

Amdani! Conwy Project Evaluation

Final Report
April 2025



Contents

Page	Section
4	Executive Summary
7	1 Background
7	1.1 Commission Summary
7	1.2 Report Purpose
7	1.3 Agreed Methodology
8	2 Amdani! Conwy Project
8	2.1 Purpose
8	2.2 Partners
9	2.3 Staffing
9	2.4 Data Management
10	2.5 Outcomes
11	3 Volunteer Pathway
11	3.1 Implementation
11	3.2 Hosting
11	3.3 Volunteer Framework
11	3.4 Volunteer Recruitment
12	3.5 Volunteer Induction and Training
12	3.6 Amdani! Champions
17	3.7 Volunteer Hosts
14	4 Reducing Barriers to Taking up Volunteering
14	4.1 Intention
14	4.2 Activity
16	4.3 Achievements
17	4.4 Key Learning
19	5 Improving Wellbeing Through Volunteering
19	5.1 Intention
19	5.2 Activity
21	5.3 Achievements
22	5.4 Key Learning
23	6 Increasing Rural Opportunities
23	6.1 Intention
23	6.2 Activity
25	6.3 Achievements
25	6.4 Key Learning
27	7 Increasing Social Connection
27	7.1 Intention
27	7.2 Activity
29	7.3 Achievements
30	7.4 Key Learning

31	8	Increasing Skills and Knowledge
31	8.1	Intention
31	8.2	Activity
33	8.3	Achievements
33	8.4	Key Learning
34	9	Project Targets
34	9.1	Performance
34	9.2	Engagement Outputs
35	9.3	Volunteer Demographics
36	9.4	Volunteering Opportunities
36	9.5	ONS Wellbeing Survey
40	10	Financial Performance
40	10.1	Project Budget
40	10.2	Project Spend
41	11	Lessons Learned
41	11.1	Insights
45	11.2	Next Steps

Front page images (from top):

- Project Volunteer
- Volunteer vision board
- Volunteer Workshop

Executive Summary

1 Background

Amdani! Conwy (meaning “Go Conwy!” in English) ran September 2022 to March 2025, supported with a grant from Spirit of 2012, to create an inclusive cultural volunteering programme for Conwy county, with a focus on increasing diversity and removing barriers to participation. It was a collaborative project, led by Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC), through the delivery of [Creu Conwy, Creating the Spark - a Cultural Strategy for Conwy County Borough 2021 - 2028](#) in partnership with Community & Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) and Disability Arts Cymru (DAC). The project had five outcomes, each with target KPIs.

The project was hosted on the Council’s www.conwyculture.com site with dedicated pages offering resources and information, and was broadcast through project partners and Diwylliant Conwy Social Media channels. Delivery included a robust sign-up, induction process and training programme ensuring volunteer needs were at the forefront of their journey, with the team using a process of co-design throughout. Any organisation that had a need for volunteers for non-essential roles was eligible to apply to become a volunteer host, with the team also providing support to hosts through access to training and undertaking an access audit of their spaces and activities. In addition a dedicated Amdani! Champions initiative was developed to reward volunteers who had invested their time and energy into the project, offering seed-funding and support to help bring a volunteer-led idea to life that engaged with culture and the Conwy community.

2 Reducing Barriers to Taking up Volunteering

The project team learned early in delivery that volunteers did not always identify as disabled, despite having multiple impairments. As a response the team arranged a series of co-production workshops with d/Deaf and disabled people’s groups to identify their needs, types of barriers in place and what would overcome them, and how project delivery could have the greatest efficacy for them.

Key approaches implemented by the team included ensuring BSL interpretation was available when needed, providing appropriate transport when the time and/ or location meant that public transport wasn’t an option, providing volunteers with 1-to-1 support through personal assistants when required and ensuring basic provision such as additional portable toilets with disabled access at events. Volunteers were also supported to develop ‘Access Riders’, which aided communication with Host organisations by providing a visual representation including a personal profile, an illustrated portrait alongside their access requirements, as well as their personal needs and preferences.

In terms of project KPIs:

- 52% of volunteers identified as d/Deaf or disabled, radically exceeding the target of 7.5%.
- 78% of volunteers reported a positive change in perception of d/Deaf and disabled people, achieving the target of 75%.
- 14 Amdani! Champions had lived experience of disability, significantly exceeding the target of two.

3 Improving Wellbeing Through Volunteering

From the outset the team engaged volunteers via 1:1s and workshops, and through surveying, to understand how the volunteering journey could best contribute to their wellbeing and meet their needs. Feedback helped to shape the programme and activities, which included:

- A monthly 'Sign-Up' Café which attracted a core of around 15 volunteers each session.
- A beach clean, led by Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, where the collected rubbish created a collage to learn about recycling and ocean pollution hazards.
- Collaboration with Incredible Edible Conwy to deliver a weekly session that included picking fruit and vegetables to support a local foodbank.
- The Champion Initiative enabled volunteers to develop an Amdani! Facebook page with a dedicated "*Words on Wellbeing*" section.
- Working with Tape Community Music and Film to produce a special episode of their Wellbeing Podcast featuring volunteers, which was broadcast on Bayside Radio.
- Working with Crefft Media to produce a short film showcasing the scope of what the project achieved, highlighting the input and successes of volunteers.
- A Celebration Event was held at Theatr Colwyn to coincide with International Volunteering Day to applaud the volunteer's achievements throughout the project's delivery.

In terms of the KPIs:

- Data showed high levels of standardised wellbeing scores, such as a mean of 8.0 in response to "*Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?*", supporting the target of an increase in wellbeing levels.
- Furthermore, data showed high levels of improved wellbeing, such as an 8% increase to "*Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?*", supporting the target for ongoing increases.
- 89% of volunteers confirmed that they would attribute an increase in their wellbeing due to their participation in the project, significantly exceeding the target of 50%.

4 Increasing Rural Opportunities

Supporting inclusive volunteering in rural Conwy can be more challenging due to factors such as geographical remoteness, the time needed to travel to and from events, lack of public transport, or the physical constraints of older venues such as a lack of level access. Acknowledging these the team explored partnerships with local transportation companies and reached out to rural organisations to scope the potential for new volunteering opportunities and to identify existing rural events that may be suitable for the project to engage with. This led to several rurally based organisations becoming hosts, and in addition the team developed wider collaborations to create rural opportunities for example with Jones the Dance at St Grwst Church in Llanrwst to deliver their trilingual (Welsh, English and BSL) performance film. In terms of the KPIs:

- 1,404 volunteer hours were committed across 86 different opportunities, supporting the target to increase volunteer hours in rural areas.
- 12.4% of opportunities were in rural areas, achieving the target of 10%.

5 Increasing Social Connection

Social connection was a foundation of the project. The induction and training process included an intersectionality exercise to support volunteers to consider their characteristics and interests, which was used to find commonalities among a group of people with varied backgrounds. The

team also facilitated vision board workshops to identify volunteer's aspirations, with example of feedback being to "*make new friends*", "*develop new friendships*", and to "*lift up others*". The regular Sign-Up Café gave volunteers social confidence and friendships, and from this several volunteers attended opportunities in pairs, rather than partaking in isolation. The team also signed up with charity Tempo Time Credits and a total of 732 time credits were awarded to volunteers, for example the team coordinated a visit to the National Trust's Bodnant Garden, and volunteers independently organised a group trip to Conwy Castle. In terms of project KPIs:

- 96% of volunteers felt a sense of connection to the project, far exceeding the 75% target.
- 96% of volunteers enjoyed their volunteering experience, far exceeding the 80% target.

6 Increasing Skills and Knowledge

The team developed a bespoke training package as part of the induction that provided a standardised set of skills across four key areas of volunteer responsibility: Introduction to being an Amdani! Volunteer, Safeguarding, Social Model of Disability and Inclusive Public Engagement. As volunteers asked to gain skills to progress closer to the employment market, the team provided a range of opportunities:

- Attendance on a 10-week '*Introduction to British Sign Language*' course, from which several progressed to a Level 1 qualification on their own.
- Working with St John Ambulance to arrange an '*Introduction to First Aid*' course.
- Working with Guide Dogs UK to deliver two Sighted Guide Training awareness courses.
- DAC provided Social Model of Disability training on this at multiple points in the project, led by a facilitator with lived experience of disability.

Volunteers participating in training were given certificates to indicate their attendance which helped to build their portfolio and support in moving closer to work. In addition, volunteer hosts also received Access and Inclusion Training through the project, and the project team received skills and training, for example Safeguarding and DBS workshops undertaken in collaboration with the Disclosure Barring Services and WCVA. In terms of the KPI, 44% of volunteers gained a qualification or progressed to other opportunities, significantly exceeding the 15% target.

7 Lessons Learned

Project delivery enabled much to be learned, with wider insight covering themes such as:

- Importance of messaging from the outset
- Administration was more than expected
- Specialist support needed before volunteering
- Dedicated access budgets are essential
- Benefits of utilising disabled and deaf practitioners
- Balancing volunteer versus host capacity
- Unsuitable Volunteering Wales Platform
- Less opportunities than anticipated through CCBC and the Creu Conwy Partnership

8 Next Steps

The partnership agreed that CVSC will become the lead partner going forward beyond March 2025 when the Spirit of 2012 funding ends, merging activity within their existing and successful social prescribing offer.

1 Background

1.1 Commission Summary

Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) appointed David Waterfall in October 2022 to undertake an independent evaluation of its “Amdani! Conwy” project, funded with support from Spirit of 2012.

Spirit of 2012 is the London 2012 legacy organisation. It was founded with a £47million endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund in 2013 and will undertake a planned closure in 2026. Their research, learning and insights from over a decade of funding projects to inspire a social legacy is available at www.spiritof2012.org.uk.

1.2 Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to engage project stakeholders to gain their views and assess existing documentation, and to collate the evidence base into a single point of reference that responds to the following evaluation questions:

- Has the project achieved its intended purpose?
- What are the lessons learned?
- What is the extent of any legacy?

It is the intention that this report will enable CCBC and its partners to understand the impact of the project, and to use this insight to help develop and deliver future interventions to have the greatest benefits.

1.3 Agreed Methodology

The approach was agreed in advance with CCBC and the project steering group, and in outline included:

- Interviews with project team, steering group and wider stakeholders
- Discussions with volunteers and volunteer host organisations
- Review of background information and operational documentation
- Development of volunteer surveys and analysis of responses.
- Collation of the research findings into a succinct evaluation report

Ongoing contact has been maintained with the project steering group throughout the commission including taking feedback, discussing emerging findings, and updating on progress.

2 Amdani! Conwy Project

2.1 Purpose

Amdani! Conwy (which in English means “Go Conwy!”), and which is usually stylised simply as Amdani!) ran between 1st September 2022 and 31st March 2025, supported with a grant of £247,851 from Spirit of 2012 (the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics legacy funder), following a successful application submitted in June 2022.

