



Rosa's Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund for BME Women's Organisations

Impact Report

Published: September 2022



Organisations led by and for Black and minoritised¹ women and girls have consistently been underfunded and undervalued in the UK. These organisations operate within an inherently unequal funding sector, yet they continue to provide vital support for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

The pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequalities experienced by Black and minoritised women and girls and exacerbated violence in the home – a combination described as a dual pandemic by Imkaan, the UK-based Black feminist organisation dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls, and Rosa's funding partner. The pandemic also resulted in a surge in demand from women and girls experiencing multiple inequalities at a time when organisations across the sector faced a significant funding shortfall.

As an agile grant-making charity funding organisations led by and for women and girls across the UK, we were able to respond quickly and effectively to meet the evolving needs of the sector during the pandemic. Through the generosity of donors such as Emmanuel Kaye Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn, The Indigo Trust, and Oak Foundation, we raised over £630,000 in emergency funding specifically for Black and minoritised women's and girls' organisations. This fund was developed and delivered in partnership with [Imkaan](#).

This report examines the impact of Rosa's Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund for organisations led by and for Black and minoritised women and girls. We also explore how the pandemic has affected these undervalued organisations and the challenges they now face beyond Covid-19. The findings are drawn from various conversations with grantees and reports shared throughout the funding programme.

“The BME women’s sector is once again suffering. It’s very challenging for us. It seems as though we have to work twice as hard to get women the support they need.”

Panahghar, 2021

¹ At Rosa, we understand that terminology can take away from the different lived experiences of individuals. Throughout this report we have used the term Black and minoritised, and by this we mean women who are defined in a policy context as Black and 'Minority Ethnic' (BME). We appreciate that this terminology is by no means perfect and there are specific types of discrimination and oppression experienced by women and girls within these broad terms.

How grants were awarded

We recognised early on that funding was needed to meet the immediate needs of organisations run by and for Black and minoritised women and girls. It was imperative that funding could be easily accessed and awarded without adding to already challenging workloads.

With demand rising for specialist services and a sector-wide funding shortfall, Rosa's support during the pandemic provided a lifeline for many organisations. Through Rosa's Covid-19 Emergency Response fund developed and delivered in partnership with Imkaan, grants of up to £35,000 were awarded to Black and minoritised women's refuges and grants of up to £20,000 were distributed to organisations addressing violence against Black and minoritised women and girls.

Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund for BME Women's Organisations



£633k

total raised



53

applications received



27

organisations funded



11

refuges supported

100%

of grantees agreed that the funding helped their organisation to improve women's and girls' mental wellbeing and/or ability to cope during the pandemic

3,147

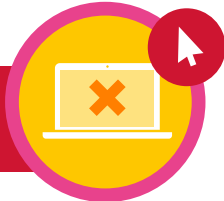
women and girls directly benefitted from the funding to BME women's organisations



How grants were awarded

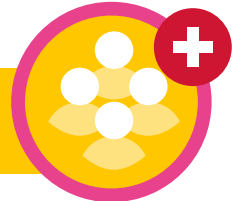
The pandemic saw organisations led by and for Black and minoritised women and girls work tirelessly to meet the increased needs of their communities. Our emergency Covid-19 funding supported a wide range of essential work, including:

IT Support



- Upgrading or introducing IT systems to enable swift online delivery
- Staff training to support and safeguard women and girls online

Staff Costs & Capacity Building



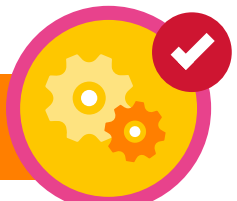
- Maintaining salary costs for current staff and funding additional posts to meet surges in demand

Emotional Support



- Holistic support for women and girls seeking safety and protection

Practical Support



- Support accessing entitlements and disseminating public health information in community languages

“This support came at a time when women were struggling to leave abusive situations during lockdown. Funding from Rosa has meant we have reached out and provided support in the most difficult circumstances and ensured women are supported to leave and access refuge accommodation”

Saheli, 2021



of grantees agreed that support helped them to be more sustainable and/or address significant cash flow issues



of grantees agreed that the funding from Rosa helped their organisation to improve women's and girls' access to support services

Impact on organisations

Our funding not only helped organisations to continue providing critical services to women and girls, it also supported efforts to transition online and deliver services remotely.

