

# THE GOVAN COMMUNITY PROJECT REBUILDING HOPE

Design Effectiveness Awards Entry 2019

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It's an unfortunate reality that those who can be impacted most by the power of design are exactly those who can't afford it.

In 2015 we began working with a small local charity who offered essential help to the then fast-growing number of conflict refugees and migrants arriving into the South of Glasgow. With little finances available, we dedicated a fixed budget of our team's time to help them help others.

This work transformed the organisation; aesthetically, culturally and financially.

Our challenge was to help turnaround the financial fortunes of the charity, enabling

them to keep transforming the lives of thousands of some of the most vulnerable and destitute in our society. All, using brand strategy and design.

Our strategy, to focus the brand's messaging and the staff's valuable time onto seeking grants from national bodies rather than donation-led fundraising, led directly to a succession of funding wins.

Our brand identity, renaming and rearticulating the organisation's purpose and personality,

enabled it to talk clearly and confidently to each of its radically different target audiences.

Our smarter approach to day-to-day design enabled a team without any design resource or agency support to continue to create effective on-going communication; cutting the costs of marketing as a proportion of overall spend.

Collectively, this transformed the organisation's fortunes. In a market where near identical local charities, with identical levels of council funding and identically increasing numbers of refugees to support all saw flat-lining or declining revenues – the new Govan Community Project increased its income by 120% – three times our original target and an ROI of 211%.

Above all however, the true impact of this work was on the lives of those the group has touched. Due to the charity's improved financial strength, the organisation was able to increase their full time team from just four – to fourteen. Twice our initial two-year objective.

This has enabled 2,600 more hours of desperately needed asylum advice and support, helping transform the lives and hopes of over 850 more refugees, in one of the poorest communities in the UK.





## The Govan and Craigton Integration Network, as they were then known, is a charity in Glasgow working to support migrants and refugees and help them integrate into the local community.

### Introduction to the charity

They are one of several 'integration networks' across the city, providing independent support for vulnerable people through the asylum process, offering English classes, an essential interpreting service, a community flat as a safe place to meet, run a food bank and offer confidential hate-crime reporting.

The group also works to help integrate people into the local area and tackle acute destitution and poverty in the community.

### Background & Context

Between 2014 and 2016 the numbers of migrants fleeing into Europe increased significantly. Due in part to the Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars, in 2015 over a million refugees fled into Greece, Italy and Spain (UNHCR). Many then continued on to seek refuge in the UK. Upon arriving, most were then redistributed into 'dispersed accommodation' across the UK to allocated areas with excess housing stock. One such area, which received more than nearly any other was Govan, in Glasgow (The Press Association).

Govan is one of the most economically deprived areas in the UK. Despite once being one of the world's leading shipbuilding communities, today the area has the 8th highest deprivation score in the country, and childhood poverty stands at 38.4% (University of Liverpool/ PopChange).

Through this same period in the UK, austerity was just starting to have an impact on public spending. Declining revenues to local authorities meant that funding to help councils manage asylum by 2015 had been cut by 37% compared to 2010 (HuffPost/ Home Office).

It was a culmination of each of these factors in 2015 which led to the group seeking our help. Their community was at the apex of the UK's migrant crisis, with tens of thousands of vulnerable people being sent into one of the poorest areas in the country – with little additional funding. And it was up to them to offer the support these people, fleeing crisis and war, so desperately needed.

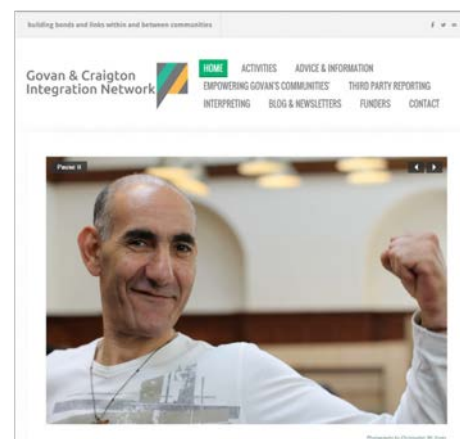


Image above: Govan & Craigton Integration Network's website before the rebranding.



