

We Can Origami

End of Project Report

Origami Pulse CIC:
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End of Project Report

With our huge thanks to support from the National Lottery's Community Fund we have been able to make so much happen for our local communities around Oxfordshire and the Merseyside over the past year (August 2021-22). We have been offering origami as a tool for wellbeing to spark creativity and community, and make happy moments together. Our focus has been on young people and families as the pandemic has put so much strain on mental health. Your funding helped us continue to offer support to many vulnerable groups who continue to be isolated, as well as offering to children in schools. This report is a celebration of what we achieved over the past year thank to your funding and some of the individual stories behind this project.



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Activities delivered during this ongoing pandemic were considered with organisers to minimise risks



Oxfordshire Library – monthly fold (over 900)

On the foundations of our previous ‘Made with gLove’ project we collaborated with the Oxfordshire library to encourage family time in support of nurturing kind creative time together. Thanks to this grant we continued offering monthly sessions on relevant themes to the time of year, and managed to transition to blend sessions held both in their ‘Makerspace’ in the library and online. This combination using large screens in the ‘Makerspace’ allowed everyone to fold together while keeping distance between groups, and allows those in isolation at home to still join. We started the project early in July with a creative summer challenge for families, and continued through the year on seasonal themes.

Folds have been so popular, with staff describing origami as a time where they see people coming together. Inspired by our work staff themselves are now offering a weekly origami session based on using films from our YouTube channel. We also had a young adult volunteer, Jay Bains, after finishing school and applying for University getting in touch keen to help as he felt origami was good for his mental health as a child. We encouraged and supported Jay to demonstrate folds during the monthly folds and plan together. One of our collaborators at the library wrote to us *“it has been wonderful working with you, you are by far one of the nicest, kindest, brightest and delightful partners / contributors I have had the pleasure of knowing. You are a ray of sunshine and we have loved all your workshops.”*





Schools – origami in lessons and clubs (over 500)

We reached out to schools in our local communities where catchment reflects lower socio-economic backgrounds and high ethnic diversity. We offered schools a choice of one-off lessons focusing on origami as tool for their wellbeing and creativity, or as clubs, or with links to topics they are learning about. In one school we worked with 3 classes on the theme of Anglo-Saxons and the Ancient Egyptians which included making boats, pyramids and an Anglo-Saxon finger puppet. We encouraged children to be proud of their work and to decorate and make their folds unique. We also ran an origami after school club over 3 weeks. We worked with 8 classes in Year 7 Secondary School, and ran a Halloween session within a STEAM club in Yorkshire. We encouraged teachers and students to continue by leaving resources and links to films.

During all our sessions we gathered feedback (see examples on the final 2 pages) and comments from teachers include *“the children have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. As ever, we will be very interested participating in any future ideas”* and *“they loved having the time to get creative”*. One of the teachers asked if we might contribute to a book she is creating for other teachers with STEAM activities relating to rainbows. We created original artwork for including in the book for teachers.

As well as running sessions in school lessons we worked with children and families at community locations in Southport, Merseyside. We worked with parents and children’s groups from Girlguiding, the Scout Association, Christ the King, High School & Sixth Form Centre, The Woodvale Community Centre, Home-Start Southport and Formby and Parenting 2000.



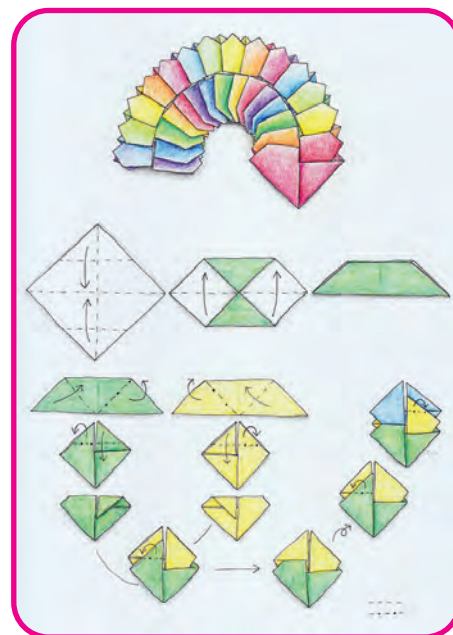


Collaborations and events (over 800)

We were contacted by organisations we worked with previously during 'Made with Love' including Adoption UK. We ran an online webinar as part of their wellbeing series encouraging folding together in families to get creative and make happy memories.

We thought of those working in the NHS over this time and teamed up with a Doctor's Charity, the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, with an online session for medics and their families. We also ran an online session on self-care for nurses in the John Radcliffe's Oxfordshire Hospital. It has also been a difficult time for patients and we collaborated with the Footsteps Festival to offer a live and recorded session for those living with chronic pain. This group has found previously that origami can help focus the mind away from pain and is accessible given paper is available with very little cost.

