

THEATRE
FOR A **CHANGE**



2022 – 2026

UK STRATEGY





OUR CONTEXT

This strategy has been developed, by staff, participants and stakeholders, against the backdrop of a continued global health pandemic; a pandemic which has illuminated deep, ingrained inequalities formed by the uneven and unjust distribution of power, opportunities and resources that benefits few and damages many.

Theatre for a Change (TfaC) works for and with women and girls who have been marginalised, not just on a global scale, but within the communities in which they live. Women and girls, who as a result of their geography, their ethnicity, their age, their religion, their class, their education, their sexual orientation and their gender are unable to have their voices and experiences heard and are unable to access and enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We live in a time of climate crisis. In January 2022, Cyclone Ana sped across Malawi; over 100,000 people have been, as this strategy is being written, made homeless as a result of the storm. It is inevitable that natural disasters such as these will become more prevalent, and that it is those people, particularly women and girls who are already marginalised, who will suffer the most.

We live in a time of global, bombastic, anti-gender and fundamentalist political and social movements. As this strategy is being written, staff of the Women of Dignity Alliance, a key implementing partner organisation based in Accra, Ghana, are in fear of increasing harassment, violence and arrest from the very law authorities who are meant to protect them. We recognise the well-funded and organised global backlash against human rights, and it is women and girls, who are already marginalised, who will suffer the most.

We live in a time of economic retrenchment, with increasing pressure on national budgets and a deprioritisation of funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is women and girls, who are already marginalised, who will suffer the most.

We live in a time where 9.5% of girls aged 15 - 19 in East and Southern Africa give birth each year. (UNFPA, 2020)

We live in a time where 1 in 3 women each year experience physical or sexual violence. (WHO, 2021)

TfaC is a small organisation, but we are mighty; buoyed and inspired by the resilience, determination and ideas of those we serve. We use our size to our advantage, seizing new opportunities and responding quickly to what our participants are telling us. We actively seek to build partnerships and alliances with likeminded organisations and movements. We understand the challenges our participants and organisation face, and we will be courageous.

“WHEN I DARE TO BE POWERFUL, TO USE MY STRENGTH IN THE SERVICE OF MY VISION, THEN IT BECOMES LESS AND LESS IMPORTANT WHETHER I AM AFRAID” Audre Lorde

“I LIKE THAT TFAC WORKS ON THINGS OTHERS ARE AFRAID OF” TfaC Malawi staff member



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR VISION is of an equal world, where everyone has choice and control over their bodies and can use their voices freely and without fear.

OUR MISSION is to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls* who have been marginalised, using participatory learning and drama.

OUR VALUES come from our understanding of power structures that support inequality and what is needed to change them.

- **Social Justice** - creating a more equal society
- **Service** - serving the most marginalised people first
- **Participation** - equal participation in everything we do
- **Honesty and Openness** - telling the truth and being open about our strengths and weaknesses
- **Integrity** - remaining steadfast and true to our principles
- **Responsibility** - taking responsibility for our own behaviour
- **Commitment** - committing to living our values

Over the next five years, Theatre for a Change UK will focus on three strategic objectives that will make a sustainable change to the lives of the women and girls we serve.

1. **Innovate, evidence and package our unique methodology, so that it is recognised and sought as an impactful approach for transforming unequal gender power dynamics.**
2. **Build and strengthen balanced and supportive partnerships with organisations in the Global South that improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls who have been marginalised.**
3. **Create spaces for women and girls who have been marginalised to influence national and global decision makers, so that their sexual and reproductive health and rights are prioritised.**

*TfaC includes in its definition, any person who identifies as a woman or a girl.



WHO WE ARE

Theatre for a Change (TfaC) UK, (UK Charity Commission Number: 1104458), uses a unique combination of participatory learning and drama to build the skills and confidence of women and girls to assert their rights as individuals and members of their communities. We enable their voices to be heard by the people who currently have control over key areas of their lives, and who have the power to make long term changes to the social norms, expectations and structures that impact their lives.

TfaC focuses on using our approach to work alongside women and girls who have been marginalised, so that they can realise and enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and rebalance gender inequalities.

TfaC started in 2003 in the UK and Ghana. In 2009 TfaC Malawi was founded. TfaC Malawi is TfaC's UK sister organisation, we share the same vision, mission and values and work closely together through a partnership agreement.

In 2015 TfaC UK launched its New Partnerships Programme with the goal of increasing impact, innovation and impact through partnerships with established organisations who are rooted within and trusted by the communities they serve.

Over the last five years we have worked in 14 countries in four continents. We have trained 4,664 facilitators to use our innovative methodology to improve the SRHR of women and girls. These facilitators have gone on to work with over 26,000 women, children, community members and power holders through behaviour change workshops, and 60,000 people through Interactive Theatre performances. In addition, we estimate we have reached a further 21 million people through our innovative Interactive Radio Drama broadcasts.

