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ACTIONS

The Urban Lab of Europe !

The USE-IT! Project Zoom-in N°3

Community research for a community-oriented urban regeneration

Project led by the City of Birmingham

**URBAN
POVERTY**

The USE-IT! project

Social deprived neighbourhoods – urban regeneration – poverty alleviation:
Linking large capital investments with community skills and assets to combat urban poverty

Although Birmingham is a key economic hub, the reality of poverty and underemployment amongst indigenous and migrant populations is leading to increasing social, economic and environmental isolation. Therefore, the USE-IT! project seeks to identify and connect social, cultural and economic assets already existing in poor and migrants communities to major capital and infrastructure investments, in order to reduce displacement and maximise the economic and social benefits of urban development for marginalised residents. The building of a new hospital, local social enterprise structures and universities rich in cultural and creative capital will be relied on to enable the population to self-empower in a sustainable way.

The model proposed will rely on Community Researchers, recruited among local community and trained in research methods to identify local assets. Mechanisms will be tested in order to unlock the potential of poor communities and facilitate the creation of a matching skills service to enhance employment and encourage the spin-off of social enterprises that are socially innovative and resilient. The project will provide peer-to-peer support for communities, and act as change and innovation drivers to bring out bold and sustainable solutions.

As a result of the project, people in the communities will be supported to raise their aspirations and to access affordable educational and training opportunities. They will access jobs opportunities linked to the large investment projects planned for the area (macro-assets), and new businesses will be created and developed in the area by local people.

For further information

USE-IT! UIA website: www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/birmingham

USE IT! Facebook: www.facebook.com/USEITUIA/; @USEITUIA

USE IT! Twitter: https://twitter.com/UseItUIA; @UseItUIA;

USE IT! Instagram: www.instagram.com/useituia; useituia

USE IT! YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCfZrYQBA87FsszE4JvhlZug/featured

USE-IT Zoom-in – The creation of social enterprises: Download

USE-IT Zoom-in – Jobs for overseas migrants: Download

USE-IT! 1st journal: Download
USE-IT! 2nd journal: Download
USE-IT! 3rd journal: Download
USE-IT! 4th journal: Download
USE-IT! 5th journal: Download

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1 USE-IT! – Community research for a community-oriented urban regeneration

USE-IT! is a £3.13m (3,56 Mio. €) project supported by Birmingham City Council and one of the "Urban Innovative Actions" from the European Commission initiative. It tests **new solutions combating urban poverty by linking larger capital investment projects (macro-assets) in deprived neighbourhoods with local community skills, talents and ideas (micro-assets).** It does all that with the intention to unlock social and economic innovation and to improve the socio-economic situation of the deprived residents. The project strives to increase the employment prospects of the residents and migrants by generating jobs and stimulating local economy.

For an overview about the USE-IT! project, its background and innovative approach, its mechanism and partnership as well as the challenges implementing such an approach, take a look at the journals and the zoom-ins of the USE-IT! project: www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/birmingham.

Key element & objective

One key element of the USE-IT! project is the **'Community Research'**. It has the intention to develop research and analytical skills of people of the local communities of Greater Icknield to put them into the position to conduct research to

- identify and understand better the needs of the communities and make their needs heard,
- bring in their skills, contacts, knowledge and insights into particular communities of the local people for the regeneration of their neighbourhoods (experts in and of their neighbourhood).

To enable this USE-IT! has set up a **free accredited community research training programme** to train interested local people doing research and work with them as "experts of their neighbourhoods" – people that know about their area and are engaged with their own communities. In addition, Community Researchers were supported in their **own research projects** and through a **programme of commissioned research**. Here community researchers delivered research for clients from across the West Midlands.

As leading partner for the 'Community Research' approach, the University of Birmingham has engaged with local partners to reach out and gain trust amongst the different communities. The university organised the 'Community Research' training. The local partners used

their embeddedness in the local communities to make the USE-IT! project known and promote the training. Some partners supported the 'Community Researchers' as mentors and trainers, too.

For further details read the following chapters.

