

Girls Hostel Empowerment Programme 2018 Report



Picture of Literacy and Numeracy Session

Background:

In 2016, the Aberdeen Women's Centre (AWC) launched a teenage girls' empowerment programme (**The Dream Girls**) to support and rehabilitate teenage mothers registered at the maternity clinic who are abandoned, and often destitute, and are in need of practical and emotional support before, during and after they have had their baby.

The overall goal is to transform their lives through education and empowerment, both economically and through rebuilding their self-esteem and confidence. Within the Dream Girls group, these young girls find solace in peer-to-peer support, emotional counselling from AWC's on site counsellor and medical advice from the clinical staff.

Following the inception of the Dream Girls, the AWC identified the programme could be expanded to include a Hostel for a select group of vulnerable girls to participate in a six month training programme to equip them with employment skills in order to secure long term employment and economic independence.

A suitable building was identified and refurbished with the support of a donor and it opened in August 2018.

2018 KEY ACTIVITIES

A total of **10** teenage mothers were booked into the Hostel after thorough background checks and profiling that established vulnerabilities and need of socioeconomic empowerment. Two girls dropped out within the first three months, leaving eight girls.

The remaining girls participated in a range of activities focused on:

1. Catering and hospitality
2. House keeping
3. Literacy and numeracy
4. Health education
5. Art and Craft training

These training classes are taught by our on-site teaching staff. The skills taught are targeted to give the girls the best chance of income generation.



Art and Craft training

They girls were engaged in a range of skills training including handicrafts, needlework and sewing, soap making, doormat designing and production, clothes weaving, neckless designing, waist-bead, baby clothes hand sewing, birth day gift cards etc.

Health Education

Health education sessions were focused on reproductive health, baby care, baby local food preparations and family planning education. The sessions are held once in a week and the girls are provided with correct and culturally-sensitive information on baby-care, breastfeeding, hygiene and family planning.

In these sessions, information on vaccinations and infant care treatment are shared with the teenage mothers.

Guidance Counselling Services

The guidance counselling sessions provides the teenage mothers with behavioural and leadership therapy so they can focus on the life changing skills provided in the programme. The counsellor also provides a range of emotional therapy, communication skills and personal development therapy. The guidance counselling services are used to support the mothers in handling household stress and real life challenges.

Literacy and numeracy

The teenage mothers are taught basic Maths and English to develop their ability of reading and writing skills in order to produce, understand, interpret and critically evaluate written information. The functional literacy sessions enable the girls to develop and function at home, at work and in life generally.

Catering and hospitality

- The teenage mothers are trained in basic catering and hospitality skills focusing on the hotel industry requirements in order to align with the employment requirements. They are specifically trained on;
- **Artisan Catering** : Food Production, Food Service
- **Cookery**: Soups, salads, Sources, Protein, Dishes, Starches, Vegetables, Desserts, Menu planning, Food costing

The teenage mothers will be taken through the theory and practical skills for a period of six months, after which they will be assisted in job security and finally integrated back into their respective families and communities.

Successes

- ✓ Successfully ensured smooth operations of the hostel with 8 teenage mothers including their babies
- ✓ Completed arts and crafts training
- ✓ Ongoing trainings on catering and hospitality
- ✓ Familial relationships re-established

Challenges

- ✓ Basic levels of hygiene and education of the girls means training is taking longer than anticipated
- ✓ Different levels of ability poses difficulties in securing jobs for everyone after six months.
- ✓ Resources for support in reintegration back to families

Since the Hostel opened in August 2018, the AWC team has had a steep learning curve in how to manage and implement the Hostel programme. It has adapted its plans to reflect the realities of the girls' experience and feels confident that, with the right support, the Hostel programme in 2019 will be a success for all involved.