



# IMPACT

## REPORT

APRIL 2020

### NEW ROOTS PROGRAM



nt  
GAN

ed  
AZINE  
olution

# INTRODUCTION

New Roots, powered by GoDaddy and delivered by Impact Hub King's Cross (IHKX), is a business start up and mentoring program matching refugees and people from migrant communities with mentors to help them identify and pursue medium to long-term professional goals. The program focused on providing personalised support to meet their self-defined aspirations and encourage their entrepreneurial spirit through mentorship, business skills workshops, one-to-one clinics with GoDaddy experts, and peer networking. It took place in London from April 2019 to March 2020. The program supported 20 ventures, 70% of which completed the program with their mentors.

Working with marginalised communities means that, in some cases, the vulnerability of their life circumstances will prevent them from fully committing to the program and being able to complete it. As one mentor put it:

However, in some cases, participants being unable to complete the program were actually an example of successes to be celebrated. One participant left the program in order to take up an apprenticeship with the BBC which his mentor helped him secure. We're proud to have been able to support these individuals in progressing towards their individual goals and in maximising their potential.

The results presented here are based primarily on the specific 10 entrepreneurs that responded at the start of the program (baseline survey) and also at the end of the program (endline survey). Questions regarding participants' motivations and entrepreneurial background were asked of a larger group at the start of the program only. Mentors were also surveyed at the end of the program. These quantitative results are complemented by quotes and case studies based on in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs and mentors, to offer a qualitative picture of participants' experience of the program.

“It is unsurprisingly not easy to engage individuals who have experienced challenge, trauma and alienation; there is a degree of frustration that this has prevented working with an individual who I believe has personality and ability which could be supported and focused into new opportunities.

David Stansell, mentor to Daphine



The key outputs of the program regarding participation and support provided are as follows:

**20** Participants  
**70%** Graduated

Out of the original cohort of 20 participants:

**50%** were women

**45%** identified as refugees

**55%** as non-EU migrants

Out of the 14 graduates:

**43%** were women

**50%** as non-EU migrants

→ **20** mentors recruited; **14** mentors completed the program

→ **9** workshops and/or drop-in clinics offered to participants

→ **£10K** invested in participants' business ventures through the Wellcome Trust Funding

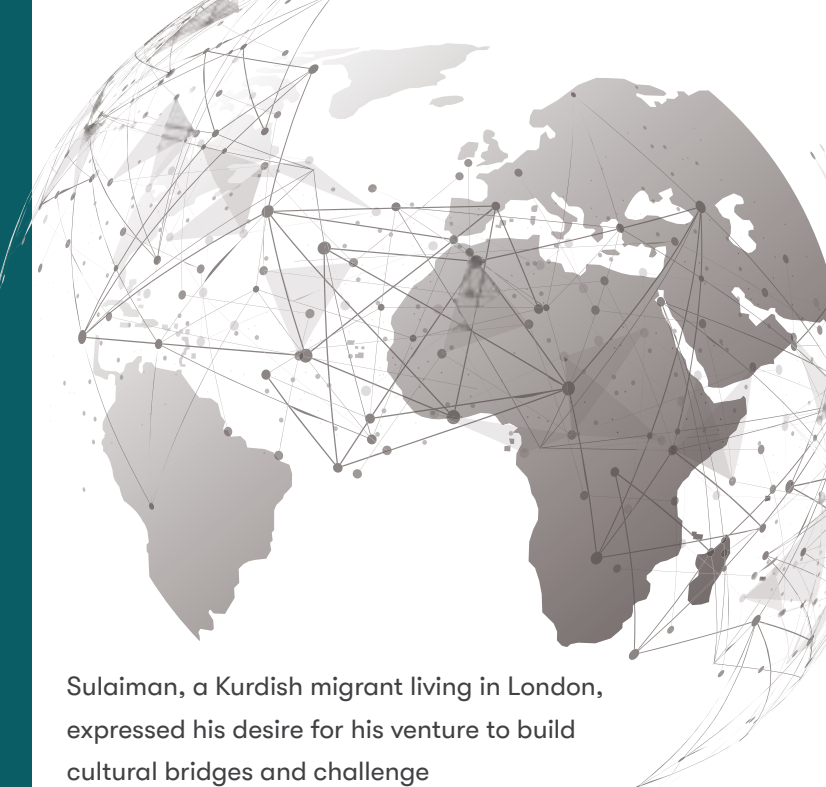
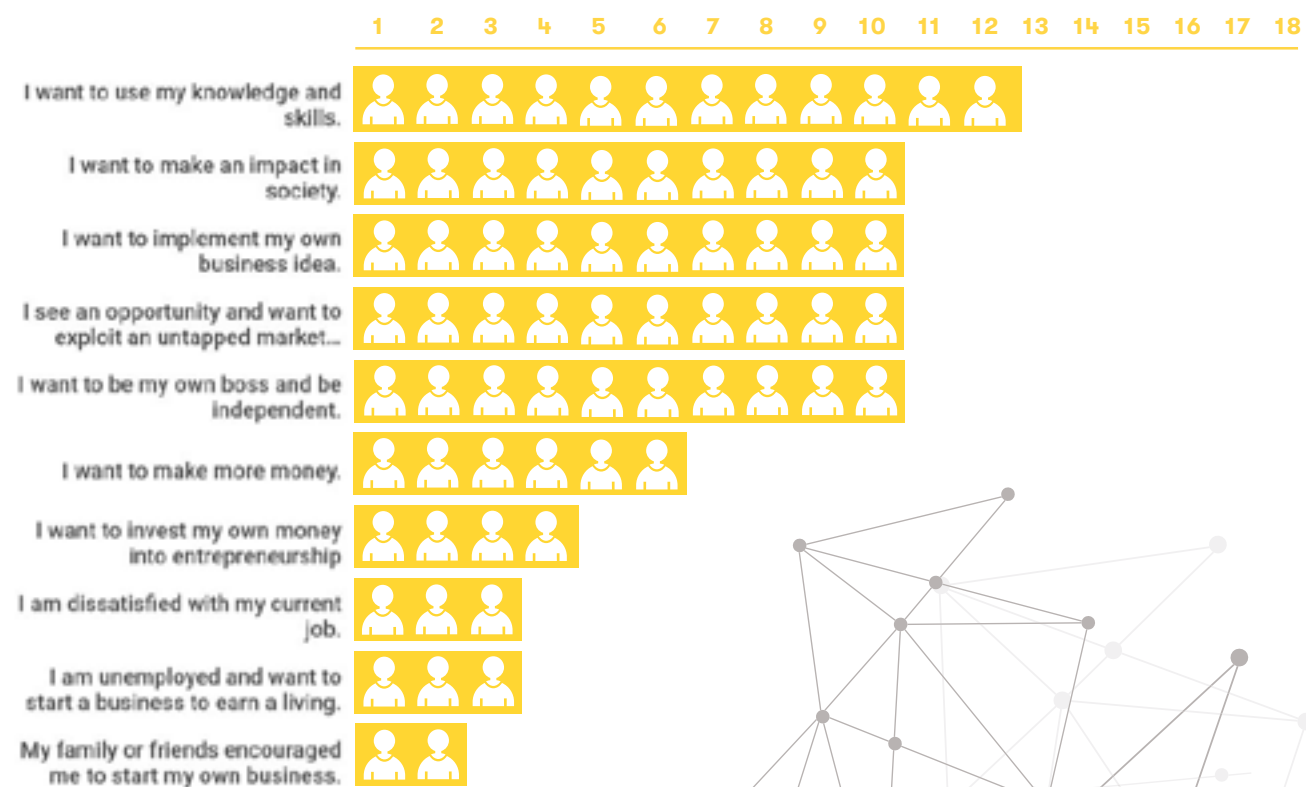


# ENTREPRENEURIAL Motivations & experience

The most common motivations for starting their businesses, declared by more than half of participants, were: to use their knowledge and skills, to have an impact on society, to implement their own business idea, to be their own boss and be independent.

The scores reported below are out of 18.

