

The Women's Fund for Scotland



Headlines

- The Women's Fund for Scotland is strongly aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality)
- The Women's Fund for Scotland can clearly demonstrate how grant monies may have a lasting impact amongst policy and decision-makers.
- Despite the difficulties of the Covid-19 pandemic grantees from 2019/2020 have celebrated completing their projects. Several of these grants will be captured in this report.

Overview

This report aims to provide an update on several projects that have benefited from grants awarded by The Women's Fund for Scotland. The report will explore how the fund is actively contributing toward gender equality, as outlined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework.

A number of organisations from across Scotland will be highlighted and each update will include testimonials, images, and success stories from 2020/2021. Foundation Scotland hopes that this report will highlight the exceptional difference that monies are having in empowering women across Scotland.

Please note, that the impact stories featured in the report are grants that were made before 2021/22 and whose activities have now come to an end. A number of these projects were significantly delayed in completing project activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions; however, this report should highlight their success in the face of lockdown restrictions.

The Women's Fund for Scotland and Gender Equality (SDG5)



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

What is a UN Sustainable Development Goal?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all".[1] The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (UN-GA) and are intended to be achieved by 2030. Sustainable Development Goal 5 centers on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. The goal has 9 targets and 14 indicators.

SDG5

SDG5 is a unique goal in that even though it is a stand-alone goal, other SDGs can only be achieved if the needs of women receive the same attention as the needs of men. Gender equity experts state that without progress on Goal 5, the other goals and targets cannot be achieved. The link between SDG 5 and the other SDGs has been extensively analyzed by UN Women's report on gender equality in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

The Women's Fund for Scotland and SDG5

As a charitable fund, The Women's Fund for Scotland plays an important role in contributing toward the aims and objectives of SDG5. Please see a breakdown of some of the most important issues surrounding gender equality, alongside some best practice projects that have been supported by the fund.



SDG5.2 - Violence Against Women

As highlighted by the above infographic, violence against women remains a universal problem that has been severely exacerbated by the Covid-19

pandemic. Over the course of the pandemic, WFS supported the following activities which aimed to reduce physical/sexual violence and empower women to stand up to abuse. In the City of Edinburgh, **Bright Light Relationship Counselling** received a grant of £5,000.00 to fund a counselling/skills coach to support women recovering from domestic abuse. The project provided one to one support to vulnerable women to help them discuss and process their experiences, understand that it was not their fault and begin the journey to recovery. As part of this process, women could identify other people in their network, such as their children, to join the therapy sessions. It was estimated that over 400 women directly benefitted from activities.

In Glasgow City, **No Fear** received funding to run their 'Freedom Programme' for victims of domestic abuse. No Fear' was founded by Lynn Smilie and her sister; both victims of domestic homicide when their father killed their mother in 1983. They themselves have sought much recovery since then and have worked within the community on a voluntary basis for over 16 years. The project kept the legacy of the founders alive and No Fear ran 3 groups to women in the community. These were delivered weekly by Zoom with experienced trained facilitators. Activities focused on trauma, mental health and wellbeing and offered volunteering and training opportunities as a means of upskilling vulnerable women. Over the course of the project, WFS supported 100 ladies to attend the 'Freedom Programme'. 20 and 2020-21 censuses, but the difference is most pronounced in the working-age carer group.

"I feel like I am stronger and understand the abusive cycle. I have built relationships with my friends and family. I am more confident and feel like sharing my experience has really helped. As well as listening to other people and feeling like I am not alone, I have grown in confidence in talking within the group as I feel like my knowledge has got better"



SDG5.4 – Unpaid care

A person is considered an "unpaid carer" if they provide support/care to an individual who has needs due to physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es), or problems related to old age, excluding anything they did as part of their paid employment. The UK Carers census identified that there were 31,760 unique carers in 2020-21. There are also more female carers than male carers in every age group in both the 2019-2020 and 2020-21 censuses, but the difference is most pronounced in the working-age carer group. WFS has been a long-term supporter of projects that aim to alleviate women with caring responsibilities. One such example is **Care for**

Carers. Based in the Abbeyhill area of Edinburgh, the organisation received a grant from WFS in February 2022. Grant monies will go towards a counselling programme and residential stay which women who experience stress and isolation because of their caring role. Activities will also provide a chance for these women to socialize with their peers and voice their own personal struggles. Care for Carers hopes that the project will offer some much-needed respite for women at risk of poor mental health and social isolation. Project activities will commence in the Summer of 2022.

