



Training for Transformation

VOICES OF PRACTICE 2016



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WIDOWS FOR CHANGE: DARING TO LIVE AGAIN

By Gracious Shirichena, Zimbabwe

I am Gracious Shirichena from Zimbabwe. I am a 49 year old widow and a graduate of Training for Transformation (TfT) Diploma 2014/15. I would like to give special thanks to the TfT staff for the good work, methodologies, effort and training which offered me so much in terms of my learning and changed my way of thinking.



After completing my studies at TfT I started thinking more deeply about the ways in which I could become a real change agent. I have started a charitable organisation called “Widows for Change”, and we are in the process of registering this organisation.

Zimbabwean widows are faced with a number of challenges. There are no institutions or organisations that are in place for widows to get financial support and many suffer in poverty. It is not uncommon for relatives of the deceased take the widow’s property without facing any consequences. In addition, the majority of widows do not know their legal rights. Another area of challenge is the social stigma faced by widows. They are no longer considered as valuable role players in society and as a result many feel isolated and unaccepted. Without any co-ordinated structures giving moral support, many widows also lose hope and their self esteem decreases.

Currently, I am working with widows who are underprivileged and from poor backgrounds. I spend quality time with them discussing the challenges which they face. I organise workshops that identify ways to sustain lives, and I also do skills training in craft work. Importantly, these workshops are also spaces to encourage each other, give each other hope and create a sense of belonging. Part of this is to encourage widows to not accept the verdict and stigma of those who say that they will never amount to anything. We say “get up, stand up, take off your grave clothes and dare to live again!” Personally, the learnings from TfT made me realize the potential in me, the energy and creativity that I held in me.

I use to think that it was best to be employed by others, not realizing that not only was it possible for me to create a better employment opportunity for myself and for others, but that I had the ability and talent to create self employment.

Now I train widows in different skills such as recycling old magazines and calendars to make necklaces, bracelets, purses and earrings.

I also train the women to do tie-and-dye and batiks.



In my community many widows are so grateful for the opportunity to use the skill of their hands to be productive and make craft that they can sell. This allows them to buy food and clothing and to pay school fees for their children. There are, however, challenges which I face as I try to make my dream come true.

Lack of funds is the biggest challenge. This is so because without finances it is not easy to purchase raw materials or machines to keep the projects going. Therefore, continuity in supply of products is hindered and becomes erratic. I am grateful though because the knowledge and skills that I gained from TfT gave me “the green light”, helping me to see how I needed to keep going and never give up. In March 2016, I and a group of widows that I work with hosted a group of tourists from Sweden.

We organized a braai, displayed some of the products we make and performed a short drama as a code on the issues facing widows.

The code really touched the visitors. It made them cry as they realized the challenges and reality faced by widows in Africa. A week after they left I received a call from their leader that some members in the group

were willing to assist us financially. I have sent a proposed budget to Sweden and I am working hard to ensure my dream and vision will soon come true.

TfT helped me in a powerful way. The code acted as a driving force for the visitors to feel the urge to help us to change the plight of widows. One of them asked me where I got the skills and knowledge and I was proud to say at the TfT Grail Centre.

Widows themselves are demanding more of these workshops for it is important to be listened to and to be heard. To date, I have conducted five workshops in my community, each attended by twelve widows, so reaching 60 women. I am planning to reach out to rural areas as well.

Before TfT I was so stressed and traumatized. I was also full of self pity, had lost hope and was slowly dying. After TfT I gained so much enthusiasm, strength, love for self and others. TfT changed my way of thinking and I want to leave a legacy that will benefit the generations to come. Now I am able to identify where there is a need (including my own!) and how best to solve it.

In conclusion I say **“live in such a way that even if you die you will always be alive in the great memories of others”**. I am forever grateful to the inspiration, wisdom and knowledge for TfT facilitators who have left a legacy to motivate our generation and many more to come, to find life’s purpose despite whatever difficulties stand in the way or how impossible the odds seem. I say: “Get your eye out of the rear-view mirror and start celebrating life and the energy from the Creator to transform others and make this world a better place to live.”

ABOUT GRACIOUS SHIRICHENA

Gracious Shirichena is an advocate for widow’s liberty. Her passion is to see the rise of widows with whose efforts to be felt even generations after them. She tackles on widows’ challenges, encourages the depressed ones, and empowers the ordinary to do the extraordinary by giving them hope to live a better life. Gracious is graced with 5 amazing children and she like reading books especially those which encourages, teaches and inspires on moving on with life.

MY PASSION FOR GENDER AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Interview with Nontuthuko Xaba, South Africa

Ntu, could you please tell us a little bit about the work that you do.

I work for Women’s Leadership and Training Programme (WLTP) that is based in three areas near the Drakensberg mountains of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. We work mainly with girls between the ages of 8 and 21 years, in rural communities and some townships. We work on issues of gender and environment. The programme has been going for 31 years, but 10 years in these focus areas. I have been a facilitator and an area coordinator and I have been doing this work for five years. I would say that this is very important work because the themes of gender and environment are at the centre of our lives no matter where we live.

On the topic of gender, we look at issues like beliefs and cultural customs that oppress girls. Two relatively common issues are *Ukuthwala* and *Umhayizo*. *Ukuthwala* is a form of abduction that involves the kidnapping a girl or a young woman by a man and his peers with the intention of compelling the young woman into marriage, sometimes with the parents’ consent. *Umhayizo* is when a girl becomes restless and agitated, crying and screaming and wanting to run away. She does all this without being aware of what she is doing. Although this is a complex phenomenon, basically it is believed that a boy has put a spell on the girl to make her love him. Our organisation has worked on these two issues and it ran successful campaigns that stopped both of those practices. We worked with traditional healers for the *Umhayizo* campaign and generally work with the traditional authority which gives us “a bigger voice” in the community.

We also see whether girls are given leadership positions and if their voices are heard within their families and in the community as a whole. We encourage the girls to fight for their rights and not to be afraid to



speak their minds and hearts on issues that affect them.

Part of enabling this “speaking out” is encouraging girls to ask questions to critique things that are happening around them, especially those things that do not speak to their values or that promote the exploitation of girls and women. Drawing on a learning from TtT on the importance of the Holon (of interconnected systems), we also encourage them to practise all the work we do with them in their families, because families are where we are rooted. It is also the space where we first learn the habit of differentiating roles according to gender. In doing so, they break boundaries, challenging the gender norms that say that there are roles of girls and boys or that a woman’s role or place is in the kitchen. We say that they should do whatever they can do and that the freedom we want for them is to be free to express themselves.

We want them to be Feminists or Womanists who will fight for equality amongst all beings on earth and for justice for all creatures on earth.

The environment has been our core focus point recently and the reason is because we are reading the signs of the time at the moment.



We are facing the issue of Climate Change and it is caused by us as humans, so it is us that should do the work of mitigation and do awareness-raising in the communities.

Girls are very involved in our community-based environmental projects and do awareness-raising on issues like waste management in rural communities. They have tackled the issue of water management as well because we have water scarcity locally and globally. Another issue that we have done awareness on is on GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

These are being introduced to our community with the excuse of saying they are fighting poverty in our country, while people - rural people especially - are being ripped off of all the resources, leaving them with nothing. We are running an agro-ecology gardening project which responds to this problem and is working against GMOs. This project has grown because people came to join us, even without us inviting and recruiting them. The women that are involved are very happy and their self confidence has grown as they have something that they can say is theirs – that they own - and that is unique from other things in the community.

