MiFriendly Cities
Evaluation Report

A final evaluation of the MiFriendly Cities programme in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

MiFriendly Cities

Contents

Executive Summary

The MiFriendly Cities programme was a 3 year initiative in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton which aimed at developing innovative, community-led and sustainable approaches to enhancing the contribution of refugees and migrants across the region. This was funded in October 2017 by the European Union's Urban Innovation Fund (UIA).

The programme represented a landmark intervention in terms of scale and breadth with regards to what has been previously attempted in both the UK and the EU. Including language classes, employment support, the chance to learn (and be accredited for) new skills, to set up a business or to develop a community project, the programme identified and delivered 31 different actions. These, delivered by 11 programme partners, were designed to both help the region's communities get the maximum benefit from migration but also to improve the sense of belonging and inclusion for those coming into the region.

This report finds that MiFriendly Cities has been a well-run programme that has made positive differences to the lives of those it worked with, and in the 3 cities in which it operated. Many of the outcomes of the programme have been innovative, sustainable and community-led. This is in-line with the original goals and expectations for the programme. It is a very real achievement that this delivery, and subsequent outcomes, have occurred in an unprecedented period of political and social upheaval in the UK and, also, in the midst of a pandemic and global shutdown.

In spite of the external circumstances in which the programme run, MiFriendly Cities engaged directly with at least 1,370 participants across Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. These participants came from at least 99 different countries and represented a full spectrum of ages and migrant statuses and experiences. The indirect reach of the programme was incalculable but many multiples of those directly engaged. This took place over 30 distinct areas of work. Here the partners met or overachieved on targets in 26 of these. This includes the delivery of 394 Share My Language sessions, 95 rights awareness sessions delivered to young people, at least 16 new social enterprises being started and 79 Citizen Social Scientists being trained.

MiFriendly Cities developed innovative ways of working with migrants and growing migrant-led social action and voice in the 3 cities and has left an evidence base of changing policy, practice, aspiration and integration for the best amongst migrants, non-migrants, employers and those seeking to work with migrants in the 3 cities.

Documents such as a guide for employers to employing migrants and "A guide to developing a MiFriendly City" online guidebook enable the influencing of change for the better in terms of migrant support across the 3 cities and beyond.

That MiFriendly Cities was able not only to produce positive outcomes, but to learn from these and share them, was a focus of the programme from the very beginning. Key transferable learnings from the programme are:

• An open approach without barriers to entry for programmes work in engaging a wide range of participants and in creating social and cultural contact between people of different backgrounds. This is important for both programme reach and in promoting integration and positive social relations.

• Convening a partnership with a wide range of organisations from different sectors, including statutory and community & voluntary, allows for a wide range of skills and experience to be harnessed and promotes more effective and holistic ways of dealing with participant need.

• Successful engagement of migrants and migrant groups with the offer of development and assistance in meeting aspirations is an effective way of promoting migrant-led social action and raising the profile and influence of migrant people and populations. However, projects and initiatives take time to develop and take off and that engagement and the building of social capital with migrants can be a longer term process that is non-linear.

This report evidences that MiFriendly Cities has improved the lives and opportunities of people living Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and has worked to make the 3 cities more cohesive and better places to live for all. A major challenge now faces the cities and partners in continuing and building upon this work. Legacy and sustainability planning has been strong with some works continuing and partners collaboratively securing further funding from new sources. However, other areas of the MiFriendly Cities work have either been wound down or ceased operating completely and, where trust and engagement has been built with local migrant communities, the partnership should aspire to keep these connections and relationships open.

The programme could not have been delivered without the confidence, and funding, of the UIA, and they are to be commended for supporting and enabling MiFriendly Cities. The recommendations made by this report are drawn from the evidence and experience of MiFriendly Cities to positively impact on how the UIA and other funders can award and plan similar future works, and how funded organisations can deliver, more effectively and impactfully. That the MiFriendly Cities programme was required to address the deficits that migrants from all backgrounds and in all cities face emphasises the pressing need for such programmes and the importance of learning from them.

With this in mind recommendations are split into 3 sections.

For the UIA in funding and developing future programmes similar to MiFriendly Cities in aim and/or scale, we recommend that:

1. Longitudinal studies of programme impact, sustainability and legacy are considered. This evaluation, and indeed any end of programme piece, is a snapshot in time and cannot, by definition, capture tangible outcomes around post-programme impact or evidence good practice definitively.

2. Closer liaison takes place with all programme partners and not just those managing programme contracts. This greater visibility could include regular attendance at programme meetings and one to one dialogue with individual partners.

With regards to cities looking to use the model of cross sector partnership working to become more migrant friendly, we recommend that:

3. A co-produced and agreed terms of reference between partners which covers any disputed or contentious terms be put in place in the early stages of collaboration.

4. Legacy and sustainability planning for the programme and programme end begins at the earliest practicable point.

5. A holistic working with clients/participants be employed. This helps to address issues that an individual has before they become a crisis point and encourages effective cross-referral between partners.

6. Initiatives which produce further outcomes, such as Citizen Social Science courses and the research undertaken by participants, be run early in the programme lifecycle to give fuller scope for impact.

Finally two more general recommendations around programme management are made. These are that:

7. There should be a standardisation of reporting data and typology across partners at the beginning of the programme. This should include standardised demographic data collection and should, if possible, be in-line with that collected at a national governmental level. In the UK this would be the usage of ONS data typologies.

8. Non-linear targets be employed in programme management and monitoring, especially in instances of new projects or programmes being launched. Few programmes or projects launch straight into the most productive phases of their lifecycle, and employing linear targets can lead to a deficit approach whereby providers are playing catch up to targets right from the start. This can be damaging to morale and working relationships.

1. Introduction

1.1. MiFriendly Cities

In October 2017 the EU's Urban Innovation Fund (UIA) awarded the MiFriendly Cities (MIFC) programme over £4m in a 3-year initiative. This programme, focussed in the 3 West Midlands cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and aimed at developing innovative, community-led and sustainable approaches to enhancing the contribution of refugees and migrants across the region.

The programme identified and delivered 31 different actions which were designed to both help the region's communities get the maximum benefit from migration but also to improve the sense of belonging for those coming into the region. Amongst others, programme interventions here included language classes, employment support, the chance to learn (and be accredited for) new skills, to set up a business or to develop a community project. This represented a landmark intervention in terms of scale and breadth with regards to what has been previously attempted in both the UK and the EU.

This innovative partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations was drawn from across the West Midlands and brings together a unique networks of skills, experience, knowledge and stakeholder reach. In many instances MiFriendly Cities was the first time that these partners had worked together. They were united by the ethos and aim of understanding how we can all benefit from integrated communities and the importance of recognising and the promoting the valuable contribution that refugees and migrants can, and do, make to the communities in which they live.

The MiFriendly City initiative included 11 partners. These are:

1.2. Evaluation Context and Aims

The MiFriendly Cities programme, when it was devised and launched, was an ambitious, large scale and revolutionary idea and series of proposed work packages. Over the duration of the programme, which has included Britain leaving the European Union and the Covid-19 pandemic, over 1,370 people in the 3 cities have been directly involved as participants and the scope of the programme and the subsequent impacts of it have grown beyond anything that could have been feasibly envisaged or planned for. Many more people have been involved indirectly with the work of the programme across the 3 cities. It is no exaggeration to say that MiFriendly Cities outgrew the original bid and plans in terms of both complexity and delivery.

This report is an evaluation of what MiFriendly Cities was, what it has become and what it achieved. Through this we seek to learn lessons from the programme and the delivery of it which can improve future practice in the 3 cities and beyond. Though programme specific targets and indicators are referenced and referred to, this is not a monitoring piece and, as such, is outcome, not output led.

It is recognised by all involved in the programme that the most important aspect of the work undertaken in the name of MiFriendly Cities was to improve the outcomes, and therefore lives, of people living in Birmingham Coventry and Wolverhampton. By understanding what did and didn't work well in the 3 cities, the legacy of MiFriendly Cities will hopefully be seen in other cities across Europe and the wider world which also seek to improve outcomes and lives for their citizens, both new and old.

All large programmes have areas of work which could be improved or which could have been delivered differently, and MiFriendly Cities acknowledges the importance of an honest appraisal of all areas of the programmes. Ultimately for the 3 cities, this has been a landmark programme in terms of its approach to migration integration and support. The aim of this piece is not just to assess and document the value and legacy of the work, but also to ensure that the participant cities, and others, are able to deliver better and more effectively in the future because of this documenting of lessons learned.

At, and since, inception MiFriendly Cities has aspired to be innovative, sustainable and community-led. Guided by these aspirations, the foci of this report, therefore, are:

- To show how MiFriendly Cities was delivered in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

- To assess the impact of the MiFriendly Cities programme and to determine the extent of effectiveness of programme delivery.

- To highlight areas of innovation, learning and other key themes for those involved in MiFriendly Cities, as well as those involved in other projects and programmes.

1.3 Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR) led the evaluation of the MiFriendly Cities programme and authored this report. CTPSR is a multidisciplinary, applied research centre based at Coventry University. Our focus is on research and action which grows the capacity of all actors to work towards peaceful and resilient societies. Building on Coventry's history in peace, reconciliation and social cohesion, we bring together expertise from across the world and every aspect of the social sciences and humanities to strengthen our understanding of the greatest challenges and opportunities arising from an ever-changing and connected world. We provide evidence and support on issues as diverse as local multi-faith action in the UK to national peacebuilding initiatives across Africa, aiming to support the work of local practitioners, governments, global organisations such as the UN and everyone in-between.

CTPSR has a strong belief in the importance and power of fair, nuanced and rigorous evaluation research. Our approach is grounded in a commitment to understanding not only the difference made through community-based action but also the processes, barriers and challenges experienced along the way: we believe it is vital to understand both what the impact is and how it is achieved. Wherever viable, our research is undertaken collaboratively with projects and participants – evaluation should be done with and not to people. Our evaluation approaches are always tailored to the needs of busy projects, working alongside delivery and ensuring wherever possible that everyone is able to benefit from their participation in some way.

2. Methodology

The evaluation of the MiFriendly Cities programme is a distinct work package within the programme and presented the CTPSR evaluation team with a clearly defined and detailed brief as to expectations and deliverables for the work. From this, the evaluation team identified suitable qualitative and quantitative methods through which to evaluate the programme and its workings.

The design of this evaluation was guided by two basic principles:

1) *Avoidance of 'one-size-fits-all' evaluations:* Different types of project require different evaluation strategies. A Theory of Change exercise was used to ensure appropriate targeting of evaluation activities i.e. minimising superfluous data collection and generating data relevant to some of the less tangible project outcomes and the ethos of the programme itself.

2) The evaluation team believe that effective evaluations can also have *process benefits*. The team were uniquely placed working with the MiFriendly Cities programme and with partners in an involved yet independent role. This enabled them to capture an understanding of how the projects and work packages function and fit into the wider programme, and by doing this, the team have been able to help them to articulate the underlying logic of their programme and generate new insight about how delivery can be strengthened.

2.1. Methods

The authors of this report took over the evaluation work package after the delivery of the Interim Report in December 2019. Following this, a *Theory of Change* session was convened and conducted with programme partners. This identified the underlying logic of the programme, acted as a team building exercise and mid-point review, and served as an introductory session between partners and the newly installed evaluation team. This comprised of a standard Theory of Change session, starting with the definition of programme aims, followed by a detailed description of activities and, subsequently, of intermediate outcomes. The discussion was captured using flipchart paper and post-it notes in order to enable partners to actively participate in the process. The co-produced diagram was then drafted and approved by partners to form the framework for this evaluation.

Following this, a mixed methods approach employing qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methodologies were used to evidence programme delivery and impact. This data informs this report and its findings. Where possible, and appropriate, programme data collected as part of the project management and reporting process was shared with the evaluation team. This took the onus away from already busy programme partners to produce new (and to some degree duplicated) datasets, and allowed for the double checking of data against project management logs and returns to the funder. Coupled with tailored quantitative data collected where needed, this has enabled the collection of a robust and comprehensive dataset.

20 formal semi-structured interviews were conducted with programme partners. These took place towards the end of delivery and supplement around 40 other shorter interviews with partners which took place during the programme. All partners were interviewed at least once, and thematic areas of discussion were structured around themes identified in the Theory of Change workshops and partner meetings.

Informed consent was provided for all interviews and observations. Where possible, consent was given in writing. Where this was not possible or deemed inappropriate (e.g. due to sensitivity around signing forms or logistical reasons), then informed consent was provided verbally.

The coding and analysis of the interviews, however, did not take place until after the analysis of the quantitative data was complete, allowing the findings from the quantitative data to inform the coding structure of the qualitative data. A hybrid coding approach of using deductive and inductive coding methodologies was employed. This content analysis model was used to analyse the interview data and to pick out recurring terms, sentiments and patterns and ensures that the findings are data-led and not researcher-led.

Qualitative data gathered in interviews was supplemented with ethnographic observations and notes from focus groups and workshops drawn from across the programme.

2.2. Limitations

This is a robust evaluation piece with a tested methodology and an experienced team. However, all research and evaluation has weaknesses and limitations. In this, the limitations stem from the data on which the evaluation is based. The evaluation team would like to recognise the efforts made by all partners to support the evaluation process and document that they facilitated swift access to project records, made themselves available for interviews and, where needed, they facilitated contact with their external partners and other stakeholders. Much more data was made available than was originally anticipated. The evaluation team had, however, very limited direct access to programme participants. In part this is related to the sensitivities of the programme and the vulnerabilities of some participants and their families. However, this lower level of direct engagement with participants is also due to the Covid-19 pandemic and issues around engagement, direct or otherwise, during the period of data collection.

3. A Theory of Change for MiFriendly Cities

Beginning in February 2020, a process was led by the evaluation team which aimed to construct a jointly-developed view of the 'change logic' of the MiFriendly Cities programme. A range of methods were used in the early parts of the programme to develop initial frameworks and tables for evaluation, looking at how the outputs of the programme could be grouped together and measured in a coherent manner. Out of necessity, much of this foundational work was based on how the programme looked on paper and what partners assumed would be achieved relevant to the original proposal. After more than half of the delivery period had passed and with a change in the evaluation team staffing, there was an opportunity to pause and bring partners together to reflect on how the programme was performing in reality and how it was being received by beneficiaries. This was an inclusive process, involving lots of reflection and discussion with each partner, which ultimately delivered a one-page vision of the programme, co-developed across the partnership. The Theory of Change became a central feature of the programme, key to how the impact of the programme was discussed, influencing multiple other communications and documents, including videos, toolkits, staff recruitment, academic articles and events. It also provided an effective foundation for evaluation and, thus, is central to the structure of the evaluation team's analysis and this report.

