

UJALA – The Light Project

Final Impact Report (2024–2025)

Blossom Group

Change can only happen from within

**A comprehensive quantitative and qualitative report
showcasing community-led transformation in South
Asian mental health support**



Pre-UJALA: Listening Before Leading

Before UJALA was even named, 450 South Asian women shared their truths. What they told us shaped everything:

“

"We don't know what help is even out there."

”

“

"The help we've tried didn't feel made for us."

”

“

"No one ever asks us. We just cope."

”

This was never a blank-slate initiative. It was built on real conversations, real silences, and real needs. We didn't start with solutions — we started with listening.

Accessible

Services meet people where they are, not where institutions expect them to be

Relevant

Support reflects lived realities — language, culture, time, trust

Trusted

Healing built on relational, not transactional trust

The **Accessible, Relevant, and Trusted (ART) framework** was developed to shift agency for accessing and using health services directly into the hands of the community. Our Ujala project stands as a powerful testament to how these principles translate into tangible, impactful change on the ground.

Project Ethos: Light That Rises From Within

"I never realised I could be a hero... On this project, I became important. Someone shone a light on me."

— Fauzia, UJALA Volunteer

UJALA wasn't *for* the community. It was *of* it. Created with and by South Asian women, it embedded mental health into the fabric of daily life:



Kitchens

Conversations over chai and cooking



Markets

Support woven into daily shopping



Places of Worship

Healing in gurdwaras and mosques



Festivals

Mental health celebrated in joy



Walks

Movement as medicine



Radio Waves

Voices that felt like home

Outreach: Making Mental Health Ordinary

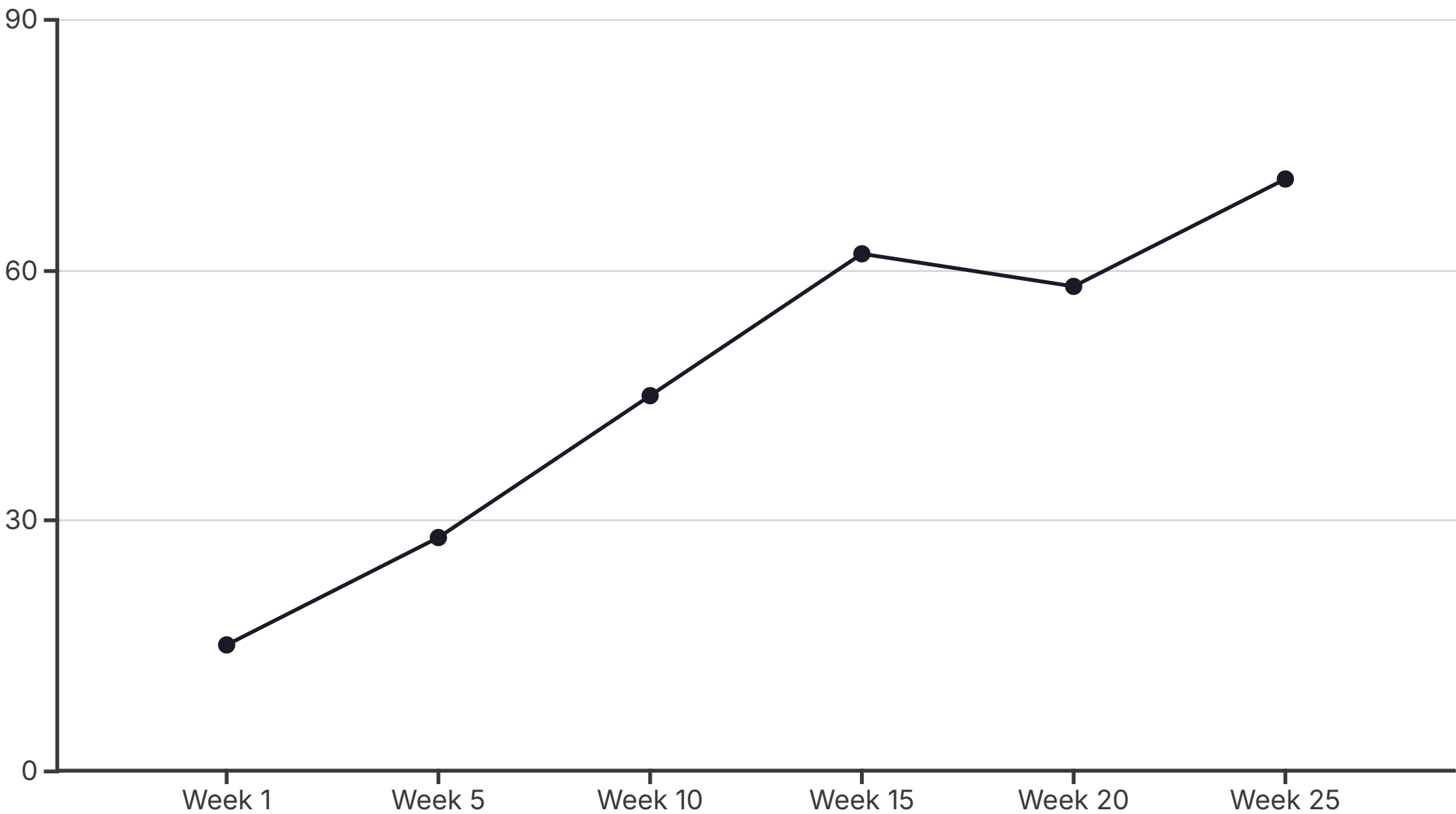
731

Direct Interactions

Across shops, homes, family events, markets

What changed:

- Help no longer lived behind clinic doors
- Trust was earned face-to-face, over time
- Mental health became a kitchen table topic — not a secret



Weekly outreach interaction counts show steady growth in community engagement, with trust building over time through consistent presence and cultural sensitivity.

