Partnering to Develop Digital Learners

A project of SI San Fernando

Presented by

Renata Ramsaywak-Lalla and Sandra Dieffenthaller

Renata: Good morning, I am Renata Ramsaywak-Lalla, President of Soroptimist International of San Fernando

Sandra: And I am Sandra Dieffenthaller, Project leader

Renata: We are pleased to share with you why and how we partnered to empower a group of girls to become digital learners

Our Partners

RSC – Restore a Sense of I Can

- **Personally known to us**
- **Shares our vision and values**
- **Worked with us on previous projects**

CSOD – Caribbean School of Data

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Sandra: SDG 17 encourages partnerships to achieve the other goals. It is important when working with a partner that the organisation shares your vision and values.

It helped that the main director of the NGO RSC is one of my former students. His organisation shares our vision in educating empowering and enabling women and girls in STEM and particularly in navigating the digital world. They are well known and highly regarded by the Ministry of Education. Having worked with RSC on smaller projects, we were certain that they would be a perfect partner in this project.

RSC's partner, The Caribbean School of Data – provides opportunities for Caribbean people to acquire digital skills essential for the emerging digital economy. They designed the platform to run this programme.

What issues did we tackle?

- **Socio economic – focus is on survival**
- **Knowledge of technology limited to social media**
- **Lack of awareness of dangers of social media**

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RENATA: Our project sought to bridge the digital divide. We recognised that low-income women and girls whose focus is on basic survival, are often unaware of the capacity of the digital world to enhance their earning power. Their knowledge of technology is often limited to the use of social media for recreational purposes and most of them are unaware of the dangers of social media

Issues....cont'd

- **Lack of knowledge of available digital literacy programmes**
- **Lack of resources to access digital literacy programmes**
- **Programmes clash with working hours**

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Many do not know of available programmes that will equip them to enter into the digital economy

Some lack the resources to access digital literacy programmes while...

Others have difficulty participating in programmes because of their working or school hours.

But why did we choose this particular programme?

Why this particular programme?

- **Girls from rural areas could participate**
- **Covered a wide range of basic digital skills**
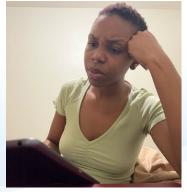- **Course designed to create digital learners**

SANDRA : Well…

- Being an online programme it allowed us to include girls from far-out rural areas

- The programme covered a wide range of basic digital skills so it was a great course for both beginners and those wishing to enhance their skills

- It was geared towards creating digital learners as opposed to just teaching digital literacy and therefore empowered the participants to continue learning digitally even after the programme

Why this programme...cont'd

- **Allowed participants to learn on their own time and at their own pace**
- **Included an online safety component**
- **No cost !!**

- It allowed participants to learn on their own time and at their own pace; hence those who had jobs or were still at school were able to work/study and also participate in the programme
- It included an online safety component AND
- It was all free of charge ...and we always love that!

What did the project involve?

- **Sourcing participants and explaining required commitment**
- **Creating a Whatsapp chat group**
- **Assigning club mentors to each participant**

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RENATA: So what did this project involve?

- First, we sourced suitable participants whom we thought would best benefit from the programme.

- We explained the requirement for individual work and the need to complete assignments and assessments. This was to ensure that they would be committed to the process

- We created a whatsapp chat to communicate with the girls and to assist them where necessary so as to ensure a successful outcome.