SDG5.6 – Reproductive rights



SDG5.6 focuses on the ability for women to make decisions on reproductive health, contraceptive use, and sexual relations. These are pivotal to

achieving universal gender equality. The Women's Fund for Scotland has awarded funds to a number of projects that focus on this target of SDG5.6. In 2019, **Hey Girls CIC** received an award of £9,7500.00 to go towards delivering the 'My Period: Menstrual Education for All' project. The charity delivered six training sessions across Scotland – in Perth, Airdrie, Edinburgh, Inverness, Glasgow, and Stirling. During the sessions, attendees had time and space to share their own personal experiences of periods and discuss how best to respond to common questions and problems that vulnerable women might ask about their menstrual health. The half-day training sessions also covered best practices in facilitating open conversations periods, how to use the 'My Period' teaching resources, and how to demonstrate reusable period products.

"I walked away with the knowledge about the choices out there for women. I now have more confidence in how to help those who need it while protecting individuals' dignity and breaking the taboo around period talk. Brilliant initiative!"

Impact Story: Deaf Links Dundee

Established in 2009, Deaf Links Dundee (DLD) is a community-led organisation that aims to offer advocacy services and recreational activities for members of the deaf community in Scotland. With key links to the police and social services, DLD fill a gap in service provision and bridge the communicational divide between British Sign Language (BSL) speakers and statutory authorities. The organisation operates out of the Tayside Deaf Hub Community Centre in Dundee, and they also have a charity shop and community café which are open to all ages of the general public. It is estimated that annually, DLD assists 300 sensory impaired people from Perth, Kinross and Angus through drop-ins, appointments, outreach, home visits and focus groups.



In March 2021, The Women's Fund for Scotland awarded DLD a grant of £5,000.00. Grant monies enabled the charity to undertake an

important research initiative that would examine the extent of issues around Domestic Abuse and/or Coercive Control experienced by women within the Deaf (BSL) Community in Scotland. Under Covid-19, DLD's specialist advocacy service saw a surge in reports of violence, abuse and sexual assaults being committed against deaf women. Project monies were therefore used to hire a female Deaf consultant, who is herself a survivor of domestic abuse. The project would form an online Deaf Women's Discussion Group. DLD hoped that the information gathered would feed into a final project report which would highlight the prevalence of violence against Deaf women, what they know about the mainstream specialist women's support services and what are the barriers to accessing such services. It was estimated that between 30-50 women would directly benefit from this project by taking part in group discussions, with a much larger number benefiting from the final project report.

Project activities commenced in the Spring of 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, DLD state that it was challenging getting deaf women and girls to engage in activities, not least because the majority of participants had faced months of shielding due to a variety of health issues. Fortunately, the presence of a deaf female consultant proved reassuring. The consultant also used "vlogs" shared widely on social media

to encourage individuals to contact her, which worked well.

Did you know?

According to Deaf Scotland, there are currently around 12,500 British Sign Language users in Scotland.

If one examines project activities, 104 women and girls were involved in focus groups, 1:1 interviews, and online feedback sessions to gather evidence of their experiences and knowledge of gender-based violence/abuse, the specialist services which offer support, the barriers they face and what they want to see in terms of accessible services. This number is far higher than anticipated and the blend of online and in-person activities ensured maximum participation and gave a voice to vulnerable women from across Tayside.

"I was emotionally/physically abused. It was difficult at the time as my mind was scared of what could happen if I contact the police and no interpreter could come with them. The Deaf Community is small which is a big issue. Police or support agencies don't understand us."

Bolstered by the participation of women and girls, DLD made sure that the project captured

information from other important stakeholders. Over the course of the project, 75 specialist organisations/agencies across Scotland that offer support to women who experience gender-based violence/abuse were contacted with a questionnaire to gather information on their experiences of working with Deaf women and girls. These respondents were very open in saying that they recognized they were not qualified to work with Deaf women who use BSL and that the report could help bridge an important knowledge gap within the sector.