Community Events: Where Healing Met Joy

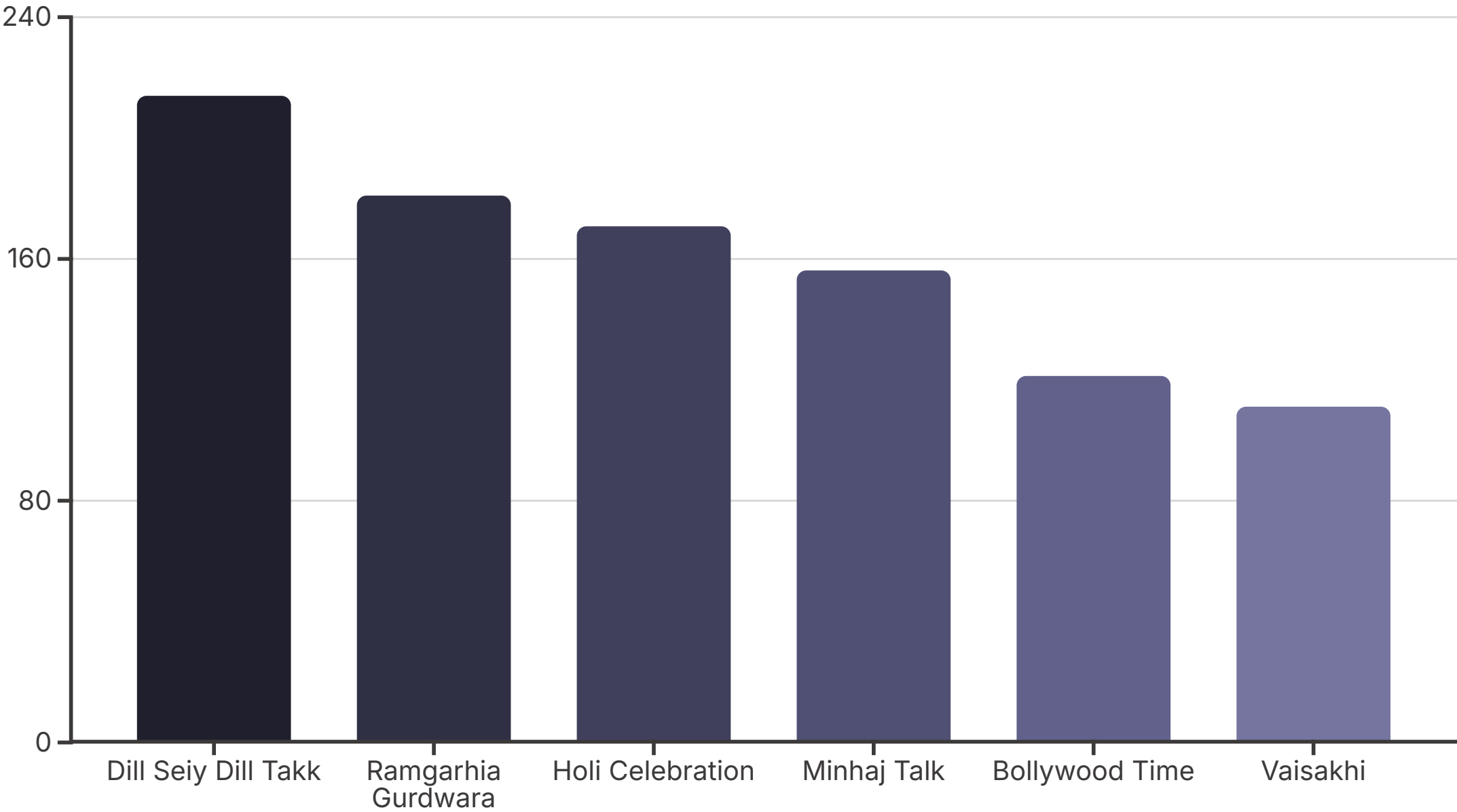
1,348

Total Attendees

Across 15 culturally anchored events

These weren't "mental health events." These were celebrations where wellbeing felt normal — not clinical.

Date	Event	Attendees
14/04/2025	Dill Seiy Dill Takk	214
05/01/2025	Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara	181
14/03/2025	Holi Celebration	171
31/12/2024	Minhaj UI Quran Talk	156
24/01/2025	Bollywood Time Machine	121
20/04/2025	Vaisakhi	111
Others	9 additional events	364



✔ **Key Takeaway:** Cultural context wasn't decoration. It was delivery.