From interviews conducted after the Theory of Change process, the opportunity to reflect and take ownership of the programme was highly valued by partners. Crucially, as explored later in this report, the chance to have open, honest, less-structured discussions about what change was viable and desirable was seen as a key, positive turning point for many in how they related to the programme. This section presents the Theory of Change and provides some narrative around how the theory was created and the more detailed logic and assumptions which sit beneath it.

3.1. What is a Theory of Change?

Theory of Change is simply a logical way of demonstrating how social interventions can be conceptualised and organised around the changes they create in relation to a particular social issue. The process is designed to show how the **activities** of a project, programme or organisation (such as delivering training) create intermediate **outcomes** during and after their delivery (such as increased skills and confidence) which logically link to each other

and an overarching social **aim** (e.g. improved support services for a population). Crucially, a Theory of Change is an assumption-based model which creates a set of theoretical and causal links to be tested through implementation and evaluation.

3.2. Getting to the Theory of Change

For those looking to replicate the use of Theory of Change in similar programmes, a short description of the process follows.

A series of facilitated workshops and one-to-one discussions took place with representatives from across the partnership, from those who have been involved since before the programme's launch to those who were still in their induction phase. Participants were led by the evaluation team through three activities which aimed:

1. To collectively create an **aim** which in one short sentence describes what the MiFriendly Cities programme is trying to achieve, which all other change can feed into;

2. To consider and list the individual and everyday **activities** that comprise this area of work, which were then organised by their purpose rather than by when and where they happen or who is responsible for them; and

3. To theorise how each area of activities creates positive change in and beyond the three cities, based on assumptions of how that change takes place within a complex external environment. These are called **outcomes**.

The evaluation team's approach in this is to ensure that every voice in the process has equal weight. The final wording of the Theory of Change is a coherent bringing together of a wide range of people, from senior representatives from Coventry City Council who have oversight of the whole programme to volunteers who are former beneficiaries. The language is kept purposely simple and to-the-point to ensure accessibility, and the whole diagram underwent five iterations of comments, critique and amendments over the course of the programme to ensure its relevance to all partners and reflect changes in the external environment.

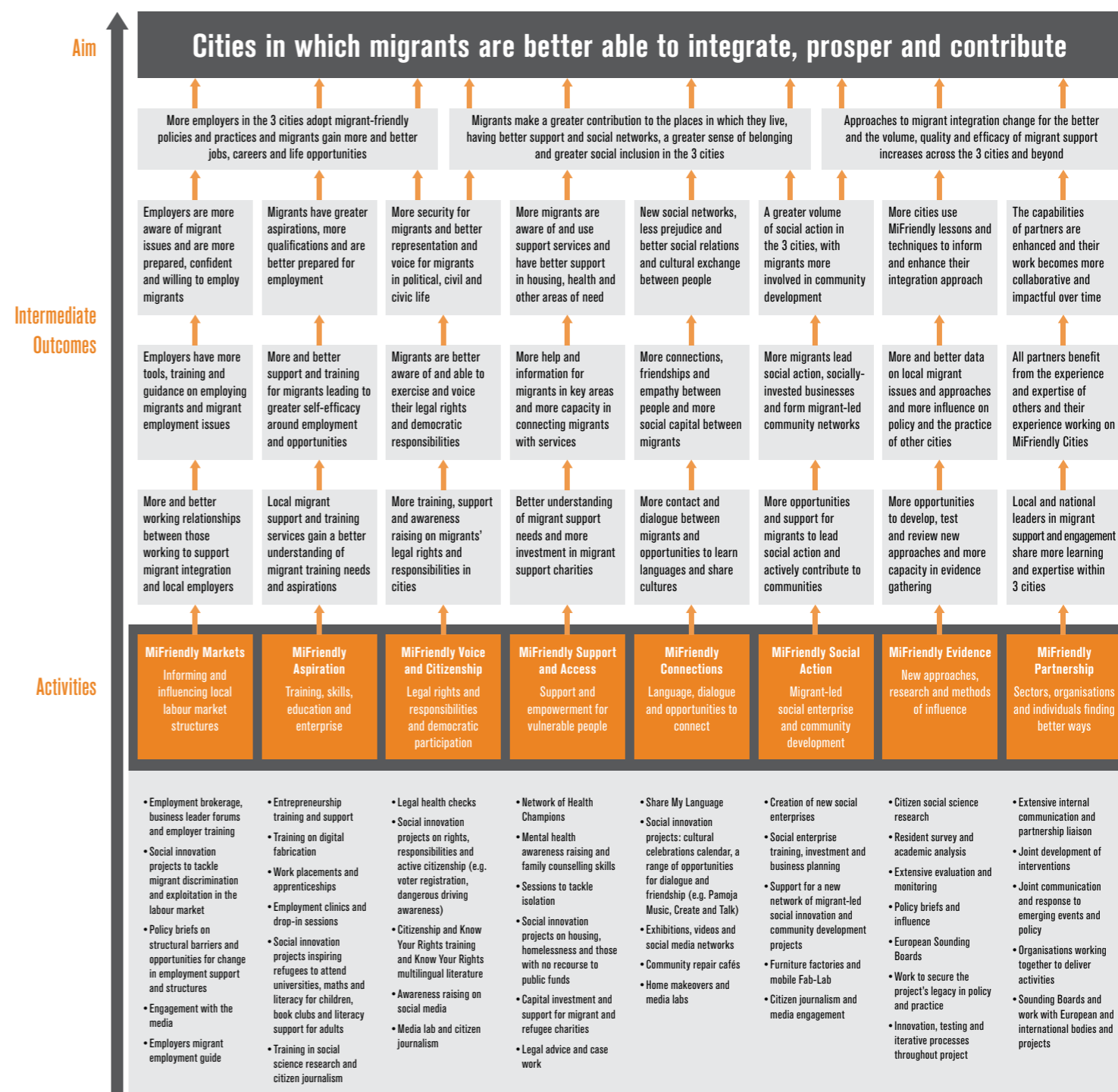The diagram can be seen in full in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Theory of Change for MiFriendly Cities

3.3. The Overarching Aim of MiFriendly Cities

Many of the discussions with partners about what the programme was aiming to achieve began with the language, ethos and vision contained within the bid: the focus on reaching and supporting migrants, on partnership and on innovation. The evaluation team, however, purposely asked partner representatives to follow the logic of these aspirations a little further in their minds and consider what the legacy of the programme will be overall, beyond how this is different to their core work: what will their local area look like if the programme is innovative, partnership-focused and successful in supporting migrants? What will the change achieve and for whom? From this discussion, an overarching aim was developed, critiqued, changed and agreed:

'Cities in which migrants are better able to integrate, prosper and contribute.'

This sentence reflects the many aspects of partner's visions which came to the fore, reflecting not just their roles in the programmes but also the ethos of the partner organisation to which they belong. The final aim is carefully constructed to bring together 4 key aspects of the programme team's aspirations:

1. **Cities**. As stated at regular points in this report, this programme is focused on cities as places of change, action and identity. For the MiFriendly Cities team, cities are not just places in which migrants live and work, and where migrants interact with non-migrants in the course of everyday life: cities represent efficient, extant units of governance: places in which charities, councils, businesses, universities, and citizens can bring their capacity together to change lives. In tackling national issues, modern urban planning and city management approaches rely and thrive upon the convergence: of teams, departments, organisations and sectors within cities. Beyond this, holding cities as the critical lens of action allows the programme to nudge city leaders, local authorities, charities, etc. to look outside their boundaries for practices, comparisons and inspiration: three cities learning from each other, hoping to inspire other cities in migration policy and practice.

2. **Integrate.** The term integration was a common feature of the Theory of Change discussions. This is not surprising given the reliance and prominence of this term in UK government policy since 2010. For this programme, however, the inclusion of 'integration' reflects the desire to support migrants in feeling that they belong in the three cities – through social networks, through contacts with those from different backgrounds, through support and connection with local authorities and through socially-minded contribution (such as volunteering, journalism or research). Underlying this, for many but not all, was a need to distinguish this focus from a perceived preoccupation with economic contribution which, particularly for many of the non-statutory partners, was felt to be overly dominant in policy and popular discourse. The programme took place through the peak of the public discussion around Brexit, in which migration and the role of migrants in the UK was central. For MiFriendly Cities, in response to this context, it is important to support a human-centric and humanising approach to migration which first sees people's aspirations as independent to and prioritised over the job roles people could fulfil, the employment capacity people represent, the skills people can bring, etc. The inclusion of 'integrate' is a subtle nod from the programme to the idea that whilst economic contribution and supporting meaningful employment is critical, social capital, belonging and socio-cultural diversity are as important, particularly if the programme is to avoid contributing to the ongoing de-humanisation of migrants in policy, media and beyond.

3. **Prosper and Contribute.** MiFriendly Cities does have a clear focus on employment but in a particular, nuanced way. Migrants, in the context of the programme, are viewed as in need of a range of services to support them to find employment: in understanding the UK system, in growing careers and in finding sustainable livelihoods. As will be shown in the activities of the programme, though, there are purposely two qualitatively-distinctive features of the programme's handling of this area: 1) a focus not just on getting people jobs but on realising and supporting people's skills and aspirations and 2) a recognition of the need to work with the markets in which migrants are to be employed as well as individual migrants. These features are explored in more detail later in this section, but overall this focus relates to the programme's ambition for sustainable change in structures and lives, beyond the short-term activities of the programme. Beyond employment, the programme's use of 'prosper' also relates to the desire to support wellbeing and the overcoming of a range of challenges and inequalities faced by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers across the UK.

3.4. MiFriendly Cities Activity and Outcomes

The programme represents a large, diverse number of interventions, from research and training through to capital projects and policy influence. A key part of the Theory of Change process was to decouple these activities from the partners leading and delivering them and from the programme's delivery timeline, organising them instead around what they will collectively achieve. Doing so allowed the development of 8 mixed areas of activity, each focused on achieving its own sets of outcomes. For coherence, the Theory of Change shows simply the links between each group of activities and a clear set of outcomes, whereas this report and analysis recognises the more complex links and overlaps between areas. These areas are discussed in brief below and explored further in the MiFriendly Narratives section.

3.4.1. MiFriendly Markets and Aspirations

As introduced previously, employment, skills, qualifications and opportunities for migrants to develop and prosper are central to the programme. The Theory of Change recognises two distinct but complementary areas of delivery in this area. In MiFriendly Markets, the programme has a wide range of activities which aim to inform and influence employment practices in recruitment, retention, legislation and workplace inclusion. These range from employment guides and training on legal requirements for employing migrants, to employment brokerage activities in which direct contact is made to businesses to understand their attitudes, positions, needs, interests and availability in relation to employing migrants.

In MiFriendly Aspirations, there is a diverse set of activities which aim to provide opportunities and encouragement for individuals looking to gain new skills and access to education (e.g. Citizen Social Science training, digital fabrication training and social innovation projects looking to encourage young migrants to attend university), progress in their careers and/or getting new jobs (e.g. employment drop in clinics).

Together, this is a recognition that supporting migrants with employment skills is an important in migrant support overall but only 'one piece of the puzzle'. The structures and institutions which support and contain employment, education and training, upheld by schools, universities, legislation and employers, need to change in order for significant change to be achieved.

3.4.2. MiFriendly Voice & Citizenship and Support & Access

These areas of activity recognise the need to provide a range of support services for migrants which address the vulnerability, discrimination, and inequality that many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the West Midlands face, but also the need to pair this support with attempts to inform migrants of the legal rights and protections available to them. MiFriendly Cities is committed to provide new, more advanced forms of protection as well as ensuring that migrants can access the protection and security already available to them. The former is about enhancing current provision; the latter is more about a lack of literacy in the way the support systems (such as health services and welfare systems) and democratic institutions operate. As examples of activities in this area, Central England Law Centre undertook significant community outreach, particularly with school-age children, to provide awareness raising sessions.

Under the banner of support & access sits the Health Champions programme which provides a good example of this type of work in aiming to increase migrants' awareness and use of health services and receipt of specific forms of health advice. Another key example is the capital investment into the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, which has expanded its space to be able to support a higher volume of people and to host events which support the migration-related causes.

Again, taken together these two areas of activity represent the need to influence structures which both support and exclude vulnerable groups – through strengthening people's knowledge of democratic routes to change, for example – and the need for individuals to have more skills and knowledge in order to support themselves.

3.4.3. MiFriendly Connections and Social Action

The assumptions behind these two areas are that social action and social capital go hand-in-hand in supporting migrants to both integrate and prosper. The area of 'MiFriendly Connections' is based on two forms of well-established logic:

1. providing opportunities for migrants to come together, share and form networks and friendships will allow for greater social capital within migrant communities and create a whole range of opportunities for people to prosper: support in times of need, feelings of belonging, positive norms around migration in-group identities in the UK, skill sharing, communal knowledge generation, etc. An example of this is Share My Language, a project which aims to support people to meet others and shares aspects of their language and culture.

2. providing opportunities for migrants to meet, share with and work with non-migrants (sometimes called 'the host community'), provides opportunities for forms of prejudice, misunderstanding, discrimination and hostility to be overcome and avoided, from both 'groups' – the current government refer to this as 'social mixing' but it's scientific routes begin in the 1950s in the foundations of social psychology, often referred to as 'intergroup contact' (based on G. W. Allport's 1954 book, The Nature of Prejudice). In this field, greater contact and dialogue within particular conditions, including when there is a common goal to work towards, is accepted as a legitimate means through which to reduce prejudice between groups. Tackling hostility and anti-minority/anti-migrant sentiment falls within this area and is a clear part of the MiFriendly Cities desired impact. An example of an activity which fits this is the Home Makeover part of the programme in which migrants are supported to learn and use DIY skills and paired with people in need of home renovations, bringing together migrants and non-migrants towards a common aim of home improvement.