DLD completed its report towards the end of 2021. The report highlighted a number of key findings which are as follows:

- There needs to be more training for Deaf women to become advocates and peer supporters for abused women.
- There is a disparity between generations within the Deaf community. The younger generation is different because they know about online abuse, especially sexting and grooming by technology.
- Project participants expressed a desire to break the taboo, by having workshops, mixed with other deaf and hearing women. To support each other like the sisterhood should be.

Regarding the legacy of the project, the evidence gathered and presented in the report has enabled Deaf Links (working alongside local Deaf women and girls) to form a working partnership with Angus, Dundee and Perthshire Women's Aid and co-design an accessible service. The charity has successfully gained 2 years of funding from the Scottish Government Delivering Equally Safe Fund to develop an Advocacy Service for Deaf Women who have experienced gender-based violence/abuse. DL has just recruited staff for the project and has begun this much-needed work across Tayside. Looking to the future, their ultimate goal is to develop and deliver a successful model of service which can be replicated in other areas of Scotland.

"The Women's Fund for Scotland has supported us to successfully produce the first grassroots research on gender-based violence/abuse with Deaf women and girls in Scotland"

To learn more about this project, the Deaf Links research report has been attached to this report.

Impact Story: Lochalsh Youth Community Trust

Lochalsh Youth Community Trust Girls Group was established in 2018, in response to a youth work consultation of users to reassess the needs and wishes of young people in Lochalsh. The girls felt that there was a need for a girls' only group, as they had fewer opportunities and the activities available were dominated by boys. The group provides activities and services for girls in years S1 to S6 every Thursday from 6.30pm to 7.30pm in the Wee Den at Kyle Village Hall and there are currently 6 regular attendees. As well as activities that are targeted for the girls, there are also hot drinks available and wi-fi access. Group attendance is free. Lochalsh Leisure Centre also works together with the Girls' Group to provide dedicated girls swimming, health, and fitness sessions.



Lochalsh Youth Community Trust is based in the Highlands

To add context to this project, Kyle of Lochalsh has been designated as a fragile area by Highland & Islands Enterprise. Fragile areas have declining populations including underrepresentation of young people, lack of economic opportunities, below-average income levels and problems with transport as well as issues relating to a lack of opportunities. Of the 79 zones assessed, Kyle of Lochalsh has been recognized as the second most fragile area scoring 18 out of 20 on the assessment scale. By providing activities and services for young women and working with the Girls Group, the Trust hoped to address the effects of living in such a fragile area through:

- Encouraging young women to stay in the area by making Lochalsh a vibrant, interesting, and dynamic community.
- Assisting young women to become more confident, to raise their self-esteem and to provide opportunities for them to develop life skills, accredited qualifications, and competencies to access employment opportunities.

- Developing as wide a range of opportunities as is possible to meet their needs locally.
- Putting them at the heart of policy, measuring the impact of prioritizing health and well-being and closing the attainment gap whilst always striving for equality and fairness.

beneficiaries individually. By December 2020, restrictions lifted in the community and the Trust relaunched group sessions on a weekly basis. These continued through 2021 and by the end of the project, the organisation had successfully delivered 28 sessions with 365 learning hours.

In 2020, The Women's Fund for Scotland awarded the organisation a grant of £6,590.00. Grant monies went towards the delivery of a weekly girl's group in the community. The Trust hoped to implement a variety of activities including a camping trip, theatre trip and visit to a pottery studio in Inverness. It was hoped that the project would directly benefit 40 young girls aged between 13-18. The girls' group set off to a good start in early January 2020. Participants were meeting up weekly to discuss issues that were important to them such as safe internet use, body image, language, disabilities, inappropriate sexual behaviour, and healthy eating. Young people created portfolios to record their learning as well as artwork to symbolize their emotions and feelings around womanhood.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic took hold across the UK, and this severely inhibited the progress of the project. All sessions were suspended and staff members at the Trust were placed on furlough. Whilst households were placed under lockdown, the Trust kept in contact with all group members and made-up activity packs with crafts and art materials which were then delivered to each household. In so doing, it was possible to have catch-up chats with all the

Impact Story: Family Service Unit (Circle)

Family Service Unit (Circle) was established 2006, to support and protect children, families and individuals who are disadvantaged and affected by parental imprisonment or parental drug or alcohol misuse; and in addition to advance education in relation to health and social care policy and practice. The group achieve this by providing outreach support to children and families in their homes; parenting groups; and creches; mentoring services to children; support to mothers in prison returning to their families; support to women with substance misuse issues; and families affected by domestic abuse. The group operate these services across Edinburgh, West Lothian, North and South Lanarkshire. The group's outreach and community services are offered Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Each year the charity reaches out to an estimated 500 families.



