

Mwamba written Submission to Inquiry into Culture in Communities

Local authority: City of Edinburgh Council

Key questions:

8 Information about your organisation

We are a Scottish charity that engages and supports African and ethnic minority women who have made Scotland their home in Edinburgh and the Lothians. We strive to break down barriers to education and employment work to enable and empower the women we support to thrive in their communities.

Our projects include a one-to-one trauma-informed listening and signposting service that is delivered in the first language by our volunteers.

'Our Conversation café' is a platform for open discussion and culturally blended workshops. Mwamba's Community Kitchen is a safe place to talk about mental health issues around a table, build confidence, and share skills and used as a platform to self-refer to our one-to-one listening service.

9 Tick the following statements that apply to you.

I attend cultural activities in my local area as an audience member and/or participant, I organise cultural activities in my local area, I run a centre or premises where cultural activities take place (for example, a library, theatre, community hall, pub or another kind of premises)

10 If you attend cultural activities in your local area as an audience member and/or participant:

I have attended cultural activities through members of my local community. I have attended the theatre through the support of organisations such as Edinburgh Theatre and our local groups and organisations.

My barriers have mostly been through a lack of current information. For example, this BSL was available in February but only sent to me two weeks before it is due to be submitted. No access to where decisions are being made on behalf of my community.

Constantly hitting a glass ceiling where my voice is not heard nor am I seen. The expectation of having to prove our work or our myself. The barrier of not being understood and a lack of cultural understanding and being described as "hard to reach"

11 If you organise cultural activities in your local area:

As mentioned, we are a charity that supports African and ethnic minority women in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Our work is dependent on volunteers to deliver a

service that is needed in our community. Aside from our one-to-one trauma-informed service Conversation Age and community kitchen..

We organisations information workshops around mental health, domestic violence, immigration, finance, education, LGBTQ issues substance misuse and most recently issues around the settlement for clients from EEA countries.

We also organise fitness activities in the park and encourage business owners and fashion designers to hold a fashion show that was a community effort to showcase local talent and promote local businesses.

We struggle due to a lack of funding to hire core staff, which has a huge impact on the service as a whole this includes volunteer growth and training. Our clients give us feedback which for us is a big part of the service we deliver.

12 If you run a centre or premises where cultural activities take place:

We work in partnership with Heart of Haven and our offices are based at the Heart community.

1. One-to-one trauma-informed listening and signposting service in the first language.
2. Conversation cafe for information sharing.
3. Cultural blended workshops around domestic violence and mental
4. A Community kitchen for our volunteers clients and we work with a local primary school.

13 If you chose the 'other' option:

Please see the above. Most activities are run by local community groups and organisations such as Passion4fusion, project Esperanza and Mwamba