



Interactive Radio Drama Training Summary Report

As part of the Palestine Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA)
project on Responding to Gender-Based Violence in Palestine



The Core Radio Team completing a TfaC training exercise in Hebron, Palestine.

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With support from the wider TfaC team

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Introduction

In May 2022, Theatre for a Change (TfaC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Arab World Regional Office. The MoU established a framework for both organisations to work in strategic partnership on the implementation of projects across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that would use participatory approaches to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes among women and girls who have been marginalised.

Against this backdrop, a pilot project was designed and developed between TfaC and the Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA), which is IPPF’s accredited member organisation in Palestine, to promote reporting pathways within Palestine’s National Referral System (NRS) for women and girls experiencing gender-based violence (GBV). The project uses TfaC’s Interactive Radio Drama (IRD) methodology to amplify the voices of GBV survivors, and to create more enabling environments for the reporting of GBV.

In May 2022, an open recruitment process in the West Bank led to the formation of the project’s Core Radio Team made up of six performers, and one presenter/facilitator, all based in Hebron. In May - June 2022, TfaC trainers Ryan Borcharding and Megan McGeough delivered two weeks of onsite IRD training designed to build the group’s capacity to produce IRD for GBV reporting in Palestine. IRD was chosen for its ability to reach more conservative and geographically disparate communities in Palestine, including communities in Area C and the Gaza Strip, and provide them with a space to engage with issues surrounding the reporting of GBV; as well as the added benefit of allowing callers and participants to be relatively anonymous when dealing with a subject matter that is highly sensitive in the country and the region at large.



The aim of the training was to equip the team with the knowledge, skills and confidence to produce an IRD series that was exciting and compelling to listen to, and motivated audiences to get involved in changing the behaviour of certain characters in the story to report on cases of GBV. The aim of presenting this behaviour change on air was to help audiences develop the skills and confidence to report GBV in real life, to a PFPPA designated service provider, or through PFPPA's crisis line, or through other agencies and organisations providing GBV support services through the NRS.

The Training

The IRD training was delivered through a series of 10 workshops of six hours each at the Queen Plaza Hotel in Hebron, Palestine, from 25th May to 7th June 2022. PFPPA staff were also present during many of the sessions and readily available to support as needed. Two professional interpreters were also present during the training to support the interpretation between Arabic and English as needed.

The training culminated with a 'mock radio broadcast' on 7th June for invited PFPPA staff and supporters; and with a live performance in Ramallah on 8th June for PFPPA donors and stakeholders as part of another project's launch event.

The training guided the group through the process of producing the first episode in an eight-episode series of IRD. What follows is a short summary of the training curriculum that was delivered by TfaC¹:

- Workshop 1 – Baseline and Equal Participation – 25th May 2022
 - This workshop developed teamwork and trust in the group and sought to measure participants' incoming knowledge, attitudes and skills around GBV, the NRS and IRD.

STAYING SAFE FROM COVID-19

Both TfaC trainers produced negative COVID-19 tests to gain entry into Palestine. The training participants all took rapid COVID-19 tests on the first day of the training; all results came back negative. Hand sanitizer, face masks and additional rapid tests were made available for anyone who wanted to use them throughout the training period. Additionally, windows were kept open whenever possible to facilitate air flow throughout the training space. Participants were encouraged to report any symptoms that they were experiencing, but by the end of the training, no one had reported experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

¹ Please refer to Appendix A for a glossary of IRD-specific terms mentioned in this section.