Participants were not typically driven towards entrepreneurship out of necessity or as a last resort, but rather wanted to use their knowledge and skills to make an impact on society. This counteracts a common narrative thread depicting refugees and migrants as a burden to the state, and demonstrates rather an aspiration to give back to the communities in which they have settled.



Sulaiman, a Kurdish migrant living in London, expressed his desire for his venture to build cultural bridges and challenge perspectives of the Middle East.

Some participants shared with us their own personal motivation for starting their venture. Oku, a refugee from Nigeria, explained how his own hardship and lived experience motivated him to make a difference.

“ I have had a very bad experience when it comes to properties in London; I have been homeless before, because of an illegal eviction. I’ve been in court for 3 years now and it’s still ongoing. The mix of all of these experiences put together I decided I would like to take my passion (for real estate) and start my business Pristo’s Properties. The main objective is to treat people fairly, give them what they need, treat them with respect.

**Oku, Pristo’s Properties**

Luz, who came to the UK from Colombia, described how her circumstances led her to find a solution that would help others like her.

“ My situation was my motivation for starting UK Latinos. I have a language barrier, and I urgently needed a plumber to come fix an issue at home and had no way of getting one quickly. I saw the need for a directory for the Spanish speaking community that was easy to use. That was the initial idea, but the more research I did the more I realized that there were many other things that Spanish speaking people who didn’t have a great level of English needed help accessing. I wanted to create an app to help people from my community be able to access the services, products, events etc that London has to offer.

**Luz, UK Latinos**

“ The big drive for me was to focus on heritage. I want a third of my content to reflect the cultural heritage of the Middle East, particularly areas being affected by wars in the region - like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya - and to document locations of historical value and heritage, cities and the culture they produced, that have been destroyed by war or are at risk. Also, to show a different aspect of these places, and celebrate our shared culture. I wanted to show the similarities between different areas in the Middle East. For example, Palestinians, Syrians, Greeks, all make hummus; there is a shared experience that I want to highlight, instead of focusing on the barriers and conflicts that divide us.

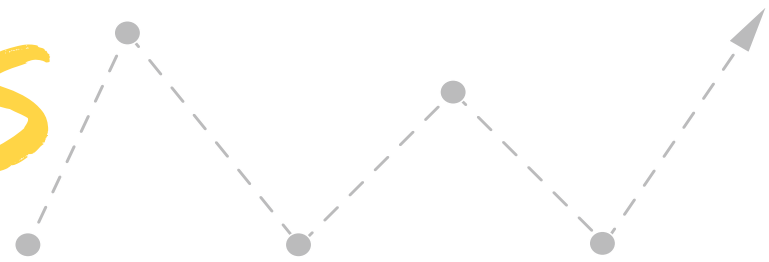
**Sulaiman, Caravel Magazine**

Participants demonstrated a desire to not only use their skills and knowledge for their own benefit by starting ventures, but also, to support others who may be going through similar experiences and in support of their communities.





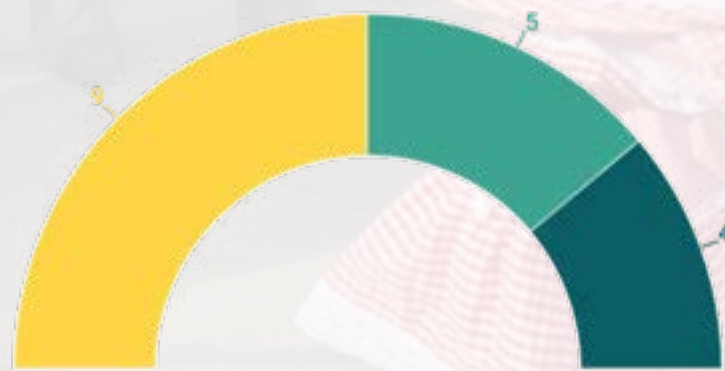
# BUSINESS



Participants had the opportunity to develop their business skills and knowledge through working with their mentor, the IHKX staff, and the workshops offered by consultants and GoDaddy talent.

In line with the short-term outcomes articulated in the program Theory of Change, entrepreneurs reported higher than average scores at the end of the program compared to the start across all business skill categories, demonstrating how the network of support coordinated for each participant benefited them and their venture. Their average self-ratings were over 20% higher in marketing & sales, financial management, operations and logistics and business planning & strategy.

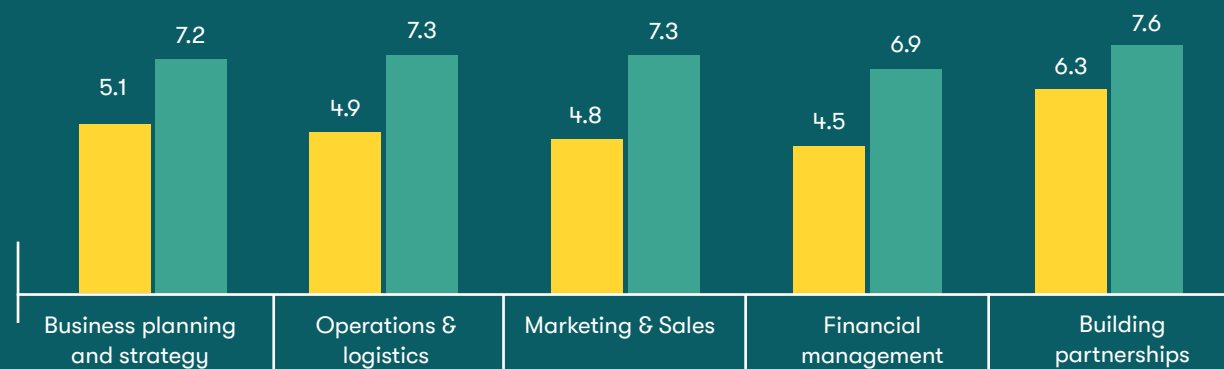
The program sought to target both entrepreneurs with a business idea or an existing business, believing that there would be many people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who will have run businesses in their countries of origin. The cohort shows that the program offer did indeed attract members of both groups, with half of respondents at baseline reporting they had previous startup experience.



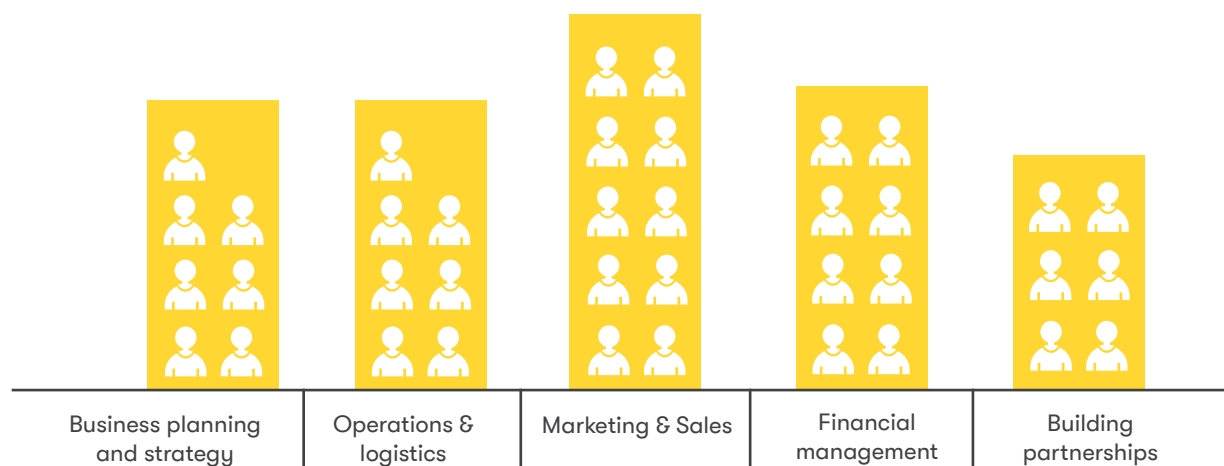
● First business   
 ● Started 1 business before joining New Roots  
● Started 2 - 4 businesses before joining New Roots

Participants' average rating out of 10

Key: **Yellow** = before New Roots  
**Teal** = after New Roots



A majority of the respondents reported some improvement in each business skill category. Progress in marketing and sales, which was directly targeted by a GoDaddy clinic, and financial management, was particularly widespread.







