



Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program 2017/2018 Report
Empowering African Women in Toronto To Address Barriers to Accessing Health and
Social Services to Reduce Poverty



Uzima Women Relief Group International
Giving a new meaning of Life, hope and bright future to all women



Jacobet Edith Wambayi, PhD, Executive Director

May 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
METHODOLOGY	6
RESULTS	7
CONCLUSION	9
APPENDIX I: FLYER	10
APPENDIX II: TABLE OF ACTIVITIES	11
APPENDIX III: SURVEY	14
APPENDIX IV: PHOTOS	19
APPENDIX V: LIST OF RESOURCES	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was carried out by Uzima and partner agencies to collaboratively promote multiculturalism among Continental African people as they integrate in the Canadian society. It is important to educate new comers about other cultures in Canada by bringing them together to participate in multicultural events where other cultures are invited to share and appreciate each other together.

African women in Toronto and the GTA were recruited into the project through promotional activities such as word-of-mouth, flyers, posters, community radios and newspapers. Recruitment took place at residential buildings, public places including agencies, malls, community events and places of worship. Participants at community events as well as formal workshops were engaged in activities that promoted multiculturalism (See table of activities, appendix II). Participants acknowledged that sharing cultures e.g food, music dance and costumes is a healthy way to build multiculturalism. As well as the fun experienced by different cultures, participants were given information on barriers in health and social services for marginalized groups such as African immigrant women. Women learnt that barriers to accessing services include isolation and unawareness of what other cultures offer. Other topics shared at events included education on gangs, guns and drugs for youth since Black youth easily become victims of such social ills.

This was a successful project for Uzima and it is believed that future projects will build on the results of this initial project in promoting multiculturalism in Toronto and Canada at large.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Uzima would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Province of Ontario through the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program 2017/2018. Uzima is grateful to partner agencies for their invaluable support in publicity of the project, recruitment of participants and providing space to run the program. Our thanks go to community members especially African women for participating and making the project a success. Finally, our gratitude goes to Uzima volunteers who worked tirelessly to support staff in implementing the project.

Jacobet Edith Wambayi
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

As well as promoting multiculturalism in Toronto, this project addressed health and social barriers faced by African women in Toronto when trying to access services especially in neighborhood improvement areas and other priority neighborhoods. Newcomer women and their families are faced with poor health, low education, and other social determinants of health when they arrive in Canada. These problems last for a long time. This is due to lack of information on how to navigate the system to access social and health services. A major factor contributing to this is living in isolation by individuals, families or even communities. This program brought African women out to meet other immigrants in Canada to share cultural values that each immigrant group brings to Canada. Participants shared food, music, dance and costumes. Many were delighted to meet other hard to reach immigrant groups.

Uzima's mandate is to alleviate poverty by empowering women and their families through education and awareness of their rights to effectively improve their health and well being. Many newcomer families are faced with barriers when accessing settlement services in Canada. These barriers are a major determinant of health for this population. Barriers that prevent African women from accessing services include language, living in neighbourhood improvement areas, poor housing, illiteracy, unemployment and underemployment as well as long immigration processes which delay family reunion. More importantly living in isolation and not associating and sharing with other cultures contributes to the above social determinants of health for this population and many others.

Project Goal and Objectives

The goal of this project was to promote multiculturalism in Canada by encouraging the African community especially the women to come out and share their culture and learn other cultures. It was also important for Uzima to address one of the major issues experienced by African women as they integrate in the Canadian society. Barriers to accessing health and social services in neighbourhoods where African women live includes inability to associate with other population groups.

This project was guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify and engage newcomer African women in Toronto
2. To identify barriers to accessing health and social services in Toronto
3. To conduct information workshops to inform women of available resources

METHODOLOGY

African women in Toronto and the GTA were recruited into the project through promotional activities such as word-of-mouth, flyers, posters, community radios and newspapers. Recruitment took place at residential buildings, public places including agencies, malls, community events and places of worship. Women and their families were informed of other events going on in non-African communities such as Asian and European communities to foster multiculturalism and reduce isolation. African women promoted African culture and learnt other cultures by interacting with women from other parts of the world. Women joined activities such as cooking at events and agencies to expose them to other Canadian cultures.