The challenges:

- Insufficient funding and growing demand on services had led to successive year-end deficits and a near-insolvent financial position, with dwindling cash reserves. The charity needed an injection of income – quickly.
- Three radically different target audiences, making communications uniquely challenging:
  - Migrants and refugees; vulnerable, fearful and often with little English language skills
  - The local Govan community; often hostile to migrants and third sector charities alike
  - Sector funders; seeking inspirational but trustworthy recipients for their limited funds
- A confusing and restrictive brand identity, not connecting with any of these audiences. The organisation was neither professional or clear enough to communicate to sector funding bodies, nor approachable enough to communicate to refugees and local people.
- A minute marketing budget, meaning no design resource or marketing team to activate any work. The solution needed to be exceptionally simple and practical to use.
- A pressure on the wider sector, from donors and sector bodies, to not allow the costs of operation to eat too far into the revenues of the charity. A need for marketing to therefore remain a small proportion of overall spending.

Our objectives were:

1. Increase income by 50% within just two years; hitting a 20% increase to £240,000 by Year 1, and a further 33% to £320,000 by Year 2.
2. Reverse the existing deficit position of -£17,992 to a surplus of £35,000 within 2 years. (Based on anticipated annual increases in expenditure of 10% in Year 1 and Year 2.)
3. Grow the reserves above £50,000 within 2 years.
4. Ensure that marketing spend does not cut into this extra revenue, maintaining

it below 2% of overall expenditure (against a Year 1 figure of 0.78%).

5. For this additional financial strength to enable an increase in the number of full time employed staff from four to six, significantly boosting the charity's support capacity.

Our scope of work was:

- A full rebrand of the charity, including a new name and design look and feel.
- A brand strategy, to help them achieve the financial turnaround required.
- A brand toolkit, to help the team pick up the identity and execute themselves ongoing.

This was also to be a pro-bono piece of work. Each year our agency dedicates an allocation of our time for good causes. For this project, a budget was set at £25,000 worth of time. However, according to our time sheet monitoring system the true time value across two years was £32,386. A £7,386 over-investment by us. So for this

DEA entry we are categorising the client budget as this higher figure.

Overview of market

Unlike other charities, direct sector comparisons for The Govan Community Project (GCP) are comparatively easy. Glasgow's six other 'integration networks' share the same remit, geographical population and central council funding. And GCP was not alone in feeling acute financial pressure.

Over the period, the other integration networks also struggled with flat-lining revenues, seeing an average sector-wide decrease in income of 0.05% across the period. Even the sector's leading national charity, the Scottish Refugee Council, was in decline – seeing its income fall by 6.6% between 2015 and 2017.

For an in-depth financial breakdown of the market context, please refer to the Market Comparison section on Page 9 and Influencing Factors section on Pages 10 and 11.

# KEY FACTS

The project was launched gradually over the course of a year. So for clarity in comparison, FY 2015/16 is pre-launch, 2016/17 is mid-launch (Year 1) and 2017/18 is post-launch (Year 2).

Total project budget

£25,000

in agency time.

£32,386

True time value actually spent.

No other agencies worked on the project, or with the charity on marketing over this period.



### A listening & strategic phase

Our research pinpointed a simple but important strategic solution. Traditional 'fundraising' from events was proving too time consuming for such a small team, yielding too little income from hardly a cash-rich community.

In contrast the revenue available nationwide from sector funders was considerable, if only the charity could articulate itself in the right way and punch above its weight nationally. The organisation needed to refocus its energy on being funding, not fundraising, driven. This, although obvious and natural in hindsight, was a sizable strategic leap for their team.

### A new purpose, attitude & name

To unite each of the target audiences, the charity needed a unifying purpose – utterly distinct to the area. So we asked, if Govan is most commonly defined by its lost industrial past, why not invert this? The community may now not be building ships – but today is building something else instead. It's building new communities. It's building connections. It's building hope.

