

Clarissa Stoneham

Outstanding Contribution Award

Describe the work of the individual being nominated

Clarissa works with disadvantaged and marginalised communities addressing systemic and systematic that negatively impact their lives. Clarissa works directly and indirectly with individuals and groups helping them to recognise their strengths and celebrate their talent. Clarissa has worked with prolific and priority offenders, vulnerable families, persecuted communities, those facing homelessness and with people and groups living in crisis. Clarissa has worked in a variety of paid and unpaid roles in inner London with the community groups for 25 years.

Give examples of the projects or work the individual has done

Clarissa started her formal career in the community late, having lived as a vulnerable, teenage parent having no family or support network in England. As a result she faced isolation, long term disadvantage and was at risk. Having started as a volunteer youth mentor, she quickly progressed to a paid family support worker in 2007 and worked with the community to identify their skills and strengths, and developed services that were meaningful and relevant. As a result, one of the first things she did was to start a community crèche called Bluebells to enable vulnerable women to access learning and earning opportunities. The crèche now operates as a social enterprise and twelve years later is still helping disadvantaged women access childcare in line with their learning and personal development. As part of her family support work 2007-2010, she began the parent champions model which was later recognised and embedded by the DCFS (Department of children and Family Services) into their guidelines of good practise. She went on to work with prolific and priority young offenders in 2010, working with cross sector organisations to support and empower over 200 young offenders from inner London to believe and achieve. The young offenders went on to get awards from Boris Johnson. One of which is now an OBE. Clarissa was a founding board member for both the Ealing and Brent credit unions (CUBE) for over 15 years promoting and ensuring financial inclusion for the most disadvantaged, unbanked communities living in Brent and Ealing. Ealing has no citizen's advice or law centre, so in 2016 she got together with others to found the Ealing Law Centre, ensuring residents had access to free and impartial legal advice. The work Clarissa did to set up the charities is a reflection of her understanding that for people to benefit from a service or support, they have to have access to the services and support. Fast forward to 2014, Clarissa worked with Citizen's Advice to set up and deliver a schedule of financial capability training to over 6,000 residents delivered by a team of 45 volunteers. As part of this financial literacy and inclusion work, Clarissa went to the Houses of Parliament to raise awareness surrounding the issues facing disadvantaged communities across London. Following on from this in 2015, Clarissa set up the first ever illegal money lending charter in the tri borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster. Clarissa continues to design and develop services, but more from behind the scenes these days helping others to spark change from within and without.

What has been the impact of the projects or work that the individual has contributed to?

In summary, the impact of Clarissa's work is sustained solutions.

Impact for vulnerable families: from working with disadvantaged families, the crèche she started in 2007 still operates as a social enterprise helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families

access education and employment opportunities. The parent champions model developed recognises the strengths and solutions that parents can create for the issues they face, celebrating their experience and local knowledge. The parent champions of 2008 and 2009 went on to win awards from Amnesty International and two of the mothers have started their own social enterprises and charities as a result. Additionally, one woman started her own social good enterprise, Dramaed, and education charity. Another woman who had long term experiences of domestic violence now owns and delivered handyman services. This is exceptional as it provided handywoman services to women who have experienced domestic violence or sexual abuse, and don't yet feel safe with males working in their home.

Young offenders: her young offenders are now young achievers with some of the young people being the first ever getting into university or college. One young man founding SBTV, now an OBE and listed with Forbes Rich List (under 30) opening their own youth clubs and starting youth initiatives around mental health. From working with young offenders aged 14-21, she ensured the National Youth Compact recognised the value, contribution and skills that disadvantaged young people had to offer, and in turn was invited to launch the Compact with the then deputy PM and ten young people. Young people won awards from ESF, Boris Johnson and the police, with 94.8% gaining employment and education within six months of registering with the projects.

Financial inclusion in 2016 helped to redesign national services with Citizen's Advice for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. In turn, this helped millions of customers avoid fuel poverty and save money. She launched the first tri borough financial inclusion project for older people aged over 65 years, gaining over £1 million of unclaimed benefits and entitlements in the first twelve months. She also started the first ever illegal money lending charter supported by trading standards and it is still in operation today, combating the effects of loans sharks in England. Winner of the Financial Skills for Life and NIACE for community training initiatives, training over 6,000 people on managing money. Won Charity of the Year Worker in 2007, 2009 and 2016.

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