Approximately 420 participants of whom about 150 were African women participated in the project. The project started in winter when the funding was available hence the number being less than the 800 anticipated. Workshops and community events to address barriers in health and social services were conducted. Some of the events were held in collaboration with Uzima partners during their own cultural events or other programs. Facilitators well versed in the areas of health care, settlement, social work, community legal support, education, financial literacy educators were identified to conduct information sessions. Uzima made presentations on female genital mutilation to create awareness of the harm associated with the practice and gave out factsheets in English, French and ethnic languages: Kiswahili (Eastern Africa), Somali (Somalia) Hausa (Western Africa), Tigrinya (Ethiopia & Eritria) and Arabic (Northern Africa). Women participating in workshops received tokens for travel and subsidy.

Participants at workshops and events filled evaluation surveys. Questions included demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education and length of stay in Canada. Other questions focused on event satisfaction: food, dress and songs, what new information was learned, if the information will benefit women and new information women would like to get. Participants were also asked their experiences with hate crimes, whether multiculturalism increased national unity and if they had connected well with other cultures. There will be follow up with participating community members to ensure that any activities that will be conducted outside of the education sessions remain on track. Phone calls and home visits were used to reach members with travel difficulties.

RESULTS

Responses from participants

Only participants over 18 years filled the surveys. Majority were immigrants from continental Africa although there were other participants from other cultures including Hispanic and Asian. Most participants have lived in Canada for 10 years or more. They were of mixed religious backgrounds including Christian, Muslim and unidentified religious backgrounds.

Multiculturalism in Canada

Majority agreed that multiculturalism increased national unity. People acknowledged that sharing cultures e.g food, music dance and costumes is a healthy way to build multiculturalism. Since majority of participants were from Continental Africa, many said they find it easier to make new friends with Black or African communities compared to others with the hardest group to make friends with being Jewish. People said it was hard to connect with the Aboriginal people because of Aboriginal cultural bias and past negative treatment from the Government. African people find it hard to connect easily with European and Hispanic groups because these groups tend to keep to themselves. People tend to associate more with communities and groups they are familiar with e.g by religion, sexual orientation etc.

From outside looking in everything looks perfect but once you are in system things are a bit complex

Experience with hate crime

Although a few people said they had not experienced hate crime majority of people reported experience with hate crime in various forms e.g speech, body language and through social media and were angry and disappointed. Some participants admitted to having reacted to hate crime in the same way by responding to perpetrators in the same way while majority said they ignored the actions. Social media has made it easier for people to share their opinions. It is also easier for both victims and perpetrators to step forward.

It is a reminder that we have more work to be done – it used to bother me but today it feels I need to do more to help educate those who hate

Project Outcomes

African women as well as all others who participated were more empowered to promote multiculturalism and improve their health and social well being in Toronto. Women learnt that barriers to accessing services include isolation and unawareness of what other cultures offer. Networking during events and workshops exposed women to new places to sell their merchandise. The diverse topics presented made participants aware of social ills like hate crime which is a determinant of health. Youth and their parents learnt ways to navigate the judicial system and avoid conflict with the law. The Uzima presentation on female genital mutilation

informed participants of some of the cultural values immigrants come with into Canada. Some of the values are acceptable but some like FGM are against Canadian law and Human Rights.

CONCLUSION

This project was well received in the community. The high response showed how immigrant communities are ready to embrace multiculturalism. The inclusion of education and awareness of issues such as barriers to accessing services by immigrants was also appreciated. Many participants attended events because of the knowledge shared and materials distributed especially to those who could not attend events in person. Participants would like this program to continue as new immigrants continue to arrive in Canada daily.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - FLYER



Uzima Women Relief Group International
Giving a new meaning of Life, hope and bright future to all women



Multi-cultural activities in your neighbourhood!!

