

# Training for Transformation

## VOICES OF PRACTICE 2018



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TFT PARTNERSHIPS</b> By Sr. Marykutty Mathew Palaparambi, India	3
<b>THROUGH FAITH ALL IS POSSIBLE</b> Sr Annacletter Ncube, Zimbabwe	4
<b>THERE IS A BETTER TOMORROW IF WE MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS AND CHOICES</b> By Jane Rabera Nyamwamu, Kenya	5
<b>THE STORY OF THE MARKET WOMEN</b> By Moureen Wagubi, Uganda	6
<b>WORKING AS A CHANGE AGENT IN THE SHOES OF PRIESTHOOD</b> By Fr Edward Gracious Kapalamula, Malawi	7
<b>LEAD PURPLE: LEADER IN THE MAKING</b> By Rebecca Mackett, South Africa	8
<b>THE IMPACT ON HUMANITY</b> By Maria Latumahina, Indonesia (Papua)	10
<b>GREAT CHANGE TAKING PLACE</b> By Mayibongwe Ngwenya, Zimbabwe	12
<b>THINKING CRITICALLY</b> By Carmen Opperman, South Africa	13
<b>CELEBRATING SMALL VICTORIES</b> By Caroline Mutimbanyoka, Zimbabwe	14
<b>I BECAME A REAL WOMAN LEADER</b> By Miskin Amag Gombo, Indonesia (Papua)	15
<b>PERSONAL CONVICTION AND TURNING POINT</b> By Mellania Bote, Zimbabwe	16
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	

## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TFT PARTNERSHIPS

By Sr. Marykutty Mathew Palaparambi, India

I am Sr. Marykutty Mathew Palaparambil, a health worker by profession. I worked for some time as a community health nurse and gradually became a community development worker. I live in India and work with indigenous (Adivasi) women, empowering them and helping them to be free, self-sustained and to live happily. Together we are trying to make our surroundings a better place to live in. It was around 2016 and I was in the process of organising Adivasi women and conducting various types of training when I did the TFT course.



The first challenge I faced was changing my own pattern of giving classes.

I changed from the conventional classroom method to a participatory method. The women resisted in the beginning as they were used to passive listening. When I began asking them question after question to get to the root of the problem, they were pushed to think and they were not used to this particular way of thinking to answer these kinds of questions. Gradually the women were introduced to critical thinking and they began to enjoy it. In this process the learning became interesting and the process of change became faster and more visible. The skills of conflict management helped me to overcome the challenges faced by changing my methodology. Using creative methods and materials like newsprint, crayons and other visual aids also began after TFT.

I was also actively involved in my organisation's triennial planning programme in my Province in India as well as in our International gathering to plan for the sexennium for the entire congregation which is spread over 50 countries. It took only a moment to spell out my experience at TFT, but in my actions I contributed in various ways towards liberation and transformation - of myself, the congregation and the people with whom we work. Our six-year Global plan is informed a lot by TFT and it is like salt in food, invisible but giving taste by its addition.



In my community there is more of dialogue and we practice the principles of deep democracy. We have planned together the many small steps that to we need to collectively take in order to care of creation. As a community we also inculcate these values in the children who live in our hostel. One simple example is that after I shared my experience of TFT, as a community we gave up sugar and we are more aware of the limited resources of nature and the responsible use of things.

With the help of Ramesh and Sunil, my peers at TFT and under the guidance of Fr. Xavier we gave a course of TFT to our women leaders – in total about 100 women in different groups. They too learned the new skills and techniques. No more do we sit in classroom style, we now sit in a circle, where we can see and relate to each other. Instead of preparing and giving the lectures we now follow the TFT animation and facilitation method of Learning and Teaching Teams. The leaders learnt with practical experiences how to plan, execute and evaluate workshop. One of the participants, Jermaben, commented; “[now I know that where there is a problem, there is answer too. It is only a matter of going to the root cause to solve the problem.](#)” Geethaben commented that “learning to be good listener has helped me to make my family a happy family”. Training on gender equity was totally new and Radhaben said “knowing gender was as if entering into a new world”.

I had an opportunity to work with Fr. Xavier to conduct two ten-day TFT courses for Christian brothers in Shillong. In fact, it was like an internship for me because, there I realized that I had not understood some aspects and some other aspects were only partially understood. Conducting the classes together with other TFT graduates and Fr. Xavier was like attending a refresher course which helped me to go deeper into the reflections, especially regarding the principles of Paulo Freire.

Currently, I move from place to place animating the sisters of my province. Some of my sisters have

shared that they see a change in me after my training of TFT. I agree that my learning and experience in TFT has brought some personal transformation in my life. My thinking and acting pattern changed and I began to see the people and the world around me differently. My perception and vision have changed. I am transformed from being welfare oriented worker to being a transformation worker. I am convinced that in the process of my personal transformation I will take my community and congregation along with me. I am sure the effect will be the spark of transformation for all of us in all our work.

