



# AAINA WOMEN'S GROUP

## Annual Report & Accounts 2023-2024

Registered Charity No. 1081537  
<http://aainawomen.wordpress.com>

# Chairs Report



It is with great pride and joy that we present the Annual Report for this year. The past year has been a remarkable journey filled with milestones, accomplishments, and impactful initiatives.

Supporting and promoting Women's Health and Wellness has always been a core value of our organization. Throughout the year, we organized workshops around healthy eating and mental health awareness, among others, to address the unique challenges women face. Additionally, we provided Chit Chat & Chai sessions. By doing so, we have played a significant role in enhancing the overall well-being of countless women in our community especially the ones who find themselves isolated.

I would like to say a massive thanks to Southwark Council as our main core funder, as well as the National Lottery who fund the mental health sessions.

As we look back on the last year, we are filled with immense gratitude for the collective efforts that have made it so successful. Together, we have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless women, empowering them to reach their full potential and embrace their true worth. We remain committed to our mission and look forward to an even more impactful year ahead. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all our management committee members, supporters, volunteers, and staff who have made this journey possible. With your continued support, we are confident that we can bring about lasting change and create a brighter, more equitable future for women everywhere.

This year marks yet another important milestone for Aaina. As we know that voluntary organisations and indeed women's organisations nationally are being forced to close down due to a lack of funding. I am proud that we are still standing and contributing to the greater good of our community.

We have also been very fortunate for having dedicated and competent staff such as Samina Akhtar who has kept us afloat with her funding expertise and Sundus Saqi who has co-ordinated the overall activities and kept them going.

Thank you all for being part of Aaina and making it such a positive and inspirational place to attend.

Nadia Saleemi  
Chairperson

# Vice Chair's Report



As Vice Chair of AAINA, I am delighted to continue supporting the implementation of our strategic plan, ensuring it aligns with our aims and objectives as well as those of our funders. Our mission is to support women in many ways and, by extension, their children. We have received ongoing core funding from Southwark and other funders for our various projects. Additionally, we have benefited from non-monetary charitable contributions, which we have utilised by sharing resources, networking, and collaborating on projects with other groups to ensure the prosperity of our organisation.

We recognise the importance of building a strong support network and fostering a sense of belonging. To encourage social bonding and friendship, we arranged several social outings and group activities. These events not only provided an opportunity for women to come together but also allowed them to share experiences, stories, and knowledge in a safe and supportive environment.

We are committed to addressing the everyday challenges faced by women in our community. Throughout the year, we extended our helping hand to those women who encountered difficulties in various aspects of their lives. The heart of our organisation lies in the impact we make on the lives of women. We have witnessed numerous stories of transformation and success. Women who once felt defeated by life's challenges have now grown into confident and self-reliant individuals. Their achievements are a testament to the effectiveness of our initiatives.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated volunteers and partners. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your time, effort, and contributions. Your belief in our cause has been the driving force behind our success.

I would like to thank Samina Akhtar for her dedication and hard work in securing grant funding. Thanks also to Sundus Saqi for ensuring project uptake and coordination continue smoothly. We are very grateful to our Treasurer, Pat Beckford, for ensuring that our financial transactions are in order.

We would all like to give a massive show of appreciation to the following organisations for their charitable contributions and participation:

- Southwark Council
- The Peckham Settlement
- National Lottery
- Tate
- LOVO, for collaboration with projects
- Gilli Moorhawk, Mental Health Workshop Facilitator

Finally, I would like to credit the Management Committee and volunteers for their highly valued contributions this year and in all the years before. May their love and dedication continue forever. I wish AAINA a continually prosperous future, with its rich and varied activities benefiting not only our members but also the Southwark community as a whole.

**Khosi Manaka**  
**Vice Chair**

# Our Project

Aaina Women's Group provides regular support and information surgeries, offering practical help and ongoing assistance to all clients. We offer a free drop-in service and free internet access three days a week for women from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities. Information is provided on a range of issues including welfare benefits, education, childcare, health, immigration, and details about other community and council projects.

