



 **THE
HIGHLIFE CENTRE**

Santander Foundation

Enterprise Skills for Women

**End of Project and Evaluation Report
July 2014**



Table of Content

Executive summary	3
Overview of the project	3
Rational – evidence of need	3
Project budget	4
Project aims and objectives	4
Evaluating the project	4
Key indicators	4
Performance review	5
Performance against target	5
Beneficiary breakdown by location	6
Positive impact	6
Personal impact	7
Wider impact	7
Conclusions, lessons and insights	8
Contact details	8
Appendix One	
Budget Performance Report	9
Appendix Two	
Case studies	10

1. Executive summary

The Highlife Centre Ltd has written this report to document project activities, performance and impact of the Enterprise Skills for Women Project that has been funded by Santander Foundation to provide Level 1 Qualifications, to women who are considering self-employment. As planned, the project was delivered within 6 months from 6th January 2014 to 5th July 2014.

The overall aim of the project was to contribute to meet Santander Foundation's Education and Training priority and to give women from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities the skills and know how that will help them to prepare, start and run their own enterprise.

Our final report provides an assessment of the impact of the project in meeting Santander Foundation and The Highlife Centre's aims and objectives.

2. Overview of the project

The Enterprise Skills for Women Project was developed to provide basic vocational training at Level 1 to women from hard to reach, disadvantaged communities inspiring them to overcome barriers that prevents them from becoming self-employed.

We delivered the qualifications in:

- Level 1 Award in Understanding Enterprising Skills
- Level 1 Award in Understanding the Importance of Business Planning
- Level 1 Award in Understanding How to Manage Money in a Business
- Level 1 Award in Understanding How to Market Your Business

2.1 Rationale

Evidence of need

The project was developed following feedback we received from women who have completed the Women's Vision for Enterprise Programme which targets women from hard to reach and disadvantaged communities to inspire them to overcome barriers that prevents them from becoming self-employed. Upon completion of the programme, 21 women were asked how vocational education could further improve their lives and careers.

- All 21 women believed that they will have a sense of achievement and a sense of purpose when they have a certificate to evidence the skill they have acquired.
- 18 women believed that they will be in a better position to run successful businesses if they have further skills, knowledge and understanding in business and enterprise.
- 6 women explained how the skill acquired will enable them secure jobs much faster than anticipated.
- 11 women have already signed up to undertake the programme

This presented us with an opportunity to provide a service that will see women come out of their shells to gain vocational skills that will improve their life chances and could lead to a sustainable employment.

2.2 Project budget

The Highlife Centre Ltd was awarded a total of £9540 by Santander Foundation to pay for the project's direct costs. The project was carried out within budget with no major risks identified. We were presented with a low risk of underspending on registration and certification as not all the women presented their assessment books to be certified.

2.3 Project aims and objectives

The project targeted women who are unemployed and from disadvantaged backgrounds living in the most deprived areas in Coventry. The Coventry Entrepreneurship Monitor (CEM) identified that only 32% of people residing in most deprived areas of the city felt that they had the skills to start new business. Our aim was to improve the quality of life of these women by providing them with training to develop the skills that will help them to take their business ideas forward.

2.4 Evaluating the Project

The Highlife Centre Ltd evaluated the project's progress against specific outcomes using self-evaluation and other methods during training sessions.

We collected evidence via:

- Registration forms
- Feedback forms and questionnaires after every activity
- Case studies
- Course assessment books

2.5 Key Performance Indicators

We set up a suite of indicators at the start of the project to collect data that will enable us to quantify the impact that the support has had on our organisation and on the women that we supported.

Mandatory Key Performance Indicators we collected were:

- The number of women who will increase their confidence and boost their determination to launch and run successful businesses or have a career in employment that is immediate and ongoing.
- The number of women who have acquired skills that will make them have a sense of purpose, changing their attitudes and mind-set about work.
- The number of women who will have a sense of achievement that will be most valuable to them throughout their lives encouraging them to socially integrate into their communities.
- The number of women who will become independent of state benefit by launching successful and viable businesses or finding employment with knowledge acquired.

3. Performance Review

This section reviews the performance of the project against its Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relating to delivering the project.

3.1 Performance against target

Projected outcomes

We estimated that by the end of the project:

- 20 women will have increased their confidence and boost their determination to launch and run successful businesses or have a career in employment that is immediate and ongoing.
- 20 Women will have acquired skills that will make them have a sense of purpose, changing their attitudes and mind-set about work.
- 20 women will have a sense of achievement that will be most valuable to them throughout their lives encouraging them to socially integrate into their communities.
- 10 women will become independent of state benefit by launching successful and viable businesses or finding employment with knowledge acquired thus improving the quality of their lives within 12 months of the project.

Actual performance

- In all, 26 women were attracted onto the project and after initial assessment 21 women signed up and received training.
- All women received classroom training and one to one support as evidence of assessment in order to gain certification.
- 3 women have already completed and submitted their assessment books for certification.
- 18 women have received support to complete their assessment books and will be submitting them for certification.
- 3 women have already started their businesses and are trading.
- All participants reported that the courses have in one way or another increased their confidence and self-esteem.

The comments they made were:

- “Good and excellent course and content”
- “It has been good as it was informal, very good felt comfortable”
- “Small group but very interesting and informative”
- “Very good presentation. Pace of training good allowing Q&A throughout. Excellent knowledge base of trainer giving additional information. Very reassuring. Thank you”
- “Centre was difficult to find but overall the course was good”
- “The day was great, a lot of information given, well presented. Very good inspirational session”
- “Very comprehensive and always thought provoking – bring new and positive challenges”
- “Enjoyed the course, very understanding and pitched at the right level”

3.2 Participants breakdown by location

We have been able to identify participants who are from a socially or economically deprived area using postcode data collected from participants on registration forms.

