

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2021-10-YO03	Al-Hurrayaya
Visit Date	Visited By
31 st January 2022	Victoria Southwell (Zoom call)
Overall aim of the funding	
To support young offenders (16-24 years) from BAMER communities in Nottingham to achieve qualifications and secure sustained employment through mentoring.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Al-Hurrayaya (AH) is a Registered Charity that was set up in 2014. AH employs eight staff and three sessional staff. A board of five Trustees support the staff team, two of whom have joined the board in the past year. The Trustees meet every six weeks and have a strong mix of skills including charity expertise, data and research, HR and diversity and project management.</p> <p>A detailed Strategic Plan for 2022-27 has been developed that identifies four key strategic goals; Improved quality and reach of support; A better knowledge and understanding of BAMER individuals and substance abuse, mental health issues, crime, poverty and gangs that impact their lives; Greater opportunities for peer support and community involvement; and A strong charity to better champion and support the needs of local communities. A detailed business plan for 2022-24 underpins this strategy. Trustees have had significant involvement in developing the plan, alongside the CEO, and it contains ambitious targets for growth.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>On the call I spoke with Asad Fazil (Founder and CEO) and Lauren Bradford (Trustee).</p> <p>Asad has led AH since he set it up in 2014. He is a charismatic person whose passion and commitment comes from his own personal experience of addiction and criminality. After many years of leading a self-destructive life, he was able to turn his life around and decided that he wanted to set up an organisation that could help young people from communities that were marginalized and misunderstood. After working for statutory services and developing a reputation for being an authority on cultural competency and racial bias he set up AH. He is deeply rooted in the local community, is clearly well respected and has strong links with Imams. The work of AH was spread across other communities and now works with a wide range of different ethnic groups. Asad describes himself as a solution focused leader. He is ambitious for AH and is acutely aware of the needs of different groups and committed to ensuring that services are relevant and accessible for them.</p> <p>Lauren is an Assistant Professor of Criminology at Nottingham University and describes herself as an active/pro-active academic. On moving to Nottingham, she actively sought out charities working in the criminal justice space and was attracted to AH due to the BAMER focus of their work. She is a relatively new Trustee to AH and is developing in her role but adds huge value to the organisation and the work that is done through her knowledge, interest in research and evaluation and her links to other agencies.</p>	

Aims and Activities

Al-Hurraya aims to change lives and transform communities by developing culturally specific interventions to improve overall community cohesion. This will enable beneficiaries and their families to overcome barriers to reach their potential.

AH is peer led and believes in empowering individuals who have lived experience and reducing the inequalities they face. Al-Hurraya is the Arabic word for freedom – freedom from harm, freedom from addiction, freedom from isolation.

The key services that AH provide are; 1) an addiction support service which works with people enduring problematic drug and alcohol addiction. They also support people struggling with addictions such as gaming, gambling and the internet. This support involves culturally specific interventions and the use of an Islamic 12 Steps programme alongside counselling and mentoring; 2) Early intervention/prevention and education workshops that address issues around gang culture and knife crime, grooming and child sexual exploitation, honour based violence and forced marriage, radicalism and extremism and domestic violence and abuse; 3) family support which offers advice, guidance and signposting to family members of beneficiaries; and 4) Cultural competency and unconscious bias training for statutory and voluntary organisations.

Over the course of the year AH works with around 650 people and works in partnership with Youth Offending Teams, PCCs and Nottingham Violence Reduction Unit.

Safeguarding

Al-Hurraya has a robust approach to safeguarding and acknowledge that it is an issue that they are addressing and flagging regularly in terms of the people they work with. The policy has a named organisational lead and underpins all of the work that they do. All staff and Trustees are DBS checked and all staff undergo internal safeguarding training as part of their induction. Refresher training and additional training also takes place.

AH staff regularly attend meetings linked to issues around safeguarding with external bodies. Staff have strong links with social workers and other relevant teams working with their beneficiaries. Asad shared that whilst this support is a vital part of the jigsaw in supporting the complex needs of the people they work with, it also is very time consuming and often falls outside of the work that they are funded to do.

Finances

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 01/01/2020 – 31/12/2020 show income of £194,073 against expenditure of £197,633 resulting in a small deficit of £3,560. Cash funds held amount to £33,452 of which £16,640 is unrestricted. The reserves policy is set at holding six months operating costs which has not been achieved to date. Income increased from £126,712 in 2019.

Budgets and funding predictions for the two-year period of the grant show predicted income of £349,465 for 2022 of which £289,000 has been confirmed. In 2023 income of £386,465 is budgeted for and £250,000 has been secured. The increase in income is due to new funding from sources that include Violence Reduction Unit, and a long-term contract from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Good financial systems are in place. Day to day management is undertaken by the Office Manager with support from the Treasurer who has a financial background. Management Accounts are produced for the six weekly Trustee Meetings and presented by the Treasurer.

Current Situation and need

Nottingham has a high number of children/young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time. In Nottingham the rate is 535 per 100,000 children/young people, compared to the average for England and Wales of 222 per 100,000. There are a number of local interventions taking place focused on prevention activities but very few that are targeting those post-conviction and none that are culturally sensitive to BAME needs. The Lammy Review (2017) stated that “Despite making up just 14% of the population, BAME men and women make up 25% of prisoners whilst over 40% of young people in custody are from BAME backgrounds”. It also stated that “The youth justice system must do more to inform local communities about the problems in their areas, so that they can contribute to insights and practical support”.