Participants' testimony in interviews brought out how exactly this support added value.



One challenge I had was I always had this ambition to start a magazine, a digital magazine, but unsure how to make it a business, how to make money through it. I wanted to be able to use my knowledge and my experience as a journalist, with new technology and media, to create a business out of this project. This was my big challenge. When I joined this program, I knew this was an interesting project and there was interest in the magazine and what it offered, but it will take time to make it generate income, but my mentor and the program was able to help me think about this and made me able to launch my magazine as well.

**Sulaiman, Caravel Magazine**

Fadi, a Kurdish migrant from Syria came to the UK over 10 years ago searching for new opportunities, and worked his way up from a construction site to running a laundry business and studying for his PHD. He began to develop his HR management software through his university research, and joined the New Roots program to help him launch his business:



New Roots came at the right time. 9 months ago, I did not have a marketing plan. When I met with Michele, my mentor, we were very systematic and agreed on a plan. We focused on creating and improving the website, followed by brochures, building my online LinkedIn profile and testing the software (...) I learnt how to simplify things - he's very straightforward - I didn't get theories from him, I got practical advice on how to improve my business.

**Fadi, TEAM (Talent Engineering & Asset Management)**

Mentors, the IHKX, GoDaddy talent and consultants all used their own professional skills and experience to work alongside participants to help develop and formalise their business ventures and upskill them in the process.

Marta from Pueblito Paisa CIC, a community centre for the Latino community in London offering free legal advice and counseling to local traders and the larger community, explained how she benefited by being taught these new skills. She came to UK as a refugee from Colombia, and as an experienced human rights lawyer in her home country, she used her legal background to support her community in London and the traders in the Seven Sisters market,

but lacked an understanding of social media and how to use different communications channels:



Now I have clear how to connect to other communities and other customers, how to increase our earnings, and promote our products and services through marketing and social media.

**Marta, Pueblito Paisa CIC**



# BUSINESS SKILLS

## Workshop

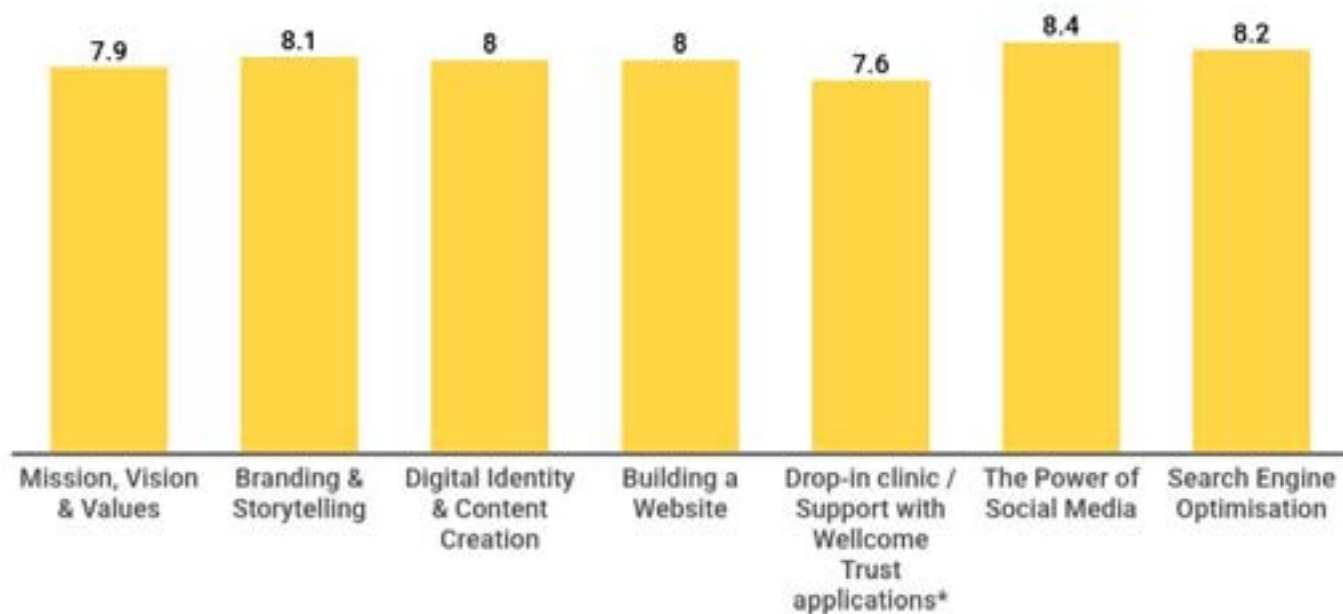


The workshop curriculum offered was particularly valuable to participants, giving them a chance to be taught new skills that could be directly implemented in their businesses. Beatrice, a migrant from Nigeria who set up an organisation to support people suffering from homelessness and food poverty described how much she benefited from these sessions:

**Participants rated workshops very highly when surveyed, with the average rating of each workshop ranging from 7.6 to 8.4 out of 10.**

“ One of the things I have learned in the program is website building. I would never have thought I could ever build a business and business website. Even just hearing the words ‘website building’ felt like something I could never do. The first session, I could sincerely see the possibility that I could do this, I could see that, yes, this is possible. They (GoDaddy talent) made the information so simple, so uncomplicated. I sincerely thank them for giving me the opportunity, and I feel like my confidence has improved in a number of ways.

**Beatrice, Elshaddai My Helper**



They also consistently gave excellent in-person feedback on the sessions, from the content to the facilitation:

“ The best part of the program was 1:1 support from GoDaddy talent and the amount of input I got to my business and online lettings website in one evening. How much they know, and how much they were willing to support, made a huge difference to my business.

**Oku, Pristo’s Properties**

Participants weren’t the only ones reporting a high satisfaction with the workshops offered, with feedback from GoDaddy talent reinforcing this positive experience:

“ Taking part in the New Roots program as a workshop host was a brilliant and rewarding experience. It was lovely to meet so many new people and learn about their businesses, and be able to share knowledge to help them get online and get found. The support from the staff at Impact Hub was fantastic, and it was a really valuable opportunity to get involved with. I would definitely take part again!

**Becki Crossley, GoDaddy talent and workshop facilitator**

“ Just wanted to say what an absolute pleasure it was to participate in the New Roots workshop; the entrepreneurs are lovely and I have really enjoyed getting to know them over the last few months, it’s great to be able to pass on the knowledge I have picked up from GoDaddy & watch their businesses grow. I really do enjoy helping out and this gave me an opportunity to do just that, I’ve worked at GoDaddy for 5 years now so it was great to be able to share my experiences. You guys at Impact Hub are great too, amazing people! Thank you for always looking after us and allowing us to use your space.

