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## A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



by Faith Dirorimwe, Zimbabwe

My name is Faith Dirorimwe, and I participated in the Diploma Course of the Training for Transformation (TFT) program in 2024/2025. I am a coordinator for students at the Female Student Network. TFT has been a significant journey for me as it has strengthened my passion to help others and empowered me as well as the people I work with.

### My Relationship with TFT

During the course, I was challenged to make the change I want to see. It was also a safe space to question and discuss things that are usually unquestioned. TFT added a deeper understanding of the community. I learned that before engaging with the community, it is crucial to understand its context and dynamics. Inspired by Paulo Freire's methods of Popular Education, I realized that my role is not to tell people their problems but to help them recognize their challenges and find solutions. My task is to guide and provide a platform for such growth, which helps the community to become self-reliant and reduce dependency syndrome.

Through the course, I also gained insights into political economy, helping me see the forces behind decisions made globally, continentally, and locally. Even if I can't address all issues, I can contribute my small part toward change. As each of us works towards change, we can collectively come up with ideas and alternatives to make a difference.

In working with students, this knowledge has been vital. I have a mandate to encourage youths to stand up for what they believe in. I gained facilitation skills during Learning Teaching Teams (LTTs) (a process where participants work together in groups and design and facilitate sessions for their fellow participants and facilitators) and learned to work with people despite differences, as well as ways of conflict resolution through transformation. The Eco-spirituality module helped me appreciate my values and embrace diversity, recognizing that we have different beliefs. I loved this module and also remember the strategic thinking approach from the "Thinking Hats" activity.

Another aspect of TFT that I appreciate is Social Research. We learned the importance of social research, its purpose, and the need to care about the subjects we study. This ignited a passion within me to stand strong and be who I am, nurturing a natural activism through the program.



### Personal Story

During this period, I am glad that I managed to encourage a sister to break free from her fears and become the strong person she is. Initially, she felt confined to her roles as a finance officer, within her family, and church, but I encouraged her to explore beyond her imagination. Though she initially resisted, she eventually embraced the challenge and has become much more confident. Big shout out to her, Isheanopa Chiwamba—TFT is great!

## **Conclusion**

Overall, TFT has added immense value to my work with the Female Student Network and our broader community efforts. It has equipped us with the tools and knowledge to make meaningful changes and foster a culture of empowerment and sustainability. By sharing our stories, we continue to learn, celebrate our victories, and affirm our commitment to making the world a better place.

## NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING

by Noluthando Nzimande, South Africa.



My name is Noluthando Nzimande. I am 30 years old, from Hlokozi village, Kwazulu Natal, and community development has been my passion since I was a young girl.

Let me tell you my story. I had a unique opportunity to further educate myself with a partial scholarship for the Training for Transformation (TFT) Diploma course. I quickly said Yes, knowing that I could potentially lose my job. I wasn't going to miss it because, internally, I knew this would make me a more effective change-maker, even though I have been in the NGO sector for over 18 years.

The TFT Diploma training was a life-changing experience, not just for me, but for my entire community. The 'Aha' moments I experienced, such as realizing that I am at the center of my transformation, that community members can find their own solutions, and that we are facilitators who listen and create safe and open spaces for deep dialogue, have had a profound impact. These insights have become tools for transformation, leading to positive changes in our community's approach to poverty issues.

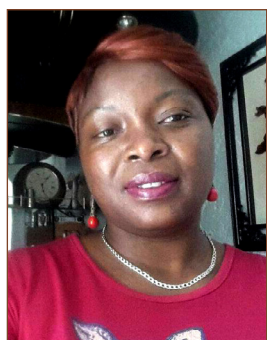
Back home, we work with sexual reproductive health, and I decided to approach it differently. A new circular sitting arrangement was more suitable, and we had conversation circles where women, men, and youth felt comfortable and they first shared life experiences separately, then listened to each other.

This time, I was very mindful of breaking down their context and language to respect culture and tradition while allowing information and discussions to flow on such a sensitive topic. One of the chiefs said, 'If I knew the issue of dialogue was named reproductive rights, I wouldn't have come, but the way it was facilitated made it easy for him to participate and communicate. He says, 'I realize that as parents, the way we keep secrets about sexual reproductive rights from our children negatively impacts the way they behave and they become careless.'



I have successfully conducted two workshops with 60 participants and will continue to do so.