Connected to this latter point, there are also a range of activities focus on social action, social impact and volunteering. These aim to encourage migrants to play an active part in their community through development projects such as, for example, the network of migrant-led social innovation projects, citizen journalism and citizen social science research. Also within this area is the social enterprise part of MiFriendly Cities which is focused on supporting – financially and through training and mentoring – migrant entrepreneurs to start new social enterprises and socially-minded small businesses, many of which have been extremely successful and most of which are, as shown in this report, still trading despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4.4. MiFriendly Evidence and Partnership

Legacy and sustainability is hoped for across almost all activities in the programme but is not more explicitly focused upon than in these two areas. MiFriendly Cities works by bringing together partners over the course of 3 years to work in an intense manner, in new ways and towards a broad set of outcomes: the theory of change makes clear that there are a range of positive externalities anticipated from this process, ultimately enhancing the support and practices of these organisations and the experiences of migrants engaging with them. Similarly, part of the responsibility that comes with the programme's commitment to innovation is a need to use and generate research, evidence and analysis which can itself create change and document the experiences and efficacy of innovative methods. In MiFriendly Evidence, the programme has invested in a mass resident's survey, a range of policy briefs, European sounding boards to share its experiences and an embedding team of evaluators supporting the programme from its inception.

Together, these commitments to research, evidence and partnership working seek to not only influence policy beyond the three cities but also to provide the opportunity for migrant support services and local migration policy enactment to become more effective over time. This longer-term vision is a central part of the programme and a core part of the funder's interests in the MiFriendly Cities model.

4. MiFriendly Data

The MiFriendly Cities programme generated a wealth of data drawn from across the 3 cities and 11 partners. Data collection and reporting was a pre-requisite for all partners and regular returns were expected, and delivered, to the UIA. The data in this section is drawn from these returns.

Overall, around 1,370 individual participants were recorded as being directly involved in the MiFriendly Cities programme. This is a large number of people and does not include those who were reached by the work. If the work of, for example the Health Champions outreach and CELC visits to schools were included, this number would be multiplied many times over. This section begins with a description and breakdown of the demographic details of the programme participants who were directly involved, and serves to set the context of the work and to showcase the outcomes of it. It then presents and analyses the data from the 31 different actions which make up the MiFriendly Cities programme.

4.1. MiFriendly Demographics

MiFriendly Cities was deliberately planned and designed to be an open and inclusive programme to all people across the 3 cities and not to focus on particular groups or individuals with certain status or leave to remain in the UK. Other programmes, in the 3 cities and across the UK, have found that where there are barriers and entry requirements to the services provided by projects and programmes, that the act of turning people away because they do not meet these requirements can have severely detrimental effects on their engagement and on wider integration and cohesion, as well as the brand image of the partners.

As such, the programme did not define who or what a migrant was and left the interpretation open to partners to deliver in ways which they saw fit. In part this was also aided by a desire, as articulated in the Theory of Change, for the programme to create more spaces for contact and dialogue between people of different backgrounds. The expectation of this is that such positive contact would lead in turn to improved social relations and cohesion as well as less prejudice between groups. This meant that the "host" communities in the 3 cities were to be included, where appropriate, either as participants or as beneficiaries. In doing this, the debate about whether second or third generation migrants, or people who have been in the UK for a long period of time but were born elsewhere, counted as migrants was moot.

Figure 2 below shows how long participants in the programme have been in the UK for at the time that they data was recorded. From the 1,371 individuals recorded, 466 either did not have this data or the answer was unclear and their data has thus been removed from the figure.
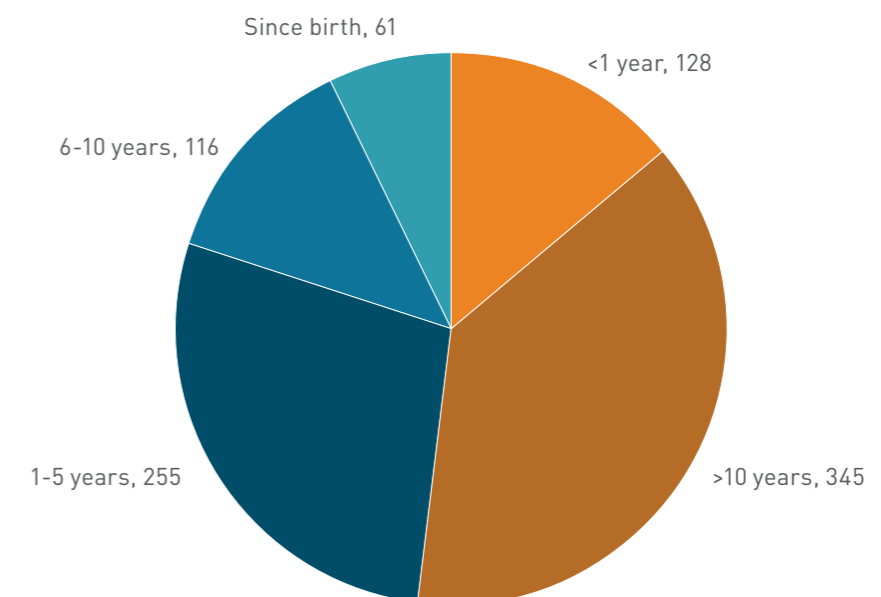

Figure 2: Participant time in the UK at first engagement with MiFriendly Cities

In this data, the high level of diversity of those who engaged with the programme can be seen very well. 61 participants were born in the UK with another 345 having lived in the UK for at least 10 years, so there was definitely a good level of engagement with what could be termed the "host" or "more settled" communities in the 3 cities. At the other end of the spectrum, and of great importance, is that 128 of the participants had been in the UK for less than one year. This is often the period in which migrants require the most intense levels of support, and so the ability of the programme to engage here is a real positive. Interview data suggests too that this number would have been higher, were it not for the Covid-19 pandemic occurring mid-way through delivery. This both slowed migration to the 3 cities (and therefore depleted the cohort) and made engagement with those who did arrive much more challenging.

Data was collected from participants in relation to both their legal status in the UK and their ethnicity. These are both challenging datasets to collect from people, particularly people who are in the UK under uncertain circumstances or those which they are not fully cognisant of, and from people who may have left their home country because of discrimination or fear based on their ethnic origin. However, these datasets are also patchy because of the lack of standardisation within them. For example, some partners used 'emic' descriptions (such as "refugee status") whilst others used 'etic' describers (such as "Limited Leave To Remain") and often nationalities were listed as ethnicities. This represents a lost opportunity in fully showcasing and evidencing the depth of engagement that MiFriendly Cities had.

What can be gleaned from the data though is that the data on participant status shows a great deal of heterogeneity. Within the data there are refugees, asylum seekers, EEA/EU citizens, British citizens, student visa (tier 4) holders, skilled worker visa (tier 2) holders and other categorisations. This shows that MiFriendly Cities were definitely migrant-friendly in the sense of being aware of the many possible ways of being a migrant, or having a migrant background in the UK, and managing to reach and engage with these.

A similar, high level of diversity and engagement can be seen in the participant ethnicity data. Here the five most represented ethnicity categories were:

- Black / Black British – African: 309 people

- Asian / Asian British – Indian: 151 people

- Any other White background, including those who define themselves as 'White – European': 109 people

- Arab: 66 people

- White British: English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish: 55 people

MiFriendly Cities participants were born in 99 different countries, with the largest number being born in India (120 people), the UK (104), Pakistan (66), Nigeria (60) and Sudan (55). There was no data for 288 participants and so the likelihood is that participants from over 100 different countries of birth were engaged in the programme. This is an impressive number and the diversity of the 3 cities, whilst self-evident from this dataset, further justifies the programme and the focus of it.

Linked to country of birth data is that there were 89 different nationalities represented in the dataset. The most common was British with 176 people, and this is likely linked to the fact that a significant number of participants were either born in the UK or have been in the UK for some time and become British citizens. Indian was the next largest nationality with 100 people, followed by Nigerian (64), Syrian (46) and Romanian (39). Data was not recorded here for 422 participants so, again, the true number of nationalities represented in the programme is very likely to be higher than that which is shown here.

Figure 3 below shows participants by their home postcode, with these postcodes then aggregated up in the city and surrounding area levels. In this dataset there was either no clear data for 398 of the 1,371 participants, and so they were excluded.

MiFriendly Cities was a 3-city programme but, even from inception, there were challenges expected around drawing boundaries around the 3 cities and any duty of care felt by partners towards would-be participants who did not live within catchment areas. Many of the partner organisations work across the West Midlands and this programme was not a regional one. This issue does not appear to have materialised to any great extent though, with only 60 participants in the programme living outside of the 3 cities and half of these from one cluster in Walsall. The interview data corroborates this with no partners suggesting that they turned away individuals on the basis of their locale.

What is clear from the data though is that participants in Coventry are significantly over-represented, compared to those from Birmingham. That there were more partners on the programme based in Coventry than Birmingham is likely a major factor behind this, but it was a recurrent theme in partner interviews that the programme was felt to be "Coventry-centric". Wolverhampton, interestingly, is not particularly under-represented, compared to Coventry though, when local population sizes are taken into account.

Data on gender was recorded for 1,178 participants. This is the highest number of completed data points for any demographic category and is suggestive that many of the participant registrations were completed by eye rather than by any interrogation of the participants. Within the data, 63% of participants were female, 36.7% male, and 0.3% identifying as Other. This is a good spread and shows that the programme engaged well across the population.
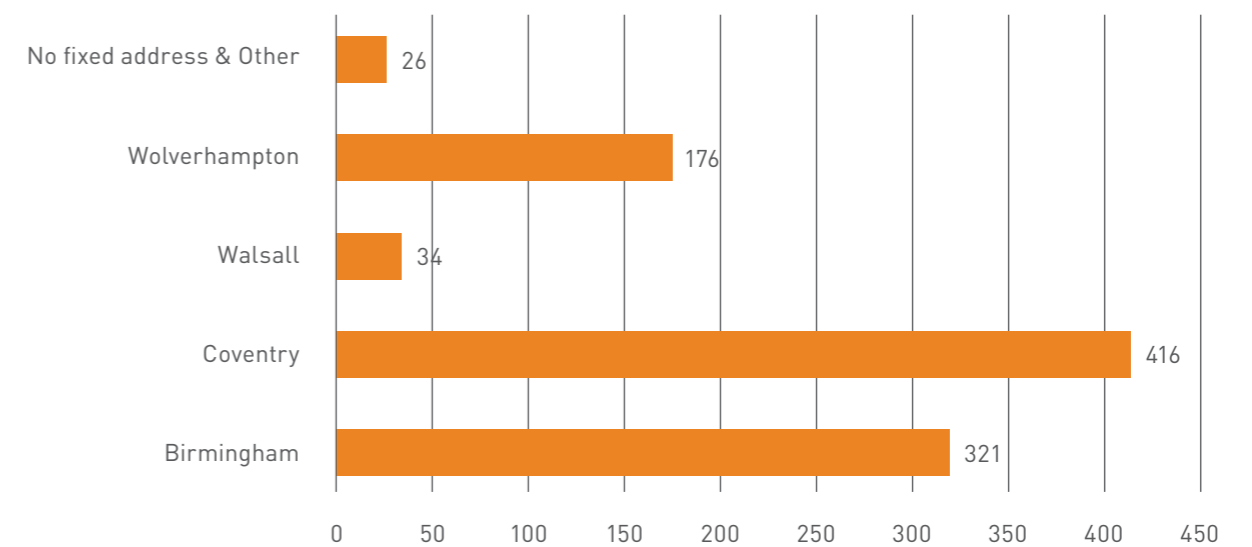

Figure 3: Participant home city at the first engagement with MiFriendly Cities

The dataset for participants by age at the time of their first registering with the programme can be seen in Figure 4 and is comprised of the 846 participants who did give their age with those who did not excluded from the set. Though there is some variation across the age bands, the general trend is one of the participants being drawn from across the full range and this demonstrates, similarly to the gender spread, that the programme was able to successfully engage with migrants with a variety of different needs and interests.

4.2. Issues with the Data

The data reported and used in this report does show the achievements and successes of the partners and the work undertake in the name of MiFriendly Cities, but it must also be caveated with the issues and challenges raised in both data collection and analysis. This is an essential part of the learning from the programme and is something which can inform better practice in other programmes and projects in the 3 cities and beyond going forward.
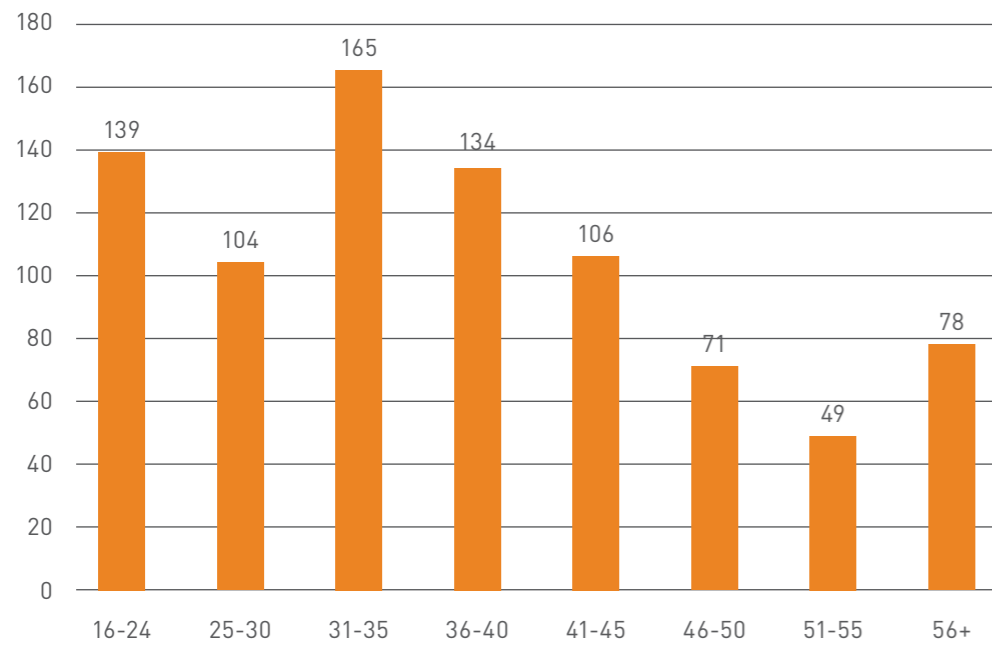
Firstly, the reporting of data was not standardised at the programme outset, and so partners recorded and reported data back in their own formats and typologies. This is typical of large, multi-partner programmes and projects, but does mean that there are some grey areas within the data and that there was some difficulty in coding responses and avoiding the double counting of participants. The standardisation of programme data to be collected at the beginning of delivery may be an area which the UIA looks to consider in future funded works.