TfaC UK is able to exist through the commitment of its staff, Board, Ambassadors and many friends. We are grateful to our funders, including the FCDO and the Medicor Foundation, as well as many other Trusts and Foundations and generous individuals. We are proud that our lean, cost-effective structure enables 98.4% of our income to go directly to supporting our charitable activities.

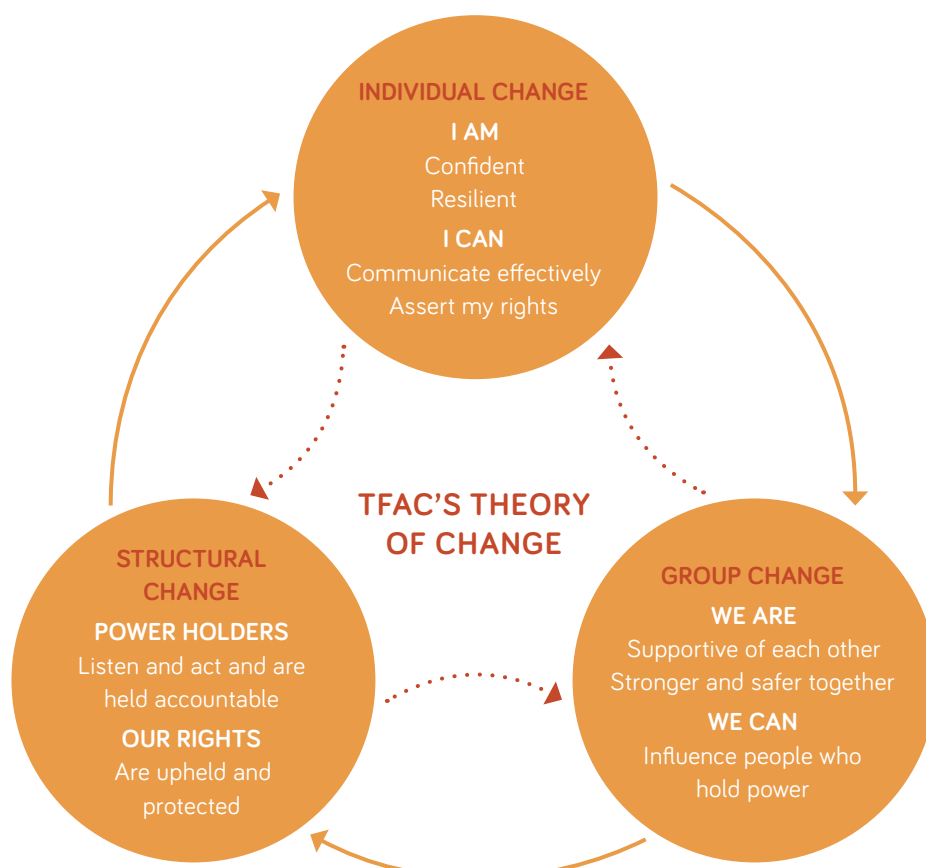


OUR METHODOLOGY AND THEORY OF CHANGE

TfaC's methodology empowers participants to change behaviours and policies that prevent them from realising their rights. While the methodology can be used to tackle a range of challenges, our expertise focuses on dismantling the individual, relational and societal barriers to SRHR.

The work is active and physical. Rather than an intellectual or abstract analysis of the problem, it instead encourages the discovery and change of habitual behaviours through a series of joyful and accessible exercises. As participants' confidence grows, we see the desire to share the experience with their wider networks - their workshop group, their families and communities. We also support the exploration of underlying power dynamics which are often rooted in structural patriarchy. The methodology supports participants to use drama, both face to face and on the radio, to call to account those who have power, and explore with them how that power can be shared differently.

At TfaC we promote change happening at three levels, individual, group and structural. Each are important in themselves, but together they manifest change that can be transformative and long lasting.





The principles that underpin our methodology are as follows:

1. PARTICIPANTS ARE THE EXPERTS IN THEIR OWN LIVES

Creating the contexts for understanding this experience, and its patterns, is the starting point. What is happening in participants' lives?

“ONLY BY KNOWING REALITY CAN WE CHANGE IT.” Brecht

This is the most important knowledge, and we put participants' knowledge first – their experiences, their voices.

Our methodology is the embodiment of this principle.

2. AWARENESS IS THE FOUNDATION OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The more aware we are of our thoughts, perceptions and behaviours, and their consequences, the more these open up to change, and the more choices we have about how we act in our lives.

Our methodology places self-awareness and reflection at the centre of the learning process.