## WORKING WITH SINERGIA MOÇAMBIQUE ORGANIZATION



by Sonia Magaia, Monica de Alcides and Amando Missias, Moçambique

Sonia Magaia, (TFT diploma 20216-2017) Founder and General Coordinator of Sinergia Moçambique shared the following two testimonies from her organization that follows TFT methodologies of engagement.

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“I am Monica de Alcides, I am part of the school council members at Escola Secundaria Malangatana Valentim Nguenha, I became aware of the project to prevent trafficking, and consumption of alcoholic beverages and other drugs in adolescents and young people in the school. I identified with the cause and volunteered to be part of the activists of the Sinergia Moçambique Organization.

I participated in training on communication skills for behavior change. I started giving lectures and even counselling in school and the community. I was able to influence my husband and our children and we became a united family and began to enter the community where, by being a mirror in the area where we live, we were able to reach other families with boys who had deviant behavior. From then on, there was a change in the people living around us.

In schools, as we gave lectures, we identified several challenges that had to do with the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. And so that students would not be influenced by bullying, we advised them.

There was a transformation in this area. There was a change in students and safety in the school; students now feel comfortable and approach us to understand how they can change, what are the essential points they need for their change. For example, if I am a person who was abusing drugs, what can I do now? ”

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I am Amando Missias, a student at Escola Secundaria Eduardo Mondlane, in the city of Maputo.

“I would like to leave some ideas about who I am as an activist and what changed in me being part of the Sinergia Moçambique Organization. First of all, I would like to thank you for participating in the training sessions and then giving lectures. And to say yes, they really changed the lives of many colleagues. In my specific case, the lectures on preventing the consumption of alcoholic beverages and other drugs changed the way I see people who consume these products. Before I despised them, I even thought they shouldn't be part of society, but during the training and lectures, I realized that even my friends used drugs. Through all of this, I learned to live with these people. I now think of them as being normal people because some even end up being family and are everywhere. But I learned to live with them. Some enter this world for pleasure and others for problems. I learned that the important thing is to help them and not judge them.”



Fortunately, I had the opportunity to give some lectures on this subject and I helped some by inviting them to participate in the lectures. And really, I think they are topics that should continue to be debated in schools because they end up helping in some way. The consumption of alcohol and other drugs in schools decreases and somehow ends up returning. That's why we should work hard on this aspect too.

It was great to be part of the Sinergia Moçambique Organization and I learned a lot. And the thing that I would like to highlight is that I can already live with people who consume alcohol and other drugs and I have not let myself be influenced. I really liked this part. Now, I even think it's a normal thing to live with them because I no longer disperse them, I no longer act badly, I no longer think much because I know that some people are in that world for pleasure and others for problems. But the important thing is to help them or try to understand them.



## CHARITY TO CONSCIENTIZATION



by Fitzgerald Chipangura, Zimbabwe

My name is Fitzgerald Chipangura, a Catholic Priest from the Catholic diocese of Hwange, in Zimbabwe. I am currently stationed at St Francis of Assisi Mission, in Dete. I am also the Education Secretary for the Diocese of Hwange.

My first encounter with TFT was through the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. Some of their members were trained TFT facilitators. It then motivated me to also attend the 2024 Diploma Course at the Grail Center in Kleinmond. In my learnings at the Grail, what really struck me was to know that the education system I had followed was actually flawed and needed redemption. Freire's method of teaching made a deep impact on me. Then, on the modules that we covered; the Political Economy of the Environment stuck with me. It was simply everyday things that we encounter that affect the core of our existence. With this module I realized that we had been conditioned to see our world as normal despite its awkward inequalities. There is a lot of systematic oppression going on in the countries and especially here in Africa. If not schooled you may easily miss it. I realized that the civilized world as we know it today has been created by a group of individuals to suit their own needs and wants.

With this knowledge I have now started thinking broadly about the challenges that our communities face. Using the TFT facilitation method, we have been discussing the challenges we face and ways of overcoming them. The communities are slowly realizing they are able to help themselves in most of the challenges they face. They have a grown sense of responsibility and ownership because of this some communities have even built their own dip tanks for their cattle and making sure they learn more ways of farming their own food. After Covid 19, people realized that growing your own food is one of the major steps towards self-reliance.

As a Catholic priest I have realized that some challenges in our communities have been perpetuated because the Church in the name of helping the poor has actually increased the dependency syndrome. Most people actually associate the Catholic Church with money and wealth. Thus, for them the Church is more like their donor organisation that pays their fees and bills. It is a place to go when you need assistance.



