

STRENGTH

&

stem

IMPACT REPORT
2022





FIGHTING SLAVERY WITH FLORISTRY

It is my great pleasure to introduce you to Strength & Stem's Impact Report for 2022.

This is Strength & Stem's first impact report since the publication of our [inaugural report](#). The inaugural report considered the impact of the pilot series of floristry workshops we ran in 2019.

The pilot report was focussed on the question: can floristry be a useful tool to help survivors grow in confidence, social connection and sense of purpose, and equip them with helpful skills for the future?

The resounding answer was yes, but in asking this question, we also heard from survivors that they wanted more opportunities and time to develop their relationships, a broader range of skills, and to put their skills into practice.

This kickstarted a period of significant change and growth for Strength & Stem. Following an interruption by the pandemic, we hired our first staff member in 2021, and began a positive piece of work on the design and delivery of our programmes. Keen to keep survivors' voices at the center of our work, we ran extensive focus groups to understand their needs and priorities, and to test ideas for development.

In response to feedback, we relaunched our vocational floristry training workshops as part of a broader evidence-based skills training programme in 2022.

The new programme was designed alongside survivors to support them in a more holistic way as they prepare for life after leaving the [National Referral Mechanism](#).

This report considers the impact of two new programmes completed in 2022. Although we gathered a wide range of data, this report focuses primarily on what participants had to say about how the programmes impacted them.

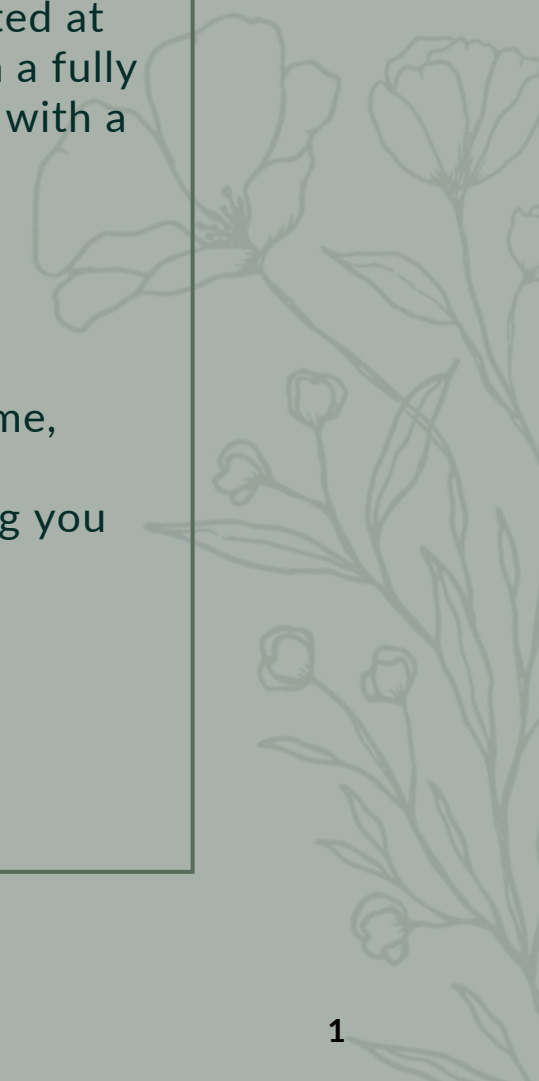
Finally, I wanted to use this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate that the positive change and growth in our work has been reflected at an organisational level. In three short years, we have grown from a fully volunteer led organisation to become a legally registered charity with a staff team of three and board of five Trustees.

With huge thanks to our donors and partners for your continued support, and without whom our work would not be possible.

And to the women who took part in our programmes, for your time, energy and commitment. Your kindness, adaptability and care continues to inspire and encourage us. We look forward to seeing you continue to grow and to flourish.



Jess Visser
Chair of the Trustee Board & Founder



The Need For Our Work

49.6 million

The number of people trapped in modern slavery worldwide – that’s 1 in every 150 people alive today.

81%

The percentage of trafficked victims in London who are women.

33%

Increase in the number of people referred to the Home Office compared to 2021.

136,000

The latest estimate of the number of victims of human trafficking in the UK today. This is likely to be higher.

16,938


The number of people referred to the Home Office for human trafficking, modern slavery, and exploitation in 2022. The highest number of referrals received by the National Referral Mechanism since its inception.

