

BRIDGE THE GAP

# Impact Report

2020 - 2023



# BRIDGE THE GAP

## Contents

03

Introduction

04

Our Story So Far

05

Key Initiatives &  
Achievements 2020-21

06-07

Key Initiatives &  
Achievements 2022

08-10

Key Initiatives &  
Achievements 2023

11

Impact On The  
Community

12-13

Success In  
Numbers

14

Mentions



# Introduction

Bridge the Gap Ending Digital Poverty CIC, located in Hackney, emerged during the 2020 lockdown to address the digital and social divide.

We empower families and the wider community by providing technology equipment, digital skills, and Data SIM cards.

Our Digital Community Hub Project facilitates change and inspires others to be pro-active.

Our mission is to equip local families and individuals with the tools to transform their futures through education, internet access, and technology, fostering empowerment and community-driven change.

Our journey was sparked by Melissa's personal struggle with digital poverty during lockdown - when her family faced the challenges of digital exclusion, especially with two children with additional needs. Her efforts to maintain a conducive learning environment led her to understand and address the broader issue of digital poverty, as she encountered many families facing similar hardships.

Melissa's initiative grew through support and advice from local government contacts, evolving into Bridge the Gap Families in Need CIC, aimed at providing refurbished devices to those in need.

Over time, the increasing demand for online access and support prompted an expansion of services to a wider community, addressing the needs of various groups including the elderly, the youth, and those with mental health issues. Despite limitations, Melissa's dedication to alleviating digital poverty continued, culminating in the rebranding of the initiative to "Bridge the Gap Ending Digital Poverty CIC" in 2023, reflecting a commitment to bridging the digital divide for a broader spectrum of the community.

**UK families  
excluded from  
digital society:**

**45%**





# Our story so far

## Our Mission

To empower individuals and communities by providing digital access, skills, and support, bridging the digital divide, and creating a more connected and inclusive society.

Our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital age.

We strive to provide the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary for everyone to thrive in the digital world, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We have Impacted  
over

5000

people in our  
community

2.1  
million

remain offline  
in the UK

## Our Purpose

As we move forward, Bridge the Gap remains committed to evolving our initiatives and responding to the ever-changing needs of the community.

We will continue to seek innovative ways to promote digital inclusion, empower individuals, and create a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve. By doing this we will continue to build partnerships with other organisations and services to enable a joint effort to enable individuals to engage in meaningful change for their lives.

# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2020 - 21

## Key Achievements and Community Partnerships:

- Conducted a successful 6 months online tutoring program benefiting 7 children in science, 10 in maths, 4 in English, and 3 in Spanish, fostering a positive impact on learning abilities.
- We facilitated access to much-needed aid by leveraging online networking platforms, allowing families to easily access support. In collaboration with Morrisons and local organisations, we distributed 120 packed lunches during half-term as part of the Marcus Rashford campaign to assist low-income families.
- We participated in the TECH421 campaign with a local group Community Closet, receiving 10 laptop donations and a £48 donation.
- Organised Easter and summer competitions, awarding prizes like Amazon Kindles in partnership with Peabody and laptops to participants.
- Secured a £5000 grant from the African Health Policy Network for 15 laptops in partnership with our host organisation The Wickers Charity.
- Developed partnerships with Host organisation St John of Jerusalem for our funding during lockdown.

Developed partnerships with Hackney Quest youth charity as part of refurbishing devices to donate to families.



# 2021

# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2022

## Device, connectivity and digital skills workshops:

In 2022, Bridge the Gap collaborated with Carib Eats, a local community hub that promotes connections through Caribbean cuisine, to host a workshop. This event aimed to combat isolation by fostering communal dining experiences. Alongside providing brand new Amazon Kindles, Bridge the Gap supported over 25 residents in learning how to use their Kindles. With the assistance of volunteers, residents were guided in accessing the internet using our SIM cards and dongles.

As part of a pilot scheme with Carib Eats, Bridge the Gap also provided support to over 50 residents over a 16-week period to enable them to use their devices to contact services such as the council for council tax reduction support, search for local activities, and access GP surgeries.

## Mother's Day Event:

A collaborative Mother's Day brunch hosted by Bridge the Gap, CAC, and The Hackney Community Closet, celebrated motherhood and empowered 60 mothers and 40 children through networking, supported by local businesses.

