

GETTING REFUGEES CYCLING

**IMPACT
REPORT**

2020: AND STILL WE RIDE

THE  PROJECT

CONTENTS

3 FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIR

4 ABOUT US

- 4 *Getting refugees cycling*
- 5 *Why we do it*
- 6 *Achievements 2013 - 2020*

8 2020 AND STILL WE RIDE

- 8 *2020 achievements*
- 10 *2020 in numbers*

11 THE CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

- 12 *An increasingly hostile environment for refugees*
- 13 *Inequalities and social isolation*
- 13 *Rising tides of economic uncertainty*

14 OUR IMPACT

- 15 *The power of a bike*
- 16 *About the people we support*
- 17 *Cyber Cyclists and lockdown*
- 18 *Increased independence and mobility*
- 19 *Better physical and mental health*
- 20 *Financial benefit*
- 20 *Reducing isolation and loneliness*
- 21 *Gender equality*
- 22 *Empowerment and confidence*
- 23 *Nurturing talent*
- 23 *Changing public perceptions*

24 REFUGEE VOICES

- 25 *Sadaf: Pedal Power*
- 26 *Cinderella: Cyber Cyclists*
- 27 *Sadegh: Volunteer*
- 28 *Yousef and family: Bike recipient*
- 30 *Karla and Beccy: Bike Buddies*

32 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

34 MEDIA AND MARKETING ACTIVITY

36 FUTURE PLANS

37 OUR SUPPORTERS

CHAIR

FOREWORD

“

The Bike Project went from strength to strength in 2020 despite what was an immensely challenging year due to the disruptive impact of Covid-19.

The pandemic has made our work more important than ever. Refugees were unable to take public transport not just because it was expensive but because there was an increased risk of contracting Covid-19. In addition to that, the lockdown restrictions increased the sense of loneliness and isolation that refugees already felt.

I'm proud of how we stepped up to meet the increased need during such a challenging period. By innovating and adapting quickly, we managed to reach thousands of refugees across all of our programmes while simultaneously significantly growing all of our income streams. In difficult circumstances, this is no mean feat.

I have been impressed with the team's flexibility and agility in responding to the plethora of both challenges and opportunities thrown up by the pandemic. They have approached the problems with cool heads and have moved quickly to capitalise on the new opportunities to deliver impact and increase revenue.

Looking forward to 2021, we are by no means out of the woods yet as the twin challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit continue to create uncertainty and disruption across all sectors, particularly in charities. We will need to be vigilant about Covid-19 and alert to a quickly changing environment

Finally, we are eternally grateful to our supporters who moved incredibly quickly and at scale to help us meet the new challenges. None of this could have happened without their generosity in a time of crisis.

”