Amdani!’s vision was for the creation of a new inclusive and engaging cultural volunteering programme that enabled Conwy communities to thrive and flourish. The project sought to increase diversity, and remove barriers to participation by reinvigorating and reinventing volunteering across the sector with opportunities that were more responsive, accessible, inclusive and fun.

2.2 Partners

Amdani! Conwy was a collaborative project, led by CCBC in partnership with Community & Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) and Disability Arts Cymru (DAC). A partnering agreement was developed with roles as summarised below:

- **CCBC (Economy and Culture Service, Culture, Libraries and Information Section) - Lead Partner:** Spirit of 2012 funding was accessed as a result of the council-led City of Culture 2025 bid, which coincided with the launch of Creu Conwy, Creating the Spark, a Cultural Strategy for Conwy County Borough.

Creu Conwy provided strategic direction and a framework for the project with a delivery plan featuring an ambitious programme of events and activities. The delivery model included the development of a ‘Town Team’ hub and spoke approach to bring cross-sector groups together to lead on culture-led regeneration at a community level. Through this programme of activity, the idea was that opportunities for the volunteer programme would be created [www.conwyculture.com/about-culture/culture-outreach/cultural-strategy].

In addition to in-kind support, CCBC contributed £13,230 in match funding.

- **CVSC:** develops and promotes voluntary and community action across Conwy County. It sits within the national body of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, is part of Third Sector Support Wales and was involved in the development of Conwy’s original Spirit of 2012 application.

CVSC led on recruiting, managing and supporting volunteers through their specialist knowledge, diverse networks and access to established systems and procedures. [www.cvsc.org.uk]

- **DAC:** Disability Arts Cymru is the lead organisation for disability arts in Wales and acted as the projects lead accessibility partner.

DAC ensured the principles of the Social Model of Disability were embedded throughout the project, providing training to partners, organising access support for disabled volunteers and forming links with local disability organisations.

As a cultural organisation, DAC also lead on commissioning creative facilitators to deliver activities throughout the project and influenced the development of the Amdani! Champions Initiatives and the Volunteer Induction and Training programme. [www.dacymru.com]

2.3 Staffing

The lead applicant and contract manager was Conwy County Borough Council who were also policy lead and responsible for all monitoring and reporting to Sprit of 2012. The main point of contact within CCBC - following some internal staffing changes - was the Culture Development Manager, with support from the wider Culture team. The project drew on two additional, dedicated roles which were funded through the project and managed by partners:

- **Volunteer Programme Manager:** CVSC used its specialist knowledge and skills to act as the project's Volunteering Framework Partner, with a range of functions around best practice, compliance, support and recruitment, and employed the Amdani! Volunteer Programme Manager (part time four days per week, between January 2023 and January 2025.)
- **Access and Inclusion Officer:** DAC oversaw the support of targeted volunteer cohorts from disabled groups and handled all access issues across the project, and contracted the Access and Inclusion Officer (part time two days per week, on a freelance basis, between February 2023 and March 2025.)

As CVSC and DAC are small, specialised organisations, both posts held the ability to respond flexibly to the needs of the potential volunteers and could build on the existing networks of each partner.

2.4 Data Management

Each of the partners had their own tried and tested systems for data management, and SurveyMonkey was agreed as a common platform that all could use to gather opinions and evidence from volunteers. To this end three surveys were developed at the outset of delivery with version in Welsh and English, to align with Office for National Statistics (ONS) data gathering requirements by the funder:

- **Start-up Survey:** this gathered information on volunteers' background, ambitions from project involvement, and ONS data. This survey was issued to most volunteers (when it was considered appropriate to do so) that signed up between May 2023 to March 2024, after which the Six-Month Survey was used with the volunteer cohort to avoid additional surveying. The last recruitment wave was in October 2024 and the Start-up Survey was not used then as this broadly coincided with issue of the Outcomes Survey in November 2024 and it was agreed that it would have been excessive to administer two surveys in such a short timeframe to the volunteers. In total 39 surveys were returned, although not every volunteer chose to answer all questions.

- **Six-Month Survey:** this gathered information on volunteers' experiences and benefits during the project, levels of satisfaction, and ONS data. It was designed to be issued approximately six months after a volunteer had been involved in the project and hence would be able to provide meaningful and informed feedback. In total 21 surveys were returned, although not every volunteer chose to answer all questions.
- **Outcomes Survey:** this gathered information on outcomes, volunteers' experiences and benefits during the project, and ONS data. It was designed to be issued at the end of the project once volunteers were able to reflect on the impact and benefits their involvement had created for them. In total 29 surveys were returned, although not every volunteer chose to answer all questions.

The project team invited all 95 volunteers to complete surveys and actively arranged gatherings and events where volunteers would be approached and supported to return surveys. These were particularly welcomed by disabled and/ or neurodiverse volunteers given the 1:1 support offered by the project team.

It should be noted that there was minimal, if any, opportunity to guarantee repeated feedback from a single volunteer across each of the surveys, for example due to availability or a lack of desire to complete paperwork - and as such sample data cannot be compared for example from ONS data gained during the Start-up Survey to ONS data gained during the Outcomes Survey.

2.5 Outcomes

The Spirit of 2012 application outlined five core outcomes that would be achieved through delivery, each with associated KPIs that were defined within the original funding application:

Project Outcomes

- To reduce barriers for d/Deaf & disabled people taking up volunteer roles in the cultural sector.
- Improved wellbeing through volunteering on Amdani! Conwy.
- Increased number of rural opportunities supported by Amdani! Conwy Volunteers.
- Increased sense of social connection.
- Increasing skills & knowledge through volunteering.

Each of these is considered in the remainder of this report.

3 Volunteer Pathway

3.1 Implementation

The project supported volunteers in a number of ways and developed numerous systems and resources to assist with their volunteering journey. Key aspects are set out below from initial action learning, through ongoing management, to monitoring of performance.

3.2 Hosting

The project was hosted on the Council's Conwyculture.com website [as image] with dedicated pages offering resources and information for hosts and volunteers, and was primarily broadcast through Diwylliant Conwy Social Media channels with support from project partners.



3.3 Volunteer Framework

This was the approach for volunteer management and firming up the processes for providing additional access support. To support development of the Framework, the team delivered a series of action learning workshops with community groups to co-produce elements of the volunteering and access frameworks. The Volunteer Programme Manager provided on-call support and guidance in setting up and enrolling volunteers onto the programme, building profiles for each volunteer which are then shared with Hosts.

This also involved creating the Amdani! Supporters role to provide 1-2-1 access support for volunteers. This included casual freelance roles for 1-2-1 assistance supporting BSL communication and general support that wasn't classed as restricted activity. For volunteers who required personal and health care for opportunities the team sourced, trained and vetted Personal Assistants (PAs) from Servoca Nursing and Care [an agency specialising in healthcare workers, <https://www.servocahealth.com/>]

3.4 Volunteer Recruitment

This was the fundamental mainstay of the project, and evolved throughout delivery as greater certainty was known and volunteer preferences became clearer.

Responding to volunteers' various individual needs, the sign-up process acknowledged digital and linguistic barriers and offered alternative methods such as hosting sign-up sessions and phone conversations. This included dedicated British Sign Language (BSL) pages to reduce barriers for Deaf volunteers who can find lots of text to be a barrier.

The team also delivered a monthly Sign-up Café to encourage awareness raising and registration. These sessions moved to different accessible cafés (such as Station Court in Colwyn Bay and Providero in Llandudno) and community spaces (such as the five area libraries in Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Abergel, Llanrwst and Conwy) across the county.

3.5 Volunteer Induction and Training

The induction process included volunteer training that became one of the project's strongest assets, delivered at multiple venues to increase reach (such as Llanrwst Library, Conwy Culture Centre, Venue Cymru and Station Court and online). The induction featured four training modules:

- Introduction to Amdani! Conwy.
- All Wales Basic Safeguarding Training.
- Workshops exploring Intersectionality and Inclusive Communication.
- A talk on the Social Model of Disability.

Volunteers were also invited to a vision board workshop to set their volunteering goals, and all received a starter pack which included their optional high-vis jacket/ uniform, certificate and learning resources (which were also available on the Amdani! Conwy resources page on [Conwyculture.com](https://conwyculture.com)), as well as the volunteer handbook. [Image shows handbook being used by a volunteer].



The handbook drew from other successful frameworks following conversations with colleagues from Hey Volunteering, Hull, and Leeds 2023 to ensure a highly visual, appealing and accessible document - acting as a general guide for volunteers to refer back to if they have need to be reminded on how the project worked.

After their induction and training, the newly enrolled volunteers would then be supported to access a list of volunteering and training opportunities on <https://volunteering-wales.net>

3.6 Amdani! Champions

This initiative was to reward volunteers who had invested their time and energy into volunteering through the project. The project offered seed-funding and support to help bring a volunteer-led idea to life that engaged with culture and the community in Conwy. During delivery the project supported a number of Champion initiatives:

- Conwy Deaf Club Coach (Host was Jones the Dance | St Grwst Church)
- Amdani! Voices - Social Media Channel (Host was CVSC)
- Access Collective (Host was Conwy Culture Centre)
- Ukrainian Culture Club (Host was Conwy Library)
- Storytelling from the archive (Host was National Library of Wales)
- British Sign Language Advocacy (Host was Coleg Llandrillo)
- Easy guide to affordable cooking (Host was Youth Shedz)
- Community Growing Project (Host was Crest Cooperative)

3.7 Volunteer Hosts

Any organisation that had a need for volunteers for non-essential roles was eligible to apply to become a host.

The team's work with Hosts was focused on developing appropriate and accessible systems to submit their opportunities in as much detail as possible, through a standardised form requesting information on issues such as:

- Contact information
- Outline of Opportunity
- Specific requirements
- Time/Date
- Location
- Access information
- Number of volunteers

A lot of this work involved consultation with the Access and Inclusion Officer to audit their spaces and activities, which led to the development of a Host handbook [image shows extract covering the Host sign-up process from the Host Handbook].



The team also offered access support to potential hosts to encourage sign-up, including producing open source social stories, access risk assessments, and training. This was positively received and due to the success, numerous Hosts were supported to complete training in the Social Model of Disability while others explored strategies to enhance the flexibility of volunteers.

"Working with Amdani! Conwy has been a pleasure for us all at Bayside Radio. Jasmine and David have worked closely with the Bayside team to match up our needs with skills and aspirations of potential volunteers. The effort that they both put in behind the scenes have made the process straightforward and this is such a benefit to a small team like ours. We really look forward to helping the volunteers gain some unique skills and have fun in the process whilst we are able to harness some really valuable extra resources during the times we need it most."