Positive feedback noted the event's role in uniting the community and plans for enhancing future events. Additionally, an Easter event attracted 44 children and 54 parents, strengthening family ties and community bonds, with prizes adding to the festive spirit.



2022

# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2022

## Mindful May:

Bridge the Gap collaborated with a local mindfulness practitioner to host an online mindfulness event on Instagram, leveraging social media as a platform to engage families and the community in practising mindfulness techniques and promoting well-being.

Dubbed "Mindful May," the event attracted 300 families, offering valuable resources and tools to enhance their overall well-being. The initiative aimed to encourage families to use their digital devices for personal growth and relaxation in the comfort of their homes.

## Poverty Alleviation Partnerships:

In collaboration with Hackney Council and other organisations such as the Round Chapel, Bridge the Gap distributed Tesco gift vouchers to 65 families and 91 children aged 5 and below, helping tackle the rising cost of living.

BTG worked in a partnership Community engagement sustainability event with London Energy Saving Squad LTD (LESS) and Hackney Council emphasising the importance of digital technology in accessing utility services whilst using online platforms to access services relevant to their needs, during the event we were able to sign up over 20 new referrals for support for a device and other signposting services.

Teaming up with Hackney Quest, a youth-focused charity, Bridge the Gap provided 30 children and 13 adults with cinema tickets as part of a community outreach effort. Families appreciated the diverse opportunities provided by Bridge the Gap, fostering stronger community ties. Leveraging technology, we facilitated families' access to this opportunity.



2022



# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2023

## Digital skills workshops:

In 2023, Bridge the Gap, in partnership with a local church and the Guinness Trust estate in Stamford Hill, successfully conducted 60 digital skills workshops. These sessions, held from July to August, aimed to equip 32 residents weekly with vital digital skills.

The workshops were conducted in collaboration with the Good Things Foundation charity, using the Learn My Way platform to teach basic computer skills. Held four times a week, each session provided one-on-one support for eight residents, tailored to meet individual learning needs and challenges. Participants included those facing health issues, mental health challenges, homelessness, unemployment, and dependency on benefits.

The program effectively helped residents register on the Learn My Way online platform, enhancing their basic computer skills. With personalised support from dedicated volunteers, participants confidently overcame device-related challenges and navigated the digital world. The feedback highlighted the nurturing and non-judgmental environment, which was crucial for fostering learning and personal growth. Residents had continual access to the Learn My Way platform for independent learning and could seek targeted help from volunteers for tasks like email setup and management, ensuring they received the guidance needed for personal proficiency.

2023



# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2023

## Digital skills workshops:

Following the 2023 workshops, a subsequent cohort was held from October to December 2023, empowering an additional 32 residents weekly with digital skills. This culminated in a festive event, "Digi World Christmas," involving 70 residents in celebratory activities. Participants were recognised for their attendance in each workshop session, receiving certificates, and were encouraged to share feedback on their experiences and how they benefited from the sessions.

Overall, these workshops and celebratory events have not only equipped residents with essential digital skills but have also fostered a sense of community, belonging, and empowerment. Positive experiences have encouraged participants to share their success stories, inspiring others to embrace the digital world with confidence and enthusiasm.



2023

# Key Initiatives & Achievements 2023

## Device and Data connectivity:

In February 2023, Bridge the Gap partnered with National Data Bank and Good Things Foundation, receiving monthly data allocations from O2, Vodafone, and Three. We distribute preloaded SIM cards and vouchers based on demand, closely monitoring usage and requesting more data when needed. Between February and December 2023, we allocated a total of 221 data SIM cards (O2 - 101, Vodafone - 102, Three - 18) and provided 18 devices to families and organisations. In February 2024, we partnered with unconnected.org, distributing 20 Vodafone SIM cards with 40GB data to HMP Downview prison Resettlement Scheme to support women reintegrating into the community. Our organisation, expanded its mission in 2023 to address digital poverty through various initiatives, including SIM card distribution, device provision, digital skills workshops, and community events.