“Rosa and Imkaan’s support has helped us quickly adjust and respond to the rapidly changing environment during the pandemic. As a small organisation, we didn’t have the resources in place to adjust and implement all the new measures required during the pandemic or provide increased support to the service users and the staff. This support contributed to building our resilience so we could respond to the new reality we suddenly faced.”

Latin American Women’s Aid, 2021

Adapting work

The pandemic resulted in organisations having to transform the way they responded to meet the increasingly complex needs of women and girls. Lockdowns and remote working meant that all organisations had to swiftly adapt the way in which they reached women and girls in need of their services and implement appropriate policies to ensure safeguarding measures were in place. Many organisations simply didn’t have the technical capacity to support their staff to work remotely and looked to Rosa for resources and provisions. The majority of organisations used Rosa’s funding to upgrade their IT systems and CRM databases to support remote working.

Connecting with organisations

Connections with like-minded organisations were seen as a valuable component of Rosa’s Covid-19 Emergency Response fund. Organisations valued the opportunity to interact with specialist sister organisations to share key learnings, institutional advocacy and to form coordinated responses to the complex needs of Black and minoritised women and girls. A number of grantees also spoke positively about the breadth of online networking events organised by Rosa and Imkaan, which strengthened ties within the sector and encouraged information sharing.

“Funding from Rosa made it possible for us to purchase and install the required IT and computer network system that could be adequately used by staff responding to the increased needs of our client group. With support, we managed to secure funding from Bridge Trust, MPOC, and National Lottery”

African Women’s Care, 2021



of grantees agreed that support helped them to connect with other organisations and develop a coordinated response to Covid-19



of grantees reported that the funding helped their organisation to adapt work or deliver core services in fundamentally different ways

Women's voices

Our Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund for BME Women's Organisations helped organisations to adapt to an environment that was continuously shifting and difficult to operate in.

The fund helped The Angelou Centre, an organisation that reaches some of the most marginalised communities in the North-East, to provide services to the increasing number of women and girls seeking refuge. Their support services include specialist advocacy, crisis housing, therapeutic support, and access to immigration and civil legal advice.

“When the pandemic hit, we observed a 60% increase in demand for our crisis refuge accommodation. The grant helped us to ensure that additional women were provided with bed space and could also be provided with holistic recovery support alongside crisis accommodation. Additional staff capacity added by the grant has helped us to provide an increased number of women with access to long term institutional advocacy support and holistic therapeutic support, which has been vital during the pandemic.”

The Angelou Centre, 2021

For Apna Haq, an organisation addressing violence against Black and minoritised women and girls in Rotherham, the fund helped them to connect with women and girls who found it challenging to engage with mainstream service providers. The funding ensured Apna Haq could continue supporting women and girls who face racial discrimination by offering culturally appropriate services rooted in the lived experiences of Black and minoritised women and girls.

“Our work helps to improve the mental health and wellbeing of women and girls most vulnerable to the effects of lockdown and COVID-19 and who are less likely to access help through other means due to cultural and language factors.”

Apna Haq, 2021



The value of Rosa's support

As a small and agile funder, Rosa's approach to this fund was to rapidly respond to the changing needs of the sector. Grants were made available and distributed within a short timeframe, and grantees maintained close contact with Rosa throughout the process.

As a leading charitable funder, it is vital to us that the grantee experience is at the core of our work, and we strive to put this into practice throughout the funding process. We worked closely with Imkaan to identify members of their network that required support and developed a simple application and reporting process to follow.

100%

of organisations valued Rosa's support and had a positive experience as a grantee

100%

of grantees appreciated Rosa's openness and flexibility as a grant maker



" We found engagement with Rosa very positive. Having a named contact made enquiries and building a relationship easier. This is really important towards feeling less like a number and more like a valued partner. This also allows for greater understanding of our work and services, which we hope will assist with future applications and partnership working."

