

## Daughters of Africa Annual Report 2021

Daughters of Africa (DOAF) was incorporated in The Gambia in November 2016 working to nurture self-leadership and co-create lasting development programmes for young people and their communities. Despite this being the first year after the pandemic it was still a year packed full of community events and increasing clarity regarding our projects. The following gives you an insight regarding our engagement with our community.

### Abuko Digital Hub



Many of the youth leaders we work with come from families with low incomes who have voiced the need for ways to build their formal and informal education. Through partnership with London based organisations- Coderoots and KORI Youth Charity - we have been able to establish a fully equipped digital hub of 12 computers, full WIFI access and a back-up generator.

This year 28 young people from Lamin, Tabokoto, Wellingara received IT training making sure they were comfortable with using computers. The hub is open and free to use for the community but only available for education activities like research and studying.

During the year the hubs availability has enriched wider youth learning providing an opportunity for online learning in a range of fields including coding, architecture, nursing, drama, and mediation.

### Drama Sessions

An example of the enrichment the digital hub has enabled are the drama sessions delivered virtually by London based dramatist, Lydia Newman, who has led drama teaching in The Gambia for DOAF before and was keen to do so again. Six young people aged 10-16 years old took part in a six-session project, building their communication and creative expressions skills virtually.

### Power of Dialogue (POD)

*'This project was educational and gave us a deeper understanding of how we connect just through simple dialogue.'*  
Abdoulie Bah



The Power of dialogue (POD) was an international project was created by Partners for youth Empowerment in partnership with Synergos Global Dialogue Initiative and Music for Dialogue. The project engaged teams of youth from 6 countries: The Gambia, Kenya, Israel, the UK, Jamaica, and the US. The aim of the Power of Dialogue was to prepare young people to build bridges across their families, schools, communities, and nations. Also, to develop skills like curiosity, deep listening, empathy, and collective action over a full week of intensive interactive workshops.

Eight young people from DOAF were given the opportunity to take part. Fatoumatta Baldeh led the project for the Gambian group. She said she was so proud of her group: 'I've seen these young people demonstrate talents and qualities that they didn't even realise they possessed.' As a group they received some funding and support to create a community podcast. They interviewed university students about their learning experience, and they received praise from all of the country groups when they shared the recording and pictures from their project in the final presentation in August.

### **Daigo 3**

*'The project developed me in many ways, and I learnt a lot from my colleagues.'* Rose Mendy



We have partnered with the University of West England (UWE) since 2019. After receiving Vessel UK training and preparation from our UK partner, KORl Youth Charity, UWE students apply their subject learning to share relevant skills with young people that we invite from across our partnerships in The Gambia.

This was the third project of this partnership and due to the pandemic with UK students experiencing lockdown in the UK, it was the first virtual delivery. The Daigo 3 participants consisted of 32 students from UWE that were studying health, law, architecture, art, and design. We brought them together with 43 young Gambians from across our partnerships to take part in the project. They had the freedom to choose the project most useful for their learning and development.

#### **Delivery:**

##### **Architecture**

The 12 Gambian students that took part came from the Gambian Technical Training College where they were studying for a diploma in architecture. This architecture project was based on the learning from two previous Daigo projects that had also included training architects from UWE and The Gambia. So, there was already a clear understanding of the areas where there was interest or a knowledge gap. This project focused on sharing skills in those areas: eco-building, site analysis, ventilation and raising skill on the 'sketch-up' application.

##### **Law**

The law project attracted a group of students from across the community that wanted to improve their self-expression and articulation of ideas. The project focussed on building skills in public speaking, debate, and critical thinking.

##### **Art & Design**

The UWE art students created a wonderful exploration of visual communication, conceptual thinking and mark making. The Gambian students, trainee art teachers from Gambia College, spent time during the project working together applying the new skills practically.

##### **Midwifery**

The midwifery project was led by UWE midwifery students working with Gambian trainee attendant nurses and science students. Over the five sessions they discussed and learnt more about Female Genital Mutilation, childbirth and women's nutrition needs from a Gambian perspective.

At the closing presentation of Daigo 3 all the participants agreed that for a short project the learning and interaction had been immense and exciting!