## THROUGH FAITH ALL IS POSSIBLE

By Sr. Annacletter Ncube, Zimbabwe

My name is Annacletter Ncube and I am from Lupane in Zimbabwe. I am a religious woman from the congregation of servants of Mary the Queen (AMR Sisters). I joined religious life in 2009 and professed in 2013. My congregation is in Bulawayo Diocese in Zimbabwe. We serve the local church and my role in society is to spread the word of God in words and action, doing pastoral work and working with different age groups in the church. This is a short story of my journey through Training for Transformation (TFT) and the projects that I have embarked on. I hope it will inspire you and change your life in the process.



### Training for Transformation

In 2017 to 2018, I did a Training for Transformation Diploma in Development Studies at the Grail Centre in South Africa. The information I gained changed my life and the lives of others in the church and society at large. It has helped me to come up with solutions for my own problems without asking help from other people. I also conscientise people and encourage them to come up with solutions to their challenges. I think critically, am innovative and take initiative. After completing my studies, I used my skills practically in my work place. One of the tools I have used many times is appreciative inquiry. This tool has worked well to help children discover their own talents, and has helped to boost the esteem of children in that they realise that they are superior, not inferior.

### Motivation and passion: our gardening project

My pride is a self reliant project of gardening - planting vegetables and tomatoes - that we have started at Inyathi (St Henry's Catholic Church). We do this as a community of three, myself, Sister Nobuhle Nkomo and Father Herbert Mudzimu. We do backyard farming, planting in the church yard. It is a small space and we decided to use empty cement sacks and black plastic bags for container planting. This is working well for us. It is an effective method, using limited land for more vegetables. It also help us to use less water and instead of buying watering cans, we simply punch small holes in 5 litre containers and use as recycled watering vessels. We do this to show that it is possible to start a business using the sometimes limited resources at your disposal and without buying anything. The main challenge we face is the acquisition of



pesticides and finding more space. Water is also a challenge even though we strive to use less water. What I like most is that we work together happily.

### Future plans

I am looking forward to seeing a flourishing garden that will sustain us and also inspire other people to explore possible projects in their homes. This benefits the immediate community as we sell the produce at affordable prices and also promotes healthy lifestyles as we use organic fertilisers. While we look forward to rolling out the project in the community, we would also like to introduce soup kitchens in the interim, to address the hunger experienced in the period before people's gardens are ready for harvest. We also look forward to engaging schools to have such projects as well.

Some of the assistance we need includes the drilling of a borehole in order to alleviate the water shortage situation. We also need more land space to expand the garden and support to buy pesticides.

### Closing gratitude

I am grateful to all the teachers who taught me at Training for Transformation (TFT). *My spirituality of love has been deepened and nourished daily as I recognise my purpose on earth. TFT has also helped me to be dedicated to my work; bringing awareness to the people I rub shoulders with.* I greatly appreciate my superior general and her councillors who supported me. I also send my gratitude to all those who helped me in different ways. May Almighty GOD bless them abundantly. In a special way my profound gratitude goes to my community at Inyathi, which allows me to practise what I learnt. May they stay blessed.

### THERE IS A BETTER TOMORROW IF WE MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS AND CHOICES

By Jane Rabera Nyamwamu, Kenya

My name is Jane Rabera Nyamwamu. I work with Neighbours Initiative Alliance as a Human Resource Officer and double my work as a Trainer of Trainers. Neighbours Initiative Alliance is a non-governmental organization working with marginalized and vulnerable groups in pastoralist communities in Kenya. Before Training for Transformation (TFT) I only concentrated on carrying out office administration duties and did not mind much about what was happening around the community with which we worked so long as my work was done satisfactorily. Although I had a passion to work with vulnerable and marginalized persons especially women and girls I did not have the opening to do so.



After TFT an opportunity presented itself and I was assigned to be a trainer of adolescents and representatives of community water utilities. This involved building capacity amongst adolescents who are schooling and those who have dropped out of school, aged 10-19 years. Several sessions with adolescents in Paranae Primary School on sexual reproductive health, covering the full spectrum of women's reproductive needs and rights, from adolescence through motherhood and beyond. We tackled on issues of how FGM affects the girl child's progress in education. One girl was triggered when the father wanted to circumcise her and utilized the skills and knowledge gained in the training to defy the retrogressive cultural practice. I will share her story.

Esther Lazarus is 13 years old and a class 8 pupil at Paranae Primary School, one of the schools that is targeted under the capacity building projects for adolescents. The school is in Kajiado Central Sub County, Kajiado County, with a population of 213 pupils; 77 boys and 136 girls. She hails from a polygamous family of 16 siblings, 10 girls and 6 boys. She is the second born in her biological mother's household. Esther's father organized for her to be circumcised, but she refused and ran away from home because she had information on the negative effect associated with the practice. She also knew that if she agreed to the circumcision, her father would marry her off before she could complete her education. Likely, the mother was also against the practice and so she protected her daughter. *"I refused to go through FGM because of the negative effects. Two of my sisters went through FGM and were married off at the age of 15 years",* said Esther. She further explained that *"My sisters were not able to complete their studies because they were married off at a tender age; they had serious complications during child birth and always experience painful periods"*. In addition to the knowledge that Esther had gained from her two sisters' experience after going through FGM, the Adolescents Empowerment Programme (AEP) has really boosted her knowledge through the training sessions she has been attending. From the life skills learnt she has become more assertive and can take good care of herself. Esther understands her rights to education as a girl. *"I want to be a teacher and become an ambassador and to walk with girls in my community to ensure that no girl is denied the right to a bright future because of negative cultural practices like FGM and early marriages",* she says.