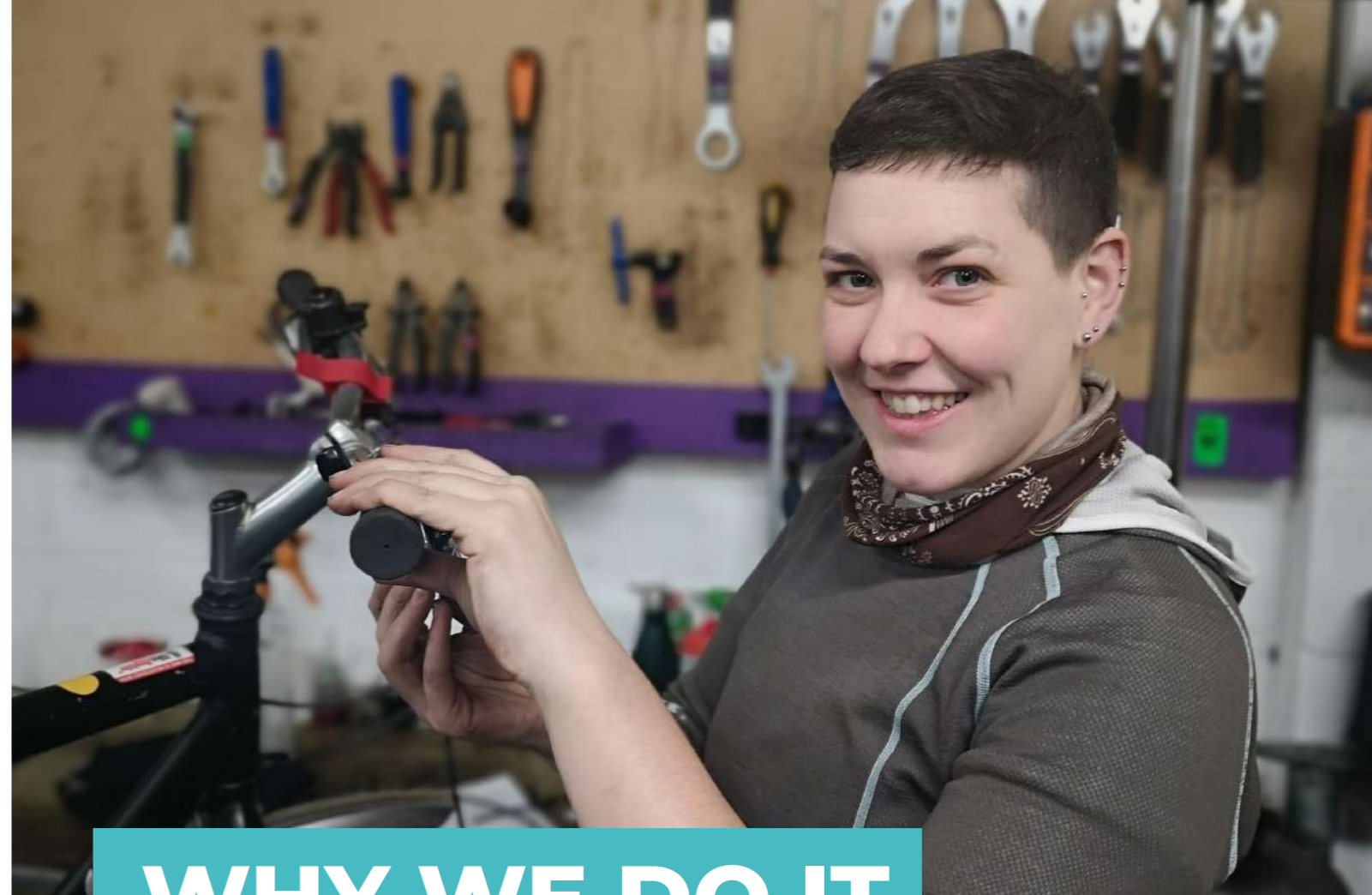
ADAM OGNALL
Chair of Trustees

“The Bike Project provides the first step into normal living for those who have faced persecution and atrocity.”

Helen Bamber OBE

Our mission is simple – to match refugees and asylum seekers without the means or money to travel around with the thousands of abandoned or unwanted bikes in London, Birmingham and beyond. Founded in 2013, The Bike Project provides an innovative solution to one of the most pressing problems facing refugees in the UK: the cost of transport and the impact that a lack of mobility has on daily life.

There are approximately 200,000 refugees in the UK and it is estimated that 27,500 bikes are abandoned each year in London alone (TfL, 2007). Over the last 8 years, The Bike Project has collected, refurbished and donated 7,289 of these bikes for refugees whilst creating a thriving social enterprise selling secondhand bikes to the public, the proceeds of which fund its charitable activities.



WHY WE DO IT

“When you have to go from charity to charity to feed yourself, a bike becomes very important to your life.”

Bike Recipient

On arrival to the UK, most refugees are prohibited from taking paid work whilst seeking asylum and live on **just £37.75 per week** asylum support whilst awaiting a decision from the Home Office. This is a process that can often take years to resolve. Once awarded leave to remain there are additional barriers that refugees face to establishing a life here.

By refurbishing abandoned bikes, The Bike Project has created a sustainable model of reuse that achieves physical, emotional, social and financial benefits for one of the UK's most socially isolated and economically disadvantaged groups.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2013-2020



7,289

abandoned bikes collected, refurbished and donated to refugees



785

volunteers trained and supported to develop and share skills



453

refugee women taught to cycle with confidence



171

refugees matched with a Bike Buddy to cycle together



2,987

secondhand and new bikes sold through our online shop



26

mechanics, cycle instructors and operational staff across London and Birmingham





2020

And still we ride

- Creation of Cyber Cyclists, a new online programme to engage and support refugees online
- Redesign of Pedal Power to enable refugee women to access cycle training during the pandemic
- Engagement and retention of volunteers through a series of community Pop-Up bike collections
- Responding to the cycling boom with new retail products: Virtual Dr Bike Servicing and the sale of new bikes
- Innovations in fundraising through a new virtual challenge, Refugee Routes, and online events

In 2020 The Bike Project proved itself

to be flexible, agile and pioneering in its response to the pandemic and resulting cycling boom in the UK. Whilst it has been incredibly challenging, being forced to adapt, create new projects and ways of working has made us innovate and there is much that we will take forward: **And still we ride!**

We billed 2020 as the year of growth for The Bike Project

with the aim of donating 2,500 bikes to refugees (a 60% uplift on the previous year) and increasing our sales both online and through opening a new, dedicated retail space in south London. We also planned to diversify our income streams with the addition of bike servicing and a focus on community fundraising through events, such as RideLondon.

In March, we were on track,

but the seriousness of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on our operations was emerging and we took immediate action to mitigate risk. We ceased bike collections from our workshops and paused all face-to-face activities such as Pedal Power, Bike Buddies and volunteering until further guidance was issued.

Of primary importance was the continuation of our core services -

bike donations and sales. To maintain these we switched overnight to a no contact, home delivery model for refugees and shop customers with wrap-around support in the form of a new, online programme: Cyber Cyclists. In addition, we moved our entire shop fulfilment operations to Birmingham. These swift actions ensured that staff could work safely to provide essential services, refugees and customers would not have to use public transport to access our services and our retail operations were safeguarded from any tightening of restrictions in the capital.

We continued to monitor and respond innovatively

to the changing circumstances throughout the year and ended 2020 on a steady footing with some great success stories such as the development of Refugee Routes. We did not stop donating or selling bikes at any point and overcame many operational barriers to ensure refugees and customers were continually supported through this incredibly challenging time. Crucially, by the end of the year, Pedal Power, Bike Buddies and our volunteering programme had all resumed to some extent.



Refurbished and safely delivered 1,409 bikes to refugees



Sold and shipped 1,115 bikes to customers nationwide



Delivered 121 sessions of Cyber Cyclists



Trained 53 Pedal Power participants to cycle

2020 IN NUMBERS



Hosted 28 pop-up bike collections in London and the West Midlands



Established 15 new Bike Buddy matches between cyclists and refugees



Secured over £1.6 million in income*

* Subject to annual accounts publication in summer 2021

THE CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

The Bike Project addresses the vital issue of refugee mobility (or lack of) whilst promoting solidarity, building community and celebrating diversity in a way that is actively inclusive. Within this context, 2020 has been our most challenging year to date, not least because of the pandemic and what this revealed about inequality and social isolation, but also because of increasingly hostile government policies.

Demand for our core services has never been higher despite asylum applications falling by 18% and a 36% reduction in the number of grants of protection. In 2020, the backlog for initial decisions on asylum claims reached an all-time high with 72% of people waiting more than 6 months for an initial decision from the Home Office, that had a knock on effect of increasing destitution amongst refugees. At the end of 2020, the number of people unable to meet basic living needs (in receipt of Section 98 support) was 3.5 times higher than the previous year (Refugee Council, 2021).