We have also done awareness-raising on issues of biodiversity. We focused on birds, trying to conserve them and working with communities on getting indigenous knowledge from old people. This was quite exciting for us as youth because we got to know what our great-grandmothers and our forefathers used to believe in before industrialization. We worked on an endangered species of bird called the Ground Hornbill (Thunder bird). The response from people from the little work we did was amazing because we ended up looking at the biodiversity of the area and how are we losing it. It was great because the impetus came from them and they wanted to restore what was in the area and start a nature conservation project that they will run as the community members.

The young women of WLTP do all this awareness-raising with confidence and without any fear because they have obtained all the facts and information from the organisation. In addition, they are able to relate those issues to their lives and to the community where they come from and that is why they can take a stand and say “I am going to do something about this”.

How did you hear about TtT and what was your experience of the course?

I heard about the TtT Certificate course through my organisation as I have colleagues that have attended the course before.

So, in terms of methodology, I have been fortunate because the method that we use at WLTP is similar to the one I learned at Tft. Personally, my main challenge during the course was English. I would be left behind trying to analyse a word and find its meaning. I had been exposed to facilitation in Zulu and at Tft I had to facilitate in English. Even though I knew all the steps and tools of the Freire methodology, it was hard to do it in a different language. Another challenge was planning or designing a workshop, although I am happy to say that I am more than able to do it now!

Some memories that stand out for me from the course were when we were doing the topic of political economy. It made me realise how we do things and how we believe in change and want change (and “development” and “progress”), but we do not look at the effects of the change we support. I was able to relate this to my community, where during nomination, councillors make many promises for things to be better, but once they have reached where they wanted, they forget who gave them those powers. I realised that power is more important and sometimes it changes people to be the kinds of leaders that only do things to benefit themselves. They do not look out for the people that they lead (or serve) and are not looking after God’s creation, destroying it in the name of “bringing development”. I think that development should not benefit one part of creation while destroying another part.

Another memory that I have is when we were doing the topic of “deep democracy”. For me that was more of a healing session for everyone in the course because as individuals and as a group we started to speak our truth. I had so much anger that I was sitting with and didn’t want to talk about until that day when I was challenged to look at that emotion and to deal with it.

In what ways has Tft impacted you personally or professionally?

Since Tft, I do not just “do things” that I think are right for people. I listen, observe, question and then act from what I have received

from people. That makes a huge impact because you are responding to what people have told you is affecting them, not what you think is affecting them. However, if they don’t see that issue is affecting them I find ways of helping them see that it is affecting them.

When I attended Tft, I was a newborn baby in facilitation. I had seen people facilitate, but did not have experience of doing it myself. [Being at Tft made me get confidence and helped me to be more assertive, to read more, to do more planning.](#) This is so important if you are going to facilitate a workshop. You also need to know how to work with communities. Though I was not able to fully practise that during the course, as I felt intimidated by the all the qualifications people had, when I came back home I put all that I learnt into practice. Yes it took time, but I was patient with myself. Now I can design not only a one-day workshop, but a three-day workshop and get good results at the end. Being in the course made me hungry for more knowledge and to be willing to break out from my own shell and do more for the community I work for. Tft may not yet be officially recognised by the South African Department of Education at the higher education level, but it is what all development workers need in order to do work effectively and bring change about in the communities. My hope is that one day it will be accredited locally and I will raise funds myself to attend the Diploma course and then do a Masters degree because I believe in Change.

Interview by Jude Clark

ABOUT NONTUTHUKO XABA

My name is Nontuthuko Xaba and I am a 26 years old. I grew up in a deep rural community called Hlokozi. I grew up there thinking that it was the only place that existed because I had never been introduced to other places. After matric, I went to college and studied agriculture for two years. However, it did not speak to my values and passion for nature conservation. I left to work for WLTP. I am currently studying towards a degree in Environmental Management through UNISA. I have also discovered that my spirituality is strongly an “eco-spirituality” – in nature I feel grounded, calm, at peace and spiritual. Things that I love doing is going out birding and also spending time with people, especially ordinary people, because in that way I learn new things.

A FRESH BREATH OF LIFE IN OUR PROGRAMMES

Interview with Beji Benjamin Jibe, Nigeria

Beji, could you please describe the work you do, including your organisation's name and vision.

The Sharing Education and Learning for Life Foundation runs a formative programme called Sharing Education and Learning for Life (SELL) Programme targeting young people.

The objective of the SELL Programme is to promote education for life-building skills among young people. SELL is a peace-building and human development programme that uses a very gentle approach to engaging young adults in participatory learning. SELL adopts a participatory approach with a didactic learning structure in the form of Sharing-Reflection-Action planning. This methodology is based on the philosophy of the Brazilian Educationist, Paulo Freire, who believed that education should begin with respect for the dignity of each person, learning should be from shared experiences and that training ought to be for the purpose of transformation. SELL Vision is “A society where people are empowered and live in peace and harmony”.

How long have you been doing this work and why do you think your work is important?

My journey began six years ago when I met Fr. Leo Traynor and his team at the SELL Foundation. Fr. Leo had just moved the programme from another state where the programme had begun and I was among the first set of animators trained to take the learning back to our peers in the community, since it was a peer educators programme. What captivated me right from the start was the training approach of the programme – learning through shared experiences. The processes were in the form of practical exercises which we could easily relate to as things we have experienced or seen happening in our communities. Since joining the team as a member of the resource team four years ago, we have worked with about six thousand young people in communities.



My experience so far is that the approach most organisations have used to get to young people lacks the component that takes seriously their experiences and their capacity to solve their own problems. The young people form a large percentage of the vulnerable in Nigeria and should take the centre stage and drive the process for enduring peace and development in Nigeria. From Boko Haram in the North to militancy in the South, the youth have vented their frustration against the system. There must be a concerted effort to encourage them to use non-violent ways of expressing these deep-seated frustrations. This is where my work becomes very important.

Before your participation in Tft, what were some of the main challenges in your work – personally, professionally or linked to the issues you work with or the methodology you used?

Before my participation in Tft, the main challenge I had was in figuring out how economic self reliance and gender mainstreaming could be fully integrated into my work. Our programme didn't have any component that addressed people's primary needs, which in most emergency situations requires attention before peace building. How to incorporate this into the peace building programmes was a challenge and this was a personal drawback for me as one who engaged directly with the young people. At the time Nigeria was ranked the biggest economy in Africa, yet the World Bank reported in that same year that over one hundred million Nigerians were living below one dollar a day.

The lack of a link between politics and people's economic survival left our trainees not only dependent on the system, but also struggling to understand how they could be experiencing so much lack in the midst of plenty.

In addition, while we had a component on Gender, it was always very controversial to discuss this topic. This was because the process had been designed to concentrate on women, with its key theme being the triple burden of women (the expectation of taking care of the family, formal employment to contribute to family income and binding

Conducting a survey in preparation for a workshop in Yola community, one of the States worst hit by the Boko Haram insurgency.



into the SELL programme. That was how another colleague and I attended the Diploma course. The road to South Africa was very difficult for me because of visa issues. At one point in my frustration I had to withdraw the application and ironically the withdrawal letter earned me a visa. When I look back now, reflecting on my experience, it would have been most unfortunate to deny me this lifetime opportunity.