**Layton Weatherall, GoDaddy talent and workshop facilitator**

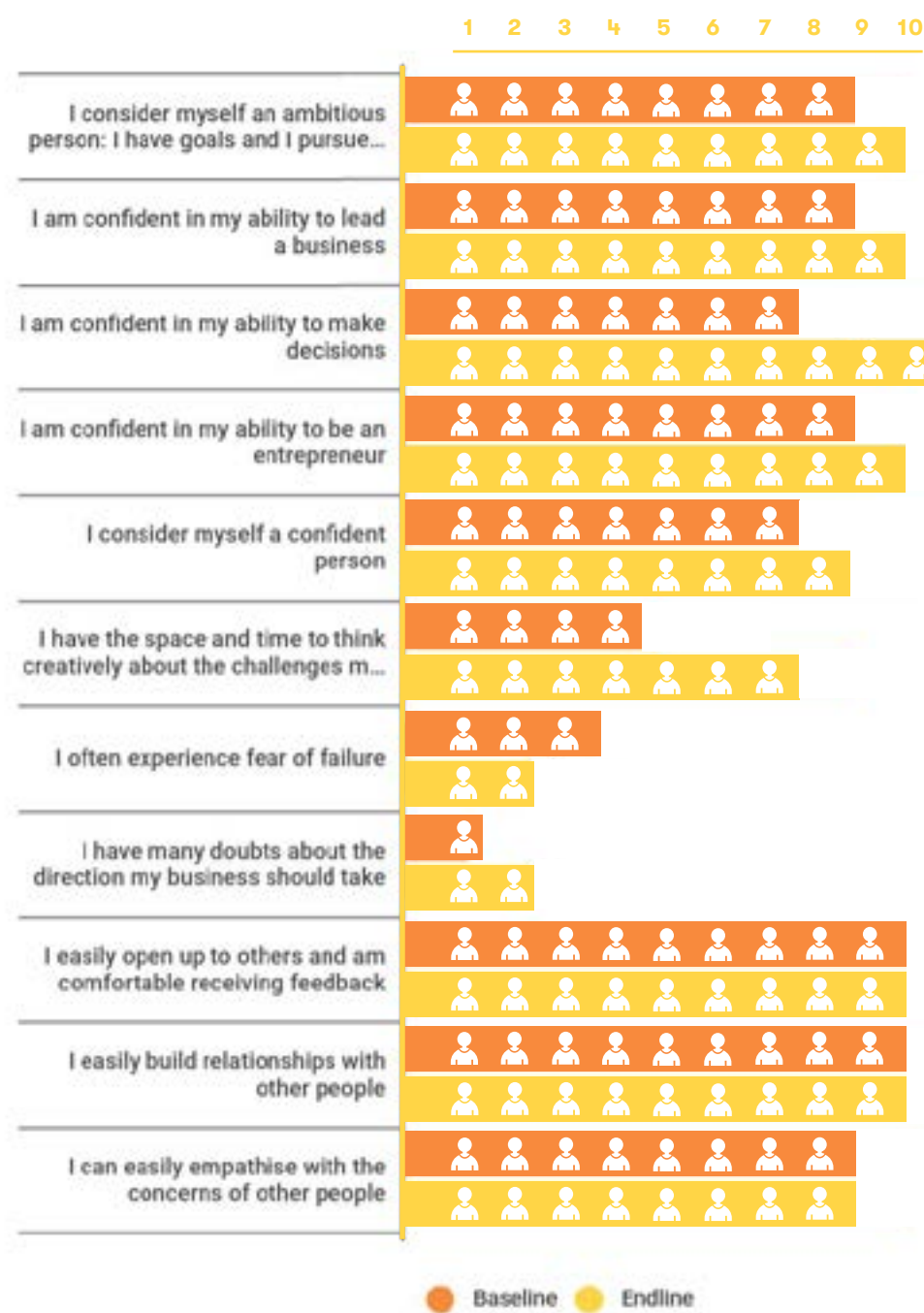
The workshops proved to be of value to everyone involved, including the GoDaddy talent who were able to accompany the development of the participants on the program. The topics offered by GoDaddy talent were very popular among the participants, and their ability to deliver complex information and adapt it to a cohort of mixed abilities meant that all participants were able to take advantage of the information presented.





# CONFIDENCE & Interpersonal Skills

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements about various dimensions of their entrepreneurial confidence and interpersonal skills at the start and the end of the program.



The chart shows the number of entrepreneurs who answered “I agree” or “I strongly agree” to the respective questions before and after New Roots. Entrepreneurs reported high levels of confidence and interpersonal skills at the start of the program, meaning there wasn’t significant room for reported growth through the program. Nonetheless, across almost every dimension, more entrepreneurs expressed confidence at the end of the program compared to the start.

The entrepreneurs’ increase in confidence was also expressed during their exit interviews:

“New Roots had a big influence because it gave me structure, and the monthly workshops gave me ways to consistently improve my digital magazine, and meeting professional people through the Impact Hub space gave me more confidence, made me feel like I had an idea that was worth committing to and helped motivate me.”

**Sulaiman, Caravel Magazine**

“The program helped to give me a structure and clarity. When I started, I felt I knew what steps I had to take, but the program helped build on that list and made me aware of things I hadn’t thought of before. It helped motivate me to continue and pursue my idea.”

**Oku, Prito’s Properties**

Bringing the entrepreneurs into a supportive community that invested its time, knowledge and resources into upskilling them and improving their businesses helped validate the participants’ business ideas and empower them to continue working towards their goals.





# ACCESS TO Mentors & Business Network

## The value of this community and the networks that participants were introduced to is also shown in the graphs.

The first graph shows how many more participants said they had access to a trusted advisor in their social circle by the end of the program compared to the start, and the second how many more participants were satisfied with their access to business networks and partners by the end of the program compared to the start.



● Start ● End

At the start of the program only one respondent had access to a trusted advisor in their social circle; by the end 60% did.



● Start ● End

At the start just one respondent was satisfied with their access to business network and partners; by the end 90% were.



The IHKX staff and mentors on New Roots utilised their professional contacts to bring additional support to the participants where possible. Fadi's mentor Michele, for example, brought in Codeac to help develop Fadi's software after working with them as a consultant on CzechInvest, a different IHKX program helping tech companies from the Czech Republic enter the UK market.

Codeac have been very nice, offering 24 hours of support and free access to their software. Codeac is always warning me when I have errors in my code so I can follow up with my developers. When the developers in India finish the software, Codeac will have even more input to help with the customization of my software. Because of the access to the hub I was introduced to different people who helped me and my business, like Codeac, and was also able to work from the space in London and the hub in Vienna where my family live.

**Fadi, TEAM**

The network was the most important for me. Impact Hub helped me access the support I needed and when I felt isolated or needed more help, around website building and business planning, because of Impact Hub and New Roots I was able to access this knowledge. Also it gave me access to other people starting businesses, the Impact Hub connected me to another member they have who has a very similar business using the same technology in the Philippines. This will help me improve my business, because I can speak to and get advice from someone who has already been doing this, but in a different continent, in South East Asia, and help me understand the challenges that I might have in future and prepare for them. It's exciting and I'm really looking forward to continuing working with this member.

**Birmad, My Home**

Fadi was not only able to meet other entrepreneurs through our network which are supporting the development of his business, but take advantage of the Impact Hub's global presence to be part of our global community, working from Vienna where his wife and children live. Birmad, a refugee from Somalia that is starting a sustainable and affordable housing construction company also described how the Impact Hub's networked benefited his business: The Impact Hub's extended networks and

community of entrepreneurs, locally and globally, were leveraged to complement the support the participants were already receiving through the program.



# ENTREPRENEUR

## Outcomes & Support Ratings

Most participants set goals with their mentor at the start of the program which they hoped would be achieved in the 9 months of mentorship. In some cases, these goals were revised during those 9 months to be more realistic, or they accepted that their goals could be achieved but only in the longer-term after the program had come to an end.

When Marta from Pueblito Paisa was asked what support she would like in the future after the program came to an end, she replied "Another 9 months!". Progression is often slower than expected because participants have limited time and resources to invest in their ventures, which is why in some cases the goals set at the start were not met by the end of the program and were still a work in progress.

“ This (social media) needs to be done all the time, and support from someone who understands communications and social media has been really good, but there is still more work to do to promote Pueblito Paisa and the Seven Sisters market.

**Marta, Pueblito Paisa CIC**

“ I have made good progress but I am still working on improving my website and social media.

**Oku, Pristo's Properties**



**70%**

Of entrepreneurs achieved their goals for the program



**76%**

Entrepreneurs' average rating of clarity of their plans for developing their venture post-program



**77%**

Entrepreneurs' average rating of their program mentor



**99%**

Entrepreneurs' average likelihood of recommending the program

Still, entrepreneurs were satisfied with the program and thought the experience was successful, emphasising the support from mentors, the sessions with GoDaddy talent and the funding provided by the Wellcome Trust as key contributors to their success. The IHKX fundraised £10,000 through the Wellcome Trust Foundation in order to provide additional resources to support the participants.

“ Thank god for the support and opportunities that have been given, and for the Wellcome Trust Foundation grant, which has made a huge difference to us, especially since we are so small scale, no amount is too small. That amount made a world of difference. For the first time I have been able to contact Hackney CVS, and I have spoken to them about training, and we are talking about expanding our operations to Hackney.