Inequalities and social isolation

Whilst the increase in digitalization of services and support in response to the pandemic has been a lifeline and increased accessibility for some, digital literacy, access to technology and internet access remains a major barrier for many, especially for women and older refugees.

Poverty has also been a major factor in health outcomes and consequently, people of colour have accounted for a disproportionate number of Covid-related deaths. This has resulted in increased anxiety, stress and social isolation of many of the refugees and asylum seekers that access our services. Looking forward, the sector also predicts imminent issues around the access to GPs and healthcare for all migrants, especially given that the resumption of refugee dispersal coincides with the vaccine roll out.

An increasingly hostile environment for refugees

In response to the pandemic, a delayed and temporary uplift of £1.88 brought asylum support to £39.63 per week. Whilst welcome, the increase fell short of essential living expenses and was not in line with uplifts awarded to other state support such as Universal Credit. Simultaneously, those in receipt of Section 95 or Section 4 (in “full-board” accommodation) were limited to payments of just £8 per week and had unfair restrictions imposed on their movements.

2020 was also the year that we saw newly arrived asylum seekers housed in overcrowded military barracks, resulting in outbreaks of Covid-19. Border closures and government delays to the reopening of safe passage for refugees also led to a rise in dangerous attempts to cross the channel by boat. Finally, despite a temporary pause on evictions, the Home Office continues to terminate asylum support for people granted leave who receive a 28-day move on notice.

Living on the end of such policy decisions has had a devastating impact on independence and mobility, but also on physical and mental health by forcing people into destitution and homelessness.

Rising tides of economic uncertainty

Finally, like all charities, we are operating within a landscape of great economic uncertainty. The full economic impact of the pandemic on the philanthropy sector is yet to be fully felt and likely to be magnified by the UK's departure from the EU. Both issues combined create complex and unforeseen challenges relating to increased competition for funding, supply issues and increased operating costs.





In 2020 the power of giving the gift of a bike has been amplified and this has had a significant impact on refugees and asylum seekers who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

“It makes me feel that someone cares about me and is actually thinking about my wellbeing... the sense of independence and ownership feels great.”

- **Bike Recipient**

Cycling improves health, helps reduce levels of depression and stress, empowers refugees (Garrard, 2003) and specific research conducted with bike recipients (Witty-Merrin et al., 2018) found that The Bike Project:

 Provides opportunities to bring people together from different backgrounds

 Reduces prejudice and negative stereotyping and increases trust









 Reduces social isolation, loneliness and increases social confidence

Further research conducted by St George's University, London in 2019 and 2020 found that by combining cycling with group activities, The Bike Project provides a vital steppingstone into resettlement for refugees, leads to improvements in health and wellbeing and opens access to community and social support.

Pedal Power was cited as highly influential in breaking the barriers for refugee women to access the wider community through increased confidence and reduced financial barriers to explore their local areas. The Bike Project has also enabled refugee women to access further opportunities to develop themselves as cycle trainers or mechanics and lend support to others.

Volunteers of The Bike Project were found to have better self-esteem and outlook on life because of relationships they have formed and opportunities like Bike Buddies have expanded understanding and insight into immigration struggles in the wider population. The studies concluded that the continuation and expansion of The Bike Project's activities would result in an improvement in the quality of life for refugees living across the UK.

The Power Of A Bike

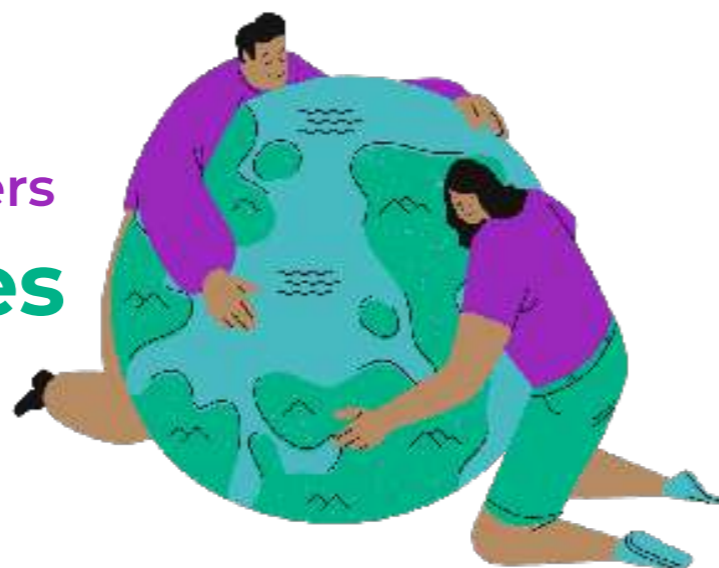
-  **93% are using their bike every week for essential journeys**
-  **83% are feeling fitter and healthier**
-  **84% feel less lonely and isolated**
-  **92% know their local area better**
-  **85% have used their bike to visit new places or do new things**
-  **87% feel part of a community**
-  **70% are spending less on transport each week**
-  **94% feel more confident and independent**

