdale
7. Back in Control Consultancy CIC
8. Barking Enterprise Centre
9. Befriending Swaffham
10. BD Collective – Barking & Dagenham
11. Black Country Innovate CIC, Walsall
12. Black Lives Matter (Manchester)
13. Blaze Charity
14. Bosnian School and Society Manchester
15. Bromley, Lewisham & Greenwich Mind
16. Campaign to End Loneliness
17. Carers of Barking & Dagenham
18. Carers Network London
19. Caring and Sharing Rochdale
20. Ceebee Gold Foundation, Manchester
21. Chinbrook Action Residents Team
22. Chinese Community Peterborough
23. Co-op Foundation
24. Creating Ground CIC, Greenwich
25. Dalmar Heritage & Family Development
26. Derby Multi-Faith Centre
27. Diocese of Lichfield
28. Diocese of London – Capitalmass
29. Durability North CIC
30. Early Years Cocoon CIC, Barking & Dagenham
31. East Timor Community Peterborough
32. Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association
33. Excel Women's Centre, Barking & Dagenham
34. Faith Network for Manchester
35. Faiths Forum for London
36. Fatma Women's Association
37. Footprints in the Community Redcar
38. Forum for the Discussion of Israel and Palestine
39. FRADE, Stockton-on-Tees
40. GenWell Project
41. GMCVO, Manchester
42. Greater Together Manchester
43. Groundswell Project
44. Gudwara Singh Sabha
45. Hope East Cleveland
46. Hounslow Muslim Centre
47. House of Empowerment, Coventry
48. House of Rainbow CIC
49. Investing in People & Culture, Middlesbrough
50. Islamic Unity Society
51. Jaffaria Academy
52. Jain Network
53. Jamia Masjid Hanfia
54. JDS Barking & Dagenham
55. Jesmond Prayer Hall – Maheboob Ladha
56. Justice First
57. Kavanna Klub, Redcar
58. Keyring
59. Lantern Initiative Peterborough
60. Light Foundation – Esther Chmfwembe
61. Linx Youth Project, Middlesbrough
62. Living Keys
63. London International Christian Church
64. Love North Southwark CIC
65. Luton Roma Trust
66. MACWO Mother and Child Welfare Organisation
67. Manchester Sikh Foundation
68. Manchester Urban Diggers CIC
69. Mencap Liverpool
70. Middlebrough VDA
71. Mind Clarity CIC, The Wirral
72. MSL
73. Myriad Foundation, Manchester
74. NAVCA
75. Near Neighbours Peterborough
76. Near Neighbours Manchester
77. Ness M Care Foundation Ltd
78. New Testament Church of God
79. North Star Housing Group, Stockton-on-Tees
80. Oldham Inter-faith Forum
81. Open Table Network
82. Ostro Fayre Share Foundation
83. Parnell Community Centre
84. Paston Farm
85. Peterborough Asylum & Refugee Community Association
86. Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS)
87. Portuguese Community Thetford
88. Quba Trust
89. RAWTALK
90. Reconciliation Through Film
91. RE:DISH, Stockport
92. RESSP
93. Rochdale Dawah Centre
94. St George the Martyr Church, Southwark
95. Saabat Gallery CIC
96. Safe Soulmates CIC
97. Sanatan Playhouse
98. Sew London Project CIC, Barking & Dagenham
99. Shahjalal Mosque and Islamic Centre
100. Sisters in Business, London
101. Soul Sisters, Rochdale
102. South Asian Health Action
103. Sparkling with Health, Middlesbrough
104. Street Games
105. Streets Ahead for Information, Middlesbrough
106. Strengthening Faith Institutions
107. Supporting Sisters, Bury
108. Taste of Africa North East
109. The Endz
110. The Feast Youth Project
111. The Right Ethos
112. Theatre Troupe, Greenwich
113. Together Liverpool
114. Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland
115. Together Southwark
116. Transforming Communities Together, Wolverhampton
117. Triangular CIO
118. Ubuntu Multicultural Centre CIC, Middlesbrough
119. Ukon Careers CIC, Barking & Dagenham
120. Voice of the Somali Community CIC
121. Waltham Forest Women's Network
122. West Norfolk Carers
123. Whispers of Comfort
124. Wilderness Foundation
125. Windrush Defenders Legal CIC
126. Wirral Multicultural Organisation
127. Women's Interfaith Network



# Civil Society Consulting

**Civil Society Consulting (CSC) is an independent, not-for-profit social enterprise - a Community Interest Company (CIC), which started life over a decade ago. The CIC aims to build community cohesion, individual skills, and institutional capacities at a hyper local level, with a keen focus on the most socially deprived and diverse neighbourhoods in the country.**

**The CIC is committed to supporting smaller grassroots community-based organisations and multi-faith groups, especially those that are from ethnically diverse backgrounds - we enable them to flourish and tackle the problems that exist in their local communities. We also provide consultancy services to larger civil society organisations too, such as social research, policy development and Communications support.**

**Contact:**

**Mark Ereira-Guyer**

**mark@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk**

**07913 818838**



Mark (on left) with George Dura, founder of East European support organisation DURABILITY NORTH CIC, Middlesbrough

