



AMINA

The Muslim Women's
Resource Centre

2016-2017 Annual Report



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Message from Chair and CEO

Welcome to our 2016/17 annual report. We hope this report offers a snapshot of what an inspiring and productive year it's been for us, supporting more than 4000 Muslim women by working with partners to influence and create change to ensure Muslim women's voices are heard and needs are met.

As we reflect over the year, the various challenges of being a leading women's third sector organisation including the uncertainty of funding, we took time to look internally at our organisational health with support from ACOSVO 'Path to Impact', and made steady progress towards building a more resilient organisation infrastructure.

The Board in an unprecedented move, recruited two members from Dundee and Edinburgh respectively, diversifying Scotland wide representation as well as generally increasing professional skills on the Board.

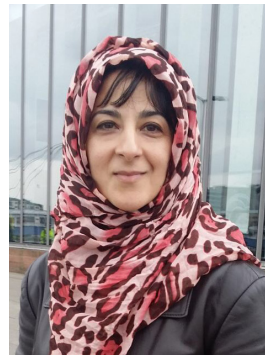
We were excited to support the CEO on her achievement of securing a gender specialist Fellowship from Clore Social Leadership, embarking on a 12 month leadership journey.

Operationally we continued to consolidate work in Edinburgh after securing office space at the brilliant Charteris Centre, and held our first ever agency only event for Employability related agencies, attracting over 40 providers. Following on from the sell-out success of Amina MWRC's theatre production of 'If I Had a Girl...' in Glasgow last year, the play went on a full tour of Scotland, reaching 900 people attending 10 national performances.

Our work is only made possible by the dedication and generosity of our staff, Board, volunteers and supporters. We would like to express our deep thanks to everyone who has contributed to our achievements.



CEO - Samina Ansari



Chair - Aziza Khand

Helpline & Development

Our national helpline service has continued to offer a free faith and culturally-sensitive listening ear and signposting service to Muslim women across Scotland. This year the helpline received over 1000 calls responding to a range of issues, such as domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, mental ill health, immigration, welfare rights, housing, loneliness, isolation as well as faith-based questions and concerns. Our Islamic advice service continued to operate every Tuesday, offering support to women from a trained and qualified female Islamic scholar. In addition, the Helpline provided support and assistance to other support organisations who enquired about how best to support Muslim women and to understand faith and culturally sensitive issues.

We have continued to create stronger relationships with specialist services, such as the Rape Crisis Scotland national helpline, Scottish Women's Rights Service, Just Right for Scotland, Positive Action in Housing and the Lon rent Helpline, to ensure appropriate signposting options are presented to our callers.

Telephone Befriending on Helpline

An increase in the number of calls taken by the helpline from Muslim women experiencing loneliness and isolation resulted in the development and launch of our Telephone Befriending service this year. The service is staffed by volunteer telephone befrienders who are matched with women, to offer a weekly telephone call, providing a listening ear, support and friendship to those who lack social supports and interactions.

1000+



- domestic abuse
- relationship breakdown
- mental health
- immigration
- welfare rights
- housing
- loneliness
- isolation
- faith-based questions and concerns.
- marriage
- counselling





Representation of Muslim women [in media] is always extreme. It's never moderate or representative of your average person"

- Roadshow participant, Edinburgh



276

women attended roadshows: Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth, Dumfries, Ayr, Falkirk, Midlothian & Edinburgh.

External Training and Workshops

We delivered a range of training and workshops to public and third sector organisations, including Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre, Scottish Action for Refugees, Canongate Youth, The Prince's Trust and Dundee City Council, aiming to increase their understanding of the needs of Muslim women and refugees.

Roadshows across Scotland

This year the project hosted roadshows across Scotland for women to explore their experiences of hate crime, its impact, how to report, and their rights to live free from the fear of crime. Women contributed their thoughts and experiences on topics such as the role of the media, hate crime within educational settings and their experiences around the criminal justice system.