Survivors face numerous barriers to recovery, including arduous legal processes, the inability to work for long periods, and a high likelihood of experiencing severe mental and physical health problems because of their trauma. Survivors in our community tell us that they feel isolated and that they want to work and contribute to society - but they lack the skills, confidence, and safe opportunities to do so.

Our programmes, piloted in 2019 and relaunched in 2022, have been developed in direct response to the above barriers.

Survivors tell us they want support and empowerment to recover





Strength & Stem exists to empower survivors of modern slavery through meaningful employment, life-giving community, and skills training.

Vision

We want to see female survivors of modern slavery living in the UK socially and economically empowered.

Mission

We work to achieve our vision primarily through our holistic programmes that incorporate vocational floristry training, supplementary skills training, mentorship, and work experience.

Vision & Mission

Why Flowers?

We believe that floristry can be used as a tool for meaningful employment, as well as therapeutic enjoyment.

Floristry is not the entirety of what we do, but it is the catalyst that starts a survivor's journey toward empowerment through our programmes.

Flowers are a universal sign of love, gratitude, and beauty. Studies examining the therapeutic effects of flowers show that flowers have positive effects on our emotions, mood, and memory.

The floristry industry is uniquely diverse and flexible in the type of opportunities it presents for employment. This suits many survivors for whom managing their time and energy appropriately is important.

At Strength & Stem, we believe in the power of flowers to unleash creativity, which in turn helps to build confidence and strengthen wellbeing.

For us, flowers are a symbol of life, hope and restoration.

“Working with flowers makes me feel alive. Slowly, slowly it changes me.”



Our Model

Our evidence-based and trauma-informed model has been designed to support survivors with their recovery and prepare them for life after leaving the National Referral Mechanism.



Floristry skills

At the beginning of our programme, participants undertake four weeks of vocational floristry training. The sessions, delivered by industry-leading florists, equip participants with core skills and industry knowledge necessary for a career in floristry.



Supplementary skills

To support overall wellbeing as well as employability, participants complete four additional training sessions aimed at developing hard and soft skills.



Mentoring

Every programme participant is given the opportunity to work with a volunteer mentor for a period of four months. This aspect of the programme is designed to help participants work towards their goals in a safe and supportive environment.



Work experience practice placement

Whilst undertaking their mentorship, each participant has the opportunity to complete a two-week practice placement with a well-known and well-established florist in London, allowing them to implement their floristry and supplementary skills.