My immediate reaction when I got an email saying that we would be living in cottages and sharing rooms with people from other countries was a feeling of sadness. My thoughts were: “How can I live in the same room with someone I don’t know? How are we going to tolerate one another?” and many other thoughts. However, the initiative of housing people from different cultures and backgrounds turned out to be the best thing that happened to me. [I had the privilege of living with great people from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, and Indonesia.](#) No lectures could have given me that life changing experience which challenged and completely reversed initial prejudices that I had harboured towards my peers even before meeting them.

As one who deals directly with peace building and reconciling communities, I was reminded at Tft of the importance and value of historical site visits. The field visit to Robben Island is the biggest life experience that one can have in learning what it means to be a peace builder. The impact of that experience can never be obtained from reading books, attending classes or listening to tutors. The reality of that visit spoke for itself and today it lives on in my personal life and work. These practical experiences are the greatest memories that are alive in me and will be there forever. This practical way of learning is the biggest advantage the Tft has over other similar institutions of learning.

How has Tft helped you in the work you do or shifted the way in which you work or approach your challenges?

Tft’s approach is to work with generative themes which are a product of specific needs assessment done in a community. This part was missing in our work. Ours were units developed in six thematic areas

together members of the wider community). In such sessions one could see how difficult it was for the young men, who struggled to express the burdens that society placed on them. With the benefit of being exposed to the module on Gender Reconciliation at Tft, I am now able to understand in retrospect the difficulty the young men experienced in conveying their own message of their own experience and the extent to which we might not have understood what they were trying to say. Today, key sessions in gender reconciliation look not only at how men’s views and actions have impacted women, but also how women’s views and actions have impacted men and by extension how the society and cultures have significantly impacted both women and men. The outcome is that both young men and women are able to tell their stories and feel listened to. After a session on the “Truth Mandala” where participants are provided a safe space to share their very personal experiences, one of the young women said to a young man: *“I am very sorry for what you passed through with your ex-girlfriend. Know that we are not all the same”*. Statements such as this are a departure from the usual lack of empathy and the sometimes unapologetic defenses during sessions in the previous gender modules.

How did you hear about Tft? What course did you attend and what memory stands out for you about that course?

My colleague who initiated the SELL programme, Fr. Leo Traynor, was himself inspired by the Tft approach and had been to the Grail Centre to see Anne Hope and Sally Timmel to further entrench the Tft model

and community workshops had to fit in to any of the six units. The old six units were becoming monotonous and the programmes predictable. It felt like we were losing touch with the “realness” of communities. My participation in the course helped me to learn how to develop processes from generative themes that are relevant at a particular time in a particular community. This new learning has injected a fresh breath of life in the relevance and acceptability of our programmes.

Has Tft had a more personal impact on you? If so, how?

I come from a background where culture is very strong and in many ways denigrates the place of women in a man’s life. I unknowingly had been denying my fiancé the respect and decorum that she deserves even if I saw myself as a feminist. The session at Tft on honouring women left a big impact in my life because it showed me how I have not celebrated this woman who was sharing her life with me. I decided that day that I will do that honouring practically – the value was there in me in the first place, I had just never practiced it. The bitter lesson for me was that she had moved on with someone else. These life changing experiences have taught me the importance of practicing what you preach. The risk always is to get so consumed with helping others with knowledge that you yourself do not internalize and act on.

Another impact of Tft on me is the improvement in the quality of my work. Today I serve as the Programmes Coordinator and Team leader of an organisation in which I used to be the Admin officer. Since Tft I have spearheaded the writing of two successful project proposals, which are presently being funded. All this would not have been possible before because I didn’t have the capacity to perform effectively on the new assignment. Indeed, Tft equipped me for the task and I am proud to have been one of the participants.

On the whole it has been great putting into practice the Tft learnings. However, there has been some resistance from higher structures of the **organisation** on programmes and methodology. This at some point has been very frustrating, since the Tft approach is one that challenges the status quo and the old approach to doing things.

That makes it even more difficult to get funding on projects such as this because of the difficulty in showing results or impact. The way out in the long run is to mobilize local resources towards achieving this goal. That is the only way our initiatives can stand the test of time.

Interview by Jude Clark

ABOUT BEJI BENJAMIN JIBE

Benjamin Jibe (Beji) is from Ballang Shippang Community in Pankshin Local Government of Plateau State Nigeria. He is a Social Worker with over 10 years experience of development work and Peace building in the northern part of Nigeria. He has facilitated Peace building trainings in other parts of Nigeria and Ghana. He is the Programmes Coordinator at the Sharing Education and Learning for Life Foundation with its operational base in Bauchi State Nigeria. He is a Diploma graduate of the Training for Transformation 2014/2015. He likes playing table tennis and enjoys travelling.

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN: KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

By Brenda Kyomugisha, Uganda

I am Brenda Patience Kyomugisha, a graduate of Tft 2011. I currently work for the Justice Law and Order Sector in Uganda on the programme Justice for Children. I joined the programme during its pilot stage and am participating in the process of mainstreaming it into government. I am a Regional Coordinator and am stationed at the High Court at Fort Portal.



The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) is a sector-wide approach that brings together approximately 17 institutions responsible for administering justice, maintaining law and order and promoting human rights.

The need to improve services for children was highlighted and led to the Justice for Children programme. The stakeholders I engage with include magistrates, judges, police officers, state attorneys, advocates, prisons, remand homes, probation and social welfare officers.

They also include non-state actors such as the chief administrative officers, religious leaders, traditional leaders, political leaders, civic leaders, civil society organisations that are relevant to children, human rights bodies, the community children volunteers (fit persons) and the resident district commissioners.

Bearing in mind that the law was originally made for adults, there was a gap for children who sought justice. Stakeholders discovered that the judicial system is not child friendly in terms of distance, structures, language, protection and procedures.

As a Regional Coordinator I try to use the platform of the Regional Chain Linked Committee and District Chain Linked Committee (RCC and DDC respectively) to engage stakeholders to be more responsive to all children, offenders, witnesses, victims and the vulnerable.



How Tft has helped me in my work

As part of my job I lobby for meetings with relevant stakeholders around issues affecting children and the law. Tft has improved my approach to engaging stakeholders. For example, the seemingly simple act of now holding meetings at the premises of the relevant institutions, has brought on board reluctant members who would have generally considered attending such meetings too time consuming.

The process of “digging deeper” and uncovering the root causes of problems (along the lines of Paulo Freire’s approach), has also been a helpful addition to the way we work. For example, one problem has been the number of child cases that have been lost in court due to the

poor medical reports as well as the absence of medical personnel in court to testify. Police had also noted that most health workers shy away from filling in the police forms for medical examination, for fear of testifying in court.

The District Medical Officer and Director of the regional referral hospital were brought on board to be able to jointly identify the root causes of health workers fear of testifying in court, an issue that results in children not accessing justice. The root causes were identified as: i) a long time spent at court before medical witnesses are called up, an issue perceived as a lack of respect for medical personnel and their time; ii) the intimidating language used by advocates during cross-examination, and iii) lack of facilitation to support medical workers coming to court to testify before magistrates, especially in simple cases (‘simple defilement’, grievous harm, arson, etc). The resolutions reached included courts always giving priority in hearing first those cases that involve medical witnesses. In addition, magistrates were encouraged to protect the personnel from the intimidating language of advocates while at court.

Another skill that was enhanced by Tft was the listening survey. According to Paulo Freire “feelings are facts”. My mind became so aware that what is being heard and felt in an informal meeting, gathering or setting is a true reflection of the feelings in that setting. In this regard, I was very keen to acquire information from stakeholders such as magistrates, prosecutors, the police and others about the challenges faced in dispensing child justice. This was through the one-on-one engagement with the stakeholders who would express their feelings and point out specific challenges faced. This, in the long run led to a specialized training of selected officers.