**Beatrice, El Shaddai My Helper**

Access to capital is one of the biggest barriers into entrepreneurship for underserved communities, and this grant funding was of immense value to them and their businesses. It enabled participants to act on the advice they received through mentorship on how to improve their business and their skills, and was used for a variety of projects such as:



**Accredited courses related to their business and/or sector**



**Legal advice**



**Accounting**



**Web development and copywriting**



**Buying raw materials and equipment for their business**



**Targeted social media marketing and PR campaigns.**

Luz from UK Latinos also spoke about how this grant funding empowered them to transform their app. Luz and the team who started UK Latinos, Catherine and Paola, had put in a lot of work to develop this app from scratch with very limited resources. The program was able to help them understand how they could customise the app and really improve the product and user experience, but due to limited capital they had built their app on a platform which didn't allow them to make the changes and improvements they wanted.

“ The GoDaddy workshops were able to help guide us and made us understand we had to change the platform where the app was built to really be able to make it our own and grow it. But the funding from the Wellcome Trust made it possible for us to do this in practice quickly and make the necessary changes to our app to make it a success! (...) The highlight (of the program) honestly was the Wellcome Trust funding. We didn't expect to receive money through New Roots. We wanted to learn and improve, but the funding made it possible to do it.

**Catherine, UK Latinos**

The workshops offered by GoDaddy and the 1:1 support received were really valued by UK Latinos, but without the grant from the Wellcome Trust actually taking those steps and implementing that advice would have been a much greater challenge.



# MENTORS'

## Perceptions & Experience of the Program



### Mentor-Entrepreneur Relationships

A majority of mentors said they would recommend the program to others, and when asked to rate their relationships with their mentee, 80% said it was “good”, “very good” or “excellent”.

the entrepreneurs, as much as for the entrepreneurs themselves who benefited from this guidance as they developed their business ventures.

“I feel lucky to spend time supporting Beatrice who is building something that aligns with my values; as well as being valued by her.”  
**Ben Carter, Beatrice's mentor**

“The program has improved my knowledge and networking skills and helped me start and launch my magazine. The program helped me to meet new professional people and opened many opportunities to collaborate with others.”  
**Sulaiman, Caravel Magazine**

The mentorship experience on New Roots proved to be a positive one for a vast majority of mentors, who used their professional experience and skills to support

# Mentor-Entrepreneur COLLABORATION

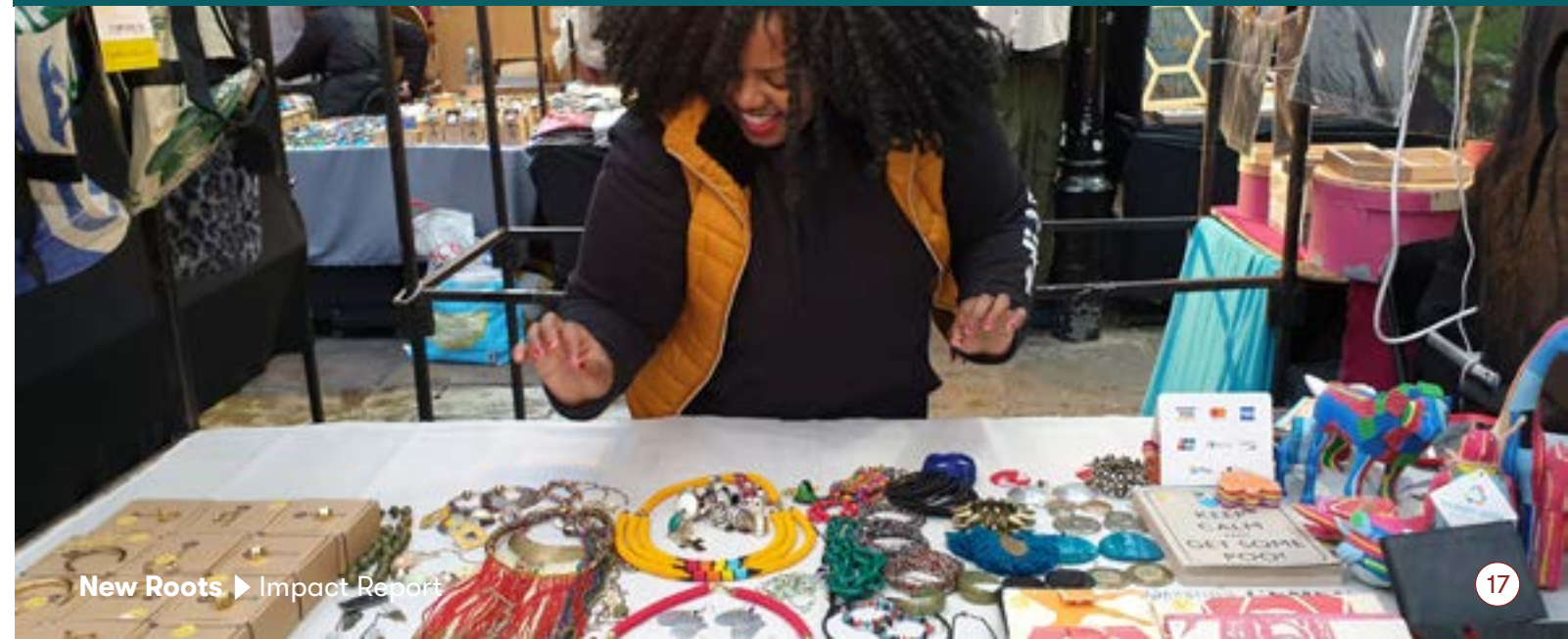
Mentors helped entrepreneurs working towards the following goals:

- Developing a business plan and model
- Sourcing products, starting to sell at a market
- Getting the business up-and-running
- Growing operations, promoting and growing specific offerings
- Building fundraising capacity, recruiting volunteers, exploring space options
- Creating social media campaigns
- Specific initiatives, e.g. opening a studio or improving a smartphone app

“I was committed to having my business started up, but this would not have happened if it wasn't for the great support of my mentor Josh, the GoDaddy team and the Impact Hub! Very grateful!”  
**Ellon, Ninsii.com**

Mentors who did not set specific goals with participants cited reluctance on the part of the entrepreneur in doing so, preferring instead to brainstorm on current challenges, but also reported a generally less successful mentoring relationship. This demonstrates the importance of setting goals for participants and raising their aspirations.

“My mentor pushed me in a gentle way. I am blessed with these beautiful ideas, and then he helped me to manage these ideas into what I can do now, make them more manageable.”  
**Beatrice, El Shaddai My Helper**







## Mentoring Hours Provided

Mentors were required to contribute 1 hour per month of support to their mentee. An overwhelming majority of mentors went above and beyond the minimum requirements of the program, dedicating a lot more time than this to their mentee and their mentee's venture.



The additional support leveraged from mentors is hard to quantify, their commercial hourly rate of consultancy ranged from £30-£350, but it clearly demonstrates how invested mentors became in wanting their mentees and their business ventures to succeed and how fruitful the mentoring relationships were for both parties.

“It exceeded my expectations in terms of how good the relationship was and how great of an experience it was. It was great to empower someone to develop their business. I thought though, we would be able to move him further along his journey, but health issues meant we had to slow down.”

**Camille Gillet, mentor to Mariwan**

# BARRIERS to Entrepreneurship

Other mentors also highlighted barriers which complicated the participants's ability to undertake business activities. These included:

- ➔ Lack of focus due to other high priority activity to be financially sustainable
- ➔ Lack of suitable space at home to launch activities (e.g. cooking)
- ➔ Language barriers, make it difficult to express a plan clearly and raise funds
- ➔ Suppliers issues, not delivery quality services
- ➔ Limited funds to buy the product intended for sale and rent retail space
- ➔ Challenge to master complex tax, insurance and legal issues

The mentorship proved challenging at times for mentors who struggled to engage with their mentee regularly, and some expressed frustration at the pace of progression towards the entrepreneurs goals and the development of their business idea. The nature of working with underserved communities means that participants will often face additional obstacles, personal and professional, which make realising their ambition more difficult, with patience and compassion being key elements to incorporate into the mentorship.