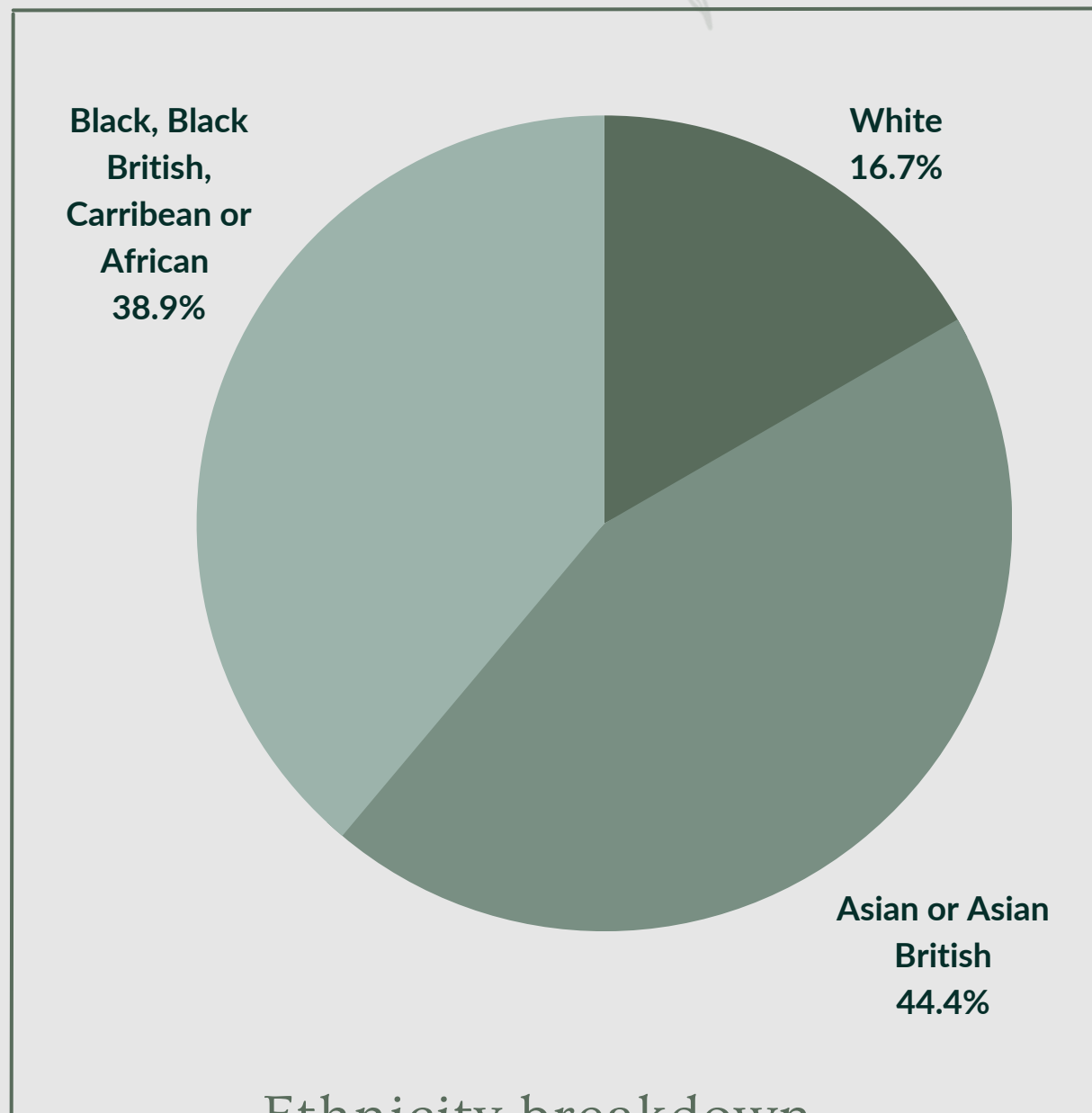


Alumni

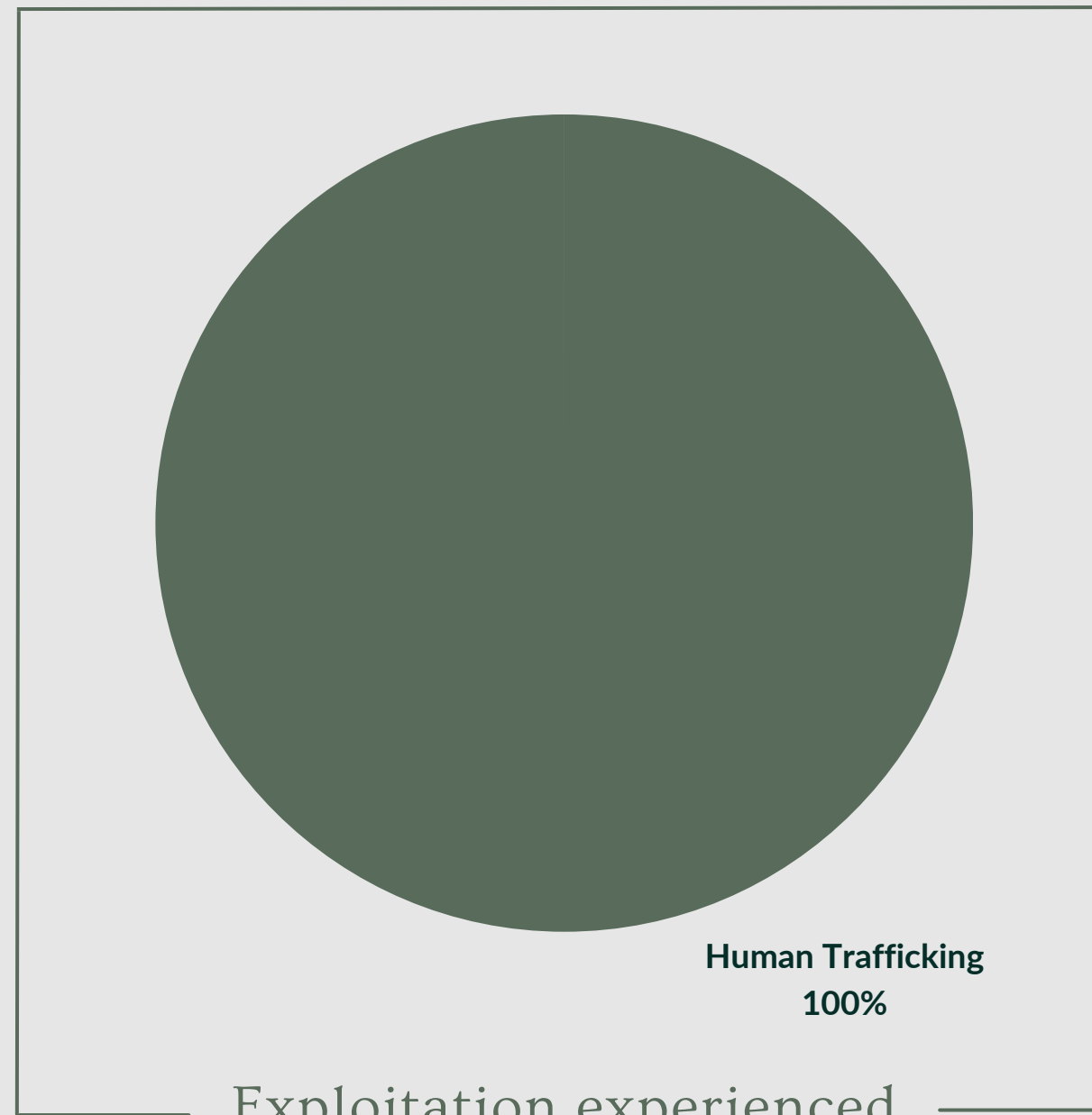
After completing the six month programme, participants graduate and become alumni. Regular alumni events are hosted to provide continued development and opportunities for connection.