For a quick overview about the 'Community Research' take a look at the 'Community Research' video. For more extended information watch the video "Community Research: Experts in Neighbourhoods" or visit the USE-IT! project website: https://useituia.co.uk/strands/community-research

2   The approach

Accredited Research Training Programme

① 'Community Research' programme
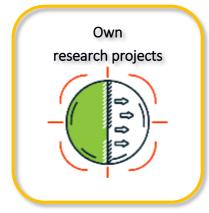② 'Community Partner' programme

Mentoring

by University of Birmingham

by local community organisation

Community Researchers

- Identifying needs
- Making needs heard
- Developing personal skills + confidence

Own research projects

Commissioned research projects

The 'Community Research' consists of three main elements:

1. Training programme
2. Mentoring
3. Community research projects

2.1 Accredited research training programme

Based on time capacities and interests, two research training programmes were offered:

① Community Research programme
② Community Partner programme

The Community Research programme is a free training programme of the University of Birmingham to become an accredited 'Community Researcher'. It consists of four practice oriented units, which all participants have to go through:

1. Learning research skills,
2. Practicing research skills (interviews/surveys),
3. Analysing data and reporting
4. Presenting results

The programme was co-designed with the first cohort of Community Researchers and developed further based on the experience. The programme is designed to support the participants in carrying out own research projects in their communities and neighbourhoods. For further information, take a look at the video.

The community partner programme is a lighter, less time intensive training programme. It was developed as some community researchers were unable to devote the necessary time to the community research programme and were intimidated of what is expected from them (i.e. doing a number of interviews and transcribing them). Others felt that there was not the right balance of what was expected from them and what they could gain from taking part in the Research training programme. In order to support them in their research interests, the community partner program was developed.

It consisted of Community researchers in training who receive the initial two-day training into social research skills and how to design research projects. They become Community Partners after finishing the two-day training and are then required to attend meetings and workshops within their communities to collect data and intelligence about their communities. The data is in form of short reports about the challenges, problems and issues of their own communities. These reports are then used by the academic team and Community Researchers to put together an expression of interest into a commissioned research project. They were also able to attend and participate in knowledge transfer workshops and USE-IT updates throughout the project.

The task of the Community partners was to visit (informal) meetings, workshops, events, discussion rounds, etc. in the neighbourhoods of Greater Icknield and find out about local needs, ideas and what is happening in the neighbourhood. The gained knowledge was to be reported back to the mentors of the Community partner programme. But also the mentors contacted the Community partners to "collect" the information in personal talks.

In contrast to the Community Research Programme, participants in the Partner Programme did not become accredited Community Researchers. Most of them were not looking for recognition but they wanted to be involved and informed of the USE-IT updates.

Lessons learnt & advice

Training programme

Most community researchers were very positive about the training program: It was practice-oriented, mostly jargon free language and the "homeworks" helped to test the methods and methodologies learnt to improve their research skills and become more confident in their application.

In the impact report, done by the external evaluator CLES, it is stated:

"It was reported as a well-designed programme of learning, which was accessible for people with no formal education, or with limited language skills. The course was praised for being very practical, about learning by doing, and an

exchange of ideas. Finally, it was also considered important that some elements of the training course were delivered at venues in the local community, which were locations where the community feel comfortable, and are easily accessible. It also created trust between staff from the University, and the community – a vital step in the development of the programme."

However, there was also criticism of the initial training programme that partly too much was expected of the participants in terms of what to do. The Community Partner programme was developed in response to this. In addition, the participants found themselves in different starting situations in terms of available time and interests. In this regard, some participants need more support than others to be able to continue the training. Here community researchers have suggested the following:

At the beginning of each training programme, assess the needs and skills of the participants with regards to be community researchers. Identify which (research) skills are already developed and which needs to be developed. Where they are less good, they receive additional training or a particular tutor group. For participants that have already more evolved research skills, a fast track programme could be offered. After each training unit, the further needs of the participants are assessed and checked how the mentors could help. The mentors are informed accordingly and asked for support. Summarising, it would be appreciated to have flexible modules that

Results

- 85 local people took part in the 'Community research' training programme and gained accredited research qualification.

- 2 people trained have gone to complete an MSC in Urban Planning at the University of Birmingham and 1 has applied for PhD in Planning.

- 5 community researchers have been trained to become trainers co-delivering the research training with the university team.

correspond to the different starting positions, interests and time capacities of the participants.

The community researchers appreciated that the training programme allowed getting to know each other, to collaborate, to exchange and to network. These possibilities should be consciously promoted through the training programme. It should also allow making contacts to other academics and the university staff. In this regards Deborah Broomfield, a community researcher, stated:

"An important aspect of the Community Research programme was the approachability of the university team. This eases things and made everything more personal."