The Sharan Project, 2021

"We had a very positive experience of being a Rosa grantee. The application process itself was simple to follow, and the funding officers were very helpful. They listened to our ideas and concerns, and if I had any queries, they responded promptly"

Shakti Women's Aid, 2021

"Very positive experience so far, especially through the online training and conferences that Rosa has run. Bringing other funders to meet Women's Group has been useful in encouraging groups to consider fundraising from other funders"

Utulivu Women's Group, 2021

Insights from grantees

Grantees observed an escalation in both prevalence and numbers of Black and minoritised women and girls seeking their services.

Many found that staff were stretched, and teams experienced burnout from the increased workload and the impact of Covid-19 on their personal lives. Some organisations were affected by funders closing well-established funding programmes to focus on distributing smaller emergency grants that would not stretch beyond the immediate crisis.

“For the BME women’s sector, the pandemic has brought uncertainty and worry to the forefront, as the issue of survival has been a recurring issue. At the beginning of the pandemic, a large portion of funders who had looked on the BME women’s sector favourably closed their funding streams. This has led to many organisations like Granby Somali Women’s Group having to rely on small pots of funding during the pandemic to address the increase in need from beneficiaries”

Granby Somali Women’s Group (GSWG), 2021

Several smaller organisations led by and for Black and minoritised women and girls reported that the pandemic had exasperated structural barriers that already existed within the charitable funding sector.

“The women’s sector is a normally underfunded sector, and this is particularly true and more challenging for smaller BME organisations. So, although there were resources made available specifically for BME women’s organisations, the historic underfunding meant that some core functions and structures were still short in terms of capacity. Also, the fact that the additional funding was short-term meant that the increased capacity created will be reduced again once the funding comes to an end.

In this sense, we believe that the BME women’s sector experience during the pandemic was more challenging in comparison to generic organisations that, historically, have had the resources to invest in core areas. Furthermore, as the complexity of the needs of the women substantially increased during this time, it has also demanded more in-depth support from frontline workers.”

Latin American Women’s Aid Refuge, 2021

Future funding

Concerns around sustainability and financial stability were repeatedly shared with us by grantees. Organisations remain under immense pressure to continue running services to meet the increase in demand, and many are worried about funding shortfalls that lie ahead. Now, as organisations navigate their journey beyond the pandemic, we must work collaboratively to draw in and distribute the resources they so urgently need.

We have used the learning from the Covid-19 Emergency Response fund to establish a new programme called the Rise Fund, which offers two-year grants of up to £40,000 to organisations led by and for Black and minoritised women and girls across the UK. We intend to run this programme for a number of years to address longer-term strategic planning and sustainability within the women and girls sector.