Esther has become a very resourceful person in the institution with standing leadership qualities and powerful communication skills. She is the current school president and a mentor at the same time.

She has mentored many girls to be more assertive and avoid being subjected to negative cultural practices in the community like FGM and Early marriage. *“Esther has really mentored many girls in our school to shun FGM. She does that by outlining the negative effects it has on the lives of Maasai girls who are subjected to the practice and forced to get married at a very young age. This has really affected the health of girls and education outcome in Kajiado County”*, said teacher Jane Naserian.

Training for Transformation has capacitated me with skills, knowledge and courage to be able to impact the lives of young people to realise change and attain their life aspirations and dreams. This has taught me never to give up a dream just because it will take time to accomplish. I also realise that *my life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives, especially the young girls who can find a voice to confront the barriers of life.*

## THE STORY OF THE MARKET WOMEN OF UGANDA

By Moureen Wagubi, Uganda

I am Moureen Wagubi, a 2018-19 Diploma course participant. TFT has been partnering with the organization I work for since its formation. The Institute for Social Transformation (IST) is a non-Governmental Organization working with the marginalized majority in Uganda, East Africa; with a primary goal of promoting a more just society with an inclusive approach to development. It trains individuals, institutions, and communities to enable them initiate and sustain change processes. IST work is based on the philosophy of Paulo Freire which is centered on the ability of groups and individuals to read their reality from the perspective of the root causes of their problems and then to take control to change their lives for the better.



Since 2015, IST has been working with women in informal markets in Uganda, empowering them with leadership and business literacy skills. In 2016, IST conducted research which found that 80% of the local market occupants were women. However, they are not represented in the administration and management of these markets. This finding revealed a gap in balancing power between women and men. The imbalance in power relations is strongly attributed to conservative culture and patriarchal dominance that assumes that men are the only ones who are created to be leaders.

Informed by these findings, IST started working with Market Women entrepreneurs to strengthen their voice and participation through training them in Transformational Leadership. To date IST has built capacity of 1000 (one thousand) women in transformational leadership. It has also created platforms for women to speak out for themselves, as well as creating Women Associations through which they can exercise their leadership skills. Because of such platforms some of the women have been elected to leadership positions, including Chairpersonship, Vice Chairperson, Treasurers, Secretaries and Mobilizers. Through these associations the women have learnt the advantages of working as a team to push their agenda to top authorities. The market leadership - especially the men - have started to appreciate the market women's contributions to leadership. Currently the market women are considered for leadership positions, which is also promoting gender sensitivity in decision making. This is vividly highlighted by the life story of Nanyonjo Gorreti who shared her journey of change and the level of transformation in her life with IST.

### Nanyonjo Gorreti's story

*“I have been working in Kalerwe Bivamuntuyo market for over 10 years. Before getting training from IST, I was among the many women who worked timidly and in a suppressed manner in the market.*



*When IST trained us in leadership I was really impressed with the methodology they used to train us old people who are not so learned.*

*It was so easy for us to understand, I was glad to learn that everyone has leadership potential. I used to think leaders were those that were elected by the people, but knowing that am a leader in my home, made my first step in accepting leadership roles. At the end of the training our action plan was to elect leaders who were going to govern the operations of the group. I was nominated and won with the majority votes according to our group. It was frightening, I even developed a running stomach because I knew I had only the theoretical knowledge, but not practical skills. However, with guidance*

*from IST, I embraced it and started managing my team. Before, I used to fear the market leaders even when we had serious issues affecting the market women and we were always intimidated with expulsion from the market. After learning about my rights and to speak on what is affecting me and knowing the clear roles of a leader, I present market women issues to the market office without fear and they are attended to. My confidence has been boosted and I speak to journalists whenever they come and I have participated in radio talk shows. The power of voice has given visibility to Market Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda.”*

## **Conclusion**

Having been given the knowledge about the role they can play in leadership and running of the markets, plus being enlightened about their basic human rights and responsibilities has created a positive shift in the lives of Market women entrepreneurs We believe that as more chances and platforms are created to involve these women in spearheading change in their lives, more sustainable and lasting transformation will be achieved.

## **WORKING AS A CHANGE AGENT IN THE SHOES OF PRIESTHOOD**

**By Fr Edward Gracious Kapalamula, Malawi**

I am a parish priest in the Anglican Diocese of Northern Malawi. I also work as the co-ordinator of HIV and AIDS Programmes. The key work of our organization is worship and prayer, Pastoral care, Christian Teaching and mission engagement and service to our communities using the holistic approach. We have a number of projects and departments within of our organization which work hand-in-hand making society a better place for everyone.



Working as a change agent in the shoes of priesthood has challenges and let-downs, but every challenge has its own way to be managed and dealt with. As a priest, people expect from you the Gospel of salvation and nothing more. This is fine, but as a development worker I also look at the wellbeing of people. Christ died for all that all should have life in fullness (John 10:10).