ABOUT THE

PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

1,409 refugees and asylum seekers from **53** countries

Syria, Iran, Turkey, Eritrea and Sudan were the most common



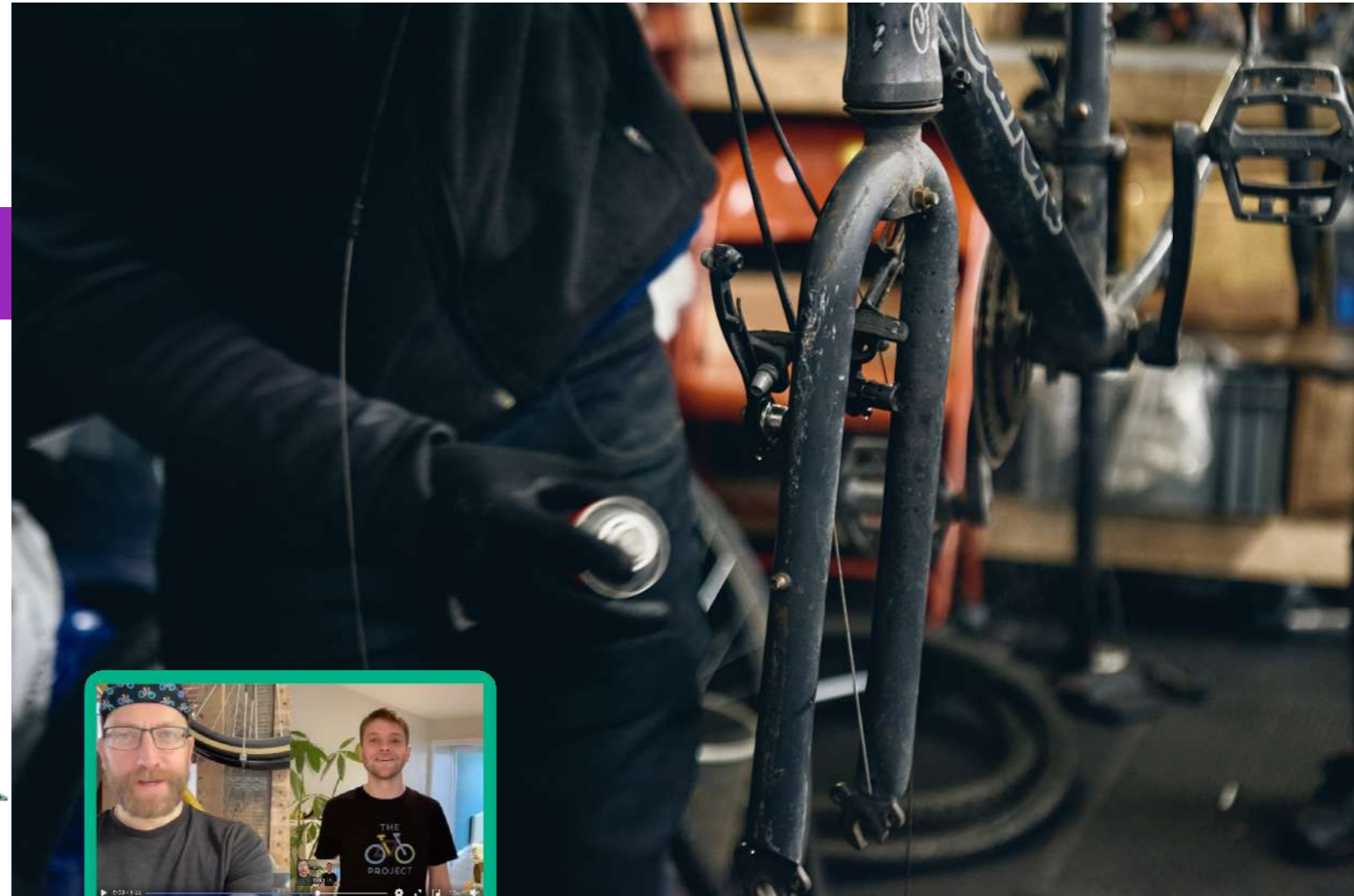
50%

of bike recipients are young people

under 25 years old

30.6%

of bike recipients are female



Cyber Cyclists and lockdown

- ➔ **81%** improved mental wellbeing
- ➔ **86%** improved English language skills
- ➔ **73%** felt better connected
- ➔ **92%** gained new knowledge of cycling or bike maintenance
- ➔ **87%** found it beneficial to their physical wellbeing

Better Physical and Mental Health

Upon follow up, 83% of bike recipients are feeling fitter and healthier than before and many tell us that cycling has provided the opportunity to reconnect with their bodies and get rid of the stresses of daily life. This is supported by wider evidence that increased physical activity reduces the risk of health conditions and improves mental health for refugees in particular, who have experienced and are recovering from severe trauma. This is because exercise relieves stress, gives day-to-day structure and supports mental well-being (Warburton et al., 2019).

“It’s very nice because my all muscles is working and the blood circulation much better. In my blood pressure, I felt last week, when I check on much better than before. Yeah included some taking past painkillers, yes no more painkillers!”

- Bike Recipient

Increased Independence and Mobility

Cycling can unlock independence and mobility to allow fuller participation in communities, something which has been long cited as integral to the promotion of refugee well-being and integration (Goodkind et al., 2002). On follow up with bike recipients 93% are using their bike for essential journeys every week and as a result, 92% know their local area better and 85% have used it to visit new places and do new things.

This sense of independence and self-sufficiency is a recurrent theme amongst survey respondents who develop greater autonomy as result of bike ownership and becomes even more pronounced with support of a **Bike Buddy** or **Pedal Power** cycle trainer.

“Now I feel comfortable to go out, especially in COVID times. I wasn’t leaving the house before but now I can go where I want when I want and quickly.”

- Bike Recipient



When physical activity takes place in a social setting, such as **Pedal Power** and **Bike Buddies**, it can go further to reduce stress post migration, improve mental wellbeing, enhance self-efficacy and reduce the risk of mortality and depression (Hartley et al., 2017).