Another skill I am sure was enhanced by Tft and has yielded results is the training and facilitation skill. In one of the specialized trainings of judicial officers and related stakeholders, the academic approach was changed and the methodology adapted to be more participatory, especially at the point of generating actions.

Each member was tasked to pronounce their commitments by pinning them on the wall and sharing with the group and to be followed up by the coordinator.

My language to state actors also changed from being confrontational to simple words that are able to bring out the desired results. Bearing in mind that some know what to do and others were trained in child justice, yet I have to keep a relationship with them. I for instance use words such as: “supposing, in the event...” “In my little understanding...”, “To me, this statement/story or situation suggests...” “I hear what you are saying, I only object...” “For me, I would add...”, “How do you feel that...?” These kinds of phrases to indicate that I know what I want and they help get to the desired outcome. This has increased heads of agency(s) ability in proposing their own answers that are action oriented.

A Success Story

One of the success stories is the approach of stakeholders in respect of adherence to new guidelines on juvenile justice. As one of the ways to achieve quality justice, State Attorneys committed to giving ample and quality time to children in terms of pre-trial counselling. During the High Court session that was gazzetted for refugees, one of the beneficiaries was Claudine Anita, a 15 year old charged with murder. In a meeting with the prosecutor, it was agreed that the child should be interviewed and counselled, especially since she was pleading guilty. The State Attorney-Wasswa Adam and the State Brief Ruth Ongom agreed to meet the juvenile in the remand home rather than meeting them at court as has been the practice. In a brief interaction with Anita after the interview, she expressed a sigh of relief and said: “I am happy I will find people I know in court and I have someone to defend me”. “I felt loved”, she further said.

The Tft training changed my life in terms of my thinking, approach to life and realization that small things can mean huge outcomes. I have been able to help my stakeholders to identify root causes and to draw insights from the current situations.

This has led to practical solutions that can be felt and touched. The programme that employs 4 social workers and 9 legal officers has appreciated the social work approach compared to a more legalist approach.

ABOUT BRENDA KYOMUGISHA

Brenda Kyomugisha is a mother of two teenage girls. She’s a teacher by profession and has had number of qualifications added to the Bachelors, including: a certificate in Law, a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling and a Diploma in Development Education. She has recently also completed a post graduate course in Social Justice. Her mode of training encompasses all methods of modern, Tft and Gender Action Learning Systems (GALs). Her passion is to be a voice for the vulnerable - mostly women and children - and to make a difference in the way life is looked at by the oppressor and the oppressed/accused/victim. She is a board member of Ruwenzori Women Forum and Tooro Development Network.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR Tft GRADUATE!

By Evernice Munando, Zimbabwe

Evernice Munando is the founder and director of Female Students Network Trust in Zimbabwe and a Tft Diploma graduate (2012/2013). The Female Students Network Trust (FSNT) has been recognized for its initiative entitled



“Empowerment of Female Students in Tertiary Education through Leadership Development and Mentorship Programmes”. This programme has been awarded the UNESCO first edition prize for girls and women’s education, 2016. The star of FSNT is obviously shining brightly as this international award comes shortly after it received a national award sponsored by ZIMRIGHTS, with FSNT being voted the ‘Outstanding Human Rights Defender (HRD) Civil Society Organisation of the year, 2015.’

The Empowerment of Female Students Programme is one of the initiatives that stemmed from a baseline survey which explored the indicators, prevalence and awareness of sexual harassment in tertiary

institutions in Zimbabwe. The conclusions of the survey were that only four of the 21 sampled institutions had sexual harassment policies in place. The major perpetrators of sexual harassment of female students were found to be male lecturers followed by male students, non academic staff and lastly - other females. These findings provided FSNT with a basis to formulate a way forward in line with the objective to create a favorable learning environment for female students at tertiary institutions around Zimbabwe. FSNT developed a two-fold intervention depending on the existence of policy. Where there is policy: effective implementation; conscientization of students and monitoring and evaluation. Where there is no policy: advocate for policy formulation; mobilise female students; engage relevant stakeholders. At national level a multi-sectoral approach is adopted that includes communities, civic organisations; police, legislators and medical personnel.

TfT skills and methodologies contributed towards these achievements.

FSNT's programming and culture is rooted in TfT principles. In order to effectively roll out its plan, the network draws on Paulo Freire's ideologies. This has helped the organisation discover unique practices that are worth translating into its own context. The organisation also adopted a systems approach to intervention for social transformation. The Holon model represents the importance of this link, focusing on the self and developing individuals in order to simultaneously impact the wider community.

One of the applied concepts has been on the relationship between liberation and education. This has become an effective ideological tool in the Network's efforts to demanding that the dignity and the rights of female students in tertiary educational institutions (TEIs) around Zimbabwe be observed. The ideal has therefore formed the core of the organisation's efforts in the struggle to create a vibrant female movement in TEIs, where young women are proficient in understanding their rights and capable of demanding that their rights to be observed. This, in turn, creates a conducive learning environment in these institutions. In addition, the learnings have become vital in the conscientization of female students to realise their capacity to hold

meaningful leadership positions in all student bodies. Institutional level rating moved from 1% at the inception period of the Network to 35% at present. FSNT has, to date, a membership base of over 4000 female students spread across the 36 TEIs of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

Award UNESCO
first edition
prize for girls
and women's
education, 2016



“Digging Deeper” to get to root causes

The Network has also adopted the familiar TfT popular education concept of “digging deeper” as a method used in facilitating workshops, to unearth the roots of the challenges facing female students in TEIs around Zimbabwe. Popular Education has been the basis in the organisation's workshop designs that are used to facilitate the Network's engagements with the students in a participatory manner. The TfT designs have been an essential tool to uproot the challenges faced by the students themselves affording female students to take the lead in seeking redress. The process raises critical consciousness thereby allowing the students to meaningfully challenge the status quo and come up with vibrant solutions to these challenges, thereby holding authorities accountable. We take on Paulo Freire's concept which stipulates that people should not be treated like objects, but rather subjects of their own learning, thereby involved in advocating for the changes that they would want to see.

Dialogue has become an effective tool at the centre of the organisation's efforts, through engagement of stakeholders (Students, Deans, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development, Ministry of Women Affairs Gender and Community

Development) in the drive against sexual harassment which is one of the pertinent issues and the theme for 2016.

Generative themes and problem-posing helped the Network to become unique in its interventions with female students in articulating issues of sexual violence. In this regard, **female students are given an opportunity to identify their own issues and proffer solutions by taking the lead to action**. This has achieved results especially during the national baseline survey where female students “named and shamed” lecturers as the perpetrators. Students are free to express themselves openly during the random sampling methodology of research. Listening surveys are constantly used during “laundry cafés” with female students. This process creates space for female students to informally share stories and for FSNT staff is an opportunity to gather original stories. Real issues came through during listening surveys and helped the Network to re-strategize its programming by compiling stories of change to be used as case studies.

FSNT advocates for an improvement in accountability and for authorities in colleges and universities to create favorable learning environments for girls and women and push for the establishment of sexual harassment policies in institutions of higher learning. Engaging with authorities on issues that matter has helped the Network to understand better the playing field and be able to re-think and adjust their interventions within the systems. The Government of Zimbabwe is one of the most difficult stakeholders, hence involving them in the Network’s interventions has improved its response towards issues of female students and somehow forced them to listen and co-operate. The FSNT works with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education and the relevant portfolio committees in carrying out policy advocacy and lobbying on issues affecting female students in the country.