Other workshops we delivered included bystander approaches to hate crime for front-line workers in partnership with WSREC; 'In Her Shoes', workshops designed by Glasgow Women's Library's hate crime programme were delivered by our team to our Women's Friendship Group, and students at City of Glasgow College; 'What Women Want..', we partnered with Women 50:50 and Engender, attracting over 35 women who were able to find out more about the responsibilities of those they elect and to express their priorities in terms of local politics.



Ambassadors

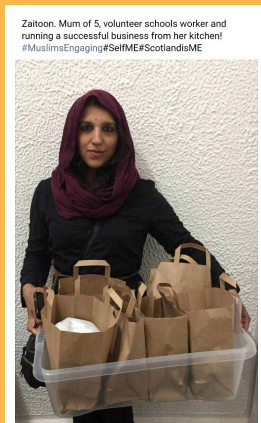
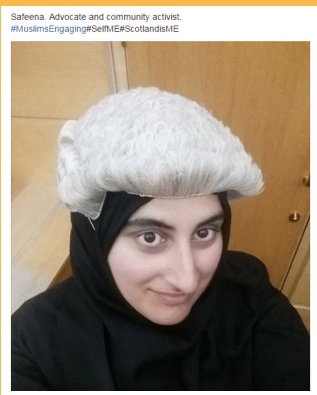
The launch of Amina’s Ambassadors programme, saw nearly 50 Muslim women from Glasgow, Edinburgh & Dundee attending workshops aimed at exploring the ways in which women could influence the communities they live within, express their views and their priorities in different forums. It is designed and facilitated to be volunteer-led, with maximum social impact in mind. Participants were hugely enthusiastic, and motivated to take a bigger role in campaigning, lobbying and awareness-raising around the issues important to them.

“
Good concept!...
Its time different
voices were
heard. We need to
be louder!”

Campaign

This year saw the launch of Amina’s ‘SelfME’ social media campaign: Muslim Women Engaging, challenging narrow stereotypes of Muslim women, and instead showcasing the diverse contributions that we make to Scottish society. We felt that it was important to capture the talent, generosity and brilliance of the Muslim women.

Here are a few snapshots of the amazing women who contributed:



Employability

This was the Employability Project's most exciting year yet! The project worked with 469 Muslim and minority ethnic women across Scotland, empowering, nurturing and upskilling women to identify, confront and overcome barriers to progression; making paid employment, self-employment/enterprise, volunteering and training opportunities more accessible and sustainable.

This year our core provision of English conversation classes, employability skills training and personal development workshops continued. In addition, we piloted the delivery of certificated courses within barrier free learning environment- World Host Customer Service Training and Retail Works – and introduced employer engagement into the provision programme.

The project has continued existing partnerships and forged new relationships. We strengthened connections with Workers Education Association (WEA), Dundee Rep Theatre and Job Centre Plus and developed close connections with Shelter, Gilded Lily and Shakti Women's Aid.



Topical 'VLOGs' created by the project – business start-up, confidence and a volunteer's journey. Glasgow, 2017.



Project Highlights

Business Week

Capitalising on Dundee's Business Week and in partnership with Gilded Lily, we promoted entrepreneurship as an alternative route to income generation. Attended by 32 women, the day featured sessions on entrepreneurial spirit, confidence and an opportunity to participate in product making workshops.

Agency Event

'Inspiring Aspirations' held its inaugural agency event in Edinburgh. Featuring the Minister for Employability and Training Jamie Hepburn alongside academics Dr Khadijah Elshayyal and Dr Nabil Khattab, the event attracted 46 delegates from a range of organisations. Discussions centred on economic inactivity, the impact of religiosity on unemployment and the sharing of good practice.

"Making Progress"

Glasgow's 'Making Progress' event was designed to bring women together to celebrate achievements and provide a platform for showcasing talents and skills. Clients were given the opportunity to deliver a workshop to share their skills with others. Three women ran three workshops on product making, cake decorating and art therapy for 28 attendees.



Drama classes help me express myself and communicate. My English is not good, drama helps me communicate with people through expression."

"Thank you very much for helping me. I feel valued and I am determined to look for better jobs that match my qualifications."