Operations Director, Bayside Radio (Host)

4 Reducing Barriers to Taking up Volunteering

4.1 Intention

The outcome and associated KPIs were:

Reducing Barriers to Taking up Volunteering	
Outcome	To reduce barriers for d/Deaf and disabled people taking up volunteer roles in the cultural sector
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1 at least 5% of our Amdani! volunteers are from the Deaf & disabled communities, increasing to 7.5% by the end of Year 2 75% of respondents report a positive change in perception of Deaf & disabled people At least 2 Amdani! Champions have lived experience of being Deaf &/or disabled

Project activity and resultant achievement of these is considered below:

4.2 Activity

The project team learned early in delivery that when they asked volunteers if they identified as disabled, they often would say they don't identify or that they don't know, despite having multiple impairments. This made it challenging to discuss suitable approaches to support them take up volunteering, and to identify barriers and hence potential solutions. As a result an initial action within the team was to arrange a series of five co-production workshops between April and June 2023 with d/Deaf and disabled people's groups to identify their needs, types of barriers in place, what they felt could overcome these barriers, and how the project could best be delivered to have the greatest efficacy for them. [Image shows notes from consultation with local community groups considering volunteering].



This included sessions with Conwy Mind, two with Centre of Sign Sight and Sound, and two open sessions. To embody the project's principles of arts and creativity, the workshops

involved a local poet and storyteller to maximise engagement. Workshop feedback led to the design and structure of the Volunteer Framework (as detailed earlier in this report).

While access information was collected during volunteer applications, some volunteers with more profound access needs came forward and shared they still struggled when engaging with Hosts. In response the team worked 1:1 with volunteers to develop Access Riders, providing a visual representation including a personal profile, an illustrated portrait alongside their access requirements, as well as their personal needs and preferences.

Not all the volunteers felt they required this additional layer of support, and in total seven were developed. [Image shows an Access Rider - censored to remove personal/ sensitive information]. These were well used when issued to Hosts to support the matching of suitable volunteering opportunities.



The access budget within the project was invaluable as the team recognised early in delivery that access itself was a major barrier for many volunteers. Responses to support volunteers included several approaches, with examples including:

- **BSL:** paying for a BSL interpreter to accompany volunteers where required. For example, BSL Interpreters were made available for Volunteer Inductions in June 2023, October 2023 and April 2024, to support both deaf volunteers and a DAC facilitator to deliver Social Model of Disability Training. Also BSL Assistance Support for one deaf volunteer to regularly volunteer over 12 months for Bags of Love with Bro Celynnin Ministry.
- **Transport:** paying for minibuses when the time and / or location mean that public transport isn't an option, or to enable several volunteers to get to an opportunity, or if anxiety prevents a volunteer from using public transport. For example minibus transport was used for a group of volunteers to get to the Winter Sounds - VRi and Dance Collective event, which was held on a Sunday evening in a rural area (St Mary's Church, Betws y Coed) in October 2024.
- **Personal Assistant:** paying for a personal assistant/ support worker to accompany a volunteer where required so they can engage in volunteering. For example, supporting a volunteer whose access needs include practical mobility support, communication support and personal care to volunteer at multiple opportunities, including regular volunteering with the National Library of Wales Broadcast Archive from March 2024 to February 2025.

- **Access Equipment:** such as provision of accessible portable toilets to support volunteer led community organisation Pwyllgor Aberconwy to deliver their Winter Sounds: Al Lewis concert at St Mary's Church, Conwy in October 2024.

The team delivered significant work with Hosts to build their capacity and capability. This included dedicated Access and Inclusion Training sessions for Hosts, delivered by the Training and Fundraising Development Officer at Disability Arts Cymru, before which 63% of participants said they vaguely understood the Social Model of Disability and 37% said they'd heard about it but didn't really know much about it. After training, 99% said they had a good understanding of the model and could explain it.

The team also worked hard to offer guidance and support to local organisations. This included conducting site visits to identify potential environmental access barriers in and around venue and opportunities to make reasonable adjustments to make their services more accessible to disabled volunteers and members of the public.

Additionally for key volunteer hosts such as Conwy Culture Centre, the Access and Inclusion Officer also worked with host staff to produce access information documents such as visual stories, access statement and easy read documents which would be included In Volunteer Role Descriptions and published on their websites, [Image shows accessible directions to the Conwy Culture Centre, as at <https://conwyculture.com/visit-culture/conwy-culture-centre/parking-and-access-information/social-story-conwy-culture-centre>].



4.3 Achievements

The outcome was *“To reduce barriers for d/Deaf and disabled people taking up volunteer roles in the cultural sector”* given the scale of activity delivered and the focus on - and evidenced reduction of - access barriers, it is considered that this outcome has been successfully achieved.

In terms of the KPIs:

- **Year 1 at least 5% of our Amdani! volunteers are from the Deaf & disabled communities, increasing to 7.5% by the end of Year 2**

Data showed that at the end of the project 52% of volunteers (49 of 95 responses) identified as Deaf or disabled, and as such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

It should be noted that this level of success may be due to a combination of the original target set in the funding application in 2022 being cautious, alongside the fact that as the access support was a key part of the project's promotional messaging the team saw a larger influx of disabled volunteers, and that as DAC was a partner the focus on Deaf and disabled communities was strong from the outset.

- **75% of respondents report a positive change in perception of Deaf & disabled people**

Data showed that at the end of the project 78% of responders (21 of 27) confirmed a positive change in Deaf and disabled people, and as such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

- **At least 2 Amdani! Champions have lived experience of being Deaf &/or disabled**

Champions were volunteers who'd demonstrated a commitment to volunteering with the project and who were invited to develop volunteer led initiatives. As all 14 of the Champions had lived experience, it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

4.4 Key Learning

Insight includes:

Learning - Reducing Barriers to Taking up Volunteering

- The cultural sector nationally has not fully recovered from the pandemic and returned to pre-Covid levels of activity, and this is especially so in Wales (which is the second lowest spender on culture per head out of all European nations <https://www.museumsassociation.org/wales-spends-less-on-culture>). As a result, many organisations are focusing their limited resources on issues such as fundraising, infrastructure, or sustainability.
- The access budget has been invaluable and arguably has led to greater disabled participation in cultural activity than any other element of the project, or within other interventions in the county. A key example of this is enabling local people to engage in sustained volunteering activities that they otherwise would have been unable to do, had it not been for provision through the project such as personal assistants, transport, or BSL.
- Many volunteers expressed gratitude that they had been asked about solutions to their access needs, as most had not been asked this before. This approach helped many volunteers take ownership of both the process - further embedding co-production - and the outcomes in terms of engaging with volunteering opportunities.

- The Access Riders are a valuable resource, well received by volunteers and Hosts alike.
- The quality of Hosts' response to the project varied. Several Hosts embraced the project and worked with Amdani! to improve their working practices and their physical premises to reduce access barriers that were immediately practicable. Some organisations have been especially open to working with disabled volunteers to develop long-term action plans, as seen with CCBC's Conwy Culture Centre and the Access Collective Amdani! Champions Project.
- Conversely, some organisations cited the barriers in their venues and limited staff capacity as a reason for not engaging with the project. The attitudes within some of these organisations reinforced barriers and reduced or generalised disabled experiences together, restricting opportunities for all volunteers because of a single barrier, such as lack of step-free access. In effect, they'd made assumptions and decision for disabled volunteers, rather than sharing an opportunity with honest and accurate information and allowing disabled volunteers the option to make their own choice. This demonstrated that more work is needed with many organisations to promote and embed the importance of the Social Model of Disability, improve Equality Diversity and Inclusion Practices and recognise disabled people as valuable contributors to the cultural landscape.
- Volunteering Wales' platform proved not to be as user-friendly as hoped and imposed additional pressures on the team capacity to support volunteers in signing up to opportunities. Although promoted as a volunteer management tool, the platform did not offer functionalities that the team hoped would allow effective digital management of volunteers beyond recording their hours, such as building volunteer profiles noting access requirements. The project team agreed to use the platform shortly after it was launched and was still in a phase of development and testing, although the team were unable to have their user feedback suggestions implemented. As a result the team were unable to record sufficient information about volunteers on this system or make volunteering opportunities visible solely for volunteers registered with the project. Sign-ups via the website were low, likely due to a mix of the access requirements of many project volunteers and the interface not being as intuitive as hoped. The project would have benefited from a much more accessible and dynamic volunteer management system. However, even with a high-quality digital interface or software, supporting such a wide and variable range of access requirements requires multiple formats and channels to deliver one function - that being a need for in-person sign up sessions, phone calls, easy-reads and BSL supported formats.

5 Improving Wellbeing Through Volunteering

5.1 Intention

The outcome and associated KPIs were:

Improving Wellbeing Through Volunteering	
Outcome	Improved wellbeing through volunteering on Amdani! Conwy
KPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least a 25% increase in 50% of our target groups who have wellbeing levels of 5/10 Average increase in wellbeing levels 50% of volunteers would attribute an increase in wellbeing to participating in the project.

Project activity and resultant achievement of these is considered below:

5.2 Activity

From the outset the team engaged volunteers (and potential volunteers) via 1:1s, workshops [image shows a visioning workshop from August 2023], and through surveying to understand what people would like to get from the project and how their volunteering journey can best contribute to their wellbeing.

Many have demonstrated a clear desire to make a change and find new experiences to support their wellbeing, with feedback quotes including:

- “Joy”
- “Different outlook”
- “Heart, mind and soul”
- “Fun and enjoyment. Improve health and longevity”
- “Find something new to do. Keep healthy and my brain healthy”

Wider feedback identified that opportunities linked to practical skills and outdoor presence would be particularly well received to support wellbeing. As examples of how the team were pro-active in their responses:



- **Beach Clean:** the team organised a beach clean [as image] through the Multiply Project, led by Grŵp Llandrillo Menai [<https://www.gllm.ac.uk/multiply>] in July 2024. The rubbish collected created a collage to learn about recycling and hazards of ocean pollution.
- **Foodbank Support:** the team collaborated with Incredible Edible Conwy [<https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk/conwy>] to deliver from November 2024 a Friday session for volunteers in Llandudno Junction that included picking fruit and vegetables to support a local foodbank. This provided the volunteers with immense sense of achievement, supporting their confidence and wellbeing.

The monthly Sign-Up Café although originally intended to support engagement and increase registrations, have been found to support wellbeing and social connection amongst the volunteers, with a core of around 15 volunteers attending each session. The team introduced guest speakers facilitators and workshop activities into these sessions such as, discussing the CCBC led Taith project [<https://conwyculture.com/taith-creative>] that offered creative activities and resources to support wellbeing.

The Champion Initiative that enabled volunteers to develop an Amdani! Facebook page [<https://www.facebook.com/amdani!>] had a dedicated “Words on Wellbeing” tips section that encouraged volunteers to share their tips and what works for them [as image].