Recruitment

At the beginning, it was a challenge to recruit community researchers for the training programme. Finally, a successful approach was to engage local, community-based organisations to reach out for potential community researchers and inform them about the programme and potential benefits. For this they organised local 'recruitment events' or informed at neighbourhood events about the programme. In addition, word-of-mouth through community researchers that already took part in the programme was very successful, as well as leaving leaflets at places where people have to wait and have time to read i.e. in medical practices.

> *"You always find people with amazing skills, you simply have to look for them. There is no shortage of skills." (Hamid Lea, Community Researcher)*

Another lesson learnt was not only to rely on the local community organisations. The university had to be present and work with the community organisation through their channels. A physical presence in the neighbourhood is very advantageous for this. Also, as some people had not been in touch with the academic world before and were intimidated by doing research and work with the university, having first contacts, meetings, etc. in their neighbourhood and not at the university allowed a low-threshold access to the programme.

Another need is to a have a well worked out communication strategy around how to reach out and inform the communities about the community research programme. Focus of the communication should be how community researchers and communities can benefit from community research. Community researchers mentioned following benefits and motivation to join the community research programme:

- Doing an own research project of personal interest and develop needed skills for it
- Broadening the own personal perspective
- Receiving an accreditation from the university (for their CV)
- Being engaged in a work that is beneficial for their community – doing something useful
- Making the needs of the communities heard and better understood
- Working with the university on their research project, giving credibility to the project
- Being part of community research network
- Build up links to academics at the university

2.2 Research projects

Own research projects

Parallel or after the training programme, the community researchers had to conduct a research project of their own. These projects had to be beneficial or of interest for the Greater Icknield area and the communities living there.

A university team and mentors [cf. chapter 2.3] supported the community researchers in the implementation of their research projects.

Commissioned research projects

In order to gain further experience and increase the capabilities in doing research, commissioned research projects were organised. **Accredited community researchers could be listed in an online platform and were contacted for research tasks.**

Lessons learnt & advice

Peter Lee and Sara Hassan from the University of Birmingham, responsible for the Community Research project, as well as David Newall and Harry Naylor from the community organisations Brushstrokes and Karis Neighbour Scheme mentioned the following beneficial aspects of the community research projects conducted by the community researchers. It allowed to

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Research projects by community researchers

- Childhood Obesity – completed
- Hope Foundation – completed
- European Skills Recognition Passport
- Better Health ESOL evaluation (exploring motivation to learn)
- Voices of Jamaica (and other 'Windrush' migrants)
- Health and Wellbeing Coaching Social Enterprise
- Creating a 'Wild' Neighbourhood
- Creating an 'Age and Gender Friendly' Neighbourhood
- Bereavement Supportive Communities

- Equanimity to address barriers to learning for children and young people
- Community Arts project: Hidden Mothers
- City LAB – development of the social enterprise
- Place Perceptions – Neighbourhood and City Inclusion (Using mental maps and environmental perceptions)
- Causes of unemployment (Ileys)
- Opportunities for local procurement in Soho Ward
- Supporting Soho 1st with developing its idea of makerspace and helping out with identifying suitable premises
- Identifying the needs of BME North Smethwick communities by Jalal Community Connect Foundation
- Health, wellbeing and clinical data dashboard social enterprise model
- Mystery Shopper: Urban Splash Show Home launch event (8th June 2019)
- Canal and River Trust volunteering and adoptions project
- Eat, Make, Play – running consultation stall
- Walkability
- Alternative Community Tours
- Exchange study
- UK2070
- Tate' Industrial'
- University as a public good

- receive information and evidence from hard-to-reach communities and gain local knowledge;
- reach out to communities as it would be very difficult for an "outside researcher";
- bring in and get a different perspective on the local situation;
- make the local communities heard and their needs better articulated;
- bring local projects forward by establishing connections between community researchers and local projects.

Through the local knowledge and embeddedness of the community researchers, they are more sensitive to the local situation, they have empathy, which helps to understand better the community needs and identify issues, which may not have been considered when a "classic" research project would have been conducted. Through their existing contacts to the communities or even being part of the community they also find it easier to engage hard-to-reach groups and to research more sensitive topics.

Particular for the community research projects was that the community researchers were encouraged to bring in their own perceptions and not only the perceptions from the people they had interviewed. Their personal perceptions provided new perspectives.

