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LAAMIGA

WOMEN'S MENTORING AND TRAINING

Catch up on the latest achievements, activities, project and events from Laamiga.

ANNUAL REPORT

March 2018 -

April 2019

Womens
Giving women the confidence to realise their potential

Charity
Islington and Camden

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A view from the Chair

Giving Women the confidence to realise their potential

Welcome to Laamiga's Annual Report for 2018/2019. At a time of ongoing political uncertainty in the UK and often hostile attitudes towards migrants and refugees, many community groups like ours are finding it more difficult to secure funding. Nonetheless, Laamiga has continued to explore new directions alongside our core mentoring programme.

In September 2018 we started an innovative six-month training programme called IDIA. Named after a 16th Century queen of Benin, IDIA helps women to build confidence and gain leadership skills through an intensive programme of workshops, action learning groups and one-to-one support. We will continue this course and are developing ways of assessing its longer-term impact.

The IDIA expert training sessions were led by women in professional roles, which has led to more relationships with corporate firms. We also strengthened our partnership with Training Link near Euston where we held both our Step up to IT and IDIA Community Leadership Courses. In 2019 Laamiga hopes to develop further partnerships and build our profile in the local community.

Laamiga's highly skilled trustees, mentors, leaders of discussion and craft groups, social media organiser, and outreach worker, often balance this volunteer work alongside considerable professional and family commitments. They believe that the personal support Laamiga offers, which recognises each woman's circumstances, existing skills and potential is essential for helping our mentees succeed. Mentors often say they gain as much as their mentees from the experience and all volunteers say they benefit from meeting women from different backgrounds.

Laamiga's work was recognised with an award for Access to Services at the London Faith and Community Awards 2018. A great deal of credit for this goes to our Coordinator Emua Ali, who works tirelessly and imaginatively to develop and improve Laamiga.

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Coordinators Report

Introduction

Laamiga continues to be delighted by the commitment of our volunteers, mentors and trustees. Without them and our donors, partners and supporters we cannot sustain our work in the community. The women we support often have complex personal and family issues when they seek mentoring help that will lead to training, a job or self-employment.

A mentor will be a buddy for a year or more and can help her mentee address personal challenges as well. Two recent case studies show the positive impact mentoring relationships can have:

Nadine and Susan:

Nadine met her mentee Susan every other week at her home where Susan would talk her through assessments for work. In addition, they worked on various reports and correspondence essential to Susan's role. Through this, Susan's confidence in reading and writing English as well as typing improved. Her strong organisational skills allowed Susan to grapple with the considerable administration required for her career. Nadine assisted Susan in applying successfully for a job, and Susan is in the process of gaining additional accreditation.



Idia graduation day, March 2019

Aaliyah and Nadia:

Nadia is from a North African country and is married with three children. She completed university and became a professional in a competitive industry, but was forced to leave her country due to civil war. After raising her young children, she wanted to resume work and approached Laamiga. Nadia was matched with Aaliyah, a solicitor, who helped her set out long and short term goals and write a CV. She attended language classes to improve her confidence in spoken and written English, and passed her theory driving test. After sending her CV to prospective employers, Nadia secured a part time voluntary position at a charity in her professional area.

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We rely on the generosity of partner organisations to provide us with resources and meeting spaces and have formed some new partnerships in



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WOMEN'S MENTORING AND TRAINING

Partnerships

2018/2019. These include global law firm Baker Mckenzie, which provided us with trainers for our IDIA workshops, and multinational law firm Clifford Chance, which helped with funding, volunteer mentors and space for training our volunteers. London based Kairos Europe has offered Laamiga free places on training courses in Italy and Spain in 2019 as part of its ARISE project (Analysing Refugee Inclusion in Southern Europe and Re-Thinking Migration). Laamiga is now a partner with Kairos and others in a bid for European funding to do more training in 2020 and 2021.

**Baker
McKenzie.**

IDIA Women's Community Leadership Project



Following Laamiga's successful Step Up to IT programme in 2017/2018, feedback suggested the need for a similar course for women wishing to set up social enterprises or community activities. IDIA was subsequently established as an intergenerational project, aiming to help women from refugee and migrant backgrounds make the most of their practical skills and experiences, and become visible leaders in their communities.