I attended the Training for Transformation course in 2016-2017. TFT has greatly changed my life in the way I think and act. I realized that I have the right and duty to protect those oppressed in communities, both female and male. I realized that the entire planet needs to be taken care of because this is what God intended in the Genesis of time. This course has helped me indeed to cooperate well with the people I serve as a change agent. In my field of work - being a parish priest as well as HIV and AIDS Coordinator, I have changed the mindset of people in the Church and in the community at large by not just depending on the Government regarding issues of development. For example, we stayed for more than a year without bridges on two of our rivers that led to our church building as well as the health centre facility and primary school both under the Anglican Church. I was one of the few people who opened the eyes of many to realize that we are the ones who are suffering, that this is our problem and that we needed to act to maintain this route to many important facilities. We used the people in the Church to source all

materials for the work and we also engaged the Government to provide those materials which are not locally found. It worked.

After my TFT course I introduced an NGO - Children for Christ (C4C) - with colleagues from the Health Department, the Magistrate and a friend who works with a Youth and Counseling network (YONECO). My aim was to be able to reach out to street children, more especially children in the Lakeshore side of



Malawi. We discovered that street children do not go far with education because of stigma and discrimination. One of the street children told us that “anzathu ku school amatinena kuti ndife ana amahule amai anthu amakhalira kugona ndi anthu” meaning “friends provoke us at school, saying that we are prostitute kids and that our mothers always sleep with men”. This is a reason for supporting these children, including through counselling. Since we are in the process of registering our NGO we have just identified and selected a few children whom we are financially supporting in terms of school uniform, note books, bags and school fees. Currently, we have only 17 children under our sponsorship. Each member is contributing a little amount every month to support these kids. We believe by 2020 we

will have over 500 children.

TFT is not just about passing exams, it is much more than that. It makes you think practically and have the momentum to achieve great things in a particular field. During the TFT course I came across so many practical ideas that are useful in this life. For example, the module on gender which addressed issues of protecting those most vulnerable has helped me reach people in many areas in Malawi, facilitating with a number of NGOs, including World Vision and Scripture. Indeed I have reached many people in all three regions of Malawi facilitating mainly on issues of maternal health, Gender, and Child Protection. The knowledge and the methodology of Paulo Freire which I gained from TFT have helped me to engage people using problem posing, in which participants are able to participate fully and realize their own problem within the community and act on it. With this methodology even my sermons are well understood by all since I engage all to participate fully.

Let me conclude by saying that [I wish every change agent could go through the course of TFT which has changed my ability and my thinking.](#)

### **LEAD PURPLE: LEADER IN THE MAKING**

**By Rebecca Mackett, South Africa**

#### **Contextual and Organisational Background**

South Africa is known globally as one of the most unsafe countries for women and children. There are many social ills that happen daily especially amongst previously disadvantaged communities. Abuse in all forms is commonly accepted as part of the struggles of life. In Noordgesig, a township which borders Soweto in South Africa, I have founded a Community Based Organization called “Lead Purple: Leader in the making”. We are working with women who experience abuse as a daily reality. These women are entrapped in households where they experience domestic violence, either because family members, children and/or partners, are substance abusers. Families are in pain and suffering and have no way to deal with the trauma, anxiety and pain that goes with substance abuse. As a non-profit company registered since 2015, Lead Purple: Leaders in the making has been active in the community offering life skills, self-leadership through facilitation of personal development skills, coaching and mentorship. We have also been supporting and encouraging women’s income-generating projects of homemade craft such as baking, knitting and jewellery-making. For continued and reinforced learning we hold conversations - normally on a Saturday - to include people that are employed. The themes for discussion are relevant to daily experiences and would include the new information gained in workshops.



It is also platform for those who attend to practice public speaking, promote their income-generating projects and a call for the community to support each other in business. In 2016 the selling of products built momentum and the first market day was held. Sadly, it could not continue due to the Recreation Centre and Parks around it being under construction and the community infrastructure that is still in progress. With the Recreation Centre not being available some of the participants offer their home for the workshops to continue.

### **The Value of Training for Transformation**

Through a friend in Cape Town that knew about our community project I heard about the Grail Centre and Training for Transformation. That is how I applied to for the Diploma Course. As the founder of Lead Purple Leaders in the making I had the privilege of doing the Diploma Course in Development Education in 2017/2018. Coming from a professional background of personal development, coaching in mentorship in the corporate world and different entrepreneurship programmes, **the enriching TFT journey was about practical alternative community development methods that build confidence and support for all genders, especially women. This is what I so badly needed - to see the world differently.** Learning and understanding the key principles of Freire and about popular education, gender reconciliation, culture and the political structure opened my mind and heart and gave me the necessary skills to become a true difference maker.

On completion of the Diploma Course I used the research project that we had to conduct and the paper that I wrote as a result, as a tool to run an Awareness Campaign on the different forms of abuse suffered by women living with substances abusers. I applied the knowledge to collaborate with different stakeholders in the community.