Results

- 27 research projects were commissioned
- One community research project on childhood obesity helped to secure £ 300.000 (€ 360.000) to tackle childhood obesity (read the article).

It was also advantageous that both own projects could be implemented and commissioned projects were offered.

The Community researcher's own projects allowed them to conduct research on projects and subjects that matter to them and their communities. It was considered unfavourable that sometimes these research projects did not "find" the target person or institution to take up the results and follow up with actions. Thus, some research projects ran the danger of going nowhere.

The commissioned research projects were important, as some community researchers did not have a personal concrete research project at hand. These projects allowed those researchers to continue working and complete their training. Another advantage was that the community researchers were paid for that work. This was highly appreciated and a strong motivation to continue doing community research (recognition of their work). Nevertheless, the costs for the commissioned community research projects were still lower than if an

established company would have been commissioned. This allowed carrying out research on community topics for which research normally could not be funded.

> *"Value the time commitment of community researchers and show the appreciation of their work!" (Sara Hassan, University of Birmingham)*

It has been noted by some community researchers, that the follow-up of research results were unclear or did not happen. To improve this situation, the following was proposed:

- Be more focused for what kind of community research projects you are looking for; do not be too vague. Give hints about issues that might be relevant, but give enough space to come up with own research project ideas.
- Identify research interests of (local) institutions and organisations and in which areas they want to become active. Link them with the research interest of the community researchers.
- Support community researchers to present and make their research results known to relevant institutions. This will also help to make the community needs better known.

Again, the community researchers noted that a framework should be supported to enable joint development and collaboration on research projects.

2.3   Mentoring

To support the community researchers in their research projects, personal mentors were offered. The community researchers could contact their mentors any time to ask for advice and feedback i.e. to go through the results of interviews, discuss the experience applying the research techniques or how to engage a community in the research project. Also regular drop-in sessions in a local community centre were organised. Mentors contacted their mentees at irregular intervals, too, to discuss the progress of their research and what to do next.

The mentors came from the university and from local community organisations, which partly had been in touch with the mentee or the community before.

Lessons learnt & advice

The mixture of fixed dates for the mentoring, but also being available at "anytime", was very much appreciated by the community researchers.

The mentoring was an important part of the Community Research programme and not only by providing technical hints i.e. how to structure a survey or doing interviews. The

mentors provided the community researchers with confidence, reassuring them that they can make it.

> *"Moving through the Community Research programme motivated to change things."* *(Deborah Broomfield, Community Researcher)*

3 Further outcomes & lessons learnt

Personal skills development

The Community research programme did not only contribute to achieving research skills, but also to developing personal skills. The programme has above all promoted the personal development of the community researchers. Many community researchers mentioned the increase of self-confidence because of taking part in the community research programme and conducting research projects. In addition, they developed new links to other community researchers and academics as well as with people in their communities, which has led to a stronger engagement in their neighbourhood. Working on commissioned research projects raised the self-esteem as "someone wants your results" as one community researcher put it.

University with physical presence as anchor institution

The USE-IT! project with the community research programme has increased the university's presence in Greater Icknield, developing the idea of being an anchor institution for civically engaged people in the area. With the community research programme, it has created a pool of local experts that live in the area. The impact report, done by the external evaluator CLES, puts it as follows:

"Through USE-IT!, the university has embraced this role and has developed a very successful community researcher programme that has harnessed the assets that exist in the community. The University has been crucial to the commissioned research, and will be vital to the success of the social enterprise, they have provided 'clout' and legitimacy in the research process."

The university is also vital for the Community Research programme as it provides the credibility and quality control of the programme and the community research projects. Thus, their involvement is crucial.

Important is also the physical availability of the university in the neighbourhood if they want to become an anchor institution for the community-oriented neighbourhood development and make the Community Research programme work. Thus, it would be good to have a permanent contact point in the area, in which people and community researchers can drop-in at any time and work together (co-working space with technical infrastructure i.e. printers, computers).

"It needs time to build trust between communities and university, that the communities believe 'Community Research' is something serious, which helps them to improve their situation." (Deborah Broomfield, Community Researcher)

4 Outlook

Continue the community research programme by the university as anchor institution

To continue the work of the University of Birmingham fostering community engagement, the university wants to establish a presence in a grade II-listed former Municipal Bank in Birmingham's city centre. The space in the former bank will be used to utilise the University's role as an anchor institution to bring together multiple stakeholders to address the challenges of the City of Birmingham and deliver inclusive growth for the region. This approach ought to bring the University's research closer to people, enabling its work to inform, and be informed by its audiences. For further information, read this article.

