



Summary Report on one-week training and one-week supervised implementation of Leadership and Facilitation Skills for Key HIV Affected Communities in Thailand and Southeast Asia

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1. Introduction

In April 2018, a group of 19 leading Thai sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) activists from nine locally based regional, national and community organisations convened in Bangkok to share experiences, reflect on successes and challenges in their work, and further develop their leadership and facilitation skills for working with marginalised groups. An extraordinary range of key HIV affected populations were represented by the group – including female sex workers, migrants, people living with HIV, women who use drugs, women who have experienced abortion, men who have sex with men, and transgender people. The group shared the common goal of working to improve the lives of these groups through the promotion of behaviour change and advocacy of their rights. The week-long training was made possible with funding from the Australian Embassy in Bangkok through their Direct Aid Programme. The training was organised by Unzip the Lips and the Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA), and designed and delivered by Theatre for a Change.

2. Training

The training was delivered from 23rd April to 27th April 2018 at the Asia Centre in Bangkok, with a field visit conducted by the Theatre for a Change trainer on 3rd May 2018 to Samut Sakhon Province to supervise the implementation of the training, as well as site visits and outreach to several of the organizations that participated in the training. During the training week, participants took part in a series of 10 half-day skills-building workshops, which developed their knowledge, attitudes and skills around leadership and facilitation. The training especially focused on how to create a foundation to empower marginalised groups to use their voice and assert their rights. The training culminated with an original showcase presented on Thursday evening, 26th April 2018, in front of a small invited audience of NGO and civil society leaders. The showcase was developed and presented by the participants themselves, which featured stories and assertive 'we' statements from the marginalised groups they work with.

3. Planning

Planning for the project had two main areas:

1. The first involved formative research and content planning, ensuring that the needs of the group and community were integrated into the design of the training, and that training aims and outcomes were clearly defined. A needs assessment was administered before the training – please see Section 6 for more details. A consent form, baseline/endline survey, and training evaluation form were also developed, along with training handouts focusing on key points. All of these documents were translated into Thai before the training began.
2. The second involved logistical planning including participant recruitment, venue hire, and the hiring of a logistics coordinator and interpreter, communications materials and meeting supplies, as well as travel, accommodation and insurance logistics for the Theatre for a Change trainer.

4. The aim and indicators of the training

The aim of the training was to increase the leadership and facilitation capacity of activists who work directly with key HIV affected populations in Thailand – specifically to give them a unique skill set of interactive and participatory tools that use physical approaches for the empowerment of marginalised groups in their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Indicators included:

1. Knowledge of how to encourage equal participation in a group as a facilitator;

2. Awareness of how society and culture influence how we use and do not use our voice;
3. Knowledge of the differences between assertive, attacking and avoiding behaviours;
4. The ability to use assertive 'I' and 'we' statements instead of confrontational language;
5. Knowledge of qualities of a good group leader;
6. Knowledge of the physical skills that make a good facilitator;
7. Knowledge of activities a facilitator can use to create drama with marginalised groups;
8. Increased confidence when speaking in public, saying how you feel, saying 'no' to something you don't want to do, asserting your right to speak/have your voice heard, and asserting other people's rights to speak/have their voices heard;
9. The ability to devise and share stories based on our own experiences with an audience; and
10. The ability to critically reflect on and evaluate our work as individuals and as a group.

5. The group

Theatre for a Change trained a group of 19 participants from the following organisations:

Asia Pacific Coalition of Male Sexual Health (APCOM) - 1

Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTAN) - 1

Help without Frontiers - 3

International Community of Women living with HIV in Asia Pacific region (ICWAP) - 1

Ozone Drop in Centre - 2

Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT) - 1

Raks Thai Foundation - 6

Tam Tang - 3

YouthLEAD - 1

The youngest participant was 23; the oldest was 48. Most participants were 25-40 years old. There were 15 cisgender women, 2 cisgender men, 1 transgender woman and 1 transgender man in the group.

In terms of response to the training, the group as a whole did very well – they were clearly engaged and enjoyed the process, and kept commenting on the dual purpose of activities –



i.e. that they were both having fun and learning simultaneously. There was a concern at the start of the week about the suitability of one participant in the training who was taking methadone as part of her drug rehabilitation programme, since this made her very sleepy and prevented her from participating fully – but this concern was addressed, and her ability to participate improved throughout the week.

There was also a lot of nervous laughter around uncomfortable and sensitive issues that came up during the workshops at the start of the week, but as the group took themselves more seriously, they became more focused on their collective goal, and this laughter eventually dissipated.



