

Empathy in action – Participation and HIV prevention in Malawian schools

Malawi London, United Kingdom
Fiona Morrell





Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Established

Budget:

\$250,000 - \$500,000

Website:

<http://www.tfacafrica.com>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Theatre for a Change uses experiential participation to help support some of the most vulnerable communities in Malawi live safer, more equitable lives.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

In Malawi teachers have an HIV prevalence rate of 23%, nearly double the national average and placing them as the third most at-risk group in the country. Two teachers die every day. Young people between 13 and 24 are the most likely to become infected with HIV and young women are 4 times more likely to become infected than their male peers. Around 60% of adults living with HIV are women. Gender inequity in education is evidenced by the under-enrollment of girls in secondary education by almost 2:1 compared to their male counterparts. Less than 7% complete their school education. An important starting point for us is to establish empathy for people who are disempowered – this is the catalyst for change.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

We use participatory and experiential approaches in teacher training college to help pre-service teachers develop emotional intelligence and awareness of HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, and gender rights. We continue to support teachers to use these active participatory approaches as they take up post in schools. This enables them to develop inclusive, empathetic, child-centred classrooms from which they can engage their students and disseminate their awareness of HIV prevention. Our innovative programme ensures we reach wide numbers of people in an impactful and sustainable way. Central to this is our unique innovative participatory radio broadcasts. This audio equivalent of our 'touch tag' methodology reaches 500,000 people every week and is supported by our school listening club programme.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Over the last 3 years TfaC has trained 7,200 teachers to develop the awareness and empathy which enables them to manage their sexual health positively and make an impact when facilitating this process with students and their fellow teachers in schools. Our endline evaluation of 1600 training teachers on our programme recorded that both men and women show gains of nearly 50 percentage points in their ability to both use male and female condoms. Supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education our trained teachers are able to let participatory pedagogy permeate their teaching practise – constantly encouraging children to explore, through a range of drama techniques, what it feels like to be someone else and make different choices. This supports positive behaviour change and helps children develop the empathy and self-efficacy to advocate for their gender rights. Teachers have set up 314 listening clubs in schools where they gather boys, girls, parents and teachers to listen and participate in our weekly broadcast drama. The programme promotes inter-generational communication and empathy around issues such as HIV and gender equality. Our endline evaluation shows a 19.4% increase of learners in clubs who felt comfortable discussing HIV.

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

We are the only practitioners using these unique participatory behavioural change approaches to tackle HIV and gender equality in Malawi. We are

supported through excellent partnerships with the Ministries of Education and Gender and other large NGOs, such as Concern and UNICEF, with whom we are able to disseminate our learning and partner for specific projects such as our Child Protection work. We are confident these partnerships will help us develop a franchise model that will enable sustainable growth of our successful methodologies and deeper, wider impact for our participants.

About You

Organization:

Theatre for a Change

About You

First Name

Fiona

Last Name

Morrell

Twitter URL

Facebook URL

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Theatre for a Change

Organization Country

, London

Country where this project is creating social impact

Your role in Education

Other.

The type of school(s) your solution is affiliated with

Public (tuition-free)

How long has your organization been operating?

More than 5 years

Innovation

How long has your solution been in operation?

Operating for 1 5 years

Now that you have thought out your entry, help us pitch it.

Define your company, program, service, or product in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

TfaC uses experiential approaches to enable vulnerable people to protect themselves from HIV and advocate for their gender rights.

Identify what is innovative about your solution in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

We support teachers become empathetic so they can protect themselves, their students and their school from HIV and promote gender equity

Social Impact

What has been the impact of your solution to date?

Over the last three years we have worked with 7,200 teachers who in turn will influence over 72,000 students. The teachers have set up 318 schools listening clubs, each with 5 boys, 5 girls, 10 parents and 5 other teachers. There are an additional 20 listening clubs, in teacher training college. These clubs enable us to work with 8,950 people each week. The radio station estimates that each broadcast is listened to by 500,000 Malawians.

