

April 2023 - April 2024

Acton Gardens Community Centre Social Impact Report


Prepared by

Project and Impact teams - Acton Gardens Community Centre /
London Development Trust

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ABOUT ACTON GARDENS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Acton Gardens Community Centre (AGCC) serves residents living in Acton Gardens, previously known as the South Acton Estate and the surrounding areas. The South Acton Estate is now undergoing a major regeneration programme; however, many residents continue to face multiple challenges associated with poverty, deprivation, and social isolation.

The AGCC, managed by London Development Trust, works with people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Our focus has been on individuals and groups fighting social and economic isolation, the unemployed, and marginalised groups. We also support the community to improve their physical and mental health so they can lead healthier and happier lives.

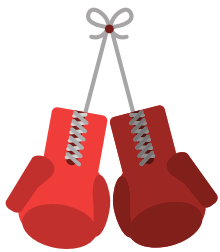
The impact and Evaluation team at LDT develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for each of the projects prior to them starting. These are reviewed periodically and adapted as needed. We gather data which enables us to make an assessment of what impact our projects - and the centre as a whole - make on the community.



Acton Gardens Community Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From April 2023, the Acton Gardens Community Centre delivered various new projects and events to the community. This report will review the impact of the following projects:



BOXERCISE WOMENS FITNESS
AND SELF-DEFENCE CLASSES



COMMUNITY IFTARS



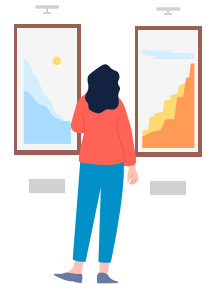
COMMUNITY FRIDGE



FREE YOGA CLASSES



STAY AND PLAY



ART EXHIBITION

Some key results of these projects include:

2000

food packages to
vulnerable people

400

volunteer
hours

4

regular
volunteers

6

free and low cost
activities

845

project
beneficiaries

30

hours staff
training

PROJECTS OVERVIEW

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- The Community Fridge Project ran for 50 weeks between April 2023 and April 2024.
- AGCC delivered 3 community Iftars last Ramadan, working in collaboration with three partners, and local residents. Welcoming well over 1000 people across the three events, and providing a rich variety of food, this project was a fun and inclusive way of bringing all sections of the community in to this cultural celebration.
- Boxercise womens fitness and self defence classes started in January 2024, two classes a week led by a championship winning female boxer, these sessions are low cost, very popular, and beneficial to the women who take part.
- AGCC welcomed a new weekly Stay and Play children's group in February 2024 in partnership with Daniels Den.
- Free Yoga classes are now available to community members, as well as paid classes. Both sessions are well attended.
- Descendants Charity installed an art exhibition of work by young people. This has been a popular and welcome addition to the Community Centre, and helps to showcase the important work which Descendants do.

PROJECT AIMS AND OUTCOMES

1. Improve food security and nutrition: food packages including meat and vegetables help to alleviate hunger, reduce food waste, and improve access to healthy and nutritious meals to vulnerable members of the community.

2. Reduce social isolation and increase community connections and cohesion: delivering services by volunteers from local people and in partnership with local organisations increased the sense of belonging. Also, providing an open and welcoming space for people to spend time, and find out what's happening in their area.

3. Improved health and well-being: fitness classes, projects aimed to support vulnerable people, and reduce their level of stress as well as improving physical and mental health.