Development of a social enterprise for community research

Based on the success of the commissioned research projects, some community researchers have developed the idea of a 'community research social enterprise', which is currently in development. The idea of the enterprise is to continue with community research and look to both help other communities develop their own team of researchers and provide a permanent pathway for other agencies to unlock community expertise. This is a very important step. In the impact report, done by the external evaluator CLES, they state:

"This is a significant opportunity for the researchers to continue to pursue their research interests and do so in a manner that rewards them financially. It also has the potential to influence the wider West Midlands area in terms of the ways in which research is done, the types of projects that are developed, and in bringing in 'lost voices' to research. Finally, there is the potential to cement the legacy of the USE-IT! programme by creating this asset within the neighbourhood."

The 'community research social enterprise' would also allow that the community researchers to collaborate by concentrating on their top strengths and interests i.e. one is very good in doing interviews, another one in writing.

It is important that the community researchers are supported through the process moving from a community research project to a social enterprise. The impact report states:

"To set up the social enterprise will require the University to play a verification or quality checking role (particularly in the early stages of the organisation), and support from BVSC and iSE with the necessary skills around social enterprise. The University should also consider continuing to part fund courses, perhaps through giving lecturer time to each on courses."

Also the commissioning of community research projects should continue, which would be very helpful in the start of the 'Community Research social enterprise'. Peter Lee from the University of Birmingham proposes to make 'Community Research' part of the formal process of planning consultation on urban development projects and plans. Another idea is to apply for project funding and calls, in which 'Community Research' (training, mentoring, research projects) is part of the project.

Summarising and finishing with the words of the impact report of CLES:

"The USE-IT! approach has been different from many of these [Community research projects] in several important ways. Firstly, it has been a long-term investment in developing a large cohort of community researchers and utilising the skills and experience of an academic institution to do so. Many similar projects are short-term pieces of work that seek to support an institution to undertake a particular piece of consultation. … Third, the model of commissioned research has provided a sustainable stream of opportunities for community researchers to maintain their involvement and be remunerated for it.

It has also demonstrated to the partner organisations, that the community researchers are a viable partner for their research, being skilled and with a local knowledge, which many organisations lack. It has also provided an opportunity for the community researchers to be paid for their time. This has been important for some of the

researchers, who admitted that they may have had to look at other opportunities had the financial resource not been available."

USE-IT! JOURNEYS OF COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

Almost two years ago, I joined the USE-IT! initiative as a Community Researcher after seeing an advertisement on Facebook. My interest was in research as I wanted to work on issues affecting women and the over 50s, in particular how to create and facilitate employment opportunities. I was invited to a two-day training session which was held at Summerfield Centre in research techniques. This led me to developing my project brief and undertaking interviews around my area of interest. My journey after the training was to undertake Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Birmingham. My degree was sponsored through USE-IT! and the university. On a humorous note, I attended the induction expecting to enrol for a degree in regeneration and thought "Oh no, this is going to be boring." It wasn't. In fact, it has turned out to be a great educational and personal journey. I submitted my dissertation in August 2019 on time! The topic was women, austerity and planning. **What will I be doing next?** My plans are to apply to study for a Doctorate in Planning at Leeds Beckett University. (Deborah)

The USE-IT! Project came at the right time for me. I was at the crossroads with my career, juggling odd jobs and really trying to make ends meet. USE-IT! gave me confidence and real experience I could use when applying for jobs. Turned out just got a job and I'm starting next month. I'm absolutely thrilled. As it often happens when joining training groups, workplace or meetings I was the only Polish participant. Despite of diversity of the group I always felt my voice is heard and views are respected. Atmosphere has been very inclusive and very welcoming. It has been like seeing real, organic and holistic community: people of different age, race and backgrounds. We've made connections and work on the team projects - something that in real life would be almost impossible without USE-IT!. Therefore, it would be a pure loss not to carry on with our Community of Researchers. Carrying on legacy of USE-IT! under umbrella of a Social Enterprise would be a fantastic idea to continue an amazing work USE-IT! has started. Being an Eastern European immigrant in current Brexit political realm requires a lot of resilience. In an overwhelmingly hostile political atmosphere USE-IT! has created something special: a safe inclusive platform for people who want to work for local communities regardless of race, nationality or socio-economic background. It was like capturing representatives of our communities in action and it was beautiful. Many times it made me think that being the only Polish in the room `I come as one but I stand as ten thousands`. For the first time for a very long time I felt proud of being immigrant in the UK. I felt appreciated, welcome and validated. Apart from robust training, countless drop-in sessions and networking opportunities I have got from USE-IT! there is something that can be easily overlooked in the evaluation of the project but I personally find equally important: it has been a fantastic opportunity to develop and sustain the sense of belonging. Something that is always an `unfinished problematic project` when you are an immigrant. (Kat)