FSNT continues to roll out awareness campaigns on issues of sexual harassment and has held several workshops to discuss the way forward and identify gaps from the grassroots in order to deal with this predicament.

As a network we are vibrant in leadership and capacity building, as well as mentorship programmes that have so far proven a success. This is evidenced in universities like National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and many others that never used to allow a female to occupy the SRC presidential post, but have since changed through the Network’s efforts. The Network’s efforts also enabled Mutare Teacher’s College in 2012 to have an all female SRC team, thus showing how FSNT has played a very vital role in enhancing female leadership capacity.

FSNT continues to be inspired by its director and the founder of the network, Evernice Mundando, who completed a Diploma through Tft. This energised her to nurture and grow the Network to its current dimension. Emanating from an activist background, Tft shaped and moulded Evernice to become a leader of difference, who came to believe in dialogue rather than throwing stones as she did as a student leader. Evernice thanks the Tft family, with a big thank you to Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, the pioneers of Tft and Ntombi Nyathi and team for being the implementers of Tft.

ABOUT EVERNICE MUNANDO

Evernice Munando is a 40 year old woman and the Founder and currently Executive Director of the Female Students Network Trust (FSNT). Munando has personal experience of female student activism, being the only female student leader in her time. She is actively involved in civic engagement and development work and is a member of the Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZI) and also sits on the board for Combined Residents Association (CHRA). She obtained a Certificate and a Diploma in Development Education from Training for Transformation in partnership with Kimmage University. Against great odds, she is a holder of a clean class one Journey person card in Carpentry and Joinery. She is a former vice chairperson of the School Development Association of David Livingstone Primary School, and Chairlady of hospitality in the Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe. Finally, Evernice is a mother of two boys aged 14 and 10 (Berzel and Byron Mahachi), and in her little “free time” she likes to meditate.

TfT - A CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY, CONFRONTATION AND CONTROVERSY

By Dan Glass, Scotland

If I had to describe myself and the work that I do, I would say I am an activist who harnesses the power of creativity to bring life, community empowerment and soul to a range of oppressive situations.



Recent examples include MC'ing 'Shafted?!' a speakeasy led by people with HIV to expose stigma; the 'Never Again Ever! cabaret led by Nazi Holocaust survivors to confront racism. Now I am involved in the development of 'Queer Tours of London - A Mince Through Time' to bring forth the visibility of our incredible community at large and the journey to how we became who we are today. Against the backdrop of global homophobia, criminalisation and oppression of the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex), 'Queer Tours of London' are being developed to support London's current queer activism, culture and performance in all its glory.

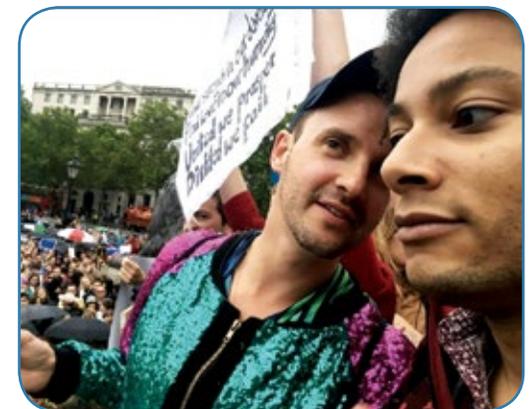
To me, the term "Queer" means believing that everyone has the right to be themselves and express themselves without being judged or hated because that doesn't fit in with what's seen as "normal".

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the passing of the 1967 'Sexual Offences Act' in the UK – an Act that led to the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in England – a fog of collective amnesia thickens. The 1960's LGBTQI activist movements visioned and demanded a world where we would be a 'Queer Nation', yet Britain is still unfortunately behind the times. There is no permanent LGBTQI museum or centre; comprehensive political representation; advertising standards to combat heteronormativity or infrastructure for LGBTQI housing projects. In addition, as reported in the Guardian newspaper (October 2016), since Brexit, LGBTQI people are facing an increase of nearly 150% in homophobic attacks. Without a radical shift in archiving our history, our future will continue to be sidelined. Better knowledge and understanding of our history will lead to collective pride.

The purpose of processes of critical education involves the marginalised learning to read their reality and writing their own history; gaining the ability to interpret the world critically and to act to change it. As the great Paulo Freire says "[T]he more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side."— *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

'Queer Tours of London - A Mince Through Time' aims to bring to life hidden queer histories while also kicking off a range of practical and contemporary creative human rights programmes relating to current LGBTQI equality. We exist to shine a light on London's rich LGBTQI history through creative and life-affirming interactive tours. We tell the stories of London's queer history, shedding light on the lives, spaces, identities, repression and resistance that form the backdrop of LGBTQI lives today. We do this through educational, accessible and interactive walking tours, cabarets, street-art and events that bring life to the complexities and lived experiences of our history, present and vision for the future!

To me, the term "Queer" means believing that everyone has the right to be themselves and express themselves without being judged or hated because that doesn't fit in with what's seen as "normal".



Attending TfT

I heard about TfT through Verene Nicolas who was the coordinator of the 'Human Ecology' Masters degree (Msc) in Glasgow, Scotland.

Even before that, Steve Biko's work and the relationship between the Anti-Apartheid struggle and other forms of oppression and resistance had been hugely influential in my praxis. I am particularly impacted by Biko's words that *'The most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is your mind'*, a quote that challenges us to combine deep personal transformation with effective radical mass action for social equality.

I attended the full Training for Transformation Diploma programme from 2012 - 2013. Attending TtT was the best thing I have ever been lucky enough to do. [I massively deepened my learning and skills in facilitation, tools for liberation, mass-mobilisation, critical education and so much more.](#) I still regularly check the notes I took during the TtT Diploma to refresh and deepen the wide range of skills which enables myself and my community development programmes to resonate more powerfully, from 'active listening' to 'the fundamental wheel of human needs' to 'levels of awareness'; essentially the transformative potentially – personally and on a mass-scale – has been huge.

One main memory that stands out is watching the facilitation team in action and the huge role models they turned out to be! The team of facilitators has been profoundly inspiring for me and my activism – if only I had found out about TtT years ago – this programme should be available in nursery schools and crèches!

ABOUT DAN GLASS

Dan Glass is an award-winning activist, performer and writer who was named as one of Attitude Magazine's campaigning role models for LGBTQI youth and a Guardian 'UK youth climate leader'. An agitator from the Training for Transformation educational programme, the core of Dan's work is the development of critical consciousness and creativity to spur people 'to read their reality and write their own history'. His recent programmes involve MC'ing 'Shafted?!' a speakeasy led by people with HIV, HIV / HEP C; Blind Date and the 'Never Again Ever! Beyond UKIP Cabaret in Nigel Farage's boozier. Contact Dan at www.theglassishalfull.co.uk and at alright@theglassishalfull.co.uk - Twitter #danglassisfull

WALKING ALONGSIDE PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY AS THEY DO THE WORK

By Thandiswa Blie, South Africa



I work for an organisation in the Western Cape called Mamelani, where I am a health facilitator on the Wellness Programme, sharing knowledge with people about their health. I focus on nutrition, chronic illness and HIV and AIDS.