Period: Dec 2017 – March 2018

Learn about other cultures in Canada: Food, music, dance, costumes

A chance to know businesses in your community and market yours

A chance to know resources and services in your community

For dates and venues please call Jacobet Edith Wambayi at 647 721 6826



APPENDICES

APPENDIX II – TABLE OF ACTIVITIES

Date	Venue	Activity	Outcome
Dec 9, 2017		<p>Organized by Kenyan Community in Ontario <i>Jamhuri</i> Day (Day Kenya became an independent Republic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Approximately 120 participants -Dinner: -Dance: Mixed music from African, Caribbean and Western -Food: Mixed dishes from African, Caribbean and Indian communities -Speeches informed people about barriers to settlement and how to access services -Recognition of role models particularly women entrepreneurs -Uzima gave list of health and social resources -Networking 	<p>More community engagement and sharing various skills; cooking and marketing of traditional foods and costumes</p>
Dec 14, 2017	1860 Wilson Avenue, Suite 400 Toronto, ON, M9M 3A7	<p>Organized by Northwood Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Multicultural Year end Celebrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 50 participants -Traditional food was shared -Networking -Uzima gave list of health and social resources 	<p>Women were aware of barriers to accessing health and social services in Toronto and will be able to access more services in future</p>
March 10, 2018	2500 Birchmount road	<p>Uzima Annual dinner dance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Approximately 50 participants -Dance: Mixed music from African, Caribbean and Western -Food: Mixed dishes from African, Caribbean and Indian communities -Fashion show: African attires mixed with some Western/Asian designs -Speeches informed people about barriers to settlement and how to access services, Uzima reiterated the harm associated with female genital mutilation and gave out factsheets in various languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -African women were learnt more about ways of engaging with many other cultures in Toronto. - Women learnt the barriers to accessing services include isolation and unawareness of what other cultures offer -Those with merchandise sold and learnt where to market in the community

Date	Venue	Activity	Outcome
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Selling handcrafted jewellery and clothes from Africa -Uzima gave list of health and social resources -Networking 	
March 21, 2018	Verdi Convention Centre, 3550 Derry Road East Mississauga	<p>Organized by Canadian Alliance on Race and Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 120 participants -Conference on Intersection of Race and Accessibility -Personal experiences of discrimination and oppression were shared -Uzima gave list of health and social resources 	-Participants learnt that discrimination and oppression are common individual and systemic practices and they are huge barriers to accessing health and social services for marginalized people.
March 24, 2018	399 The West Mall, Etobicoke Civic Centre	<p>Organized by Visible Minority Radio & TV Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 30 participants -Community information workshop: Minority Youth Project – Guns, gangs and drugs -Various speakers on various topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Law enforcement by an African Police officer ii) Restlessness among minority youth by Africans in partnership against AIDS iii) Female genital mutilation by Uzima -Uzima gave list of health and social resources -Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -African youth and their parents learnt ways to navigate the judicial system and avoid conflict with the law -Youth learnt health information to help them in their daily lives -More community connection through networking
March 24, 2018	483 Oakwood Avenue, Toronto	<p>Organized in collaboration with Elevations Foundation/Corporation, Multicultural Smiles Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 20 participants -Participants were dressed in traditional costumes - Sharing different cultural food -Song and traditional dance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women learnt a lot from other cultures and also the barriers to accessing services -Showcasing helped to expose women to what is available in their communities

Date	Venue	Activity	Outcome
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Showcasing and selling different items from different cultures - Uzima presented on female genital mutilation, a cultural practice that puts women at risk of childbirth complications and psychological trauma. Factsheets in various languages were shared -Uzima gave list of health and social resources 	
March 31, 2018	Casa Abril Restaurant, 475 Oakwood Ave, York, Ontario	<p>Organized in collaboration with Elevations Foundation/Corporation, Multicultural Smile workshop and the Easter dinner, “STAND UP AND BE COUNTED: SAY NO TO HATE CRIME”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 30 participants -Participants were dressed in traditional costumes - Sharing different cultural food -pamphlets on ‘Hate crime” were distributed -Uzima presented on female genital mutilation and gave out factsheets - Uzima gave list of health and social resources 	-Youth and their parents learnt that hatred of other cultures can lead to hate crimes and that crime is a barrier to accessing health and social services and thus a is a determinant of health

APPENDICES

APPENDIX III – SURVEY

Adapted from Elevations Foundation (Partner agency)

What is your age?

- Under 12 years old 12-17 years old 18-24 years old 25-34 years old
 35-44 years old 45-54 years old 55-64 years old 65-74 years old
 75 years or older

Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity.