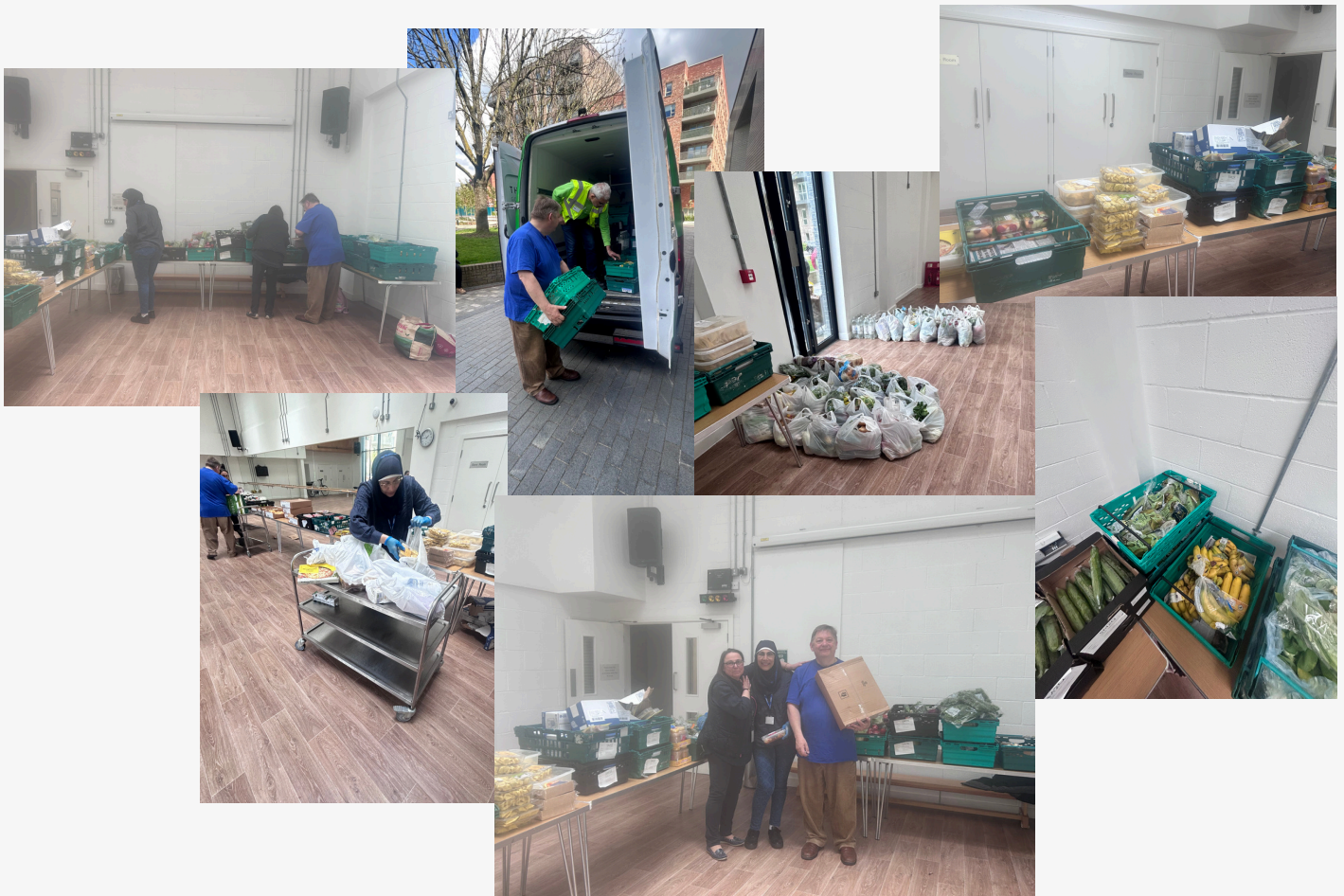
4. Improved connection and partnership: projects were collaborative effort between Acton Gardens London Development Trust and multiple local organisations, building on each other's strengths, networks, and resources.

PROJECT FOCUS:

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

Between April 2023 and April 2024, AGCC volunteers, in partnership with the Felix Project distributed around 40 food parcels - both halal and non halal.- to local residents each week. With each parcel worth approximately £30 of groceries, this project has a crucial place in combatting food poverty amongst local people.

Community Fridge has been running for three years now, thanks to the dedication of centre worker Isabel, and volunteers David, Matt, Sophia and Naeema. Each has their specific skill set, and reason for wanting to carry out this project.