### **The Abuse Awareness campaign**

Finding a venue to run the Abuse awareness campaign during the 16 days of Activism against violence against women and children was a challenge. Through collaboration with the local councilor of the ward we met with different church leaders and asked for partnership. Through this event as an organization we were able to secure two church venues in Noordgesig. The first event was held in the evening and was attended by 12 people, mostly the leadership of that particular church. After reading the paper I wrote it was mostly the men that spoke and most wanted to know how we could bring a solution to the community. Most of the women were quiet and had nothing to say or questions to ask. However, with the second event that



was attended by women only it was a totally different conversation that unfolded. Most of the women mentioned that they have experienced all forms of abuse and that they felt ashamed and paralyzed by their circumstances. Suppressing their feelings had made them feel hopeless and this campaign gave them an opportunity to break the silence. The majority of the women that attended the campaign had been part of the life skills workshops and conversations in the past. Some of them told me that they belong to the church and although they have sought help from the leaders, they have often been discouraged by the response. They were looking for support and help, but there was nothing available. The request was that the Abuse campaign continues. The ladies offered their homes for the community workshops saying that more women would attend if the workshops were not held at a church.

### **Our challenges**

As a community-based organization not having a venue is a major challenge, stopping us from planning regular workshops in advance. Supporting the women with counselling is also a challenge as it depends on the availability of one of the houses of the women that is part of the group. We also need more counsellors that will volunteer their service.

## Future plans

As an organization, we will continue on the awareness of Abuse Campaign. Using the methods learned at TFT to facilitate workshop that will lead to solutions. As Lead Purple: Leaders in the making we are grateful to work with the women, to build a better future that will service the common good of all that are suffering and in pain. To follow us see the Facebook pages.

## THE IMPACT ON HUMANITY

By Maria Latumahina, Indonesia (Papua)

### Introduction

This paper is to illustrate my life journey to pursue my personal purpose in life that is about upholding principles of environmental justice and to put it into practice. The time when I found Training for Transformation, I believe, is a divine intervention. It transformed my way of knowing, of being and of doing. I will tell a story of how I was introduced to Training for Transformation Diploma Course, how the course affects my knowledge, attitude and skills in pursuing my purpose in life. Further down I will describe the process of how Training for Transformation method contextually adopted and applied in my personal and working environment. Last but not least is the impact that I witnessed and the challenges ahead. This is probably the most powerful and indescribable insight yet, I believe in the power of story-telling in a process of empowerment.



### How I Found Training for Transformation

I was introduced to Training for Transformation through Verène Nicolas of Centre for Human Ecology in Glasgow. I came to Training for Transformation Diploma Course of 2012/2013 at the time when I was searching for a new approach in inspiring individuals, groups and wider communities in Papua to seek for an alternative way of living.

The underlining method of Training for Transformation (TFT) involved the hand, the heart and the head. This approach taught me that transformation involved knowing, being and doing. In addition, TFT also argued that transformation starts when a person is able to say, “change begins with me”. When a person able to transform he or her life, eventually they will affect change at family, organization, community and the wider environment. This approach forced me to sit back and to reflect on my personal inquiry; of who I am and of my calling in life. Furthermore, TFT introduced the learning cycle of action and reflection. Personally, I grow through my self-reflection and action cycle; to make peace with myself and to speak my truth. I learn about believing in myself and holding to my calling and vision in life. This includes taking a risk that comes with the decision.

I also learned that change would not happen without the support of others. I experienced how my family believe in and accept me for who I am and that taught me to pay the same respect; to listen better and to accept other people of who they are. Yet, change does not stop there, it has to go to the next level; to the organization and to a wider society.

My journey of self-discovery brought me to work with a group of development consultants of Seventythree. I contributed in shaping up Seventythree’s approach on community empowerment; adopting Training for Transformation in the areas of environmental conservation and sustainable development in Papua. This has been undertaken with provincial government of Papua and with communities in three places including Raja Ampat archipelago on the bird’head of New Guinea island, an atoll of Numfor on the north cost of New Guinea and of Wolo, a district in the highland.

### The Impact on Humanity; On Leadership for Social Change

The support to government of Papua planning office has resulted in government’s ability to enact on their sustainable land use planning policies. In July 2018, I interviewed two people from the Papua

development planning office. This undertaking generated stories, among others, on the leadership of development planners to cancel a proposal to clear 5000 ha primary mangrove forest in the southern cost of Papua province, suitable to place a smelter for gold and mining production. The sustainability of mangrove forest is essential for the livelihood of fishery communities in the area.

Further, the six years of work with the three communities of Raja Ampat, Numfor and Wolo have resulted in the emergence of community change agents and the establishment of community based organizations including the association of homestay owners in Raja Ampat, the Virgin Coconut (VCO) producers coop in Numfor and an emerging coop of coffee growers in Wolo. The homestay owners of Raja Ampat established a homestay association and set up a collective promotion platform similar to booking.com. The organization managed to generate total revenue of USD 1,5m/month and provide employment opportunities to more than seven hundred local people. Likewise, the VCO producers and coffee growers have managed to engage market, to create employment opportunities and to make the ends met. Local communities, who used to involve in serious debt and land selling, have managed to lift themselves out of poverty. In an attempt to finalize the writing of my thesis, I interviewed nearly fifteenth people of Raja Ampat members of homestay association and of Wolo coffee growers combined. In the process, I heard statements such as “I am a raw model, “I love my people”, “the community trusted me to become a village leader”. Others also said things like “I discover my potentials, “I affect change in my communities, “I inspired my communities and they liberated themselves from dependency and poverty”, I inspired my people to protect the environment and to sustain its services”.