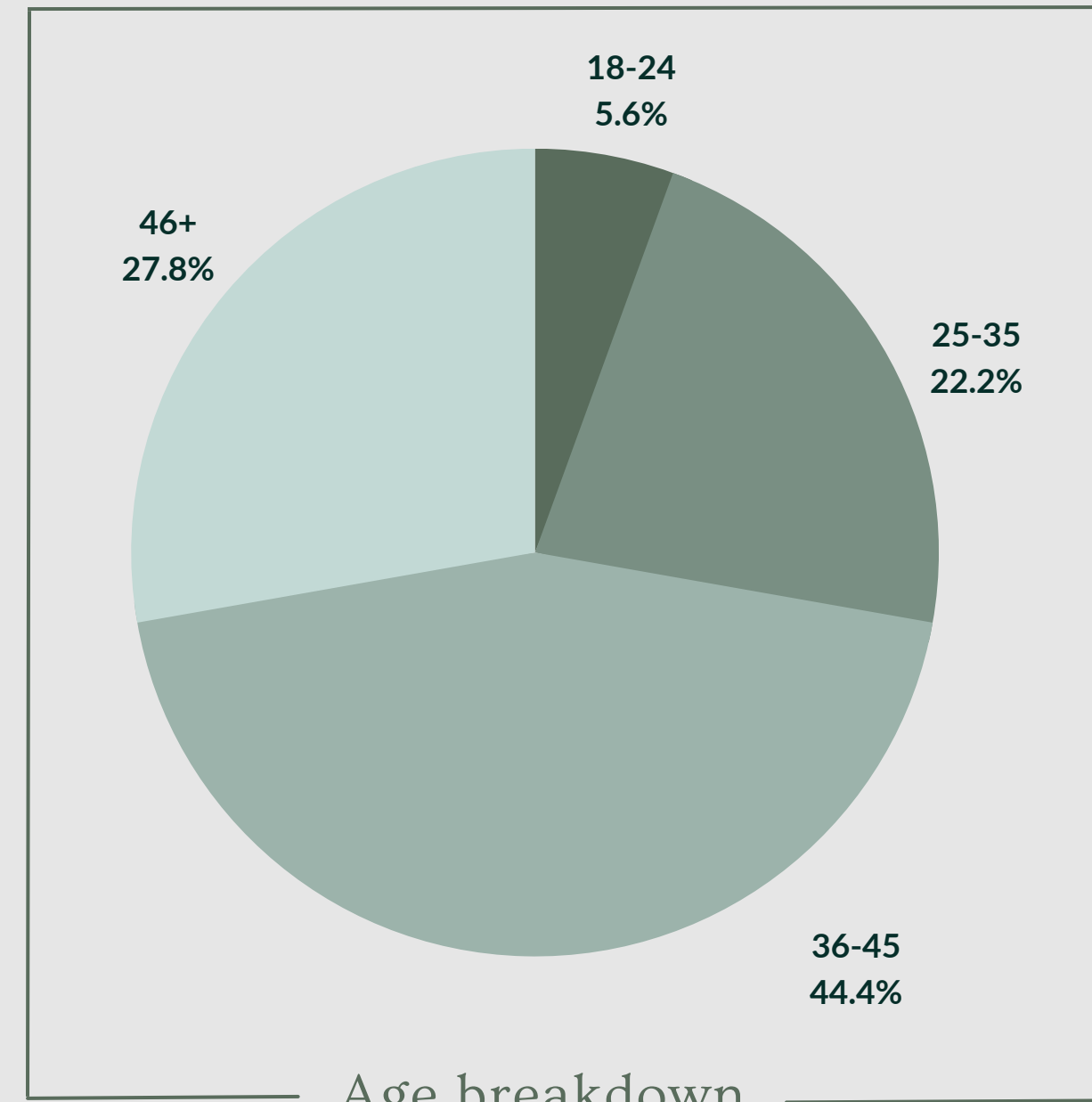
2022 Demographics



Ethnicity breakdown



Exploitation experienced



Age breakdown

Highlights & Achievements

2
cohorts of
participants

18
women participated
in the programmes

73%
of participants had
100% attendance

12
months of
programmes

48
hours of floristry
skills training
delivered

24
hours of
supplementary
skills training
delivered

69
days of work
experience practice
placements
completed

52
1:1 mentoring
sessions completed

14
partner expert
session leaders
delivered skills
sessions

47
volunteers
supported the
programmes

Highlights & Achievements


We host a number of social events each year to encourage community building outside of the formal programme setting. This year, a highlight was attending Chelsea in bloom with our first cohort.



BRITISH ICONS
CHELSEA IN BLOOM
23-28 MAY 2022



We were honoured to have the wonderful team from Bloom Magazine write a beautiful feature on Strength & Stem and the work we do.



Our overall aim is for female survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking to become socially and economically empowered. The impact goals we aim to achieve are:

- 1** For survivors to gain key vocational and prevocational skills so that they are better prepared to enter employment.
- 2** For survivors to experience increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, and ability to maintain personal wellbeing.
- 3** For survivors to experience stronger community, feel less isolated, and more valued by others.

Our Impact Goals



Impact Measurement

We consider our impact (i.e. participant's progress toward empowerment) across three main areas. These are:



Economic

Motivation, preparation & soft skills development (prevocational)
Vocational preparation & practical skills development



Wellbeing

Mental health, wellbeing & resilience
Self-esteem & self-efficacy



Social

Social community
Value and belonging

We collect a range of quantitative and qualitative data on our impact. This year's report focuses on what programme participants had to say about how our work has impacted them. The following pages individually consider the economic, wellbeing and social impact achieved.

Please note that any names of Strength & Stem programme participants used in this report have been changed to protect their identity.



Economic Impact

To foster economic independence, Strength & Stem focuses on prevocational and vocational skills development.

Prevocational skills are the life skills that an individual would need to obtain before being able to take up employment. Vocational skills are both one's job acquisition skills and technical skills such as floristry.

We aim for participants to be better prepared to take up employment through gaining important and necessary prevocational and vocational skills. We do this through:

- Delivering targeted skills training workshops that incorporate adult learning and vocational rehabilitation techniques
- Teaching in a trauma-informed environment
- Utilising expert session leaders to deliver key sessions
- Providing opportunities for participants to implement new skills in a work environment

“It helps because I have got skills I didn't have before so that I can get a job in floristry or something else. I have also learnt time management skills and more about my strengths that are valuable in a job.”

When Lily started the programme, she told us that she had low self-esteem and that she didn't feel as though she had any skills for employment. She demonstrated wonderful commitment and participation throughout the six-month course.

Wellbeing Impact

To improve the wellbeing of participants, Strength & Stem focuses on skills development and broader support.