The team worked with Tape Community Music and Film [a local arts charity with a community focus, <https://tapemusicandfilm.co.uk/>] to produce a special episode of their Wellbeing Podcast featuring Amdani! Conwy volunteers, which was broadcast on Bayside Radio in January 2024 [<https://www.baysideradio.co.uk/the-wellbeing-podcast-the-series>]. The episode covered what motivated them to volunteer and the benefits they’ve found in helping others.



The team worked with Crefft Media [<https://crefftmedia.com/>] in September 2024 to produce a short film for the project showcasing the scope of what was achieved during the project, highlighting the input and successes of volunteers, and demonstrating wellbeing benefits by providing real examples of how being involved with Amdani! gives people purpose and meaning. [BSL version at www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8VzzlAB_rE]

There was also a Celebration Event held at Theatr Colwyn in December 2024 [as image], to coincide with International Volunteering Day on 5th December, which was attended by volunteers, project partners, and wider stakeholders to applaud the volunteer’s contributions and achievements.



The evening event was attended by approximately 20 attendees and included showcasing the film, as well as a live poetry reading by Welsh poet Rhys Trimble [www.facebook.com/rhystrimblepoetry/] and music from Banda Bacana [<https://bandabacana.co.uk/>].

5.3 Achievements

The outcome was “*Improved wellbeing through volunteering on Amdani! Conwy*” and it is considered that given the demonstrable focus on volunteer wellbeing and improvements experienced, that this outcome has been successfully achieved.

In terms of the KPIs:

- **At least a 25% increase in 50% of our target groups who have wellbeing levels of 5/10**

Given the nature of the volunteers and the timing of when they became involved with the project, it was not possible to collect consistent distance travelled data for a defined cohort of volunteers that evidenced an increase in their individual wellbeing scores over time. However, ONS scores (as detailed later in this report) recorded in the Outcomes Survey show average wellbeing levels of:

- “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”: mean of 8.0.
- “Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”: mean of 8.0.
- “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”: mean of 7.8.

As such while it was not possible to collect data to support the original KPI, ONS mean values show high levels of wellbeing across the volunteer cohort.

- **Average increase in wellbeing levels**

Data has been recorded for three standard wellbeing indicators (as used by ONS), and each shows increases or consistency in positive respondents (counted as 7 or higher out of 10) during delivery:

- “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”: shows an 8% increase in positive respondents.
- “Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”: shows no change.
- “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”: shows an 8% increase in positive respondents.

As such, it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

- 50% of volunteers would attribute an increase in wellbeing to participating in the project.

Data from the Outcomes Survey showed that 89% of respondents (24 out of 27) provided a positive response to the question “Do you attribute any increase in wellbeing to participating in Amdani! Conwy?”.

As such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

“So far I have enjoyed being part of the Amdani! Conwy Community, I already feel like my contributions matter.”

Volunteer [as image]



5.4 Key Learning

Insight includes:

Learning - Improving Wellbeing Through Volunteering

- While a clear focus of delivery was on supporting wellbeing, many of the volunteers had complex needs spanning a range of physical, mental, emotional and social aspects. While team accommodated these as far as practicable, it was more than expected and was in several cases beyond what the project team could reasonably be expected to support.
- The CCBC Wellbeing Team were communicative and supportive of the project, helping to identify opportunities and provide advice and guidance where this was not held within the team.
- The film was more informative and impactful than expected, and alongside this report will be a valuable means of communicating the impact and legacy of the project.
- In terms of KPIs around determining wellbeing levels, the original application set distance travelled scores aligning with national population level metrics (eg ONS4 as used in the Annual Population Survey) that may not have been the most appropriate given the complex needs of potential volunteers, or the scale/ consistency of their involvement in the project and willingness/ ability to complete surveys. In the future stand-alone questions at conclusion may provide a more useful measure of wellbeing improvement alongside the development of case studies that show human change.

6 Increasing Rural Opportunities

6.1 Intention

The outcome and associated KPIs were:

Increasing Rural Opportunities	
Outcome	Increased number of rural opportunities supported by Amdani! Conwy Volunteers
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer hours increase by 10% from Year 1 to Year 2 in rural areas. • At least 10% of volunteering activities take place in rural locations in the County.

Project activity and resultant achievement of these is considered below:

6.2 Activity

Supporting inclusive volunteering in rural Conwy can be considered more challenging, given factors such as geographical remoteness, the time needed to travel to and from events, lack of public transport linkages, and often the physical constraints of older venues such as poor facilities or a lack of level access. In addition, it is anecdotally perceived that smaller or close-knit rural communities often have established, informal volunteer networks so opportunities are less likely to be offered or promoted more widely.

Acknowledging these facts, the team early on explored partnerships with local transportation companies to support opportunities in rural locations. For example the team created a chargeable account with Stanleys Travel [<https://stanleysttravel.co.uk/>] to support volunteers have rapid access to rural travel specialists. However, a 15-mile return journey (standard route from coastal to rural area) was approximately £80, which reduced the frequency of what could be offered to volunteers and was as such usually prioritised for opportunities in rural Conwy, happening after 6pm, and for disabled volunteers with no other means of travel.

Alongside this the team reached out to rural organisations to scope the potential for new volunteering opportunities and to identify existing rural events that may be suitable targets for the project to engage. This led to several organisations becoming Hosts in rural Conwy, for example Llanrwst Library [as image taken during an access audit], Gwyl Garrog Festival, Bro Celynnin Ministry, Sir Henry Jones Museum and Gŵyl Dafydd ap Siencyn Festival.



A specific example of rural volunteering was through the team's linkage with Winter Sounds

[<https://conwyculture.com/winter-sounds-2024>] which delivered live music events in a number of venues across the county, including several in rural locations. Amdani! Conwy volunteers supported the Dance Collective who hosted an evening of folk music and dance at St. Mary's Church in Betws y Coed [as image, courtesy of Anthony Harrison].



The team worked with Hosts across the county to promote these, and allocated time to a specific recruitment drive given the high-profile nature of Winter Sounds and the CCBC's own commitments to cultural engagement. The events tended to be outside of usual hours, so the team ensured every volunteer had transport arrangements in place as part of the offer, and to provide additional support there was a member of the project team at each event.

"[the volunteer] was absolutely brilliant – what a star for travelling so far! She gathered so much feedback that we ran out of forms for the kids, and she kept a perfect head count throughout. A massive thank you to her!"

Discover the Night Sky Event with Golygfa Gwydyr (host)

The project also developed wider collaborations to create rural opportunities for volunteering. For example the team connected Jones the Dance and the St Grwst Church in Llanrwst to form a three-way partnership in May 2024 to bring their new trilingual (Welsh, English and BSL) performance film, Y Dewis, to the church [as image from the 'Jones the Dance' event, and quote below].



The team helped them apply for and secure funding through Arts Council of Wales' Nosan Allan/ Night Out funding scheme that help brings high quality arts to rural areas. This led to the project providing two volunteer opportunities: the first was for four volunteer stewards for the event, the second was funding a volunteer through the Amdani! Champions initiative to organise a coach trip for the wider deaf community to access this rural event.

“I would say that the partnership with Amdani! has been one of the most valuable of this very complex partnership project. As a small company we have been working our socks off making this work which has D/deaf performers at its centre. D/deaf audiences were the missing piece as we so badly wanted these works to meet D/deaf audiences. Amdani! have been invaluable connectors, you have met and matched our energy in making this a success and through your volunteer ambassadors gathered a really significant D/deaf audience. We hope that we can build on this with future work.”

Producer at Jones the Dance | Y Ddawns
for the Y Dewis event at St Grwst Church, Llanrwst

6.3 Achievements

The outcome was “Increased number of rural opportunities supported by Amdani! Conwy Volunteers” and given the focus on rurality and collaborative working to create new opportunities, it is considered that this outcome has been successfully achieved.

In terms of the KPIs:

- **Volunteer hours increase by 10% from Year 1 to Year 2 in rural areas.**

The Volunteering Wales platform does not calculate data in this way and does not provide comparable analytics. Team evidence shows that across 86 different opportunities (where data was available) a total of 1,404 volunteer hours were delivered through the project, equating to an average of just over 16 hours of time per each of these opportunities. It should be noted that this is a limited sample size, and the total scale of opportunities and hours delivered was much higher in reality.

As such while it was not possible to collect data to support the original KPI, evidence shows high levels of volunteering across the project.

- **At least 10% of volunteering activities take place in rural locations in the County.**

Data showed that in total 121 opportunities were delivered, and 15 of these were rural, equating to 12.4%.

As such, it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

6.4 Key Learning

Insight includes:

Learning - Increasing Rural Opportunities

- Transport is an ongoing barrier, for example a lack of regular and reliable public transport which is often compounded by the weather such as when flooding causes the cancellation of all trains on the sole coastal train line through Conwy. Associated with this, the increased cost in supporting volunteers to access rural opportunities by providing transport was significant.

- Rural volunteering opportunities are often less formal and people consider ‘they are just helping out’, attempting to ‘parachute in’ and impose new systems could be detrimental. In the future, to further develop project engagement in this area a dedicated project officer would be needed to sensitively work with rural communities and identify the support needed. If more volunteer opportunities could be developed within the rural area for people who lived locally this could negate and offset some of the challenges relating to transport. Although there is benefit in encouraging people from the coastal area to volunteer rurally and vice versa to broaden perspectives and remove barriers.
- Many of the accessible venues and existing events in the county for disabled people are located on the coast, further reducing the prevalence of rural opportunities.
- Language is also a potential barrier. For example, on average 55% of people living in rural Conwy can speak Welsh, compared to around 20% on the coast. Welsh speaking is seen as a desirable, and in some cases essential requirement for volunteering in the rural areas of Conwy.
- The KPI data was set in late 2021/ early 2022 when the original application was being developed and sought to estimate an unknown and untested area of delivery that would run to 2025. The context changed over time, although the KPIs could not be changed during delivery.

