

“thank you so much for taking up my case for heating oil during this protracted cold period..... had purchased 500 litres of oil for me” -Beneficiary.



**Charles Oham, Hannatu Sulley, Carlos Moreno-Leguizamon and
Amanda Amorim Adegboye**

Self-esteem: Self-confidence
Critical thinking;
Knowledge & information; Skills &
competences


diversityHOUSE
SUPPORT. DIGNITY. RESPECT.



LOTTERY FUNDED

alth &
ty of life

London, March 2021

Christine Locke
CEO
Diversity House
Sittingbourne, Kent
ME10 4BX

Dear Christine

Please find the addendum to the final evaluation we carried out in 2020 on the SWAG project. The addendum covers the extra period of March 2020 to March 2021. We expect that the report will be of strategic importance in the post-Covid 19 period that Diversity House (DH) is entering.

We did enjoy working with your team and the stakeholders of SWAG.

Sincerely yours,

Charles Oham &
Carlos J Moreno Leguizamon

Addendum to SWAG Project Evaluation

Project mandate and scope

The aim of the Supporting Women and Girls (SWAG) project is to support disadvantaged and marginalised women and girls in Swale and Kent, individually and collectively by creating opportunities for them to gain and improve their life skills and competencies in areas such as psychological and physical wellbeing, income generation, political, social, and individual perception of their empowerment.

This project brings together women and girls from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds to increase understanding and support aimed at creating a complete cycle of empowerment. The project phase ended in March 2020, however, due to the impact of COVID-19 it was extended for 12 months. This addendum focuses on the extended period of March 2020 to March 2021.

Addendum's Objectives:

- To identify the results obtained by SWAG's activities, specifically in response to the Covid-19 period from March 2020-March 2021.
- To identify the actual and potential changes the project created in the lives of women and girls living in Swale and Kent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

To identify the achievements, the report uses the same framework of questions used in the evaluation regarding the Effectiveness, Efficiency, Project Relevance, and Impact of the project in this extra year. Also, the addendum uses the gender components of the project at the individual, community, and national levels using the framework of participation and empowerment (see appendix 1). The data for the addendum was obtained mainly from the client's documentation, testimonials, videos, and management accounts. Quantitative data were derived from electronic registrations and data entry (Lamplight Software). Finally, the data for the addendum is analysed qualitatively through some of the statements (testimonials) provided by the participants and quantitatively by counting participants in all the activities provided from March 2020-2021.

Results from March 2020-2021

Investment

The extended SWAG project utilised the surplus funds from the Supporting Women and Girls project awarded by the Big Lottery Fund of £347,105. The project also counted on the in-kind donations and support from volunteers and stakeholders such as Swale CVS, Morrison's Supermarket, BioDiversity, Swale Borough Council, FareShares UK, LKM and the University of Greenwich, O2E, Good Things Foundation, Swale Community Centre and Kings College Canterbury.

SWAG Empowerment Framework

The four domains of the Empowerment Framework (see appendix 1) were used by SWAG to ensure that the project met its objectives for the extended period from March 2020 to March 2021 outlined below:

1. Psychological and Physical Empowerment

The outcomes in this domain were based on reports of participants:

- Maintaining positive physical wellbeing through access to food and warmth
- Improved feelings of emotional and psychological wellbeing

These alluded in the following statements by C1 and C2

- C1: "Gave me a great opportunity to really bond with my children. I became closer to my children, we ate together".

C2: "thank you so much for taking up my case for heating oil during this protracted cold period..... had purchased 500 litres of oil for me".

2. Economic Empowerment

Under this domain, the following outcomes were tracked by assessing participants:

- Increased access to work and opportunities in the job market

This indicator was achieved by the number of participants who committed to taking the opportunity to retrain to improve their skills and for some to gain new skills in the online digital inclusion course. They also received new tablets which they could use to apply for new jobs and in some cases start new business ventures.

3. Community Empowerment

Participant outcomes measured under this domain are:

- Increased access to volunteering
- Decrease in loneliness and isolation

These were confirmed by some of the following feedback by C3, C4 and C5

C3: "What I found useful is that I was able to identify with other people's view and their concerns, so the way I felt and how I am able to adapt with the situation are not isolated but similar with some other people's experience"

C4: "thankful for the support they have given to us ethnic minorities in the area".

Participant C5 described how they supported others through volunteering with Diversity House by picking up and delivering shopping for neighbours, family, and friends.

4. Asset/social empowerment

Under this domain the following outcomes were measured:

- Information and knowledge acquired.
- Online social skills, abilities, and competency training on Zoom
- Bicycle acquisition and cycle training (in social bubbles) resulting in bonding and empowerment of women and girls.

This was confirmed by the following data:

Video clip showing women and girls learning to ride a bicycle in the park.

Lamplight data showing 21 cycling sessions with 134 outputs.

Photographic evidence of participants on Zoom training.

Lamplight recorded entry of data showing 94 sessions of community engagement and 790 outputs.