“It helped me to find new friends, and now we are talking about for our problems and we have same experience, and we discuss each other about our experiences. It makes me feel more stronger and confident in myself”

- Pedal Power Participant



Financial Benefit

Transport is the biggest household spend in the UK: a bus pass in most areas of the UK costs an average of £20 per week, and from this, we estimate a minimum annual saving of £1,000 for every bike that we donate. This estimate could be much higher as refugees living on limited means often pay per journey instead of realising the savings a weekly pass provides. Consequently, relief from transport poverty is a primary motivator for needing a bike in the first place and on follow up it is not surprising that 70% of bike recipients tell us they are having to spend less on transport because they are able to cycle to get from A to B.

Reducing Isolation and Loneliness

On follow up, 84% of bike recipients feel less lonely and isolated and 87% feel that they have become part of a new community of cyclists. Refugees feel better connected with their local area and are making twice as many trips for social or leisure reasons and put simply, cyclists speak to each other - as one bike recipient said about Bike Buddies:

“They’re not just giving me a free bike, they’re giving me somebody who I can go riding with and I can be friendly with, who I can talk to and especially somebody like me...who comes from a different country and is new in the area...to know somebody and to know places, it’s a really good thing.”

- Bike Buddy Participant

Gender Equality

Women make up 28% of the refugee population in the UK and when framed by the fact that just 27% of cycle trips in the UK are made by women, and even less by women of colour, this could put refugee women at a double disadvantage. At The Bike Project, we strive to achieve equal representation of women in cycling and 30% of all bike recipients are female (compared to just 4% when we started out in 2013). Lowering our gender gap has only been made possible through the provision of Pedal Power, cycle training for refugee women, led by refugee women, which makes cycling accessible by overcoming the particular barriers that refugee women face.

Through a tailored programme of cycle training and social group support and activities Pedal Power encourages refugee women to reach guidelines of moderate-intensity physical activity a week which is vitally important as compared to the general population, refugee women are more likely to suffer from PTSD (Schubert et al., 2011), anxiety and depression (Llacer et al., 2009), social isolation, lack of opportunity (Hassan et al., 2016), obesity (Van der Kloof, 2015), as well as lower cardio-respiratory fitness (Guerin et al., 2007)





Empowerment and Confidence

Empowerment encompasses a process that helps people gain control over their lives, within which lies the sub-theme of confidence to overcome barriers. We see this demonstrated on follow up with bike recipients, 94% of who feel more confident and independent after receiving a bike.

“I feel very confident... I've started to think there's a lot of things I just said in my head and I think I can't do this, can't do this. Now I know if I, if I really want to do something I should give it a go first. And, if it doesn't work then I know I tried. Rather than just sit back and think, oh it's difficult.”

- Bike Recipient

In particular, women who have gone through Pedal Power training frequently describe a new sense of self-belief of being able to do whatever they wanted and having the confidence to try new things.

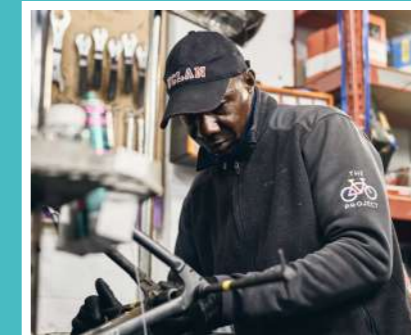
“I can do anything. No one, anyone says you are a woman, stay at home and like this. I can go with myself, what time I want and come back when I want. I can do anything I want. No one says 'don't do that'... Freedom. Yes. Freedom... I can do anything I want... go out in the morning and go to the park... just the freedom of having a bike makes me feel confident”

- Pedal Power Instructor

Nurturing Talent

Despite bringing with them a wealth of experience and skills (over 40% of refugees hold formal qualifications before coming to the UK) unemployment stands at around 36% and those who are employed are often working well below their capabilities. The increased confidence from learning about the local area through cycling enables many bike recipients to pursue local opportunities and opens up the possibility of gaining employment. As a consequence, we find that bike recipients are twice as likely to be in work, training or education.

People are also encouraged to return to learn new skills at our workshop, office or at Pedal Power and interviews with our volunteers found that volunteering has been particularly helpful for those prohibited from working so that they can feel part of a supportive community, develop skills and confidence to increase preparedness for the UK workplace.



Changing Public Perceptions

Research with volunteers has shown that by talking about and sharing experiences, they have increased understanding around the refugee crisis and examined their privilege as a lifelong UK citizen. The Bike Project also proactively engages with the media to provide a platform for positive representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the media and increase representation of women in sport. In 2020, we featured across 25 media platforms, including newspapers such as The Guardian, The Telegraph and The Evening Standard and two of our staff were featured in Cycling UK's 100 Women in Cycling.



REFUGEE

VOICES

PEDAL POWER

Sadaf

Sadaf, a Pedal Power graduate and volunteer has grown to become role model to other refugee women; encouraging them to confidently clutch the handlebars of their bikes without the fear of harassment or reproach. With the help of our Pedal Power instructors, she was able to find hope and purpose in the midst of uncertainty and suffering, this is her story:

“Where I am from, females don’t have much rights. They don’t own anything. Whatever it is, it is your parents’, your husband’s, your son’s. Coming here, the experience was the opposite. Ownership is very important, and having a bike is an awesome experience!

The asylum process snatched everything away, I was very depressed and I thought I had no one to turn to and that I had nothing of my own. I was depending on someone for everything and asking for support again and again – I felt really bad about it. Before receiving my bike, I was not an active person. I didn’t feel like walking or going out. Having a bike makes me feel mentally strong. It makes me happy. It gives me a sense of positivity and I start feeling better. I have seen a very strong change in my behaviour and in my mental health.

I enjoy the whole experience of cycling. Learning something new and going out on my own, I built the self-confidence I have lost a long time ago. It gives me hope.