The group of training participants.

6. Needs Assessment findings

All participants completed a Training Needs Assessment before the training began.

Feedback from this assessment indicates that most participants had some facilitation experience prior to the start of the training, with most having between 2-4 years' experience and a few having 10-15 years' experience.

Groups and communities the participants currently work with include women living with HIV, women using drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, migrants, women who have had abortions, HIV affected youth, and youth living with HIV.

Participants indicated that the key SRHR issues for their participants and communities were poor SRHR knowledge, stigma and discrimination from health workers towards marginalised

groups, anal cancer, family planning and access to contraceptives/safe sex, HIV prevention, lack of access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services including safe and legal abortion, prevention of unwanted pregnancy, rape, sexual and gender based violence, men who abandon women after they become pregnant, comprehensive sexuality education, and unspecified gender inequalities.

Participants indicated that they wanted to develop the following skills as facilitators during the training period: confidence, knowledge of participatory approaches to facilitation, techniques to facilitate SRHR sessions, theatre skills, speaking skills, facilitating sessions cross-culturally, monitoring and evaluation strategies, how to break the ice with participants and create a safe working space.

Participants indicated that they planned to share the knowledge and skills gained from this training with their colleagues, fellow group leaders and community groups.

Many participants expressed excitement at being able to use this training with their communities. Some of the potential barriers that participants thought they might face when implementing the training included: time and budget constraints, lack of correct information, lack of skills in organising activities and meeting the specific needs of vulnerable groups, the presence and participation of men in activities that would prevent women from opening up and sharing freely, lack of SRHR knowledge among community members, resistance to discussing/dealing with SRHR topics openly, and lack of confidence among facilitators.

These needs were addressed throughout the training in the following ways:

1. *Participatory approaches to working with marginalised groups* – throughout the training, participants learned how to facilitate using a focus ball, and learned how to facilitate warm-up activities, games and songs that develop key skills in participants – like equal participation, listening and assertiveness.
2. *Confidence* – participants were given the chance during the training to lead activities in their small groups, and develop stories to share with an audience during the internal performance. Their confidence will increase as they continue using participatory methods with their communities over time.
3. *Institutional support* – during the implementation week immediately following the training, the focus was on building support internally for the participants to use the techniques and skills they learned in the training in their existing programmes and projects. This building of support happened through a combination of meetings with senior organisational staff, and monitoring and sharing feedback on workshop delivery in Samut Sakhon Province.

7. The training

The training covered the following topics over five days:



- Building trust and equal participation in a group
- Creating a safe group space
- Exploring social expectations around voice
- The difference between assertive, attacking and avoiding behaviours
- How to use “I” and “we” statements for effective communication
- How to use our bodies to ‘sculpt’ situations of marginalisation and risk
- How to use role play to share those situations with others
- How to develop characters through ‘hot seating’
- How to explore the power and status of those characters
- How to rehearse our stories for sharing
- Sharing our stories with an audience
- How to integrate the methodology into our work



Participants exploring the physical experience of balance, and its relationship to equality and leadership.

8. What went well and what was challenging?

Successes included:

- *Diversity of participants* – a wide range of key HIV affected groups were represented by the trainees, which provided a diverse range of perspectives and experiences from which the group could draw, and contributed to building of linkages and shared experiences of barriers/violations between the different HIV community groups.
- *Participation and engagement from group* – there was consistent attendance and participation from group members throughout the training period.
- *Increasing the confidence and skill level of the group* – the participants' growth and ability to devise and perform stories from their own lives was evident through demonstrations of these skills. The group's ability to reflect on their own work and behaviour also increased noticeably as the training progressed.
- *Relevance of training content* – several participants commented on the usefulness of activities that explored assertive, attacking and avoiding behaviours, as well as activities exploring equality, balance and positions of leadership.
- *Reflection as part of the process of empowerment* – several participants commented that the emphasis on reflection both during and at the end of each day helped to consolidate and deepen their learning.

Motivation to continue – motivation among participants was high at the end of the training to implement what they learned in their communities.

