

INVESTABLE PROPOSITIONS TEMPLATE

investable propositions are primarily a learning exercise that will enable you to use as an alternative means of generating resources to traditional grant funding. You will hear at 18th February workshop and 5th April programme conference the emerging concept around the Impact Coalition in East Birmingham for which drawing up investable propositions will be a key component.

1. Describe your investable proposition.

(Type your answer – up to 500 words. You may include an additional graphic or diagram to support your description, but this is not mandatory!)

“Women in East Birmingham communities are not even through the turnstiles.”

Saheli Hub is seeking investment to establish a **Women's Sports Training Academy** in East Birmingham, aimed at increasing opportunities for ethnically diverse women in the sports sector. The Academy will provide:

- Training & certification: Accredited courses in sports coaching, fitness instruction and sports leadership.
- Employment pathways: Direct links to local sports clubs, leisure centres, and community organisations offering physical activities.
- Business growth: Citizens want to create their own businesses but don't have the skills, this proposal will ignite entrepreneurial spirit in our communities, enabling more women to become self-employed in the sports & physical activity sector, and become ambassadors for other women in their local communities.
- Coaching and peer support: The Academy will be run by women who work in the field and have direct experience of the journey participants are on themselves. We aim to work with local peers to improve understanding of cultural and local barriers.
- Local community engagement: Initiatives to increase participation of women and girls in sports and fitness activities and crucially seeing local representation in jobs in the sector.
- Holistic development: A focus on personal confidence, motivation, leadership skills, and health & wellbeing.

Approach

By creating a tailored, culturally sensitive space, the Academy will break down barriers to job entry & career development, empower women with skills, and create job opportunities in an industry currently lacking diversity and representation.

To create an accessible offer we would deliver training in community languages (Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali etc) and tailor them to different fitness & ability levels so everyone can enjoy the benefits of sport.

Future growth & opportunities

Evidence from Sport England (This Girl Can, 2025) shows that 3 in 5 women feel they do not “belong” in physical activity & sport, and 1 in 6 felt so unwelcome they never returned to activity ever again.

This proposal aligns with the Sport England national strategy “Belonging starts with inclusion” with potential for investment from sports organisations.

We also know that women are twice as likely to be unemployed as any other group. With large local developments with Knighthead there is an ideal opportunity to work with communities to help them to access the thousands of jobs created in East Birmingham.

Our experience & strengths

Saheli Hub is a multiple award winning Sports & Inclusion charity, recognised by 4 national awards in 2024 for sport led by Naseem Akhtar BEM who has been internationally recognised as a pioneer for women in sport. Our extensive expertise to connect with underserved, diverse communities in Birmingham in ways that other organisations don't; we have a deep understanding of their needs and wants and how to effectively involve them successfully. We can help other sports companies better connect with ethnically diverse women, boosting their inclusivity and representation, while also reaching new audiences.

2. How does your investable proposition fit with the outcomes of the mapping you've done and the vision and themes for your Quarter?

(Type your answer – up to 300 words, noting that the workshop on 18th February will include a session exploring the vision and themes for your quarter)

The Sports Quarter aims to use sport as a vehicle for social change, improving health & wellbeing, building skills & careers and tackling inequality. Our proposal aligns with this vision by:

- Building careers and routes into work: Providing structured pathways into sports-related employment (including self-employment), boosting economic inclusion and growth. *“Recognise the strengths of connected women, knowledge and ability.”*
- Enhancing wellbeing: Encouraging physical activity among women who face cultural and social barriers to participation. *“Barriers to exercise and socialising due to Muslim women not accessing certain spaces.”*
- Strengthening community cohesion: Engaging families and local organisations to support and sustain change. *“Communities are more insular than they used to be.”*
- Addressing inequality: Tackling gender and ethnic disparities in the sports sector and moving beyond purely physical activity to include health education such as the importance of good nutrition too. We will challenge stereotypes and in doing so open up new opportunities.

The mapping workshops and wider community meetings highlighted that representation was a huge barrier to involvement particularly for ethnically diverse women from South Asian, African and Caribbean backgrounds for instance and there was a sense that by creating facilities by and for women in particular that this would build solidarity and “unite” them.

The lack of access to career opportunities in the sector significantly limited engagement in both sport and its economic opportunities. This was further supported by mapping in the “Women’s Economy” work, which was consistent with our findings in the Sports Quarter. By linking employability programmes with sport, we can create a sustainable ecosystem where economic benefits stay within communities, supporting generational change.

3. How has the engagement with, and feedback from your community and stakeholders helped to shape the proposition?

(Type your answer – up to 300 words. You may include 1-2 photos from your community events)

“We need to empower ourselves as women.”

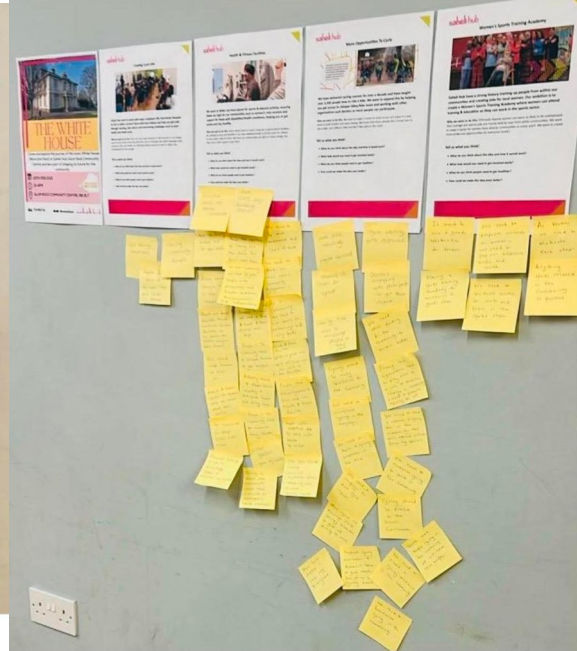
We held 4 community meetings with citizens and sought views from partners and local workers to gain insight into our investable propositions. Starting with 4 ideas, we narrowed these down to 2 IPs which were supported by the community & stakeholders.

