

FACEWORK'S MAKER SPACE

Impact report Jan- July 2025



This report highlights the progress of the Facework Maker Space in its first 6 months of operation.



This place has been a godsend to me, the activities have given me the opportunity to come out, to socialise after years of being isolated. I met lovely people for this new chapter of my life. It's a safe place, It reconnects me to me and to this area and to my passion which I have rediscovered. “ Anna from Poland.



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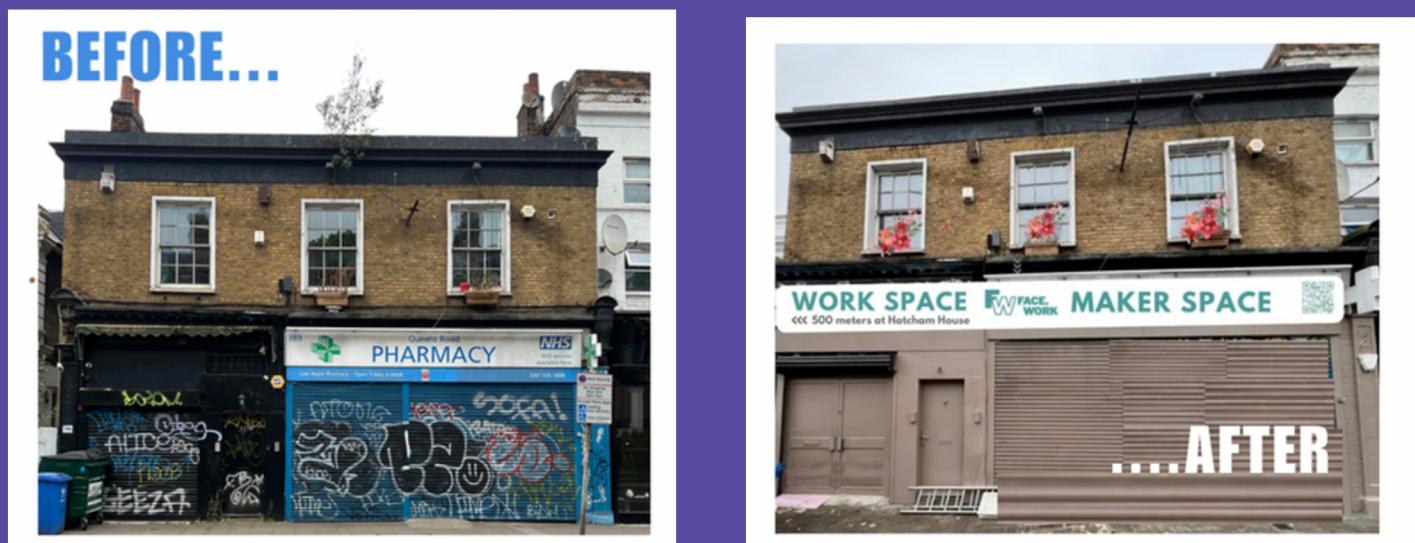
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INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 2025, the Lewisham Housing and Refugee Resettlement team made a grant to Facework so that it could develop a unique Maker Space on the HighStreet from which to run the Facework Refugees employment programme.

This grant paid for the rent of the space (£2,000 a month) and a contribution to staff costs and Facework overheads in developing this project for an initial 12-month pilot.

Lewisham Works team also provided a Capital grant of £15,000 towards the costs of the refurbishment of the old Pharmacy building.



Aims and objectives of the project

Facework believed it was important to pilot a more radical approach to supporting refugees into employment, improve the local economy and help build community connections. To that end we wanted the Maker Space to be a place which:

- 1 SUPPORTED REFUGEES IN DEVELOPING THEIR SKILLS THROUGH WORKING WITH THEM IN TRANSFORMING THE BUILDING AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO CREATE THEIR OWN SELF EMPLOYMENT.**
- 2 FACILITATE ACTIVITIES WHICH PROVIDED GREATER INTEGRATION WITH SANCTUARY SEEKERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.**
- 3 PROVIDE AN AFFORDABLE VENUE FOR ANYONE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WHO WANTED TO SHARE SKILLS, MAKE CONNECTIONS AND BEGIN THEIR OWN BUSINESS OR SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS.**

We have made significant progress in all of these 3 areas and this report highlights just some of the success under these 3 headings as well as ways in which we want to build on this work.

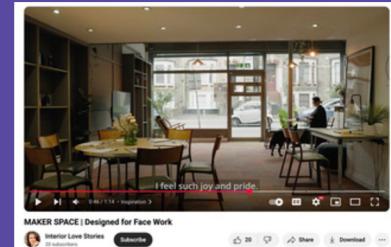
MAKER SPACE ACTIVITIES

1 SUPPORTED REFUGEES IN DEVELOPING THEIR SKILLS THROUGH WORKING WITH THEM IN TRANSFORMING THE BUILDING AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO CREATE THEIR OWN SELF EMPLOYMENT.

Being on the high street and being accessible has given us a unique opportunity to be more visible and be able to respond to constant enquiries from local people.

OUTCOMES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE

- Provided paid employment for 2 of our Facework Ukrainian participants to design and oversee the construction of the space. This helped them establish their design businesses – see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7mlOrjEoYA>
- Mobilised 9 volunteers from our Facework Futures programme who worked with us and were supported in learning how to install a kitchen, build a new disabled toilet, ensure the building had better environmental footprint. Installing cavity walls and loft insulation. We also provided employment for 3 local residents who undertook the painting and decoration of the outside of the building including quality signwriting.
- Created a 6 month internship post for one of our Facework Futures participants (Najiba) so she could help run activities one day a week in the space and learn about project planning.
- Helped establish 2 refugee led businesses;
Pilates business - hosting a weekly Pilates class run by Ukrainian
Refugee Film company - supported an independent film maker who documented the project. We now employ him to live stream the Facework Employment training sessions.
- Hosted over 30 Facework Futures employment training sessions and regular one-to-one case work from the space. This work has included helping individuals consider self-employment opportunities and we have been successful in getting refugees established as Uber Drivers and freelance builders (see HANLON database for our success rates).
- Hosted a unique mobile phone repair training programme (run by refugee organisation) to teach others how to establish their own mobile phone repair business.
- Host 4 work experience students who have used the maker space as a base for learning about social entrepreneurship.