7 Increasing Social Connection

7.1 Intention

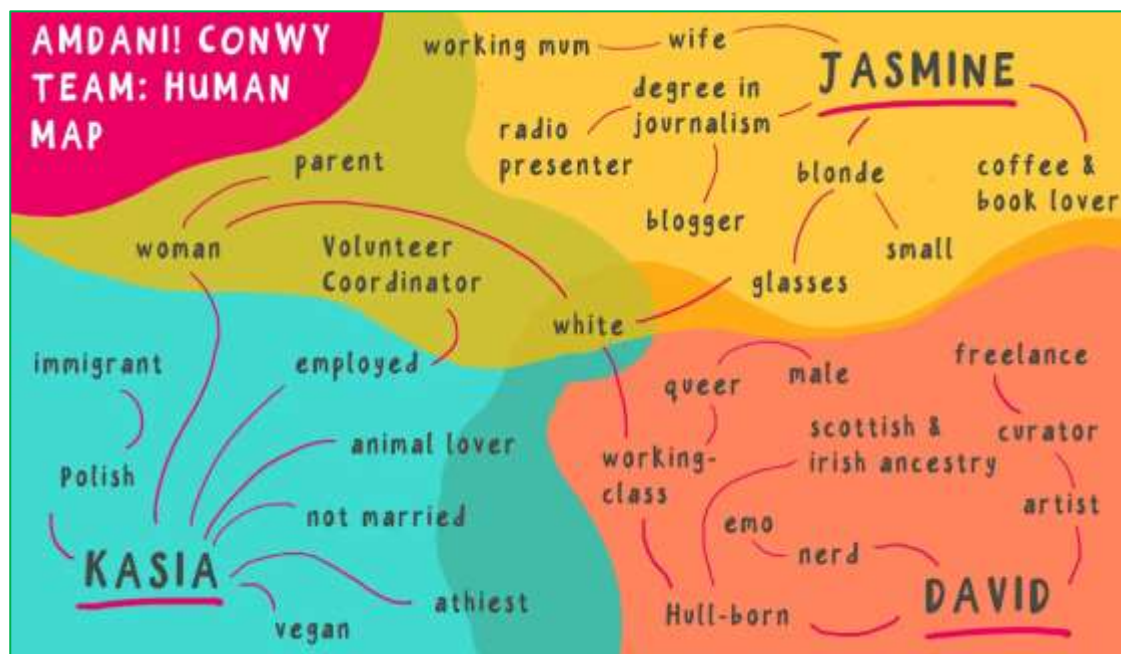
The outcome and associated KPIs were:

Increasing Social Connection	
Outcome	Increased sense of social connection
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of volunteers report a sense of belonging/connectedness to Amdani! 80% of volunteers enjoyed their volunteering experience

Project activity and resultant achievement of these is considered below:

7.2 Activity

Social connection was a foundation of the project. The initial induction and training process included an intersectionality exercise, where the team supported volunteers to make spider diagrams sharing their characteristics, interests and backgrounds. The volunteers would then be encouraged to share with each other and find commonalities among a group of people representing various backgrounds. This helped to break down barriers and encourage social connections early in people's volunteer journeys. [Image shows a human map using the project team as an example].



In addition each volunteer was invited to respond to a Startup Survey at the beginning of their volunteer journey to help the team better understand their motivations and goals that they would like to get from the programme.

This approach was reinforced throughout delivery, for example Vision Board Workshops with Evie Roberts [a local artist <http://www.evieleonie.co.uk/>] in August 2023, November 2023 and January 2024 revealed volunteer's aspirations such as to, "make new friends", "develop new friendships", and to "lift up others". [Image shows volunteer at the Vision Board workshop.]



When asked, "What would you like to gain from being involved with Amdani!", feedback identified a strong desire for social connection, with examples of responses including:

- "Sense of giving, friendship and purpose."
- "Meeting new friends."
- "Experience and networking."
- "Making friends, helping people, being involved in the community and giving back."

Several of the routine project activities also provided strong social bonds. As mentioned earlier in this report, the monthly Sign-Up Café although originally intended to increase registrations, have been found to support wellbeing and social connection amongst the volunteers. A core of around 15 volunteers attend each session, enjoying time to catchup with friends, meet new attendees, and discuss future plans for volunteering and wider social activities. Several volunteers have used this to attend volunteer opportunities in pairs, rather than attending on their own to maximise their social connections. In addition, several of those that learned BSL through the project practice together outside of the project activities, demonstrating a sustainable legacy and lasting social benefit.

The team signed up with charity Tempo Time Credits [<https://wearetempo.org/>], to link with the scheme that brings local communities together to carry out valued voluntary work to earn time credits that can be exchanged for a range of services and activities provided by Tempo's national networks of organisations and corporate charity partners. In total 732 time credits were awarded to volunteers. Feedback from the project volunteers indicated that they were eager to use their rewarded credits but didn't want to do so alone.

To respond to this the team organised a coach trip in October 2024 to Bodnant Garden [a National Trust site, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodnant, and as image]. Due to the success of this some of the volunteers independently use their time credits to organise their own trip to Conwy Castle [a Cadw site, cadw.gov.wales/castell-conwy]. This not only allowed volunteers to visit cultural sites they would otherwise not typically have gone to, but more importantly allowed them to spend quality social and recreational time with other people.



While the vast majority of volunteering opportunities provided social interaction and encouraged friendships, an example of specific activity was when the team partnered with Crest Cooperative in June 2024 [www.crestcooperative.co.uk/, as image] to establish group volunteering gardening opportunities, including the support of a professional gardener. Aside from learning opportunities and wellbeing benefits, volunteers particularly welcomed the ability to build connections with others in the activity and to meet people within the Cooperative itself.



7.3 Achievements

The outcome was “*Increased sense of social connection*” and given the clear focus on supporting volunteers to develop social bonds and friendships, it is considered that this outcome has been successfully achieved.

In terms of the KPIs:

- **75% of volunteers report a sense of belonging/connectedness to Amdani!**

Data from the Outcomes Survey showed that 96% of respondents (26 of 27) felt a sense of connection to the project, and as such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

- **80% of volunteers enjoyed their volunteering experience**

Data from the Outcomes Survey showed that 96% of respondents (24 of 25) enjoyed their volunteering experience, and as such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

7.4 Key Learning

Insight includes:

Learning - Increasing Social Connection

- The majority of interaction for the volunteers with the project team and the Hosts, as well as with other volunteers, created valued social interactions that helped build bonds and in many cases new and lasting friendships.
- Aside from opportunities for volunteers to socialise and connect with other volunteers, there was also the ability to meet members of the public. This was identified by many of the Hosts, with feedback indicating they observed volunteers actively engaging event attendees and gaining a clear sense of connection.

“... he seemed to fit in straight away, and the other volunteers all enjoyed working with him. We look forward to his next session with us in three weeks.”

Development Officer, St Grwst Church (host)

8 Increasing Skills and Knowledge

8.1 Intention

The outcome and associated KPI was:

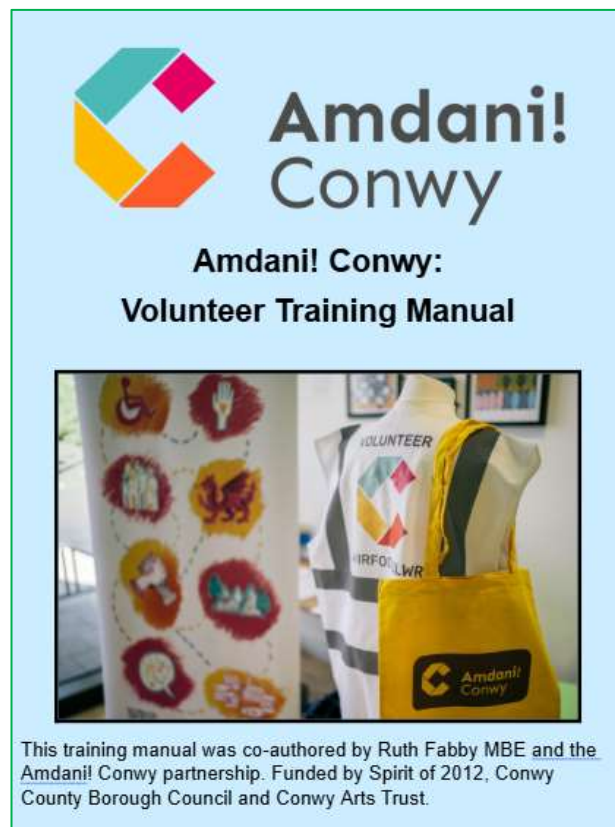
Increasing Skills and Knowledge	
Outcome	Increasing skills and knowledge through volunteering
KPI	15% of volunteers gained an accredited qualification or progress to other volunteering or learning opportunities

Project activity and resultant achievement of these is considered below:

8.2 Activity

The team developed a bespoke training package as part of the volunteer induction that provided a standardised set of skills across four key areas of volunteer responsibility. This was developed with input from Ruth Fabby MBE [a local arts freelancer, <https://www.ruffyarts.com/>] and covered: Introduction to being an Amdani! Volunteer, Safeguarding, Social Model of Disability and Inclusive Public Engagement, as detailed in the Volunteer Training Manual [as image]. To add a creative element to the training, the Inclusive Communication film was produced in March 2024 by Hijinx Theatre [a professional theatre company for actors with learning disabilities, <https://www.hijinx.org.uk/>] that included project volunteers alongside Hijinx actors, with support from TAPE filmmakers. The culmination of these aspects, and the wider induction training offer, provided all volunteers with a broad skills base and additional knowledge that most did not have beforehand.

Volunteer Hosts also received Access and Inclusion Training through the project, in particular linking with Disability Arts Cymru facilitators, as well as ongoing support from the team.



Volunteers expressed a clear desire to introduce opportunities for them to gain skills and use this knowledge base to progress closer to the employment market, and as such the team provided opportunities to learn specific skills, with examples including:

- **BSL:** the project worked with Coleg Llandrillo in September 2023 to enable five volunteers to undertake the 10-week '*Introduction to British Sign Language*' course successfully gaining a BSL qualification. From this, three have chosen to progress to a Level 1 qualification on their own, further indicating the ability to the project to embed a desire for knowledge and skills development.
- **First Aid:** the team worked with St John Ambulance in September 2024 to arrange an '*Introduction to First Aid*' course for 14 volunteers.
- **Sighted Guide Training:** Guide Dogs UK facilitated two awareness courses with volunteers, project team, and Hosts in September 2023.
- **Photography Skills:** the team worked with specialist photographer and creative facilitator Alan Whitfield to deliver a workshop, attended by four volunteers.
- **Social Model of Disability:** project partner DAC provided training on this at multiple points in 2023, 2024 and 2025 led by a disabled worker, which provided valuable lived experience and insight especially for those that had not come across it before. Over 60 organisational representatives were supported.

Volunteers participating in training and induction were given certificates to indicate their attendance which helped to build their portfolio and support their moving closer to work. [Image shows a volunteer at a workshop indicating his desire to use newfound skills to "*find part time work*"].



In addition to the volunteers and Hosts, the project team received skills and training. For example Safeguarding and DBS workshops undertaken in collaboration with the Disclosure Barring Services and WCVA to give the team the knowledge and confidence to address regular enquiries from Hosts regarding technical queries about Safeguarding and DBS checks for volunteers.

8.3 Achievements

The outcome was *“Increasing skills and knowledge through volunteering”* and given that a wealth of training, advice and support has been provided to volunteers, Hosts and the project team itself, that this outcome has been successfully achieved.