Table 1. Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact from March 2020-2021

| Domains | Critical assessment |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Relevance | <p><i>Is the conceptual framework for empowerment adopted by SWAG adequate and relevant to promote the participation of women and girls in the project?</i></p> <p>Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the innovative interventions and partnership of the SWAG project to stakeholders in the community- Swale Borough Council, Swale CVS, local charities, and businesses. SWAG team collaborated with several agencies and organisations ensuring that vulnerable women and girls and their families were supported during the pandemic, this included support in providing a stipend for gas and electricity, delivery of dried packs of food including requesting that ethnic foods be delivered, this demonstrated social inclusion from the local authority that had not done this before.</p> <p>Other activities included online training and workshops to tackle isolation during the lockdown and activities for children, young girls, and older women. The feedback and testimonials demonstrated that the felt needs of women and girls were addressed. There is also an indication that the needs are ongoing, and steps are required to ensure continuity.</p> |
| 2. Efficiency | <p><i>Were things done right?</i></p> <p>Staff who were qualified ran several services during the lockdown period demonstrating resilience, agility, innovation and adaptability switching from face-to-face interventions to mostly an online format to run their activities.</p> <p>The team demonstrated a high degree of flexibility and resilience by engaging with vulnerable women and girls and introducing new activities and initiatives that were needed during the lockdown e.g., computer training.</p> <p>Offered value for money during the period of March 20 – March 2021 despite the working challenges during the national</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| | lockdown, staff continued to visit the vulnerable and distribute food and provide support to women and girls (see social return on investment). |
| 3. Effectiveness | <p><i>Were the outputs delivered and main results achieved?</i></p> <p>SWAG has effectively responded to the COVID 19 pandemic by being resilient and innovative, all their activities continued during the pandemic as they changed the format e.g., online-based training, workshops and social activities. SWAG continued to support vulnerable women and girls during this period.</p> |
| 4. Impact | <p><i>Has the potential impact led to any community benefit?</i></p> <p>The lockdown period saw SWAG engage with the local authority to deliver boxes of dried food to people in the community. SWAG also influenced the delivery of ethnic food to the BAME population and engaged with over four thousand women and girls.</p> |

Additional Results (March 2020 to March 2021)

During the 1-year project period, **4589** women and girls' beneficiaries achieved one or more of the outcomes and indicators. The project exceeded all the priority target related outcome indicators agreed with the Funder, which includes.

- Improve motivation and confidence of 600 women and girls.
- Better equip 1095 women and girls to gain access to the job market.
- Improve mental and physical wellbeing of 1500 women and girls.
- 1175 women and girls took part in volunteering activities.
- 1147 of the beneficiaries were girls aged 6-16 (25% of beneficiaries).

The project also exceeded the number of delivered activities. Table 4 shows some selected activities. The full list is presented in the evaluation report.

Table 2: Summary of selected delivered activities March 2020- March 2021

| Activities | No of Beneficiaries | No of Sessions |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Health Promotion: including door-to-door visitation and food distribution | 3234 | 298 |
| Community Engagement: comprising virtual networking and socialising against isolation | 790 | 94 |
| Online Training and Workshops: for awareness and empowerment | 487 | 24 |
| In-person Training and Support: (1-2-1 digital inclusion training and donation of 10 Lenovo tablets with MiFi internet connection for 24 months) | 10 | 10 |
| Referrals to relevant agencies including local authority, DWP, Social services | 68 | 68 |

Social return on investment for period from March 2020 to March 2021

| Hours of Volunteer Work | Match Funding | Surplus (Grant) | Total Project Cost |
|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2,350.0 | £ 188,500 | £ 86,770 | £ 275,270 |

| No of Months | Women and Girls Outcomes | No of Sessions | Number of Volunteers | Girls 6 -16 years | Total Project Cost | Total Savings |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 12 | 4589 | 494 | 1175 | 1147 | £275,270 | £188,500 |

*Total project savings is the difference between the total cost of the project and the grant awarded.

The **social return on investment** for SWAG project from March 2020 – March 2021 is two pounds to every one pound (£2:1) invested in the project by funders demonstrating a high return on investment during Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown.

Recommendations

SWAG and Diversity House as the implementer:

- Should continue with the necessary intensity and innovation to ensure that women and girls are not disadvantaged post-COVID-19. Given the devastation that the pandemic has caused, there is a need to continue the project more than ever. The level of needs justifies further support from stakeholders to tackle social exclusion, unemployment, health, and wellbeing.
- SWAG has demonstrated resilience during this difficult period exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown providing interventions for women and girls health and wellbeing. This intervention has been critical and averted a higher negative impact, innovation has been a key core competency in the organisation. It would be critical that a centre is developed to contain these services under one roof and to provide further activities as the felt needs of women and girls have demonstrated and the projected fall out of the pandemic envisaged.
- As a learning and social innovation organisation, Diversity House should continue to disseminate relevant information and action led research that has emerged from their project to a wider community to bring about systemic change in women and girl issues nationally and to create a framework for knowledge exchange, they should continue to engage with their local and regional universities and research centres and be supported by their funders to consolidate on these initiatives.

Conclusion

The Addendum to SWAG Project Evaluation from March 2020 to March 2021 demonstrates that the investment, empowerment of women and girls, as well as the number of activities in a critical period like the one generated by the pandemic, continue to be relevant, highly efficient, and effective as well as impactful qualitatively and quantitatively. This initiative must continue to impact the lived experience of women and girls.

Appendix 1

| | |
|--|---|
| Psychological and physical Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved motivation and confidence • Improved mental and physical wellbeing |
| Economic Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income readiness • Access to job market • Business start-up • Financial inclusion |
| Community Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering opportunities • Community integration and social inclusion |
| Asset/social Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and knowlege • Online skills, abilities and competentin training on Zoom • Bicycle aquisition and riding training |