Linked to this is that experience of the partners and evaluators in working with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other individuals of new, unsettled or uncertain status has shown though that however data is standardised and recorded, there is likely to be some ambiguity in how individuals choose, or are able, to define their status. The open approach which MiFriendly Cities took to delivery and working with individuals in the 3 cities is a commendable, and unusual, one and would have been undermined by any attempts at asking participants to produce documentation regarding their status in the UK. Here it is preferable to have a less detailed dataset than it would have been to have excluded participants or made them uncomfortable in engaging.

Finally, whilst it is a success of the programme that there was a substantial amount of cross-referral between aspects of programme delivery and that many participants took part in several programme projects or areas of work, gaps in the datasets made it challenging to avoid the double counting of participants. Researchers at Coventry University have worked through the datasets and have found that there were at least 1,371 distinct and individuals participants who took part in MiFriendly Cities. This does not include any participants where a name was not given and is therefore likely to be an undercount of the true number.

4.3. MiFriendly Actions

This section presents the final outcome data from the 31 programme actions. These are presented below in 30 rows here, as two ESOL packages have been combined. The most relevant or main theory of change pathways are flagged alongside each output, but this is not an attempt to silo them away. Nearly all of the 30 actions cross multiple pathways, and 3 have been deemed to have completely overarching impact and to not fit well enough into one main pathway.

There are also two major caveats to this dataset. These are firstly that this data, by virtue of it being recorded, only includes actions which were logged and reported, and so these figures are in all likelihood an undercount. Secondly, these outputs only include the work which was envisaged prior to the start of programme delivery and not other areas of work which emerged throughout delivery, or which were informally taken on by partners to provide extra or more holistic provision to participants.

Figure 4: Participant age at first engagement with MiFriendly Cities

Output	Theory of Change pathway	Description	Target	Actual
Employers Guide	MiFriendly Markets	A how to guide for employers converting work placements into apprenticeships	1	1
Job opportunities	MiFriendly Aspirations	Creating further employment, apprenticeships and opportunities	100	101
Digital Guide	MiFriendly Markets	An online guide to help employers employ migrants	1	1
Employer roundtables	MiFriendly Markets	Meetings between local employers to discuss programme-related issues	6	4
Employment brokers	MiFriendly Markets	Employment brokers reaching employers and companies	2000	1,791 with over 300 companies
Drop-in employment sessions	MiFriendly Aspirations	Walk-in sessions offering employment advice and guidance	60	76
Accreditation	MiFriendly Aspiration	Participants gaining qualifications and accreditation	250	161
ESOL classes	Overarching across the programme	Participants attending formal ESOL courses	500	696 (across 2 packages)
Skills training	MiFriendly Aspiration	Training in DIY, carpentry and painting & decorating	100	200+
Mobile FabLab	MiFriendly Social Action	Mobile FabLab resource used	1	1 resource used twice
Community Health Champions	MiFriendly Support and Access	Number of migrant Community Health Champions recruited and trained	60	61
Share My Language	MiFriendly Connections	Share My Language sessions run	100	446
Rights Health Checks	MiFriendly Voice and Citizenship	Number of free rights healthchecks undertaken	200	255
Rights awareness sessions	MiFriendly Voice and Citizenship	Delivered to support young people	115	95 with over 500 participants
Community and home makeovers	MiFriendly Connections	Makeovers delivered to vulnerable people across the 3 cities	100	106

Table 1: MiFriendly final programme outputs

Output	Theory of Change pathway	Description	Target	Actual
Community repair cafés	MiFriendly Connections	Number of community repair café sessions run	3	9
MiFriendly exhibitions	Overarching across the programme	Number of programme exhibitions run online or in person	3	3
Citizen Social Science	MiFriendly Evidence	Citizen Social Scientists trained and conducting research in their communities	30	79
Citizen journalists	MiFriendly Social Action	Citizen journalists trained and enabled through media labs	100	185
Volunteering	MiFriendly Social Action	Volunteers supporting MiFriendly projects and works	30	33
Social enterprise	MiFriendly Social Action	New social enterprises started across the 3 cities	16	16
Social innovation	MiFriendly Connections	New social innovation projects started across the 3 cities	15	16
Briefing papers	MiFriendly Evidence	Themed briefing papers produced	4	4
Pop up furniture factory	MiFriendly Social Action	Number of pop up furniture factory days ran	2	2 1000+ of upcycled furniture items
MiFriendly Cities Baseline	MiFriendly Evidence	Document produced and published	1	1
MiFriendly Cities scorecard	MiFriendly Evidence	Exercise undertaken	1	1
Mapping policy opportunities	MiFriendly Partnerships	Exercise undertaken and developed	1	1
Hope House	Overarching across the programme	New community building built and opened	1	1
Employers Survey	MiFriendly Evidence	Exercise undertaken and analysed	1	1
Residents Survey	MiFriendly Evidence	Exercise undertaken and analysed	1	1

The most obvious pattern in the dataset is that targets were achieved or exceeded for 26 of the 30 outputs, and some of these by a significant measure. Amongst these, over 200 people were trained in DIY, carpentry and painting & decorating against a target of 100; 394 Share My Language sessions were run against a target of 100; 255 people received free rights healthchecks against a target of 200; and 185 citizen journalists were trained against a target of 100. These are huge overachievements and reflect not only the ability of the partners to deliver, but also the legitimate desire to continue to deliver and serve the 3 cities after targets had been fulfilled.

The 4 outputs in which the target were not achieved in full were all initiatives or projects which relied on face to face contact. The project management data is strongly suggestive that in these cases outputs were on target prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and requirements for social distancing. This reflects both the reality of a situation in 2020 and 2021 which seemed far-fetched at the time of programme launch, and agreed changes in priority and focus for delivery which was agreed with the funder to reflect this new reality.

It is also likely to be the case, given the innovative nature of many of the outputs, that they simply did not work or work as well as had been expected. This is also a learning and there are areas here in which the 3 cities can take their practice forward and share these with others. The "A guide to developing a MiFriendly City" online guidebook which was produced and published as part of the programme is a practical, and useful, attempt at making this happen.

4.4. Overall

The quantitative data presented in this section shows the wide-ranging successes of the MiFriendly Cities programme. The demographic data, though flawed and with limitations, serves to highlight the depth and breadth of programme engagement across the 3 cities and in different communities within these. MiFriendly Cities can claim, with good evidence, to have reached out to either the full, or close to the full, spectrum of migrant backgrounds in the 3 cities. This resonates strongly with the open ethos of the programme and is of huge credit to all involved, especially as a significant proportion of the programme was delivered during a pandemic.

The diversity and reach within the data also illustrates the level of diversity, even within ethnic and national groups, in the 3 cities and wider West Midlands and emphasises the need for specialist programmes, such as MiFriendly Cities, to support these populations and the individuals which comprise them. This unmet need will also be seen in other diverse and superdiverse cities and regions across Europe and the world.

Alongside this, the project data from the outputs demonstrates the wide range and huge volume of work delivered by the programme. Taken together this output and demographic data show the scale of MiFriendly Cities and the achievement of the partners. Soberingly too, they also demonstrate the deficit which cities in are with regards to being or becoming migrant friendly.

These numbers, though important as a monitoring tool and for project management, are not the best way of understanding and learning from the outcomes and experiences of the programme and projects within it. Evaluation of social action programmes in a checklist format is reductive and takes away nuance and scope for the sharing of practice, both good and bad. Therefore, in the next section the work undertaken behind these figures are used to illustrate the working of the programme against the logic shown in the Theory of Change model. This is a departure from a traditional case study method of exhibiting the individual workings of a programme or project. In part this is necessary due to sheer number of works undertaken and the breadth of them, but also required to accurately demonstrate how the 30 outputs interlinked to form a programme ecosystem which worked to make the 3 cities more migrant friendly.

5. MiFriendly Narratives

This section of the report builds on the data in the previous section to showcase and examine the work done by the programme and partners in making the 3 cities more migrant friendly. It does this by following the logic articulated in the Theory of Change.

Structuring the analysis in this manner allows for the robust testing of the model, demonstrates how key facets of the programme created impact in novel ways and sets out areas which can readily be replicated and built upon elsewhere. The data collected shows an extensive array of activities and examples of positive impact from the programme; and so this section selects a large number of critical examples of change and challenge from across the programme in a logical manner in order to coherently represent the work of MiFriendly Cities. A traditional focus on siloed, single partner delivery of outputs would give a more disjointed view of the programme and the impact that the interventions and work have had. Using this approach instead, the evaluation team has been able to see the ecosystem of the programme and, within this, the value of close partnership working and of social interventions which are spread across a number of key delivery area and themes. The section takes each area of activity from the Theory of Change in turn, working from left to right on the diagram presented in Figure 1.

5.1. MiFriendly Markets

The MiFriendly programme recognises the importance of employment to migrant integration and the centrality of being able to work and prosper in the cities in which people settle. It purposely recognises that this requires a dual approach, representing the need to influence both structures of employment and the skills and confidence of individual migrants. The MiFriendly Markets pathway addresses the employer-side deficit of migrant employment, based on the well-tested assumption that employers, employment legislation and workplace practices provide a range of barriers to the successful employment of migrants. The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

This pathway of the Theory of Change is possibly the most straightforward to demonstrate with a clear line evidenced from start to finish. At an early stage in the programme, an Employers Survey was conducted with the results, then analysed to uncover employers' needs, concerns and issues around the employment of migrants. A critical finding from this was that employers had much less certainty around the legality of employing non-EU migrants than they did around employing EU migrants. This was a clear, and easy to address, deficit which caused barriers to employment for non-EU migrants. Roundtable events were then hosted with key local employers in the three cities to sense-check and share these findings before an employers' guide to employing migrants was produced and published. This guide contained legal guidance, appropriate terminology and contact details for local groups working locally to support migrant integration.

This process of building relationships with employers, identifying and addressing barriers to migrant employment and linking employers to those working on the frontline with migrants aimed to create both real impact in removing those barriers and a virtuous circle with the MiFriendly Aspirations pathway of work. Employment brokers from the MiFriendly Cities programme, including those based at the Refugee and

Migrant Centre and the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, made contact with over 300 different businesses on a cumulative 1,791 occasions. This is a huge amount of working between employers and organisations seeking to get migrants into the labour market and was backed up by an evidence-based guide and training which gave employers more confidence and guidance on employing migrants and migrant employment issues.

5.2. MiFriendly Aspiration

This pathway of work addresses the migrant-side challenges in finding employment and meeting and growing personal aspirations. This runs parallel to the MiFriendly Markets pathway detailed above. The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

Local migrant support and training services gain a better understanding of migrant training needs and aspirations
LEADS TO
More and better support and training for migrants leading to greater self-efficacy around employment and opportunities
WHICH LEADS TO
Migrants have greater aspirations, more qualifications and are better prepared for employment
WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO
More employers in the 3 cities adopt migrant-friendly policies and practices, and migrants gain more and better jobs, careers and life opportunities

This pathway of work initially aimed to identify migrant training needs and longer-term aspirations. It began this process by drawing on the wealth of experience of providers on the frontline and reaching out to already engaged participants and clients. Alongside this employment drop-in sessions were run in which needs, skills gaps and aspirations could be identified. In all 76 of these sessions were run and, though it was not their primary purpose, a substantial amount of information which informed programme delivery was collected.

"I had no idea on barriers in my previous jobs. MiFriendly Cities helped me to identify many issues, how skills are not utilised in a proper way. [MRAS people] have no aspiration, they end up doing lower-skilled jobs. We should get highly skilled people – but many [employers] are not aware of them out there. In their countries of origin, these people could run businesses and you would never know! This understanding was important."
– Programme Interviewee

Where these drop in sessions identified client needs around training or education, including ESOL, they were referred to other MiFriendly Cities projects which could address this. This quickly led to the creation of a strong cross-referral network and this was aided by the open access of the MiFriendly Cities programme. Generally, ESOL and other similar programmes are only open to certain cohorts and so it is a challenge for brokers and frontline workers to confidently refer clients, but this was not an issue in MiFriendly Cities.

Underpinning all of this approach was the idea that migrant aspirations are valid and real, and that the act of getting someone into a job, any job, is not enough. Here, networks were opened up which allowed clients to gain skills through training and development, or practical experience through volunteering or apprenticeships to pursue and gain jobs or roles which they wanted and aspired to. Links were also established with the MiFriendly Social Action pathway to link clients into initiatives such as the Media Labs and social enterprise development.

Though the citizen journalism aspects of the MiFriendly Cities work run by Migrant Voice is situated in the MiFriendly Social Action pathway of the Theory of Change, examples from this serve as a good illustration of the inter-connectedness of the programme delivery. An African-born migrant from Coventry first attended a Media Lab session in early 2020 as he wanted to learn more about how to write better so as to share his experience as a disabled asylum seeker struggling to

fund his education. Utilising the skills he learned with at Media Lab, he wrote an article about his plight for Migrant Voice and used these new skills to reach out to external news outlets. His story was published in outlets including Coventry Telegraph and I Am Birmingham, Talking Migration podcast, iHeartRadio and Qualitative magazine. This has given him credible experience as a published journalist. He also set up a fundraising page to help him with his tuition fees and achieved his crowdfunding goal by raising over £5,000 which has enabled him to work further towards his goals.

The example above is just one from many of the MiFriendly Cities programme being able to work with migrants in the 3 cities in a way which helps them to do, or work towards, what they want to do with their lives. The work in this pathway in opening up and enabling positive life and job opportunities for migrants, coupled with the employer-side work of MiFriendly Markets, created opportunities for migrants to enter the labour market, and enabled employers to consider them confidently as viable candidates. This is a mutually beneficial model and one which can be an exemplar for other programmes and cities.

5.3. MiFriendly Voice and Citizenship

Legal rights and legislation is clearly a central issue for migrant integration and migrant support programmes and is an area of support often delivered in the UK as a distinct, narrow and over-subscribed service, commissioned through local authorities and led by individual charities under restrictive contracting arrangements. The traditional model, as described in many meetings and interviews with legal practitioners working on the programme, means that often, proactive and more holistic forms of legal support are not available or at least not prioritised. MiFriendly Cities sought to address that with specific funding to support awareness-raising outreach activities and wider forms of legal support – beginning with 'legal health checks' – than would usually be offered under extant commissioning arrangements. This was combined with a range of more iterative activities linked to democratic participation and activities to raise awareness of the legal side of the challenges migrants face.