This not only articulated their purpose, but acted as a flexible and simple language platform to help the team write any headline, status update or funding application in a confident and warm tone of voice, without the expense of a copywriter. And from this also came a simpler, more functional, more search-friendly and easier to understand name, that also became a rallying cry. A name for a local movement, not just a corporate charity. The Govan Community Project was born.

### Design solution

This was an unusual design challenge. Some of our audience were Third Sector professionals, whereas others didn't even speak English. There was also almost no marketing budget or daily design resource. So, to ensure effectiveness, our team revived some very low-tech methods of graphic design:

- Pre-designed and easy to use Microsoft templates were built, meaning the team could craft polished, professional and consistent funding applications, without expensive design software. These templates were also carefully designed to look distinctively positive in tone, portraying success and confidence to sector funders – key drivers to their grant decisions.
- A non-lingual design approach was devised. Learning from global airport and train station signage, we adopted an iconographic and symbol-based method. These are understandable in any language and easy for a team with little budget to use without image licensing costs. And as photography would often be sourced from social media we trained their team how to apply duotone filters to make all imagery look consistent and photocopy well, even at low resolution.
- Our research also found how traditional posters remained the most effective channel to talk to the service users, as internet access is sometimes limited in migrant communities. So a 'DIY' design system was developed. Volunteers could print and cut out iconography or text, and using a photocopier could manually apply to pre-designed 'empty belly' poster templates. This allowed ultra-low-cost, on-brand design and a more authentic hand-made feel.
- To save money further, this also included the use of recycled fluorescent paper, providing stand-out whilst still allowing more affordable black and white printing, and the use of stencil typefaces, as they're the easiest to create literally by hand – and echoes the area's shipbuilding history.

A simple but elegant design system was created, which immediately began saving significant costs.



01 CUT



02 SCAN



03 PRINT



WARM  
GRASSROOTS  
SIMPLE  
ACCESSIBLE  
HONEST  
FRIENDLY



OBJECTIVES	RESULT	VARIANCE
1. <b>50%</b> income increase in two years	An income increase of <b>120%</b>	<b>70%</b> above objective
2. Reverse P/L to a <b>£35,000</b> surplus	Year 2 surplus of <b>£100,738</b>	A <b>£118,730</b> turnaround
3. Increase reserves above <b>£50,000</b>	Year 2 reserves of <b>£131,218</b>	Over <b>2.5 times</b> objective
4. Hold marketing spend <b>below 2%</b>	Marketing spend steady at <b>0.73%</b>	A <b>-0.05%</b> reduction, as a proportion of spend
5. Increase full time staff from <b>4 to 6</b>	An increase from <b>4 to 14</b>	<b>+8 more</b> people than objective

The 120% overall income increase over two years was **2.4 times** our growth objective of 50%.

The income growth also exceeded the yearly interim objectives too. In Year 1, against a target of 20% growth, income hit £197,772 – a **32.5%** increase on the previous year. And in Year 2 against a target of 33% year-on-year growth, income hit £434,379 – a **65.7%** jump on the previous year.

This moved the charity from a negative deficit position in Year 1 of -£17,992 to a positive surplus in Year 2 of £100,738. A turnaround of **£118,730**, and nearly **three times** our original objective.

An increase in the reserve position of the charity from £16,251 in 2015/16 to

£131,218 in 2017/18. Over an eight-fold increase in just two years, and **2.5 times our target figure**.

Against an already ambitious target to increase the charity's number of full time staff by a third from four to six, the charity actually saw an increase from four to **fourteen**. Over **twice our target**.

Against a target to hold growth in marketing expenditure below 2%, we actually saw a marginal reduction in the proportion of overall spending by **-0.05%**.

This represents a ROI of **211%**, based on the profit turnaround and the value of the actual time spent by our team over the two years.

Taking an average of Glasgow's six other similar integration networks, GCP's income results by Year 2 outperformed the market average by **176%** (Figure 1).