“
**Because of this
job I feel more
confident. I don't
care what others
think anymore.”**

Case Study

“When I came to Dundee I was nothing. I had my career in Italy but had nothing in Dundee.” Y initially joined the English conversation classes. With support, Y later joined the Drama workshops at the Rep Theatre, the Enterprise event, Assertiveness workshops and completed HeartStart recovery training and engaged with employers via workplace visits. Growing in confidence and ability, Y later applied for a cleaning job noting, “I applied as a cleaner because I knew that my English was not good, I knew I needed to take baby steps. Because of this job I feel more confident. I don't care what others think anymore. Now the same people who said things to me about being a cleaner ask me how to get a job as a cleaner. That feels good”. Y is now looking for her next step, moving ever closer towards her personal goals.



ESOL Class celebrations and certificates, Glasgow, 2017

End Violence Against Women

This was an outstanding year for our End Violence Against Women (VAW) project with the production of a new short film, 'Hopscotch', the Scotland wide tour of 'If I Had a Girl...', the men's workshops and self-care workshops for women & girls.

Workshops for Muslim Men

Shaykh Abdul Aziz Ahmed and Shaykh Hassan Rabanni worked with Amina to deliver workshops to over 80 men across Scotland including Edinburgh Central Mosque, Annandale Mosque in Edinburgh, Falkirk Islamic Centre, and via the 'new Scots' partnership with Aberdeen City Council. The workshops explored the Islamic perspective on domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and how the community can end violence against women.



Shaykh Abdul Aziz taking questions from attendees, Edinburgh Central Mosque 2016.

“

A very informative workshop. Raised my awareness about issues related to violence against women. Very well integrated with a strong Islamic message, which increased my knowledge about the issue in regards to Islamic context.”



Our 'Self Care Manual for Women' is published and available to download for free from the website.

Self-Care Workshops for Women

This year we held four self-care workshops in Scotland: two in Edinburgh, including a youth workshop with girls and young women from Saheliya, one in Falkirk in partnership with Rainbow Muslim Women's Group and one with Amina staff and volunteers. The three-day workshop consists of yoga, breathing exercises, discussions and some gentle but powerful techniques for practicing self-compassion and taking care of yourself.



“Woman to woman, let me tell you about when I escaped an abusive husband...”

You Can Change This Campaign

You Can Change This is our ongoing campaign to end violence against women. As part of the campaign the project launched 'WomantoWoman' – a blogging carnival. We appealed for women to contribute blog content based on themes that were emerging from our self-care and storytelling sessions – the impact women can have on other women's empowerment.



Self-care workshop in Falkirk with the Rainbow Muslim Women's Group, 2017.



VAW film 'Hopscotch'

What happens when you walk down the street...if you're a young woman of colour...who may or may not wear a hijab? 'Hopscotch' produced by Amina – MWRC with support from Edinburgh Rape Crisis, is based on a poem by Nadine Aisha Jassat which is a true account of the harassment and violence experienced by women of colour and Muslim women in public spaces. The film aims to highlight the lived reality for many women across Scotland today. The screening of 'Hopscotch' in Edinburgh was a great success, with over 50 people from different organisations, Imams, politicians, film makers and poets attending followed by panel discussions on experiences of street harassment, sexual harassment, racism and Islamophobia women face.



Screening of 'Hopscotch' at the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh, May 2017

'If I Had a Girl...' Tour of Scotland

Following on from the sold-out success of the April 2016 showcase of 'If I Had a Girl...', the production went on a full tour of Scotland. The play portrays the vulnerable reality of women from minority ethnic communities in Scotland who live daily with domestic abuse and honour-based violence. Previewing in Glasgow, the play went on to Edinburgh, Greenock (as part of International Women's Day), Paisley, Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee. Over 900 people attended the 10 national performances. There were a large number of non-traditional theatre goers from the Asian and Arab communities, in particular Sikh and Muslim community members that attended the performances across Scotland.