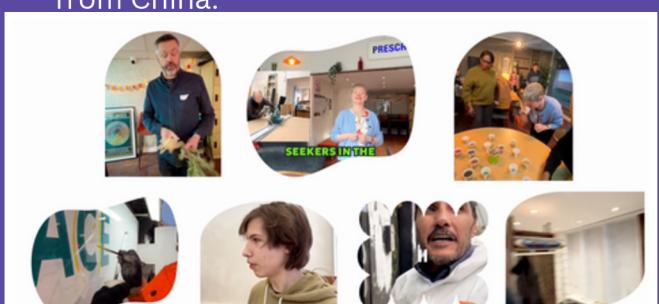
MAKER SPACE ACTIVITIES

2 FACILITATE ACTIVITIES WHICH PROVIDED GREATER INTEGRATION WITH SANCTUARY SEEKERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

If refugees are to find work or start their own businesses they need to both improve their skills, become proficient in English and grow their confidence. We believe this comes through connection and so from the start we wanted to run activities which brought local people and refugees together. Under this aim we have achieved the following in the last 6 months:

OUTCOMES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE

- Employed an experienced adult educator who has experience in facilitating workshops with participants with mental health needs. She has run 24 regular Arts & Craft Making sessions on Fridays for anyone in the community who wishes to learn how to make things, learn English and meet others including those we invite from our refugee employment training programmes. See www.face.work/artandcraftclub
- Hosted “MEET ME” Art Therapy sessions at the Maker Space on Sundays which have been run by refugees for refugees.
- Provided free space for crafters to run their own workshops and create income for their businesses. This has included a workshop on how to blend tea, how to make a whisk from a Christmas tree and how to create greetings cards. We have created income for these local crafters as they build their business.
- Provided space for a local parents group who meet weekly to support each other as they raise children with SEND needs.
- Hosted 4 networks of organisations who have needed an accessible space to host their forums. This has included
 - * Civil Servants from Ministry of Housing,
 - * The Refugee Council network
 - * Goldsmiths Staff
 - * GLA No Wrong Door network
- Worked with Kingship Carers catering who used the Maker Space to share their community food cooking practice with a visiting delegation from China.



See videos of activities at <https://www.face.work/videos-of-making>

MAKER SPACE ACTIVITIES

3 PROVIDE AN AFFORDABLE VENUE FOR ANYONE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WHO WANTED TO SHARE SKILLS, MAKE CONNECTIONS AND BEGIN THEIR OWN BUSINESS OR SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS.

One of the most important thing any new company or social venture needs is space. During this first year we have opened the Maker Space to any one or group of local people who are wanting to create community connection. Where they can they have made a modest contribution for renting the space but for any group using the space we encourage them to provide free places for our participants.

OUTCOMES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE

- We have been able to host a number of activities run by our Changemakers as they develop their projects or wanted to test their projects. This has included:
 - * Parent workshops on understanding County Lines dangers
 - * Barista training sessions for young people,
 - * A forum for looked after children as they transition into adulthood.
- We have hosted a regular student drama group who use the Maker Space to rehearse every week. The Director from this group says,

"We can honestly say that without Facework providing their support and use of their spaces we would never have been able to grow our business. We now employ 21 staff and run Youth Theatres and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art sessions for over 370 young people across London, including using the Facework spaces weekly for our Youth Theatres. Thank you Facework!"

- Hosted the Embassy of Milawi who needed a space in Lewisham to provide visa support to citizens here in the UK
- Hosted 2 Telegraph Hill Festival craft making activities where local people ran children's food preparation classes.
- Provided space for yoga teacher who has started her own business and runs community yoga for local people including for our refugees
- Worked with Kingship Carers catering who used the Maker Space to share their community food cooking practice with a visiting delegation from China.
- Hosted various private fuctions for members of our LOFT working space who need larger meeting room areas and for members of the local communities.



MAKER SPACE ACTIVITIES

DEVELOPING THE MAKER SPACE INTO YEAR 2

We hope that in this short report we have shown funders and partners the range of activities and positive impact we have had in the first 6 months. We believe that during the remainder of the contract with the landlord we can build on this work and extend the positive impact further. However we do need to secure funding for year 2 by the start of September 2025 so we can:

- Strengthen the ties between other refugee and social action projects in Lewisham. We have already met with LRMN who are interested in having a dedicated weekly outreach session.
- We are in discussions with the GLA about providing a more proactive outreach programme in Asylum hotels. If we did secure this programme we would need to use the Maker Space as a base for this work in South London so we can continue to support refugees once they are in employment or training.
- We are seeking funding to be able to create a small grants programme for refugees so they can establish their business or social enterprise. We have funded 7 projects this year alone with grants from the National Lottery and the Borough of Sanctuary team but more could be achieved if we were able to provide micro finance or loans to start ups.
- Building on the success of the Changemakers dedicated workspace we are keen to expand this and make the Maker Space available for 2 set days a week for the new crop of Changemakers who start in September. The combination of event space and mentoring support would help us make the projects more sustainable.
- We believe we can meet 20% of the costs of the rent and overheads next year through creating a more robust commercial charging scheme.
However we need approximately £28K to continue to run the space.