Our endline surveys show gains of nearly 50% in teachers' ability to use condoms and negotiate safe sex. There was also an increase in HIV Testing. Our radio project endline showed clubs helped learners feel they could trust their teachers in matters surrounding sexual health with a 21.7% increase.

What is your projected impact over the next 1-3 years?

Over the next 3 years, we will train another 7,200 pre-service teachers in college in participatory, empathetic pedagogy.

We will increase the numbers of schools listening clubs to 600, enabling us to reach 15,000 direct beneficiaries each week and through active empathy, promote behaviour change and advocacy of sexual and reproductive health issues and gender equality

We will build the capacity of our radio team, ensuring the broadcast remains fresh, relevant and continues to attract more listeners.

We will scale up the use of participatory radio by exploring its use and launching the project in other Southern African countries.

What barriers might hinder the success of your project? How do you plan to overcome them?

As our projects develop and we reach more beneficiaries, our challenge will be to preserve the deep impact and excellent quality of delivery. Our

radio broadcasts are specifically designed to use our approach of active empathy through the listening calling in and participating; as we scale up the work this element will remain at its heart.

We have a rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedure. Each of our newly qualified teachers are mentored and assessed by more experienced teachers, trained by TfaC. This helps ensure the quality of participatory in-class teaching and supports the establishment and management of listening clubs.

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

In the next six months we will support our latest cohort of teachers take their awareness of empathy and participation into thei

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your six-month milestone

Task 1

Complete a baseline of our new teaching cohort to check their skills and awareness

Task 2

Train a cohort of experienced teachers as regional monitoring and evaluation mentors to supervise the newly qualified teachers

Task 3

Support teachers in the establishment of 50 new listening clubs in schools

Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Training of new cohort of pre-service teachers. Expand reach and impact of listening groups. Begin international scale up.

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your 12-month milestone

Task 1

Recruit a new cohort of pre-service teachers and begin their 10 month training programme in teacher training colleges

Task 2

Build capacity in the radio project by completing broadcasting techniques training for 10 teachers

Task 3

Commission a consultant to scope out potential market for participatory radio programme in 2 Southern African countries

Founding Story: We want to hear about your "Aha!" moment. Share the story of where and when the founder(s) saw this solution's potential to change the world [125 words]

The 'Aha!' moment was in a teacher training college, where a group of young teachers had just performed the true story of a girl who was sexually abused by a teacher. Shockingly, there was laughter in the audience, particularly among the young men. The facilitator asked if anyone would like to help the protagonist, by taking her role. Silence, with the occasional giggle. Then one young woman made her way from the back of the hall, past all of her male colleagues, to come and take the part of the protagonist – she replayed the scene with the teacher, and this time firmly asserted her rights not be abused, and threatened to report him if he didn't leave her alone. This was empathy in action.

Sustainability

Tell us about your partnerships

TfaC holds Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministries of Education and Health in Malawi ensuring our work is policy relevant.

We are supported and collaborate with funders including Comic Relief, Open Society, DFID, GIZ, Christian Aid, Barclays Bank and Saving Grace in collaboration with the Guardian Newspaper.

Our partnerships with academics include SOAS, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the London International Development Centre. Our partnerships enable our rigorous, sustainable and wide-reaching programmes.

What type of team (staff, volunteers, etc.) will ensure that you achieve the growth milestones identified in the *Social Impact* section? [75 words]

Our growth will be led by our staff in Malawi who will continue to train pre-service teachers and manage the programmes. The mentoring of young teachers will be carried out by experienced teachers, trained in monitoring and evaluation, who receive additional stipends. Capacity building of the radio team will be carried out by volunteers from the BBC World Service and SOAS. We will employ a local consultant to carry out the scoping evaluation in preparation for scaling up activities in other Southern African countries.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren't specified within the list

Theatre for a Change offers great opportunities for research. We work with regular cohorts of people in both Malawi and Ghana, many of whom are HIV positive. Potential research projects include HIV adherence research, longitudinal impact studies and research into arts based participation.

We want to raise our profile both in the UK and the US and would be interested in marketing/media support.