Schools

Amina's School Project has been running for 6 years and has made some big leaps this year. The project delivered interactive workshops to young people from primary up through secondary school aiming to tackle prejudice and stereotypes concerning Muslims. During the workshops pupils have been given an opportunity to understand the practical aspects of practicing the faith, to question and challenge their perceptions and to engage with Muslims on a more personal level. The sessions were delivered by Amina's trained volunteers with support from staff.



Islam was humanised in an accessible and clear manner for pupils. All staff involved have also benefitted greatly by hearing how belief and practice put into real world action."

– Teacher,
Duncanrig
Secondary

We have reached over 20 schools and 100 classrooms, that's just under 3500 pupils across Scotland and a 230% increase on last year!

This has included Stirlingshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Argyll and Bute and Ayrshire. We have visited schools as far West as the Ardnamurchan Peninsula past Fort William and, also into primary schools.

This year we recruited and trained 21 women to volunteer with the schools project and have managed to expand to new areas due to interest from volunteers in Motherwell, Falkirk and Edinburgh.



3500
Pupils



100
Classrooms



20
Schools

Women's Friendship Group

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, Ann Sholi and Rukhsana Ghani, who for another year organised the running of the Women's Friendship Group (WFG), which was thus able to meet consistently bi-monthly over the year, excluding school holidays.

This year the group grew in both diversity and number. Although the majority of members identified as Pakistani, many Indian, Arab and White joined the group, allowing for rich discussions on shared experiences and values.

Over the year, women attended workshops on a variety of issues to build their knowledge including personal safety, meditation, herbal medicine, bowel and breast cancer awareness, conflict resolution, mediation, visiting museums, finances, a series of hate crime awareness sessions. The group also secured £1,000 in funding through Over to You, Community Choices Fund which will allow them to open the group to many more members over the next year.



I have learned new things, which we don't even think or hear about"



I enjoy the company of the women, some of us have been here since the group started many years ago. But we love when a new member joins"



It's good to see a mix of women, from many different countries"

We currently have
54
members in
WFG



WFG discussing local elections



I really saw the families happy. Often we're dealing with their problems and concerns but on the trip, we could see them relaxed and enjoying themselves."

- Refugee Support Officer

Refugee Support

In the second year of the project, Refugee Support Officers and volunteers have continued to support the families arriving in Dundee from Syria and Iraq through the Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme. Along with our partner organisations, we meet new families at the airport when they arrive, and we support them as they settle in. Refugee Support Officers ensured families know where to go for support and information to address their financial, educational and housing needs. They act as a first point of contact for other agencies such as social work, NHS and education to provide information about appointments and other services.

When people first arrive, they often require support to improve their English language skills, and overcome significant barriers to finding work. We supported college applications this year for some of the new arrivals, and with the Employability team's support, one of these Syrian students has now successfully found work. Throughout the year we also organised trips and events jointly with the Building Bridges project, Angus Refugee Care and Steeple Church where families were able to relax and enjoy social events such as Aberdeen Eid in the Garden, Saint Andrews Beach visit, Ceilidh & Syrian Dance and Food and Arbroath Eid Fun Day.



Building Bridges

The project successfully delivered over 45 social and informative sessions to more than 700 women from all ages ranging from 16 to 60 years, in Dundee. This hugely popular project continued to reach and maintain a high number of women taking part in weekly activities, aiming to expand their social networks, improve their skills and confidence and to help them participate in the wider community. Our key activities included arts and craft, swimming, walking football, trips to museums, Iftar get togethers during Ramadan, Eid Parties, confidence building and drama workshops, presentation skills and self-care sessions.

96% reported they are meeting new people that they previously didn't know

95% felt more empowered as a result of their involvement in the programme

81% felt they gained new skills

70% are feeling less isolated than before the project began

64% felt that their ideas and opinions were valued within the project

Case Study

H is originally from Iraq and has lived in Dundee for almost 10 years. Until recently she was very isolated and did not engage or meet with any other women except her family. After starting to attend the Building Bridges activities, she met S who is from Syria. They found themselves living in the same neighbourhood and started visiting each other. S supported H to attend a local learning centre to learn English. H has grown in confidence, and now has a wider support network.