Towards the end of 2019, the charity was awarded a grant from the Women's Fund for

Scotland to deliver a series of health and wellbeing workshops to vulnerable women who have drug and alcohol misuse issues and/or have involvement with the criminal justice system. The activities included mindfulness and yoga, tips on how to manage stress and anxiety, harm reduction, tolerance, parenting, nutrition and aimed to create positive futures. The need for the project was identified by women supported by the organisation sharing their views through feedback forms, where it was identified there was a lack of opportunity for vulnerable women in the South Lanarkshire area. The group also conducted an evaluation of one of their women's outreach team, which highlighted that the women 'could become catalysts in these communities' and identified 'bringing women together' as a key priority'.

Did you know?

According to a 2018 Scottish Government report, women who experience substance abuse are less likely to be employed and tend to have a lower household income than their male peers.

Family Service Unit had originally planned to deliver 5 group work programmes in 6-week blocks from April 2020 to March 2021. Due to Covid-19 delivery and facilitation of groups took place from October 2020 to November 2021. The first group work programme delivered 4 groups in blocks of 6. These were as follows, (1) Healthier Lives, (2) Managing Stress and Anxiety, (3) Harm Reduction and (4) Parenting. Bringing women together via Zoom was not simple as there existed anxieties of practitioners in delivering groups

remotely and anxiety amongst the women in meeting 'new' people via digital means. However, the approach of respecting individual's confidentiality and in gently nurturing women's attendance by permitting camera(s) being turned off until they felt increased confidence encouraged women to attend. The second group work programme was delivered from September to November. Three programmes were delivered in 4-week blocks including (1) Managing Stress and Anxiety, (2) Positive Choices (Supporting Change) and (3) Parenting. These were selected after receiving feedback from the women on which groups had greater impact and value to them.



Motivational interviewing was blended within the group discussions in promoting change and increasing women's knowledge and skills to improve upon their motivation to change. This also led to improving healthy interactions amongst the women in fostering a supportive peer community where they encouraged each other with the changes they wanted to see in their lives. Learning and knowledge on parenting were

promoted through each woman's 'Tree of Life,' visually representing the experiences that made up their past, present and future.

To measure the impact and legacy of the project, Circle staff used their overarching 'SHANARRI' indicators against all project participants. These findings indicated that 100% of the women had an improved understanding of the impact of their behaviours/actions on family and 100% of women demonstrated an improved understanding of developing and maintaining attachment with their children. Ultimately, Circle state that It is the 'toolkit' of strategies and techniques that were applied throughout the groups that the women have been able to take away. Every parenting group ended with a meditation, ones that the women could apply in their own daily lives when navigating difficult and stressful situations. It is these approaches that contributed to the overall improvement in health and wellbeing for the women who participated in these groups.

Case Study

Julia* was involved with justice services and as a mother of two boys, was working towards increased contact with her children. The emotional impact of not being a primary carer had a detrimental impact on her wellbeing, how she viewed herself as a mother and how others perceived her. Julia was isolated from peers, had low self-esteem, and lacked confidence in making positive changes.

Julia attended all 24 weeks of the first group work programme improving her knowledge in recognising barriers to change, identifying factors that motivate positive change and in her understanding of herself as a mother. By the end of the project, Julia had an improved sense of self and valued the peer support of the group. She also had increased confidence in accessing support and was motivated to participate in local groups.

"I have always been a person who likes 1 to 1 meetings and always found groups a struggle but as I want to better myself I have been loving the group I don't feel to be shying away, I can speak my mind without anyone judging me, and we can all trust each other and help whenever we can."

*Please note, names have been changed to respect the anonymity of individual.