3. THE BALANCE OF POWER IS OUR AIM

Our vision is of equality – a balance of power. We know we are healthier and happier when power is shared between people and when those who hold power are accountable to those who are powerless. The more attention we pay to balance in our voices and in our public and private spaces, the more empowered we will all be.

4. ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES – IF WE CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOUR, THE CONSEQUENCES CHANGE

Our methodology enables both female and male participants to experience the ability to change their attitudes and behaviours, and to experience the empowerment this brings.

This three-part structure is the foundation of our behaviour change methodology:

1. What's happening?
2. What are the consequences of what's happening?
3. What can we do differently?



5. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IS INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

This process starts with awareness of what is happening in our bodies, with our thoughts and perceptions, and in our habit behaviours. It is a conversation with ourselves, where we notice what is happening, without judgement, and is a radical act in itself.

Individual change has a symbiotic relationship with group change. The group supports the individual to change and reflects back the progress that is being made. The principle of equal participation of all group members underpins this.

6. INDIVIDUAL CHANGE NEEDS STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Our theory of change shows the interrelated dynamic of individual, group and structural change.

In our methodology, participants use their bodies and voices to influence power holders and change the narrative, literally and figuratively: telling the truth to power, and inviting power holders to create the conditions where their rights are upheld. Participants advocate for themselves.

5. INTERACTIVE THEATRE IS A NATURAL FORM FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND ADVOCACY

Interactive Theatre (in all its forms) and our methodology, is based on participants' experience and involves showing how people behave and sharing stories – it is a perfect form for changing behaviour and advocating for rights.

It is also a perfect medium for changing gender norms – gender is about playing roles – and these roles can be changed physically using our methodology.

“THE BODY IS THE FIRST WORD OF THEATRE.” Augusto Boal

The Theatre for a Change methodology has been accredited by the Open College Network¹, and we have carried out extensive research into its impact. As we have grown, we have sought to maintain the participatory, grassroots nature of our methodology, which puts participants' experience and voices at the centre of everything we do.

¹Home (ocnlondon.org.uk)

HOW WE DEFINE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

TfaC's mission is to improve the SRHR of women and girls who have been marginalised, using participatory learning and drama.

But what do we mean by SRHR?

At TfaC we believe every individual has the right to make her or his own choice about their sexual and reproductive health and to do this we work to understand and rebalance power dynamics that undermine this choice.

We recognise that there are many different kinds of power relationships. Gender, age, race and socio-economic status can be just some of the factors that affect choice and control, both at an individual and a structural level. Our unique, physical methodology creates a safe space where participants can explore, recognise and transform these power dynamics.

TfaC's work on SRHR, includes the following areas of focus²:

- Comprehensive sexuality education within the formal education system and within informal learning environments.
- Counselling services for sexual health and well-being.
- Prevention of, detection of, immediate services for, and referrals for cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including harmful practices.
- Prevention of, detection of, immediate services for and referrals for cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Balanced and open communication about SRHR within relationships, within families, and with sexual partners.
- Prevention and treatment of HIV and other STIs.
- Counselling and services for a range of modern contraceptives.
- Safe and effective abortion services and care.
- Safe access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services.
- Prevention, detection and management of reproductive cancers, especially cervical cancer.

We actively seek to combat feelings of shame, fear and stigma surrounding sex through the use of sex-positive, non-judgmental language and approaches.

We understand SRHR as fundamental to achieving health, education and human rights, and a pathway to a more equitable world.

We recognise that we cannot do everything alone. We work hard to build strong partnerships with other organisations, including public health, education and social services in every community and country where we work.

We also acknowledge that many of the power dynamics undermining SRHR are driven by multiple intersectional challenges, including poverty, violence, access to education and health services, and the impact of climate change. We will continue to work hand in hand with other partners who specialise in these areas to create environments in which practical and positive changes can be made and sustained.

²The focus acknowledges the work of UNFPA: [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: An Essential Element of Universal Health Coverage | United Nations Population Fund \(unfpa.org\)](https://www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health-rights)



OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This strategy was developed in close consultation with staff, board members, stakeholders, and TfaC's current and former participants.

Over the next five years, TfaC UK will focus on three strategic objectives which mirror our organisational analysis (Theory of Change) of how positive change can take place and be sustained.

We start with looking at ourselves as an organisation, what we can improve and offer. We move to our work developing strong, balanced partnerships with outstanding organisations, to directly impact and improve the SRHR of women and girls. Finally, we turn our gaze further outwards, creating spaces where the voices and experiences of women and girls are powerful and heard, and where we actively take a role in wider movement building that disrupts the status quo and rebuilds a fairer, more equitable reality.