- White or Euro descent Hispanic or Latino Black or African Native Indian
 Asian Other please explain

Religion

- Christian Muslim Buddhist Jewish other please specify
 Non religious

Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*

- No schooling completed
 Nursery school to 8th grade
 Some high school, no diploma
 High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
 Some college credit, no degree
 Trade/technical/vocational training
 Associate degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Professional degree
 Doctorate degree

1. Have you ever been a victim of bias such as Hate speech offline or online?

- Yes
- No

*Optional: If yes, how did you feel?

2. Have you ever conducted biases such as Hate speech offline or online even as a joke?

- Yes
- No

3. Do you think biases such as Hate speech offline or online is getting better, or worse?

- Better
- Worse
- Unsure

Comment

4. How long have you lived in Canada?

- Under 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 10 years and above

5. Does multiculturalism increase national unity?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*Optional: Why did you choose yes/no?

6. Does multiculturalism decrease national unity?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*Optional: Why did you choose yes/no?

Comment

7. Has your bias changed since coming to Canada?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional: Why did you choose yes/no

Comment

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 how easy is it to make new friends from these groups with 1 being not very easy and 10 being very easy place a number in the box?

- a. **Native Indian**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

b. **Black or African**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

c. **White or Euro descent**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

d. **South American (Hispanic Latino)**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

e. **Christian**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

f. **Muslim**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

g. **Jewish**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

h. **Buddhist**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

i. **LGBT**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

j. **Other**

What do you think is the barrier to connecting easily with this group?

Thank you



APPENDICES

APPENDIX IV– PHOTOS FROM EVENTS



Uzima dinner dance



Presentation on Health



Uzima dinner dance – crafts for sale



Visible Minority Radio event

APPENDICES

APPENDIX V– LIST OF RESOURCES

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
Africans in Partnership against AIDS APAA 526 Richmond St. East., Toronto, ON M5A 1R3	Fanta Ongoiba, Executive Director	(416) 924- 5256 Ext 301
Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA)	Yvette Bailey Dorset Park Hub Coordinator	416-292-6912 byvette@agincourtcommunitieservices.com
Arab Community Centre of Toronto (Syria Only) 555 Burnhamthorpe Road, Suite 209 Etobicoke, ON M9C 2Y3	Huda Bukhari Executive Director	Phone: 416- 231-7746 Email: hbukhari@acctonline.ca
Assaulted Women’s Helpline P.O. Box 369, Station B Toronto, Ontario M5T 2W2	Margaret Arnason Training, Resource and outreach Coordinator	416-364-4144 ext.223 marnason@awhl.org
Broad African Resource Centre (Partner) 2885 Jane Street, Unit 4, Toronto, ON	Esther Simon, Director	barc@broadafrican.org 416) 783 3699; (647) 712- 7557
Birchmount Bluffs Neighborhood Centre 93 Birchmount Road Scarborough, ON M1N 3J7	David Meyers Manager Community Development	416-396-7606 david@bbnc.ca

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
Canadian Council of Muslim Women P.O. Box 154 Gananoque ON, K7G 2TV	Sahar Zaidi- Project Coordinator	info@ccmw.com 1-613-383-2847
Canadian Coptic Newcomers Services 1245 Eglinton Avenue West Mississauga, ON L5V 2M4	Hala Dr. Susan Ghatash	Phone: 905-567-9150 416-648-8199 Front Desk : 905-567-4032 newcomers@ccnet.ca
Elevations Co-op Inc 483 Oakwood Avenue Toronto, ON M6E 2W4	Pastor Jairo Essendi- President	info@elsci.ca Tel: (647)-875-7505
East Scarborough Storefront 4040 Lawrence Ave E. Scarborough, ON M1E 2R2	Anne Gloger - Director	agloger@thestorefront.org Direct: (416) 208-7197
Elizabeth Fry Toronto 215 Wellesley Street East Toronto ON M4X 1G1		Main phone number: 416.924.3708 Toll free number: 1 855 924 3708 e-mail: info@efrytoronto.org
Family Services of Toronto 202-128A Sterling Road Toronto, M6R 2B7 t. 416-595-9230 ext. 0	Maria	mariahu@familyservicestoronto.org t. 416-595-9230 ext. 0