Mamelani came into being around 2003. I have been there from the start, although my journey to Mamelani began a while before that when I worked as a volunteer carer at a drop-in centre for children who were living on the streets (this centre is now a partner of Mamelani). During that time – and perhaps also because there was so much stigma and stereotyping about “street kids” – I got so attached to these young boys. I noticed that there was some kind of racial divide between the boys (who were between the ages of 7 and 16 years), and I made it my mission to bridge those divisions. I was supposed to be there as a volunteer for only three months, but the organisation decided to keep me on as an employee.

I used to have many conversations with another volunteer at the drop-in centre (who is now in the leadership of Mamelani). We found ourselves talking a lot about HIV and AIDS, and I had that feeling in me that I needed to do something about HIV. Two stories in the media touched me particularly at that time. One was a billboard and television insert about a guy called “Lucky” who was HIV+ and lucky enough to be supported by his parents and family, despite his status. The other story I heard on the radio. It was about a man from my province of the Eastern Cape, who was rejected by his family because he was HIV+. These stories confirmed for me that people in our communities who were dealing with issues of HIV and AIDS needed to be supported, comforted and listened to. My friend and colleague pushed me, asking me: “So what are you going to do about your wish to work on this issue?” I felt that in order to “do something” about HIV, I needed to know more and I went to lots and lots of workshops. I learned so many

different things – how to be with and care for someone who is HIV+; the role of ARVs (anti-retroviral medication); how to adhere to medication; what is the best nutrition, etc. With help and support, I got myself through all of these workshops, because I was not working formally at the time.

I started to write down everything I learnt from my workshops and these notes became the first session in the Mamelani manual. I compiled it myself. It was called: “Understanding HIV/AIDS”. I used to undermine myself, thinking that I am not formally educated and given the context where I come from. I was surprised that this could happen, that I could record my own learning and draw on my own story and experience and contribute to something that helps others learn. It is kind of funny because this is also what Paulo Freire says is important – that we must not downplay the importance of people’s experience or of the power of writing our own stories!

Mamelani gets its name from the Xhosa word “*masimamelane*” which means “we must listen”. We believe that only through listening to the real needs of communities can real change happen. It was at Training for Transformation that the deep meaning of this concept became clear to me. I attended both the Certificate and Diploma courses. At the Diploma course, the Learning Teaching Teams (where you practise designing and facilitating workshops), played a big role in my learning, because then I had to change the ways I was working and doing workshops. **The main shift and learning was not to choose or impose the topic for people, they must choose.** You can see the “spark” of a theme that is relevant to people – when for example we ask people to write down a problem and there are a number of people in the room all agreeing that “Yes! This is it, this is the issue, this thing is really happening!”, you see the spark in the energy in the room. Tft gave me the way of letting them choose what problem to focus on and ways of encouraging them to action plan themselves. I think people must work, I must walk alongside, I must not decide for them and I must not try to solve their problems – they must solve their problems.



Giving people the space and power to name things and work through things for themselves is important. It also gives me time and space as a facilitator to observe – their emotions, the process, the dynamics, my own stuff.

So, since the early days of Mamelani, running workshops has been a core part of my work. I have facilitated many, many workshops across a number of different townships in Cape Town. Because there was so much stigma around HIV and AIDS, we thought: “Let’s add a focus on chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension”. So we give information on nutrition, chronic illnesses and then also on HIV and AIDS. There is a personal aspect to the workshops – people offload their problems and their stress. We also focus on the family, the workplace, the community – like the Holon systems that I learnt at Tft. We have a number of sessions and follow-up sessions with a group or individual, and in so doing we build on and strengthen what they are already doing.

One of the challenges in the area of HIV and AIDS is that people are defaulting on their ARV medication and not being consistent and compliant. There are many reasons for this. Some are working and are not allowed to take time off regularly or are anxious about taking time off or explaining to the employer why they need to be absent from work from time to time. Our response to this challenge is an exciting development in my work at Mamelani – Community clubs. We recruit members to join our community club, highlighting the benefits. We say: “If you join the club, you can collect your meds at your club venue rather than waiting for a much longer time at a clinic. Someone can also collect your medication on your behalf as long as you have had your bloods checked and you do attend the club as a member”.

The response has been very positive in this short time since starting this initiative and at the moment although we only have one club, we are working towards having three. Of course, this job has its challenges, it is not easy. It needs patience and kindness and humanity to connect with the people. The counselling role needs “guts”, you need to be strong. I also have other skills that I gained along the way, particularly around stress reduction and relaxation that help me in my work. I have knowledge and skills in alternative and holistic health methods, like massage, Reiki (a healing technique combining energy and touch) and practices that connect body-mind-spirit towards healing and recovery from trauma (like breath work, tai chi and acupuncture). I feel good knowing that I am making these services that most people can't afford to pay for, accessible to many. I also explain to people that there is nothing strange about these methods and that they have been used for centuries. Generally, there is a good response from people because they experience for themselves that the methods work.

At Tft, a highlight for me personally was meeting such a diverse group of people from far and wide. I was really interested in the cultural differences between us and it made me learn how to adapt and to fully understand differences between people. Today I can say that I am not like before. I was always so angry, I used to be triggered and respond immediately! **Something about Tft made me more harmonious, within myself and with others.** The laughter and tears in that training room and the love from the facilitators made me strong. I felt so accepted and acknowledged by facilitators and that made me confident. I did not feel judged based on where I came from, my level of formal education or my age. Since that experience I have been just going from strength to strength and I am ready to keep on doing what I do to make the world a better place.

ABOUT THANDISWA BLIE

I was born and raised in a small town called Alice in the Eastern Cape. I am a mother to a grown-up son, have an 11 year old granddaughter and am blessed to still have my two elderly parents at home. If I am not at work, I like to watch TV, listen to Gospel music or go to church. My dream is to keep working in formal employment and after that to take my knowledge and skills to the Eastern Cape.

CALLED TO SERVE AND SELECTED TO LEAD

By Mable Sichali, Zambia



The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) is a faith-based organisation which has been in existence for 51 years, with the mandate to preach the gospel. The UCZ created a department for Community Development and Social Justice programmes 11 years ago, with the view to address the many social ills that communities face. For a long time the church preached the gospel without offering practical and psychosocial help to its members and communities. During 2010/2011 the church, with the help of Gossner Mission and Church of Scotland, partnered with Training for Transformation and sent 5 participants to study community development education at Tft. I happened to be among that first group and graduated with a Diploma with good grades. After the training, I continued co-ordinating a congregation and running an organisation I founded in 2007 through the social services committee. I served as an Executive Director and congregation chairperson as well as zone leader for Christian Women Fellowship. Two and half years later, I was appointed as Community Development and Social Justice Secretary, breaking the record because since the church's inception, **I am the first deaconess to hold a senior management position – a position I still hold today; all because of Tft.** They wanted someone with an undergraduate degree or Master's degree, but with my Tft Diploma I surpassed highly qualified Reverends with Master's degrees, emerging as the best candidate and getting the job. I would like to believe that I have proved that indeed I was the best candidate for the job.

Challenges

My challenges go back to when I was in South Africa during Tft. Many people back home were not happy and questioned the integrity of the criteria used for my selection. Some of the respected leaders were so annoyed that my education was never recognised.

Also, while I was being trained at Tft, our domestic worker accidentally dropped my baby daughter without disclosing this unfortunate incident. This led to an injury that developed into a serious brain tumour. We struggled with the illness for a year, during which I was reduced to pleading for help to take my daughter for an operation in India. Because all my financial resources were going towards my child's medical care, my financial status grouped me amongst poor women, even though I had worked for many years. Tragically, my baby girl died. I remember that I was hospitalised in the University Teaching Hospital for four months before she died and that I was writing my research paper while in the hospital. This was the hardest moment for me and during this time I saw dozens and dozens of children die hour after hour. I saw the abuse of women by some medical personnel. I remember one day crying to God that I had seen enough. That experience has deeply impacted me in many ways.