This has been one of the challenges I face. As a village priest it has been my duty to help people in different forums to realize that there is life in their villages and that they need to sit, think and come up with locally grown solutions. My TFT education has helped a lot in this regard. I now have more facts to help the assession that we are poor by design. There is a system that has made sure we remain poor and begging from the so-called first world countries and the elite. It is time for this to change, and it starts with me.



The political climate has not made it easy either. With the authorities having eyes and ears in the whole, asking why people are poor is then viewed as a direct challenge to the ruling elite. Thus as we find safer ways to advocate for zero tolerance on poverty, we use kid gloves to deal with the situations we encounter every day. We then use more dialogue than confrontation, even on cases where we feel confrontation would have been the best. Hopefully as I perfect my TFT methods, I will also grow the equivalent strength and bravery needed to deal with the challenges our country faces each and every day. I have the confidence that I will achieve my goal and I am not giving up. With a vast multitude of exemplary TFT facilitators and advocates I also feel I have enough support to face my challenges. The struggle continues and we are not giving up! Aluta Continua! Asante sana.

## DELTA TRAININGS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN WOMEN'S LIVES

by Khutala Malundala, Babalwa Malibeni and Andile Dobha, South Africa



Khutala Malundala (TFT 2016-2017 diploma course) and Babalwa Malibeni (TFT 2024-2025 diploma course) shared a story from their organization, Delta, in South Africa with the TFT network.

Meet Andile Dobha from Lujizweni in Ngqeleni under NYANDENI Local Municipality. She is one of the women trained by Delta. In this village women were trained on empowerment and leadership using Paulo Freire's methodology. They were also trained on Health and Wellness and Food security by

promoting Agro ecology. We encourage women to use land as it is the resource we have in the marginalized areas. After the training they usually start communal gardens and individual gardens where they plant vegetables. Some start small businesses like bakeries, and sewing. After her training, Andile cultivated vegetables which led her to buy chickens for eggs and later an incubator. She involved her children in the business. She

uses organic matter for fertilization and can buy everything she needs with the money. She eats what she likes and managed to build a two roomed flat with the money she gained.



## LIVING OUT MY PASSION



by Ntsekiseng Clementina Thetsane, Lesotho

My name is Ntsekiseng Clementina Thetsane and I proudly hail from the beautiful landlocked mountainous kingdom of Lesotho in Southern Africa. As student of the Diploma course, my journey with TFT began in April 2024 in Cape Town, Kleinmond South Africa on the first phase at the Grail Centre until currently doing my Social research project. As a dedicated spiritual counsellor and facilitator, I am deeply committed to nurturing the well-being of individuals and communities. My journey has led me to specialize in sign language and palliative care, allowing me to serve diverse populations with compassion and understanding. While I currently find myself unemployed, I remain devoted in community work, addressing the social issues faced by our youth, striving to build connections and foster a sense of belonging among those around me. My mission is to create a community with a heart, where empathy, support and shared growth are at the forefront of our collective experience.

### Tools and Concepts which stood out for me

The best part in TFT for me was when I got introduced to the Paulo Freire philosophy of conscientization. The concept encouraged me to participate fully and freely without being judged rather than being a passive absorber like the traditional way of education we got from our formal schools, and that really made my learning process more relevant and impactful. What I like most about this concept is that it is learner-centred, there's dialogue and collaboration with critical thinking and reflecting on real life experiences for us to understand more what is happening around us. It allowed me to reflect on my beliefs, values and assumptions and that helped me to understand better social, political and cultural contexts that shape my life and the life of my community.

**The river of life:** Stood out for me as a tool which helped me in personal development, knowing where I come from and where I'm heading, all the obstacles in my life and how I can fix my life. It is also important in community building and conflict resolutions as it helps also participants to gain insight into their experiences, emotions and needs and developing understanding of each other and building connection and rapport. It is a visual representation of our life journeys as it shows every step of the way and helps us also to structure our ways in life, what we want our life to be like. It is important for self-actualization and also therapeutic and empowering, as mentioned earlier; it allowed me as an individual to reflect on my past experiences and fostered a sense of personal growth.