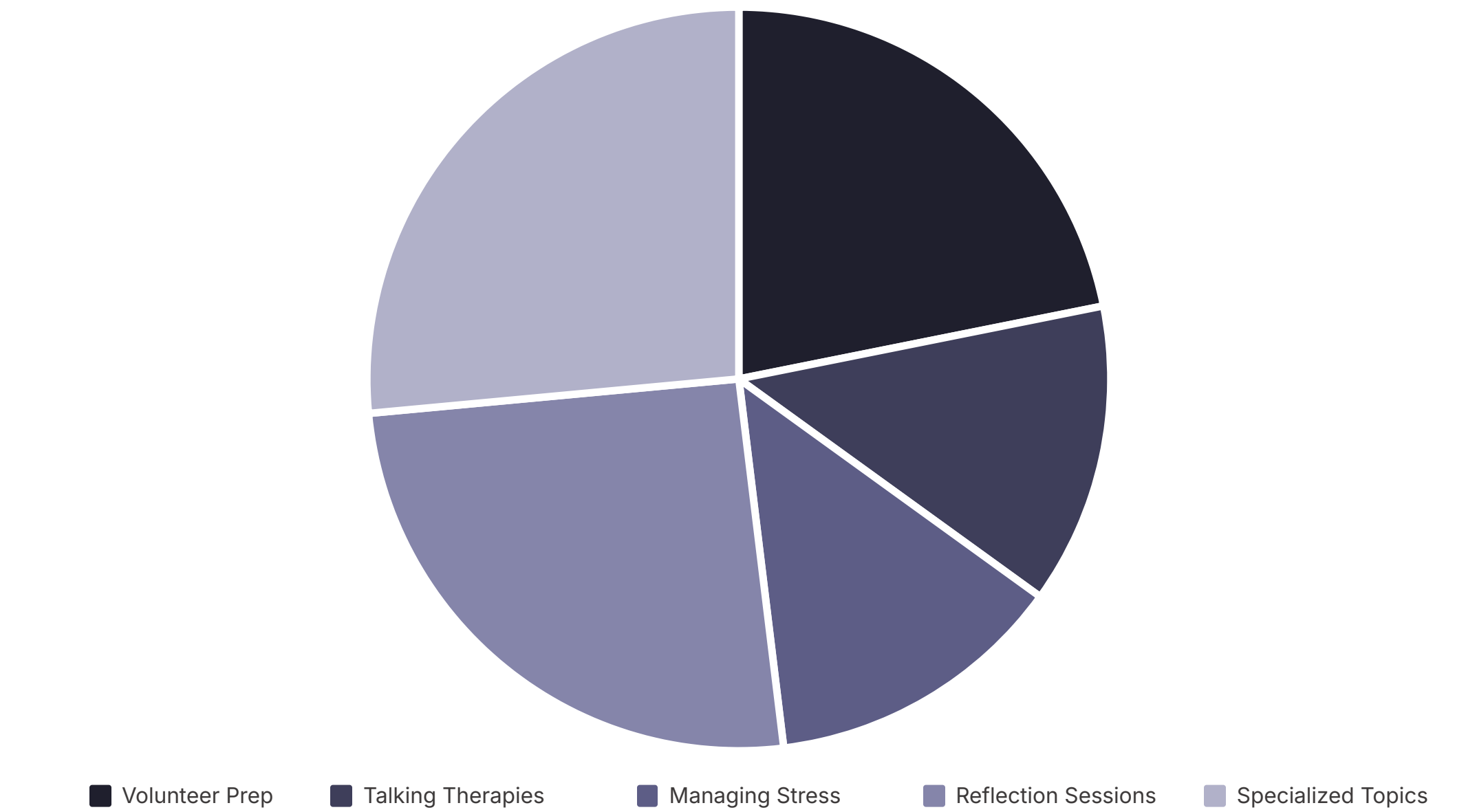
Volunteer Power: Healing From Within

38

Volunteers Trained

Topics included Talking Therapies, Menopause, Anxiety, Perinatal Mental Health, Breastfeeding, and more

Session	Participants
Volunteer Preparation	85
Talking Therapies	51
Managing Stress	51
Reflection 2	56
Reflection 1	43
Breastfeeding	33
Coping with Anxiety	28
Menopause	21
Perinatal Mental Health	21



These weren't just "helpers." They were ambassadors of healing — trusted, relatable, and rooted.

"I thought only educated people could lead... now people ask me what therapy means."

— UJALA Volunteer

Wellness in Motion: Healing by Walking and Breathing

247

Walking Groups

Participants finding healing through movement

274

Yoga 4 All

Participants embracing breath and mindfulness

- No therapy chair required
- Just movement, breath, and presence



Walking Groups Yoga 4 All

These weren't wellness fads — they were emotional release valves for women under chronic stress. Healing happened in community, through gentle movement and shared breath.

Radio: Relationship-Building Through Sound

40+

Broadcasts

Weekly radio segments building trust

70,000+

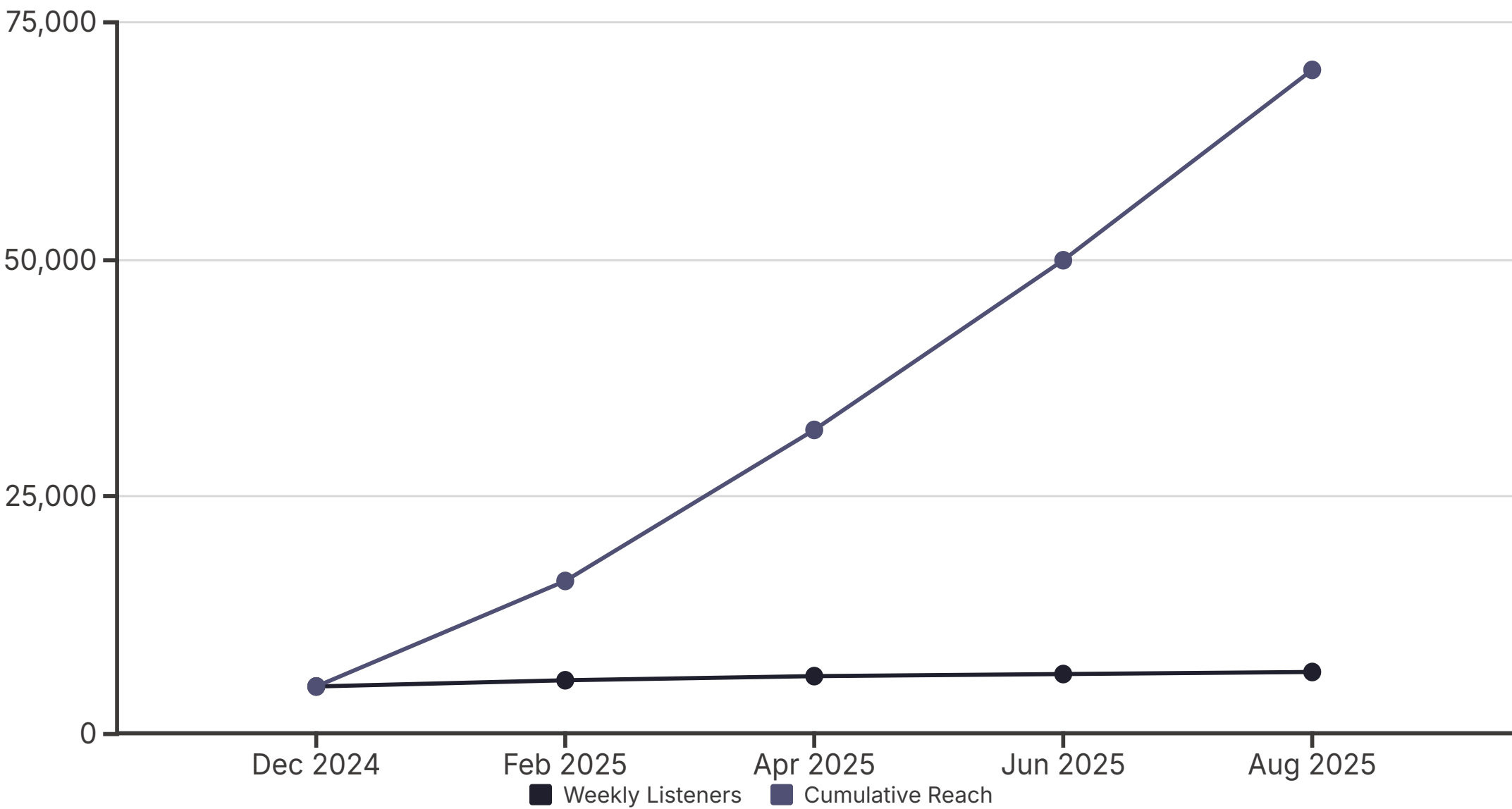
Listeners

Cumulative reach across communities

NuSound Radio became the heartbeat of UJALA. It made mental health relatable, local, and safe.

Topics Covered

- Anxiety and stress management
- Autism in the family
- Domestic violence support
- Therapy and grief
- Parenting stress



"I heard about Dessa on the radio... now she's my therapist."

Listeners didn't just hear "issues." They heard their neighbors' voices, creating permission to seek support without shame.