### **The Challenges**

As the organizations grows the challenges in organizational management especially conflict management have become more pressuring than ever. Poverty does not just mean lack of food, water and shelter but also other aspects of humanity. The challenges lie on ensuring participatory decision making, accountability, equality and justice. In Raja Ampat, the homestay association faced issues including corruption, sexual harassment and the inability of managers of homestay association to hold each other to account. In one reflection meetings, the participants brought up the underlying causes including discriminative and oppressive social norms and social status. This has internalized in a form of fear and of shame to speak their truth and to challenge an oppressive power. Women and Youths are among the sufferings. The challenges faced drove my colleagues and I to reflect upon our approaches in addressing internalized impressions and intergenerational trauma especially on how it affects social relationship and threatened social movement.



### **Calling to be Born**

We brought this issue of internalized oppression into a TFT Think Well meeting in Dar Es Salam in 2017. The Think Well meeting is a regular gathering of TFT graduates from all over the world. The think well meeting serves a space and a support mechanism to strengthen spiritual basis, to improve skills in popular education and to enhance solidarity for social transformation in whichever ways and scales. Furthermore, the think well meeting generated ideas on decentralized TFT management including the establishment of regional hubs.

A discussion in a regional team prompted Dan Glass, a UK based LGBT activist to come over to Raja Ampat in March 2018 and help in a listening survey on internalized oppressions. Further, Dan helped with facilitating the process of naming the problems including fear, shame and anger. This process was deepened in the homestay association’s regular reflection in July 2018. The process supported critical reflections on self-purpose in life and strengthened awareness on homestay association’ collective values including honesty, integrity, justice, equality, inclusiveness and the power of vision. **The challenge remains as people learn to act on all these values in their journey to liberation; step by step, day by day. There is no shortcut to transformation.**

The change process is not linear, it is multidimensional. It goes through stages, from less developed and to a better one. Yet, in some cases, is cyclical. Initially, we thought the community of Raja Ampat has reached a level of impacting change at the wider society, it is true in some cases, yet, on certain aspects, individual change is still on going.

I foresee the need for personal coaching and mentoring in support to my personal inner strength as well as skills upgrading in coaching and mentoring of others. A further mechanism for skill upgrading in the area of community psychology including personal and collective leadership could become an input for the design of the next think well meeting.

## Conclusion

TFT reassures that transformation is personal before the family, organization and the wider communities. Social transformation starts with an individual change. My personal journey of transformation is a testimony of how TFT works in my personal life, my organization and in my work with communities in Papua. As I personally able to sustain my life including the love and support of my family, my colleagues and I managed to promote change in our organizational approach and how it affects change in the lives of many rural Papuans. The communities of Raja Ampat, Numfor island and the coffee growers of Wolo testified how they discover their potentials, and how they value themselves and that liberate themselves from poverty. Yet, the struggle does not stop at the level of meeting basic needs. Re-discovering values of social relationship and fostering social movement remains a challenge given the immense internalized oppressions among the poor that get in the way of self-governing process.

TFT as a global movement is taking shape. It is a hope that it will further serves the need for personal leadership development as well as upgrading skills on coaching and mentoring of others.

## GREAT CHANGE TAKING PLACE

By Mayibongwe Ngwenya, Zimbabwe

### Introduction

I am Sister Mayibongwe Sharon Ngwenya from the Congregation of the Missionary Daughters of Calvary. I come from Zimbabwe, in Hwange District which is in Matebeleland North Province. I am 28 years old and am three years old as a nun. I work in a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called Lubhancho as a co-ordinator.

I would like to share with you the challenges that I face in my work place, how the TFT course has impacted me and the community and how it has helped me and my organisation.

My organisation consists of three active staff members - the coordinator, financial administrator and the program officer. There are a lot of things that need attention in our office. We are fully involved in visiting all the most remote areas in Hwange district. We help orphans and vulnerable children together with their guardians. The challenges that I face include having difficulty in convincing my fellow work mates about TFT methodologies. I am new in the organisation, and although I am the co-ordinator, I find myself acting very small. My way of looking at things is also a bit different from my fellow work mates. Another challenge is that lack dialogue as an organisation.

The TFT course however has left an impact on me. For one, my confidence and courage has increased. Unlike before, I am now able to speak out my feelings freely, my likes and dislikes without any fear. For example, every month as an organisation we attend meetings at the magistrate court giving reports on what we do. I considered a magistrate as a person to be feared, but only to find out that as I am, I can converse with him. The methodologies I learnt have impacted me and the community.



As an organisation introduced a project called 'Serving Internal Lending Communities'. We introduced this project to different communities. This is a project based on saving money; it is done by the guardians and parents of the orphans and vulnerable children. These contribute money, from 25c up, and this money is put together and given to the treasurer chosen by the community. The use of the money is to buy books, pens and medication for the children they are taking care of. They also borrow the money they have contributed to buy basic needs like mealie meal, sugar, salt, tomatoes and vegetables. I link this with Paulo Freire's principle of dialogue.

