

2021-2022

Laamiga Annual Report

Chair & Coordinator's Report,
Finance & Fundraising Report,
Annual Accomplishments.



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Chair's Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read Laamiga's Annual Report for 2021/2022. The past few years have indeed presented everyone around the world with challenges never imagined. COVID-19, the ongoing political uncertainty in the UK and hostile attitudes towards migrants and refugees, have created a challenging climate on multiple fronts. Despite this, Laamiga has continued to remain steadfast in delivering the programmes focused on building the confidence and leadership skills of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic migrant and refugee women here in London.

In April 2021, we launched the Sheba project. This project created the space in which participating women increased their employability; amplified their level of confidence; boosted their career aspirations and created an encouraging environment in which they can take steps towards employment, self-employment or further training. In collaboration with Love Welcomes, this year also saw the growth of Athena, a six-month project centred on developing financial literacy. As was the case with Sheba, the current climate necessitated the use of digital tools. The implementation of women-led webinars and creation of empowering virtual peer groups truly added an enriching element to these rather challenging circumstances.

The mentorship programme has continued to expand over this year- with phenomenal stories of personal growth (both from mentees and mentors) being shared. Mentors have gone on to support established projects and use their professional networks to share our mission. Mentees as well have tirelessly supported us in building our profile in the community. This is truly a relationship in which both parties grow and learn from one another - reinforcing the asset approach to transformation which grounds Laamiga's work. I would like to give thanks to our highly skilled trustees, volunteers and mentors who often balance this volunteer work alongside considerable professional and family commitments. A continued appreciation to our funders who support our projects. A special thanks must go to our Coordinator Dr Emua Ali who works tirelessly to develop and further Laamiga.

Mandekh Hussein, Laamiga Chair

Our Mission, Vision & Values



Our Mission, Vision & Values

The Power of Communities

Our research has shown that women from refugee and migrant communities have a lot of talent, skills and knowledge. However, due to cultural, linguistic and religious factors they are often unable to find suitable employment and end up in manual, low paid occupations, e.g., cleaning and hotel work.

The Power of Connections

These women are often grappling with basic survival needs, e.g., housing and food, and are unable to invest time on acquiring new skills to advance their livelihood and reach their full potential. This is where our mentors can help.

The Power of Women

Our research also shows that some refugee and migrant women have developed extremely successful businesses and achieved satisfying careers, demonstrating the value that they can bring to society if given the opportunity.



Coordinator's Report

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our volunteers without whom Laamiga's services would not exist. Additionally, we are extremely grateful for our partners who provide us with amazing, resilient volunteers without whom Laamiga would not exist as a volunteer-led charity. We thank our mentors who give their time, energy and support to mentees who achieve so much because someone believes in them. Thank you to our trustees who guide Laamiga with their expertise, skills and direction in finance, fundraising, strategy and business development.

We wouldn't exist without the support of our funders who believe in our mission, vision and values to enable women from minority ethnic, refugee and migrant communities to reach their potential to start their journey to financial independence. Finally, thank you to our staff and operational volunteers who go above and beyond their job to keep Laamiga operating as a small vibrant women's charity.

We are very proud of our mentees who found employment and took the giant leap into the world of work and our mentors who continued to support them to understand workplace culture. The Sheba project provided mentees with individual career coaching sessions, a career plan and monthly interview skills webinars to enable them to develop the self-confidence to take the next steps in their career pathways.

We have mentees who through regular English language conversations with their mentors have become independent in attending appointments, shopping and talking to their children's schoolteachers without interpreters. Many mentees have enrolled in further education courses to improve their digital skills and with the support of their mentors have been able to access online shopping, pass Life in the UK citizenship tests and improve their study skills. Our corporate partners have given us many volunteer hours in consultancy to help us improve our operational and strategic functions.

Our Athena financial literacy project has been of great value to mentees who now have the ability to manage their money, set goals, budget, get better deals for their utilities, broadband and mobile phone contracts and save more effectively. This is all the more important with the current inflation of costs of living, food and essential goods. We look forward to another year of growth of Laamiga as a small women's charity and developing more partnerships and collaboration with local voluntary sector and corporate organisations.