Challenges and lessons learned included:

- *Equal participation* – a couple of the female participants were concerned that the two cisgender men and one transgender woman in the group “took up too much space” – i.e. by over-participating. They shared their experiences from a previous training they had participated in, where they had felt uncomfortable and like they could not open up and share honestly about their experiences as women. The trainer was aware of this dynamic and responded by balancing participation as much as possible, bringing attention to the fact that some were over-participating and others were under-participating in the group, and asking the group what they could do differently as a result to ensure equal participation among all participants.
- *Limited time for organising and planning* – APA cited this as a challenge due to the fact that the grant funding was received in February 2018 and the project had to be delivered by the end of May 2018.

- *Capacity* – projects in the future would benefit from a dedicated project intern who could lead on project organisation, and enable greater sustainability through additional follow up activities.
- *Language* – some of the participants spoke Thai but not English, and others spoke English but not Thai, so this made small group work challenging at times. Overall, however, the presence of the interpreter was very helpful.
- *Length of the training* – while a few participants felt that the five-day training could have been condensed into three days, more participants felt that the training needed to be longer in order to give them more time to digest and reflect on their learning, and rehearse their stories for sharing with an audience.
- *Physical nature of the training* – a few participants remarked that the high physical demands of the training was challenging for them, and led to long days.
- *Cross-constituency linkages* – future trainings that work across several different constituencies could benefit from a dedicated SRHR session at the beginning of the training that focusses on creating a shared understanding; by building linkages between the specific SRHR violations and identifying similarities in how different groups experienced violence, stigma and discrimination, as they are facing the same underlying systemic barriers.
- *Implementation* – during the training week, we learned that most of the participants were not currently in direct leadership roles with key HIV affected populations. This could make implementation of the training challenging, since the training was geared towards facilitators who were already leading groups. However most of the organisations that the participants work with are holding workshops, sessions and meetings with groups in their communities and the skills can be applied this way. Some participants were able to organise a workshop during the second week of training, held at the Raks Thai Learning Centre in Samut Sakhon. The aim of the workshop was to increase participants' ability to participate equally as part of a group. The workshop involved around 40 students ages 12-15. Participation was high and several students commented on how much fun the workshop was, and how they wanted more workshops like this in the future.

When reflecting on the workshops afterwards, the Raks Thai facilitators commented that they felt sad that harmful gender norms had already been established in the group, with the girls feeling unable to participate equally with boys – for example, refusing to take the focus ball when it was offered to them, or insisting that it should be the boys who speak and play the games actively, while the girls watch from the sidelines. The facilitators were somewhat aware of this already, but they commented

that the physical nature of the methodology really made this dynamic very clear in quite surprising and somewhat shocking ways.

We talked about the importance of bringing these issues to light, and how an awareness of these behaviours needs to be developed among participants first, before they can begin to change these behaviours in a more equal way. We also talked about how deeply entrenched some of these notions related to gender inequality are, and how they are supported by society, culture, institutions and the media – which, as a result, means that meaningful and sustainable change will take time to occur. They ended the reflection session feeling inspired and hopeful that they can make a difference in these childrens' lives – and they are already demonstrating this potential through the leadership and facilitation skills as demonstrated during the workshop that day.



Raks Thai Learning Centre students exploring equal participation through movement, activities and games.

9. Impact Evaluation results

Theatre for a Change conducted a survey before and after the training to measure the achievement of the training aim and related indicators. Results from the survey are as follows:

Indicator	% of participants achieving indicator at Baseline	% of participants achieving indicator at Endline	% change
1. Knowledge of how to encourage equal participation in a group as a facilitator.	24	50	+26
2. Awareness of how society and culture influence how we use and do not use our voice.	41	61	+20
3. Knowledge of the differences between assertive, attacking and avoiding behaviours.	18	44	+26
4. The ability to use assertive 'I' and 'we' statements instead of confrontational language.	24	56	+32
5. Knowledge of qualities of a good group leader.	41	61	+20
6. Knowledge of the physical skills that make a good facilitator.	53	67	+14
7. Knowledge of activities a facilitator can use to create drama with marginalised groups.	6	61	+55

The areas of biggest growth include an increased knowledge of activities to use to create drama with marginalised groups (55% increase), and knowing how to use assertive ‘I’ and ‘we’ statements (32% increase). These results make sense, given that the training was intending to introduce a series of participatory activities to the group that they can use in their leadership and facilitation work, and that a good amount of time during the training was spent on exploring assertive, attacking and avoiding behaviours, and learning how to convert confrontational statements into assertive ones.