- Workshop 2 – GBV in Palestine – 26th May 2022
 - The first half of this workshop was led by a PFPPA GBV specialist and aimed to equip the group with some of the key concepts related to preventing and responding to GBV in Palestine.
The second half of this workshop explored participants’ own experiences related to GBV. Facilitators explored with participants Critical Moments and criteria of a Critical Moment in IRD. Facilitators introduced activities like sculpting, gallery walk and improvisations, which would be used in later workshops to devise Episode 1 of the IRD.
- Workshop 3 – Story Devising – 29th May 2022
 - This workshop explored participants’ understanding of story devising, and expanded their knowledge of how to make bold, confident choices in devising an original story for IRD. Building on the activities introduced in the previous workshop, participants decided on one story from the previously shared stories to be the plot for the IRD series. Importance was placed on choosing the story that possessed important elements of an IRD story, including the story being powerful, unique, compelling and relatable. Also integral to story creation was making the five ‘w’s clear - who, what, where, when, and why. Finally, hot seating was introduced in order to embark on character development.
- Workshop 4 – Character Development and First Episode – 30th May 2022
 - In this workshop, participants developed their characters through hot seating just after the Critical Moment in Episode 1. Hot seating was used to explore any additional scenes from the first episode, and the five scenes of the first episode were decided upon. The participants ran through the Critical Moment and facilitators facilitated group feedback on the clarity of characters and story. Participants also developed their characters through power/status and rehearsed each scene with status level in mind.
- Workshop 5 – Performing for Radio – 31st May 2022
 - In this workshop, participants explored the difference skillsets between performing for radio and performing for stage. Due to the upcoming in-person performance, participants had to keep both skillsets in mind, and the group began rehearsing two different versions of the drama: one for in person, and one for radio broadcast. Participants also explored character objectives through improvisation, and the importance of making characters’ objectives clear to an audience.



- Workshop 6 – Intro to Touch Tag – 1st June 2022
 - In this workshop, the group learned how to facilitate Interactive Touch Tag, which enables the audience to practice reporting on cases of GBV in IRD in order to change behaviour and attitudes around GBV in Palestine. The steps of facilitating touch tag were reviewed, and the presenter practiced facilitating with participants supporting as audience members.
- Workshop 7 – Touch Tag Practice – 2nd June 2022
 - In this workshop, participants continued to practice touch tag, both for in-person performance, and on radio. Participants created caller profiles and the presenter became more comfortable in dealing with difficult callers as well as the touch tag cycle (including comments from the guest speaker and social media feedback).
- Workshop 8 – Touch Tag Practice (continued) and Rehearsal – 5th June 2022
 - In this workshop, participants continued practicing touch tag, and ran rehearsals for both radio and in-person performances. Facilitators led participants through vocal activities to enhance quality of speech and the IRD broadcast format was reviewed.
- Workshop 9 – Tech Rehearsal – 6th June 2022
 - In this workshop, participants developed their ability to run a smooth technical rehearsal, inclusive of props, entrances and exits, and incorporated background sounds. Rehearsals for both radio and in-person performances were run again, and final feedback was given.
- Workshop 10 – Mock Broadcast and Endline – 7th June 2022
 - In this workshop, the group presented the first episode of the IRD broadcast on radio to PFPPA staff and guests. Experts on GBV were also in the audience and were able to give strong feedback to the group on the story progression and facilitation techniques with callers. The group also reviewed the plan going forward for weekly rehearsal and production of episodes, and the sequence needed to create each episode.

The Core Radio Team

- The Core Radio Team (CRT) was made up of seven participants - four women and three men - from Hebron.



- Many CRT members were previous participants and volunteers in PFPPA’s programming around GBV and SRHR, and three out of the seven participants had previous experience in performing with local theatres (Freedom Theatre, YAS Theatre, etc.) The other four participants had little to no experience in performing previously.
- At the start of the training, the CRT completed training in-take forms. Through these forms, they expressed interest in supporting GBV prevention; improving confidence with performing in front of an audience; gaining knowledge of IRD; and learning a wide variety of skills related to performance including voice acting for radio. TfaC trainers incorporated these interests into the training curriculum.
- CRT members expressed some concerns over potential backlash from the community due to the sensitive nature of the topic of GBV in Palestine. Some concerns and potential risks identified on in-take forms included: potential campaigns against the show; censoring or banning of PFPPA and its activities; and individual participants being socially excluded due to being part of the show. PFPPA and TfaC addressed these concerns in the following ways:
 - By designing the project in collaboration with a wide range of government and civil society partners, including the Ministry of Health, the NRS and Muntada, a network of Palestinian women rights’ organisations; and leveraging their support before and during the broadcasts.
 - By training participants, in conjunction with PFPPA, how to respond to push-back from community members who may display hostile views towards women, and the goals of the project.
 - By ensuring that PFPPA had ways of feeding into the development of storylines so as to avoid controversial characters, situations or topics that would run the risk of bringing PFPPA and/or affiliates into disrepute.

Key Successes

- The CRT showed great ability in **working together as a team**, and remaining **open, responsive and supportive** of all team members while dealing with challenging and sensitive subject matters.
- The group gained and developed **key knowledge and skills, and showed growing confidence** in producing and presenting IRD during the training period; and tackling sensitive topics in increasingly confident and assertive ways.