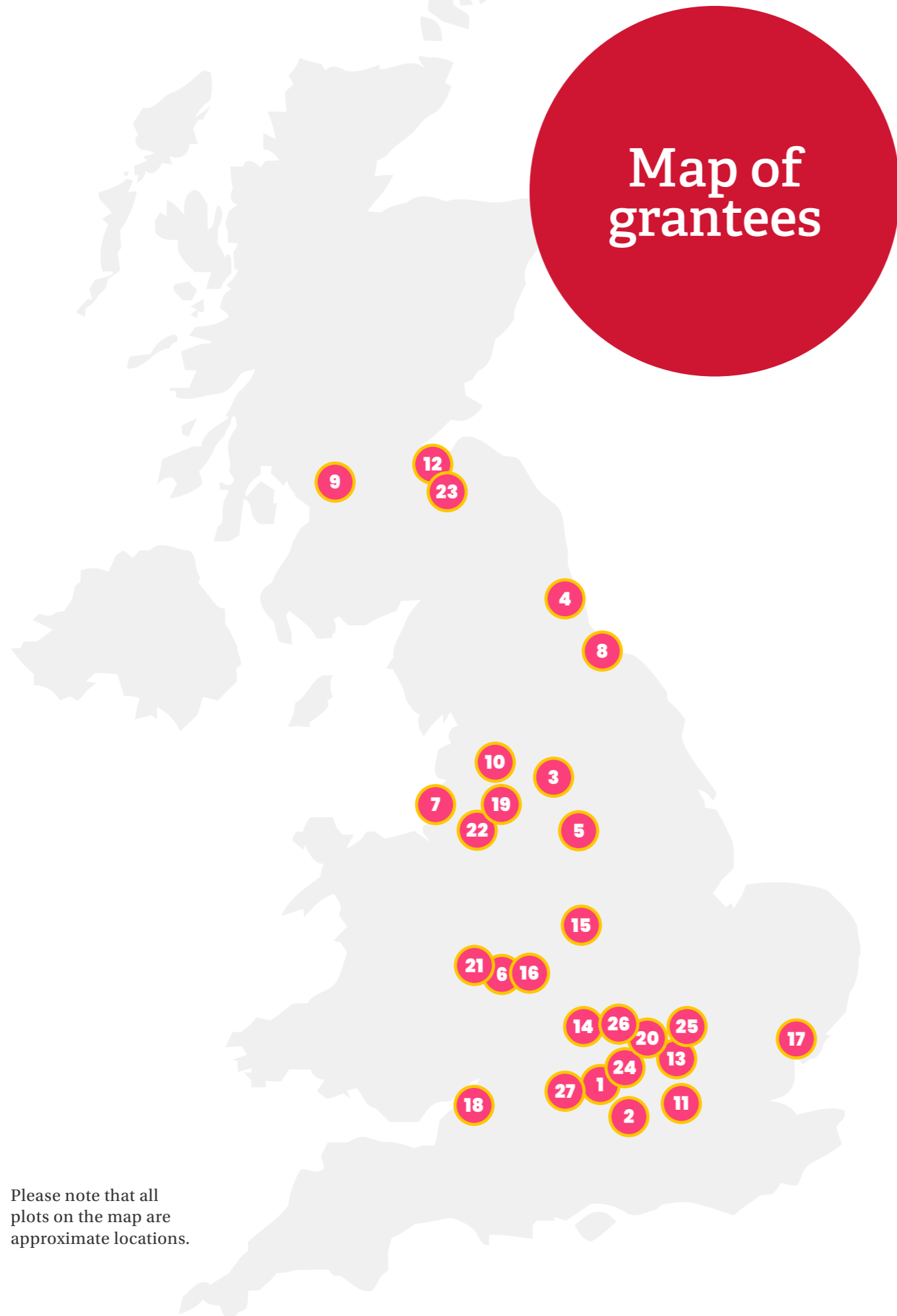
We recognise that discriminatory practices exist within the funding sector, which creates barriers to organisations led by and for Black and minoritised women and girls accessing funding. We value the collective voices of these organisations and continue to work with them to understand the challenges they face in the sector.

We understand the importance of having funds available specifically for Black and minoritised women's and girls' organisations and will continue to support initiatives that empower these organisations.

In partnership with

imkaan





Please note that all plots on the map are approximate locations.

Number	Organisation Name	Location	Total Grant
1	African Women's Care	Kensington and Chelsea	£14,562
2	African Youth Development Association	Croydon	£7,302
3	Anah Project	Bradford	£34,922
4	The Angelou Centre	Newcastle upon Tyne	£33,893
5	Apna Haq	Rotherham	£18,748
6	Baobab Women's Project C.I.C.	Birmingham	£20,000
7	Granby Somali Women's Group	Liverpool	£20,000
8	Halo Project	Middlesbrough	£26,600
9	Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid	Glasgow City	£20,000
10	Humraaz	Blackburn with Darwen	£32,344
11	Kiran Support Services	Waltham Forest	£35,000
12	KWISA	City of Edinburgh	£19,000
13	Latin American Women's Aid Refuge	Hackney	£34,900
14	Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation	Islington	£19,968
15	Nottingham Muslim Women's Network	Nottingham	£19,703
16	Panahghar	Coventry	£34,250
17	Phoebe	Ipswich	£20,000
18	Refugee Women of Bristol	Bristol, City of	£15,142
19	Rochdale Womens Welfare Association	Rochdale	£18,750
20	Roj Women Association	Haringey	£19,880
21	Roshni Birmingham	Birmingham	£31,470
22	Saheli	Manchester	£34,890
23	Shakti Women's Aid	City of Edinburgh	£35,000
24	The Sharan Project	Westminster	£19,492
25	Sistah Space	Hackney	£20,000
26	Sister System	Haringey	£7,292
27	Utulivu Women's Group	Reading	£20,000