The Bike Project has done something very practical for me that benefits me all the time. It is an encouraging thing building something of your own and you can rely on it. Back home, they have an idea that females are not good drivers and I tried to break that barrier by being part of Pedal Power. In the UK there are many refugee women and girls who are still struggling with that problem too, so I want to be a role model. They can look at me and be proud of me. They can do it too! Just because they are an asylum seeker, that doesn’t mean they can’t do it or that they are any less. It should be an encouragement for all of them.”

CYBER CYCLISTS

Cinderella

Although cycling was a big part of Cinderella's life as a young child, it took a backseat to her life during the war. It can be difficult to navigate the culture of cycling as a woman in Syria, but the continued instability also created a crumbling infrastructure that led to more difficulty safely cycling. When Cinderella arrived in the UK and connected with The Bike Project, she was over the moon to receive a bike and cycling become her main form of exercise and main method of travel.

“Having a bike gave me so much more self-reliance. For the first time in a long time, I felt like a whole human being who could depend on herself!”

Then, the world changed with the pandemic. At first, Cinderella found herself bored, then later, isolated. The novelty of studying and working remotely wore off and she realized she was missing her freedom of movement and the sense of connection it brought. “In Syria, freedom of movement changed with the war. I was really glad to be able to move around London so freely, but with Coronavirus it felt like my world got really small.”

When The Bike Project started Cyber Cyclists, with lessons every day on bike maintenance, fitness, nutrition and yoga, Cinderella was quick to sign up.

“I love the energy of the instructors, and I can't believe it's all completely free. That's not normally the norm for classes. It was a great way to stay connected while in lockdown.”

Cinderella's favourite classes are those focused on road maintenance and safety, as it is so informative, although she is also fond of the fitness classes. Since taking part she has noticed she feels more confident and optimistic. “There's a real sense of solidarity on the platform, when we're all taking part in something together and it has been easier to cope with the isolation.”



When refugees approach us at The Bike Project, they do so thinking they will get a bike to simply access more locations and to save on public transport. Often the true impact goes so much beyond that, as for those who do not have the permission to work, volunteering can have a profound impact on their lives:

“Before getting a bike I was alone all the time. I used to play football at home and since I came to the UK, I wasn't able to do any physical activities. My family isn't here and I always felt the need to see my family.

Once I had a bike could attend Church regularly to pray and go to services, which I couldn't afford to do before. Now, I am able to see my friends and I've found a new family.

The Bike Project are my new family. With the help of my bike and volunteering in the workshop I was able to fill the gap left by not having my family here. I was always part of a football team, but I haven't been able to join one here. When my friends saw that I became a cyclist, they all were very proud of me and wanted to become cyclists themselves. I introduced them all to The Bike Project, and they all have bikes now. We have cycling competitions and we race each other for fun.

Cycling is very important because it is better for the environment, so I feel like I am helping all human beings in the world, not just myself”

VOLUNTEERING

Sadegh



BIKE RECIPIENT

Yousef & family

Yousef received a bike, along with his two children, during lockdown and he was keen to share how the bicycles have changed things for him and his family.

“Having a bike is like a healthy friend, we travel to the big park and we cycle around the neighbourhood. We are really enjoying it. I taught my kids, and they quickly learned and became confident with their bikes.

Before, my family spent a lot of time doing home activities. The bikes gave us more outdoors sports and discovery activities. We save money: when we want to go visit another family or go shopping, the bike saves us the bus ticket. At the same time, it is a sports lesson. And if we have any psychological pressures, I go to the nearby forest or park with the kids and feel better mentally. The photo of my kids and I was when we were on our way to the nearby forest.”

The bikes helped a lot. It strengthened our ties. For example, when we are getting ready to leave for a trip we start encouraging each other and starting conversations, we start talking about different things. The bike is basically a tool to build community interaction and communication, it is like a key into the community. It helps you meet other people in your surrounding community and helps with the physical wellbeing and at the same time. I also save money as a refugee who is not able to buy a bike. I’m very thankful to The Bike Project, and to everyone who supports this project.”



BIKE BUDDIES

Karla and Beccy

Karla was matched with Bike Buddy, Beccy, and they met for their first ride before the pandemic. During lockdown they stayed in touch and met up again when it was eventually safe to do so, they have since gone on many rides together and developed a firm friendship. Here Karla explains what this has meant to her.

“Having a bike has been a blessing, a wonderful experience. The relationship with Beccy has been the best thing, she is lovely, so easy to talk to and it’s been a great relationship, a very nice person to meet with and cycle, she’s amazing and it’s all down to The Bike Project.

To be able to learn when you are old is hard, but having someone with you that you trust and love, and who trusts you made all that possible. That you can do that as an older person is amazing. It was a dream to ride a bike and now it’s come true.

The very first meeting I was so scared at the beginning of riding my bike, I thought “I can’t do it” but it’s all about trust, Beccy trusted me a lot, gave me support and helped me learn. Ever since then I feel much more confident cycling a bicycle.

My bike has a name ‘Fider’ and he has a best friend which is my Bike Buddy’s bike. It makes me feel better, free, happy and it’s so nice. I would tell anyone thinking of doing Bike Buddies to ‘believe that you can do anything at any time’ that is what I have taken from this.

The Bike Project are always there to help, I never knew I could do ride a bike and now I can. I experienced many new things, plus it’s good for environment and I can now go anywhere, I can go to the shops on my bike or just for a ride which helps a lot.”





