



WOMENS PLATFORM

IMPACT REPORT 2019



441 WOMEN REGISTERED FOR THE WOMEN'S PLATFORM IN 2019 - THIS IS A 26% INCREASE FROM 218



Women's Platform (WP) focuses on migrant and refugee women separated from their extended families and social supports; women who find it difficult to balance their responsibilities as mothers and wives with those of their personal, social, and economic development.

The platform supports women in successfully achieving Socio-economic integration into South African society by fostering personal growth through sharing opportunities and experiences. Furthermore, WP provides knowledge on access to health, legal & education services, develops key job skills, and supports small business development. Women's Platform responds to the network's needs by offering training in Personal Development and Open Workshops (Health, Human Rights, Leadership, English Conversation Club and Preparing for Work).

Additionally, the Platform offers peer led basic training in skills necessary to support financial sustainability or managing small businesses with post training mentorship. After completion through mentorship and referrals, women are encouraged to find employment or start their own businesses.

OVERVIEW

The platform has grown rapidly over the years. The program responds to the overwhelming numbers of women by conducting monthly registration sessions. Women are referred to English School and Conversation Club (10 week programme to practice English and build confidence) or placed in the Personal Development course.

The platform meeting provides a space for women to celebrate their achievements and to promote the ethos of the programme. Additionally, WP provides knowledge on access to health, legal & education services, develops key job skills, and supports small business development.

Women Platform responds to the network's needs by offering training in Personal Development, which helps women to increase self-awareness and confidence. Women are able to articulate clearly what they have learned during sector enrollment. Additionally, women have access to free Health Clinics and intimate partner violence screenings that offers individual counselling and support groups.

A group of self-identified leaders are equipped with facilitation skills and share practical knowledge. The women are prepared to be active leaders and spokeswomen within the broader civil societies.

The Financial Sustainability component of the Women's Platform programme, offers peer led basic training in Beauty, Hospitality, Craft (Sewing and Beading) and Childcare. These courses vary from 6-13 weeks. Additionally, a Small Business Skills course is conducted to support entrepreneurs. The demand for the courses remains high.

After completion through mentorship and referrals, women are encouraged to find employment or start their own businesses. They receive Individualized work-readiness support, monthly check-ins on professional goals, and site visits. This has greatly helped the women to reach their full potential.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Anna Leite, a peer facilitator for Personal Development since 2018, found full time employment and continues to be a role model to her peers and community. She is currently studying her AA Degree and doing an internship through the Girl Trek movement. This movement encourages women to walk each day as a declaration of self-care. Anna encourages her peers and community here in SA to use walking as a practical first step to inspire healthy living and person growth.
- Jeanette, an alumni member of WP, has a National Diploma in Mathematics and Technology and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Unable to follow her career path in SA due to her documentation, she established her own sewing business and school. She continues to mentor individual women and teaches sewing to the Somali community.
- The leadership group discussed integration in South Africa with Fulbright Professional Barbara Franz.
- There have been an increased number of women who've had access to free health screenings. This is through the SHAWCO clinics run by a group of student doctors who volunteer their time and resources.
- The initiation with the local e-commerce, company "Wear it like a local" and the establishment of a bi-weekly product development workshop for women with strong sewing skills has supported women to develop unique products targeting the local tourism market.
- The women hosted a Christmas market where they had an opportunity to display and sell gifts for the festive season. The feedback was positive and we hope to arrange for an annual Christmas market.
- Every Peer Facilitator is paired with an individual mentor. Mentors support each other through a bi-monthly meeting to strategize as a group on mentees progress.
- Dr Leah Mundell from the University of Northern Arizona conducted interviews with over 60 platform members to prepare an evaluation and impact report.
- A selected hospitality graduate was given the opportunity to run the Scalabrini kitchen for 6 months, catering for workshops and events at Scalabrini Centre, serving other customers and improving entrepreneurial skills.

FUTURE PLANS

The Women's Platform will continue to nurture active leaders and spokeswomen within the migrant community. The year starts with a training workshop for our peer facilitators and the piloting of the newly designed Personal Development workshop, which now emphasizes experiential learning and includes the use of daily personal journals in support of the mentorship programme.