In addition to our information service, the drop-in sessions offer a confidential, non-judgmental support service for women. Aaina provides support regardless of background, religion, or culture, ensuring a safe space for all.

Our approach promotes cultural interchange, fostering mutual understanding and respect across different cultures, ethnic groups, and faiths.

We currently work with communities including Arabic-speaking, Turkish, Bengali, Pakistani, Indian, Somali, Iranian, Nigerian, and others. The majority of our clients face social exclusion due to language barriers, which are often compounded by lack of childcare, unemployment, poverty, and economic disadvantage. Many of our clients are refugees and asylum seekers.

## Services

At Aaina we offer the following services:-

- Free internet access
- Information and reference area
- Referral service to other agencies.
- Translation service.
- Advice on courses available.
- Help with housing, immigration, health issues, domestic violence and education.
- provides a culturally sensitive environment where our members can discuss any problems in the strictest confidence.
- Health awareness workshops.
- Self development workshops.
- Social events and activities to share and exchange cultural experiences.
- Skill development courses.

## Sewing Club

Our club caters to people of all ages and backgrounds. Our experienced tutors specialise in freehand cutting, a technique that is particularly beneficial for African and South Asian women, for whom it is ideal for creating traditional attire.

Members have full access to domestic machines, as well as all necessary equipment. Women join the club not only to learn or refine their sewing skills but also to exchange ideas on the latest designs, explore various cultural concepts, and share styles and ideas for soft furnishings. The club offers lessons in knitting and crochet, covering techniques such as crochet stitches, working in rounds and rows, shaping, and following charts or instructions.

For many women, the sewing club has been a successful way to make new friends and socialise in a supportive environment. It provides a valuable opportunity to meet women from different religious and ethnic backgrounds and learn about each other's cultures, fostering cultural diversity.

The club operates whenever funding is available.



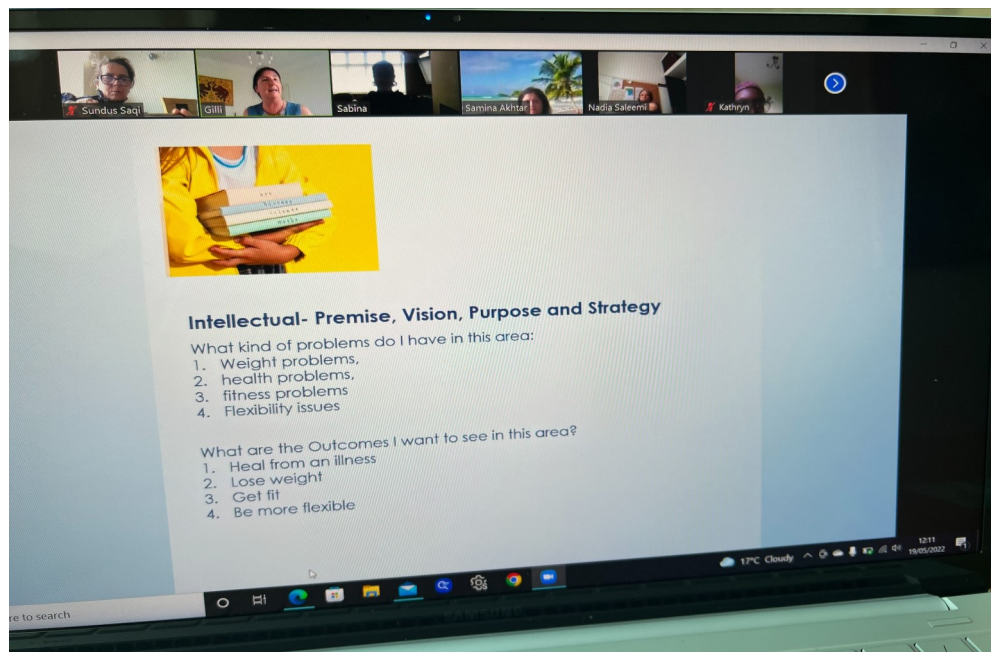
## Health Workshops

Our Health Awareness workshops covered a wide range of topics in a relaxed and comfortable setting, making it easy for participants to engage and make new friends. We were fortunate to receive funding from the National Lottery to run our "Active 50 project" .