OBJECTIVE 1: INNOVATE, EVIDENCE AND PACKAGE OUR UNIQUE METHODOLOGY, SO THAT IT IS RECOGNISED AND SOUGHT AS AN IMPACTFUL APPROACH FOR TRANSFORMING UNEQUAL GENDER POWER DYNAMICS.

To achieve this, we will:

- Innovate, adapt and test methodological tools to be used in new contexts and with new technologies.
- Evidence and publish the impact of our methodology with an established, external partner
- Adopt a not-for-profit business model which appropriately values our methodology and secures new partners.
- Brand and market our methodology so that it gains profile and recognition within the development and humanitarian sectors and with funders.
- Develop and retain global accredited trainers who can facilitate methodology training, monitoring and learning.
- Launch and use a bespoke online learning platform to enable increased access to and reach of the methodology, and to improve our ability to monitor and learn from its impact.

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD AND STRENGTHEN BALANCED AND SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH ORGANISATIONS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH THAT IMPROVE THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN MARGINALISED.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work in solidarity with our sister organisation, TfaC Malawi, to build its management and programmatic capacity to achieve its strategic aims and become an outstanding example of TfaC's methodology and values in action.
- Identify and create long-term relationships with value-aligned partner organisations, working with women and girls who are acutely marginalised in their context.
- Support partners to use TfaC's methodology to increase their impact through training, the online learning platform, close monitoring and robust evidence.
- Identify the complex, intersectional needs of the women and girls we serve, and create formal and informal partnerships and consortia with organisations who are experts in these issues.
- Secure significant long-term funding from a diverse portfolio of donors in partnership with our implementing partner organisations.
- Manage current and future grants to implementing partner organisations, including relationship management with funders.
- Learn from what we do and use this to improve impact.

OBJECTIVE 3: CREATE SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN MARGINALISED TO INFLUENCE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL DECISION MAKERS, SO THAT THEIR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS ARE PRIORITISED.

To achieve this, we will:

- Take part in national and international campaigns and movement building activities that promote SRHR and women's rights.
- Stand in solidarity and offer our methodology to support organisations working on thematic areas that impact women and girls' SRHR, for example, tackling climate change and resisting the anti-gender movement.
- Convene, participate in and learn from global discussions around development, gender and SRHR, and ensure our participants and partners are supported to have a voice in these spaces.
- Connect and amplify stories and models of change from within our portfolio of work, and use these examples to promote the need for long term, sustained and holistic support for SRHR from policy makers at a national and global level.
- Advocate to donors for long term, unrestricted funding and the need for funding to prioritise the SRHR of women and girls.
- Publish and share our results and learning, centred on amplifying the voices and experience of women and girls who have been marginalised.



OUR CULTURE

TfaC UK is a lean, flexible and specialist organisation. We work efficiently and purposefully to ensure the maximum level of resources goes directly to supporting partners and the impactful programmes they deliver.

We live our feminist values and hold ourselves accountable to participants, partners and funders. We take time to reflect on the power we hold and how we can disrupt and transform dominant power dynamics.

We respect, listen and learn constantly from the expertise of our project participants and partners, from each other and from our wider networks. We see learning as an opportunity to change and improve.

We prioritise safeguarding the rights of children and adults at risk and Do No Harm is a fundamental principle behind everything we do.

We commit to ensuring staff have the right skills and opportunities to flourish. We prioritise their well-being and celebrate their unique talents. Diversity, equity and inclusion are at the core of our organisation and make us strong. We work together with kindness.



CONCLUSION

In a challenging time for international development, this strategy gives us the clarity and the vision we need to continue to progress our vital and urgent work over the next five years.

We take inspiration from our participants, such as this girl who lives in Dedza, in the beautiful highlands of Central Malawi.

“TFAC HAS CHANGED ME TO BE A BETTER PERSON. I WAS A GIRL WHO DID NOT KNOW MY RIGHTS. NOW BECAUSE I KNOW MY RIGHTS, IF SOMEONE ABUSES ME, I AM ABLE TO REPORT. I HAVE ALSO LEARNT TO INTERACT WITH BOTH SEXES WITHOUT FEELING SHY AND I AM ABLE TO SPEAK OUT WHEN THINGS ARE NOT OK WITH ME. FOR EXAMPLE, MY FRIENDS WERE [PRESSURING] ME TO GET MARRIED, BUT BECAUSE I REALIZED THAT I HAVE A GOAL TO ACHIEVE AND THAT I AM STILL YOUNG, I REFUSED.” Girls' Club member, Dedza, Malawi

We will speak out when things are not OK and we will achieve our goals.

PHOTO CREDITS

Jean Bizimana - front cover | Ryan Borcharding - p11 | Priyanka Budha thoki - p6, back cover
Adam Dickens - p2 | Henry Kambuzuma - p3, p9, p12 | TfaC Archive - p4, p5 | Valor Pictures - p7



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