Excluding GCP, the rest of the market saw an average **decrease of 0.05%** in income across the period. In contrast, The Govan Community project saw a **120% increase**.

Taking an average of the other integration networks' end of year surplus/deficits, GCP outperformed the market average by **a factor of ten** (995%), (Figure 2).

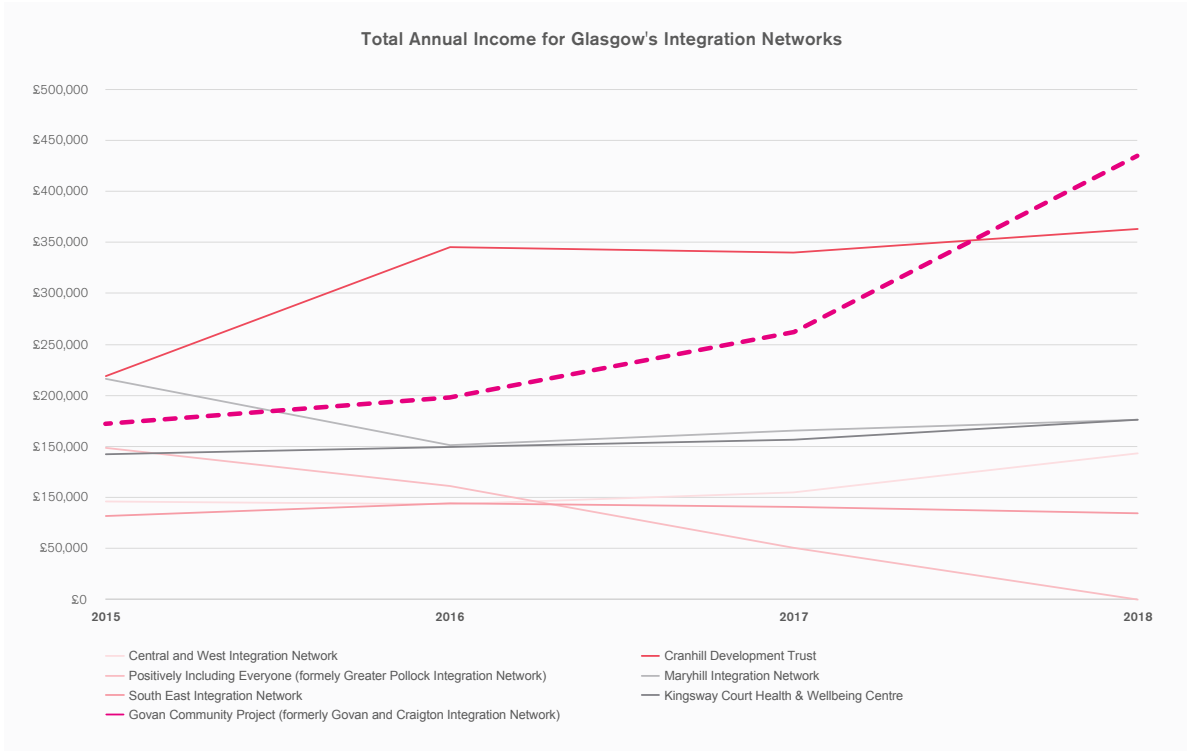


Figure 1. Income of Glasgow's seven Integration Networks over the period (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