The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

More training, support and awareness raising on migrant's legal rights and responsibilities in the 3 cities
LEADS TO
Migrants are better aware of and able to exercise and voice their legal rights and democratic responsibilities
WHICH LEADS TO
More security for migrants and better representation and voice for migrants in political, civil and civic life

Core to this part of the Theory of Change was an offer designed and delivered by Central England Law Centre in which outreach sessions were delivered to young people in schools, reaching a range of young migrants who had never had contact with legal support services before, and were not aware of their own legal rights and the potential hurdles and issues which they face in their future, particularly in relation to legal documents. The findings from this part of the programme are broadly that school-age migrants have very limited awareness of their own legal rights and responsibilities, posing a range of risks for their future. The data from interviews shows how this, combined with the legal health checks for migrants of all ages and statuses, led to a range of people being referred to CELC for support on one issue, often leading to more in depth and wide-ranging support on multiple legal issues. MiFriendly Cities has been highly successful in showing a clear route from proactive outreach and legal health checks to resolved legal issues for migrants and, for the majority of clients, a well-evidenced, greater understanding of the legal protections afforded to them in the UK.

There are also a range of standout examples in which individuals and families have been refereed to CELC through the MiFriendly Cities activity, and the CELC has been able to resolve one issue such as a problem with immigration status paperwork and, through a process of spending time with clients, have discovered a whole range of issues related to benefits payments, housing,

debt and legal issues with family overseas. One of these stories of impact is of one particular client referred to the programme for a legal health check, eventually resulting in a man being connected and reunited with family members in his country of origin whom he had lost contact with, with support provided by the MiFriendly Cities team to process immigration paperwork for that family to live together in the UK. Critically, from this example and others in the dataset from this area, the key lesson is that the positive impacts which likely contribute so much to the prosperity and integration of those people in the West Midlands, would not have happened if it was not for the funding and approach of MiFriendly Cities.
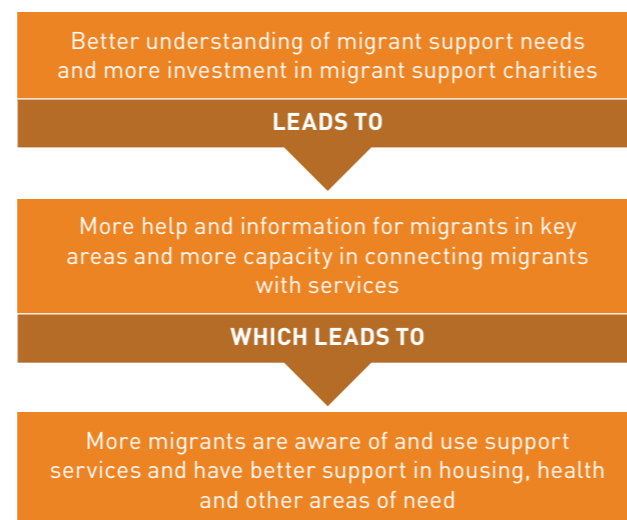
Sitting behind this success is the ethos of MiFriendly Cities in supporting forms of innovation and novel, flexible approaches. This paired with the extant belief of the charities involved, and especially that of CELC, in active listening, going beyond the initial issue and taking time to understand the experiences of clients, appears to be the crucial success factor. This ethos can be seen in the work in the employment strand, also, in ensuring that clients experience a person-centre approach and have time to explore aspirations beyond the need to earn money in the next few weeks. It is a flexibility often not permitted by current commissioning models and an area in which the MiFriendly Cities 'experiment' has showcased the potential of partners such as CELC and CRMC, once some flexibility and initiative has space to shine.

There is a strong logic in this pathway that once migrants are made aware of, and able and confident to use their legal rights, they will be more secure that their voice in the community will grow, and they will be able to seek better representation in political, civil and civic life. Interviews often drew back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs stressed that an individual cannot reach the higher stages of self-actualisation until basic human needs such as security and shelter are met. In this sense, much of the work in building the awareness, ability and confidence in migrants being able to use and access their legal rights is a foundation of the longer-term goals of MiFriendly Cities around building migrant-led social capital.

5.4. MiFriendly Support and Access

This area covers a range of interventions which start with the notion that migrants in the UK struggle to gain equal and effective access to public services. There are explicit and implicit barriers recognised throughout the research in this field (see for example Fisher and Range's 2015 report on Creative English[1]) which prevent access to support. This group of activities covers specific interventions on mental and physical health and access to the NHS, social innovation projects on housing and homelessness and a substantial capital investment which have led to the creation of a new space in Coventry for migrants to be gather, hold events and receive support across a range of services.

The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

Better understanding of migrant support needs and more investment in migrant support charities

LEADS TO

More help and information for migrants in key areas and more capacity in connecting migrants with services

WHICH LEADS TO

More migrants are aware of and use support services and have better support in housing, health and other areas of need

The Health Champions programme here is a clear example of impact which shows how, even against significant challenges, this change logic is valid. Health Champions were recruited in the 3 cities, managed by the two local refugee and migrant support charities, and provided basic training in a range of physical and mental health issues based on training content from Coventry University and, later, local authority public health leaders. The programme was extremely bold in its approach of putting a great deal of faith in volunteers with very little prior experience in this field. There were a range of challenges related to this over which issues should be addressed, the 'official' status of

volunteers and the validity of advice provided. Overtime, though, and in line with the more iterative and innovative approach of the programme, the programme found a small group of health champions in the 3 cities who receive training and began a range of outreach activities, from one-to-one encouragement for individual migrants reluctant to seek medical support to larger-scale events and new social media presences.

Throughout the process it was felt that the potential of the programme was hampered by the difficulties of managing volunteers, of defining what a health message was and what the specific role of a health champion was. Despite this, the target of 6,000 messages was met and, more importantly, at the point when the Covid-19 pandemic began, the programme had a readily available set of trained West Midlands migrants who were able to mobilise very quickly to support local public health messaging efforts, from early social distancing through to lockdown information in different languages and messages around vaccine uptake and hesitancy. There were a range of challenges to overcome and some difficulties in relationship management between partners but the ability to take a bold step in entrusting members of the community with a role in public health has ultimately provided a clear legacy. Both Coventry and Wolverhampton local authorities have invested in Health Champions programmes as a result of what effectively became a pilot which would likely not have happened without the innovative remit of the programme.
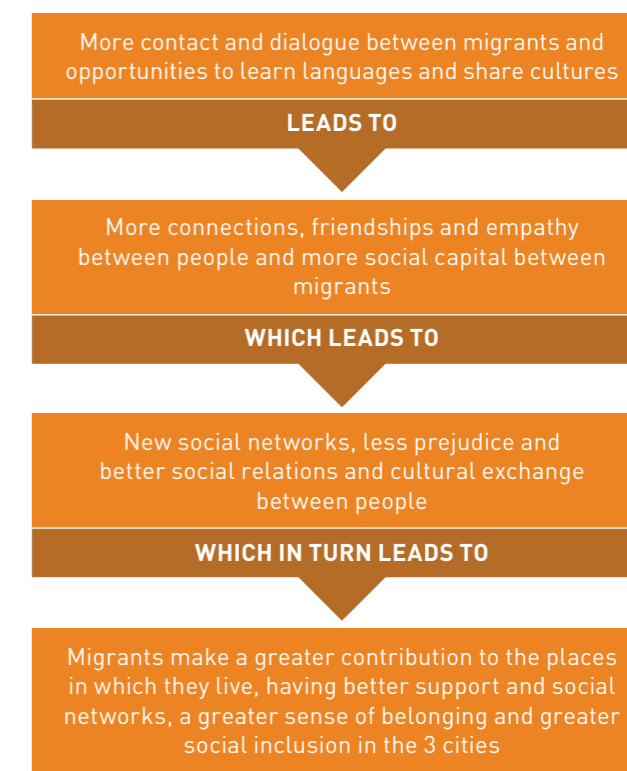
Away from the Health Champions work, there is evidence drawn from across the programme that as partnership working developed and grew, such as the volume and support offered by and between partners, as did the information accessible by partners and migrants themselves. There developed an almost tacit knowledge within the programme and partnership network by the mid and end stages of delivery, about which individual or organisation could help with a presenting need or issue. This knowledge, the fact that most aspects of the programme were open to all, and the networks developed enabled growth in cross-referral, formal or other ways, and migrants became better connected to the services which they needed.

This links naturally to the finding in the MiFriendly Voice and Citizenship pathway that the programme was able to create more holistic ways of working with clients by addressing their presenting need and uncovering, and helping with, other needs which are under the surface and not yet felt urgent. Voice, confidence and awareness are all key in migrants being able to use support services and find better support in housing, health and other areas of need.

5.5. MiFriendly Connections

Bringing people from different backgrounds together in structured contact, even in very informal settings, is a basic tenet of prejudice reduction and intergroup contact theory. Academic research and lived experience has shown time and again that if individuals and groups are bought together in this way on the grounds of commonalities and are treated equally and fairly by the organising body, then they become more receptive and open to difference. Additionally, they are then predisposed to hold less negative prejudice towards both those who they have met in the contact and people from the same backgrounds as those who they have met. This is an effective way of breaking negative stereotypes and creating more positive ones.

MiFriendly Cities harnesses this process of intergroup contact to seek to build connections between the different migrant groups in the 3 cities, and also the "host communities", with the eventual aim of helping all people feel a greater sense of belonging and inclusion where they live. The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

More contact and dialogue between migrants and opportunities to learn languages and share cultures

LEADS TO

More connections, friendships and empathy between people and more social capital between migrants

WHICH LEADS TO

New social networks, less prejudice and better social relations and cultural exchange between people

WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO

Migrants make a greater contribution to the places in which they live, having better support and social networks, a greater sense of belonging and greater social inclusion in the 3 cities

1. Evaluation of the Creative English Programme – Creative English (creative-english.org.uk)

It is relatively simple to evidence that MiFriendly Cities led to more contact and dialogue between migrants and opportunities to learn languages and share cultures. Engaging and involving people from across the 3 cities was a core aspect of the programme, and the MiFriendly Data illustrates well that people from different ethnic and national backgrounds were engaged, as well those from across the age spectrums and the geographic area covered. Crucially too, people with a variety of different statuses in the UK, and therefore people with different migrant (or non-migrant) backgrounds were engaged and bought together.

It is important to recognise and acknowledge again that the programme was aimed at, and open to all, from migrant backgrounds and that it actively sought to engage and involve non-migrants or the host community. This enables cohesive and integrated communities to be built, and steers away from segregation, ghettoization and the concept of parallel lives.

> *"Early in the project, a partner made a point: if the target group is 'migrants', you shouldn't bring in people who were already born in the UK. I said to this person: if it's about Migrant-Friendly Cities, you have to bring communities together."*
> *– Programme Interviewee*

Engaging with non-migrants on the MiFriendly Cities programme does not mean that resource intended for migrants in the 3 cities was allocated towards non-migrants. Instead, this approach was used to build and enhance capacity. An example of this is volunteers from White British backgrounds were involved in the delivery of practical skills training around furniture repair and upcycling. Some of these migrants who were trained then went onto deliver home makeovers as part of the programme to "host community" members and households. For many involved, migrant and non, this was their first opportunity to engage closely with people from different backgrounds to themselves: a fundamental first step in promoting cohesion and tackling prejudice.

The Share My Language projects run in all 3 cities are an excellent example of the ways in which people can be bought together with a focus on their commonalities, rather than their differences, and how these commonalities can be used as the hook to engage participants. The design and content of the SML work, along with the positive and open attitude of the providers, saw that women with young children were actively encouraged to attend and bring their children with them. Not only does this remove one barrier to engagement in

the form of childcare, and enable the project to reach a group that is otherwise often difficult to reach, it also gave common ground and social talking points to participants.

Similarly, the Media Lab projects not only bought people together over the common interest of the media works but led to the formation of strong social networks between participants and a greater understanding and appreciation of the other. This become especially important to many during the Covid-19 lockdowns when the need to shelter would have meant complete isolation for vulnerable participants who have limited social networks in the UK. The Media Lab work was able to carry on virtually and, in sessions attended by the evaluation team, participants from across the 3 cities spoke of the positive impact that the networks created by MiFriendly Cities had had on their lives and mental health over the period. There was also evidence of reduced prejudice and increased understanding between participants with cultural barriers being broken down and demystified. For one male participant from an Indian background, he had never previously spoken to an African woman but was now co-editing an online magazine with someone of such background whom he had befriended through the Media Lab.

Across the programme, interviews with partners and participants both saw repeated themes of migrants involved in the programme sharing their stories with one another and gaining confidence from knowing that they have other people around them who have similar backgrounds, issues and challenges. These networks have continued to exist after the programme has ended, with some Share My Language groups continuing to meet, formally and informally, and the Media Lab participants continuing their collaborations. The programme set up of bringing people together to share their cultures and backgrounds in collaborative and relevant ways has been successful in fostering a sense of belonging in the 3 cities and at leaving in place established and lasting networks between people.

5.6. MiFriendly Social Action

The MiFriendly Social Action pathway of work is one which is aimed at creating opportunities for migrants to become involved in social action, enterprise and innovation in the 3 cities, and upskilling, empowering and enabling migrants to then lead their own projects and businesses. This has strong crossover with both the MiFriendly Connections and MiFriendly Aspirations pathways but is important enough to the programme,

and distinct enough in impact, that it warrants a separate pathway.

The logic here, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

> **More opportunities and support for migrants to lead social action and actively contribute to communities**
>
> **LEADS TO**
>
> **More migrants lead social action, socially invested businesses and form migrant-led community networks**
>
> **WHICH LEADS TO**
>
> **A greater volume of social action in the 3 cities, with migrants more involved in community development**

MiFriendly Cities had explicit targets around, and projects aimed at, creating opportunities for migrants to lead social action and to be involved positively in their communities. These include the starting of new social enterprises and innovations across the 3 cities as well as schemes such as the pop up furniture factory and mobile FabLab. This gave very broad scope for different levels and depths of engagement for migrants in the 3 cities.

At least 16 new social enterprises were started up across the 3 cities under the MiFriendly Cities banner, and CUSE stats show that these cover 43 people aged 18-62 from 20 different nationalities. Over half of these businesses are expected to still be in operation in 5 years' time and, as of August 2021, these had directly created 85 jobs and worked with over 2,000 people in their local communities. Including new businesses and enterprises which have come about because of the intervention of the programme in creating the initial 16, it is possible that there are now over 40 new social enterprises operating in the 3 cities. This is huge, and sustainable, migrant-led community and business development.