**Holon:** This is one of the tools I used since it possesses a degree of autonomy and interdependence, this tool allows small groups to function effectively and adapt to change in the environment. I also took with me the LTT Planning template which really helps in planning a program well and making it organized, knowing what to be talking about so as to be relevant.

Political economy came out as the most interesting module for me even though my field of profession is in mental health and spiritual health. After the module in the first phase, I came back home with a clear mind taking care of nature for it to do the same, planted some vegetables, collecting water for irrigation and stopped using tap water in order to reduce the water bill.

### How I have changed personally because of the TFT process and the difference it has made

Before enrolling in TFT, I always longed for skills in public speaking. I was never aware of the best participatory methods but rather into the banking method of education when facilitating some workshops and having group counselling sessions.



With the knowledge that I have now, it brought light to me that each person has knowledge and what is needed is for us to guide them, bring their knowledge to the surface, make them feel confident and be able to share with others. On top of that I was recognized and acknowledged by Valued Citizens Initiative of South Africa for the method I used in facilitation, the way I posed the problem in the session made participants understand the Sexuality education better.

Participating in TFT has been an enriching experience that I deeply value and I'm grateful that I got to be one of the beneficiaries of transformation. The insights gained and the skills developed during this training have indeed empowered me to embrace change, both personally and professionally. The dedication and the hard work put forth by the facilitators and fellow participants have created an inspiring environment that fosters growth and collaboration. This course has indeed helped me with improving my emotional intelligence, boosting my self-confidence. Also with the facilitation skills I am able to facilitate workshops. Again it has been therapeutic since we were able to talk about what never sat well with us and by listening to others' stories.

Being in the programme helped me realise that people act differently because they lack emotional intelligence and therefore now that I'm in the light, I can help others work on their emotions as well.

I had a session before, with survivors of GBV at Lapeng Care centre and one of the participants became very interested in the method used to facilitate. After the whole week of sessions, she approached me and asked if I can share with her all the discussions they had since she feels like it will benefit others from the outside. Her plan after was to go out there and share the skills and knowledge she got from our sessions, which was a positive outcome for us. It changed her life and hence she felt the need to go change the lives of others.

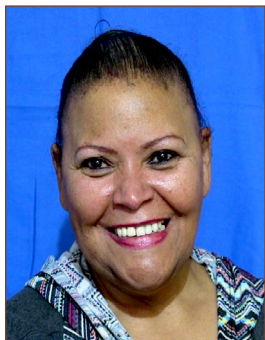


**Challenges:** I once faced a challenge of having a participant who did not want to be part of the discussions but rather be in a group, so it was a bit difficult because some participants wanted her out for not participating. As a facilitator, I had to make sure that both parties benefit and no one is left outside, so I had to talk to the whole group about being one and having different personalities and they had no choice but accept each other with their differences. I also had quiet participants in one session and for them to be engaging, I had to think of a game we used to play as kids of spinning the bottle, If the bottle faces your way, you'll share something, then spin it after, pointing it to another person.

**In conclusion,** I wholeheartedly encourage people to enrol in the TFT journey if they are seeking for personal development, leadership skills, and improving team work because this course offers invaluable tools and perspectives. Together we can build on the incredible work already being done and continue to drive positive change within our communities and organizations.

## FINDING STRENGTH AND POWER WITHIN

by Joan Daries, South Africa



**Introduce and contextualize:** My name is Joan Daries and I manage Mthimkhulu Community Development – a programme of The Grail Centre Trust in Kleinmond, South Africa. I grew up in a working-class family during the dark years of the struggle for democracy in our country. I am the 4<sup>th</sup> child of 10 children, so our home was always full of activity and noise. My hardworking parents were devoted to raising their children and living out their deep Christian beliefs through service to our local church, neighbours and our local community. They always impressed on us the value of a good education, independent thinking and having the courage of our convictions.

This meant that becoming actively involved in the struggle for democracy was inevitable for us. My career as a high school teacher was during the worst years of the struggle as high schools were the battle grounds. Our school premises was a site for military manoeuvres designed to strike the fear of God into the hearts of our children. I have had to stand at the graveside of too many children whose lives were cruelly cut short.

It is from this context that I left teaching to start working in the NGO sector with no real experience in community work. However, it was a seamless transition because of my pedagogical background and my grounding in Christian social justice principles.

By the time I did the Training for Transformation short course in 2023, I had the lived experience of all the theories of development from pious charity and toxic charity to social welfare, to western based logical frameworks of inputs and outputs expected to equate to outcomes, to transformational development that views individuals and communities as their own agents of change and transformation that is deep, intentional and truly empowering.