Knowledge of the physical skills that make a good facilitator showed the least amount of growth (14% increase). This could be due to the lack of specificity of the question that was asked on the survey – which showed a drawing of an outline of a human body with a prompt to label the body with the physical skills that make a good facilitator. This could also be due to the limited time participants had to practice their facilitation skills during the training week, since the second week of supervised implementation was intended to give them the chance to begin delivery of the training in their communities, and further develop their facilitation skills as a result. Since the endline survey was conducted at the end of the training period (end of week one), it did not capture this growth that inevitably happened during week two.

To measure Indicator 8, participants were asked to rate how confident they feel performing certain tasks on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all confident and 10 being extremely confident. The average score for each task at Baseline and Endline are below:

8. Increase confidence performing the following tasks:	Average score at Baseline	Average score at Endline
a. Speaking in public	5	8
b. Saying how you feel	7	9
c. Saying ‘no’ to something you don’t want to do	6	9
d. Asserting your right to speak/have your voice heard	7	9
e. Asserting other people’s right to speak/have their voices heard	7	9

The measurement of Indicators 9 and 10 were based on observation and group work throughout the week. Audience feedback from the internal performance suggests that the group was able to devise and present powerful performance pieces that impacted audiences emotionally, and challenged them to consider the injustices that marginalised groups face, and how those injustices can be addressed by power holders in their communities.

The group also successfully underwent a series of reflection exercises and activities throughout the week, which showed noticeable growth in their ability to ask themselves and each other questions about their work, and give and receive constructive feedback.

10. Feedback from Participants taken from Evaluation Forms

Having read the Evaluation Forms which the participants completed on the final afternoon of the weeklong training, feedback is mostly very positive, with the average score for each section as follows (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree):

Statement	Average score
1. The objectives of the training were clearly defined.	4.6
2. Participation and interaction were encouraged.	4.8
3. The topics covered were relevant to me.	4.6
4. The content was organized and easy to follow.	4.7
5. The materials distributed were helpful.	4.6
6. This training experience will be useful in my work.	4.7
7. The trainer was knowledgeable about the training topics.	4.8
8. The trainer was well prepared.	4.9
9. The training objectives were met.	4.5

When asked how this training impacted them personally and professionally, participants responded in the following ways:



“I now realize that being a good leader means talking less and listening more which I have been doing the other way around most of the time.”

“I feel that learning about attacking, avoiding and assertive behaviours was very useful because I noticed that I have behaviours to look out for and how I can behave to not worsen situations. Workwise, the techniques used in this training are great because I can implement them in future workshops and meetings.”

“Personally, I am impressed with my drama skills development. The training made acting easy and accessible. Professionally, I learned how to encourage a learning process that impacts both thoughts and emotions.”

11. Next Steps and Recommendations

Theatre for a Change would recommend the following to ensure sustainability and impact:

1. *Forming a Facebook group* – this will serve as a useful forum for the group to share updates on the work as it is implemented in their communities. This group was already set up on the last day of the training.
2. *Integration of methodology into ongoing organisational practice* - to ensure realistic usage and sustainability of the approach, Theatre for a Change recommends finding ways to integrate these participatory approaches into existing programmes and projects.
3. *Electing team leaders* – two participants, Ami (Raks Thai) and Kong (PPAT), were discussed as potential team leaders for the group, who could facilitate periodic reflections and feedback on the work, and support group members as needed with any questions and challenges that arise.
4. *Alliances with stakeholders* – we recommend that the organisations involved continue building alliances with key stakeholders and district leaders in target communities, who can support the planning and delivery of workshops and performances.
5. *Future training* – seek further funding to offer a Training of Trainers (TOT) in 12 months’ time to selected participants that would build on their experience implementing the training in their communities. Steps are being drafted and will be shared by Theatre for a Change on how to prepare for a TOT as participants and facilitators.



12. Conclusion

It is clear that this training was a success in helping participants improve their leadership and facilitation skills, and helping them develop an awareness and appreciation for the benefits of participatory approaches to community development and the empowerment of marginalised groups. Participants also expressed significant impact on their personal behaviour change as well as increased confidence as speakers, facilitators and leaders. They evidently really enjoyed the training, and their communication skills, and capacity to develop and share stories with an audience grew visibly over the five-day training period.

Understanding the methodology, its benefits, and how best to adapt and apply it will become clearer and easier with practice. The group displayed incredible potential to use the methodology creatively in their work; and they should receive support and modest resources whenever possible from within their organisations to enable this to happen.

We look forward to supporting them on their journey however we can, and continuing working in partnership with APA and Unzip the Lips to positively impact more marginalised communities in their sexual and reproductive health and rights.