In terms of the KPI:

- **15% of volunteers gained an accredited qualification or progress to other volunteering or learning opportunities**

Data from the Outcomes Survey shows that 44% of respondents (11 of 25) confirmed they had gained a qualification or progressed to other opportunities, and as such it is considered that this KPI has been achieved.

8.4 Key Learning

Insight includes:

Learning - Increasing Skills and Knowledge

- The training and skills development has been a massive component of the project. A strong mix of life, transferable and technical skills were gained by volunteers through formal training/ induction as well as through their general volunteering experiences. There was an example of a volunteer that after receiving safeguarding training made a valid safeguarding report.
- Volunteers were observed by the team and by Hosts applying their newfound knowledge and skills during their volunteering opportunities, and wider interactions with the project team/ Host representatives. In a broader sense, volunteers progressed from receiving training, to being in the training (i.e. the Inclusive Communication film) - indicating a huge leap in confidence and capability.
- The team also gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of delivering a project of this nature and there was a lot of group learning that benefited the project partners which was applied within their own organisations, for example CVSC improved its Safeguarding knowledge through the project and undertook additional training as a result.

9 Project Targets

9.1 Performance

The project held a number of targets, covering goals set by the funder and those in place from the project partners to provide wider insight and learning:

- Engagement Outputs
- Volunteer Demographics
- Volunteering Opportunities
- ONS Wellbeing Survey

Each of these is outlined below.

9.2 Engagement Outputs

Targets were considered across the funder's three standardised levels of volunteer engagement ('Inspire', 'Engage' and 'Enable'):

Project Targets	
Level	Volunteers
Engagement Level 1: Inspire	Not included in the project.
Engagement level 2: Engage	125
Engagement level 3: Enable	50
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Inspire: Defined as "<i>Number of people reached by your project.</i>" These were not included in the project. • 2 Engage: Defined as "<i>Number of people involved in one-off or mass participation elements of your project.</i>" Counted as those who received the induction and training, this was originally set at 300 but was reduced in November 2023 to 125. The rationale for this was; the impact of the pandemic on volunteering (whilst aware of this at the bid stage it was not fully understood and the impacts were, and are still emerging), ensuring that the number of volunteers was proportionate to the number of opportunities and to allow more capacity for meaningful engagement to enable level 3. • 3 Enable: Defined as "<i>number of volunteers who have participated in either multiple one-off opportunities or regular opportunities in the same host organisation.</i>" 	

At project close the project had achieved the following:

Project Targets - Volunteers			
Level	Target	Achieved	% Achievement
Engagement level 2: Engage	125	49	39%
Engagement level 3: Enable	50	46	92%
Overall	175	95	54%

This shows that in total 95 volunteers were supported: being those who attended recruitment events, signed up on the project system and also on Volunteering Wales.

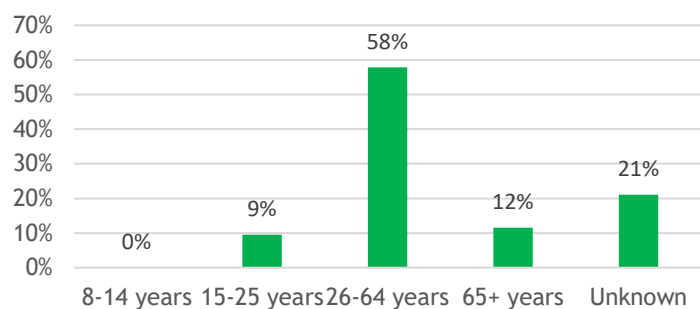
The achievement levels (39% at Level 2 and 92% at Level 3, equating to 54% overall) reflect the team's prioritisation of Level 3 activity and involvement. Whilst this resulted in a greater impact for volunteers engaged, it was potentially at the cost of more directly supporting the recovery of volunteer numbers and as such reduced the project's quantifiable outputs.

9.3 Volunteer Demographics

Data collected shows the following demographics of the 95 volunteers:

- Age

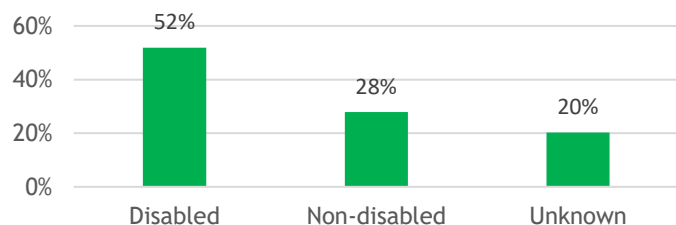
Age	
8-14 years	0%
15-25 years	9%
26-64 years	58%
65+ years	12%
Unknown / Prefer Not to Say	21%
Total	100%



This shows the most frequent category was '26 to 64 years old', with 58% of respondents.

- Disability

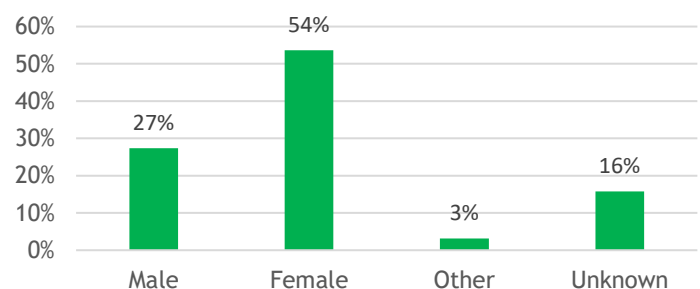
Disability	
Disabled	52%
Non-disabled	28%
Unknown / Prefer Not to Say	20%
Total	100%



This shows the most frequent category was 'disabled', with 52% of respondents.

- Sex

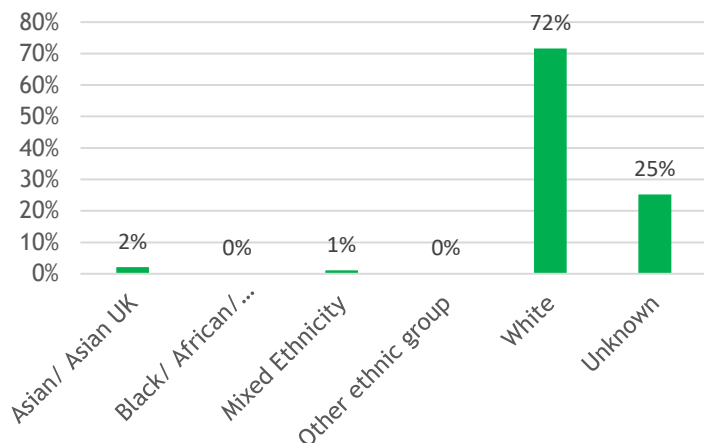
Sex	
Male	27%
Female	54%
Other	3%
Unknown / Prefer Not to Say	16%
Total	100%



This shows the most frequent category was 'Female', with 54% of respondents.

- **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	
Asian/ Asian UK	2%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black UK	0%
Mixed Ethnicity	1%
Other ethnic group	0%
White	72%
Unknown / Prefer Not to Say	25%
Total	100%



This shows the most frequent category was 'White', with 72% of respondents.

- **Postcode Analysis**

Postcode data recorded showed that:

- 27.5% of volunteers lived in a rural area (as defined by the Conwy Rural Development plan)
- 25.3% of volunteers are from economically deprived areas (as defined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation).
- 4.3% of volunteers declared that their preferred language is Welsh and 3.2% communicate through both Welsh and English, and 2.2% use BSL.

9.4 Volunteering Opportunities

Data showed that 86 individual volunteering opportunities were provided, many requiring multiple volunteers. 17 of these were regular or ongoing opportunities, such as supporting the 'Warm Welcome' at Conwy Culture Centre.

Data also shows that across the various opportunities, a total of 1,404 volunteer hours were provided, equating to an average of 16 volunteer hours per opportunity.

9.5 ONS Wellbeing Survey

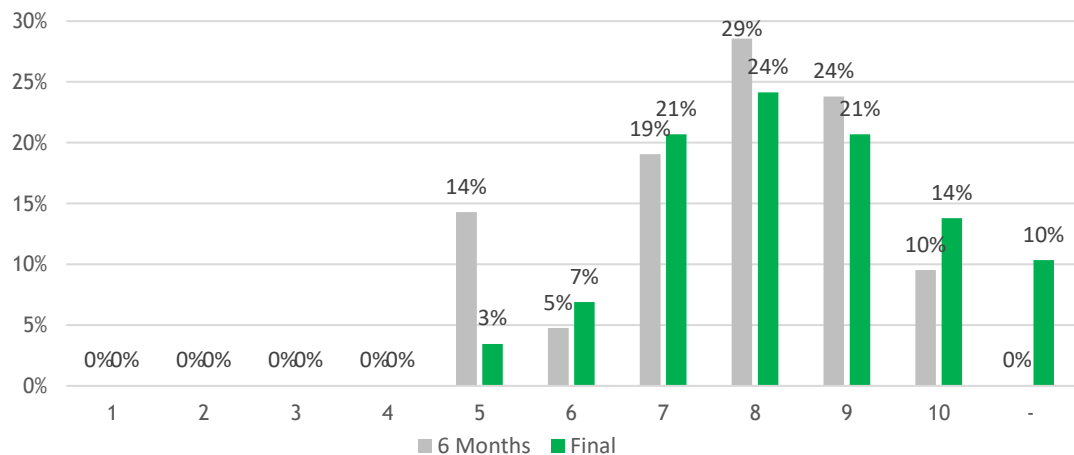
Data was gathered on national wellbeing, which is focused on measuring how people in the UK are doing as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. As such volunteers were asked the following four standard ONS questions (often referred to as ONS4), with respondents scoring on a scale of 0 (representing a low score) to 10 (representing a high score) for answers that describe how they were feeling when they completed the survey.