What Worked: The UJALA Blueprint



Embedded Care

Healing came to where people lived — not the other way around



Cultural Integration

Support delivered in Urdu, Punjabi, and Gujarati — through language, food, music, and ritual



Volunteer-Led Trust

Volunteers weren't intermediaries — they were the message



Everyday Visibility

Therapy happened while walking, laughing, sharing food — not just in sessions

This blueprint proves that when mental health services are truly accessible, relevant, and trusted, communities don't just engage — they transform.

Mitigation & Gaps: What We're Still Learning

1

Gap: Men's Participation

Challenge: Male participation remained low throughout the project

Next Step: Build male-focused outreach with trusted male figures and culturally appropriate spaces

2

Gap: Digital Exclusion

Challenge: Digital exclusion among elders limited reach

Next Step: Expand offline tools — leaflets, radio, drop-ins, and face-to-face support

3

Gap: Postnatal Care

Challenge: Postnatal care uptake needs boosting

Next Step: Collaborate with midwives and doulas for deeper reach into maternal health networks

 These gaps don't represent failures — they represent opportunities for deeper, more inclusive community engagement.



Conclusion: Building Villages, Not Systems

"Where's my daughter Dessa?" — Community member referring to her therapist

That's the win. When therapists feel like family, healing is no longer a service — it's a relationship.

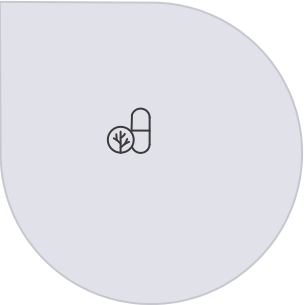
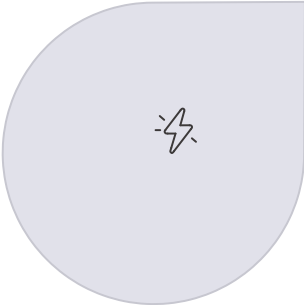
UJALA didn't impose change. It walked with it — through doorways, festivals, prayer halls, and radio dials.

Relationship-Centered
Trust built through authentic connection



Community-Owned
Solutions emerging from within

Empowering
Every person becomes a source of light



Culturally Rooted
Healing in familiar contexts

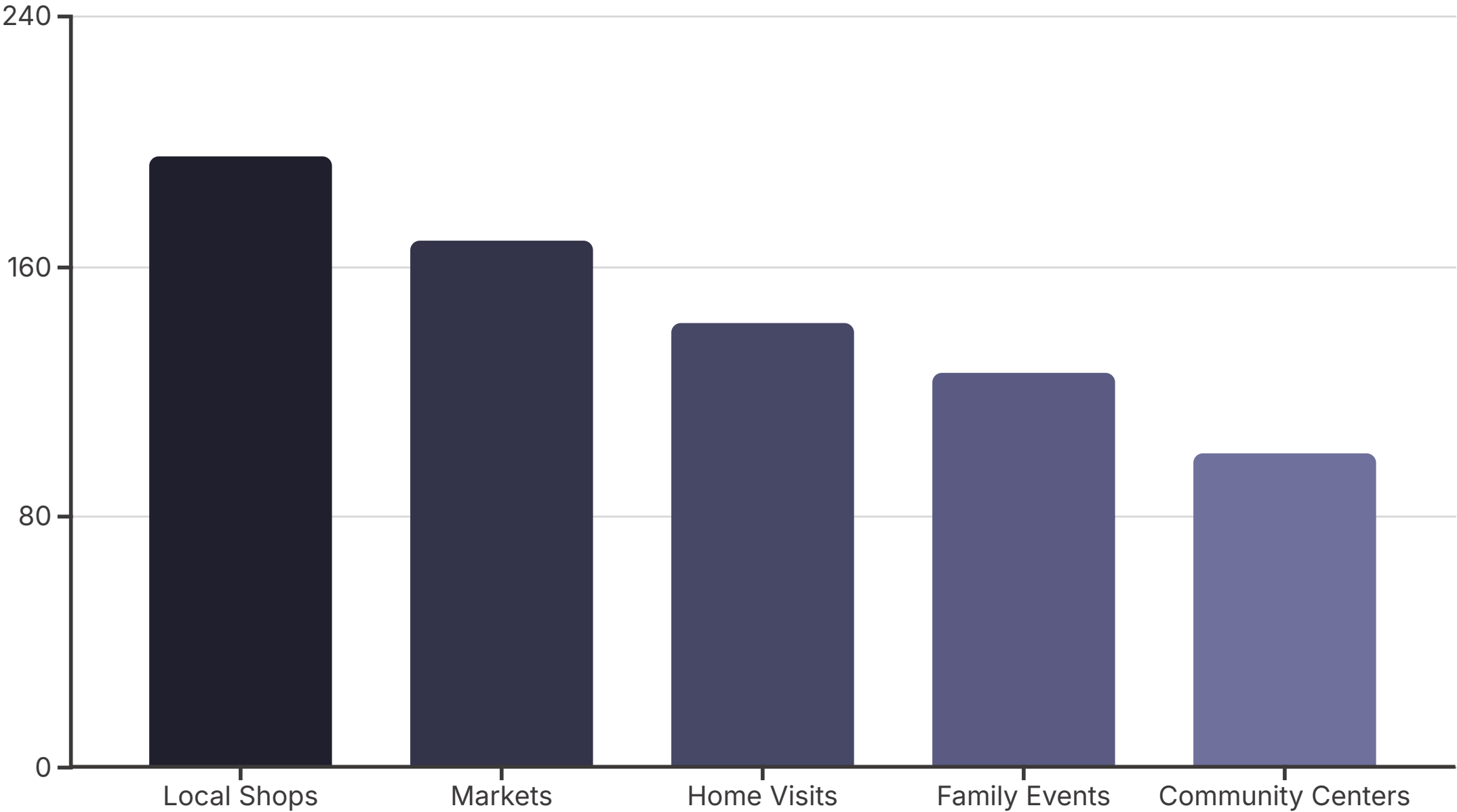
The light didn't shine on the community.
The community became the light.

Visual Data Summary

Section 1: Weekly Outreach Distribution

Total Interactions: 731

This visualization shows the weekly distribution of outreach efforts across shops, markets, home discussions, and family events.



