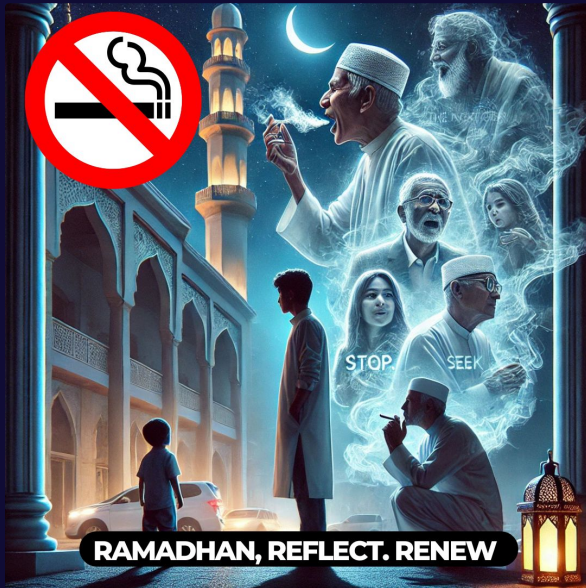


Blossom Group: Culturally Driven Smoking Cessation Impact Report



January - May 2025

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A comprehensive report on our Swap to Stop programme achievements and future innovation plans to address smoking cessation in culturally diverse communities of Waltham Forest and Newham.

Who We Are: Community-Rooted Changemakers

Blossom Group is deeply embedded in the ethnically diverse communities of Waltham Forest and Newham, where health disparities are significant but often overlooked. Our organization's foundation is built on authentic community connections and cultural understanding.

Our mission centers on reducing health inequalities through culturally sensitive engagement that respects traditions while promoting healthier choices. We leverage our trusted position to overcome barriers that mainstream health initiatives often fail to address.

Our team of community health champions reflects the diverse populations we serve, ensuring cultural sensitivity in all our interventions.



What We Delivered: Culturally Tailored Engagement

1

Togetherness Cafés

Operated 3 weekly community cafés (2 in Waltham Forest, 1 in Newham) with an average of 50 participants per session, creating safe spaces for health conversations.

2

Cultural Celebrations

Hosted Eid celebrations in Leytonstone & Stratford with 200+ attendees each, integrating smoking cessation messages within cultural contexts.

3

Library Campaign

Conducted three major sessions at Stratford Library, engaging 600+ community members with culturally appropriate Swap to Stop information.

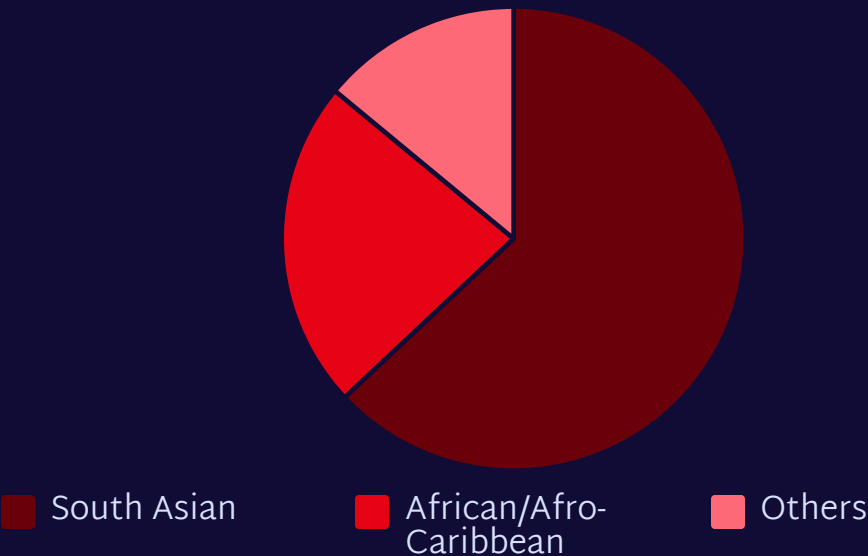
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Ramadan Engagement

Implemented faith-sensitive cessation messaging during Ramadan, achieving a 3% immediate quit rate among participants.

Total direct engagement: 1,500+ individuals across all activities, each receiving culturally appropriate information, advice, and referrals.

Community Profile: Understanding Our Audience



Poverty Rate

Living in poverty or low-income households, affecting access to resources



Limited English

Facing language barriers that hinder traditional health interventions



Chronic Illness

Reporting respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, many linked to smoking

Our participants are predominantly women (65%) across various age groups, with the majority (45%) aged 35-55 years.

Key Barriers: Challenges Beyond Traditional Approaches

Language & Literacy

Majority require information in Urdu, Bengali, and Somali. Traditional written materials are ineffective for many participants.

"If someone spoke in my language, I would understand better. The leaflets do not make sense to me."
– Female participant, 52, Newham

Cultural Contexts

Smoking and tobacco use (including shisha, paan, and snuff) are deeply embedded in cultural practices and social gatherings.

Vaping carries stigma in certain communities, with misconceptions about its health implications compared to traditional tobacco.

Socioeconomic Factors

Tobacco serves as a stress-coping mechanism for many facing poverty and mental health challenges.

"Smoking is part of our daily stress relief – no one ever explained there's another way." – Male participant, 45, Waltham Forest

Innovation: Storytelling & Drama for Behavioral Change

Our Innovative Approach

Blossom Group is pioneering culturally immersive education through storytelling and drama in community languages, combining traditional narrative techniques with modern health messaging.

Create Cultural Scripts

Develop authentic narratives in Urdu, Bengali, Somali, and other community languages that address tobacco use in culturally relevant contexts.

Train Community Performers

Engage local volunteers and respected community members as storytellers and actors for maximum authenticity and trust.

Deliver Performances

Present short dramas and stories during cafés, faith events, and cultural gatherings that emotionally resonate with audiences.

Provide Immediate Support

Follow performances with VBA+ and instant referrals for vape kits and behavioral support while engagement is high.



Why It Works

- Stories create emotional connections that statistics cannot
- Narratives delivered in native languages eliminate comprehension barriers
- Cultural contexts ensure messages resonate authentically
- Drama bypasses literacy limitations that hamper written materials
- Community performers add credibility and reduce resistance

Our Ramadan campaign demonstrated the power of culturally contextual messaging, achieving a 3% immediate quit rate.

Our Ask: Partnership for Innovation

Funding Support

Script Development

Fund the creation of culturally authentic scripts in multiple languages with input from health experts and community members.

Ambassador Training

Support the recruitment and training of community storytellers and performers to deliver engaging, accurate health messaging.

Program Delivery

Enable 12 months of continuous storytelling-based outreach across multiple venues and community events.

Partnership Opportunities

- Collaborate with NHS bodies to integrate our approach with existing cessation pathways
- Partner with local authorities to reach institutional settings like schools and care homes
- Engage cultural organisations to enhance the authenticity and reach of our programs
- Work with academic institutions to measure impact and develop an evidence base

Together, we can transform smoking cessation approaches for underserved communities, creating a model that respects cultural contexts while driving meaningful health improvements.