Running parallel to this in the Theory of Change model is the social innovation projects, many of which were delivered by Migration Work. These show the same pattern of creating opportunities and supporting

initial social action, which in turn leads to migrant-led social action and which places migrants at the heart of community development in the 3 cities. A very good example of this creating opportunity for migrants to lead social action and to develop the networks and experience to grow these is the Pitch Day. This event enabled community members to develop and share their ideas. One of these called 'Get out from your box!' won the Pitch Day people's vote, and the support of Birmingham City Councillor, John Cotton. This winning project aims at fostering political engagement and was directly inspired by the 'Active Citizenship' briefing paper and a MiFriendly Cities workshop in Birmingham which ran on the same theme. Projects and pitches at the day were all given access and exposure to the West Midlands Funders Network too, as they had been invited to sit on the judging panel. This is a level of exposure which most grassroots individuals and organisations simply do not typically get and was made possible by the backing of Migration Work and the MiFriendly Cities programme.

Overall, the link between the logic of the MiFriendly Social Action pathway and the impact which it has is arguably the most straightforward and clearest of all the pathways in the model. The programme gives migrants access to opportunities to be involved in social action and then demonstrably enables and empowers them to lead their own social action and community development activities. There are migrant-led businesses operating in the 3 cities, people working in those businesses, and people volunteering in their local communities after the programme has ended because of this model.

5.7. MiFriendly Evidence

The MiFriendly Cities programme collected a wealth of evidence and data. Some of this was a deliberate exercise, such as the evaluation work package, and other aspects were a beneficial outcome of the practicalities of project management and accounting. The two strands of data collection were, though, linked at an early stage of the programme so as to allow the evaluation work package to be formative as opposed to summative. This means that MiFriendly Cities was able to learn and adapt to practice and learning over the duration of the work. Large programmes or projects which do not take this approach, and instead reflect only at the end of the funding period, tend to represent lesser value for money, produce less impact and be more likely to be viewed as missed opportunities.

MiFriendly Cities was funded to be a programme which

took new and experimental approaches to working with migrants and with city-wide integration issues and concerns. Therefore, a lot of work was undertaken which was novel and new. This meant that the collecting, analysing and sharing of data was central to MiFriendly Cities, even if it did not show up explicitly in work plans or packages at the start of delivery. The 3 cities themselves, the UIA and other cities cannot hope to learn from MiFriendly Cities without there being robust and credible data. This was emphasised during the Theory of Change and the formative logic that came with this is that:

> More opportunities to develop, test and review new approaches and more capacity in evidence gathering

LEADS TO

> More and better data on local migrant issues and approaches, and more influence on policy and practice of other cities

WHICH LEADS TO

> More cities use MiFriendly lessons and techniques to inform and enhance their integration approach

WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO

> Approaches to migrant integration change for the better and the volume, quality and efficacy of migrant support increases across the 3 cities and beyond

From the outset, MiFriendly projects were designed to be new additions to the offer and provision in the 3 cities. There was no use of the programme to continue with existing provision, rather new projects were developed from fresh ideas, or existing concepts and plans were used and deployed in the 3 cities from elsewhere for the first time.

An important example of the testing and reviewing of ideas and practices can be seen through the various ways in which the Share My Language projects were rolled out. In Coventry, these were run centrally through the local authority with a designated officer responsible for engaging with communities and running the project in the city. In Birmingham, and later Wolverhampton,

there was a radically different model, whereby the local authority contracted delivery of Share My Language out to community based providers.

The use of these different models gave scope for data collection and learning within the programme around the pros and cons of each approach. This in turn enabled empirical decisions to be made about delivery and provision which improved the quality, suitability and sustainability of it.

Both of the delivery models had strong positives around the way in which they were able to engage and work with participants. In Coventry the work, being local authority led, bought participants, often women with young children, into contact with the local authority for the first time and enabled a trusted relationship to be built between them and a Coventry City Council representative. This enabled the Officer to signpost and refer presenting issues across the local authority and other statutory bodies. In Birmingham, the contracting model meant that resource from MiFriendly Cities was directed out into the communities which the programme served. This created jobs, opportunities and exposure for both the contracting organisations themselves, and for the local authority in communities that are otherwise hard to reach and engage with.

> *"We went for a grant programme for SML instead. Some of the grant recipients were completely new organisations to us."*
> – Birmingham City Council Interviewee

Work between Birmingham City Council and some of the, often migrant-led, organisations, who delivered Share My Language in the city have outlasted MiFriendly Cities.

A good illustration of the benefits of trying new approaches in developing evidence bases can be seen in the Citizen Social Science programme. This trained over 70 people from the local area to conduct research in their own communities and to build evidence bases for change and action around issues that were important to them. These issues ranged from raising awareness of low voter registrations amongst international students living in Coventry to documenting the conditions faced by young asylum seeking mothers to the impact of Covid-19 on foodbanks in Birmingham. The very specific focus of many of these studies, either geographically, demographically or with regards to subject area make much of this work either very challenging or not possible for researchers who are not community-based to undertake.

However, impact here was restricted, as good deal of this training and subsequent research took place towards the end of the programme and so was not as impactful in the timeline of the MiFriendly Cities programme as it could have been if it were run earlier. This was due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an important learning, and future programmes with similar citizen researcher elements should look to frontload training and research.

> *"If you trained CSS a bit earlier, they could have done some more research for client group."*
> – Programme Interviewee

There is, though, a strong legacy of continued social action research and evidence building in the 3 cities coming from the Citizen Social Scientists. A number of graduates have taken on paid research roles with local authorities in the 3 cities, Coventry and Manchester Universities, and been involved in further EU funded migrant-related projects. Some of the research conducted on the course was also used to inform small funding bids from the community and voluntary sector which were aimed at increasing migrant provision. This also links back to the MiFriendly Aspiration pathways of the programme.
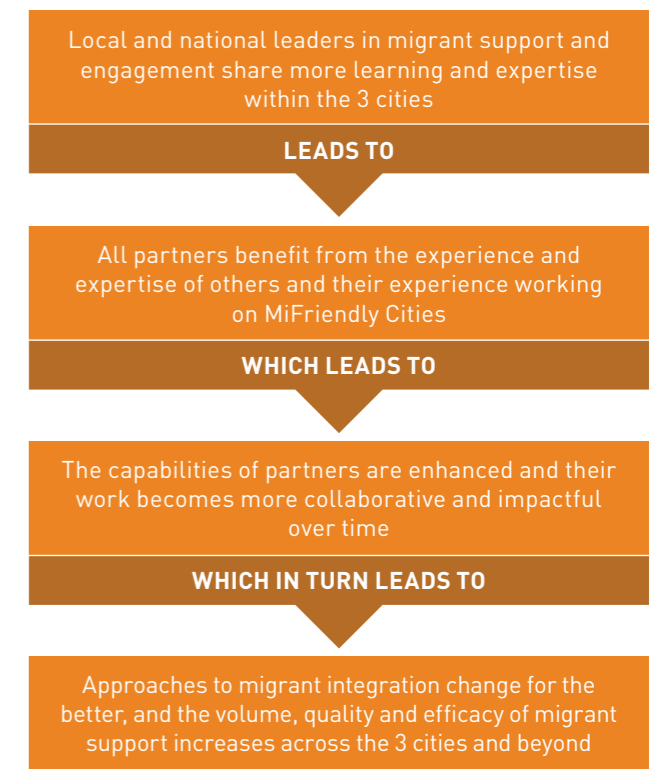
Data, evidence and experience from all aspects of the MiFriendly Cities programme have been disseminated and shared across the world to help other cities and regions improve their approaches to migrant integration. This includes the publication of formal policy and briefing papers to presentations from Citizen Social Scientists and programme participants to conferences and international panels. The employers' guide to employing migrants and the "A guide to developing a MiFriendly City" online guidebook are further tangible and concise examples of evidence being collected, used and influencing change for the better in terms of migrant support across the 3 cities and beyond.

5.8. MiFriendly Partnership

The MiFriendly Cities programme bought together partners who, though they shared common goals around migrant well-being and positive outcomes and were geographically close to one another, had either not worked together before or had not worked closely. The partnership mix of local authorities and policy makers, academics and practitioners at this scale was unique to the region.

The length of the programme, the mixed delivery methods and overlapping work packages and outputs meant that co-operation was needed for the programme to be successful. A positive externality which came from this is the development of close working relationships and social capital between partners. Therefore, both the success of the programme delivery and the likelihood of achieving lasting change and legacy both hinged on successful partnership working.

The logic, as articulated and tested here by the Theory of Change, is that:

> Local and national leaders in migrant support and engagement share more learning and expertise within the 3 cities

LEADS TO

> All partners benefit from the experience and expertise of others and their experience working on MiFriendly Cities

WHICH LEADS TO

> The capabilities of partners are enhanced and their work becomes more collaborative and impactful over time

WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO

> Approaches to migrant integration change for the better, and the volume, quality and efficacy of migrant support increases across the 3 cities and beyond

Coventry City Council led the partnership and were responsible for much of the formal co-ordination and coming together of partners. This is particularly true of the early stages of the work before relationships and areas of shared interest had developed and emerged. This dynamic of a partner leading on a programme which it was also delivering on is further discussed in the following section of this report. Largely though there is a feeling across the programme that the partnership working and regular programme management meetings did, despite

administrative tensions, bring local and regional experts and interested parties in migrant integration together to co-operate and share their practices.

"We were exposed to one another in a positive way."
– Programme Interviewee

This positive exposure and coming together benefited partners by giving them a greater knowledge of the related work going on around them and their client bases as well as, in the case of some partner organisations, giving them access and a showcase to their work that they had never previously had.

"I feel like as there was a bit of a lightbulb moment with the pandemic hit, when people suddenly realised there are thousands of people who have no recourse to public funds, and they no longer have jobs to support themselves. I mean, I feel like we've been saying this stuff for years, but if people don't want to hear it, because it is actually quite complicated and time-intensive."
– CELC Interviewee

This exposure and joint way of working combined to produce more collaborative enterprises between partners. This became especially true when there were key rallying points in the timeline. The first of these came around the mid-point of the programme when MiFriendly Cities sought to define legacy and appoint a Legacy Officer, and the second came shortly after with the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Both, in different ways, united partners. In the first instance, Coventry City Council led on encouraging a joint vision for what legacy looks like for the project and stimulated planning and thinking around this, whilst Covid-19 and remote working enabled more frequent meetings between programme partners and the coming together to share practice and ideas about how to move working with migrants online.

"It was really helpful to see what other people and organisations were doing. It felt like we weren't trying to find out what worked and what didn't work all on our own and all on the fly in a pressure situation."
– Programme Interviewee

"The local authority member set up the Zoom for the SML group, and we learned how to pass good practice to others."
– Share My Language Interviewee

The quotes above illustrate this well. The capabilities of

partners to respond to the challenges of Covid-19 and to continue to work with often very vulnerable and isolated cohorts of people in the 3 cities was greatly enhanced by the partnership working of the programme. Practical examples of this included the sharing of expertise around hosting meetings and events online, information about how to help migrants access the funds or facilities which they needed to get online, and ideas and tips about how to tailor content and delivery online. These are real examples focussed around one specific event and series of needs, but the partnership working across the programme saw microcosms of this occurring throughout.

Legacy was the other "rallying point" for partners which enhanced partnership working and collaboration. Here, legacy was seen at different times and by different partners in a series of different, but equally valid, ways. For some interviewees legacy and partnership working were very closely entwined and there was an expectation of continued collaboration and working together.

"Memories and skills don't go away. Networks will work further. Some things about the connections, synergies won't end overnight"
– Programme Interviewee

Whilst for other interviewees, legacy was very clearly seen as being defined and measured by practical outcomes, such as the submission of future funding bids and planning for further formal collaboration.

"The three cities and another in the West Midlands are working on a bid together now. Without the success of MiFriendly Cities it wouldn't have been possible. That's a very tangible legacy. Before this, local councils always did separate bids, then they started to talk to each other. So this is a positive."
– Coventry City Council Interviewee

The submission above is a massive achievement in terms of partnership working and all those involved felt that it is not the sort of work that would have been undertaken before MiFriendly Cities. MiFriendly Cities gave the region the confidence to attempt this sort of work and gave those involved in the partnership the ability and networks to pick up the phone and speak to other major regional players to make big bids happen. This is in the dual knowledge and trust that the partners can deliver and that they share the ethos of ensuring that the volume, quality and efficacy of migrant support increases across the 3 cities.

6. MiFriendly Key Themes and Insights

During the evaluation team's analysis of the data from the ethnographic observations, interviews and focus groups/workshops, a set of recurring ideas, experiences and insights emerged. Over the course of the analytical process, these have been brought together into coherent themes, presented in this section. These themes are a blend of insights on the programme's successes, challenges and sustainability as well as commentary on the processes used by the programme in its approach to innovation. Whilst this section is written by the evaluation team, the themes themselves are based first and foremost in data and come wholly from the experiences of those closest to the programme: they are reflective of conversations during interviews with a wide variety of partners.

5 key thematic areas were identified and are discussed in this section and attempts are made to look ahead at how these findings could potentially influence future programmes, both in process and impact delivery. The section is aligned with a key aim of the evaluation report: to set out how the experiences from this innovative programme can inform future practice in the 3 cities and in other cities around the world.

6.1. The Challenge of Definition

The MiFriendly Cities programme convened 11 partners from different sectors to work and deliver together, in many instances for the first time. Whilst there was a clear determination and intention to work collaboratively from all partners, there were a number of tensions around different working practices and organisational cultures. Often these challenges were most tangible around the perceived need to define key terms in the programme's lexicon. A variety of terms were given as examples of how the need to define the scope of the programme provided both barriers and opportunities.

6.1.1. What do we mean by 'migrant'?

Parts of the programme were intended to be open to a wide range of beneficiaries, both migrants and non-migrants, but other parts understandably required the scope to be limited to migrants in the 3 cities. This then meant a decision was required over what the term migrant meant in relation to entry to the programme's offer. Ultimately, for most of the activities, the term migrant was left open and, arguably, undefined. For some partners, this was a relative advantage in comparison with other, more restrictive, funding arrangements and meant that their work could reach people whom they would have ordinarily not have been able to include.

"The inclusiveness of the definition 'migrant' is a positive thing in this project. Participant data shows the inclusiveness of the region."
– Programme Interviewee

"Every project has some niche, but within MIFC you can support a very big group, you are not restricted in cooperation and supporting. It's a shame other project aren't as flexible as MIFC!"
– Programme Interviewee

The unusual, inclusive, nature of the programme did though lead to confusion and discussion throughout the duration of the work. This was particularly the case in frontline organisations which have a long experience of working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in more prescriptive funding models.