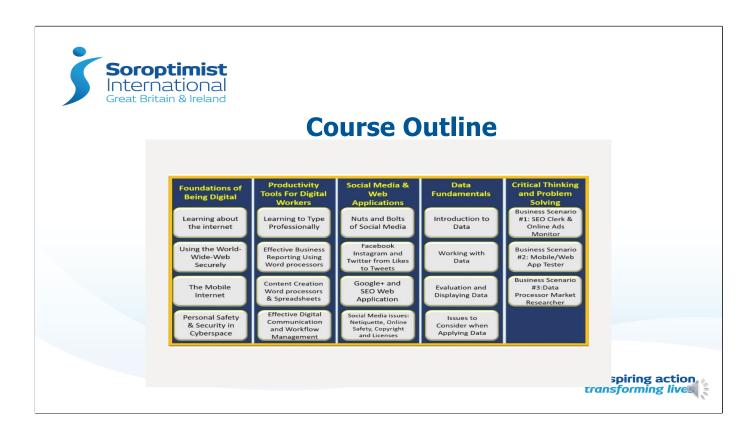- We assigned mentors from the club to each participant.

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What the project involved....cont'd

- **Following the progress of each participant and supporting them**
- **Reporting to RSC on a regular basis**
- **Ensuring that all participants completed their course work**

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- We kept in touch with our mentees, answering their questions and offering moral support when needed. Technical support was provided by RSC Tech support team.

- Mentors reported on the progress of the participants.

- We ensured that they all completed the course and did their assignments.

Course Outline

Foundations of Being Digital	Productivity Tools For Digital Workers	Social Media & Web Applications	Data Fundamentals	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Learning about the internet	Learning to Type Professionally	Nuts and Bolts of Social Media	Introduction to Data	Business Scenario #1: SEO Clerk & Online Ads Monitor
Using the World-Wide-Web Securely	Effective Business Reporting Using Word processors	Facebook Instagram and Twitter from Likes to Tweets	Working with Data	Business Scenario #2: Mobile/Web App Tester
The Mobile Internet	Content Creation Word processors & Spreadsheets	Google+ and SEO Web Application	Evaluation and Displaying Data	Business Scenario #3: Data Processor Market Researcher
Personal Safety & Security in Cyberspace	Effective Digital Communication and Workflow Management	Social Media issues: Netiquette, Online Safety, Copyright and Licenses	Issues to Consider when Applying Data	

SANDRA: The programme lasted 3 months – from September to December 2021

Topics covered included

- Foundations of being digital
- Productivity tools for digital workers
- Social media and web applications
- Data fundamentals
- Critical thinking and problem solving

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How did it work?

- **Weekly zoom sessions with entire group**
- **Breakout rooms with individuals/small groups**
- **Frequent communication between mentors and mentees**
- **Communication between mentors and RSC**

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During the period of training there were weekly zoom sessions with the entire group and tech support team during which breakout rooms with individuals/small groups allowed for clarifying issues, answering questions and sharing ideas.

Success of the programme also hinged on frequent communication between mentors and mentees to ensure that they were progressing and completing assignments in a timely way

We also reported regularly to RSC

RENATA: To evaluate the participants progress, online assessments were administered after each module. There was no stipulated time frame for doing these assessments. They were done when the participant was ready but each test was timed. Certificates were awarded based on successful completion of all assessments and assignments.

Participants were also required to apply the knowledge gained to real life scenarios e.g. Creating a business opportunity using knowledge of social media

Results

- **All participants completed the programme**
- **Participants all gained certificates**
- **Greater awareness of online safety**
- **Relationships developed with mentees**

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We were very happy that:

- All participants successfully completed the programme and received their certificates.

- They became more aware of online safety as they navigate social media and

- We developed relationships with our mentees and are available should these girls ever need our help.

Unexpected outcomes and lessons learned

- **Online learning is the way to go**
- **Accommodate more participants next time**
- **Tech support and further training**
- **Cemented our relationship with RSC**

SANDRA: The Covid 19 pandemic forced us to direct many of our projects online and moving forward we recognise that this is the way to go.

We should have accommodated more participants and will do so the next time such a programme becomes available

We did not expect this but the participants were invited to access tech support and further training from RSC at any time free of charge

As a Club we have now cemented our relationship with RSC

Showing our appreciation

IPP Terry presents a token
of appreciation to our RSC partners
Raj and Sugan Ramdass

And of course we always show our appreciation to our partner.
Thank you