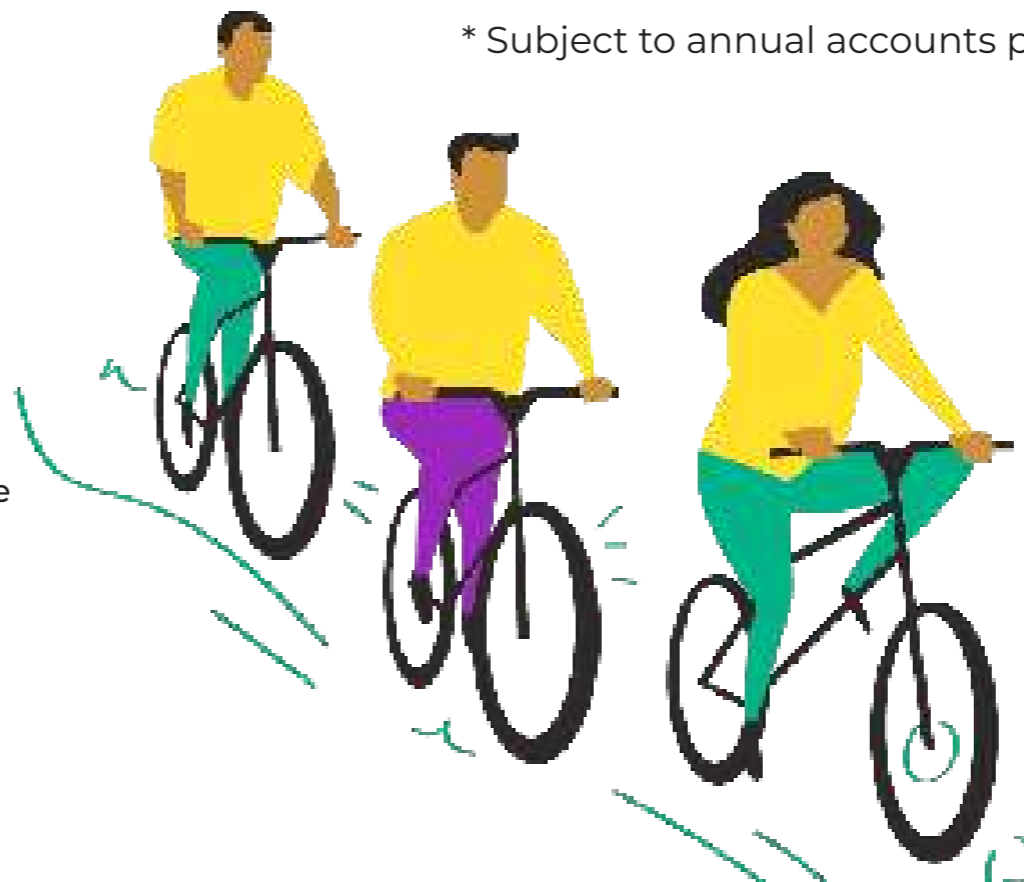
FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

Hiring dedicated fundraising staff, being nominated the Charity of the Year for RideLondon46, and plans to open a high street bike shop and café to grow our social enterprise meant that 2020 was going to be an exciting and busy year of expansion and growth for The Bike Project.

As a result of the pandemic, RideLondon was cancelled and we were forced to pause any plans for retail expansion as a precautionary measure. The efforts of the fundraising team were redirected into creating and marketing new ways to fundraise and this resulted in our strongest fundraising year to date with income from retail activity, grants, events and donations totaling £1.6 million*.

- » Creation of Refugee Routes, which inspired fundraisers to cycle the same distance as a common route that refugees take when fleeing their country. The challenge had 58 signups with a dropout rate of only 9%, resulting in £21,675 of donations.
- » Doubled our income from retail activities to £399,378 as a result of the cycling boom in the UK.
- » Secured a record £846,567 of grants income to fund our charitable programmes and increased giving from major donors to £114,146.
- » Grew our number of regular givers to 96 donors, with an average gift of £12.90, totaling £11,435.
- » Launched #AndStillWeRide - The Bike Project COVID-19 Emergency Appeal raising £8,872.
- » Ran a Christmas Appeal that included a £10,000 matching pot, raising £22,835.
- » Hosted an annual comedy event online, raising £19,072 and held three virtual quizzes raising a total of £6,921.

* Subject to annual accounts publication in summer 2021



Achievements in 2020

MEDIA & MARKETING ACTIVITY

Our marketing roadmap for 2020 had to be heavily adjusted following the pandemic but The Bike Project fared well and was featured across 25 media platforms, for a variety of content ranging from Pedal Power to Refugee Routes and our work offering free virtual bike services to NHS staff.

2020 Media Highlights



Evening Standard

Interview with Nour for International Womens Day: 10 women making a difference in London



