

CASE STUDY:

QuIP as part of a mixed methods evaluation of the impact of the UK government's Tampon Tax Fund

- **COMMISSIONER:** DCMS / Kantar Public
- **COUNTRY OF STUDY:** UK
- **INTERVIEWS:** 40 organisations
- **YEAR OF STUDY:** 2022

THE PROJECT

The **Tampon Tax Fund (TTF)** was set up by the UK Government in 2015 as a response to pressure from advocacy campaigns and public opposition to the taxation of sanitary products. Due to EU regulations the VAT could not be removed at the time, so the Fund was set up to channel the money to charity and non-profit organisations and projects supporting women and girls. The Fund was managed by the Civil Society and Youth Directorate which moved from the Cabinet Office to the Department of Culture, Media & Sport in 2016.

TTF provided **£86.25** million through **137** grants, over **6** rounds of funding. The Fund had a broad remit, acknowledging that organisations supporting women and girls were best placed to identify priorities and needs. The taxation of sanitary products was abolished by the UK Government in January 2021, and the final round of funding was distributed in 2022.

WHY USE QuIP?

Kantar Public chose to incorporate QuIP interviews to capture more detail from the perspective of grantees about harder to measure organisational and sectoral changes, and which factors staff perceived to have contributed to any change. This complemented the survey which was able to reach a larger number of grantees (77) but at lesser depth, and the case studies (8) which included a focus on process aspects and were less exploratory than the QuIP interviews which also focused on the experiences of smaller grant-making organisations who received onward grants.

This was an endline evaluation, rolled out towards the end of the fund's operation. However, the short time period available for interviews meant it was difficult to reach all the organisations originally targeted.

Respondents were aware that the interviews were about their work in relation to the TTF, but interviewers encouraged as broad a reflection as possible on all potential causal pathways relating to their work. The analysis distinguished between outcomes reported at the organisational, sectoral, and individual (intended beneficiary) level.

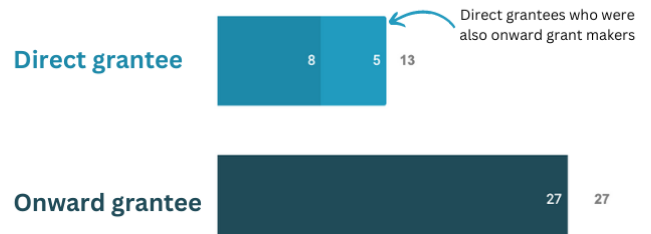
The larger evaluation managed by Kantar Public included a grantee survey, bid review, public data analysis, case studies, and evidence synthesis from project-level M&E data to understand the impact of the fund, particularly in the last 3 years.

APPROACH

To acknowledge the broad remit of the fund it was important to cover a range of TTF grantee organisations and project types in the sample. The sample covered different:

- Delivery modes (grantees who received and delivered projects themselves and onward grantees who passed money on to smaller organisations to deliver projects)
- Thematic areas (e.g., violence against women & girls, homelessness, mental health)
- Intervention types (frontline and capacity building)

Final QuIP sample breakdown



Organisations had to meet the following criteria to be included in the sample:

- They received TTF funding from 2018-2019 cohort onwards (to increase the potential for accurate recall)
- They were not already participating in case studies conducted by Kantar Public (to avoid respondent fatigue)

The original aim was to split the sample evenly between grantees and onward grantees, but this was not possible due to a limited number of eligible grantees to sample from. The number of onward grantees was increased instead, bringing the total to **40**. The interviews were conducted remotely (using video calls) by independent UK-based researchers, employed and trained by Bath SDR.

40 interviews of around **1** hour were conducted. Intended outcome domains formed the basis of the questions which were structured to prompt respondents to report on what had changed in that area, why and how - eliciting causal mechanisms which may or may not refer to the TTF. The outcome domains used in the questionnaire were selected based on the TTF Logic Model:

- Project activities and services
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Funding



FINDINGS

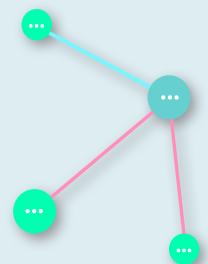
Overall, participants were positive about the impact of the TTF at the organisational level. Most participants reported that the TTF contributed to their organisation starting or developing activities or services in response to specific needs or sector gaps. For example, one organisation identified a gap in provision for women who were experiencing “problems or harms in their gambling”. Funding from the TTF enabled them to start providing support and treatment, as well as training other organisations to identify early signs for referral. They describe being able to “really drive [it] forward as a new strand of work.”