“The person is as important as the business idea. Allow for considerable flexibility and changes of course in reaching the overall goal. Seek clarity, but supportively. And only push when there is clarity and commitment. Otherwise explore why those two ingredients aren't in place and help the mentee develop them.”

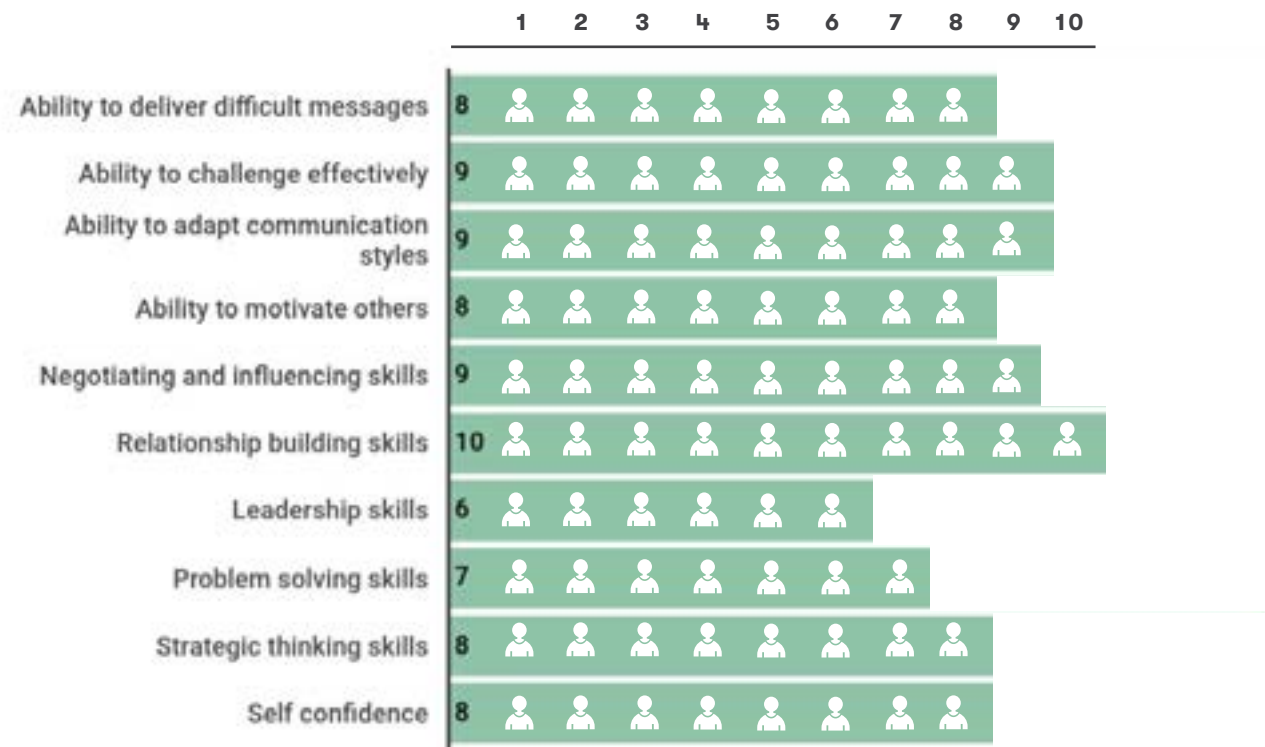
**David Stansell, mentor to Daphine**





# MENTOR Skills

Nonetheless, the experience of mentorship, even if challenging at times, proved to be a positive one for the mentors. The mentors themselves benefited from their experience of mentoring as demonstrated in their responses to how it affected their own skills.



As shown in the graph above, a majority of mentors reported some growth in all skill areas assessed as relevant to their work with entrepreneurs on the program. Mentors experienced “some positive effects” or “substantial positive effects” especially in their relationship-building skills, their ability to motivate others, their ability to adapt their communication style, and ability to challenge entrepreneurs effectively.

Camille was matched to Mariwan and helped him develop his pottery business and studio idea. An engineer by trade, she used her professional background and skills to help give Mariwan structure and clarity on how to get his idea off the ground, but equally was able to take learnings from this relationship herself around project design and management:

“The program helped me realise that my wish for structure is not a given, that it is helpful, that not everyone has this logical and structured way of thinking. It helped give me confidence that this is a skill that is useful, particularly for people starting a business. It also taught me to be more realistic, in terms of what can be achieved in a small amount of time. I just expected the rosier scenario, but life gets in the way. It taught me to factor this in from the beginning in any project, to be more risk aware.”

**Camille Gillet, mentor to Mariwan**

## Case Studies

### Josh, Balloon Ventures

**The IHKX team sat down with mentor and IHKX member Josh to discuss his experience on the New Roots program. Josh founded his social enterprise Balloon Ventures in 2012, where he works with small businesses in East Africa, helping them grow and create jobs. Over the course of 9 months, Josh worked closely with his New Roots mentee Ellon to support her in the launch and growth of her business.**

“I got involved in this program because I thought some of my skills would be relevant, helping people start up businesses. I’ve been working with Balloon Ventures for almost 8 years and as an entrepreneur, you tend to work on the same stuff. You’re not necessarily working through new challenges, and what I find the most fun in business is problem-solving and learning. I wanted to be exposed to something new, think of other problems, and be exposed to someone else’s challenges. London is a big city but you don’t tend to meet people from different backgrounds. I can’t even begin to empathise or understand what it’s like being a refugee and living in London. I guess when you think of refugees you think of someone who is really struggling, and experiencing a lot of uncertainty. On the other hand, Ellon has been here for some time, and ready to do this; that was a good learning on my part. The program was what I expected in terms of working to support someone one on one, though we probably met up far more than was expected for the program. She came here (IHKX) regularly and we made good progress.

You (IHKX) made the match between us because she was looking to import products from east Africa, and obviously I work there. I introduced her to a woman called Catrine who has now become her primary supplier, who is doing

something similar in Germany (albeit with a slightly different focus) and that was probably the most useful thing for Ellon in the entire program, that introduction. She would otherwise probably still be struggling to get a product at this point. The Wellcome Trust grant has been really helpful, without that it’s very hard to do anything. You can only basically do research or get lucky, like in the case of Catrine. Regular costs such as paying for the market stall become unsustainable without funding.

The general process is similar to what we try to teach at Balloon Ventures, about testing assumptions, primarily around if there is a market for this, and in the case where you don’t have much money, it’s about speaking to people, going to markets etc. The first month or so, when Ellon was going out talking to people, she was so convinced that this was going to work. The optimism is amazing, and it’s normal of course, but it’s been good to

“The highlight of the program for me was Ellon’s first day at the market, that was the culmination of months of work.”

get a sense of the challenges by going out and testing these past few months.

The highlight of the program for me was Ellon’s first day at the market (Camden Market), that was the culmination of months of work. Also when the partnership with Catrine was finalised, when we

realised we could get product. Godaddy really helped with the website, gave her an e-commerce site, helped her build the website and the SEO, so that’s been great to see.

The program has made me more aware of the challenges of setting up a business here, and of other people’s experiences of living in London. It’s similar to what I’ve been doing in Balloon Ventures, and I’m currently developing a software about how to start a business, and it’s been useful to play that back. For me though, it’s been incredible just getting to know someone from a different background.





## Ellon, Ninsii.com

**Next we interviewed one of our New Roots program participants, Ellon of Niinsi.com. Her arts and crafts business showcases authentic East African products to the western market, and over the course of the program, Ellon has been working hard with her mentor Josh to successfully launch and grow her budding enterprise.**

“My business is Niinsi.com, which is my surname. In the West, people use forenames, but back home everyone calls me Ninsii. The first time I came to the New Roots launch event with the mentors, I had been planning to call my business ‘Ninsii’s Niche’, but one of the marketing experts in the room said, “Why not call it Ninsii, that sounds unique”. So I went with Ninsii.com! My passion is around exporting african arts and crafts, and I import fashion, art, accessories, anything beautiful in the inner african market, east Africa in particular, focusing on Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda - and I have blood in each of these countries! I’m not particularly focusing on one culture, but showcasing a mixture of everything.