Due to significant past trauma and current challenges faced by participants, improvement in a sense of personal wellbeing and the long-term ability to maintain wellbeing are essential for empowerment.

Improvements in wellbeing are considered across the areas of mental health, resilience and self-esteem and self-efficacy.

We support wellbeing through:

- Floristry sessions that incorporate conscious elements of self-care and self-expression into floristry exercises
- Teaching wellbeing management techniques and tools in workshops
- Delivery of one-to-one support from in-person progress facilitators during the workshops, and from mentors afterward

“Now I know clearly about my future and goals and passions. I have learnt to have a lot of respect for myself ... it has helped my mental health ... putting together flowers makes me feel happy and helps me make others happy ... it clears my head when I'm in the moment.”

Poppy was experiencing significant anxiety when she started the programme. The programme helped her by supporting her immediate wellbeing needs and equipping her with skills to be resilient and to manage her ongoing wellbeing.

A photograph of two women from behind, wearing floral crowns. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a yellow ribbed sweater. The woman on the right has dark hair in a bun and is wearing a purple top. They are in a workshop or classroom setting with a blackboard in the background.

Social Impact

Growth in a participant's social network is considered through their experience of community and sense of value or belonging.

Many of the women we support feel isolated due to their past experiences. Meeting new people and building relationships are common areas of difficulty. There is great significance in developing relationships with individuals who have similar life experiences.

Strength & Stem's skills training workshops are all group sessions. We create an environment that encourages the development of friendship among the participants. We do this by:

- Giving participants time to develop friendships over six weeks of in-person workshops, through concurrent work experience, and social meet-ups.
- Ensuring a safe and supportive workshop environment that includes facilitators who share lived experiences of exploitation
- Active facilitation of friendships through group tasks and activities

“ I have met a lot of people and made friends with lots of experience and kindness. They show genuine interest in me. I made some really good friends and we give each other support because of what we have all been through ... We have a WhatsApp group and we go out. ”

Iris said that she felt very isolated as she did not have any friends in the UK. She felt that she was shy, and experienced anxiety about meeting new people. She chose to set a goal prioritising building her social network.



Volunteers & Partners

We would not be able to do what we do without the support of our wonderful volunteers and partners. Here is what they had to say about their experience with Strength & Stem and the impact they observed:

“During my time volunteering with Strength & Stem I saw many of the women on the cohort blossom from being shy, anxious and distrusting of others to developing their confidence, and knowledge and establishing relationships with others. As a [Occupational Therapy] student, the experience was incredibly inspiring. After running a focus group to gain feedback from the women, it was clear that the impact Strength & Stem had on the women was monumental to their wellbeing.”

Volunteer Progress Facilitator

“The course has helped Daisy develop further her sense of self-worth whilst improving her mental health and overall wellbeing. Daisy has developed and is part of a strong women's network who regularly meet up and socialise together. Daisy has developed skills and abilities in floristry to have a career and employment someday, now that she is fully qualified. This experience has been completely amazing and life-changing - on so many levels!”

Referring Partner

“Saxton Bampfylde has been delighted to partner with Strength & Stem over the past few years. All of our interactions with the charity have been nothing but positive, inspirational, and constructive. Communication with the charity – as a partner – is always really thorough and smooth. We can see the brilliant work carried out by the organisation, and the hugely positive, life-changing impact that it has on the participants. We are very proud to work with Strength & Stem.”

Programme Delivery Partner

“It all started when I attended a flower arranging workshop they organised - the care they gave to teaching the floristry skills, the stunning beauty of the flowers, and the feeling that the women who were going to be learning these skills would be helped in so many ways to learn to live again. It is truly an honour to participate in mentoring women in such a supportive charity. You know you have contributed to their learning to trust again, to believe they have a place in the world and that they matter and are cared for...”

Volunteer Mentor

Magnolia's Story

Magnolia is from Indonesia. The specific length of time she was trafficked is not known. However, considering her age and story, it was a significant portion of her adult life. She has been in the UK, engaging with services and part of the National Referral Mechanism since 2020.

Prior to commencing our programme, she had no formal floristry training and limited employability skills. She told us she was passionate about flowers and would like to work in the floral industry. Her long term goals were to have a wedding event business and to teach floristry "to help others".

At the beginning of the programme, Magnolia told us she wanted to empower herself, improve her social communication and confidence and gain job acquisition skills. Her Support Worker identified the need for her mental health improvement, community involvement, and belonging to a healthy community.