I was able to leave the house and socialise with others"



Please don't stop and one day every Muslim girl in Britain can have the support she needs"

Volunteering

We had 56 amazing volunteers join the Amina team bringing with them a burst of energy, time and commitment! Amina has attracted volunteers in Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh and surrounding areas across Scotland. Our volunteers are the lifeline and at the forefront of everything we do.

“

Lots of skills to take away – this will help me to get back into education”

Helpline Volunteer

“

It’s rewarding & satisfying giving back to the community”

Befriending Volunteer

“

Amina helped me in improving my IT skills”

Admin Volunteer

In addition to volunteer induction training, volunteers have undergone various personal development trainings, such as, English conversational classes, employability skills, training on retail and customer service, confidence building, presentation skills and assertiveness, ending violence against women, befriending, listening skills, mental health and in our schools’ project.

Through volunteering at Amina, over 75% of volunteers report an increase in confidence, self-esteem, skills, knowledge, feeling more able to achieve their ambitions and thus improve their quality of life as well as that of others. Occasionally our volunteers go on and work for us too! Some of our volunteers have progressed into further education, employment and other volunteering opportunities.



Volunteer training session, January 2017



Zaitoon's Journey

Zaitoon decided to set aside some time away from looking after kids and being a housewife. She wanted to do something with her time and for herself. Zaitoon became involved in the school's project; with a little training and existing experience & life skills, she soon flourished in her new Schools Volunteer role! Since then Zaitoon has went on to volunteer with other projects.

Zaitoon says: **'To put it mildly Amina MWRC has provided a very vital and much needed service for not only pupils, teachers but for volunteers alike to not only come together and share their opinions and learn from one another but to also embrace our differences and accept that we can be different and still hold those same values, principles and enjoy each other's practices while sharing mutual respect and understanding through compassion, tolerance and willingness to be open.'**

Zip Slide

Our volunteers often participate in fundraising activities. This year staff, volunteers, supporters and Board members took to the high wire across the Clyde. The dreich weather conditions and nerves did not distract our thrill-seeking team, who managed to raise an impressive £6,700 for the centre!

Volunteer Appreciation Day

Every year, we have a special day dedicated to our amazing volunteers. It's a great opportunity to meet a range of volunteers and exchange volunteer journeys. This year it was High Tea in Glasgow and South Asian curry in Dundee. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, who are the driving force of all we do at Amina.



Amina Volunteer Awards 2017

Befriending

This year the project enabled more than 30 Minority Ethnic women aged 50+ to engage in a total of 24 sessions, offering a wide array of health focused and recreational activities such as yoga, walks, lunch clubs, health workshops as well as our annual Glasgow Shopping trip and residential weekend. The project aims to improve health outcomes for over 50s women and tackle isolation by providing women with access to reliable information, enabling them to make better choices in relation to their health and increasing their social networks.

In October 2016, 13 women from the befriending group took part in a weekend residential in the Scottish Highlands. The visit proved to be a truly memorable one. Away from the chaos of the city, the women took in the fresh air and enjoyed nature walks and learnt about foraging and wildlife. In the evenings, they relaxed and enjoyed painting canvases that displayed beautiful autumnal plants and flowers. The opportunity to relax and enjoy has had significant impact on their wellbeing.

Women who have engaged with the project:

95% felt less isolated

91% reported improvements in their emotional health

81% felt more aware of health risks

72% had made new friends

“

My confidence has increased so much, I remember lying in bed most days not wanting to do anything but I know I won't do that anymore...I've got dates to remember and I need to be organised. There is lots to do and I love being busy.”

Support Us

Some of the invaluable work we do, wouldn't be possible without your financial support.

By donating to Amina, you are providing vital support for this work to continue, and allowing us to work with some of the most vulnerable women in society, ensuring Muslim and Minority Ethnic women feel safe, empowered and included in Scotland.