Figure 3 Enterprise Skills for Women - KPI results

Location	Coventry
CV1	3
CV2	8
CV3	2
CV4	2
CV5	2
CV6	4
Total number of women supported	21

The evidence shows that some 80% of the women supported are from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is in proportion to people from economically inactive and deprived areas in Coventry and surrounding areas.

Our client reach indicates that an increasing proportion of women from the most deprived areas in Coventry have accessed and received support. Post codes representing the most deprived areas in Coventry are: CV1, CV2, CV3 and CV6.

4. Positive impact

It is clear from feedback received and from case studies that the project has been successful and that there have been huge benefits to the women who participated including increased self-confidence, acquired or improved skills/knowledge and improved quality of life.

4.1 Personal impact

A summary of how the project has impacted on individual lives:

- Changed and improved quality of lives of the women.
- A positive feeling of equal access to services and opportunities
- Acquired or increase skills and knowledge
- Increased chances of employment
- Increased self-esteem, confidence and motivation.
- Personal and professional development
- Increased independence as they are now off state benefits
- Changed attitudes and mind set to the workplace
- Improved work life balance
- increased social inclusion
- Interpersonal skills: for example: social skills and coping with authority – some women have explained that they are now able to approach mainstream services and comfortably network with people due to increased confidence.
- Organisational skills: Personal organisation, and the ability to order and prioritize
- Managing time and problem solving
- Personal skills: for example: insight, motivation, confidence, reliability and health awareness.

Some women explained that they:

- *Felt more reason to get out of bed, and were more motivated*
- *Gained a great sense of satisfaction from the sessions, training and activities*
- *Got to know each other much better as they had time to talk on during events and at sessions.*
- *The project boosted the social confidence of one member so much that he started to take part in other activities and got to know more people.*

4.2 Wider impacts

Organisational impact

Funding received from Santander Foundation has enabled The Centre and its volunteers to become involved in community projects and created partnerships to offer the best solutions to the needs of its service users.

With the funding from Santander, we have increased our reputation in the local community as a valued service provider bridging gaps in skill, education and provision of information, advice and mentoring impacting positively on individual lives.

Promoting entrepreneurship and creating jobs in our community are important to us, and the funding received has allowed us to go much further, reaching to those most in need of entrepreneurship support. We reach out to people who are unemployed or low income families and may never have gained the qualifications or skills that can help their life chances, enabling them to access rewarding careers or further study.

Staff and volunteers have been able to learn from this project and have been able to share learning with other community organisation.

5. Conclusions, lessons and insights

This section outlines the main conclusions from our analysis of the project. It also draws out the key lessons and insights for future work and future projects.

Overall, the project has been a success. There are a number of approaches that worked well in this project.

- As this was an only women project, it helped with women who faced cultural issues and are from different cultures for example providing women only sessions for Muslim women.
- Addition of a social element to activities that include regular informal events
- Delivery of sessions or activities that coincided with school hours for mothers
- We found that it is important to gain the trust of participants so that they felt confident about attending sessions. For example: delivering business awareness sessions in churches and local facilities to build relationships with women from BME communities.
- Recruiting the right volunteers to assist on the project is important, in particular someone to engage with individuals residing in socially or economically deprived areas. The volunteers relate on a one to one basis with people.
- We used traditional and innovative methods to attract and engage beneficiaries such as SMS texting and Social Networking websites.
- Everyone from management to beneficiaries volunteered their time on the project to make it a success. This empowered beneficiary volunteers to take control, lead their activities, gain skills and experience, giving them confidence that could perhaps help them to move into employment.
- Collaborating with other organisations helped with mutual referrals.
- There were also wider community benefits including women integrating more with the wider community that has helped increase personal confidence and motivation.
- Lessons have been learnt including, good practice in self-evaluation involving participants in monitoring and using a range of tools and techniques such as case studies.

6. Contact details

This report has been written by project manager of the Enterprise Skills for Women Project

Ms Christabell Amoakoh

The Highlife Centre Ltd, 18 Hertford Street, Coventry, CV1 1LF

Telephone: 02476 550 057 | 07704 638 507

Email: christabella@thehighlife.org, www.thehighlife.org

APPENDIX ONE

Budget Performance Report

BUDGET PERFORMANCE REPORT

Organisation	The Highlife Centre Ltd
Project Name	Enterprise Skills for Women Project
Project duration	6 Months
Dates covered by report	6th January to 5th July 2014

Expenditure	Project Budgeted Expenditure	Actual Spend	Variance
	£	£	£
Trainer & Advisor	4,400.00	4,400.00	-
Office and Admin Expenses	2,700.00	2,699.90	0.10
Learning Materials	1,480.00	1,480.00	-
Registration and Certification	960.00	529.20	430.80
Total Costs	9,540.00	9,109.10	430.90

BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget was under spent by £430.80 as only 12 women presented their assessment books to be registered and certified by SFEDI (Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative). It is a possibility that the remaining 9 women will present their assessments at a later date as we continue to work with them to overcome barriers to employment.

APPENDIX TWO

Case studies

**ANNA MATUSIAK**

After I took those courses I was able to understand more how to run my business. I knew more about book keeping (what was veeeery helpfull), I knew how to plan my expenses and keep records of everything.

I used some of the marketing techniques and it turned out they are working and I got more clients because of that. I found out my weak spots and was able to correct them. I benefit a lot from the courses and I am very happy about it.

**EUNICE BEUGRE**

The courses have helped me to build my confidence and have given me the knowledge that I was missing to start my business. Now I know that there are possibilities out there.

My self-esteem is so high now, I have turned my business idea into reality and I am now not afraid to start my business knowing that there is all the support that I can get from the Highlife Centre.