Additionally, we partnered with Holly Health and Age UK Lewisham & Southwark to conduct a research study that offered free support for adopting healthy habits.

The guest speakers at these workshops were all specialists in their fields from well-recognised organisations. We extend our thanks to Gilli Moorhawk for their informative sessions.

The feedback from women who participated in the mental health and well-being workshops has been very positive. The encouraging responses we have received have motivated us to plan for future funding applications to continue offering health information services. These workshops were conducted via Zoom.





## Social Activities and Events

Aaina is dedicated to community development, social justice, and empowerment, with a primary focus on identifying and addressing barriers to cultural inclusion and enhancing social and economic participation for our members. We celebrate cultural diversity and actively engage our members and the wider community in sharing and exchanging cultural experiences.

We organise a range of free social activities and events for our members, including celebrations for Eid, Black History Month, International Women's Day, and pampering sessions.

Our members have thoroughly enjoyed the outings arranged by Aaina, which include visits to parks, restaurants, and picnics whenever the weather allows.



## Fitness Classes

The Yoga and aerobics classes will be held as long as funding permits.

These classes are highly popular because they offer a culturally sensitive environment for women who, due to religious or cultural reasons, may not be able to access mainstream activities. The classes cater to all ages and fitness levels, promoting well-being and healthy living while encouraging physical activity. Additionally, we organise a weekly walk day to help our members maintain good health.

A huge thank you to the ladies who participated and kept us motivated!





## Chai and Chat

To keep our members connected during the challenging period of lockdown and the pandemic, we organised Chai and Chat workshops. These workshops proved to be very successful, and we received positive feedback from members who requested that we continue them. Consequently, Aaina is now organising more workshops, sometimes on Zoom and at other times in person.

A big thank you to all the ladies who participated!



## ESOL CLASSES

The project consists of an ESOL class for newly arrived women who have limited writing or speaking skills for various reasons. The tutor's feedback was very positive, noting that 95% of the women made significant progress, including speaking in longer sentences. The women were enthusiastic about learning, and the sessions were well-attended and highly valued by our members. The classes also fostered interaction among women from different cultural backgrounds, revealing that many had not previously engaged in education. Each woman received a personalised lesson plan to address her specific needs.

Alongside the lessons, members were given information and encouragement to participate in other activities, leading to their involvement in future projects. Many women are now seeking part-time or volunteer opportunities.

This activity will continue as long as funding permits.



## Who's Who

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

<b>CHAIR</b>	Nadia Salimi
<b>VICE CHAIR</b>	Khosi Manaka
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Sajida Habib
<b>TREASURER</b>	Patricia Beckford

### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

Nusrat Raja

Mariam Mohamed

Naseema Syed

Ruksana Khan

## Our Funders & Partners

On behalf of the Management Committee, staff and members we would like to thank our funders:

Southwark Council.  
Peckham and Nunhead Community



We would like to thank our partners for their support.

London Councils Community Grant.  
The Peckham settlement  
Award for us  
Big Lottery.  
Southwark Community Refugee Forum.  
Volunteer Centre Southwark.  
British Red Cross.  
NHS Southwark.  
Community Southwark.  
LAP.  
STAG.  
Solace Women's Aid.  
FSI.  
Cycle Confident.  
LOVO.  
Feminist Library.  
Kew Gardens.

# Statement Of Financial Activities For The Year Ended 31st March

<b>AINA WOMEN'S GROUP</b>				
<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024</b>				
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Incoming Resources From Generated Funds:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Voluntary Income	34,047	10,000	44,047	42,023
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>34,047</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>44,047</b>	<b>42,023</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Charitable Activities	32,540	3,250	35,790	41,490
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>32,540</b>	<b>3,250</b>	<b>35,790</b>	<b>41,490</b>
Net Incoming Resources	1,507	6,750	8,257	533
Fund Balance Brought Forward	1,750	171	1,921	1,388
<b>Fund Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>3,257</b>	<b>6,921</b>	<b>10,178</b>	<b>1,921</b>