- The **simultaneous interpretation** between Arabic and English, provided by the professional interpretation team, was **smooth and seamless**, and made a huge difference to the successful delivery of the IRD training.
- **Audience responses to the mock broadcast on 7th June, and the live performance on 8th June, were positive**, with audiences reporting that they felt connected to the protagonist and that the Critical Moment, and all performances were “realistic”. Clare Hollowell, Senior SGBV Advisor at the IPPF Secretariat, watched the performance virtually, and afterwards said the following: “Fantastic translation of the play! Such wonderful emotion coming through, and very difficult to cover all those characters. The performance was very powerful.”
- The audience also appreciated the way **the story wove together two key areas of PFPPA’s work** – sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence – by telling the story of a young couple’s conflict about when to have their first child.
- The CRT indicated solid levels of **satisfaction with the training, and were grateful for the opportunity to develop as performers and be of service to their communities in combatting GBV.**
- **A further success was overcoming many of the challenges listed below**, through close communication and strong team work between TfaC and PFPPA.

Key Challenges

Logistics

- The **start date of the training was pushed back** several times due to different delays and logistical concerns. Initially, **it was difficult to find enough participants to commit to the training period**, compounded by the challenge of not being able to advertise project roles publicly due to fear that this project would be conflated with another GBV-focussed arts-based project happening in Palestine at the time, which angered the government due to the way it addressed GBV insensitively. The challenge of recruitment was eventually resolved by PFPPA reaching out and recruiting from through their existing volunteer network in Hebron.
- Due to these delays, **an intro seminar about the training could not be delivered as planned**, and was instead delivered on the first day of the training. As a result, the training intake forms were not administered until the first training day, which meant some vital information about the group – including scheduling concerns, family resistance to participation in the project, and a physical disability among one of the



group members – was not learned until this time. With more time these concerns could have been better addressed; however, solutions were still able to be found through close collaboration between TfaC trainers, participants and PFPPA staff.

Group Dynamics

- **The group sometimes struggled with the physical demands of the training**, and would often ask to sit or take breaks, and suggested that any future trainings be half days instead of whole days over long spans of time. TfaC will take this feedback into consideration when planning future training programmes.
- It was determined at the start of the training that **the group's knowledge of gender-based violence was still developing**. As a result, TfaC and PFPPA decided to bring in a GBV expert on day two of the training in order to shore up the group's knowledge of GBV in Palestine, to further develop attitudes and skills in support of women and girls reporting abuse, and to destigmatise survivors of abuse. TfaC would recommend further investments in the group's knowledge and skills related to GBV as the project continues and during subsequent project phases.
- **There was sometimes nervous laughter from some group members when role playing and sculpting situations involving GBV during training activities**. TfaC trainers responded to this by pausing whenever possible and exploring reasons for the laughter, and resetting and refocusing the environment, to give the activities the proper tone and focus that they needed.

Feedback from Participants

The group completed a training feedback survey after the last day of the training. All participants completed the feedback survey. Feedback is based on responding to questions in a qualitative manner. Many participants noted that they were looking forward to the future of the project, and that the training itself was positively impactful on them personally, while their developing identities as agents of change within their community has become noticeable. Some highlights of participant feedback are included below:

“One important thing I will remember from this training is the importance of serving the community [over] personal gain.”

“The thing I am most looking forward to, in the future of this project, is for women to learn about violence and that they should never hide these incidents; and for people to appreciate and use the services of PFPPA.”

“The thing that most impacted me from this training is [having a] new approach within our community [to] introduce information on violence in our communities.”



Recommendations and Next Steps

- **CRT to meet weekly** to devise, rehearse and perform the dramas, using the rehearsal and production plan reviewed together during the last day of the training.
- **PFPPA and TfaC to engage in weekly support sessions with the project coordinator and core radio team** to support the development and production of content as needed, with special focus placed on keeping programmes interactive and action-focused.
- **PFPPA to continue to invest in the development of the CRT's knowledge and attitudes** related to the reporting of GBV, and women's rights more broadly, in Palestine.
- **PFPPA to further promote and publicise IRD radio programmes widely and as innovatively as possible, especially amongst women**, highlighting the uniquely participatory format in order to encourage reporting on GBV cases, and change behaviours around GBV.
- **PFPPA and TfaC to closely monitor feedback coming in from audiences each week**, and to make any adjustments to broadcasting content accordingly, while still holding fast to the goal of enhancing reporting around GBV.
- **PFPPA to lead on booking guest experts who can appear on the programme each week**, to provide contextual and factual expertise to programme topics, and lend support for the goals of the broadcasts and project.
- **PFPPA and TfaC to develop plans for scaling up the breadth and depth of the work post-pilot project**, informed by findings of the project's impact evaluation.

