

# Saheli

**A health and fitness service by and for local women, removing barriers for Asian women to engage with leisure facilities and manage their health.**



**ENTREPRENEUR:**

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**BASED:**

Birmingham

## What does it do?

Saheli – a friend dedicated to improving community health and wellbeing: by providing innovative services and solutions that educate, motivates, inspires and empowers.

Saheli delivers health and fitness services run by and for local women in Birmingham. It removes barriers by encouraging them to engage with leisure facilities; exercise to improve the management of their long term conditions; take up reskilling opportunities; acquire NVQ qualifications and improve their sense of wellbeing and engagement in the community. It also provides a course of adventurous outdoor pursuits for teenage girls.

## Need

Despite recent improvements, Birmingham's residents are still not living as long as they should be when compared to the UK average. Lack of exercise contributes to this. Aspects of religion

and community affect how exercise can be practised, and amongst ethnic minority groups, participation is well below the national average. The aim is to develop a series of Saheli health and adventure hubs, rooted in local communities and staffed by locally recruited women.

## Solution

Saheli provides the local Asian women with a holistic, personalised life enhancing and community empowering experience. This addresses the need for specific interventions to ensure that women have access and opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity.

Through the provision of a tailored health and fitness facility, local women can now exercise and socialise in a community environment, thus benefiting from the positive effects that being active brings. The service also reaches women who have previously never engaged with mainstream healthcare and who are referred from local GPs to lose weight, manage heart conditions and recover from illness more speedily. Saheli also offers in-house training and qualifications.

In March 2010 Saheli received a commission for £70,282 from NHS Birmingham East and North and a further £21,500 from "Be Active". The BEN commission follows Gateway 2 approval.

**Health Launchpad** has provided seed funding and expertise to help Saheli to develop a robust and viable business plan that includes a growth plan for scalability and sustainability. The investment and support has also covered the costs of an in-depth community consultation to identify market needs for the service and mould the future development of services. This has allowed Saheli to be a locally commissioned service from May 2010 in preparation for subsequent wider commissioning.



THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

### CONTACT

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