I loved the opportunity to be in a group of participants from many different countries and intergenerational as well. We had so much in common and the sharing was great. Face-to-face training would have been ideal to deepen connections and build more friendships.

The most impactful lesson to me in my personal development journey with Training for Transformation was delving into the wisdom of my elders and my ancestors. I had never spent time in thinking about the “old ways” of doing things and solving problems, as this wisdom is preserved in an oral tradition that I had cast aside as quaint, but not really relevant to our times. They are the stories of old people. I am now “old people” myself and I am the storyteller to my grandchildren and surprisingly these tech savvy children want to listen to the stories of the past.

In TFT I learned to appreciate the storytelling that connects across the generations and builds ties that bind families together and creates community cohesion, which is essential in building community resilience. I have become more intuitive and confident in what sits at the core of my being.

The most important learning for me through TFT has been that transformation whether on a personal or community level is not linear, it can be a bit messy in that many missteps can happen, as this is where one learns best and as long as one keeps on learning from the mistakes you will make progress towards the desired outcome.

As I work with vulnerable young people, I am always pleased when they are able to pick themselves up and start all over again. For instance, one of the young women who went through our Youth Development Programme, left the programme with high hopes of going to the University where she had been accepted. However, she did not have the funds she needed. She took a job as a shop assistant earning a meagre salary, but she had hoped to save money for her studies. Some months later, I encountered her looking very depressed and I asked her what was up. “Oh, mama!” she said. “You know this black tax thing is getting me down.” Black tax is colloquially known as the obligation a working member of an impoverished black household has to carry the financial burden of the whole family. In this position, she was never going to be able to fulfil her own dreams. I asked her what she could do about solving the problem, and while she still looked dejected, she said she would try to work her way through it. I saw her again a few months later and her whole demeanour was different and she told me proudly that she was going to study as she had found a way to do so. She thanked me for reminding her that she had a dream and that she shouldn’t give it up. I was thrilled that she had found her own way out of despair.



It would have been so easy to try to solve her problem for her by intervening on her behalf, but that would have robbed her of an opportunity for growth.

TFT has influenced my management style tremendously. Human resource management in South Africa has strict legal frameworks and in disciplinary matters I have often found it necessary to abandon the rule book when it will not solve the underlying problem. I had a case where a grievance was lodged against a supervisor. In getting to the bottom of the matter it was clear that there were childhood hurts and self-esteem issues at play on both sides and just issuing penalties would not solve the problem. I recommended counselling as it would be a more constructive response than the penalties the law prescribed.

One of the most important aspects of the TFT approach are the modules that empower people to recognise the structural and systemic frameworks that is at the heart of social and environmental injustice in the world. We are living in very troubled times where humanity is facing an unprecedented storm of multiple global crises. It seems like the struggle for social and environmental justice is just wishful thinking. What power can ordinary citizens exercise against this scale of injustice?

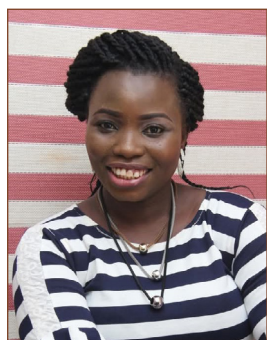
TFT teaches us that we have the power we have always had. The power that exists in our numbers and when we use our voices, our ingenuity, our own personal and collective assets and abilities to shape our own local environment and build our networks across nations we cannot be subdued and subjugated. Our instincts are for survival and a future for our children and our grandchildren.



## ADEBIMPE JESUJOBI STARTED A SCHOOL

by Olutosin Adebawale and Adebimpe Jesujobi, Nigeria

Eden free school Modakeke Osun state, Nigeria



Olutosin Adebawale, TFT country team Nigeria, had a conversation with Adebimpe Jesujobi following up on the TFT trainings. Adebimpe attended the youth training two years ago. Prior to her TFT training, she said she found it difficult to convince parents to enroll their children in her free school. Wherever she went, she was accused of being diabolical and using the destiny of the children in the school. Their parents said it was impossible for a young woman to start a free school for poor people when she was equally poor. Her family and friends couldn't understand her decision to do such.