Last year we were approached by a voluntary charity 'Oxford Christmas Lunch' offering free community lunch for about 500 people for refugee families, those in food poverty, the elderly, people who would otherwise be on their own and people with mental health issues. This group of volunteers offer lunch and festive activities. We created packs of papers, leaflets, cards and folded pieces to encourage conversation and creativity during the day for all the tables to keep and enjoy.





Thanks to the Oxfordshire Library we teamed up with the Oxfordshire Human Rights Festival run by volunteer students in Brooke's University who were focusing on girls and education and were keen to create displays of origami butterflies with messages in the library made by local communities. I worked with one school (East Oxford Primary School) to fold butterflies with 3 classes and brought artwork to the library. The butterflies that children created together with other members of our community were displayed across the library for students to visit and see their artwork.

Our work supported by the Lottery has started to gain international interest and we were delighted that Kimi Komisarof got in touch with us from a voluntary organisation called 'Yumetomo Project: Living with dementia, living with dream' working with people with dementia and their families to fold cranes. Kimi recognised our similar aim in using origami to bring together community and described that folding creates 'circles of smiles'. Through our monthly origami fold and social media we encouraged anyone who might like to fold cranes with wishes to send to Japan to get in touch. Cranes that were created contributed to an ongoing display celebrating hope.

In addition, to the library I worked with East Oxford Primary School creating a film for classes to fold cranes with wishes for Kimi to send to Japan. We had 400 cranes sent to Kimi which she posted to Osaka which included cranes folded by staff in our Oxfordshire library. The Yumetomo Project invited us to an online event to show us the displayed cranes in Japan as part of an astonishing large exhibition of 40,000 cranes. The organisers described how people in Japan were so happy that we are folding origami in the UK and would want to take part. Teachers in the school we worked with and others who sent cranes were happy to see photos of their cranes in Japan where they were presented so beautifully with such care. As one member of staff commented "*it's mind-blowing*".

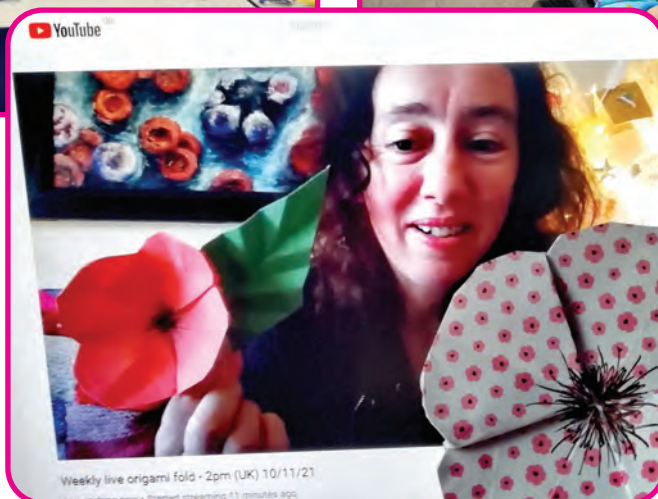




Films/social media (29,000 views)

Since the pandemic, we have created a film each week with live folds on 'Wellbeing Wednesday' as part of wider work with hospitals including Lizzie's work at University College Hospital London. Films provide ongoing support for those taking part in 'We can origami'. Since the summer we took a blended way approach to allow continued support online and in person, so reducing films to to every fortnight. The channel www.youtube.com/DrLizzieBurns has a following of 1,260 and over the past year we've had 29,000 views of films with over 1,800 hours watched. One viewer from the Merseyside wrote to us *"Do you know how many years I've wanted to learn to make the crane? Finally, you helped me reach that goal. Thank you so much."*

We have continued to respond to themes of interest from children and schools including a film to fold Pudsey Bear as requested by a child with over 3,500 views. Schools have used the film as seen through photos shared on social media. The Remembrance Poppy has been the second most viewed film also with over 3,400 views. With great thanks to talented origamist Peter Buchan-Symons who is based in Oxford and has very kindly shared his own new origami designs on seasonal themes allowing us create films which are new and exciting.





People who used our films and take part in workshops have shared their folds and encouraging others through twitter @DrLizzieBurns and a Facebook group 'Join the fold: Origami to beat boredom'. We have been amazed and delighted how many people will share their creations and how they used origami as gifts. We have been deeply touched by some of the feedback people have shared about the films and our sessions. With permission we share the impact a session made on one person:

"I just wanted to message you say thank you for the monthly origami folding sessions you do, I love watching them. Recently my mum was ill in hospital with cancer and after making the lily in the September fold session I took mine in to show her and she loved looking at it. Unfortunately she passed away 2 days later so as a tribute to her I ended up making 30 lilies in galaxy themed origami paper for her wake. Everyone loved them and I even had to give a live demonstration of how they were made. So your session really had a far reaching impact. I've attached a photo of them for you to see."