Before I joined this, I was working a 9-5 trying to help

refugees and asylum seekers find and start work. I had in the past done the same business in Africa. Though I probably seem integrated (in the society), for more than 4 years now, I have been saying to myself, I need to start my business, I need to start. I landed on the New Roots program through a colleague of mine and I was actually trying to get people onto the program. I remember having a really long phone call with Nuno about referring people, and afterwards I thought, why not refer myself? The mentorship has been brilliant, the IHKX staff have been brilliant, and here I am!

Prior to the program, my biggest challenge was understanding how starting a business actually works. I’ve seen people do the paperwork, HMRC, etc, but I wanted to learn how to actually do it, having to understand markets, even a simple market like Camden market: how do you set up a stall? Get space? How do you start a business in the UK context? Back home, I was selling things from the back of my car and driving to different places, but here I didn’t know the rules or laws. But now I am getting there.

From my mentor Josh, from even the first day, we were asking each other questions: why do you want to do this? How do you want to do this? There was a really good connection. Without Josh, the actual trading wouldn’t be

“**Without Josh, the actual trading wouldn’t be happening, and everytime I feel stuck, Josh has ideas, it becomes easier, and now it’s actually happening.**”

happening, and everytime I feel stuck, Josh has ideas, it becomes easier, and now it’s actually happening. Sometimes, when you’re new to this field, you just want to know you have someone. I’m hoping Josh will always be there in my life, even after this program ends. My work is similar to what Josh does, he supports businesses in east Africa, so you guys did the best match.

I learned how to set up the website from Godaddy. I learnt a lot from the workshops, about how social media works, how to market your brand, things that are really important for starting a business. These workshops, together with the mentorship, it’s been great, and everytime I leave the Impact Hub, after the interactions or workshops, I go home and think, this is actually working. If I need to ask anything, I just need to jump on an email and ask! The team, the way the program is designed, really good, I wish it could go on even longer.

This program has really expanded my network. My current supplier was an introduction from Josh. She has a similar business but a developed brand in Germany, working for over 10 years. Josh brought her on board to teach me how it works. By the end of Christmas, she was sending me long emails, with lots of tips and details. She then told Josh that she would send me products to sell! At that time we were a bit stuck. After that, things started moving very fast, and by the end of January she was already shipping stuff, and it’s only because she trusts Josh! I’ve now taken on that partnership, and it’s really working. You never know what might happen after this, but I’m very optimistic.

This program is like a miracle happening, because it didn’t even occur to me I could do this. When I told people ‘I’m quitting my job’, people said ‘What! Do you have anything lined up?’ and that scares you! I started thinking, ‘Should I do this? I have to do this!’ and I remember I came to speak to Josh about quitting my job, and he wasn’t too sure. But I knew that the biggest business people in the world take risks. And I thought, “I’m not going to die, I’m going to take this risk, and it will work”. I thought I might be broke, things might not happen, but let’s see, let’s take this risk. So, I’m here.

“**For me the biggest lesson learnt over the program was ‘follow your passion’. Believe in yourself.**”

I’ve been thinking that in the future I can help Josh somehow in return! When you work really well with somebody, you can often observe that while they are currently helping you, there is something you can do to help them. I can perhaps buy from the people he’s supporting and use their products. Post program, it would be nice to continue working with Josh, and it would be great to reach out to Impact Hub if I ever need help with something, because people need ongoing support. I believe when people start a business, it’s important to have ongoing support, to catch up with people and see how things are going.

Actually launching Ninsii.com was my program highlight! The first day the shipment arrived, and then when I first went to Camden Market, getting to book the spaces, it all happened in such a short time. I was talking to a fellow New Roots participant on the phone, he asked ‘are you really starting this weekend?’ and I said “yes!”. I was pulling a suitcase of stuff, and I thought ‘It’s actually happening!’. Josh came and helped with his girlfriend, they helped organize stuff, taking pictures, and that was really nice.

For me the biggest lesson learnt over the program was ‘follow your passion’. Believe in yourself. Don’t worry about what anybody else tells you, it’s going to work if it’s what you want to do. I just needed a bit of an understanding of how things in the UK work in terms of starting a business. I love African art so I believe, fingers crossed, I’m going to become a brand, a good east African art brand. I’m not going to let you guys down!

Finally thank you Impact Hub, you have been such good coordinators, without you guys this program wouldn’t be here. Alisa and Nuno, you are really doing a good job, I’ve seen programs start and fail, (I know because I used to run programs!), so thank you, you’re doing super good.



## Ibrahim, My Home

**Ibrahim is a refugee from Somalia who came to the UK at a young age and has recently been working to get his sustainable and affordable housing development business off the ground. Over the course of the New Roots program, he has created partnerships across the Impact Hub global network, including with a member from Impact Hub Phnom Penh, and used his Wellcome Trust grant to complete an accredited course on a sustainable brick production method core to his business offering.**

“I’m from Somalia and what motivated me to start this business was travelling back home and seeing people who are struggling to get affordable housing. I decided to do something about that. I’ve been trying to search for new technology that could help reduce the cost of housing – that was my main motivation, to give people back something, something I didn’t have when I was young. When I came to the UK and went to the university here, and then traveled in Africa, I saw a need for affordable accommodation for low-income people. I’ve been researching for 5 years, and when I found this program I knew I had to apply to help make my idea a reality.

My business is about creating affordable and sustainable housing. Building housing for low income communities in East Africa, starting in Somalia, and using technology around compressed earth bricks and stabilized earth: a brick that doesn’t need plastering, painting, construction method that doesn’t need columns, which reduces a lot of costs because of the building project. The raw material comes locally which reduces the cost of importing cement for construction, and only needs low skilled labour to build. All this reduces building costs between 25-50%. When I found out about New Roots I thought it could

help me pursue my ambition. I’ve always wanted to make this idea into a reality, and New Roots was a program that actually helped me, to think about the vision of the business long-term and the mission of the business, and helped me really develop my business plan. The network was the most important for me. Impact Hub helped me access the support I needed and when I felt isolated or needed more help, around website building and business plan, because of Impact Hub and New Roots I was able to access this knowledge.

Also it gave me access to other people starting businesses, and the Impact Hub connected me to another member they have who has a similar business using the same technology in the Philippines. This will help me improve my business, because I can speak to and get advice from someone who has already been doing this, but in a different continent, and help me understand the challenges that I might have in future and prepare for them. It’s exciting and I’m really looking forward to continuing working with this member.

Participating in this program gave me motivation, and confidence that I can do business without fear. One of the first workshops I attended was about overcoming fear, and that was really helpful. I learnt a lot about how this is normal. I thought of this as a huge project, that would touch millions of people, and I always had that fear of failing, of feeling I couldn’t accomplish this vision. But the workshop and New Roots helped me understand how to deal with that fear and face it, and the right support to give me confidence to continue. My mentor helped me a lot, he was a critical friend for my project, and helped me really improve my business plan and work on my vision for the business and the way I want to direct it. He made me aware of the different health and safety aspects I would need to take into consideration, and also warned me of possible challenges I would face in developing my business so I could prepare for them.

“**The network was the most important for me. When I felt isolated or needed more help around my business plan... because of Impact Hub I was able to access this knowledge.**

He had a lot of helpful tips for me to improve and make my project better.

The best thing about the program for me, was being connected to someone doing such a similar project, from somewhere across the world. I never thought I would meet someone and work with someone from so far, but that was a real highlight! I’m so excited to learn more from him and about his experience of running his business. The other highlights were the workshops from GoDaddy; in particular the workshop on the power of social media, and understanding SEO, because they’re very important and I didn’t know a lot about it and how relevant it is to my business. I learnt a lot from those workshops on how to build and improve my website, and I was able to use that knowledge directly on my business.