**The community members came together, discussed their needs and came up with a solution.** Without any doubt I would say that this has impacted the community most. They love what they are doing and they are enjoying it. Most children have been helped by the project, the teachers have said that significant shift has taken place in schools in term of attendance and the pass rate has moved from low to high.

As an organisation, we use a few tools and methods that I learnt from TFT to work with these different communities. I see a great change taking place. Before we had many people coming for help to Lubhancho, but at the moment we have a record in that the communities are trying to cater for their needs, although as an organisation we still give a hand here and there. For example, it is commonly agreed that all children are vulnerable, but we say a girl child is more vulnerable than a boy child. It is therefore part of our program to empower girl children, by promoting their education. As part of this, we still also help them by paying their school fees and giving girls sanitary pads so that they do not miss lessons during their menses.

As an organisation, we have not partnered with other TFT members and I hope that in future we shall do so if the need arises. We are also limited as an organisation by the funds that we get from donors therefore it is always difficult to keep our hands stretched out for those in need of help. We wish to reach out to places like Lupane and Binga district because there many people there in need of our help too. My dream as a coordinator of Lubhancho is to cascade the methodologies I got from TFT course, especially Paulo Freire's principles to the whole nation of Zimbabwe beginning with the self, small group, community, society till the whole environment is transformed.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the TFT team who impacted me with such great knowledge on how to work and face communities and help them live the reality. The dreams of the communities are slowly coming true. Thank you very much.

### THINKING CRITICALLY

By Carmen Opperman

My name is Carmen Opperman. I came to TFT with the hope that it would change me somehow. TFT was supposed to make me better. It was supposed to give me the confidence and courage to finally do the great things I had dreamt of for so long. I was a Community Development Worker before I started TFT and by the end of the course I was supposed to be the best Development Worker I could possibly be. I had left my job as a Community Development Worker to do the course. I knew that there was more that I could do to bring change, but I needed to build on my skills, my confidence and my courage. I believed that TFT would be the answer. However, things do not always work out the way we envision them. I completed TFT, but I was still just me. Sure I had learned a lot. My confidence had grown and maybe I was a little more courageous than before. But the growth was nothing significant. In fact, I believe that many may have thought that I was even worse-off than before. I had not become a better Community Development Worker. Instead I found myself unemployed.



I was introduced to Popular Education before I started TFT. It changed my perception of the people I worked with and my role in the learning process. I became a facilitator facilitating a learning process with capable and informed people whom I could learn from. I could see the benefits of Popular Education in

my workshops, but I still felt like I needed something more and this, is why I decided to attend TFT.

TFT taught me a lot. I think one of the best tools it gave me was the ability to connect with the lessons I learned and to internalize them. We were forced to think critically about how we would apply our readings to our daily lives. Sometimes this caused stress and frustration, but today I understand the value of connecting with something you hold to be true. When Freire says that “feelings are facts” I understand that it is okay to experience my feelings. It is okay to acknowledge and express them and it is okay for them to pass.

When I read that “everyone has something to contribute”, I recognize myself as part of this “everyone” and I am reminded that my thoughts, feelings and experiences matter and I am allowed to share them. I began practicing self-care. It was not structured or regular and it was not always easy, but taking care of my mental, spiritual and physical health became a priority. It had never really been a priority before.

The greatest lesson I learned at TFT however, was acceptance, of myself and of others. It took me a while to get there, but now I know that I don’t have to wait until I become all the things I wish to be. I already have a role to play. I already have something to contribute. Every little step I take towards improvement of myself and of others counts. When I support the small businesses in my community, it counts. When I reach out to the local NGO and assist where I can, it counts. When I encourage and support the good work that others are doing, it counts. All the small things I am doing right now, count. All the small things you are doing right now, count!

### CELEBRATING SMALL VICTORIES

By Caroline Mutimbanyoka, Zimbabwe

*“The development of Africa will not happen without the effective participation of women. Our forefathers’ image of women must be buried once for all.” Ousmane Sembene.*

I vividly remember in 2014 struggling with the decision that I had made to resign from my job in order to attend a Diploma in Training for Transformation (TFT). To this day I feel that, had I not made that essential but tough decision, I wouldn’t have known and understood myself the way I do now. TFT groomed me to be who I am today and nurtured my passion to fight for social justice for women by using effective tools to bring transformative development in my community.



One of my focal areas was the learning of the TFT principles such as the Holon. This concept taught me to appreciate developing the self-first and then influencing other entities and systems. From then I understood that change was to start with me.

In 2017 I attended the young women’s leadership workshop in Maputo, Mozambique to learn more about the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) and how they relate to the work that we do in our various communities. It was the first time that Zimbabwe was represented on such a platform. Whilst in this space I was challenged in seeing that other young women were doing so much to make a positive impact within their communities with very little resources. I took time to reflect on the challenges also faced by women in my community and I felt driven to take action upon my return home. I had always worked outside my area where I lived, but this time I decided to bring my efforts home.