Strength & Stem played a pivotal role in Magnolia's journey by equipping her with floristry skills, employability and life skills, and fostering positive social relationships. After completing floristry training, Magnolia gained confidence and expressed her excitement about her future business. Likewise, her employability and life skills training boosted her confidence and prepared her for future employment.

“ I am so happy and more confident ”



To further her floristry career, Magnolia was paired with an experienced florist as a mentor and gained valuable industry knowledge. Magnolia created her CV, sought internship opportunities, and refined her technical floristry skills. Her work experience practice placement provided valuable references for job applications. She also built positive relationships with other programme participants, staying connected through a WhatsApp group and informal gatherings.

As a Strength & Stem alumni, she continues to engage in alumni events, reinforcing her positive social network.

Magnolia actively participated in all programme elements with 100% attendance, leading to increased motivation and a sense of success. In May 2022, she obtained Conclusive Grounds Status and a work visa, allowing her to work in the UK. Strength & Stem contributed to her self-esteem, practical skills, prevocational skills, and work experience, better preparing her for employment. Her wellbeing improved, evident in her increased confidence and happiness. Her positive social network will support and encourage her during this transition.

A significant indicator of Magnolia's progress was her confidence in designing flowers for a friend's engagement party and wedding, showcasing the impact of her transformation.

“Doing the floristry makes me feel good ... I am very happy and very excited to learn because this is my future dream, to have a business doing weddings”



Further Impact

“ The word 'thank you' is not enough. Thank you for teaching me good skills. I love to do it [floristry]. I am very proud of myself. This course makes me motivated and helps me to cope with my mental health. ”

“ I am happy that I have a safe space to learn and socialise. Also learning new skills that make me happy and less stressed. ”

“ These workshops have taught me so much about myself and skills for the future. I wish it was longer because I have learnt so much and met some amazing people. Thank you. ”

“ I have learnt to work on my confidence and being more passionate about myself and be happy in my own skin. Thanks for the motivation. ”

“ I am more confident now, have more knowledge, better mental health, happier, better at dealing with difficult things. Floristry has really helped with stress, meeting new people, not scared. ”

“ I will use all of the basic skills [supplementary skills] I have learnt. I am very proud of myself for taking part in this course... I will go for what I believe and what I want. I will take responsibility for my improvement. I am very happy with the employability skills. ”

“ I am very happy because I feel confident in all basic skills [supplementary skills], meet new friends, learn many things and I will use all the basic skills to be better for employment in the future. ”

“ I think the skills I've learnt from the floristry help me a lot to do this in my future life because I have the confidence in making bouquets, flower crowns, buttonholes & table arrangements. ”

“ I learnt so many things not only about flowers but for my future too. ”

Looking Forward

We anticipate the positive trend of change and growth continuing in 2023. The need for our services remains prevalent, and we continue to learn and implement changes to our programmes in response to feedback.

At the time of writing, we are six months into the delivery of our 2023 programme. Some of the changes implemented across 2023 include:

- The delivery of one programme rather than two. The programme has expanded in duration and content. We accepted the same number of women onto the single programme as we did in total across two programmes in 2022. This change has allowed us to offer more skills training sessions, a longer period of mentoring, and a longer work experience practice placement.
- The incorporation of a robust progress facilitation component to ensure that each participant gets the most out of our offering and that we can cater more specifically to their individual needs.

Beyond our programmes, we are currently undergoing an exciting review of our monitoring and evaluation to help us strengthen the clarity with which we communicate our impact and ensure we are collecting the most useful kind of data. We look forward to introducing you to the improvements in our next report.





R E F E R E N C E S

PAGE 2: <https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>
<https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1250/the-reality-of-modern-slavery-in-london-in-2017.pdf>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022/>

PAGE 4: Haviland-Jones, J., Rosario, H.H., Wilson, P., and McGuire, T.R. (2005). An Environmental Approach to Positive Emotion: Flowers. *Evolutionary Psychology*., 3, p.104

A D M I N I S T R A T I V E I N F O R M A T I O N

Strength & Stem Ltd is a registered Charity number 1192080

Strength & Stem Flowers Limited is a registered Company number 14218713

All photography credit goes to Jaerin Lee, and features Strength & Stem Cohort 1 participants during the floristry skills and supplementary skills training workshops



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