Other participants have also been kind enough to get in touch and share with us the difference this project has made for their mental health. One participant wrote *"it's a difficult time at the moment, not well, & this has really given me a welcome distraction & I can even sit & do it in bed! Now experimenting with paint effects too, prior to folding the paper. I'd lost my creative muse but it's now returned Thumbs up ty for inspiring me x"*. Another wrote about how introducing her to origami is helping with her long-term chronic condition: *"I feel really calm and in less pain. Thank you for introducing me to #Origami"*. These individual stories have touched and inspired us from people who may be too vulnerable to attend in person, and who unable to afford to buy workshops for self-care. We thank the Lottery for making this possible.

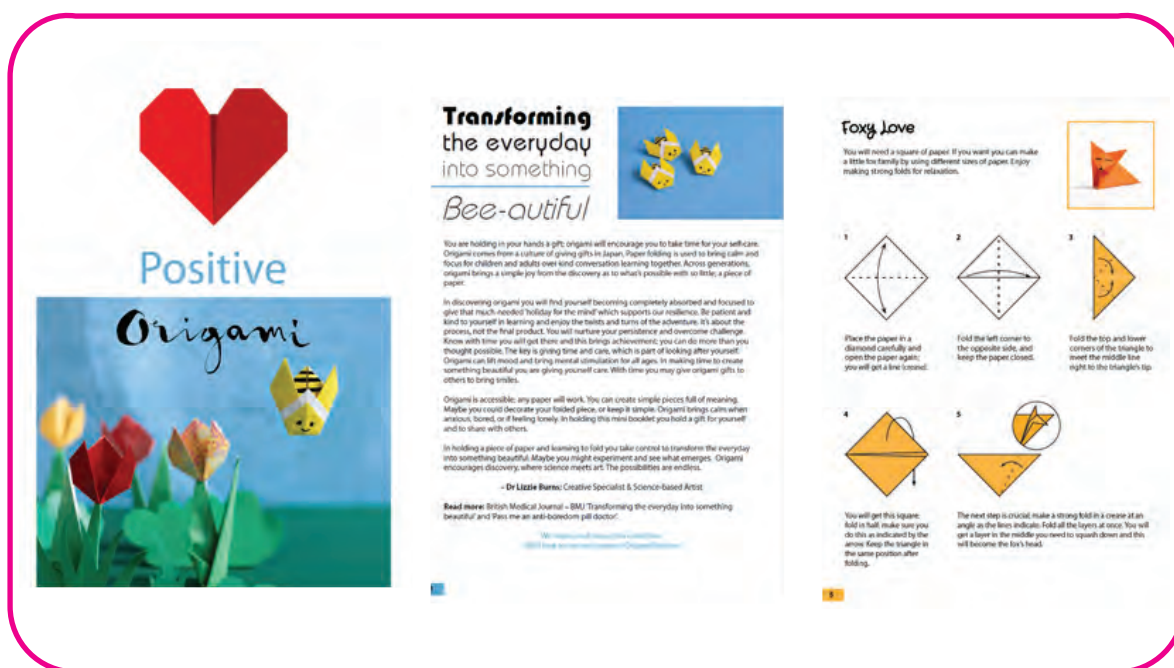




Publicity/media

Thanks to the publicity in your Lottery offices, 'We can origami' was featured in Crafts Business with the following article: **Origami for Mindfulness Project to Welcome More People into the Fold Thanks to National Lottery Funding.**

We were approached by BBC 5 Live to ask if we could demonstrate a piece of origami live on the radio on International Origami Day close to midnight with Colin Murray hosting. Colin was very interested and Dr Burns explained how to fold a simple cup as being just about possible through descriptive words only. Colin folded a cup and was astonished to test it out and find it could be drunk from. As part of wider work, Lizzie also took part in the 'Festival of the Girl' collaborating with the Oxford Vaccine group to fold antibodies and encourage girls to consider science, as well as the benefits of origami for wellbeing. Lizzie was also interviewed on BBC Radio Scotland along with a child and her mother who enjoyed the origami activity.



'Positive Origami' leaflets – 25,000

We budgeted for printing 5,000 origami booklets designed by Steven Kitchen to give to schools and hospitals as part of additional support for participants and beyond this project. We have all given so much time and care to create a very special booklet with messages of self-care that can be used by both children, and adults with a focus on creativity and lifting mood. The theme for the booklet is love and positivity. When offered to patients so far we have found everyone has chosen the new booklet over the previous 'Made with Love', and would suggest this come from a fresh, uplifting and positive feel.