Project Updates: Wild Things CIC

In February 2022, Wild Things CIC was awarded £3,906.00 by The Women's Fund for Scotland. Grant monies are going towards a holistic project that will involve the delivery of nature workshops (bushcraft, foraging, etc.) for women in and around Clydesdale who may be experiencing forms of disadvantage or recovering from domestic violence or forms of sexual or sex-based violence.



hammock camping and weaving. Activities are taking place every week for 6 weeks from 11-1pm in a safe woodland area in Lanark. The charity is working with Health Valleys (health practitioners) to refer, and register interested women, and this is helping to ensure that first-time participants can engage in the project, socialize with new people and learn practical skills. It is hoped that by the end of the project, a brand-new set of women will feel confident to spend more time in the wild and engage in outdoor pursuits!

WILD THINGS SCOTLAND CIC

WILD BUDS WOMENS GROUP

Our Wild Buds Womens group will be starting in May for women in the Lanark area.

We will be hosting a 'Come and try it day' to give participants a chance to meet staff, visit the location and try out some of the typical activities we will be running over our 6 week block.

Bush craft

OVER THE 6 WEEKS WE WILL TRY OUT SOME SIMPLE BUSHCRAFT TECHNIQUES AROUND OUR CAMP, LEARNING TO MAKE FIRE, COOK SIMPLE TOOL WORK AND CREATE IN A WOODLAND SETTING.



Foraging Walks

WE WILL EXPLORE OUR SURROUNDINGS AND SEE WHAT PLANTS WE CAN FORAGE TO COOK WITH AND CREATE SIMPLE REMEDIES TO USE FOR RELAXATION AND HEALING.



Nature Connection

WE AIM TO CONNECT EACH WEEK TO OUR SURROUNDINGS TO LEARN SIMPLE TECHNIQUES TO HELP US IMPROVE OUR HEALTH AND WELL BEING THROUGH CONNECTION WITH THE NATURE.



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Project Updates: Adventure Circus

In February 2022, Adventure Circus was awarded £4,118 by The Women's Fund for Scotland to fund a series of free circus skills classes for women in Perth to increase fitness and mental wellbeing. The project will offer activities free of charge to any women in the local community and it is hoped that this will help to widen participation in the local community.

Project activities commenced in May 2022 and the women's group is well underway. Participants are making the most of the Scottish summer and learning new bushcraft skills like building fires,

Thanks to funding from The Women's Fund, project activities got underway in the late Spring of 2022. Weekly classes are being delivered in the centre of Perth and women from across the local

authority are participating in the project. A number of women have already started weekly ariel classes which will build agility, and flexibility and will be a great opportunity to connect with the women and form friendships.



"Thanks to the Women's Fund for Scotland we are able to support our aerial students with free weekly classes to help build their strength and flexibility for circus arts!"

Project Updates: Jubilee House

Jubilee House was set up in 2015 to help women and children who are living with or recovering from domestic abuse. A large property in Paisley, Renfrewshire was donated to the charity to act as a recovery hub. The charity is renovating this building room by room. Their overall aim is to empower their service users to live their best lives. They run a variety of weekly services and groups,

including a financial empowerment group, craft group, garden group, medication/wellness class and an educational course called the Freedom Programme and its follow-on course, Freedom Forever. They also work alongside organisations in the community, including Crisis Counselling, Women's Aid, and Women and Children First, and refer women to these organisations as appropriate.



In February 2022, The Women's Fund for Scotland awarded the charity a grant of £1,947.80. Grant monies are being used to create a new meeting room in their building in Paisley. This room will act as a second meeting room for classes and other activities. A fully furnished second meeting room will enable the charity to accept more women onto their Freedom Programme courses since they have to limit how many women, they take on each course due to the need for social distancing. Sixty women and girls who are victims or survivors of domestic abuse will benefit from this project.

Project activities commenced in the spring of 2022 and the charity has made quick progress. In June 2022, Jubilee House completed the refurbishment of the room. See picture below:



"Things have been getting rather crowded lately and it is wonderful to be able to accommodate more ladies and more groups!"

Looking to the future, staff at Jubilee House are looking forward to welcoming a brand-new cohort of women. The meeting room in combination with A brand-new greenhouse will mean that activities can be bigger and better than ever!