- TTF grants contributed to most organisations starting or developing new activities
- Many claimed that organisational capacity increased as a result of TTF grants
- Some respondents linked TTF grants to improved sector partnerships
- Other funders were reported as having a similar impact on these outcomes
- Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis were reported as key drivers of increased need and demand for services
- Short-term funding and lack of a specialist fund for women & girls were cited as barriers to further change

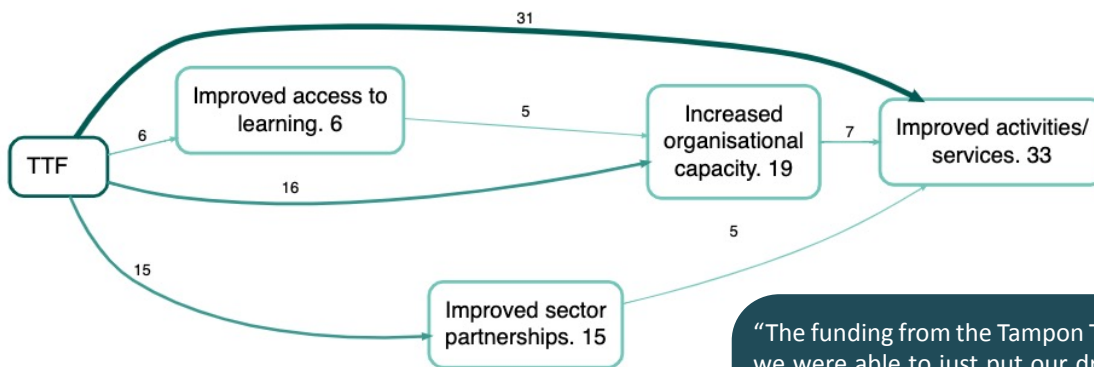
More detailed example findings from the study follow, illustrating how the causal pathways identified in the narrative data are visualised as causal maps once coded using causal qualitative data analysis.

HOW TO READ CAUSAL MAPS

- Maps are designed to be read from left to right. The direction of the arrowhead on each link reflects the direction of causation or influence.
- Above each link there is a number which represents the number of participants who made that causal claim.
- Numbers in the factor boxes show how many participants told a story which goes all the way back to the start factor, via whatever route.
- All maps presented here have been filtered to remove links reported by fewer than five respondents.



TRACING THE IMPACTS OF THE TTF ON IMPROVED ACTIVITIES/SERVICES



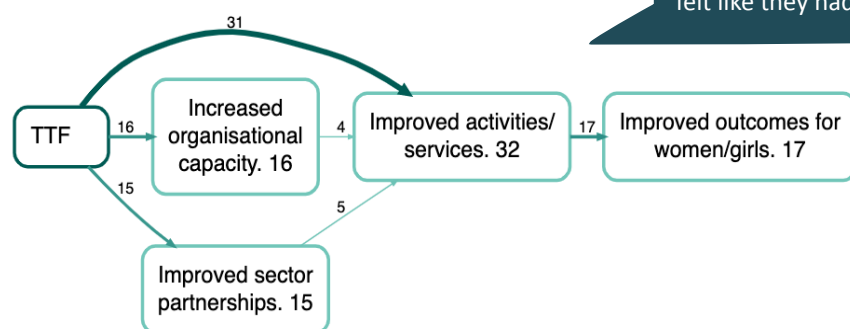
“The funding from the Tampon Tax Fund was great because we were able to just put our dream project into a project bid and that then become a reality, rather than the Tampon Tax Fund saying we really want people to specifically deliver something about this or this[...] There’s [usually] not that kind of space for the creativity. So, it would be very much us delivering something on behalf of someone else’s vision and strategy [...] And this is where we saw a gap and we’ve been able to address that through the Tampon Tax Fund.”

There was some evidence that the TTF had a positive impact at the *sector* level, particularly to improved sector partnerships, but only a few participants mentioned improvements in other sector level outcomes in the Logic Model. Most participants were onward grantees focused on frontline activities which may have contributed to the lower levels of reporting of sector level outcomes. However, other funding sources were cited as contributing to similar outcomes as the TTF and there was no evidence of the Fund having a specific and direct impact at that level.

The QulP evaluation didn’t intend to capture the impact of the TTF at the *individual* level because it wasn’t in scope to speak to the women and girls accessing TTF funded projects themselves. However, some participants did report that the TTF contributed to improved outcomes for women and girls.

TRACING THE IMPACTS OF THE TTF ON IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN/GIRLS

“I think that it’s a real shame that there is nothing to replace the Tampon Tax Fund. It’s been incredible to see the work that we’re doing. And it’s just a shame that there’s no government funding to support women specifically.”