To reduce the waiting list, new registration criteria will be introduced; these include required attendance at 3 Open Workshops and registration into the Employment Access Programme. Open Workshops will now include a monthly autism support group and the SHAWCO health clinics held at Groote Schuur will increase their iterations and include a baby clinic.

The Financial Sustainability portfolio continues to foster new collaborations and partnerships where women can gain workplace experience, and the Small Business Growth Course's curriculum will be updated.

STATISTICS



441

women registered for the Women's Platform



946

women attended 28 open workshops with topics related to health; human rights; leadership and preparing for work.



348

women attended four WP platform events



239

women successfully graduated from Personal Development

236

women successfully completed Sector Skills Training in the following areas



64 nails and beauty



52 Craft (Sewing and Beading)



68 childcare



52 hospitality



80

women completed their 10-week English Conversation Club



45

women successfully graduated from Small Business Course with 18 women receiving financial stimulus from Small Business Growth Grant.



40

women attended the Women's Health Clinic (SHAWCO) in 5 cohorts throughout the year.



15

individual women participated in formalized leadership opportunities,

SUCCESS STORIES

I CAN SEE WHERE I AM GOING : QUELANI'S LIFE AFTER WOMEN'S PLATFORM

Quelani had to leave her family behind in Zimbabwe, but found herself a family in South Africa, for which she credits the Women's Platform.

Leaving home and losing family support

Zimbabwe was not in a good way after the elections in 2008; attempts at a coalition government were not successful and atrocities were committed with impunity against opposition supporters. The economy was in a crisis and there were severe food shortages. In December 2009, Quelani and her husband made the difficult decision to leave their family behind and come to South Africa.

"When I first arrived in Cape Town, I fell into a depression because of the change of environment, health issues and missing my family. I went from having a big family to just my husband, it was something that I did not take very well. I am a family person." Language barriers made integration difficult. "It was not very easy to meet people. When you are not South African and are in another land where you don't speak the same language; understanding each other is very difficult."

While still in Zimbabwe, Quelani was studying Travel and Tourism. She was forced to drop out because of the economy. "When I dropped out [of studies] in Zimbabwe, I was so hurt. I could not explain it and I could not talk about it. I was seeing people being successful because they were going to school. Education is the key, but I could not go to school. When I came here to South Africa, I thought it was going to be easy for me to go to college or university, but it was the opposite." She started working for a guesthouse in Cape Town, trying to keep close to what she loved to do, but the job itself was not for her. This would eventually lead her to Scalabrini.

Speaking the same language

Quelani found out about Scalabrini at church. She recalls that, walking into the Scalabrini offices, she gained a kind of family. "When I first walked in here I felt at home, I felt like I belonged here. We all spoke the same language, the language of love. We were all so united, the bitterness that I had and missing home, it started to disappear"

After eight years of not being able to study, it was a pivotal moment when Quelani discovered she could continue learning and doing hospitality at Scalabrini. "I was trying to go to school...finally I could go and on top of that, they saw some leadership in me that I can teach the other ladies. That was so powerful." Another significant moment for Quelani was realizing that she could be helpful in her own community in Cape Town - despite not being South African.

Purpose and direction

"The biggest help from Scalabrini and Women's Platform is knowing myself better and doing what I love. I love people. Knowing myself better was so helpful from my education side and my personal life too. There are many things that I am now putting into practice after Personal Development."

Quelani dreams of having her own catering company in the future. She would also like to help teach and empower the women in her own community, not just at Scalabrini. "Most people from Atlantis find it difficult to reach Scalabrini, so I wish to have some days when I can teach women, so I can be empowering other women like me and show them that there are better things that they can do, other than staying at home." Scalabrini has helped Quelani in regards with her self-esteem too. "Back in Zimbabwe, I am a village girl. I thought I could not do anything; life was always about looking up to men and they must do everything for us, but after I came here, things changed. I see that women can do anything, even the things that men do. I can see where I am going."



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Scalabrini
Centre of Cape Town

The centre is registered with the South African Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation (021-079 NPO), as a youth and child care centre (C7569) and as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Services (930012808) and governed by a Trust (IT2746/2006).
Auditors: CAP Chartered Accountants.

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