Conclusion

From the findings of this report, it is clear that the training was a success. The training was effective in enabling the CRT to develop and deepen their knowledge, skills and confidence in devising, performing, producing, presenting and facilitating an IRD programme. It also served to increase their understanding of behaviour change, assertiveness and reflective practice.

The team is committed to combatting GBV and enhancing reporting on GBV cases in their communities as seen by their dedication to the project and the diligence and hard work they portrayed in committing to activities and concepts of the trainings that were new to many members.

It was also evident that the group was able to work very well together after establishing ground rules and they showed a natural instinct to support one another, which the particular

focus on equal participation throughout the training helped to enhance. These instincts and traits will serve the team well as they embark on their IRD journey and serve as an important foundation in creating impactful IRD episodes.

The team showed strong potential in using the IRD methodology as evidenced by their successfully putting on a mock broadcast, and truly 'lit up' in front of an audience in terms of their energy level and dedication to delivering the message on GBV awareness and enhanced reporting. This was showcased to an internal audience of staff from TfaC and PFPPA, and their skills, knowledge and confidence in creating and delivering an IRD project were well noted by audience members. We are confident that they will further produce a highly exciting and impactful IRD series on air.

The team expressed significant levels of satisfaction with the training and stated that they learned a lot. It was also a joy to work with a highly energetic and enthusiastic team that showed up with a sense of fun, curiosity and creativity; at the same time they were also deeply connected to the subject matter which helped them to develop the awareness and appreciation of the IRD methodology approach to combat GBV and enhance reporting on GBV cases.

The CRT has achieved a tremendous amount thus far and we look forward to supporting them on the rest of their IRD journey.



The CRT with TfaC trainers on the final training day.



Appendix A: Glossary of IRD specific terms

1. **Interactive Radio Drama (IRD):** IRD is a unique participatory social and behaviour change communication tool with a specific methodology. For more information on this methodology, please visit www.tfacafrica.com/ird
2. **Sculpting:** An activity where the participants will shape their bodies to create frozen “statues” to represent or reflect a particular moment of a story, feeling or a concept that is being discussed. These statues are often referred to as sculptures and can be done individually, in pairs or groups.
3. **Gallery Walk:** A gallery walk takes place when a group of participants are observing the sculptures made by another group of participants. This will then be followed up with a discussion on what the viewing participants experienced during their “walk”.
4. **Come Alive:** This is an activity the sculptures will transition from being statues into embodying movement, gestures and sounds that reflect the experiences of the particular moment or feeling.
5. **Improvisation:** This is the playing out of a scene without any previous preparation such as written dialogue. Typically in IRD, the process would involve Sculpting, Gallery Walk, Come Alive and culminate with Improvisation to build a story.
6. **Story Synopsis:** A story synopsis includes a brief summary of a story’s main plot and how the story unfolds with key moments.
7. **Devising:** This is a process that involves group collaboration to create a story through improvisatory work.
8. **Hot-seating:** Hot seating is a drama technique used for further developing a character and a story. It is where a character is questioned by a group about their backgrounds, thoughts and motivations in the story.
9. **Protagonist:** A protagonist in IRD is the central character around which the story revolves and develops. This central character will face a series of challenges very similar to the target audience so that the audience will feel a deep connection to the main character and want to help them overcome their challenges.
10. **Critical Moment:** Critical moments in IRD are life-changing events that happen to the protagonist in the story. These moments are gripping moments that make an audience gasp, shake its head and keep them glued to the story. They are moments of high dramatic tension that make the audience want to do something to help the protagonist.
11. **Touch Tag:** Touch Tag is one of the main defining features of IRD. It is the process whereby the audience will call in (to the radio station) to replace the protagonist during a critical moment to change the behaviour of the protagonist, live on radio. This gives the audience a chance to develop skills like confidence in reporting GBV that they can apply to situations in their own lives.