



Training Summary Report for VSO Tanzania - April 2019



Introduction

In June 2017, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and Theatre for a Change (TfaC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together in partnership, with TfaC providing training and technical support to VSO volunteers and staff in the use of Interactive Theatre techniques for advocacy and behaviour change in support of VSO's work on adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (AYSRHR).

In January 2018, TfaC travelled to Lindi, Tanzania and trained 20 participants as Interactive Theatre facilitators. Since this training, the group has devised and facilitated over 100 Interactive Theatre performances to reduce early pregnancy and promote girls' access to education. These performances have been attended by over 15,000 community members and have resulted in local authorities taking action to promote AYSRHR in their communities.

In April 2019, TfaC returned to Tanzania and held a training of trainers in Mwanza. The training involved seven participants from the Lindi training, plus nine participants who were new to the TfaC methodology. The aim of this training was to develop the group's ability to train facilitators in the TfaC methodology to support its roll-out as part of future VSO-TfaC partnership projects in Tanzania.

The Training

The training was held at the Royal Prince Hotel in Mwanza, Tanzania from 1st April to 11th April 2019. The training focused on how to use Interactive Theatre to challenge harmful gender expectations and promote healthy and balanced relationships between women and men.

The training began with a series of team building activities designed to develop trust and co-operation in the group. These activities introduced key themes like self-awareness and equal participation which would run throughout the training period.

The training then focused on gender expectations in a Tanzanian context. The group explored how they are expected to use their voices, bodies and space as young women and men, and how this contributes to the creation of risk related to their sexual and reproductive health. The group also explored ways to challenge these expectations, and experimented with ways of using their voices, bodies and space in less expected ways - for example, using your voice assertively and confidently as women, and using non-dominating body language as men.

The group then learned how to devise Interactive Theatre for challenging gender expectations, and how to facilitate the process of interactive Touch Tag, when the audience is invited to make changes to the characters' behaviour in the drama in order to create positive change. Near the end of the training, the group facilitated workshops and performed two stories for an invited audience of young people from the community. The group excelled during the performances but at times struggled to keep the focus of the workshops clear.

The 10-day training was video recorded by a TfaC facilitator, and this raw footage is currently being edited into a series of short 'how to' videos which will be shared with the group, and will serve as a valuable professional development tool for them moving forward.



A female participant sculpts her body into a strong and assertive position.

Key successes

- Excellent training venue, facilities and location.
- Smooth integration of old and new participants.
- Great participation and energy from the group throughout the training period.
- Demonstrable behaviour change among participants. By the end of the training, many of the female participants were noticeably more confident in the workshops, and many of the male participants were much more aware of their tendency to dominate, and would adjust their behaviour in order to allow their female counterparts to participate equally.
- Demonstrable improvement in participants' ability to facilitate learning energisers, activities and Interactive Theatre performances.
- A new TfaC video series has been created, which will support the group in their professional development as trainers and facilitators.

Key challenges

- Negative attitudes expressed towards gender equality and safe sexual practices by some members of the group. In one instance, participants talked openly about how they have been discouraging open discussion about safe sex in their community.
- Newness of some participants to methodology meant that they were not ready for some of the more advanced level training material.
- Some participants found it difficult to attend workshops regularly, causing disruptions to overall group progress.
- A safeguarding concern arose, and this has since been reported to the VSO Country Director.
- Environmental impact of training - eg over 700 bottles of water were consumed during the training period.

Feedback from participants

Having read the Evaluation Forms which the group completed on the final day of the 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.	4.80
2. Participation and interaction were encouraged.	4.93
3. The topics covered were relevant to me.	4.60
4. The content was organized and easy to follow.	4.13
5. The materials distributed were helpful.	4.67
6. This training experience will be useful in my work.	4.67
7. The trainer was knowledgeable about the training topics.	4.87
8. The trainer was well prepared.	4.80
9. The training objectives were met.	4.50

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

“This training can help me to be more confident in my community especially in the gender issues and in my work can help me to be a good facilitator by using different methodology in my youth group.”

“Personally the training helped me develop my confidence and how to interact with other people from different backgrounds. Professionally it will help me while reaching out my community in doing facilitation and educate them in sexual health and reproductive knowledge at the same time.”

“This training has helped me to be more confident, use the skills like team work, creativity, tolerance to conduct any task that I will be given at my best level to achieve the main goal. Also the training has helped me to think as an important female in my society and also I may be able to use my space, voice and body to change bad image in my society and help others to reach their dreams.”



An audience member intervenes to support the protagonist during touch tag.

Recommendations and next steps

Theatre for a Change would recommend the following:

1. The group receives additional training in SRHR knowledge and attitudes as soon as possible, with a particular focus on how to address sensitive issues like condom use in the local context.
2. Personal development plans are created for participants in accordance with their current level of skill and experience with the TfaC methodology:
 - At the moment, two participants - Irene and Suleiman - are ready to be trainers of facilitators. They would also make a strong joint training team. We would strongly suggest investing in both of their developments as facilitators and trainers in the methodology.
 - Five participants - Hussein, Machupa, Rabia, Rashidi and Zawardi - are in the process of transitioning from facilitators to trainers, and would benefit from additional support, both in terms of SRHR knowledge/attitudes and further facilitation experience - especially in a workshop setting - before starting to train others.
 - Two participants - Patricia and Phyneous - showed great potential as facilitators. We would recommend giving them the chance to practice facilitation with small groups – ideally for between six months to one year – before they begin training facilitators.



- The remaining seven - Ahmed, Ally, Jonesy, Leah, Leila, Lucy and Modesta - are either still participants or transitioning from participants to facilitators. We would not recommend them to serve as trainers until they have had at least two years of facilitation experience, and could demonstrate an improved capacity to facilitate and train facilitators at that point.
3. The participants' WhatsApp group is utilised as a monitoring tool as well as a platform for sharing best practises, videos and photos of the work regularly.
 4. Relationship building continues with key SRHR stakeholders in target communities, who can be invited to help organise and take part in workshops and performances, and who can take action to promote AYSRHR in their communities.



The group brainstorming what makes a good performance.

Conclusion

Overall, this training was a success in further developing the Lindi team's Interactive Theatre knowledge and skills, and introducing the new participants to the process of devising, performing and facilitating Interactive Theatre.

The Lindi team's recollection of knowledge and skills from the previous training was strong, although it was clear that certain areas - like facilitating Touch Tag and workshops - still needed more practise and support.



The group as a whole is still maturing as SRHR activists and leaders, so continuing to invest in their development and growth should be prioritized moving forwards, in order to maximise their impact and reach on the communities they serve, and avoid any potential harm they could cause through reinforcing gender stereotypes or spreading harmful SRHR messages.

It is clear that the Lindi team has already had a tremendous impact on their community, and with the right monitoring and support, they have the potential to make an even bigger difference as new projects in different parts of the country take shape.

We look forward to following them on this journey, and supporting them however we can.



The group with their certificates and focus balls.