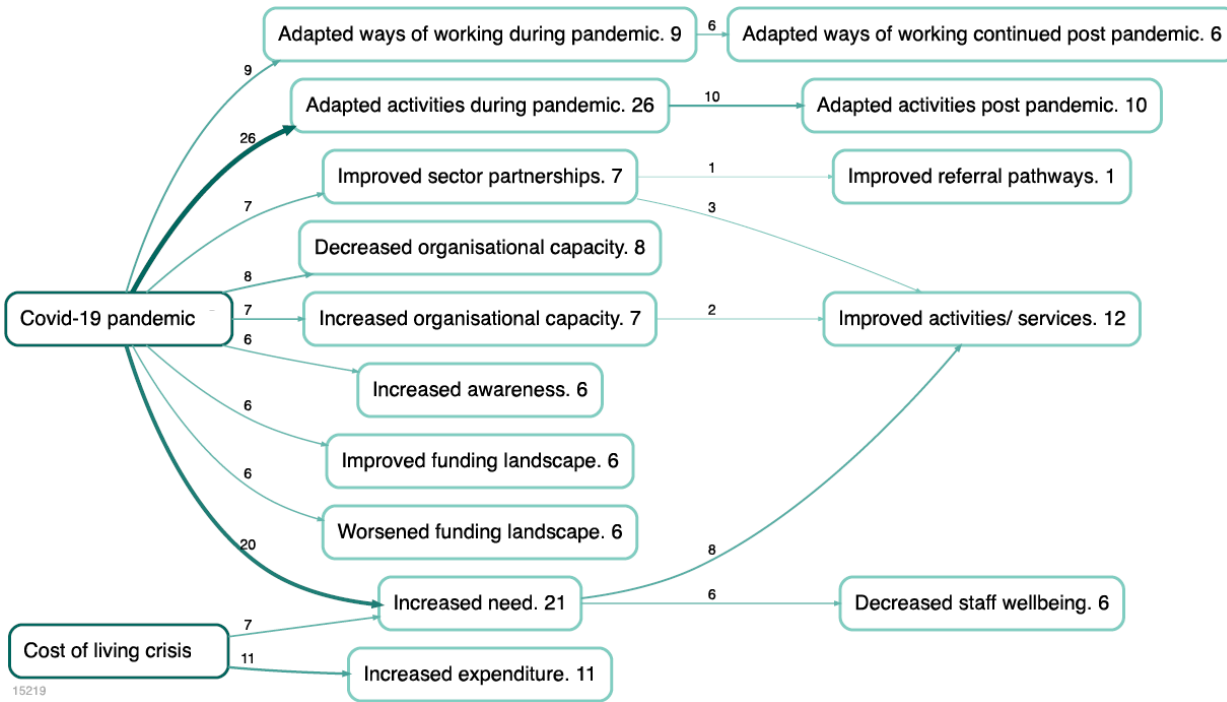


“The girls have felt empowered from it. They felt like they had a voice.”

The most frequently reported outcomes for women and/or girls were:

- Increased confidence/self-esteem
- Ability to act as own agents
- Increased knowledge and skills
- Improved relationships with peers
- Improved access to services

Responses were mixed about how the funding landscape has changed over the recall period. Some participants explicitly claimed that the funding landscape for the women and girls sector had worsened over the recall period. The main reasons cited for this were the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, but funding challenges were highlighted as consistent barriers to sustained success.



Although contextual factors which increased need for services, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, were reported as negatively influencing intended outcomes, there were many reports of positive adaptations adopted as coping mechanisms (some of which have persisted) and some reports of improved partnerships and services.

“We have some online courses and that was new obviously because of Covid. [...] We don’t allow children [in the centre] so actually, during Covid we couldn’t access people who didn’t have childcare, people in rural parts of the borough who don’t even have buses or can’t afford buses. One of us realised that these people still wanted support, so we have a blended approach to that now. We still deliver classes online, that was an unexpected wake up call for us actually.”

USE OF FINDINGS

The survey data collected by Kantar Public showed that the majority of grantees felt there was insufficient funding available to the women and girl’s sector. Findings from the QuIP corroborated this, adding that many respondents linked a decline in sector funding to the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and government cuts. The QuIP interviews provided further insights to understand how these external factors influenced outcomes, both positively and negatively, and how the TTF grant funding interacted with these factors. The Covid-19 pandemic and the increased cost of living were reported to be increasing need and demand for services.

“A qualitative impact protocol (QuIP) formed a key part of the impact evaluation of the Tampon Tax Fund. The findings from the QuIP helped us to build a stronger narrative around the impact of the Fund at both a sector and organisational level, and helped identify specific pathways of change. We have been able to use the data to triangulate with other strands of the evaluation such as survey data and case study research” - Kantar Public

Limitations: This evaluation may have benefited from a more distinct differentiation between the purposes of the case studies and the QuIP interviews which at times overlapped in both subject matter and type of respondent. However, overall the combination of different approaches provided a more holistic view of impact - with QuIP adding a focus on causal pathways to impact.

You can read the full evaluation report at gov.uk/government/publications/tampon-tax-fund-evaluation. Annex 8 contains the full details of the QuIP findings.