Section 2: Community Events Impact

Total Reach: 1,348 across 15 events

Date	Event	Attendees
31/10/2024	Mental Health and Art	23
21/12/2024	Christmas Lights Trip	56
31/12/2024	Minhaj UI Quran Talk	156
04/01/2025	Theatre Trip	56
05/01/2025	Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara	181
20/01/2025	Brew Monday	45
24/01/2025	Bollywood Time Machine	121
28/01/2025	People Powered Places	57
08/03/2025	International Women's Day	31
10/03/2025	Commonwealth Day	42
14/03/2025	Holi Celebration	171
17/03/2025	Managing Stress	32
24/03/2025	Coping with Anxiety	52
14/04/2025	Dill Seiy Dill Takk	214
20/04/2025	Vaisakhi	111

Introduction: The Light Within

"I never realised I could be a hero... I could be the one changing things. Helping people understand how to deal with their mental health. I don't even speak any English—my Urdu isn't great. I didn't go to school. No one ever asked me, and life just passed by. But on this project, I became important... someone shone a light on me."

— Fauzia, UJALA Volunteer

This quote doesn't just open a report. It opens a truth. UJALA didn't reach down to communities — it rose up from within them.

Created by **Blossom Place ASA CIC**, a community-rooted organisation with deep cultural fluency and lived experience, UJALA wasn't a project *for* South Asian women — it was a project *with and by* them.

The Problem

Too often, mental health services are developed in silos and presented to communities like brochures — detached, clinical, impersonal.

The Solution

UJALA rewrote that script. It redefined access by embedding healing into the spaces where real life happens.

"Before this project, I never knew about talking therapies."

"I got help before but it didn't feel right. Now, I know this support is for me."

"Where's my daughter Dessa?" — referring affectionately to the therapist they connected with

This is what happens when services stop acting as systems and start acting as humans.

Weekly Outreach: Making Mental Health Ordinary

731

Direct Outreach Interactions

Delivered across shops, homes, markets, and family events

Impact: Every interaction represented a step toward trust. People didn't need to walk into a clinic to talk about their stress or confusion — they just needed to bump into someone they trusted in their daily life.

This removed the shame, the "formality" of seeking help, and instead made mental health part of everyday conversation.

01	02	03
Mental Health Became Relatable	Cultural Fluency	Community Engagement
Accessible and normalised in everyday settings	Outreach workers spoke the language — not just linguistically, but culturally	People engaged because they felt seen and understood

This was never about numbers. It was about becoming part of the rhythm of the community — visible, trusted, present.

Community Events: Celebrating Belonging

1,348

Total Attendees

Across 15+ culturally anchored events



Dill Seiy Dill Takk

Heart-to-heart conversations in cultural context



Holi Celebration

Joy and healing through festival traditions



Vaisakhi

Spiritual wellness in community gathering



Women's Day

Empowerment through shared experiences

Impact: These events weren't "health fairs." They were community moments where mental health found its rightful place — in joy, culture, family, and connection.

What changed:

Attendees didn't feel preached at — they felt welcomed

Conversations about therapy and support happened in between laughter, music, food, art

Men and women asked questions, reflected, and took away dignified information

This wasn't outreach—it was in-reach.

Volunteer Training: Building Community Capacity

38

Volunteers Trained

Topics included therapy awareness, perinatal mental health, stress, menopause, and more

Impact: Blossom didn't just "use" volunteers. They invested in them. These weren't just helpers — they became catalysts, ambassadors, and translators of healing.

Many of these volunteers had never imagined themselves in a leadership role. Some didn't speak English fluently. Yet here they were—educating their neighbours, supporting friends, holding space for healing.



Local Women Became Trusted Messengers

Community members speaking to community members



Empathy and Lived Experience

They carried not just knowledge, but understanding



Ripple Effect Created

More voices, more trust, more impact across the community

"I thought only educated people could lead... now people ask me what therapy means."

— UJALA Volunteer

Wellness Activities: Healing in Movement

247

Walking Groups

Participants finding healing through movement

274

Yoga 4 All

Participants embracing breath and mindfulness

Impact: Therapy didn't start in a chair—it started in movement. The walks and yoga were spaces to exhale, to talk without pressure, and to connect without stigma. These informal activities became mental health gateways.

Stressed Mothers

Found calm and companionship in group activities

Elders with Chronic Stress

Felt visible and valued in community wellness

All Attendees

Discovered wellbeing can be gentle, collective, and culturally resonant

These sessions weren't a "wellness trend"—they were emotional lifelines, creating safe spaces for healing through community and movement.

Radio Engagement: Voices That Felt Like Home

40+

Radio Segments

Weekly broadcasts building community connection

70,000+

Cumulative Listeners

By August 2025

Impact: NuSound Radio became a lifeline in the kitchen, in cars, in shops. The segments were in languages that matter, delivered with humour, heart, and respect.

Listeners heard real voices—sometimes a neighbour, a volunteer, or a faith leader—talking about anxiety, grief, autism, domestic violence.

Listeners Asked Questions

Radio content sparked curiosity and engagement

Personal Connections Made

Women learned therapist names and claimed them as family



Families Started Discussing

Topics once buried in shame became conversation

"I heard about Dessa on the radio... now she's my therapist."

This was not awareness theatre. This was truth-telling in the tone of trust. This was not broadcasting. This was relationship-building through sound.

A New Way Forward: What UJALA Has Proven

UJALA showed what happens when:



Community-Led Services

Services are delivered by people who live where the problems are



Culture-Centered Approach

Language and culture are central, not an afterthought



Communal Healing

Healing happens in communion, not isolation



Volunteer Leadership

Volunteers are not helpers—they're healers, advocates, and architects of trust



Daily Integration

Health is treated not as an event, but as a daily, lived reality

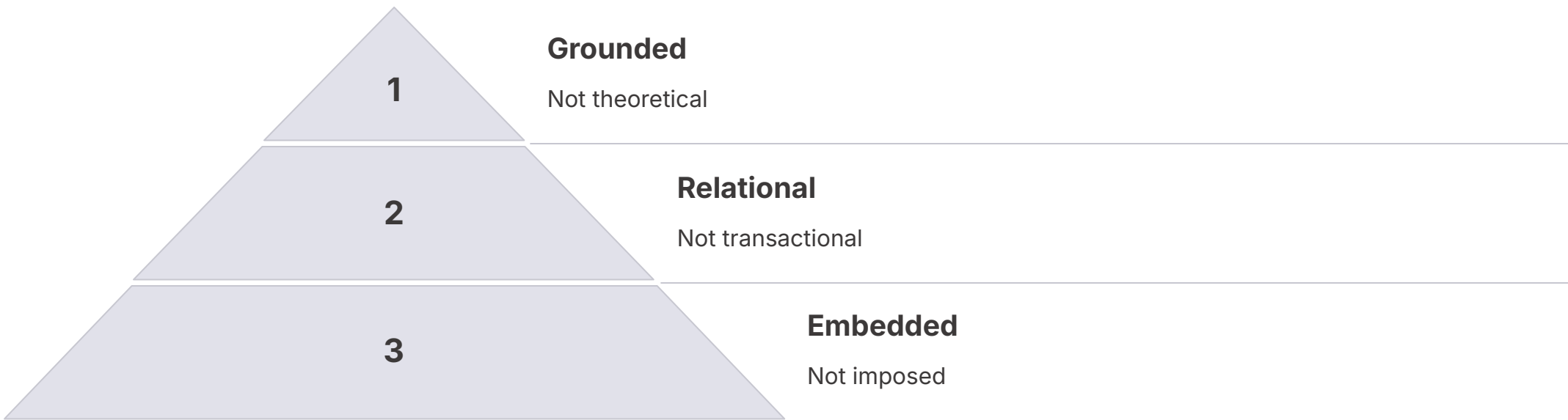
"Where's my daughter Dessa?" one woman asked. That's what success looks like. A therapist is no longer a stranger — she's family.