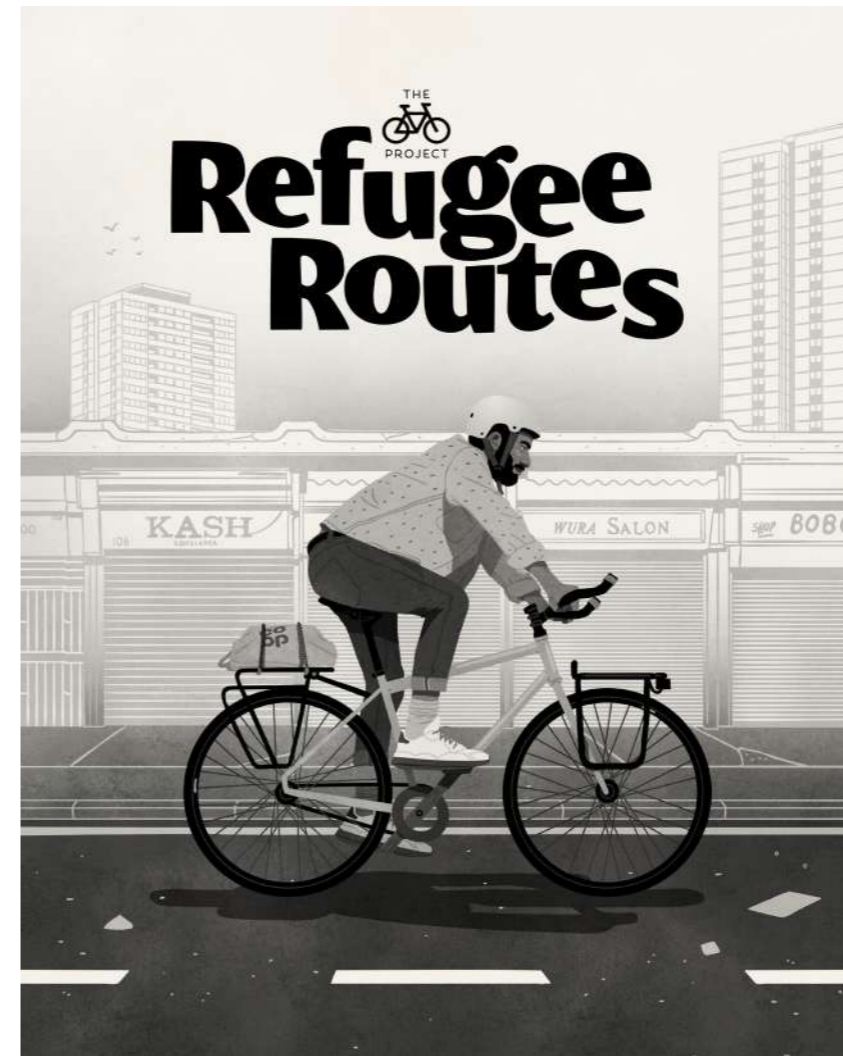
The Telegraph

Meet the virtual plumbers and mechanics helping Britain get by during the coronavirus lockdown



The Guardian

One woman's charity cycle trip in search of places called Hope



For our brand new challenge event, **Refugee Routes**, we connected with graphic artist **Mason London** who designed a bespoke graphic image for us, including an animated version. In addition, he shared our charity across his social network, resulting in a 10% increase in our Instagram community.

We increased our work with celebrities, creating new content with not only our patron David Morrissey, but also working with the aforementioned graphic artist Mason London, Francis Cade, Jen Brister and Joanna Rowsell.

This gave us the opportunity to increase our video content, in addition to an increase in case studies and refugee stories captured, and we created 5 new short films including a Pedal Power documentary, by award winning documentary maker Leslie Knott.

Our social audience remained highly engaged throughout the year, spreading the word of our campaigns and projects (with support from MPs like David Lammy and Dr Rosena Allin-Khan). Overall, we had a 27% increase in community growth, with an equal positive knock-on effect on engagement (+11%) and a significant increase in visitors across our website: 97.51% increase in sessions, 99.32% increase in page views and sales saw a knock-on effect, in some months increasing by up to 17.3%.

Finally, **we invested in our CRM database**, splitting this up into 19 segments, each with their own specific email journey to increase engagement and deliver added value to supporters regardless of how they connect with us. We also developed our website and digital marketing setting up a new registration process for bike donations, aiming to increase the success of supporter stewardship and set us up for 2021.



FUTURE PLANS

The UK government's hostile environment policies are continuing to restrict refugees' and asylum seekers' access to financial support and adequate housing. As a direct consequence this puts refugees in an increasingly vulnerable position where they are dependent on charitable aid to meet their basic living needs. At the same time, demand for our services has never been higher whilst the imminent departure from the EU creates economic uncertainty across the UK charity sector. As such, the financial savings and access to vital support and opportunities that a bike can provide have never been more significant.

Beyond the bike donation itself, our programmes of Pedal Power, Bike Buddies and volunteering which help to promote social integration and reduce social isolation are prescient. **Looking forward, we will continue to address the growing need from refugees in the UK by increasing our output from our current bases in London and the West Midlands.** At the same time we will improve the quality of service delivery and consolidate our learning from the regional expansion to maximise the transformative impact of every bike that we donate.

To ensure our financial security we will continue to diversify our income stream, including a renewed emphasis on community fundraising and will proceed with our delayed plans to open a new, standalone retail spaces operating with the addition of bike servicing, to benefit from the cycling boom in the UK.

Looking forward, we are confident of our ability to not just survive, but thrive and beyond the pandemic we are excited to announce an ambitious national mobile bike donation programme to reach all cities across the UK where there are refugees living. We will also be piloting several social action projects to provide the opportunity to fully realise the power of a bike to strengthen the impact of every bike we donate and create opportunities for the voices of refugees to be heard whilst promoting solidarity across the UK.

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Bike Project only exists because of the generosity of our supporters. We would like to thank everybody that has donated a bike or their time throughout 2020 and also give thanks for the support of our financial donors and the following trusts, funds and organisations, without which, the achievements outlined in this report would not have been possible.

- AB Charitable Trust**
- AD Trust**
- Barrow Cadbury**
- Birmingham City Council**
- BlackRock**
- CAF**
- City Bridge Trust**
- Clifford Chance**
- Comic Relief**
- DCMS**
- Dulverton Trust**
- Ebay Foundation**
- EQ Foundation**
- Groundwork UK**
- Lansdowne Partners**
- Leathersellers' Company**
- London Community Foundation**
- National Lottery Community Fund**
- Network For Social Change**
- Newby Trust**
- QBE Foundation**
- Reta Lila Howard**
- Robert Holman Memorial Trust**
- SC & ME Morland's Charitable Trust**
- David Boyd household**
- School for Social Entrepreneurs**
- Souter Charitable Trust**
- Southwark Council**
- St Clare and St Francis Trust**
- Team London**
- Texel Foundation**
- The Canary Wharf Group**
- The Gunter Charitable Trust**
- The Harbour Foundation**
- The Pears Foundation**
- The Rayne Foundation**
- The Talent Fund**
- Unltd**

**Founding Sponsor:
JHub and the team at The Pears Foundation**