Supported by charitable fund Rosa and Clifford Chance, 10 women attended Saturday workshops between September 2018 and April 2019, led by "volunteer ambassadors", professional women from a variety of businesses. The sessions saw participants form action learning sets to give each other mutual support, followed by 1-1 mentoring with the volunteer ambassadors to help the women develop their projects. Every one completed the course and were more confident and



positive about the future, and several spoke of benefitting from having access to a network of women in a similar position. Their mentoring continues, and many took the opportunity of taking further courses in the community, with some learning film-making skills producing a short film about Laamiga.



Group Activities

Group Mentoring

Mentors give their perspectives

"My group mentoring sessions are attended by several regulars, including a writer, a couple of entrepreneurs, comforting mothers, and women waiting for permission to work. Some have good English, others speak French and Arabic, and a few have limited English. I am getting to know them and miss them when they don't turn up.

We talk about topics ranging from the weather to shopping, survival tips for life in a new city, children and how some marriages don't work any longer in England where women learn about less traditional models. We also do practice interviews, and I invite the participants to ask questions.

We occasionally tackle political issues, including Brexit, and I hope I have inspired a few more to go to English classes, although immigration rules make it hard for some to attend college. Some participants who do work are keen to share their experience with the group, passing on tips on the practical realities of the workplace. Group mentoring may not have measurable outcomes - an exam passed, a job won - but it seems to develop a sense of community and confidence."

English Conversation Group

"I am very happy to be a volunteer English teacher at Laamiga's Saturday morning meetings. Their progress in speaking English is sometimes slow, but the increase in confidence is significant. The women see me as a friendly English person who sympathises with their difficulties and encourages them to overcome them and to enjoy aspects of living in London. I find their company very friendly and stimulating."

Drop-In Knitting Circle

We run a monthly Saturday knitting group as part of the sessions for Nasfiyat's Women's Group. Developing knitting skills contributes to building confidence and self-esteem, as well as being a relaxing hobby. It also creates a level platform for mentees and mentors, developing skills together and helping each other to learn.

The group is run by a trustee with three volunteers. We rely on donations of yarn and tools from the crafting community in North and East London and welcome further donations. In addition to knitting and crochet, the group are interested in learning how to sew and make jewellery.



Laamiga Social Media

Social media and the website play a crucial role in promoting Laamiga's activities and values and our volunteer has been contributing to it for four years. Our new part-time administrator is providing invaluable support in helping to plan our social media activities, graphics, and new website proposal.

Step-Up to IT graduation day



This year we collected comments from mentors and mentees participating in projects and posted them on the website, Twitter and Facebook. We received great feedback on events and activities, and how mentoring has improved mentees' skills and confidence. We also use social media to recruit women mentees and mentors, with advertisements published on the website, Twitter and LinkedIn.

We highlighted Laamiga's activities and events such as the drop-in knitting sessions, Step-up to IT, the annual picnic and International Women's Day.

We are committed to raising awareness about Laamiga's values and activities and encouraging donations as well as partnerships with organisations working on related issues. To achieve this we are exploring alternative website programmes, ensuring consistency across all the social media platforms, and highlighting new projects. We update content regularly and use data analysis to create more impact and ensure our social media platforms reach the right audiences.

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Finances & Fundraising

Building on last year's success in winning funding for wider projects, we were delighted to receive a grant from Rosa, the fund for women and girls, and from Clifford Chance, to fund our innovative IDIA project and to support the mentoring at the core of our service.

We were also pleased to be recognised for Access to Services with an award from the London Faith & Belief Community Awards. Fundraising efforts now focus on securing core funding as well as supporting the next round of project activity.

The critical factor that makes Laamiga's work possible is the contribution of its volunteers. Without their time and skills, we would not be able to do what we do. Beyond that, the financial health of an organisation like Laamiga is determined by the balance between the inflow of funds and keeping expenditure as low as possible without compromising proper governance. Our financial procedures are regularly reviewed by the trustees to maintain proper approval processes.

We have a small number of regular monthly donations from individuals, and we also receive contributions via our funding website Wonderful.org. However, until that stream grows, Laamiga's work is almost entirely dependent on grants, usually for specific projects. We do not have an office, but it still remains a challenge to fund general expenses like insurance, website hosting and stationery.

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