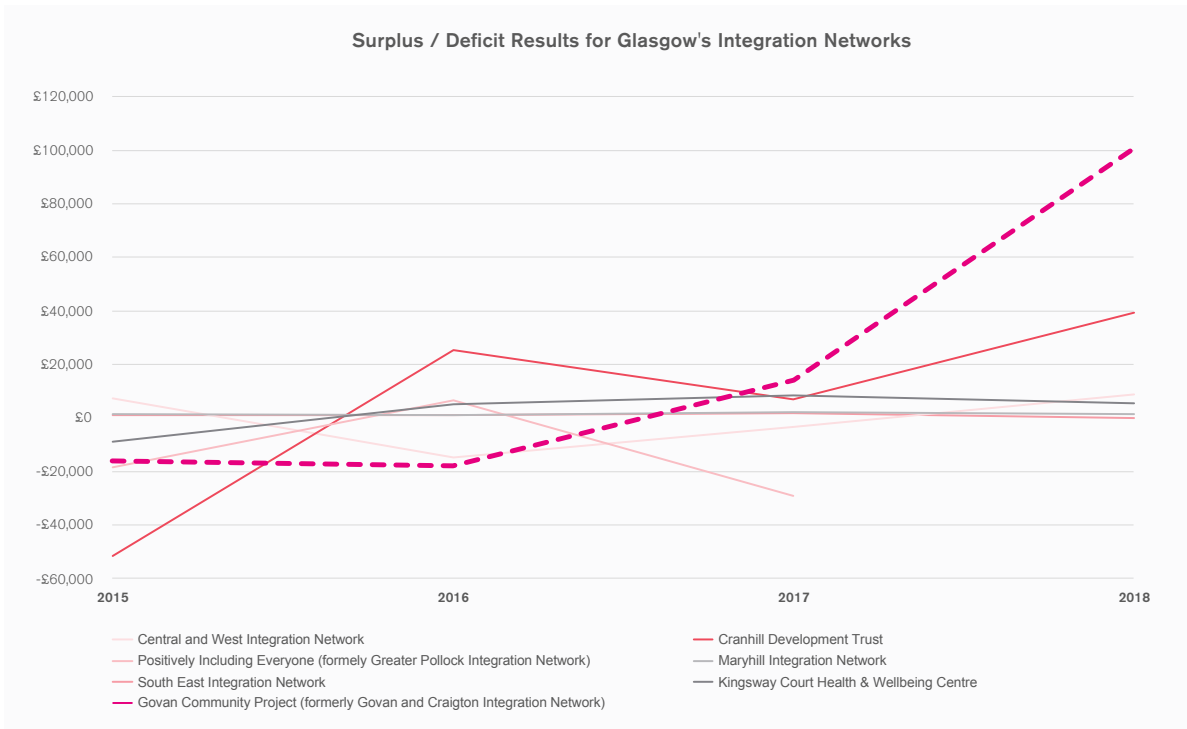


Figure 2. Year-end surplus/deficits of Glasgow's Integration Networks over the period (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

The hard numbers have been phenomenal; transforming a struggling community group into a growing and stable charity. However, statistics alone can't communicate the true impact this additional funding, resource and support can now offer.

Due to the extra funding our work has helped create, the charity has had the following direct impact on the local community:

- Over **850** more vulnerable people have been supported, due to a new dedicated asylum caseworker and two full-time advocacy workers creating **2,600 more hours** of support capacity.
- Compared to pre-2015 numbers this represents a **three-fold** increase in services users.
- Alleviated on average **33 days of destitution** from each asylum case, according to independent audits by the British Red Cross, compared to those supported by The Home Office directly.
- Provided over **£13,000** more in destitution grants, **896 more** fresh food parcels and **107** more emergency food packages, directly helping hundreds more families in acute and abject poverty.
- Funded **312 more hours** every year of Women's and Men's Groups, Homework Clubs and English Classes, providing safe and welcoming places for new friendships to grow, isolation to be tackled and essential integration skills to be learned.



X3<sup>FOLD</sup>

increase in service users, compared to 2015.

2600

more hours of local support provided.

850

more vulnerable people supported.

-33<sup>DAYS</sup>

fewer days of destitution from each asylum case.

£13,000

more in destitution grants.

896

more fresh food parcels.

107

more emergency food packages.

312<sup>HRS</sup>

more hours of Women's and Men's Groups, Homework Clubs and English Classes.

1. The brand impact on funding application wins

Most funding applications are branded and designed in some way. As a result, it was a priority to create simple, professional and easy to use document templates and a toolkit of imagery and graphic assets which could be tailored to any funder's bespoke application entry system. Balance in the design was also critical. Too slick and the group wouldn't have seemed in need enough to support. Too unprofessional and the group wouldn't be deemed trustworthy enough.

