



# **Community Impact Report 2020-2026**

*Latin American Community in London*

## INTRODUCTION

This report provides a detailed overview of the impact, growth and reach of the various programmes delivered by Ágape for the Latin American community in London from 2020 to the present day.

Through key initiatives such as the food bank, English classes, advice services and the emotional well-being programme, the organisation has responded comprehensively to the emerging needs of a population in vulnerable circumstances.

This document presents data, results, and evidence of the work carried out, reflecting not only the quantitative growth of the services but also the qualitative impact on the beneficiaries' lives.

## FOOD BANK IMPACT

### 1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 2020, the food bank has played a vital role in supporting the Latin American community in London, particularly during and following the COVID-19 crisis.

What began as an emergency response has developed into a structured and essential service addressing both food insecurity and wider community needs.

### 2. Overall Impact

The growth of the initiative reflects its importance and the increasing demand within the community:

- Initially supporting **20 families in 2020**
- Expansion to **over 550 families currently supported**
- **Weekly distribution** of essential food parcels
- Ongoing support for **migrants in vulnerable situations**

### 3. Food Provision

Each food parcel is carefully prepared to meet basic nutritional needs.

#### Typical contents include:

- Rice, oil, sugar, salt

- Lentils, oats, cereals
- Coffee, milk
- Pasta, tinned tomatoes, beans, tuna
- Fresh fruit and vegetables

These items are made possible through donations, particularly from:

- The Felix Project

#### **Estimated value per parcel:**

- £12 at the start of the project
- £15 currently

#### **4. Growth and Demand**

The increase from 20 to over 550 families highlights:

- Rising levels of need within the community
- Increased awareness of and trust in the service
- The ongoing impact of economic and social challenges

#### **5. Holistic Support (Beyond Food)**

Through regular engagement with beneficiaries, volunteers identified additional needs, leading to the development of complementary services:

- English language classes
- Legal advice and guidance
- Wellbeing workshops

This holistic approach has strengthened community resilience and improved overall wellbeing.

#### **6. Community Impact**

The food bank has made a significant contribution to the community by:

- Reducing food insecurity among Latin American families
- Supporting newly arrived migrants
- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Connecting individuals with additional support services

## ***THE CLOTHING BANK***

The Clothing Bank at St. Matthew's Church has played a vital role in supporting low-income Hispanic families within the local community. Rooted in compassion and service, the program has assisted approximately 500 Hispanic families since its founding. It provides essential clothing resources while fostering dignity, inclusion, and a strong sense of belonging among those it serves.

Many Hispanic families in London face economic challenges due to factors such as low wages, unstable employment, language barriers, and limited access to benefits. These conditions often make it difficult to afford necessities, including adequate clothing for work, school, and seasonal weather changes.

The Agape Clothing Bank offers free clothing to individuals and families in need. Its services include:

- Distribution of gently used and new clothing for men, women, and children
- Seasonal items such as coats, shoes, and school uniforms
- Books and bed linen
- A welcoming and respectful environment where users can select items according to their needs and likes

### **Impact on the Community**

#### **1. Meeting Basic Needs**

The clothing bank helps alleviate financial pressure by providing essential clothing at no cost. This allows families to allocate limited resources to other necessities such as food, housing, and healthcare.

#### **2. Promoting Dignity and Self-Worth**

By allowing individuals to choose their clothing in a respectful setting, the clothing bank promotes a sense of dignity and personal agency. This is particularly meaningful for community members who may otherwise feel marginalised.

#### **3. Supporting Children and Education**

Access to appropriate clothing, including school attire, helps children attend school with confidence and without stigma. This contributes positively to their academic engagement and social integration.

#### **4. Strengthening Community Bonds**

The clothing bank serves as a gathering point where relationships are built between volunteers and users. It fosters trust, cultural understanding, and solidarity within the Latino community and the broader parish.

## **5. Encouraging Volunteerism and Cultural Exchange**

The program engages volunteers from diverse backgrounds, creating opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and mutual learning. This strengthens the social fabric of the parish.

The Agape Clothing Bank at St. Matthew's Church is more than a clothing distribution program—it is a source of hope, dignity, and community support for low-income Hispanic families. Its continued presence and growth are essential in addressing material needs while fostering a more inclusive and compassionate community.

## ***ENGLISH LESSONS***

Since the start of the programme, we've seen a positive response from the community, with strong interest and steady participation across all groups.

We began with around 10–12 students per class, running both morning and afternoon sessions twice a week. While attendance naturally varies, a core group of learners has remained consistent, showing real commitment and motivation to keep learning.

Over the past few years, the programme has continued to grow and reach more people in the community:

2023–2024: 45 students

2024–2025: 48 students

2025–2026: 40 students (ongoing)

These numbers reflect not only sustained interest but also the ongoing need for accessible English learning within the community.

Most students joined at beginner or near-beginner level, and over time, we've seen clear progress. Many are now more confident speaking basic English, have a better understanding of everyday vocabulary, and take a more active role during lessons. It's also encouraging to see students practising outside the classroom and making an effort to use English in their daily lives.