### Mini Aya School Pre-School



This project was established this year to ensure that local children are prepared for the core subjects taught in public schools including phonics, reading, writing, and basic maths. The objective is to make sure they start school as confident learners. Two DOAF youth leaders lead the project, guided, and assisted through virtual training sessions by two experienced UK teachers. Evaluations happen at the end of each term and parents are kept up to date with how their children are doing.

Nineteen children joined the project in its first term, all were local to the area of Abuko. The sessions take place each Saturday for six weeks followed by a two-week break. The final session of each term is concluded with an excursion to build their knowledge of their country or an art workshop to build creativity. The children were excited to visit the the National Museum and work with Gambian Artist John S. Mendy.

### Health Forums

*'Being a man and being able to be part of this session was great, I will share the knowledge with my sisters and friends.'*  
Abul Jallow



A wonderful development this year has been the formation of the Health Forums. DOAF were able to gain support from two physicians from Nigeria, Dr Tosan Otubu and Dr Atinuke Akinmolayan, both general practitioners in London. Our team provided them with current research on health issues in The Gambia and doctors then prepared and delivered on-line presentations on contraception, menstruation, and cancer for DOAF's invited audiences made up of healthcare staff, community leaders, and young people. The sessions took place bi-monthly. Each forum lasted for two hours with plenty of time for questions and feedback.

### Professional Health Assessments

*'I learnt about the 'evaluation cycle' which as new information for me!'* Mansata

We were also delighted to have intern Frank Tyler a Ph.D. student studying public health services, join us virtually from Washington University. He worked with us over two months updating our research and building the presentation skills of our youth leaders. His final task was to develop and deliver a three-session training course for trainee nursing attendants on various ways that professional health assessments can be carried out in their communities.

## DOAF Credit Union



Inspired by a visit to the Kombo East Youth and Children Development Association (KEYCDA), we decided to build on our work with the Kampeng Kaffo women's group and establish a credit union. Our experience of working with them had taught us that building income was a key challenge for the women. Our team met with them to discuss the idea and they enthusiastically agreed to take part. We went through the registration process with the National Association of Corporate Credit Unions of The Gambia (NACCUG), an apex body that has the mandate to promote and support the development of credit unions across the country. We were guided through the steps required to establish a credit union in the Abuko region and were able to register 52 local women and complete the procedure of opening a bank account. Every woman was given a passbook, and 51 of them have begun actively saving.

## Gambian Girls Matter

'The programme was incredible; I did not expect it to be this good!'



Gambian Girls Matter is a youth led initiative developed by Fatoumatta Baldeh, one of our youth leaders who felt that the safety of girls needed to improve in the country. She has brought together a team of both genders who are determined to better the lives of girls and young women in the nation.

They created and ran their first community event bringing together 31 girls to discuss and learn more about the key issues they felt were affecting them, including: early marriage, female genital mutilation, school safety community safety and girls' rights. They were offered solution strategies in the workshops and had animated discussions where deep down experiences and memories were revealed and the day-to-day problems facing girls were shared.

This year Daughters of Africa has been able to work with 366 people from across the Gambia:

- 277 females
- 89 Males
- 4-11 = 19
- 10-20 years = 148
- 20-30 years = 129
- 30-50 years = 89
- Participant's locations: Bundung, Lamin, Mandinaba, Abuko, Faraba, Brikama, Brufut, Kunkujany, Kanifing, Pirang, Bakau, New Jashwang, Latrikunda, Bakote, Tabokoto and Busumbala Village.
- Participant's Institutions: French Senior School, University of The Gambia, Yunus English Senior Secondary school and Nusrat Senior Secondary School, Kanifing Senior Secondary School, ABCD Secondary School and 22<sup>nd</sup> July Academy, Abuko Lower Basic School, Ndow's Comprehensive Senior Secondary School, Ida's Ideas Fashion & Design Institution, Management Development Institution, Gambia Training Technology Institute, Wellingara Clinic, Kombo Easy Youths and Children Development Association and Rural Child.

We are proud of our work but aware that we need to find new ways to fund our projects, develop our structure and become increasingly sustainable. We are grateful for our resilient team, and we look forward to 2022!