Through the skills and knowledge I gained from Tft, I have become brave to face the challenges with boldness. My dialogue, advocacy and facilitation skills have improved tremendously. My writing and English language has also improved, I am no longer ashamed to speak in public and I am able to address any audience. I am more focused than ever. I always have relevant information at my fingertips and am ready for any situation. My research and public speaking skills have greatly improved and have enabled me to represent the church in high profile meetings, both at local and international levels. Below is an excerpt from the conversation between one international partner and my immediate manager, Peggy: "Dear Peggy, I wanted to write to let you know that Mable did a fabulous job in representing the UCZ. I am grateful to you for sending her to take part in our conference. The Church of Scotland has truly been blessed. Mable interacted with many people whilst she was here and all were taken with her commitment, dedication and ability. We are thankful to you and UCZ for the work that you do." And Peggy's reply: "Dear Jennie, we thank God for the good report about Mable... she has also shared with us the good program that you put in place for her and that she was enriched by her interaction with a lot of people".

My facilitation skills have given me a platform to conduct workshops in many places. My negotiations skills have also given me an opportunity to work with different partners both at local and international level and one such interaction resulted in me sourcing funding to buy a wafer-making machine. I recently also found sponsors for the construction of a 'Child and Mother Care Centre', to mitigate the impact of teenage pregnancies and early marriage. The project will receive 120,000 pounds over three years.

From the time of my daughter's death, I have developed a passion for children. I have become an activist and initiated the formulation of a child protection policy which my church has never had. I now speak with so much passion and dedication all because of Tft. In November 2015, I lobbied to go to Geneva to high profile meeting, for a stronger voice for Children's Rights. I went with my 6 month old baby and was the only African woman challenging the activists (and doing so with my baby on my back!). My son was one of the delegates representing children the world over.

It is gratifying to say that during my tenure of office, UCZ has more community projects than before and I have managed to send 9 Deaconesses for Tft, with 6 ready for the 2017 intake. I supervise more than 50 deaconesses.

Under my leadership UCZ have more than 200 self-help groups of between 15 to 20 members each. I have managed to train 720 leaders in missional congregations, among which are 30 reverends and 50 deaconesses.



I am now a member of a circle of African women theologians. My preaching is no longer that of control. I am very practical. I now listen a lot and respect everyone. I work with more satisfaction now than before. TfT made me discover myself. I have found meaning for all that I do now and I feel called to serve.

ABOUT MABLE SICHALI

My full name is Mable Kifwabantu Sichali born in the 70s. I am married with 3 children, 2 boys and one girl. I have been a diaconal worker in the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) for 10 years. I am currently pursuing my degree in Social work at Cavendish University-Zambia Campus.

TFT: A LIFE-CHANGE PROGRAMME

By Afaf Doleeb, Sudan

Since I participated in the Training for Transformation course in 2012, my life has changed in many different ways – personally, professionally, and spiritually. It has been a life-changing experience, not just a study programme.



After I came back from South Africa, I conducted research on the “brain drain” in Sudan and started to realize the extent of the problems my country is facing. I interviewed many talented, well educated people and most of them asked me the same question: “Why did you come back from South Africa? Do you plan to migrate?” And I said the same to all: “I didn’t shift my study major to the topic of Development in order to develop other countries”. I know that at least 90 percent of the younger generation is looking for an opportunity to leave the country due to the economic and political situations there. However, for me, TfT gave me the hope and motivation to change; although sometimes I feel frustrated.

I started working with the United Nations Office for Project Services a few months after my graduation. It was not long till I realized that we are far away from development, even though our agency specialization is ‘sustainable development’.

I worked at the programme unit and watched senior programme specialists writing proposals from the office. There was a clear gap between the communities’ needs and what the agency offered. After a while, I convinced the head of office at our hub and headquarter office, to conduct assessments before implementing any project. It wasn’t easy as they said that we were working in conflict zones and no specialist would risk his or her life to go and conduct an assessment there. So I volunteered to do the first assessment after getting clearance from the UNDSS “security office”. The project budget was 5 million Euro to build water infrastructure in specific areas. However, the shocking feedback I received from the community forced us to change the whole programme.

The communities didn’t want us to build water holes close to their villages. At the beginning I couldn’t understand why, but they told me that water sources attract rivals “Janjaweed”, putting their lives at risk. That’s why every time we construct such infrastructure, people move away, preferring to walk at least 6 hours a day to get water. I also asked about the facilities in the area, like schools, and the mothers’ response was shocking to me. One of the women said “the government or Janjaweed might bump us at any time, or they will take these kids to become soldiers, so let them enjoy the childhood life they have for now”. I cried for many nights and reported all the responses I got to my supervisors and HQ. [Now we have a policy saying that “no project should be designed without community consultations”](#). The project is now serving 500 000 direct beneficiaries and we do our best to find solutions to deliver better interventions.

Since 2013, I am also supporting an organisation called “SEEMA Center for Protection of Women and Child Rights”, working on providing services to the victims of Gender Based Violence and protecting Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), in addition to other vulnerable groups. The centre is delivering psychosocial, legal, health and financial services to the victims. They support around 300 victims of rape each year and work on the law reform through advocacy. They have now succeeded in making changes to the rape article, which was one of the most

discriminatory articles in the Sudanese Criminal Law 1991. The article didn't have a specific identification of rape, and confused it with adultery. It needed 4 men or 8 women to witness the rape incident in order to accuse someone of rape. This is usually impossible. Fortunately, the centre, together with other groups, managed to change it.



I learnt a lot of valuable things from Tft, but the most important value was the sense of commitment to the community, which will live in me forever.

TFT HAS BEEN LIKE MY EASTER EVENT, MOVING ME FROM A DEADLY STAGE, INTO LIFE

By Naftal Guambe, Mozambique

As a church worker I am expected to engage with communities on issues of Christian ethics and values, as I learned in my theological studies. In the process of my studies I was “packed full” with Christian ethics and values which I regard highly as relevant and necessary in contributing towards making the world a better place. However, I was faced with the challenge of how to successfully express and exercise these Christian ethics and values within the realities of my context. Training for Transformation has taken me to a new level of activism and of world citizenship through nurturing me to bravely engage with the complexity of the world in which I, and we, live. Therefore, **Tft is my Easter, as it has awakened me from constructed limitations into a new vibrant level of activism.**

I literally moved from only speaking words of transformation, into



seeking to live the words that I speak. Tft has been helping me to be more of myself and to have courage to speak and live my mind. I am better able to express my thoughts better and more openly and I feel in more constant contact with my conscience. In a sense, I am fighting for the liberation of my mind. The journey of trying to understand myself has also increased my ability to be a better observer of the behaviour of others, especially the people of my community. Before Tft, I did not know that I had to “grow into being” in order to accompany congregations or communities through the process of transformative development. Tft instilled in me even more life-affirming skills and helped me understand how I could reshape and share these in my community engagement. It helped to fill the gaps in my ministry as it challenged me to creatively and positively critique what was not working in my ministry, and to move beyond into and appreciating other beings' existence and my co-existence with them.