Some learners who initially struggled to communicate are now able to introduce themselves, ask simple questions, and take part in basic conversations. For many, this is a meaningful step towards greater independence and integration.

### **More than just a class**

Beyond language learning, the programme has had a strong social and emotional impact.

Students often describe the classes as a welcoming and supportive space.

Many feel less isolated and more connected to others in similar situations. Over time, relationships have naturally developed between students, creating a sense of community within the classroom.

For many participants, this is not just about learning English; it's about feeling seen, supported, and part of something.

### **Support and Inclusion**

At Agape, we make a conscious effort to support each student as an individual, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

During classes, students receive one-to-one support when needed, and both volunteers and staff are actively involved in guiding and encouraging them. The environment we aim to create is one of respect, patience and inclusion.

This reflects the core values that guide our work at Agape: solidarity, dignity, equality and respect.

### **Wider Impact**

The impact of the programme goes beyond the classroom.

Students are gaining practical language skills that can improve their access to employment opportunities. Increased confidence is helping them navigate everyday life in the UK, whether that's speaking to a GP, supporting their children at school, or handling daily interactions.

At the same time, the programme helps strengthen community connections and plays a small but important role in reducing social isolation.

### **Looking Ahead**

We are committed to continuing and developing this programme so that it can reach even more people.

Our next steps include expanding the number of classes, creating more structured learning pathways, and improving attendance and retention. Securing ongoing funding will be key to making this sustainable in the long term.

With continued support, we hope to keep building a programme that makes a real and lasting difference in the lives of our community.

## **ADVICE SERVICES**

Since 25 September 2024, Ágape's Advice Services area has provided comprehensive support to 200 service users, delivering guidance, information, **and personalised case support**.

The interventions have covered a wide range of areas, including: **social benefits, taxation (tax), immigration processes, telephone support, interpretation of official correspondence, access to and management of utility services (water, electricity and gas), Pension Credit, State Pension, housing, family-related issues, domestic abuse, disputes with private landlords, Universal Credit**, as well as other **administrative matters within the United Kingdom**.

Each case has been handled on an individual basis, ensuring access to **clear, accurate and up-to-date information**, alongside appropriate support to facilitate understanding of processes and resolution of issues. In addition, the Advice Services team collaborates with other professionals and external organisations, enabling a more comprehensive and specialised response tailored to each service user's needs.

Furthermore, some **informational workshops** have been delivered for the wider community, addressing topics of **general interest and relevance**. These sessions have contributed to increasing awareness, promoting understanding of key administrative processes, and empowering individuals to navigate available services more effectively.

The service has received a **positive response from the community**, reflecting the relevance and quality of the support provided. This impact is underpinned by the team's commitment to delivering **reliable information** and maintaining continuous **professional development and knowledge updating**, to enhance service quality and effectiveness.

### **Measurable Outcomes and Impact**

- **Service users supported:** 200 individuals have received guidance and case support during the reporting period.
- **Cases managed:** All service users have received personalised assistance, with follow-up provided where required.

- **Case resolution:** A significant proportion of cases have resulted in positive progress or resolution, particularly in relation to benefits, housing and utility services.
- **Referrals made:** Referrals have been made to **specialist professionals and external agencies** in cases requiring additional expertise (legal, social, psychological or immigration-related), strengthening the support network available to service users.
- **Community workshops delivered:** Several **informational workshops** have been conducted, benefiting members of the wider community and increasing access to key information.
- **Areas of highest demand:** The most frequent areas of support have been **Universal Credit, housing, social benefits and interpretation of official correspondence**, highlighting key community needs.
- **User satisfaction:** There is evidence of **high levels of user satisfaction**, particularly regarding clarity of information, quality of support and trust in the service.
- **Institutional strengthening:** The advisory service has contributed to positioning Ágape as a **trusted community support provider**, while strengthening partnerships with other organisations and professionals.

## ***EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IMPACT***

March 2026 The Emotional Wellbeing Area at Agape aims to strengthen the emotional and social health of the Latin American community in the United Kingdom. The programs provide emotional support, practical tools, and spaces for cultural and social integration, designed to serve:

- Older adults (55+), both men and women
- Young and adult women (18+), promoting empowerment, wellbeing, and sisterhood
- Agape volunteers This report highlights the evolution of participation, predominant needs, strategies implemented and observed impact in the community.

### **1. Community Impact: Participation Growth Since its inception, the Emotional Wellbeing**

Area has experienced significant growth. At the program's launch, 12 older adults (55+) both men and women regularly participated in individual sessions and group workshops. Currently, over 68 older adults engage actively in the programs, demonstrating sustained trust and commitment. Additionally, 42 young and adult women (18+) now participate in workshops, women's circles, and emotional and community development activities. This brings the total number of active participants to 110 members of the Latin American

community. This growth highlights the value and necessity of the Emotional Wellbeing Area as a trusted space for emotional support, practical guidance, and social integration, responding positively to the community's need for reduced loneliness, strengthened resilience, and holistic wellbeing.