Given usage of the three surveys (as detailed earlier in this report) for comparison purposes ONS data has been drawn from volunteer responses from the Six-Month Survey and the

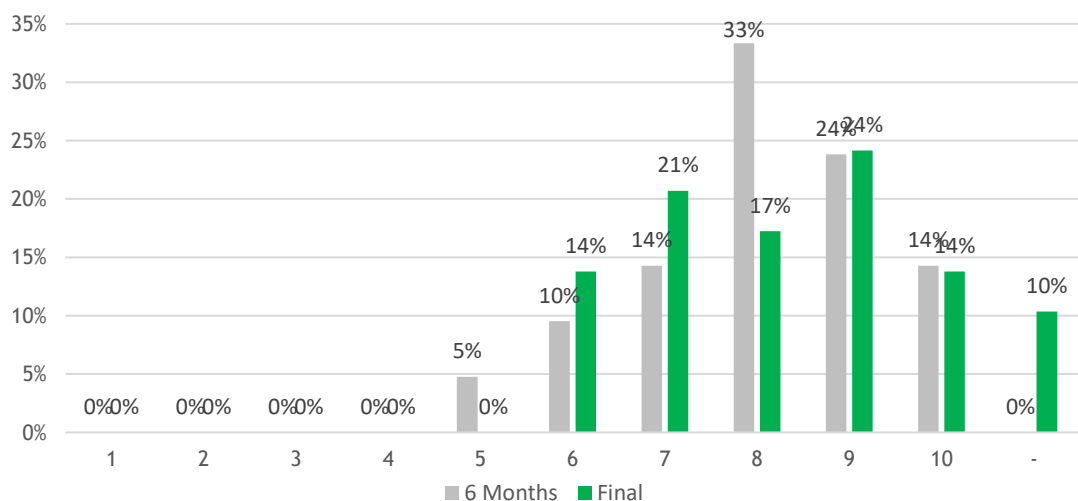
Outcomes Survey, so while the specific responders are not necessarily the same at the two time timepoints, the overall data gained is compared below:

- E1) Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?**

This shows that at the six month point the mean average score was 7.7, and at the final point was 8.0. Responders that rated themselves as positive (7 or higher out of 10) increased from 81% to 89% over the same timeframe - being an 8% increase:

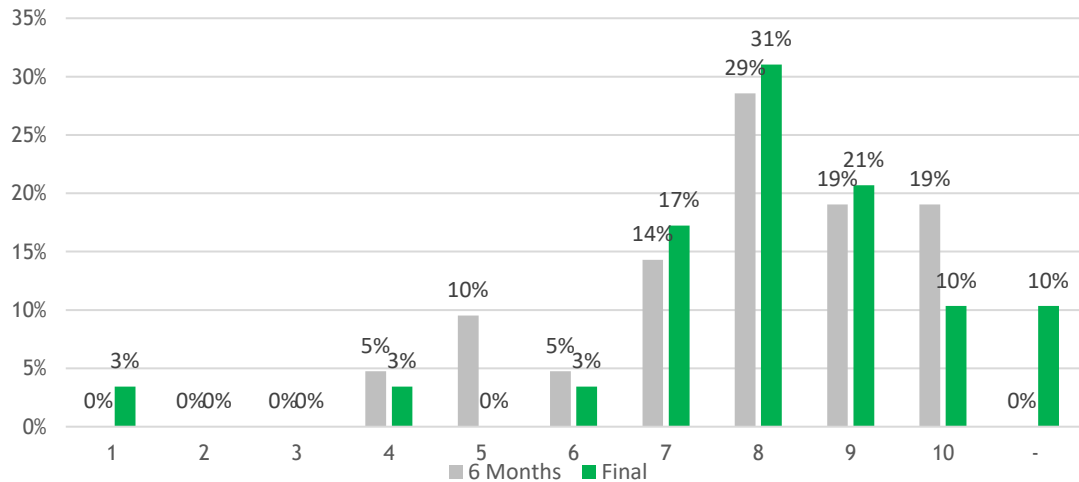


This shows that at the six month point the mean average score was 8.0, and at the final point was 8.0. Responders that rated themselves as positive (7 or higher out of 10) stayed the same at 85%:



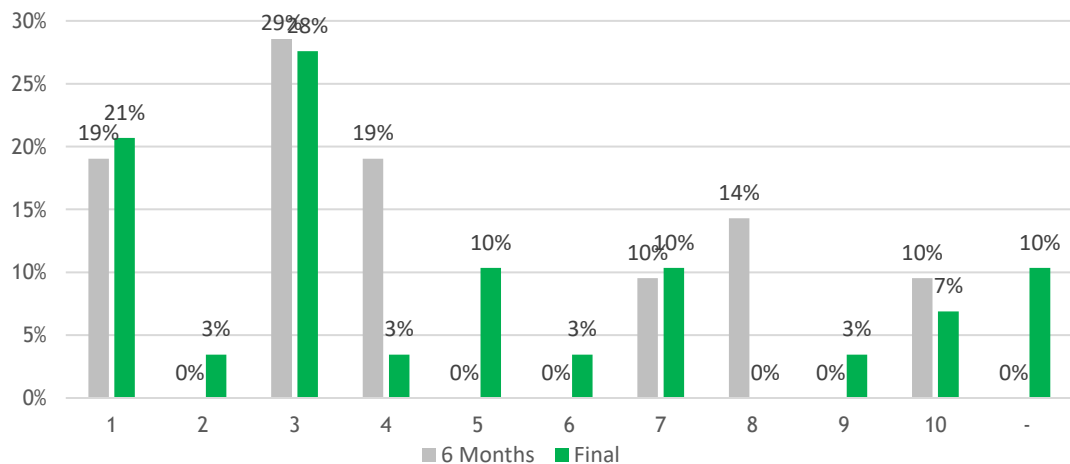
- E3) Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?**

This shows that at the six month point the mean average score was 7.9, and at the final point was 7.8. Surprisingly, despite this slight decrease responders that rated themselves as positive (7 or higher out of 10) increased from 80% to 88% over the same timeframe - being an 8% increase:



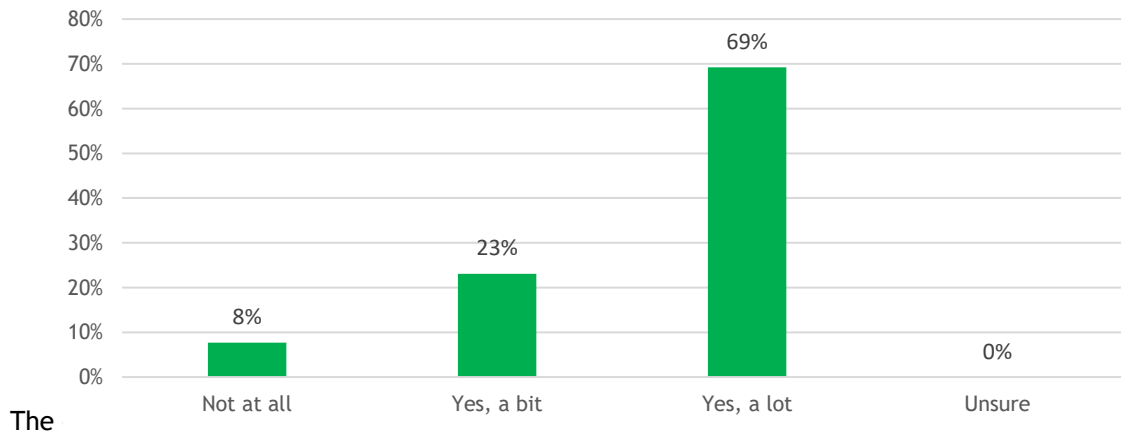
- E4) On a scale where 0 is “not at all anxious” and 10 is “completely anxious”, overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (Over 16s only)**

This shows that at the six month point the mean average score was 4.6, and at the final point was 4.1. Responders that rated themselves as positive (3 or under out of 10) increased from 48% to 58% over the same timeframe - being a 10% increase:



- **E5) Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project/event?**

This question was only asked at the final point, and shows that the most frequent response was 'Yes, a lot' with 69% of responders:



The

Wellbeing Data				
Level	Point	Mean	Positive Respondents	Change
Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	6 Months	7.7	81%	8%
	Final	8.0	89%	
Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	6 Months	8.0	85%	0%
	Final	8.0	85%	
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	6 Months	7.9	80%	8%
	Final	7.8	88%	
	Point	Mean	Positive Respondents	Change
Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	6 Months	4.6	48%	10%
	Final	4.1	58%	

10 Financial Performance

10.1 Project Budget

The project had a total cost of £264,081. This included 94% funding from Spirit of 2012 (£199,546 of main project funding and a dedicated budget of £48,305 for access costs to ensure disabled and non-disabled people can participate in volunteering as equals). The overall budget was as below:

Project Budget	
Item	Income (£)
Spirit of 2012 - Volunteering Cities grant	199,546
Spirit of 2012 - access grant	48,305
CCBC match (£6,500 allocated to DAC and CVSC)	13,000
CCBC match (used for translation)	230
Conwy Arts Trust (used for PR and training)	943.92
UKSPF - (allocated to Volunteer Rewards)	2,000
Total Income	264,024.92

10.2 Project Spend

The total actual project spend may be summarised below:

Project Spend	
Item	Spend (£)
Staffing (CVSC and DAC project officer roles)	158,103.98
Access	48,605
Monitoring and evaluation	12,850
Volunteer recognition	3498.17
Marketing and recruitment	8643.92
Training (for volunteers and hosts)	9,954.83
Travel	3,115.89
CCBC Overheads (Admin support, Translation)	4500.00
Contingency (used for additional marketing and data collection (Survey Monkey)	3336.36
Total Cost	252,608.15

The funders have approved that the underspend amount of £11,416.77 can be transferred to CVSC who will repurpose it to maintain volunteer engagement and activity in the interim period whilst continuation funding is secured.

11 Lessons Learned

11.1 Insights

Project delivery has enabled much to be learned. Aside from the specific learning identified throughout this report, wider insight may be considered for ease by theme:

- Importance of Messaging from the Outset
- Administration Was More than Expected
- Specialist Support Needed Before Volunteering
- Dedicated Access Budgets are Essential
- Benefits of Utilising Disabled and Deaf Practitioners
- Balancing Volunteer Versus Host Capacity
- Unsuitable Volunteering Wales Platform
- Less opportunities Than Anticipated Through CCBC and the Creu Conwy Partnership

Each of these is summarised below.

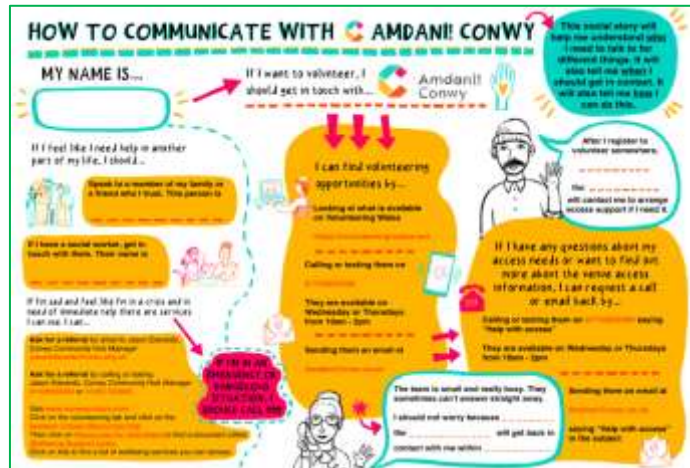
- **Importance of Messaging from the Outset:** although the purpose of the project was clear within the partnership from the outset, it was not always apparent to external audiences:
 - The project's priority on inclusion for disabled and deaf volunteers meant that at the outset messaging was misunderstood to mean it was exclusively for those groups. This caused some confusion amongst potential partners and wider stakeholders in terms of raising awareness and marketing.
 - For volunteers, although the project was open to anyone who wanted to volunteer, in reality some members of the community just wanted to be in a group for social benefits, and they had less interest in progressing volunteering experience.
 - For Hosts, some misunderstood the aim of the project at first and feared that Amdani! was seeking to compete with their established volunteer programmes and reduce their funded outputs. As a result the team clarified with volunteers, Hosts and wider stakeholders that the project was open to anyone and that its inherent purpose was to add value to the quality of the volunteering offer across the county.