Dr Emua Ali, Coordinator



Thank you to
this year's
donors:

European Social Fund

Rosa & Smallwood
Trust



European
Social Fund



Finances & Fundraising

The funding and partnership from our generous sponsors and donors, along with the generous contributions from our volunteers, remain the lifeblood of Laamiga.

Over the past year, we continued our Sheba project (funded by a grant from the European Social Fund and managed by Paddington Development Trust (PDT). This project supports unemployed women aged 18+ from black, Asian, minority ethnic refugee and migrant communities to develop resilience, to transfer skills from the private/domestic sphere and to gain self-confidence and motivation.

We were also delighted to receive a grant from the Rosa and Smallwood Trust's "Women Thrive Fund" which allowed us to fund our Athena Project, which aims to help women improve their confidence with personal finance and gain financial independence.

As the Covid-19 pandemic eases, we are cautiously returning to in-person events and workshops and, where the participants feel comfortable, one-to-one mentoring too. However, the enabling of access to a virtual space and the spend on technology solutions and broadband support have increased our reach and we are grateful to our project funders that allow us to continue our work in this new format where needed. We continue to focus on securing general, non-project specific, funding for fixed costs, to support the mentoring at the core of our service, as well the next round of project activity.

The contribution of our volunteers is the critical factor that makes Laamiga's work possible. Without their time and skills, we would not be able to achieve our aims. Beyond that, Laamiga is almost entirely dependent on grants, usually for specific projects. Our financial health 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, and we also receive individual contributions via Laamiga's website (www.kindlink.com/charity/Laamiga). These donations, with 25% extra through taxpayers signing up to Gift Aid, are very important, as they contribute to vital costs that make our work possible, like insurance, website hosting, travel and childcare.

Impactful Story

Sofia is a Marketing Manager who had been wanting to volunteer for a few years. When she heard about Laamiga through work, Sofia was immediately drawn to the organisation's focus on women, and the opportunity to help people from different countries, as Sofia was an immigrant herself.

She was matched with Eva, an art & craft enthusiast, who had been unemployed for some time. Having worked as a graphic and visual designer for years, Eva decided to leave the corporate environment when she developed a chronic illness and focused on her health. This turned into a long break that impacted Eva's body and mind, leaving her depleted of energy.

Sofia and Eva started the mentorship virtually during the lockdown and agreed to meet once a month. They immediately clicked as they shared many passions and interests; Sofia was struck by how Eva had put her time, knowledge and energy into organising art workshops over Zoom for her family's and close friends' children, so as to give them a productive distraction from lockdown and relieve the parents' daily burden.

It took Sofia some time to win Eva's trust: Eva was naturally a giver and a provider, someone who wasn't comfortable letting others help and guide her. Eva had always been the one people would go to for support, and would struggle to give herself the same compassion and priority she would so selflessly give to others.

Sofia and Eva set two main objectives: to get Eva out of the house regularly, so that she could regain confidence in her body and boost her mood through light movement and social interactions with her local walking group; to focus on her social media presence, so that she could slowly build on her dream to start a business selling her arts and crafts online. Sofia put her work experience into use, and shared a lot of free tools and online platforms that Eva could use to deepen her knowledge of social media and become more tech-savvy and independent in her choices.

As trust developed in the mentoring relation, Eva opened up about other aspects of her life, such as personal grief, family dynamics and relationship traumas. Sofia grew into a better listener, by learning to keep opinions to herself, and instead provide a safe space for Eva to express freely. Sofia always reminded Eva that the mentorship was a place for her to be supported and heard by a trusted sounding board who was there to give their time and undivided attention.

As Eva regained her confidence, building back her emotional and psychological strength, she started smiling more and coming up with new ideas herself. She was finally able to notice her own progress in different areas of her life, and celebrate her achievements. She could look back and see how her attitude had changed for good, and could identify ways to maintain the same approach in the future.

While Eva's little online business grew and received a lot of praise - and even the biggest orders to date! She managed to get back into work, going from a part-time to a full-time contract as a manager in a local shop. Sofia was proud to witness the steps Eva took on her own, and how she grew into the role and climbed up the responsibilities ladder.

They now have a friendly relationship and keep in touch regularly to share a laugh or two.

Accomplishments



51

mentor applications



27 mentee applications



13

completed the Sheba project



19

completed the Athena project



9

webinars delivered



3

mentees secured full-time jobs



5

field trips taken



6

financial workshops delivered for the Athena project