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Thanks to the arts co-ordinator in the Oxfordshire Hospitals we were able to send a message out to arts co-ordinators in hospitals and with further contributions from hospital charities this enabled us to bring the print run up to 25,000. These leaflets will be used as part of ongoing wellbeing support for both staff and patients in hospitals including Cambridge University Trust, St George's in London, York and Scarborough, Royal Derby, Oxford University Trust, Leighton Hospital, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Aintree University Hospital, Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and University College Trust in London. 'Positive Origami' is supported by videos filmed by Anna Konopinska with her children with uplifting music.

With time we are keen to add online translations as PDFs to support refugees as we are thinking of children who will be traumatised from losing their homes and stability. Through social media we asked if anyone might be willing to translate our leaflet into Ukrainian and someone who we've never met helped give so much time to translate and make this accessible. We have also made links with the Ukrainian Society in Oxford and will be able to pass on leaflets. This project will continue to grow and allows us to be generous with booklets for anyone who could benefit.

Conclusion

This report celebrates how much the Community Fund of £10k has made possible for us, and exceeded what we thought we could achieve. We are so grateful for support for us to reach out to vulnerable members of our communities, and through collaborating with others to bring smiles of achievement. We hope the feedback on the following pages will give further insight into the joy and confidence sessions brings in support of resilience and recovery. For both of us as mothers it's been an exceptionally hard year for our own mental and physical health and for our families also coping with mental and physical difficulties including divorce and Long COVID. We hope this report shows despite such a hard time we kept focused. We let the project grow and develop with input from others to exceed our expectations. Together 'we can origami'.





Our Thanks To

National Lottery's Community Fund

Collaborations

Oxfordshire Library including Connelia Swift, Tom Robinson and Ewan McGuigan
Schools and teachers including East Oxford Primary School, Oxford Academy, Rose Hill Primary and Bayhard's Hill Primary School, Darton Academy in Yorkshire
Kimi Komisarof and the Yumetomo project in Osaka, Japan
Origamist and designer Peter Buchan-Symons
Arts co-ordinator Ruth Charity in the Oxfordshire Hospitals
Graphic Designer Steven Kitchen and photographer Anna Konopinska
Oxford Human Right's Festival with students Laura Campbell & Lilli Spearing
Jay Bains - volunteering
Footsteps Festival – helping those suffering from pain conditions
Royal Medical Benevolent Fund – working with doctors
Oxford Christmas Lunch volunteers



Examples of feedback: Monthly origami fold



- Thank you so much - really calming and thoughtful, and thanks for the clear instructions. And the 5 year old didn't fold, but happily coloured and helped decorate the paper.
- Many thanks, I really enjoyed that, thrilled with the stars bowls, has brightened up another LongCovid duvet day 🌟🌟👍
- Thank you, very much enjoyed slowing down and concentrating on making something beautiful ❤️
- Thank you, this has been very relaxing. I've had a busy morning so it was nice to stop and concentrate on other than the chores.
- And a sense of achievement, you get so engrossed in doing origami then you see the end product.
- The session has improved my mood, encouraged mindfulness, calming and creative.
- It has been useful today as it is calming and has allowed me to express myself creatively.
- It was wonderful! Origami helps through the day at the moment. It makes me very happy and it gives me energy. Always nice to fold together. I feel more peaceful and relaxed.
- Thank you so much! You are a wonderful instructor! We had loads of fun.
- Thanks that was great - not an easy task with little ones but you did so well and it made me smile a lot! 😊 well deserved cuppa may be in order now for you I suspect 🏆😊
- Made us feel so cheerful! Get us in a festive mood for Halloween
- The only improvement I could ask for is to have a longer session so we could do more folds
- It definitely makes a big difference, really absorbing and a lovely sense of connection and support, thanks for all you do! 🍷
- Thank you Lizzie, it definitely helps my mental health, knowing that I'm seeing you every month, I look forward to it.
- Everyone remembers the first time they saw someone fold something and it seemed like magic as a child
- What a great way to bond with my girls!

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School origami sessions



Great to learn a new skill + sooo relaxing ----
Thank you so much for coming in - we ^{have} all had lots of fun!
Come again!

It was Really fun because
I learnt something new and
thank you so much we
loved having you.

It was the best
It was fun.

I think that it's hard to do origami but the more
you helped the ~~easy~~ easier it was thank you
for coming to show origami from Heidi.

- I felt excited
- This was the best day ever
- Magical
- Felt happy as it was fun
- Made me surprised
- Playful and create
- Felt hungry
- The children really enjoyed it
- Thank you - you have helped them so much
- It's something they can do at home