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
Flemingdon Health Centre 10 Gateway Blvd. Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3A1	Neil Stephens- Program Coordinator	
Hassle Free Clinic 66 Gerrard Street E. 2 nd Floor Toronto, Ontario M5B 1G3	Jane Greer	jane@hasslefreeclinic.org hfclinic@interlog.com 416-922-3549 ex.129
Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC) 400 McCowan Rd, Ground Floor Toronto, ON M1J 1J5	Noell Dunne, Administrative Assistant Charity Lebeanya Executive Director Madleline Nwokeji Program Director	info@hsdconline.org (416) 345-1613 charitylebs@yahoo.com madelinenwokeji@hsdconline.org
Midaynta Community Services 1992 Yonge Street Suite 203 Toronto, ON. M4S 1Z8	Mohammad- 416-702-8056	Shakira@midaynta.com Fill in Correct Numbers
Northwood Neighborhood Services 1860 Wilson Avenue, Suite 400, Toronto, ON M9M 3A7	Francois Yabit	fyabit@northw.ca 416-748-0788 ext 212
On-Track 1371 Neilson R., Suite 113 Scarborough ON M1B 4Z8	Audrey Sequeira -Employment Consultant	Audrey@ontrackcareers.ca Tel: 416-283-0672

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
People to People (p2p) Organization	Helen- Program manager Nejat- Program Co.	P2p@p2pcanada.org Tel: 416-690-8005
Rexdale Community Health Centre	Althea –Director Habiba Adan (FST)- Works Thursday and Fridays only	Tel: 416-744-0066 EXT.222 2 Althea.martin@rexdalechc.com
Regent Park Community Health Centre 465 Dundas Street East Toronto, Ontario M5A 2B2 Tel: 416-203-4506	Cherie M.- Director of Community Programs Ambaro Musse Guled- Case Manager & Community Health Worker East African Health Project Sophie Bart, Clinical Director.	cheriem@regentparkchc.org 416-203-4506
Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities 2660 Eglinton Ave. East Scarborough ON M1K 2S3	Shola Alabi- Community Engagement Manger EE/KP	Salbi@schontario.ca Tel: 416-847-4116
Sudanese Community Church of Toronto	Peter	sudcomchurch@gmail.com Tel: 647-628-5410 / 647-746-6708
Scarborough Women’s Centre 2100 Ellesmere Rd,	Koreen Thomas, Information Referral	outreach@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
Suite 245	Program Worker	(416) 438-7111
Taibu Community Health Centre 27 Tapscott Road, Unit 1 Scarborough ON M1B 4Y7	Liben Gebremikael – Executive Director	ed@taibuchc.ca Tel: 416-644-3539 ext. 223
Toronto Community Housing 22 McCaul Street, 1 st Floor Toronto, Ontario M5T 3C2	Selekha Jama- Manager, Resident Access and Support Resident and Community Services Division	sulekha.jama@torontohousing.ca Tel: 416-981-5980
Unison Community and Health Services 12 Flemington Rd, Toronto, ON M6A 2N4	12 Flemington Rd Toronto, ON M6A 2N4 416-787-1661 1651 Keele St, York, ON M6M 3W2 <u>(416) 653-5400</u>	
Women's Health in Women's Hands 2 Carlton St. Suite 500, Toronto ON, M5B 1J3	Notisha Massaquoi Wangari Tharau Denese	notisha@whiw.h.org 416-593-7655 x4870 289-423-3225 denese@whiw.h.com
Young Women Christian Association of Canada 104 Edward Street, 1st Floor, Toronto, ON	Ann Decter, Director	adecter@ywca.ca national@ywcacanada.ca (416) 962-8881
WoodGreen Community	Mohammad	mhayat@woodgreen.org

Agency	Contact Person	Contact Information
Services 815 Danforth Ave, 1st Floor, Toronto, ON		(416) 645- 6000 Ext. 1323
Visible Minority in Radio and TV Network Northridge Community Centre 1051 Glenashton Drive, Oakville, ON. L6H 6Z4	Kay Alabi	647-701-9956 ebedieko@gm ail.com