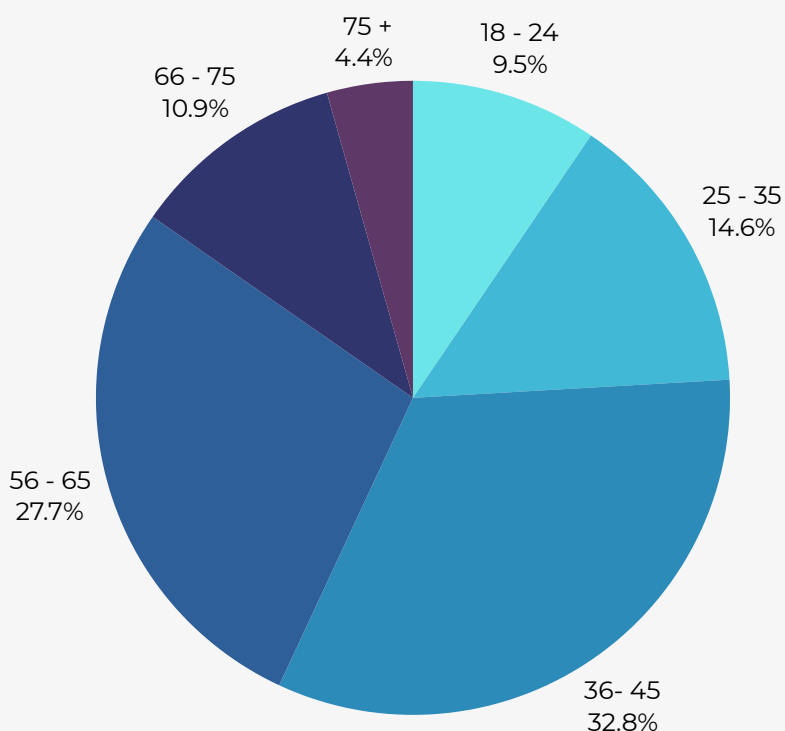
Community Fridge project, April 2024

Community Fridge welcomes people from across the community, reflecting the diverse population in the area.

Volunteer Spotlight: David and Matt

David is a local resident who first heard about AGCC Community Fridge Project in a local Ealing newsletter. He has been a key volunteer and coordinator for the past two years, and brings his son Matt along to help with sorting the food before packing. Matt is great at organising and categorising the food before it is bagged into halal and non halal parcels. The two are crucial and much loved members of the team. Thank you David and Matt!

age of community fridge beneficiaries



PROJECT FOCUS: BOXERCISE

Boxercise was set up to give women in Acton the opportunity to get fit, gain confidence and meet new people in their local area.

The project was on for 12 weeks and engaged up to 60 people throughout the time of the time the project was delivered. We commissioned a facilitator - Hannah Beharry - who grew up and learned how to box in Acton. Hannah went on to become the number 1 female British boxer for 9 years, she was a 2 times European champion, she was ranked number 3 in the world and she was one of the first women to box for Great Britain. It was important to us that we commissioned someone who was from the area and could inspire local women to get involved.

Over the 12 weeks the sessions have gone really well, with many of the participants asking for the project to continue. We are currently looking for funding to continue this project due to how popular it has been.



Many women in the group have expressed how it has really helped with their physical fitness but more importantly to them, they have expressed how much it has helped with their mental health. Moreover, many of the participants found value in meeting new like minded people.

We would say that the project as a whole achieved its aims and was a success; this is a project we would like to continue and we will be working hard to find ways to get this project funded and open it up to more people, younger and older women for example.

BOXERCISE PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

“Great teacher! Makes us motivated”

“I think it is a great initiative to empower women through exercise in a safe space. I hope it continues!”

“Great opportunity to meet other local women and be part of the community, as well as a good opportunity to get fit and healthier.”

“I come here for stress release.”

“Improved fitness level, motivation, stress release, social connections and self-confidence”

This project was designed specifically for women, to provide a safe space in which they could get fit, and learn valuable self defence skills. Of those surveyed:

- 70% attended the sessions to engage with others
- 70% attended the sessions to keep active and busy
- 80% attended the sessions to learn new skills
- 75% reported meeting new members of their community at class

PARTNERSHIPS

Since April 2023, AGCC is proud to have continued partnerships with: RollaDome, , Descendants, London Taekwondo Active, Acton Youth Association and The Felix Project.

AGCC has also begun new and positive partnerships with Daniels Den, Hannah Beharry Boxing, Another Yoga Class and Angela Grant School of Dance.

The team at AGCC work dynamically to foster and build community partnerships, so that we can maximise the activities and events held at the centre, as well as the value for money afforded to the community.