For the few grants entries that don't carry any design, this is where the brand language became key. Sector funders told us they seek out 'strength, originality and local impact'. They want their limited cash to go towards the causes which are not only noble, but the most able to execute on their promises.

Our redefinition of who they are, why they do what they do and the adoption of the flexible language platform delivered this, allowing the entries to feel clearer and more confidently and professionally written. And rooting our language to economic and regenerative migrant community work helped make it truly unique to funders. Professional in approach, local in focus but in urgent need of their investment.

However, our project's impact on the funding wins runs deeper than only design and written language.

It was our strategic and consultancy services which helped focus their small team's energies onto seeking sector grants on a more national scale, as opposed to labour-intensive traditional community fundraising. And it was our brand definition work which reignited the charity's self-confidence and culture, helping them retain experienced staff and attract skilled talent in the field of grant funding.

Collectively this helped elevate each application, increasing their chances of success. And the numbers bear this out. Prior to our work, The Govan and Craigton Integration Network won few of their funding applications. In the 2017/18, The Govan Community Project won every one they entered.



2. UK charity sector context

Although the UK charity sector's income continues to increase overall, growth has slowed for the past five years. And critically, not all charities are experiencing that growth equally. It's the largest, with income over £10 million, which have generated 75% of the sector growth.

In contrast, charities with revenue less than £250,000 have actually seen their income decrease by 2.3% since 2013. (Figure 3. Charity Financials, Jan 2018) Therefore, GCP achieved their growth amidst a slowing and even declining category.

3. A cultural bandwagon?

It could be argued that as the whole country was talking about the migrant crisis in 2015, donations and funding acceptances for related charities were bound to increase.

However, as the results of Glasgow's other integration networks show (Figures 1 and 2), there was no spike in income over the period. For a broader comparison, The Scottish Refugee Council, the dedicated charity for national refugee support in Scotland and most likely to benefit from any macro-spike in funding or donations, actually saw a decline in its income by 6.6% between 2015 and 2017 (SCVO, 2018).

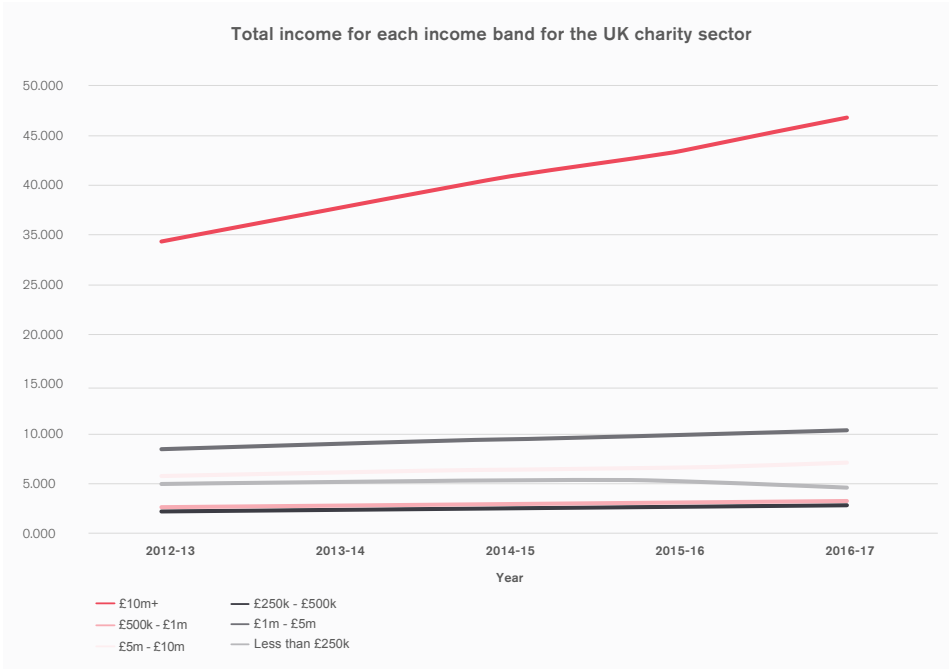


Figure 3. Differences in national charity revenue, by income band (CharityFinancials, 2018)

### 4. Cannibalisation factor

Occasionally in the third sector you can see dramatic swings in fortunes between directly competing charities. This is due to a group having a run of funding wins which come at the detriment of others. So a £10,000 funding win for one is an equal funding drop for another – doubling the comparative impact.