I approached my Parish Priest and the church executive to establish a programme for a small group of women to come together, dialogue and explore their challenges as well as discuss possible solutions and act upon them. This was agreed upon. I met with the women and had to apply a more interactive method of facilitation. I recalled one of the principles of Paulo Freire that I was taught at TFT that people are not objects but subjects of their learning. I knew that they were capable of identifying their challenges and were better placed to come up with possible solutions on their own. My role was simple; I just had to facilitate the whole process.



I experienced the beauty of dialogue and team work. The women identified their challenges and listed them in order of priority. The issue of poverty came out on top, with lack of adequate skills and resources to start small initiatives for income generation, lack of knowledge in health issues, experiencing gender based violence and lastly the inability to organize teams of action also listed. I used the TFT method of digging deeper and upon further discussions they agreed to initiate two projects in response to the issue of poverty - the greenhouse and skills training in cooking, baking and décor. They explained that by having a greenhouse they could feed their families and generate income by selling excess to the local supermarkets.

They also explained that by learning cooking, baking and décor they would be skilled enough to cater for weddings at church and the community as well as other events which would in turn help them to generate an income.

*“If we are to make poverty history, we must have the active participation of States, civil society and the private sector, as well as individual volunteers.”* Kofi Annan, (2005). With this in mind, we continued with the discussion and my question to them was “what can we do to rewrite our story”? They suggested that we fundraise first by contributing monthly subscriptions, and by other small creativities like selling muffins on Sunday after service and we all agreed to that .We organized each other and made contributions for ingredients and the following Sunday we sold muffins.

I made several inquiries for the greenhouse which is now costing close to USD\$5000. This is a huge amount which we do not have access to at the moment so, as a collective we decided to start smallwith backyard gardens. We used the money from our fundraising to buy the seedlings and we managed to obtain one bigger space as the main garden from a member of the group, Mrs Shamhu. Other members managed to grow their vegetables in containers. This for me is a good and effective example of applying active participation into real action to change the status quo. Fifteen families have access to spinach vegetables and soon fresh maize from our little garden. It’s a small victory worth celebrating. We are working on raising funds for training and the greenhouse which is challenging at the moment due to the unstable economic conditions facing Zimbabwe. I must say that giving up is not an option for us. We have made it this far. We have plans to have workshops on health and gender based violence within the first quarter of the year 2019 and hopefully many people will benefit from such activities in our community. **A luta Continua.**

### **I BECAME A REAL WOMAN LEADER**

**By Miskin Amag Gombo, Indonesia (Facebook December 2018)**

#### **What is the name of your organization and what is the work you do?**

My name is Miskin Amag Gombo. I’m a member of the Economy Growth Development, in Papua Indonesia. I did the TFT Diploma course in 2017-18.

I work with other TFT graduates - Wahyudin Nur and Dian Yanuardy. We go to the villages for data collection on people’s work, especially coffee farmers. It was when my colleagues wanted to visit my village that was I was invited to join the team. We started by first visiting the coffee gardens.

Then we helped the farmers in the process of understanding more on how to dry coffee, how to keep the quality of the coffee so that they could get a good price in the market. We work with 84 coffee farmers, men and women from two districts.



#### **And do you think TFT helped you in your working with the community? How?**

Yes, TFT helped me very much to work with community, because through that I can be brave and not afraid to talk in front of my people or farmers. **I really feel that I became a real woman leader.**

### **Do you see any changes in the communities that can be attributed to the participation in TFT?**

Yes, what I see is more women coming for interviews even with their family problems to ask me for solutions. They talk bravely to our team about what they think is true. They said if I also stay there they would have more power to talk because they know I will help them and support them. In our culture it is our custom that a woman is never allowed to talk in front of others, or to say something. Only men usually do and did that from a long time ago and that became like part of the rules and regulations. So, if I go to village the women feel like I'm coming with a hot sword for them. From what they have said and what I have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears, this is only one of the small changes that I see in the 15 of them.

### **Are any of the women in decision making positions?**

Only in small meetings, like in churches or in our activities, but not yet in big meetings because men still argue against and shut down women's voices.

### **Have you or your organisation started any project since TFT?**

Not apart from our work with coffee farmers. My plan is to open a school for women and men mainly from the village starting next year, and I hope to get funds to do this.

### **PERSONAL CONVICTION AND TURNING POINT**

**By Mellania Bote, Zimbabwe**

Thank you very TFT for opening my eyes during the workshop held in Gweru, Zimbabwe, November 2018. I would like to share how it has awakened certain things within me. Training for Transformation has ignited a desire within me to do better in life, at my workplace, in my family, country and the whole world. I have realised that there is more to life than just being content with who I am, where I am and what I can do.



My life had no meaning at all. I have been to school, but personally it never dawned on me why I have been studying. During the TFT course, I had an opportunity to do introspection and have realised that there is more to life than just living and working. I realised that I have to change my way of doing things, life style and have a relationship with God too - have an in-depth knowledge about who God is and for him to dwell within me. Having realised all that, I decided to have a mentor in my life. I believe the shining light needs to be natured and I need guidance on the right path to follow.

**I believe this is my turning point. No matter how tough life may seem, with focus and mentorship I will go very far.**

We express our gratitude to the following TFT graduates/participants for sharing their stories

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