During Ramadan 2023, AGCC partnered with Acton Youth Association, SKT relief fund, and Watandar Restaurant to deliver three community Iftars, which attracted over 1000 people in total. The goal of these Iftars was to break fast together as a community, and also to raise money for charity during Ramadan. These events were a great success in terms of the number of attendees, celebratory atmosphere, quality of food served free to the community, and funds raised.



Community
Iftar

Sunday 2nd April
Sunday 9th April
Sunday 16th April

6.30-9pm

Acton Gardens
Community Centre
Unit A, Munster Court,
Bollo Bridge Road,
London W3 8UU

All faiths welcome, bring a dish
and break fast with your neighbours!
Authentic homemade Afghan cuisine will be
freshly prepared and served for Iftar

In support of SKT Welfare's
Ramadan Food Appeal - Donate Online:
www.launchgood.com/actonfeedingthefasting

Email: info@actongardens.community

Tel: +44 (0)20 8075 5140
Call Mr & Mrs Ghafori:
0736838512

ACTON GARDENS | COMMUNITY CENTRE

RESIDENT STORIES

100% of residents surveyed reported positive feelings towards the Community Centre. They mentioned it was a welcome space to be able to come to for free, to meet other members of the community and participate in fitness classes.

Most respondents were regular visitors, while some surveyed were attending for the first time. People described the community centre as a place they could connect with the local area, and exchange information, a place offering opportunities such as volunteering, and a place to work from.

One resident interviewed had lived in the area of South Acton all her life (70 years), and another had moved in recently (1.5 years ago)

All those interviewed commented on the diverse, energetic, and developing nature of the area, though some said it was a loud and lively area, while some thought of it as quiet.

Everybody commented that South Acton is well connected travel wise, and that the High Street is thriving. One resident noted that there are fewer independent businesses than there used to be.

Respondents noted the increase in new build apartments, as well as play areas for kids. They also commented on the rising costs of living in the area, highlighting the need for affordable, accessible community spaces.

A few residents said that they would like to see more provision for working-age adults, as they feel currently we are serving children, young people, and the elderly well, but do not have not enough going on during evenings and weekends for adults.

Residents interviewed attended the centre between once and five times a week.

“Having the space here has helped me to run my charity” - Margaret, CEO of Descendants charity for young people

“Coming here has helped me with my sense of purpose through volunteering, and with my fitness levels” - Ioanna, local resident and volunteer

*Upcycling fashion
workshop for kids,
February 2024*



Christmas Party 2023



*Engagement Party,
private
booking, August 2023*



*Birthday celebration,
private booking
June 2023*

SUMMARY

Community Fridge: for the past year this project has been successful in reaching the targeted groups which were low-income households, unemployed/job seekers, and any other vulnerable people that had difficulty affording enough food each week, and getting access to fresh fruits and vegetables which standard foodbanks don't provide. This is possible because of our partnership with the Felix Project, which works with supermarkets to reduce food waste, as well as to fight food poverty.

Iftar series - Ramadan 2023 this project was successful in creating a fun, welcoming and accessible series of events for the whole community, Muslims and non Muslims alike enjoyed the food and the atmosphere, a number of volunteers from the community helped out with setting up, shopping, cooking, washing dishes and promoting the Iftars.

Women's Boxercise: Since working from home has become far more widespread in recent years, many people feel they lack opportunities for physical activity and social interaction in their lives. There were also calls from female members of our community to have women's only self defence training, to allow women to feel safer and more confident,, as well as to increase their fitness levels, and meet new people. AGCC was very happy to be able to begin this project with funding from L&Q's Community Chest. It is very popular with the women who attend, who all hope it will continue. Further funding is needed extend the project, which AGCC and LDT are looking into.