This model proves that when mental health services are truly accessible, relevant, and trusted, communities don't just engage — they transform from within.

Conclusion: Building Villages, Not Systems

There is a truth we must confront: **there is no unity without effort**. If we want to claim that we're building strong communities, we must do the work of feeding the roots. We cannot expect strong trees without watering them.

UJALA didn't pretend. It laboured. It listened. It walked slowly, with care and depth. It didn't create unity by announcing it — it built it, one conversation, one walk, one festival, one voice at a time.



And through it, **Blossom Place ASA CIC** showed what happens when we become the light — not just shine it.

Before There Was Light: Learning From Listening

Before UJALA had a name, we sat in kitchens, mosques, gurdwaras, and living rooms with **450 South Asian women**. We didn't ask what they needed from a "project." We asked what hadn't worked — and why.

“

"We don't know what help is even out there."

”

“

"The help we've tried didn't feel made for us."

”

“

"No one ever asks us. We just cope."

”

This is the truth UJALA was built on. Not assumptions. Not policies. Real silence, real fatigue, and real hope.

Out of these conversations came our core understanding: **we can't solve today without understanding yesterday**. Historical exclusion, cultural disconnection, and lack of trust in systems weren't side issues — they were the issue.

Accessible Services must meet people where they are, not where institutions expect them to be	Relevant Support must reflect lived realities — language, culture, time, trust	Trusted Healing can only happen when it's built on relational, not transactional trust
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UJALA is the ART Framework in action. It proves what's possible when equity is not a lens — but the foundation.

Our Ethos: Light That Rises From Within

"I never realised I could be a hero... On this project, I became important. Someone shone a light on me."

— *Fauzia, UJALA Volunteer*

UJALA wasn't created *for* the community. It was created *by* it. Mental health wasn't placed in a service silo — it was woven into life:



Market Stalls

Conversations during daily shopping



Prayer Halls

Spiritual and mental wellness together



Festivals

Joy and healing in cultural celebration



Walking Groups

Movement as medicine and connection



Radio Dials

Voices that felt like family



Conversations with Aunties

Wisdom shared across generations

This was care on South Asian women's terms.

Because healing can't be outsourced — it has to be owned.

Outreach: Making Mental Health Ordinary

731

Direct Interactions

Across homes, shops, events, and markets

What changed:

Mental Health Moved

Out of clinics and into kitchens

Trust Was Built

Face-to-face — slowly, respectfully

Therapy Became Normal

A normal thing to talk about — not a last resort

This wasn't outreach. This was everyday presence. Mental health stopped being invisible.

✔ Every interaction was a seed planted in the soil of trust, growing into conversations that would have been impossible in clinical settings.

Community Events: Where Healing Met Joy

1,348

Total Attendees

Across 15 cultural events

Date	Event	Attendees
14/04/2025	Dill Seiy Dill Takk	214
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24/01/2025	Bollywood Time Machine	121
20/04/2025	Vaisakhi	111
9 additional events		364

Key insight: These weren't "mental health events." These were community moments where mental health belonged. Laughter and healing sat side by side.