"There is an unclear definition of 'migrant' within this project. Who are they? Is it any person whose family or who hasn't been born in the UK? That's a large cohort with very different experiences."
– Programme Interviewee

Part of the issue here was that although there was clear messaging within the senior partner leads and those attending partnership meetings, this was not always trickled down and conveyed to frontline staff or volunteers. Based on the interview data, it is likely that some would-be participants missed out on inclusion in the programme because of this. Marketing and promotional material, particularly in the earlier stages of the programme took longer to produce because of uncertainties around who classed as a migrant and who was eligible to participate in MiFriendly Cities projects.

Beyond this, though, some partners felt a degree of concern that the open approach led to work that was not focussed on or prioritised to those who needed it or could benefit from it the most.

"Migrants – this one big group. It doesn't really work, so I think it would have been helpful at the beginning if we've done a bit of segmenting of target beneficiaries for the project. And I think we would be a better use of resources in some way, but we would have targeted this group of people and these type of activities, etc. to address identified needs. So you can say we're targeting undocumented young people because we've identified this need, we're targeting people moving from benefits to employment because we've identified this need."
– Programme Interviewee

This was a concern shared and one which reflects the work of many of the partner organisations who struggle on a day to day basis to get provision and to work with those who are most in need, and who fall through the cracks or out of focus in other areas of provision. More specific, targeted work streams here may have mitigated this, as would more open, productive and inclusive discussion on how the programme could best apply definitions to its diverse portfolio of activities.

6.1.2. Vulnerability and Integration

A similar lack of clarity around other widely used, but contested, terms such as 'vulnerability' and 'integration' existed. This is to be expected, given the wide range of partners and the different roles and fields from which they are drawn, but did cause slowdowns and tensions in the partnership which, with hindsight at least, could have been entirely preventable. Future multi-partner programmes could begin by co-producing an agreed terms of reference for such words and terms.

On a programme management front there was also ambiguity around some of the targets and indicators of the MiFriendly projects. This included indicators around Active Citizenship and health messages. With the former the concept was felt to be vaguely defined, whereas the definition of the latter was seen by some partners as being too broad and indicators on what a "health message" is or was lost any real sense of meaning.

> "What is a health message anyway? Is it 1 message to 6000 people, or 6000 messages for 1 person each? What is more important, the quality or the quantity? 6000 is an arbitrary number. What is better, a Facebook post that reaches a lot of people, or a very detailed one-to-one in-depth conversation? In my understanding, numbers are irrelevant in that respect. I see that targets are needed, but still."
> – Programme Interviewee

This lack of clarity around terms and definitions is indicative of the general strategic ambiguity which was described by most partners and possibly linked to the high staff turnover in the programme. This turnover was a recurrent theme in interviews but it was also acknowledged that this was unavoidable in many cases and not related to the programme or working conditions. Again, these challenges around definitions could have been avoided or mitigated with a clear and agreed terms of reference at the inception stage of the work.

6.2. Holistic Working

A recurrent theme in the interviews, and one which was interviewee-led, was that the programme highlighted the interconnectedness of issues, need and problems for individuals and groups. Few participants in the programme who presented a need had only one issue which required assistance and addressing. For instance, an individual with issues around employment could also be likely to have deeper, non-urgent issues around housing, status in the UK or debt, but these issues, typically, are only presented when they do become urgent and reach crisis point.

Central England Law Centre and Homemakers have caseloads of examples of clients who have all started off with them by presenting one problem but deeper interrogation of issues has found a web of vulnerability and life challenges. This illustrates how complex these challenges are and why the comprehensive and flexible approach is needed.

> "This project massively changed my understanding of migrant issues in our city."
> – Programme Interviewee

The open structure of MiFriendly Cities gave partners the time, access and scope to get beyond the initial presentation of difficulties and to work with clients in a deeper way, and then to react more holistically. This meant that there were early interventions and not just the firefighting of the presenting issue. This is a better outcome for clients and, generally, more cost effective and easier to manage for partners.

Importantly and possibly as a by-product of the partnership being convened, partners were given contact and access to migrant cohorts with whom they had previously not worked and were unaware of or had been unable to access and assist. There is plentiful evidence in the interview data of untapped demand in the 3 cities for training, ESOL, help in finding employment, legal advice and social contact.

> "Because we want to tell you that it's the crux of the problem for a lot of people, and you can't deny it and it is the reality of why people face so many challenges in finding suitable housing, not living in poverty, finding employment, progressing through their career, accessing whatever health services you know"
> – Programme Interviewee

This strand of discussion in the interviews covered nearly all of the MiFriendly Cities work package areas

and Theory of Change pathways with great detail around the inequalities in access to provision and the mutually re-enforced cycles of poverty, discrimination and need.

> "I'm saying the national policy environment creates so many structural barriers for people. Then MFC is trying to operate within that, and it's trying to create a welcoming and enabling environment in what is essentially an environment that is structurally very difficult, and why do young people need to get specialist legal advice? To prove that they got a right to live here, why do they need to pay thousands of pounds in fees? Why do they need to hear all of those? Yeah, so you know what I think about this years back. My point is: why aren't [these cities] migration friendly? It's partly about racism, and discrimination, and partly about poverty. Systemic poverty we have, and it's partly about the hostile immigration environment."
> – Programme Interviewee

There were recurrent and unprompted linkages between areas of work which could be, and where possible were, linked together in MiFriendly Cities to provide a more holistic and upstream series of interventions for clients. This was felt to be something that could not usually occur in the day to day working of many partners, and was an eye-opening experience for many as to how provision could be better delivered. This realisation that client vulnerabilities are interlinked and under-presented is a major learning from the programme and is suggestive that more holistic and casework focussed interventions are needed at an individual level to run alongside more generic and standardised offers.

6.3. Covid-19: Resilience, adaption and delivery

That a significant proportion of the MiFriendly Cities programme was delivered during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the disruptions to everyday life, migration patterns and working patterns that came with this, is an unavoidable aspect of the programme. It is of little surprise that the pandemic was touched on in all partner interviews and also that many instinctively began to self-define and frame their recollections of the programme into pre-Covid and in-Covid times.

With regards to project delivery, the diverse nature of projects and delivery methods in MiFriendly Cities meant that different strands of work were impacted in very different ways with some flourishing and finding a key role to play in pandemic response, whilst others were forced into hiatus and saw targets and levels of

engagement slip away through no fault of their own. Though the flexible and responsive attitudes of the UIA and Coventry City Council are to be commended, for partners in the latter cohort, this was still a source of immense frustration.

> "Some things were overdelivered, some things couldn't work anymore, especially those courses and community programmes that were meant to be face-to-face."
> – Programme Interviewee

The Furniture Factory was typical of the MiFriendly projects which relied on the use of physical equipment and space and which would not only have been unsafe but also, at times during the pandemic, illegal to undertake.

> "Our targets were achievable before the pandemic, but then they became impossible to achieve them. Some of the staff was furloughed, an important co-worker of ours passed away, and when lockdown was lifted, the regulations were still too strict for us. We had problems with regular testing of our existing participants, and we could not take new participants, as their Covid status was unclear."
> – Programme Interviewee

A challenge for all of these projects and delivery methods which were placed on Covid-19 related hiatus was maintaining contact with participants and their momentum and enthusiasm. Particularly where participants had little other social contact or interaction, besides their MiFriendly involvement, the data shows that many partners took extra time to continue to engage remotely and virtually with them because of a perceived duty of care.

> "Apart from language development, people also knew that there is a space every week where they could see each other. It was really important. Isolated people were hit by pandemic even more. We were worried for them."
> – Programme Interviewee

This pastoral care is not something which is recognised in project management outputs or programme targets, or which partners had to do, but undertaking this engagement is true to the ethos of both MiFriendly Cities and the individual partner organisations, and is deserving of recognition and mention here.

Whilst some delivery methods struggled and projects were side-lined, others saw new impetus and focus, particularly the Health Champions work.

"The task of Health Champions was more unclear before the pandemic. After the pandemic started, it became clearer what the most important messages are to spread."
– Programme Interviewee

The Health Champions model allowed for the quick translation and dissemination of urgent public health messages during the pandemic, and reached people living the 3 cities via means which otherwise could not have been met in more formal, organisation-led ways by partners. There were teething problems and the Health Champions did, according to interviewees, unwittingly pass on false information on several occasions, but within a relatively short period Health Champions were reminded of the importance of only using official links and sources in their messages. Overall though, the response of the Health Champions became a key part of public health messaging in the 3 cities and *"likely saved lives"*. In Wolverhampton, the City Council are still using the Health Champions WhatsApp group to share information about vaccinations and other public health messages.

The Citizen Social Science course run by Coventry University benefited from the online model adopted during the pandemic. A CSS cohort ran in traditional in-person format towards the beginning of MiFriendly Cities delivery and attracted 5 participants, but the cohort which ran in February 2021 saw 74 participants sign up and take part online. Reasons for this greater sign up were given by students as being the flexibility which it gave to them around other commitments (including childcare), that they were more comfortable and confident online than in entering a university building, and that the financial costs and commitments were lower. Even though MiFriendly Cities would pay for travel for participants to attend in-person CSS courses, this was still a barrier to participants with low incomes. Being reimbursed for travel requires an act of faith on the part of the participant that this reimbursement will definitely happen and that it will happen in a timely manner. Interviews with online participants suggest that they would have not been willing to take this leap of faith and therefore would not have attended an in-person course. Coventry University are now looking to continue with CSS delivery in online only formats following the experiences during Covid-19.

In terms of partnership working and the project management of the programme, the effects of the pandemic and disruptions were largely positively framed by most partners. Central England Law Centre describe the realisation that there are a very large number of people

living in the 3 cities who have no recourse to public funds or statutory support as a "lightbulb" moment for other partners and feel that this affected partner thinking more than any presentation from the Law Centre had previously.

This and the relatively smooth transition for partners to online ways of working, even if not delivering, meant that partnership working was generally perceived as being better and more open after the disruption of lockdown than before. Some partners attribute this to more frequent (online) meetings with other partners, some to the programme coming together to tackle a common enemy in Covid-19, and others, perhaps more pertinently to the innovative nature of the UIA, to the focus on prescriptive targets and outputs being lessened and shifted towards finding new ways of working.

"The pandemic took some of the paperwork stress away, so in the final year more delivery was possible."
– Programme Interviewee

And to repeat an important observation:

"Some things were overdelivered, some things couldn't work anymore, especially those courses and community programmes that were meant to be face-to-face but we were given space to adapt"
– Programme Interviewee

Overall, the qualitative data shows that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on MiFriendly Cities was surprisingly varied and, in more ways than may have been expected, positive. It did mean that some work could not be delivered but it also shone new, and bright light, on other areas of the programme, and encouraged newer ways of working to deliver and closer partnerships between statutory bodies and migrant-led areas of community outreach and action.

6.4. Programme Structure, Bureaucracy and Management

The subject of programme structure, management and bureaucracy was one of the most common, and contentious, thematic areas to emerge in the partner interviews. Discussion here often became a distraction from covering topics around programme delivery and frontline work undertaken with participants in making the 3 cities more migrant friendly. This is unfortunate but reflects the lived reality and experience of nearly all partners, whichever side of the bureaucratic and programme management divide they were speaking from.

This section therefore does not seek to apportion blame or to take sides for or against partners in the programme. It instead will focus on what can be learnt by partners and other cities and programmes to make future delivery and management of multi-partner programmes more optimal. It is a reality of funded work that reporting and programme management are, and will be, required of partners, and there are areas of learning and reflection here from MiFriendly Cities.

One of the main themes in the interviews with partners was the difficult juxtaposition between the MiFriendly Cities programme aspiring to be innovative and dynamic, and the management of the programme and the reporting methods being perceived as being *"fixed"* and *"driven by the original bid"*. The balance between delivering work in the ethos of MiFriendly Cities and delivering towards the targets of the programme was a fine line to tread and, as performance and payments were linked to the meeting of targets, the programme began to naturally gravitate towards a target driven model.

"This project is heavily target-driven. It is the targets that are discussed at project meetings, not the social impact."
– Programme Interviewee

"We should focus on the approach, not the numbers of participants."
– Programme Interviewee

The position that this placed Coventry City Council as programme managers in was largely understood and appreciated by interviewees.

"Any externally funded project needs to fit the funder's requirement. It causes frustration, but needs to be done."
– Programme Interviewee

"I think it was massively complex for Coventry City Council. What they possibly weren't great at was translating that down to the partner level into something more simple and manageable. So maybe that's the criticism. I think they did a good job, and they were trying to do the best within the understanding of contract management"
– Programme Interviewee

There were perceptions of organisational culture clashes in the way that programme management was handled, and of how meetings were arranged and held. This is

likely a reflection of a number of factors including the different organisational cultures in the public sector, the community and voluntary sectors, and the personalities in the room. A rarely acknowledged facet of the programme meetings was that nearly everyone present was senior in their own organisation but not senior in the MiFriendly Cities partnership and that this, naturally, creates power imbalances and challenges in operating.

Coventry City Council were in a difficult position in the programme operating in dual roles as the contract managers and as delivery partners on the project. This creates a challenging dynamic in the relationship between them and other partners, and impacts the wider programme. This observation is not a critique of Coventry City Council and the management of the MiFriendly Cities contract, but rather is a critique of the model and something for UIA to consider in future multi-partner projects. The UIA could also consider having a greater presence in the programme in meeting with partners and attending programme meetings. In essence, this could remove the partner managing contracts from the undesirable *"middleman"* role in mediating between partners and outputs.

Interviewees described a greater level of flexibility and leeway in adapting and working as the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded. Here, the programme management team at Coventry City Council and the funders at UIA were seen as being responsive and receptive. This was a common pattern whereby there were lots of underlying strains and tensions in the programme, a dislike for administration and the target-driven nature of reporting all reinforced the existing pressure on partners of delivering a major project with a diverse client group in an often challenging environment.

The word *"pressure"* was very frequently used and Coventry City Council was perceived, at least early in the programme, as being the source or the face of this pressure. However, when Covid-19 struck in early 2020, there was a shift in where this pressure was perceived in coming from and how the programme was managed overall and run by partners.

It may be overly simplistic to attribute changes in programme administration and the pressure felt by partners to the pandemic though. A relatively common theme, albeit not emphasised by interviewees, was that building up social action projects, particularly with disengaged or hard to reach groups, takes lead in time.