“**The best thing about the program for me, was being connected to someone doing such a similar project, from somewhere across the world. I never thought I would meet someone and work with someone from so far, but that was a real highlight!**





# Participant Profiles

## Marta Hinestroza, Pueblito Paisa CIC

Marta came to the UK as a refugee from Colombia and set up Pueblito Paisa, a community centre for the Latino community in London offering free legal advice and counseling to local traders and the larger community, while simultaneously serving mouth-watering Colombian delicacies and coffee. Marta is working to standardise and formalize the community offer so she can deliver it sustainably and developing a strategy to help all traders supported by Pueblito Paisa in moving to a new marketplace in Seven Sisters which is currently being developed. She used her Wellcome Trust fund to support her ongoing work and rally support for her cause through a tailored social media campaign and PR campaign.



## Oku Abara, Pristo's Properties

Oku has an ambition to launch an ethical online based property lettings business. With some years experience in the London property lettings market and having been homeless himself, struggling to access suitable and affordable rental property, Oku wants to put together a considerate property lettings company that is flexible, affordable and able to provide accessible and alternative housing options to various individuals. He is currently working on his business plan and developing his service offer. His mentor introduced him to St. Mungo's Ethical Lettings agency where Oku is gaining insights into the daily operations of an organization similar to his. Oku used his Wellcome Trust fund to gain an accredited certification on property and lettings management which is critical for his business offer.



## Esmail Abdollahi, Shiny Glass

Esmail is a skilled glazer with 8 years of experience. Esmail founded Shiny Glass in the UK supplying and installing glass splash-backs in kitchens, shower enclosures, walk-on glass, skylights and all things glass. Esmail is currently working on a strategy to increase his client base, build his company's web presence to reach a wider audience, and gain the appropriate professional certifications in the UK to be able to grow his business. Esmail used his Wellcome Trust fund to pay for print advertisement on his work van, to promote his business while he travels from one job to another.



## Koroush Kapour

Koroush is a highly accomplished educationalist, human rights activist and a doctoral researcher with over 16 years teaching experience in Sciences, Social Research Methods, and International Education and Development. Koroush wants to make use of his extensive knowledge in the educational sector to develop a service supporting the Kurdish youth in the UK in accessing and attaining education and maximising their potential and is currently developing his business plan and service offer. Koroush used his Wellcome Trust fund to hire an accountant to take a deep dive into his financials and hire a marketing expert to create a social media campaign to attract more clients.



## Fadi Sofi, TEAM (Talent Engineering and Asset Management)

Fadi developed Talent Engineering & Asset Management (TEAM) an HR software developed to support SMEs to manage their day-to-day activities, payroll and project management while completing his PhD. With his software almost ready to go to market, he is currently working on a sales strategy and market entry strategy for the educational sector in India, and the Middle East.







### Daphine Wokuri

Daphine has built up years of experience cooking professionally from when she used to work for the diplomatic service, and now in the UK she wants to start her own food business. Daphine has the ambition of one day opening a restaurant and is currently doing some market research into the food market in her local area, competitors and suppliers, as well as the best business model to start her food business.

### Birmad Ibrahim, My Home

Birmad is a Somali refugee who is developing an environmentally friendly construction business to offer affordable and eco-friendly homes to low-income communities in urban and rural areas of Somalia. Birmad is passionate about environmentally friendly construction technologies that can be made more affordable and accessible to the urban poor in Somalia and surrounding regions and help speed up the process of reconstruction and recovery which is essential in supporting human livelihood. Birmad used his Wellcome Trust fund to gain an accredited qualification in compressed earth bricks and stabilized earth technology, from sourcing materials to produce the brick to production techniques, which is integral to his business.

### Peyman Heydarian, The Voice of Santur

Peyman is an award-winning music scientist and santur performer. A computer scientist and musicologist, he adopted innovative tuning systems and performance techniques to play a multi-ethnic repertoire on the Iranian santur and developed computer algorithms for the analysis of Persian musical signals. Peyman currently teaches performance and music technology courses at London universities while running his music and performance business which he wants to focus on, to grow his portfolio of events and audience reach. Peyman used his Wellcome Trust fund to attend a conference and training session on music information retrieval, the biggest in his field, where he was able to network and form partnerships with other industry leaders.



### Woin Tegegn, Ethiopic Kitchen

Woin is a cooking instructor and simultaneously has started her own catering company. She has always been passionate about Ethiopian cuisine and recently focused on developing plant-based vegan dishes from Ethiopia through her enterprise Ethiopic Kitchen. Her ambition is to have a permanent location from where to run Ethiopic Kitchen and be able to dedicate herself to it full time and is currently working on increasing her online presence and growing her customer base. Woin used her Wellcome Trust fund to buy equipment that was essential to run her business as she grew her clients and the number of events she was catering for while on New Roots, and to help her develop her website further.

### Ellon Ninsiima, Ninsii.com

Ellon has previously run a business in East Africa for 5 years and always wanted to return to running her own business in the UK as well. Through New Roots Ellon launched her retail business selling unique handmade African crafts of all sorts like the one she had run previously, but to the UK market. She secured suppliers through the program and was able to start trading while on New Roots. Ellon used her Wellcome Trust fund to purchase goods for her business and to start selling at Camden Market, as well as through her e-commerce website.



### Beatrice Fazoranti, El Shaddai My Helper

Beatrice founded and runs a charity supporting people who have experienced homelessness in the UK and Nigeria while working full-time as a social worker. They provide meals and clothing to people in need and have so far been dependent on charitable donations. Beatrice is keen to transform her charity into a sustainable organisation by developing her fundraising strategy and new earned income streams to grow the support she is able to provide her beneficiaries. Beatrice used her Wellcome Trust Funding to gain an accredited qualification in fundraising, and has managed to grow her operations to Hackney with the help of her mentor.





### Luz Yolima Cuellar, UK Latinos

Luz developed and launched a mobile app called UK Latinos which aims to help integrate the Spanish speaking community in the UK. Through the app Luz makes local and national news, cultural experiences, educational and employment opportunities accessible for Spanish speaking people who would otherwise struggle because of the language barrier. Luz has grown the number of users on her app, and businesses advertising their services, and increased her reach and support to more members of the Spanish speaking community in the UK while on New Roots. She used her Wellcome Trust fund to migrate the app to a new platform which allowed her to customise it further, make it compatible to both android and ios, and increased her potential to monetize the app.

### Sulaiman Othman, Caravel Magazine

Sulaiman is journalist and broadcaster with over 17 years experience in the industry in the Middle East. Sulaiman launched an online magazine celebrating culture and art, focusing on contemporary art from the Middle East region and providing a window to explore the wealth of Middle Eastern creativity with the wider public. Sulaiman also plans to use the online magazine to sell artwork to a UK audience. Sulaiman used his Wellcome Trust fund to contract lawyers which helped him draft the terms & conditions for his website and navigate the legal requirements to be able to sell art through this platform.

### Mariwan Karim, Pottery Studio

Mariwan is in the initial stages of planning to open up a ceramics studio. He is currently an art technician in a school but has always wanted to open his own studio focusing on throwing technique, Hand build, Slip casting, and printing on Clay (Screen Print and Mono print and painting on ceramics also exploring and decorative homeware. Mariwan used his Wellcome Trust fund to attend an accredited course on how to run a pottery studio, from teaching techniques for groups of mixed abilities, to the business operations and logistics.



# THANK YOU

#### GoDaddy Team

Stacy Cline, Director Corporate Citizenship  
Darren Hall, Website Specialist - EMEA Manager  
(workshop facilitator)

Becki Crossley, Creative Specialist  
(workshop facilitator)

Beth Ashley, Content Specialist  
(workshop facilitator)

Layton Weatherall, Digital Marketing Account Manager  
(workshop facilitator)

Jess Baldwin, Website Specialist  
(workshops facilitator)

#### Impact Hub King's Cross Team

Alice Graham-Brown,  
Programme Manager

Nuno Menezes, Programme Manager

Nayla Attas, Programme Director

#### Impact Hub Global Team

Justin Lyle & Sarah Nichols