Cultural Context
Wasn't branding — it was delivery

Volunteers: Healing From Within

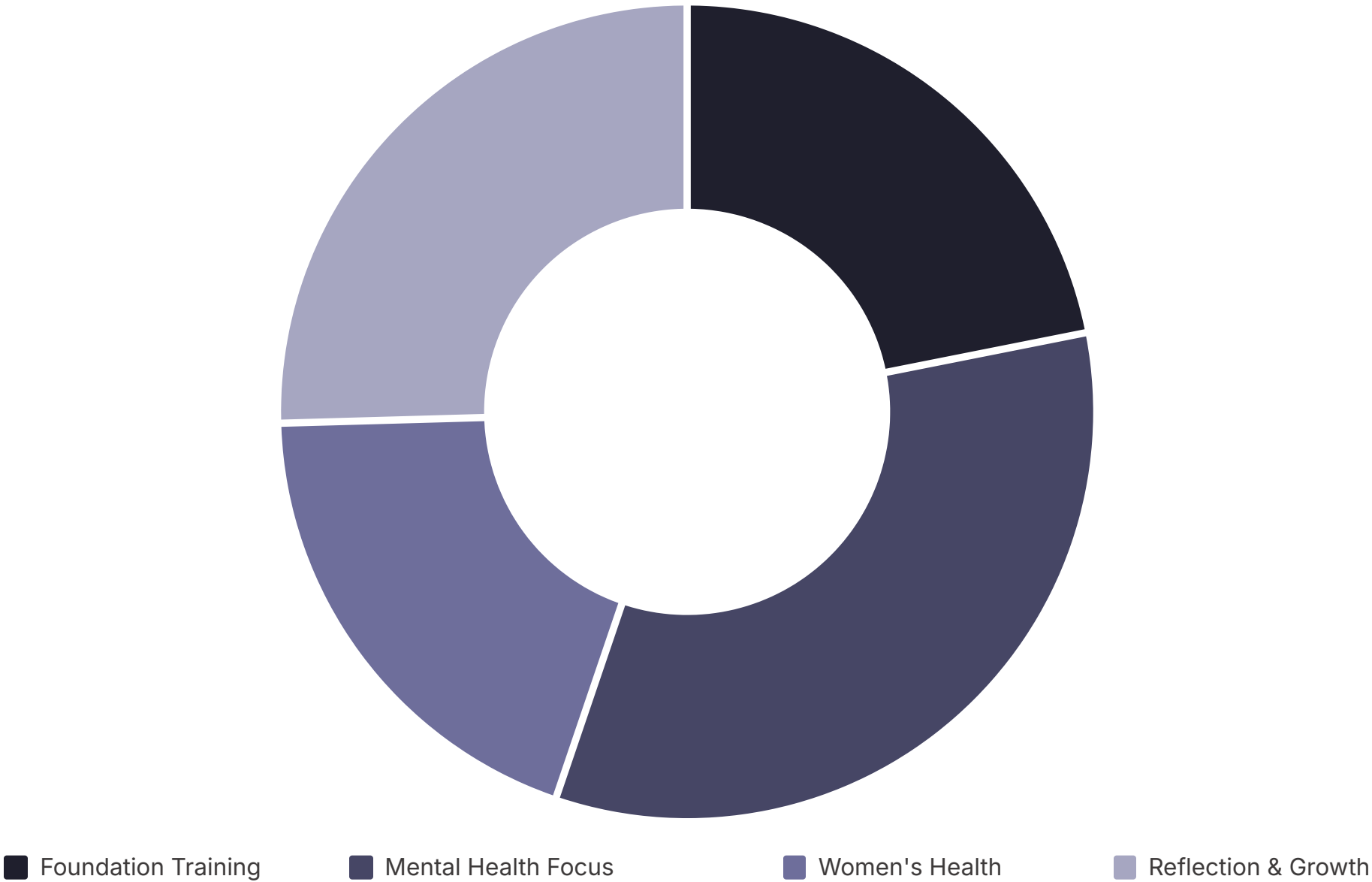
38

Volunteers Trained

Topics ranged from therapy to menopause, breastfeeding to anxiety

Session	Participants
Volunteer Preparation	85
Talking Therapies	51
Managing Stress	51
Reflection 2	56
Reflection 1	43
Breastfeeding	33
Coping with Anxiety	28
Menopause	21
Perinatal Mental Health	21

These weren't "helpers." They were ambassadors of trust.



Wellness in Motion: Walking and Breathing Into Healing

247

Walking Groups

Participants finding healing through movement

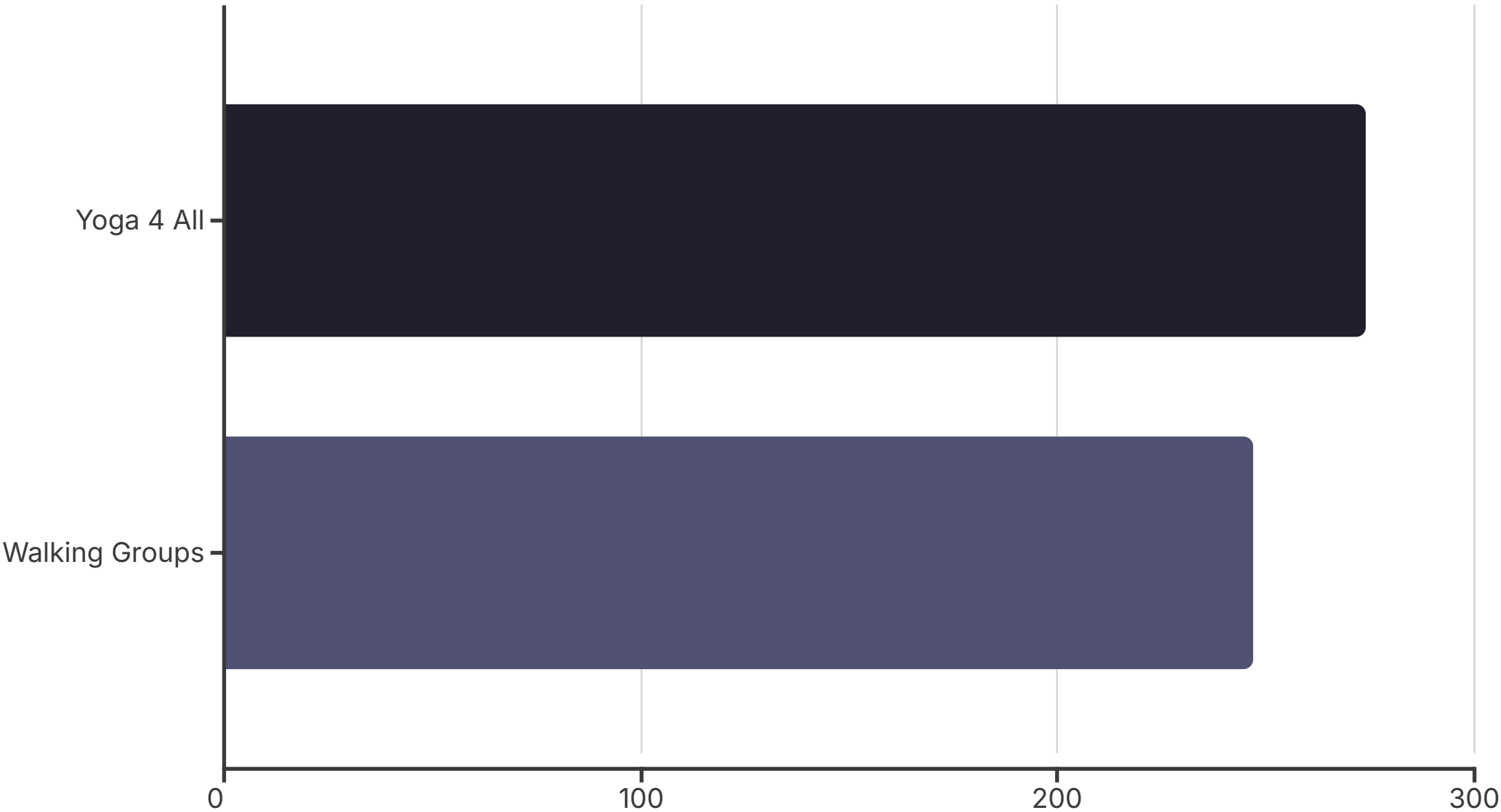
274

Yoga 4 All

Participants embracing breath and mindfulness

Impact:

- No therapy room needed — just breath, movement, and space
- Elders, mothers, and carers released stress together
- Healing became physical, visible, and communal



These weren't classes. They were release valves — spaces where stress could be exhaled and community could be inhaled.

Radio: The Voice of Belonging

40+

Broadcasts

Weekly segments building community connection

70,000+

Cumulative Listeners

Voices reaching into homes and hearts

NuSound Radio turned into a bridge. Episodes tackled anxiety, grief, domestic violence, autism, therapy — with authenticity.