After the training, Adebimpe said she was stuck with the tool she learned - the HOLON - and community engagement. So, she returned to her parents and family in Ondo state and had a heart-to-heart talk, explaining her decision and vision to them. She then engaged with her friends and old schoolmates. Adebimpe said that she had enough examples of transformers who are doing great work in various communities too, which she cited as examples.

Adebimpe engaged with community leaders and explained calmly her vision and mission to them, she said that now, she knew that community engagement and understanding is key to any successful transformative work.

Now she has 98 students in the school and some of her friends are the sponsors of these pupils, paying the school fees.



In addition, she said that her self-confidence has improved after TFT training, and she has peace of mind in the village since no one is accusing her of using children's destinies anymore. Tosin's organization sponsors 20 pupils in her school through the scholarship program. The number of out-of-school children in her village has reduced. Also, the mindset about charity work being rituals has changed.

## EMPOWERMENT IN DIFFERENT SPACES



by Eunice Ndlovu, South Africa

My name is Eunice Ndlovu, I did my TFT diploma course in 2022-2023. The impact the diploma had in my life, was that I got self-confidence and self-awareness.

Johari's Window, a tool that was used, has allowed me to understand that feedback is for my growth. I take feedback positively because I know it enables me to grow as a person as well as to grow in my line of work. The other thing that still comes to me is the reflection and action. I am constantly reflecting and finding different ways of doing things. I look for and spend my time on things that are life-giving and less on things that are not life-giving.

As a mother and a wife at home, I've changed the way that I used to be. It used to be my voice alone. I used to decide on everything, but now I also listen to my husband's opinions. I listen to my children and if they do something, and I am a bit harsh on them without getting the full information, I go back and apologize, which is something that I did not have in me. But through TFT, I have seen the person that I have become and I am still becoming because you change every day through how you interact.

TFT has helped me to understand that everyone has got something to say. It unlocks the potential that one has.

I work with ten ladies in my community. I used to do everything by myself, not knowing that I was taking the power from them. Once I did TFT, I realized that everyone has got the potential to do what I could. Since then, we divide tasks, people take ownership, and they are confident in what they do. As well as in the church, the women that I work with, meet every week and they used to wait on me for everything, but now things can go on without me because they are now confident to do things on their own.

In church, in our small group that grew from five to ten women, we stopped telling people what to do in the ways that were prescribed to us. Instead I've engaged the participatory method on how people can talk, share, and reflect.

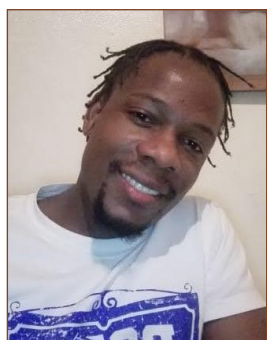
Another shift in church, was the women's ability to take up space. Before, black people were not recognized enough to be in places of decision-making positions. New white members would be given positions above them. But sharing my ideas and growth, others have also become empowered, and learned to speak up and now we have three more black women that have also been assigned to decision-



making structures. We use the Holon to understand the self that has an impact on the community and also the women around us. We also use the time metrics, which really interests a lot of people - including my husband who has done it with me.

When I meet with bigger groups and share, there's something that gets impacted in me. I'm open-minded to always learn in the spaces that we always meet.

## TOOLS OF TRANSFORMATION



by Lameck Gama, Mozambique

My name is Lameck Gama and I am from Maputo City, in Mozambique. I like to play soccer, basketball and chess and enjoy reading and writing poems.. I hold a degree in Clinical Psychology from the Pedagogical University of Maputo.

My desire has always been to work with and care for people, that's why I chose my course (clinical psychology). I started working in community-based organizations helping people living with HIV/AIDS, to know more about how to care for themselves and prevent new infections.

I work with Sinergia Mocambique, a non-governmental organization that works in three fields, namely education, health, and family, and its target groups are adolescents and young people who consume alcohol in schools. My responsibilities include guiding them and giving advice as a team leader for young people who tend to go astray because of drug abuse.

I attended the diploma course in TFT from April 2024, where we had three phases of training. The first was in present and the last two were online via zoom. One of the first tools was the approach of river of life, which describes important moments in an individual's life, as well as the butterfly exercise. Johari's window was also one of the tools that significantly changed my outlook on life. I could also use some of these tools in my work. I was seeing a young girl who was suffering from anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies. In our sessions, I used tools like the Butterfly exercise and Johari's window to facilitate talks around what she wants and needs out of life. With time, she discovered why she found herself in this particular place and together we looked at how she could use the resources she has, to reach her goals. An important discovery was that she had to respect her own journey, be patient with herself and stop comparing herself to others. Currently she is working and finishing her Law and Advocacy training and says those negative thoughts have decreased significantly.