Women were broadly supportive of the idea and through consultations with local women, sports organisations, wider active city partnerships, the following insights have emerged:

- Many women especially from ethnically diverse backgrounds, feel excluded from mainstream sports settings due to cultural norms and lack of representation.
- There is a strong demand for female-only training spaces and female role models in sport – seeing “someone like me” – as a motivating factor.
- Local employers and sports facilities express interest in hiring trained female staff from local communities but citizens are not prepared to take up these opportunities. We will incorporate a “grow your own” ethos, working with employers to support local recruitment.
- Local opportunities will reduce barriers such as transport and childcare for women.
- There is a lack of awareness of opportunities and what is needed to access them, for example limited training courses available in proximity to them.
- Citizens are supportive of initiatives that create safe, culturally appropriate sports engagement.
- There was some commentary around the importance of connecting sports to wider “health & wellbeing” which impacts on ability to engage with sport.
- Many women want the opportunity to meet others in different communities such as ethnicities, faiths or neighbourhoods.

This feedback has shaped our focus on employability, accessibility, and cultural inclusivity.

“We need to keep income & resources in the community and our local organisations need to support us.”



4. How has being part of the Coalition for Impact programme helped to inform the proposition?

(Type your answer – up to 250 words)

Being part of the **Coalition for Impact** has enabled us to collaborate with other charities and organisations working towards social and economic transformation.

We've learned about local developments and opportunities, such as the **Knighthead** investment into the **Sport Quarter** and identified funding and partnership opportunities to scale our work.

We've built organisational capacity by learning about best practices, approaches, models and initiatives which can help us develop more sustainable ideas; and this has helped us to strengthen our business case with evidence to tackling inequality in sport.

Through working with consultants, we have also changed our mindset in relation different funding models and particularly how we might capitalise on our assets & experience to generate income.

We've also connected with partners within our quarter and there may be scope for us to consider collaborating with them on our investable propositions, for example we have **values alignment** with **Dream Chasers** but work with different communities so our work may be complimentary so that we could share a space while strengthening our reach across the community; with **BCFC**

Foundation they have potential access to facilities which we could explore co-locating within and what we can offer to them in return is our unique knowledge, experience and reach into 'hard to engage' communities.

Saheli Hub have last year been developing a 5 year strategy for health inequalities for women, being part of the programme has informed this along with the workshops/events we've delivered have fed into the final version of this.

5. What are the next steps that need to happen?

(Type your answer – up to 300 words)

1. **Develop a full business plan** for the project supported by a full market analysis and costed proposal.
2. **Secure investment:** Identify mixed funding sources (grants, public sector, private sector, social investment). Sport England & National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are one potential source of investment, for example through working with the Lawn Tennis Association we identified there were nearly zero trained female tennis coaches in Birmingham! Additionally there may be routes with employment/skills funding such as WMCA (via Adult Education Budget).
3. Identify and secure a location: Identify and find a suitable venue. Through this programme we have explored local opportunities such as the **White House in Ward End Park** or collaborating around the Birmingham City Football Club stadium development with **Knighthead**.
4. Build on existing partnerships: Particularly with NGBs and employers, working with them to ensure that we bridge the gap between community skills and jobs requirements; this proposal would focus on aligning education with real needs & opportunities so that participants can enter employment or self-employment.
5. **Develop training curriculum:** Partner with sports organisations to create accredited courses. This would be tailored to real job opportunities so that participants are able to enter the field. Training will be shaped by direct industry input and our own in-house knowledge, ensuring it addresses real employment gaps while breaking down barriers women face in accessing careers in sports.

6. What resources are needed to make it a reality? As an investable proposition, what is the investment needed for? Buy a building? Working capital to set up a new service?

(Type your answer – up to 300 words)

Investment is needed for:

- **Facilities:** Renting or purchasing a venue with appropriate training spaces, ensuring these are fit for purpose and in a location which is accessible to the community it is intended for.
- **Programme development:** Creating training materials, securing accreditation, building on links with employers & providers to pitch it appropriately for their needs.
- **Staffing:** Hiring trainers, coordinators, and community outreach workers to kickstart the programme delivery.
- **Equipment:** Sports equipment, furniture & IT infrastructure for training delivery.
- **Marketing & outreach:** Community engagement, recruitment strategies, publicity materials.

7. Will it generate an income? How?

(Type your answer – up to 200 words)

We would aim to make the Academy financially sustainable through:

- **Training fees:** Selling our professional courses would enable us to generate an income over time and we seek to subsidise course fees for those cannot afford them. There may be opportunities to widen who is involved in Saheli Hub's work, for example offering training to companies as part of cycle to work schemes which would generate an income which would fund costs for those cannot pay.
- **Finance:** Partnerships with the **Council and Sports organisations**. In particular we would seek investment from National Governing Bodies and **Sport England**.
- **Corporate package:** We could create a package to sell to brands and businesses supporting diversity in sport. This could include sports clubs or private sector partnerships. For example this could be a training package for big leisure sector organisations. We have an existing short course developed which we deliver through our partnership with **Sport England** and we believe our expertise and track record in this field has the potential to generate revenue in the future.
- **Facility hire:** Renting out space for community events, sports clubs, and coaching sessions.
- **Employment placements:** Partnering with sports employers to provide trained staff.