The Community Research project works on place based research into how residents perceive their local area as they talk about and walk through it brings the researcher closer to their community's, hidden issues, hopes, frustrations and possibilities. With raised awareness comes responsibility to try and effect change through sharing the research findings with others within and beyond the local community who who could make a difference. **The fact that community voices are listened to and valued, often for the first time, by such anchor institutions as the University should be setting a precedent for other parts of the city.** Birmingham as a city is changing rapidly. By keeping our ear to the ground the impact and possibilities of change can be heard and shared. (Hamid)

The USE-IT! project is a fantastic idea and experience. Training in have purposeful dialogue, deepening my personal knowledge of area and creating data that can really help in development. I think it also gets you closer to people, potentially creating stronger community bonds. You hear more of each individual's life story, promoting empathy, uncovering local issues and pointing towards action that needs to be taken. It was excellent and I hope it continues. (Mark)

I started my USE-IT! journey last summer when I saw an advert for community researchers at a coffee morning and attended an initial information session at Cape Hill. I attended a training day where I learned the theories and practice of the research and how to produce topic guides and conduct the interviews. Our first project was to be one that we were particularly interested in, and I chose to work on the Icknield Port Loop Development. Very shortly after that a number of other research opportunities become available. I was honoured to work as one of the researchers on the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer project. When the results from all of the research were compiled and the report sent to the Government it was instrumental in obtaining substantial funding for Birmingham City Council to set up a pilot project to deal with some of the issues involved. I was able to act as community lead in a couple of projects. The thing I enjoy the most about being a community researcher is the wide range of people I get to interview. **There are so many amazing people doing amazing things in and around Birmingham. I have learned how powerful these people's stories are, and I am delighted that we are able to use these stories to have such a positive impact on our local community.** (Jeanette)

I love to learn and especially about things on a deeper and meaningful level. My CR training has met and surpassed my learning needs. It provides theoretical knowledge and practical application, and importantly for me the high quality and very patient mentors that facilitate one's self development. **What really makes it successful is the equal valuing all knowledge, especially that of the trainees.** The accreditation that comes with the training enables remuneration for research work, there are no limits - the world is your oyster. The diversity of the cohorts of trainees gives testament to the sincerity of the inclusivity of the project. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had and continue to have as a CR. I am pleased to be involved with the planning process for the legacy of this project. (Gazala)

I got involved in USE-IT! project because I was impressed that a government funded initiative focusing on the Icknield Port Loop area. I have enjoyed gaining training on community research and also getting involved in workshops. **I hope the future will bring positive changes to the neighbourhoods as a result of USE-IT!.** (Hameed)

My story with USE-IT! began when I enrolled for Community Research Training. After recruitment I was familiarised what the research involved and the research process. Working as a community researcher enables me to support the development of the community with research work that will bring the most benefit to people living in the area. It also enables me to acquire knowledge and understanding of community and social issues. Since working with various projects and communities within USE-IT! I constantly develop new skills, update old ones and acquire specific knowledge. **Working as a community researcher has improved my time management skills, creative thinking and problem-solving ability.** (Shazia)

I have been so happy to be involved and do research on the USE-IT! project especially with Ola, Sara, Lisa and Dr. Peter Lee. In the training they all helped me a lot to get experience on how to approach people, talk to them and interview them. It has opened a new path for me because when I interviewed someone in my community to get their ideas about different subjects I had to translated things to English which has been was very helpful for my English as my second language. I can't thank you enough for everything you have done. (Hawar)

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM   USE-IT   European Union European Regional Development Fund   UIA

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This Zoom-in is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The Zoom-ins will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.

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