## **2. Predominant Needs Identified Older Adults (55+)**

1. Stress and anxiety related to migration, or Challenges adapting to a new culture and language or Legal and economic uncertainties
2. Loneliness and social isolation, lack of support networks, particularly for those living far from family and friends.
3. Emotional management and self-esteem. Difficult expressing emotions and maintaining autonomy.
4. Comprehensive physical and mental health or Need for relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and adapted movement practices

## **Young and Adult Women (18+)**

1. Work, educational, and social stress of cultural adaptation, employment, studies, and family life challenges
2. Loneliness and search for belonging. Need to create safe social networks and trust-filled spaces
3. Empowerment and personal leadership. Need to develop confidence, communication skills, and community participation
4. Emotional management and resilience of Coping with anxiety, family conflicts, and building self-esteem

## **3. Strategies Implemented**

1. Individual and group emotional support sessions. Over 30 group sessions have been conducted in the past three years of active listening and guidance for managing emotions, anxiety, and internal conflicts
2. Mindfulness, conscious breathing, and relaxation workshops to reduce stress and improve emotional well-being. Adapted for older adults and young women.
3. Latin American Women's Circles (18+ and 55+) o Spaces for sisterhood, empowerment, and mutual support o Benefits: enhanced self-esteem, development of support networks, and sense of belonging.

4. Artistic expression and somatic movement activities of Therapeutic yoga, dance, and creative workshops promote emotional integration, physical health, and social connection.

5. Intergenerational mentorship of older women supports younger women in adaptation, parenting, and employment. Encourages learning, confidence, and community cohesion.

6. Cultural and social accompaniment or Support for cultural integration and adaptation to life in the UK. Provides strategies to overcome language, work, and social barriers.

#### **4. Results and Observed Impact**

- Reduction of stress and anxiety: 78–80% of participants report feeling more emotionally balanced
- Strengthened self-esteem and resilience: 65–72% report increased confidence and ability to face challenges
- Support networks and social relationships: 72–75% have developed meaningful friendships and bonds
- Active community participation: notable increase in attendance at workshops, women's circles, and cultural events
- Empowerment and leadership: young and adult women report greater confidence in decision-making and community project involvement

#### **5. Conclusion**

The Emotional Wellbeing Area at Agape has achieved significant and growing impact in the Latin American community in the United Kingdom:

- Participation has increased from 12 initial participants to 110 active members in comprehensive emotional well-being programs.
- Strategies implemented have effectively addressed needs related to stress, isolation, emotional management, and empowerment.
- The combination of individual support, women's circles, mindfulness workshops, creative activities, and intergenerational mentorship has fostered holistic wellbeing, resilience, and a sense of belonging. The Emotional Wellbeing Area is now recognised as a key pillar for personal and community development, providing a safe and transformative space for older adults and young women in the Latin American community.

## ***FINAL CONCLUSION***

From 2020 to the present, Ágape has demonstrated sustained, adaptive and impactful growth in its support of the Latin American community in London. What began as an emergency response during the COVID-19 crisis has evolved into a comprehensive, multi-faceted model of community care that addresses both immediate needs and longer-term integration challenges.

Across all programme areas, the evidence shows a clear trajectory of expansion, trust-building and deepening impact. The food bank's growth from 20 to over 550 families highlights not only increasing demand but also Ágape's capacity to respond effectively to food insecurity, while acting as a gateway to wider support. Similarly, the clothing bank has supported hundreds of families, promoting dignity, inclusion and relief from financial pressure.

The English lessons programme has played a vital role in fostering independence, confidence and social integration. Beyond language acquisition, it has created meaningful connections and reduced isolation, contributing to an improved quality of life and greater access to opportunities. In parallel, the Advice Services have provided essential, tailored guidance to 200 individuals, empowering them to navigate complex systems related to housing, benefits, immigration and employment, while strengthening Ágape's position as a trusted and reliable support organisation.

The Emotional Wellbeing programme stands out as a key pillar of holistic support, addressing less visible but equally important needs such as loneliness, stress and emotional resilience. Its significant growth—from 12 to 110 participants—and strong reported outcomes demonstrate its effectiveness in fostering wellbeing, empowerment and community cohesion, particularly among women and older adults.

Taken together, these programmes reflect a holistic and person-centred approach that goes beyond addressing material deprivation. Ágape has created safe, inclusive spaces where individuals are supported with dignity, empowered with knowledge and skills, and connected to a wider community network.

The organisation's impact is both quantitative and qualitative: it is evident in the increasing number of beneficiaries reached, as well as in the improved confidence, resilience and sense of belonging reported by participants.

Looking ahead, the continued sustainability and expansion of these services will be essential to meet ongoing and emerging needs. With appropriate support and funding, Ágape is well placed to further strengthen its role as a vital community anchor, contributing to a more inclusive, resilient and empowered Latin American community in London.