In the future clear messaging will be needed from the outset. For volunteers clarifying the boundaries of what is offered, and what the project is not designed for. Similarly for Hosts, such as building on the successful Host organisation FAQs and Host interview podcast that were delivered, to avoid misunderstanding and potential pushback.

- **Administration Was More than Expected:** the team realised at several points during delivery that the realities of the target audience would require significantly more input and administration time than had been anticipated or budgeted for. Key examples included:
 - The Sign-Up Café meetings were an efficient way of gaining signups (and social connection), but were time intensive and face-to-face was essential in this regard as attempts for digital signups got little if any traction.

- Many volunteers required 1:1 personal reminders (such as telephone calls or meetups) of their volunteering commitments, as group digital reminders (such as emails) were not effective in ensuring their involvement and activity.
- Most volunteers struggled with booking onto opportunities, logging their hours, using Tempo credits, and claiming expenses. Supporting these aspects needed the team's time on the phone or in-person.

Some volunteers would also regularly contact the team for non-volunteering related enquiries. The team attempted to resolve this through inductions, Easy Read information and developing new resources [Image shows the 'How to Communicate with Amdani! Conwy' help sheet]. However, some volunteers still chose direct contact with the team.



In the future resource allocation will need to acknowledge the 1:1 and person-centred requirements of the volunteers and assign suitable team capacity to support this, alongside actual project delivery.

- **Specialist Support Needed Before Volunteering:** within a wider context of health and social care services being strained countywide (and indeed across the UK) coupled with the openness and support the project provided, the team encountered many potential volunteers who had complex needs often including poor mental health. While some wished to volunteer they were not in a place where they were able to reliably fulfil any volunteering commitments, or required ongoing welfare support to facilitate their participation that was beyond the scope of the team.

In the future it will be beneficial to signpost or collaborate with local support organisations, such as Conwy Mind who are equipped to deal with mental health needs, to provide support as a precursor to considering volunteering.

- **Dedicated Access Budgets are Essential:** the team saw first-hand how allocation of the access budget enabled volunteers to engage with cultural venues and events they wouldn't have been able to access without additional provisions. Key realisations included:
 - A key overall challenge around access was the limited number of access support workers in the county, which often meant the team had to look outside of Conwy to find support for the volunteers, such as BSL interpreters, which often came at a significantly increased cost. The team were able to address this in part by recruiting freelance students from the Level 4 Deaf Studies course at Coleg Llandrillo to provide BSL assistance, although this was a limited resource.

- Transport was an ongoing barrier for many volunteering opportunities, especially the rural ones. The team’s ability to book transport directly on behalf of the volunteers led to higher engagement rates, and also avoided volunteers being out of pocket or struggling with expenses claims. However, this required additional team time to co-ordinate between the volunteers, the Hosts, and taxi firms.
- There was a significant need for Personal Assistants (PAs) for volunteers that required additional support to fully engage in their volunteering journey. The team explored if this provision could be accessed through CCBC’s Social Services, but it was found that there was limited staff capacity and they had their own recruitment challenges. As a result, the team at the outset of delivery attempted to arrange PAs and undertake DBS checks but this was too time consuming, and so external agency Servoca’s services were commissioned from December 2023 to support volunteers requiring personal care. Working with an agency came at a high cost it was vital for some volunteers.

“Without the communication support I wouldn’t be volunteering.”

d/Deaf volunteer

In the future it will be helpful to develop external relationships from the outset, such as with taxi operators, PA agencies, and wider access specialists.

- **Benefits of Utilising Disabled and Deaf Practitioners:** the ability to draw on the skills and capacity of disabled or deaf creative practitioners was central in the facilitation and delivery of the project. The project budget had a line for Creative Facilitators and as detailed previously in this report the team were able to connect with specialists such as: Ruth Fabby MBE (Ex DAC CEO and performance artist), Dr Sara Louise Wheeler (Disabled artist and writer), TAPE: Community Music and Film (Inclusive TV, Film and Music facilitators), Hijinx (Theatre group for neurodivergent actors), Mark Davies (BSL Artist and educator), Elly Strigner (Illustrator and designer), Alan Whitfield (Poet and Photographer), Making Sense CIC (Sensory arts organisation), and Evie Roberts (Workshop facilitator).

In the future it will be important to maximise the impact of any support by continuing to focus on working with artists who represent different protected characteristic groups, have lived experience of disability, or utilise creative skills to create accessibility resources and activities. This was done initially with NWAMI (Networking for World Awareness of Multicultural Integration) but could be developed further to better engage intersectional lived experiences.

- **Balancing Volunteer Versus Host Capacity:** the team worked well to accommodate the challenge of balancing volunteer availability with Host opportunities, for example experiencing alternating patterns between having a surplus of opportunities without enough volunteers signing up, followed by the opposite position in the following months.
- For volunteers, the team spent a lot of time building a personalised approach with the volunteers to counter this so that they could explain in more detail the nature of opportunities and assist them to identify those that may have been most suitable for them. **Conversely, some** volunteers don’t turn up or cancel at the last minute, which

puts additional pressure on the team and can damage reputations with the Host. The team spent some time with repeat no-show volunteers, who due to health reasons were encouraged to avoid overcommitting themselves pause their involvement while they recuperate.

- For Hosts, some submitted opportunities last minute which placed added pressure onto the team in having to contact volunteers 1:1 to make them aware, as digital advertising was not always effective and usually not a quick solution. Equally some Hosts had to cancel opportunities cancelled at short notice due to struggles in the sector, for example the Pine Festival (a large-scale music event in Llandudno) was cancelled due to poor ticket sales with 10 of the project volunteers losing out.

In the future a firm but fair warning system could be implemented at the recruitment/ agreement stage for both volunteers and Hosts - such as a 'three strikes and you're out' approach - that demonstrates the repercussions of last-minute cancellations/ no-shows on both staff time and resources (such as transport or PA costs) that could otherwise have been used to support the project's growth.

- **Unsuitable Volunteering Wales Platform:** the new Volunteering Wales platform was launched in June 2023 that coincided with the first wave of recruiting project volunteers. Unfortunately, the project team experienced bugs and formatting issues with the site. The platform also shares opportunities from across the entirety of Wales, so the team had volunteers outside the programme attempt to sign up to project opportunities. Equally project volunteers also signed up to opportunities that were outside the scope of Amdani!. The team's requests to the platform designers to create a closed space where volunteers could be presented with just Amdani! opportunities were not possible. From an access perspective, many volunteers as a result found the platform difficult to use, and used the alternative means of signing up to opportunities the team had implemented.

In the future it will be helpful to consider a suitable platform as early as possible, if use of an external platform is considered beneficial.

- **Less Opportunities Than Anticipated Through CCBC and the Creu Conwy Partnership:** the original funding application described the Creu Conwy Partnership as the primary source for volunteering opportunities, however the team observed that local organisations within the partnership are under ever-increasing strain due to reduced funding and capacity that reduced their ability to offer up opportunities. The team worked hard to gain buy-in from four Creu Conwy Town Team projects (Planeterium, Dafydd ap Siencyn, Cranes of Peace, and Colwyn Lights). As newly formed alliances working collaboratively for the first time and to tight project timescales, some were not in a position to offer volunteering opportunities as had been originally anticipated. While CCBC attempted to lever-in alternative opportunities through its restricted funded projects, such as Taith, as some of these involved multiple partners gaining consensus to volunteering opportunities was not always possible.

In the future it will be advantageous to work with potential collaborators as early in the application process as possible to shape the project, scope out the likely scale of volunteering and identify which partners/ agreements may need to be formalised to quicken the process from the start.

There wasn't a dedicated Amdani! project officer role within CCBC and therefore there were often competing priorities and capacity issues. Towards the end of 2023 additional roles within the Creu Conwy team were supported through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this relieved some pressures in relation to marketing, administration and supporting opportunities within the immediate Culture Libraries and Information section, however due to a secondment opportunity and restructure there was reduced capacity at senior / management level. An Amdani! project role within CCBC could have supported more consistency with day-to-day project functions and to develop stronger corporate and cross-departmental links, with for example Adult and Community Services, Employment and Youth Services.

11.2 Next Steps

The project team have looked towards the future beyond March 2025 when the funding ends. The partnership has agreed that CVSC will become the lead partner going forward, merging activity within their existing and successful social prescribing offer.

Specific actions to support future delivery may include:

- Adapting project messaging to communicate that the project is inclusive in broadest sense not just in relation to people with disabilities, encompassing; global majorities, LGBTQ+, people experiencing other barriers such as being economically inactive or financial exclusion.
- Clearly outline project definitions (for example "volunteer") as it means different things to different people and organisations.
- Adopt a more targeted approach with volunteer organisations to involve them at earliest stage to shape the approach, as those who already have developed volunteering frameworks are less likely to benefit from the project.
- Streamline the volunteer role description process so it has more utility within organisations across different opportunities so a new one doesn't need to be completed every time.
- Acknowledge the time-intensive nature of the role and allocate suitable staffing capacity.
- Allocate sufficient budgets purely for access purposes, such as transport, interpretation, or personal assistants.
- Continue offering Sign-up Café sessions as a cost/ resource effective method of promoting awareness, recruiting new volunteers, encouraging wellbeing and social contact.
- Sustain volunteering opportunities that are regularly available, for example in libraries, as these require minimal ongoing administration.
- Collaborate with local providers to signpost towards support for those that wish to volunteer but are not quite ready in terms of their mental or physical health.
- Consider drawing on the capacity of a dedicated disabled worker to act as an exemplar of what can be achieved, to inspire disabled people, and to support a culture of viewing disabled people as professionals rather than service users.
- Offer training beyond host organisations to increase accessibility of the sector. Work with potential collaborators early in the application process to define the likely scale of volunteering that is achievable.
- Implement a system that ensures commitment to address volunteer no-shows and Hosts cancelling opportunities at the last minute.

Document Control

Conwy County Borough Council
Amdani! Conwy, Evaluation
Final Report, Version 7
C-COB264
4th April 2025

Contact

David Waterfall
david@davidwaterfall.com
www.davidwaterfall.com
07951 401 320
<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/davidwaterfall>

© 2025 David Waterfall. No responsibility for loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any statement in this report can be accepted by David Waterfall.