In this case however, the city's other integration networks saw their income entirely static over the period – with an average decrease of 0.05% in income across the city. And none of the other integration networks had a rebrand or a significant change to their marketing in this period.

The funding wins of GCP were achieved by looking beyond the traditional local funders to larger national bodies, previously out of their reach. The significant increase in wins didn't come at the expense of others, but to the benefit of the city as a whole.

### 5. Related marketing spend

Prior to the creative approach being launched publically in January 2017, the total marketing spend was £1,930. A year later, despite total charity expenditure increasing by 34.5%, marketing spend had only risen to £2,433 – a 26% increase. Meaning total marketing expenditure actually dropped as a proportion of overall spending in the period, helped in large part by the new 'DIY' production methods.

### 6. Where the wins came from

It's conceivable that this surge in funding revenue perhaps came from only one or two big wins. That the impact from our work has been exaggerated by getting lucky, or having the inside track on a single big sector grant. However, as impressive as the scale of the funding wins, was its breadth.

In 2017/18 alone, grant wins came from twenty-two funding bodies, compared to just six in 2015/16. These include BBC Children In Need, Foundation Scotland, Glasgow City Council, NHS Health Improvement, Scottish Government Equalities Fund, European Social Fund, Tudor Trust, BIG Lottery Community Led Fund, British Science Week and the William Grant Foundation.

### 7. Changes in leadership staff

Small teams can be easily transformed by even small changes in leadership or personnel. Despite the total size of the staff increasing considerably, the actual leadership team at GCP changed remarkably little – with the membership of the Trustee Board remaining consistent and a single Project Manager leading the day-to-day operations through the period.



**This project demonstrates how big design thinking on a small scale can have enormous impact.**

However, the real effectiveness wasn't driven by how good it looked, or how many sales it generated.

It was behavioural. It created a strategy that focused time, a brand that a diverse community could rally behind and an accessible design system that you didn't need to be a designer to bring to life every day. This turbocharged their commercial success. Helping them see themselves as a contender to apply for funding with the 'big boys' on a national stage, and giving them the words and design tools to win.

But the true 'ROI' wasn't financial, but on the impact on people. Having more staff, with more time and more financial freedom has fuelled their support work – just when the community needed it most.

Until you meet a refugee and hear their story first hand, it's hard to describe the importance and impact of the work this incredible group of people do. From simply a listening ear to filling an empty stomach, they truly do change lives. And even if our work had only earned them an extra pound, it was still an honour to help them build a little more hope, one person at a time.



I did not have any muscle, any power. I did not think I could do it, but I came to the flat with my problems. Everything I know now, I learned at the Women's Group. I learn everything in the community. I learned about recycling, other languages and cultures and this year I learned how to ride a bike. I also make sisters in the group, the women who do the group and the many women who come every week. I love the things we do. I had 0% confidence and now I feel confident. I don't have my family but GCP is my family.

**Snaa Al Shemlwi**

Formally an Iraqi refugee. Now a part of the Govan community

It's hard to overstate the impact of this work. It's given us a look which is modern yet unique to Govan and its history, it's taught us how to talk simply and it's helped keep our costs low. But I think the greatest impact was on our confidence. It made us see ourselves as a credible contender. Not just a required local function, funded by declining scraps from the Council – but a community movement, with a purpose. And one who has every right to win funding on the national stage. I know how grants work, and I have no doubt this work has powered our incredible success and changed lives as a result.

**Owen Fenn**

Project Manager, Govan Community Project