Co-existence is a core of Tft for me, and it inspired in me a living hope which made me so eager to always want to share my insights with others. Some tools, such as social and structural analysis (the six or seven steps of “digging deeper”), have become the most relevant approach in my ministry with communities. It is a tool I also use when engaging with my colleagues as we seek the way forward to improve our work. In the process of rethinking the church's mission together with theological students and fellow Tft graduates of Mozambique, we introduced the Tft programme to 49 students of two Theological Seminaries in Inhambane and Maputo provinces. Then, beneficiaries called Tft process “Boa Nova da Tft”, meaning “Tft Good News”. Students continue to keep in contact with us as they try to apply some of the tools in their context.

My experience in sharing Tft methodology has been creative, exciting, funny, insightful and deeply reflective. In a workshop with anti-drug student activists, I used the “onion code” (peeling off various layers of an onion), that I learnt during my Diploma, to explain the intersection of problems leading to alcohol abuse. The activists moved from blaming the students with alcohol addictions into naming other hidden



Student's community awareness on the effects of drugs abuse, Mozambique

reasons for alcohol abuse. Currently they are organizing to shift the school board's approach and attitude towards this issue, which is one of punishment of drunk students. Interestingly, I experience a "clash" between the school board's traditional mainstream education approach and the popular education approach used by the 41 Tft trained student activists. Those activists have led campaigns with 700 students, raising awareness and consciousness through creative methods like classroom dialogues and conventional drama. We look forward to implementing the Augusto Boal methodology of "Theatre of the Oppressed" during 2017. This methodology uses drama techniques and moves beyond just talking, into interactive ways of exploring and reflecting on issues – their impact, causes and solutions – in a dynamic way.

I have been receiving many invitations from young people to facilitate their programmes because this popular education methodology of Tft uses creative and participatory ways of engaging. Once, towards the end of a workshop in a church, a young man with a bright smile said: "We thought that we were just playing a fun game, but I would never have thought we could come this far with that simple game... we are really learning and we don't want the topic to stop now!" People usually feel a little strange with the methodology when I begin, but they quickly engage the topic because it always is a relevant and "burning" issue. For instance, an elderly lay-leader made me emotional when he ran to me calling my name and spoke about a workshop event

which happened about a year back, where I had used an organisational development tool to reflect and discuss participative leadership. He said (in translation): "I never forget what we did that day, I always judge my leadership based on our discussion in that event..." This is the power of individual and collective transformative development, of a methodology which awakens the conscience to new level of consciousness.

I celebrate my Easter daily. I chose Easter to compare how Jesus had to die to resurrect into a new level of Glory. I have resurrected into being a new world citizen with a spirit not limited by human conditioning. I feel my tremendous potential to engage in many areas of life. The best gift of this Tft process is how I came to balance an opened mind, a feeling heart and creative active hands.

ABOUT NAFTAL GUAMBE

Naftal Xavier Guambe is a young Mozambican man born in 1988. After Theological Studies at Africa University in Zimbabwe, he completed a Tft Certificate course (2013/2014) and then enrolled for a Tft Diploma course (2016/2017). He co-ordinates the United Methodist Church's Project of Sustainability, under the Mozambican Bishops office. He co-founded the SPARK Project which currently trains school anti-drug activists and co-facilitates Tft introductory courses in Mozambican Theological Seminaries. For relaxation in his free time he loves taking a slow walk without a specific destination, playing the guitar with friends and reading any critical books (a hobby since Tft).

MY STORY OF "BECOMING"

By Jumana Eltigani, Sudan

Training for Transformation has been one of the most significant experiences in my life. It has reshaped me and helped me grow to be the self-assured African Muslim woman I am today. Although I studied Chemistry science, as a Sudanese woman experiencing and witnessing violence against women in Sudan, my desire for achieving social justice in my country and my passion towards working directly with communities, led me to work for a non-profit organisation that provides



services to children and women victims of Gender-based violence. SEEMA Center for Training and Protection of Women and Children's Rights provides services that include legal aid, health services, psychotherapy and social support. SEEMA also acts as a training centre where activists, potential service providers to victims, as well as partners, can receive training in different areas related to GBV. I felt there was a huge gap between what I originally studied and the work that I was doing. Training for Transformation provided the opportunity for me to link theory with action.

My story of "becoming" started in March 2014, when I was at Khartoum airport, travelling to South Africa to participate in the TtT course. At that moment I was thinking deeply about whether I was really ready to participate in the TtT programme. I doubted and questioned my ability to engage, to receive and to give. I lacked the confidence to be in a new place, studying new things in a different language. I was also concerned about being judged because I am Muslim. At that time I was also grappling with my ethnic identity, asking myself: "Am I Arab or African?!" Many thoughts were running through my mind and I was scared. Today I think I am no longer scared, but I am scaring my family for the new way I am thinking, I am scaring my organisation for the way I am challenging and I am scaring the System for way I am engaging in the community.

TtT has assisted me to discover new abilities in myself. I am currently one of the main facilitators in my Organisation and have facilitated workshops on Gender-Based Violence and service provision for about 100 service providers. Using a participatory methodology in workshops was initially a challenge for me since my organisation was used to a non-participatory approach. Because I had learned the importance of engaging communities in process of dialogue, I started to influence a change in the training culture of my organisation, assisting my colleagues in facilitating in a different way. For starters, we began to call ourselves "facilitators" rather than "trainers". We started practising how to engage people in a participatory way and this new approach is slowly becoming part of the training programme.

It was a great moment for me when I was preparing for a workshop with the director of the organisation and she said "The discussion with you today made me feel that we are doing genuine work for the real benefit of the community".

My worries about how my identity as a Muslim would be received also turned out to be a lesson for me. Together with my fellow participants, we got to a place of genuinely believing that no matter which faith we belong to, we can make the world a better place. It was also a lesson for us to give ourselves a chance to understand others by engaging with them, not relying on assumptions and projections we receive from others. I subsequently participated in a Cross Culture programme in Germany, which aims to strengthen the networks between Germany and the Islamic world. At the time, I was representing Sudan as a Muslim woman and I was proudly showing the world that I am Muslim, not afraid to be judged, but ready to tell people about my Islam. Through my engagement with different organisations in Germany, a fund was raised for my organisation in Sudan. This money was used for ten Sudanese women to start income generation projects in different areas in Khartoum, to meet their basic needs and improve their lives. This idea was a result of a significant learning I had early on at TtT about the importance of self-reliant programmes.

Another area of challenge for me initially was the issue of language. I remember the first day when I met the TtT programme director, Ntombi, I told her that my English language was not good. By the time I went back to Sudan, I was able to translate documents and edit proposals for the Diabetes Programs Promotion Organisation.



I edited the translation of the TtT books from English to Arabic, an important job that will make the book and methodology accessible to an audience from Sudan and other Arabic-speaking countries.

Although I speak Arabic, I was born in Saudi Arabia and pushed by the system to adopt the Arabic culture. I slowly started to claim my African identity by being in an environment that allows me to be who I am. Since that time, I have become very sure of myself as an African Muslim Woman. For me, Tft is an experience of “continuous becoming” and a journey of self discovery that has impacted my life positively, and continues to do.



Training for Transformation

We express our gratitude to the following Tft graduates for sharing their stories with us:

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*The Grail Centre, 15th Avenue,
PO Box 80, Kleinmond 7195, South Africa*
Tel: +27 (0)28 271 4887 Fax + 27 (0)86 576 8865
Email: tft@grailprogrammes.org.za
Website: www.trainingfortransformation.co.za
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Training4Transformation

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