December 2024

5,000 weekly listeners
Radio journey begins

1

2

April 2025

6,000 weekly listeners
Community trust grows

3

August 2025

6,500 weekly listeners
70,000+ cumulative reach

"I heard about Dessa on the radio... now she's my therapist."

People didn't hear advice. They heard themselves. And it gave them permission to seek support without shame.

What Worked: The UJALA Blueprint



Embedded Support

Care came to kitchens, not clinics



Language & Culture First

Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, food, ritual, and shared meaning



Volunteer-Led Trust

Not intermediaries, but messengers



Everyday Visibility

Therapy became part of daily rhythm

This blueprint demonstrates that when mental health services are designed with communities rather than for them, transformation happens naturally and sustainably.

- ✅ The UJALA model proves that accessibility, relevance, and trust aren't just ideals — they're practical frameworks for community transformation.

What We're Still Learning

1

Gap: Digital Exclusion (Elders)

Challenge: Digital barriers limited reach among older community members

Next Step: Expand offline tools — radio, leaflets, pop-ups, and face-to-face support

2

Gap: Community Voice & Sustainability Concerns

Challenge: Community members raised a critical perspective: "This project showed we are always interested in being part of the solution. We reached out through Blossom Group because you were never prepared to reach us. You need to stop looking through your lens and look through ours."

The deeper concern: "We feel slightly uplifted, but this project was tiny. We fear being thrown from a higher place than when we started — shattered more than before. It hurts more when you're pulled up to a higher level and then pushed down even further."

Next Step: Establish sustainable, community-owned structures that ensure continuity and prevent the cycle of hope followed by abandonment

This isn't a finished model. It's a living one — rooted in humility and adjustment.

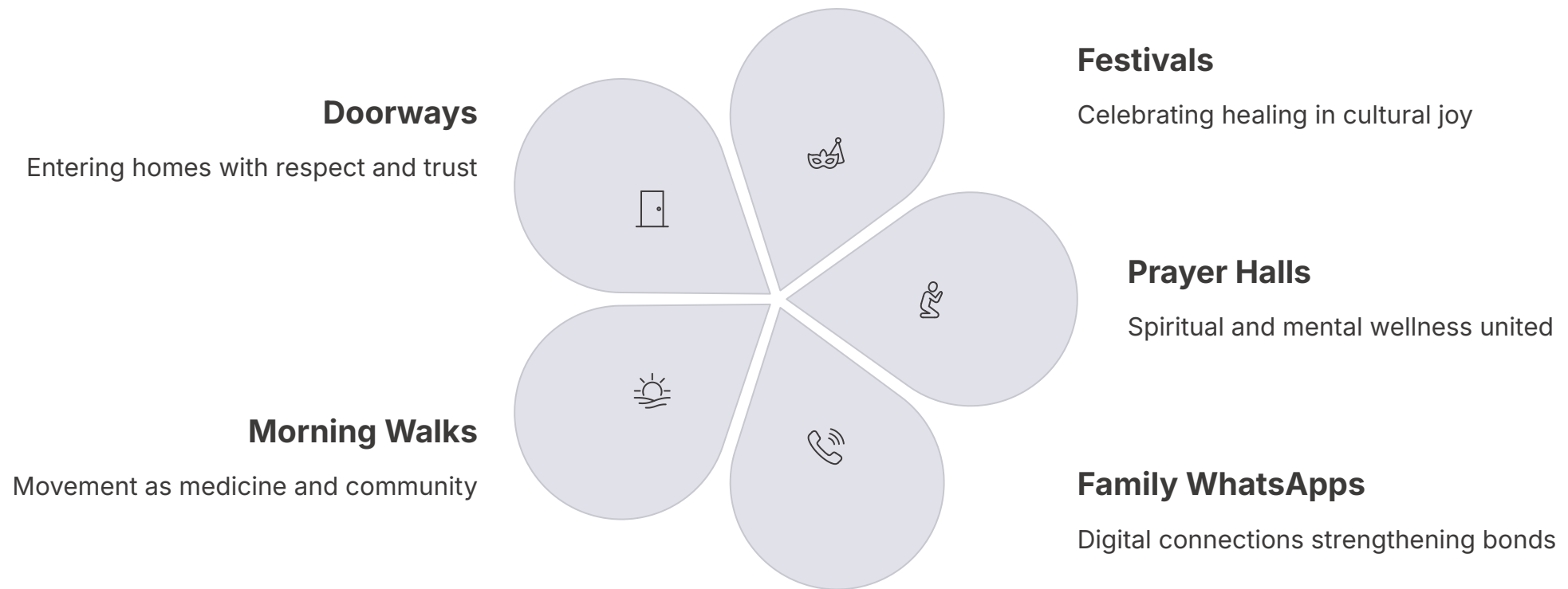
 These gaps represent opportunities for deeper, more inclusive community engagement. Each challenge is a doorway to greater understanding and more effective support.

Final Reflections: We Built a Village

"Where's my daughter Dessa?" — Community member, asking about her therapist

That's the impact. When therapy feels like kin, mental health becomes a relationship — not a referral.

UJALA didn't impose change. It walked with it — through doorways, festivals, prayer halls, family WhatsApps, and morning walks.



**The light didn't shine on the community.
The community became the light.**

This is what happens when we stop building systems and start nurturing villages — spaces where every person matters, every voice is heard, and every story contributes to collective healing.

Visual Appendix & Future Vision



Outreach Timeline

Line graph showing weekly interaction growth and community trust building



Community Events

Bar chart visualizing attendance across 15 cultural celebrations



Volunteer Sessions

Table and pie chart presenting training participation across topics



Yoga vs. Walks

Stacked bar comparing wellness activity participation



Radio Reach

Weekly line graph showing listener growth and cumulative impact



Pre-UJALA Listening Map

Infographic visualizing community voices and needs assessment

Why Blossom Group Must Continue This Work

Proven Model

UJALA demonstrates that community-led, culturally rooted mental health support creates lasting transformation

Trust Already Built

The relationships, volunteer network, and community confidence established through UJALA are invaluable assets

Unmet Need

The gaps identified — male engagement, elder inclusion, postnatal support — require continued, dedicated attention

Scalable Impact

The ART framework can be adapted and replicated in other communities facing similar challenges

The light that UJALA ignited must continue to burn. Communities have tasted what's possible when support feels like family, when healing happens in familiar spaces, and when every person becomes a source of strength for others.

This is not the end of a project.
This is the beginning of a movement.