## Energy Vouchers:

In December 2023, Bridge the Gap collaborated with a local group for an Energy Voucher Initiative, supporting 76 families, including 138 adults and 132 children. This initiative aimed to alleviate financial burdens caused by high energy costs, allowing families to redirect resources to essential needs such as food and housing. Families accessed vouchers by completing an energy request form with assistance from the local group, providing crucial relief from financial strain.

2023

# BRIDGE THE GAP

## ENDING DIGITAL POVERTY

## Impact on the Community

Bridge the Gap Ending Digital Poverty CIC has made a significant impact on community empowerment and digital inclusion since 2020.

By providing access to digital resources, facilitating skill-building workshops, and organizing community events, we've helped individuals and families overcome the challenges of digital poverty. Our initiatives have enabled participants to secure employment, access educational opportunities, and improve their well-being, thus fostering community connectivity and supporting sustainable digital engagement.

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Device Repairs and Data Wiping	Launched a service for affordable device repair and secure data wiping.	Reduced electronic waste and enhanced data privacy, contributing to environmental sustainability.
Community Engagement Events	Conducted workshops to improve technological proficiency.	Empowered individuals with digital skills, leading to further education and employment opportunities.
Access to Information	Signposted over 3800 people to local services and opportunities.	Increased community awareness and access to essential services and job opportunities.

# Our Success In Numbers

Bridge the Gap is dedicated to responding dynamically to the challenges posed by digital poverty. We focus on addressing immediate needs while also offering sustainable solutions. Through initiatives such as providing SIM cards, distributing devices, offering repair services, and facilitating digital skills workshops, we strive to empower individuals and families to overcome barriers to digital access and participation.



**707**  
Devices distributed

Over  
**60**  
Workshops

**317**  
Data Sim & Energy Vouchers

Funding

£15,844.14

Through donations and fundraising



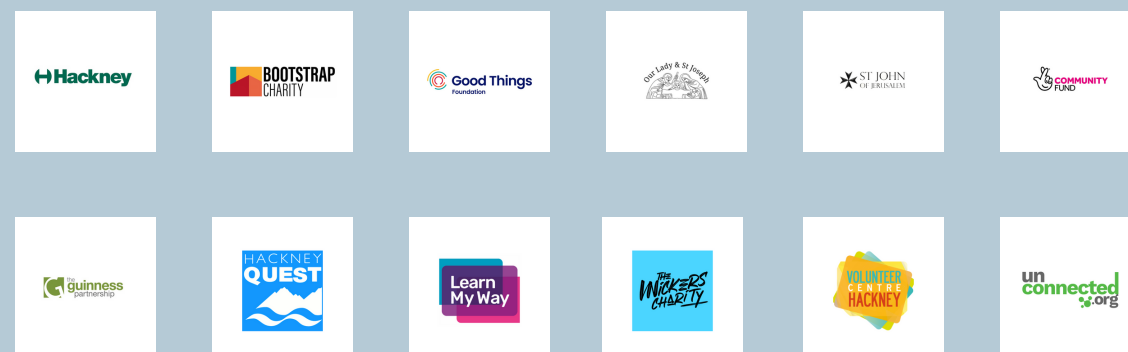
# We **thank you** for your ongoing support of **Bridge the Gap**

## Acknowledgements

Those responsible for concept and coordination:

Melissa Francis - Founder  
Mesha Morris - Data Sim Manager  
Sanjana Sambantham - HR Manager  
Anthony Matthews - IT Manager  
Zafar Jumabayev - IT Manager  
La'shawnn Edmondson Byfield - Fundraising Manager  
Kimberly Mannion - Head Reseacher  
Jack Mayhew - Creative Director  
Madeleine McBroom - Researcher  
Steven Price - Digital Champion  
Alexandra White - Social Media  
Andras Pusztafi - Social Media  
Joseph Ofosu - Social Media  
Stuart Steeple - Social Media  
Frances Thomas - Data Sim Service  
Priyadarshan Muthu - HR  
Brittney Campbell - Administration  
Carol Thomas - Administration

## In partnership with:



Bridge The Gap CIC

Hackney, London, UK

[www.bridgethegaplondon.co.uk](http://www.bridgethegaplondon.co.uk)

[info@bridgethegaplondon.co.uk](mailto:info@bridgethegaplondon.co.uk)

# BRIDGE THE GAP

# ENDING DIGITAL POVERTY