Just £5 can pay for a call to our confidential helpline, so women can receive the support they need, by a trained member of the team. This small amount can be life changing.

All donations are welcome, and don't forget it can be as little as £2 a month.

You can donate by:

- Sending a cheque to our Glasgow office, payable to: 'Amina - The Muslim Women's Resource Centre.'
- Payroll giving
- Credit or Debit card via our website
- Standing order
- PayPal

Volunteer with Amina!

With exciting new projects and an increased need to support our vital on-going work, there could not be a better time to join the Amina team. If you are interested in volunteering at Amina drop us an email at: info@mwrc.org.uk or apply online through our website!



I came to this country in 2014 and I cannot express in words what Amina have done for me. They always provide support and help me build my confidence and learn practical skills. I would do anything for them. – Sadia Batool, Volunteer

Acknowledgements



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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Scottish Government – VAWG, PECF, ALEC, PCF, CJS; RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund; Rank Foundation; People’s Health Trust; People’s Project; Dundee City Council; Scottish Sadaqa Charitable Trust; Moncur Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation and NHS Tayside.

To whom we give thanks

Our Team

Board of Directors:

Aziza Khand – Chair

Robina Khan – Vice Chair

Safeena Rashid – Secretary

Asma Abdalla – Treasurer

Hatham Al-Jubouri

Fariha Thomas

Jamilah Hassan Adewunmi

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Staff Team

CEO – **Samina Ansari**

North of Scotland Coordinator –
Shohana Shabnam

Helpline & Schools

Coordinator – **Cath Campbell** (-Jul17)

Development Officer –

Sophie Barfoot (-Feb17)

Development Officer & Schools –

Mahrukh Shaukat

Volunteer and Training Officer –

Shazia Nadeem

Alima – **Nausheen Karim**

Ending VAW

Coordinator – **Mariem Omari** (-Aug17)

Officer South – **Safa Yousaf**

Officer North – **Sara McHaffie**

Employability

Coordinator – **Lori Hughes**

Officer Glasgow – **Vijiha Bashir**

Officer Dundee –

Maheen Saeed (-Jun17)

Officer Glasgow –

Nahrumah Huq (-Mar17)

Administration

Finance & HR – **Azmina Abubakar**

Officer Glasgow – **Kiran Dhanda**

Officer Dundee – **Cilmi Eldho**

Officer Dundee –

Undram Munkhbat (-Apr17)

Refugee Support

Coordinator – **Sara McHaffie**

Officer – **Marjorie Gourlay**

Officer – **Shaween Al-Talabany**

Officer – **Rania Edris**

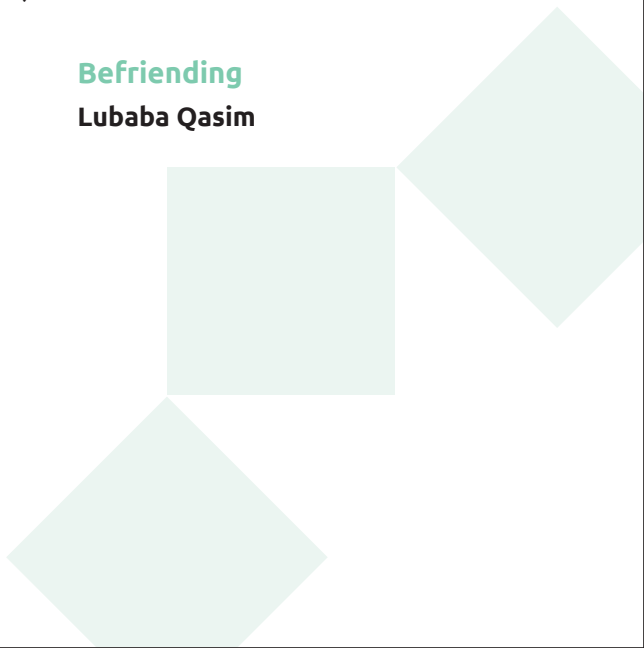
Officer – **Salwa Abdelrehim**

Building Bridges

Rana Abu-Mounes

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