KEY STATISTICS

AVERAGE WEEKLY VISITORS

40 NEW
150-200 RETURNING

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

2000 FOOD PACKAGES
DELIVERED
4 REGULAR
VOLUNTEERS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FREE CLASSES PER WEEK

4

BOXING

2 CLASSES A WEEK
10 REGULAR
ATTENDEES

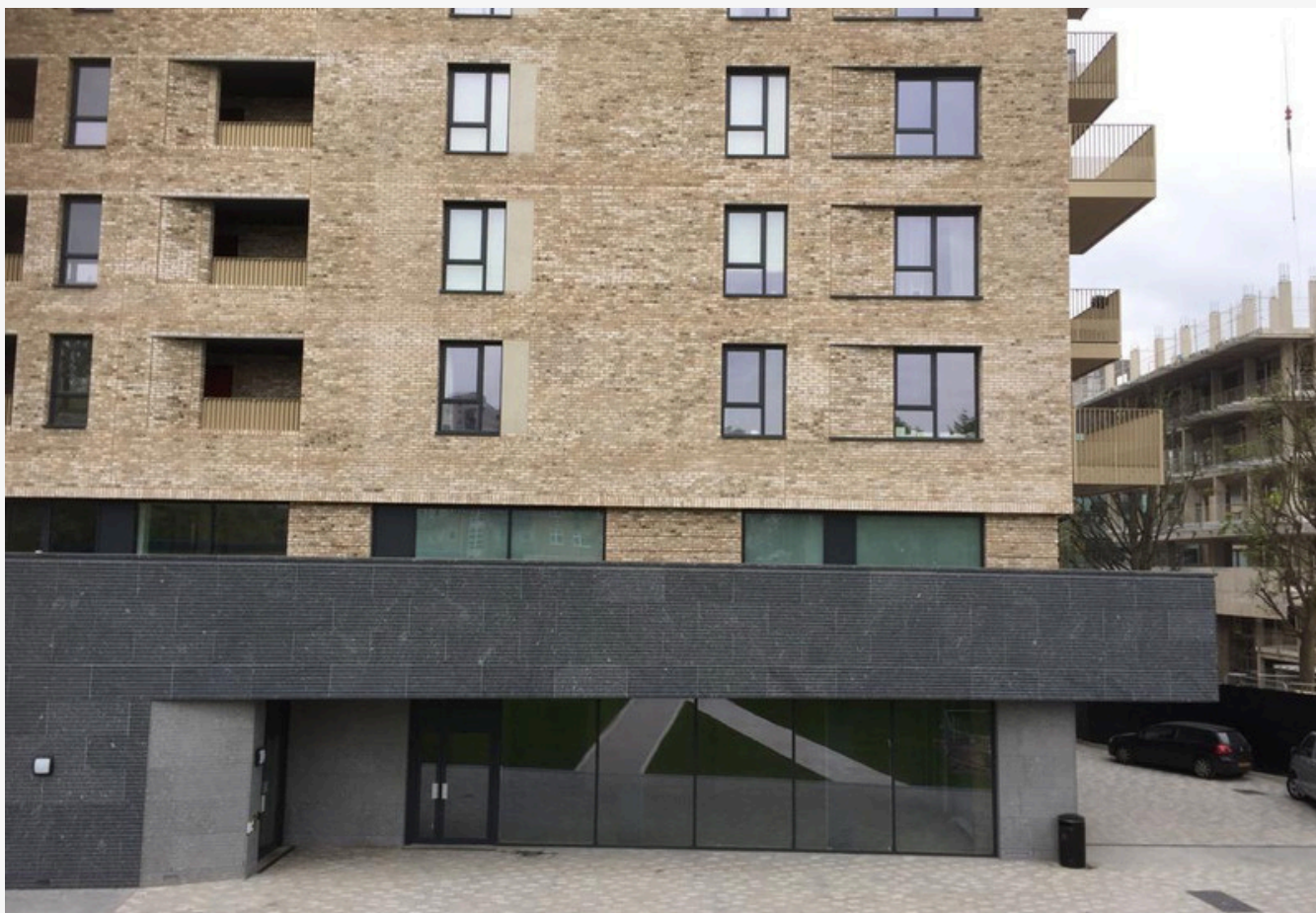
AVERAGE HOURS OF SPACE HIRE PER WEEK

179

TRAINING

2 VOLUNTEERS, 4 STAFF MEMBERS

CONTACT US



To find out more about anything detailed in this report or to volunteer with us, please get in touch:

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Unit A Munster Court
London, W3 8UU

Email: info@actongardens.community
Volunteer Email: Volunteer@actongardens.community

Tel: 020 8075 5240