



g skills is now supplying its local food bank with more than 200 loaves

Proof Bakery in Coventry, founded two years ago in conjunction with the Church Urban Fund, is sending 250 loaves a week to Coventry Food Bank, paid for by regular customers – and increasingly donors from as far afield as Scotland and Singapore.

The bakery, specialising in sourdough but teaching a range of baking skills, was founded by Warwick University graduate Chernise Neo. It meets in St Catherine's Church in Stoke Aldermoor, Coventry, which has supported the bakery since it began as a pilot project in 2018.

So far 11 refugee women have graduated from the bakery's training programme, with three currently employed at the bakery. Two of its bakers are refugees from the conflict in Syria.

During lockdown, the bakery started to offer home deliveries and also to give customers the opportunity to buy loaves to send to Coventry Food Bank, enabling the bakery to recoup lost income from events including baking classes.

"After lockdown a lot of our customers decided that they didn't want to come in to collect their bread but they wanted to keep supporting us," Ms Neo said.



“They could see that food poverty was a problem so they decided that they would like to help in this way by paying for loaves to go to Coventry Food Bank.

“What surprised us was not so much that our existing customers switched their orders to go to food banks but that a lot of new people came along and chose to take part, even people who don’t live in Coventry.”

John Scouller, Development Worker at Together for Change in Coventry, said the bakery was aiming for a target of 500 donated loaves a week for the food bank and people in need. “We are expecting demand to keep increasing as more people lose employment.



month, there is no better time to support it.”

- The bakery has received a grant from *Together for Change*, the joint venture between the Diocese of Coventry and Church Urban Fund, as well as support from the Migration Friendly Cities Project in Coventry.
- Grants to St Catherine's from the Heart of England Community Foundation from its coronavirus resilience fund, together with a grant to Proof Bakery from The Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation Covid-19 emergency food programme will help the bakery to increase the number of loaves it supplies to the food bank and for a longer period.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/stories-and-features/refugee-bakers-feed-people-need-church-kitchen>