Through having a strong local presence, Al-Hurraya is already working with partners and seeing first-hand the issues faced due to high levels of youth offending. They are seeing increased issues for young people linked to substance misuse, domestic violence, gang affiliation, exploitation and mental health issues ranging from depression and anxiety to isolation and loneliness. Alongside this they are also seeing an increase in requests to support young people at all stages of the criminal justice system, especially from young people from BAME communities. Young people themselves have shared what their specific issues are and why other organisations are not working for them. These reasons include a lack of trust and services not being culturally appropriate. Al-Hurraya has built strong and positive relationships with young BAME offenders and have identified a gap in the support that is available to them post release to stop them reoffending.

Al-Hurraya will work closely with the local Youth Offending Team and other local agencies to identify 40 BAME young people who require specialist support to help them gain employment. They will be supported by a Project Support Officer as well as allocated a Mentor who will themselves have an offending background. This provides an additional opportunity for young offenders to ‘give back’ by becoming mentors themselves and helping another young person to not reoffend.

Each young person will undertake some short courses to start building up their qualifications through either a partnership with an online provider (We Learn) or face to face with Trent Education. Additionally, the young person will undertake 100 hours of work experience to build skills and develop an understanding of working environments. These will take place with local employers who will be recruited to the programme and will also potentially provide employment opportunities once the young person has completed the programme. Beyond this, support for the young person and employer will be provided by the mentor (for the young person) and the Project Support Officer (for the employer).

The young person will additionally be able to access counselling to address any other issues they are facing and support for the whole family unit will also be available if appropriate. Al-Hurraya will work with 20 young people annually and 14-16 will achieve employment outcomes.

Expected Key Achievements in Year 1

EKA 1

Beneficiary journey will have been set up to include referral pathways, educational courses in place and employers identified for work experience and employment.

EKA 2

A reduction in the social barriers that lead BAME young people to reoffend.

EKA 3

Increase in community activities being undertaken by young people receiving support.

Request and Budget

AH is requesting **£59,042** over 2 years to cover the costs of working with 20 young people.

£29,521 in year 1 - £16,212 (Project Support Officer salary), £3,309 (contribution to CEO salary), £3,000 (staff expenses and travel), £2,000 (project running costs), £2,500 (activity costs), £1,500 (evaluation) and £1,000 (IT and phone costs).

£29,521 in year 2 - £16,212 (Project Support Officer salary), £3,309 (contribution to CEO salary), £3,000 (staff expenses and travel), £2,000 (project running costs), £2,500 (activity costs), £1,500 (evaluation) and £1,000 (IT and phone costs).

Conclusion

Al-Hurrayya is an organisation deeply rooted in the communities that it serves. But this shouldn't be mistaken for not also being a highly specialist and expert organisation working extremely effectively with BAMER communities across Nottingham.

AH is an ambitious organisation who have tapped into key gaps in provision and expertise across the city. Asad, the founder, is a force of nature who uses his own experiences to connect with the people AH supports and to build strong relationships and partnerships.

AH has very strong connections with young people who have been through the criminal justice system and the organisations that support them. So, there are good referral routes in place and I have no doubt that a healthy number of referrals will be received. Currently young people with criminal convictions who come from BAMER communities have very few options to access support that will help them move away from the possibility of reoffending. So, the work that AH does fills a real gap. This was the only application that we shortlisted that was planning to deliver a project that specifically targeted young people from BAMER communities and talking with Asad at the assessment it was easy to understand why this project is considered vital.

Despite the expertise AH has with this particular group of young offenders though, the particular approach being proposed is a new way of working. Whilst there have been some employment outcomes that have been achieved for previous beneficiaries these haven't been principal driver behind working with that person. This will be the first time they have run a programme of this type with employment outcomes being the specific focus. During the assessment it did become clear that there were areas that would need some ongoing development as AH builds its expertise around this area.

Beneficiary numbers are high and the original proposal included a target of working with 30 young people annually. During the assessment it was discussed how realistic this number was, especially as the funded worker is only going to work for 16.5 hours per week, and it was agreed that this number should be reduced. 20 young people annually was agreed upon with the expectation that between 14-16 would stay for the whole period of support and achieve an employment outcome. Linking with employers to secure employment opportunities was also an area that was discussed and Asad does recognise that this will likely be the most challenging aspect of the project. That says he has extensive links with local people and businesses and securing relationships with prospective employers would fall within the hours this grant would fund of his salary.

Compared to other applications this proposal isn't as refined and slick as some but the genuine grassroots feel of the project alongside the focus of the organisation make it an interesting application to support. There is possibly an element of risk in whether AH can achieve all that it has set out to in the project proposal but equally there is no

other similar service for young people from BAMER backgrounds in Nottingham. Therefore, the risk of funding this work has to balance with the significant needs of this group of young offenders and so my recommendation would be that it is a risk worth taking.

AH's knowledge and expertise would add significant value to the rest of the portfolio and undeniably benefit other grantees. Their knowledge and experience will also benefit AH hugely in developing its work in this area. Therefore, I would recommend that we support AH with a grant as requested.

Recommended Priority Rating

Risk = Medium	Difference to organisation = High	Priority = High
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