"Massive, big pressure, and we just started the programme. I still don't know why there was so much pressure and why we were expected to do so much within a short timeframe. Even the season was not good for that type of activity. But it was like: you have this contract and now you need to deliver. We understood that, but it was all about the targets"
– Programme Interviewee

It is entirely possible, and output data bears it out to some degree, that progress towards meeting targets was not linear over the whole duration of the programme, and that pressure was building on perceived underperformance in the earlier delivery phases before the projects had any chance to run to their planned capacity. This lead in time required to get works up to capacity, and the subsequent lack of mitigation for this with regards to performance indicators, is an important learning for all multi-year programmes: non-linear targets should be considered where appropriate.

This is further qualified by a perception amongst several interviewees that the partnership working and programme delivery had gone through a hard initial teething phase and now were both starting function much more effectively.

"Unfortunately, I don't think [the partnership] has reached its potential. Yeah, I think we're just getting to the point where we could start to have that."
– Programme Interviewee

"Relationship is an ongoing thing, we constantly needed to learn from it. This is a big project with a lot of information. Relationship [among partners] got better with time."
– Programme Interviewee

Much as with the non-linear progress of the output targets, the partnership and relationship building, especially in a new, high pressure environment, can, and did, take time. It was a source of frustration to some interviewees that the programme ended, as it was reaching a productive phase of outputs and partnership work.

6.5. Legacy and Sustainability

Legacy as a concept was built into the MiFriendly Cities programme from the very beginning with the view to a legacy strand of work coming online and beginning midway through programme delivery. At the end of 2019 and into the start of 2020, the programme partners began discussions around the appointment of a Legacy Officer to the work, and co-produced a job description and key outputs for the role. This was seen as a "rallying point" for partners and all were engaged with the principle of the appointment. The interview data shows that the appointment was regarded as a turning point in the longer-term focus of the programme.

How the work of MiFriendly Cities could continue after the end of the programme was a theme in all interviews and was interviewee led. It is a positive sign for the programme that the interviewee was always exploring how it could continue, and not questioning whether or not it should. This aside though, there was little consensus between partners as to what legacy or sustainability mean in the MiFriendly Cities context, with two broad camps emergent.

In one camp, legacy and partnership working were very closely entwined, and there was an expectation of continued collaboration and working together between partners and/or other involved groups or participants in the programme. This fits with the more tacit model of community development. In the other camp, legacy was very clearly seen as being defined and measured by more tangible outcomes, such as the submission of future funding bids and planning for further formal collaboration. The evaluation team believe both to be valid expressions of legacy and sustainability and both will be explored and interrogated in this section.

There is plentiful evidence in the qualitative and quantitative data of new networks being created amongst migrants and the organisations working with them across the 3 cities. Often these have resulted from the first engagements which migrants have had with the MiFriendly Cities programme, and developed from there into independent and robust social capital. In one typical instance, 3 Iranian volunteers attended a workshop hosted by MigrationWorks and ended up becoming involved in later exhibiting their own work and the social innovation projects. In another such example from early 2020, a 'Community Sewing Group' joined up with a project called 'Game of Homes' in an exhibition in Wolverhampton called 'This is me!'. This involved groups and individuals coming

together from different ethnic communities, cultures and religious groups to promote greater awareness and understanding of each other's faith and ethnic heritage and to showcase their work. This laid the groundwork for future collaborations which are now ongoing.

The more macro level, and harder indicators around legacy and sustainability are relatively easy to capture and to document. There is now a closer level of co-operation and shared working across the relevant local authority teams in the 3 MiFriendly Cities, and collaborative bids involving all 3 and other West Midlands cities have been written and submitted for externally funded work which can follow on from this programme. There is a strong feeling amongst the involved partners that this would not have happened prior to MiFriendly Cities, and so the bids themselves, and the working relationships, are a strong legacy indicator of the programme, as well as a desire on behalf of the 3 cities to continue building towards cities in which all those living within them are supported.

A further ongoing example of the capacity and legacy built by the programme is the involvement of Migrants Work and participants in MiFriendly Cities projects in a bid to the Home Office to work on the prevention of modern slavery. This bid and partnership stems from issues identified in the 2019 MiFriendly Cities Employers Survey that identified barriers which employers in the 3 cities faced in employing non-EU migrants. This evidenced an employer-side gap in knowledge and skills around right to work and immigration policy for non-EU migrants, and a workshop in March 2021 with 36 local employers gave more detail and insight to these deficits. Migrants at Work, a migrant-led social enterprise which was supported by the programme, are now working with the Home Office on developing these findings into a pilot training package for employers. This shows strong legacy in the 3 cities with regards to the capacity of migrant-led social action and enterprise but also nationally in the ability in influence wider policies and employers.

The LEAP project in Coventry has also seen a de facto extension of some areas of MiFriendly Cities delivery, including elements of Share My Language. This, in part, was felt to be due to the success and the evidence base of delivery during MiFriendly Cities. That the concept was able to be developed and tested with UIA funding and then to continue afterwards is exactly the development of innovative thinking and practice that the programme is supposed to enable.

Finally, the construction and opening of Hope House, the only capital infrastructure project in the programme, is a major contribution to the sustainability of migrant-led social action and provision in Coventry. Hope House is a venue for co-working, exhibitions, support groups and community events for all in Coventry, and will serve to bring migrants and non-migrants into contact with one another. This would not have been built without MiFriendly Cities, and it being in place now has lifted the capacity and capability of migrant-led social action in the city going forward.

An often overlooked area of legacy of the work done by the programme and partners is the impact that it has had on the lives of people in the 3 cities. The work done by Central England Law Centre, for instance, has seen over 100 migrant children granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and this, by definition, is a lasting impact that will outlast any funding stream and give those young people a greater opportunity to lead prosperous and secure lives. In discussions around legacy and the management of it at a macro level, these more micro level human impacts should not be overlooked or taken for granted.

The ending of the programme also brought to the surface the challenge of ending delivery to participants and this is understandably an emotive issue for partners involved in frontline delivery.

"If the project ends, it will be a brutal abandonment. For a long time, we did persuasive communication, spent lots of time with building trust and community. So some continuation should be there, people need to be motivated, it can't be ended now. The last session is coming"
– Programme Interviewee

Especially where participants have been engaged in a programme or project for the first time, either because they are new to the UK or because they have been socially isolated in the past, there is often an expectation on the behalf of the participant that the provision which they are accessing is business as usual. Therefore, the idea that it ends and that there is no continuation, follow-up or replacement is not considered and comes as an upsetting shock. Partners who delivered frontline expressed concern in interviews that they will need to continue to provide unfunded provision to some participants after the programme ends just to keep them engaged and not to lose the confidence and trust

that has been built up during MiFriendly Cities. This is a common issue in all funded social action projects and programmes and is not unique to MiFriendly Cities, but some interviewees argue that a greater focus on legacy during the programme may have helped avoid or soften this hard ending.

"No doubt that even though some things continue, if you don't have a gradual approach to how you follow up on people, meet, provide equipment, provide a space, they will fall off the cliff. Some things will be lost, which is bad. Lots of things are just finishing. The next project, the next funding arrives. Everyone was so committed to this work, but this funding is over, and so is my two colleague's roles. It is a big problem."
– Programme Interviewee

Similar concerns around a drop off and lack of legacy planning, but in terms of MiFriendly Cities content and material rather than people, was also raised by a number of partners.

"There hasn't been enough planning for the future in this respect. How can we continue using the MiFriendly Cities platforms, and so on. So much of content won't be used anymore once the project is over."
– Programme Interviewee

For some partners, the planning and collective thinking around legacy and sustainability was only really seen in the lead-up to the appointment of the Legacy Officer. This perception is a marked turning point for many in the way that the programme was viewed internally and managed.

"The tone changed and there was a point when we started talking about the legacy work. People started to shift their head away from target to what we are actually trying to achieve and what are we trying to learn, yeah. That was like the first meaningful conversation we had when we started talking about the legacy officer."
– Programme Interviewee

Across the majority of interviews on the legacy and sustainability of the programme, there were questions around whether or not the Legacy Officer could or should have been appointed earlier, or even at the beginning of the programme. The work undertaken by the Legacy Officer was universally praised and seen as beneficial, but those partners who either faced the cliff-edge in terms of client provision, and/or who haven't secured

further funding and been able to keep staff in post after the programme, tend to lean strongest towards an earlier appointment.

There appears, from the data and experience of the programme, to be little doubt of the positive impact that the Legacy Officer made in terms of ensuring the sustainability of networks and some areas of work, in promoting the programme externally and in helping secure further funding for migration and migrant-led community development work to take place in the 3 cities. That legacy and sustainability was put on the agenda of the programme with around half the duration of delivery to run was also seen as being an important factor in focussing the mindset of partners to looking beyond the programme. However, that legacy and sustainability was not defined or fully discussed until this point is highlighted as a weakness in the programme by a number of partners and early appointments of legacy staff, or at least discussions of legacy and sustainability, should be considered in future large programmes.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

MiFriendly Cities has been a well-run programme that has made positive differences to the lives of those it works with, and in the 3 cities in which it operates. It has achieved this in an unprecedented period of political and social upheaval in the UK and, also, in the midst of a pandemic and global shutdown.

Despite the circumstances in which it operated, MiFriendly Cities:

• Engaged with at least 1,370 participants across Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. These participants came from at least 99 different countries and represented a full spectrum of ages and migrant statuses and experiences.

• Delivered on 30 distinct areas of work and met or overachieved on targets in 26 of these. This includes the delivery of 394 Share My Language sessions, 95 rights awareness sessions delivered to young people, at least 16 new social enterprises being started, and 79 Citizen Social Scientists being trained.

• Developed innovative ways of working with migrants and growing migrant led social action and voice in the 3 cities.

That the partnership has delivered a complex and highly diverse programme in spite of the difficulties faced is a credit to them. The ethos of the MiFriendly Cities programme was maintained as circumstances, ways of working and client group needs changed.

The complexity and wide range of both work undertaken and stakeholder groups involved informed the need for the approach taken by this evaluation. The formative process, starting with the Theory of Change and with data gathered over an 18-month period allowed for the capture of externalities and change in the programme as well as a valid and robust dataset of final outcomes. As a learning exercise for the partnership, and other cities wishing to emulate the programme, this is important and this could not have been achieved in a more summative piece.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic affected programme delivery and did inhibit much of the direct engagement and face to face working which was planned for the mid and later stages of the programme, there were still very real examples of impactful and innovative approaches to making the 3 cities more migrant friendly. Key learnings here are:

• That an open approach without barriers to entry for programmes work in engaging a wide range of participants and in creating social and cultural contact between people of different backgrounds. This is important for both programme reach and in promoting integration and positive social relations.

• Convening a partnership with a wide range of organisations from different sectors, including statutory and community & voluntary, allows for a wide range of skills and experience to be harnessed, and promotes more effective and holistic ways of dealing with participant need.

• Successful engagement of migrants and migrant groups with the offer of development and assistance in meeting aspirations is an effective way of promoting migrant-led social action and raising the profile and influence of migrant people and populations. However, projects and initiatives take time to develop and take off, and that engagement and the building of social capital with migrants can be a longer term process that is non-linear.

These are tangible outcomes which have improved the lives and future opportunities of migrants living in the West Midlands and which have made the three cities involved better able to serve those who live, or in coming years will live, in them, including non-migrant populations. This was a core purpose of the programme.

Though formal delivery and monitoring of the programme is now over, the next phase in the lifecycle of MiFriendly Cities is a crucial one and there is much to be gained, or lost, by how the legacy and sustainability of the work plays out. The focus on legacy in the final phases of delivery, driven by the appointment of a full-time Legacy Officer, was hugely important, and the benefit of this approach will continue to be felt in the West Midlands for many years to come. Having 3 large local authorities in the same region collaborating on the programme and building working relationships over the duration has led to a number of bids and opportunities for follow on work to take place, and in some cities work is already ongoing at the time of writing. Some areas of the MiFriendly Cities work though have either been wound down or ceased operating completely and, where trust and engagement has been built with local migrant communities, the partnership should aspire to keep these connections and relationships open.

The UIA are to be commended for funding and supporting MiFriendly Cities and take a share of the credit for the benefits and impacts to the 3 cities which have been reported here. There are, of course, learnings which can be drawn from MiFriendly Cities that can positively impact on how the UIA and other funders award and plan similar future works, and how funded organisations can deliver, more effectively and impactfully. With this in mind, recommendations are split into 3 sections.

For the UIA in funding and developing future programmes similar to MiFriendly Cities in aim and/or scale, we recommend that:

1. Longitudinal studies of programme impact, sustainability and legacy are considered. This evaluation, and indeed any end of programme piece, is a snapshot in time and cannot, by definition, capture tangible outcomes around post-programme impact or evidence good practice definitively.

2. Closer liaison takes place with all programme partners and not just those managing programme contracts. This greater visibility could include regular attendance at programme meetings and one to one dialogue with individual partners.

With regards to cities looking to use the model of cross sector partnership working to become more migrant friendly, we recommend that:

 3. A co-produced and agreed terms of reference between partners which covers any disputed or contentious terms be put in place in the early stages of collaboration.

4. Legacy and sustainability planning for the programme and programme end begins at the earliest practicable point.

5. A holistic working with clients/participants be employed. This helps to address issues that an individual has before they become a crisis point, and encourages effective cross-referral between partners.

6. Initiatives which produce further outcomes, such as Citizen Social Science courses and the research undertaken by participants, be run early in the programme lifecycle to give fuller scope for impact.

Finally, two more general recommendations around programme management are made. These are that:

7. There should be a standardisation of reporting data and typology across partners at the beginning of the programme. This should include standardised demographic data collection and should, if possible, be in-line with that collected at a national governmental level. In the UK this would be the usage of ONS data typologies.

8. Non-linear targets be employed in programme management and monitoring, especially in instances of new projects or programmes being launched. Few pieces of work launch straight into their most productive phases of their lifecycle, and a deficit approach where providers are playing catch up to targets because of a linear structure is damaging to morale and working relationships.

To conclude, MiFriendly Cities has improved the lives and opportunities of people living in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and has worked to make the 3 cities more cohesive and better places to live for all. In challenging, and unprecedented, circumstances partners from a range of disciplines have come together and overcome obstacles, internal to the programme and external, to make this work and to create a successful programme. It is unfortunate for the 3 cities, those that live in them and the partners that the programme has ended, as it reached a very productive and impactful phase in its lifecycle. Partners should actively look, where appropriate, to continue the work of MiFriendly Cities and to work together in doing this.

A final thought on the MiFriendly Cities programme is that all the outputs and work and achievements of the programme, and there are very many, have been needed to address the deficits that migrants from all backgrounds and in all cities face. Reflecting on this emphasises the need for programmes like MiFriendly Cities, and the importance of learning from them.