## NEW WAYS OF FACILITATION AND ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES

by Sheryl Tendai Chigwedere, Zimbabwe



I was part of the 2021 cohort of the Training for Transformation youth training in Harare. I can say that it marked a turning point in my personal and professional journey. Drawn by its focus on fostering transformational leadership and community engagement, I eagerly embraced the opportunity. The program provided me with essential skills in facilitation, critical thinking, and transformative dialogue, which have become foundational in my work. I felt that this was my space, being a behind-the-scenes person. It made me happy to realize that transformational leadership

is not about becoming a hero in the work we do but transforming communities so that they create the change they believe in for and by themselves. I also developed a great interest in the Political Economy module and I'm reading further into it.

One of the most significant outcomes of the program has been its influence on my approach to facilitating meetings. I've mastered the ability to create inclusive spaces where diverse voices are heard and valued, enabling meaningful dialogue and collective problem-solving. Although this skill cannot be harnessed in a day, I got a strong foundation from the TFT space and I am working towards gaining more knowledge and experience. These skills have been instrumental in my engagements across various platforms, where I strive to inspire collaboration and shared understanding.

Additionally, the program provided clarity on my career aspirations, leading me to enroll in the Transformational Leadership degree program at Arrupe Jesuit University in August 2022. While this decision was personal, it reflects the confidence and direction gained from the training program. The TFT experience continues to shape my growth, fuelling my commitment to transformational leadership and impactful change!

## A LEAP OF FAITH: HOW TFT GAVE ME THE COURAGE TO PURSUE MY DREAM OF EMPOWERING WOMEN



by Eugenia Masimba, Zimbabwe

My name is Eugenia Masimba. I am the Founder of International Women Development Trust an organization that deals with empowering women with skills to start their own businesses. IWDT was registered in 2019 and today we celebrate 5 years of existence. More than 500 women and girls have benefited from our efforts direct and indirectly and we have established more than 50 businesses owned by women who have graduated from our courses.

After graduating my TFT Diploma in 2019, I felt empowered to take a leap of faith and start my own organization, dedicated to equipping women and the girl child with life-changing skills. Witnessing their growth and Training for transformation motivated me to continue on this path. The TFT methodologies I learned gave me the confidence to step out of my comfort zone, overcome my shyness, and face the world with courage.

Inspired by my newfound passion gained from TFT, I made the bold decision to leave my well paying job with the Catholic Commission For Justice and Peace and pursue my dream. TFT not only helped me think outside the box but also gave me the resilience to navigate uncharted territories and stay committed to my vision.

I have been fortunate enough to cross paths with the women featured in testimonials that I have provided and have had the privilege to work with them providing them with income generating skills, transforming their lives, for the past two years. What strikes me is how their journeys resonate with TFT principles of thought-filled therapy. TFT methodologies that I use help individuals overcome emotional barriers, the Listening surveys and generative themes from the surveys help us identify and address problems. These women that I have worked with have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in their pursuits, which is the work of TFT.

### Some of our beneficiaries

Our young baking entrepreneur Lesley Williams is 12 years old. He bakes scones and muffins for school and also sells to other friends for a living and is happy that after he finishes school he will be working as a baker and owning a bakery business. Thanks to IWDT for the training that he received.



Marble Kajevhu from Chimango Mudzi District- a remote village between the border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. We imparted them with baking skills. She said she is grateful that IWDT came to their village to teach them how to bake cakes for a living. She narrated how backward their village was before we visited them and that neighboring villages looked down upon them.

They didn't know how to bake or even to cook good meals and now because of the learnings they got from us they can cook and bake for the family and sell for profit. She thanked their councilor for inviting IWDT to their village.

Our officer did an M&E of bakery businesses for Tafara Harare women to find out how their baking businesses were performing and she found out that they are now able to bake cakes and bread for a living, but they lack funding to upscale their businesses because of the harsh economic environment of Zimbabwe. We have resolved to do refresher courses for them and to add their list of products and other courses like detergents making, cookery and tailoring so that they don't rely on their bakery only but have multiple streams of income to sustain themselves and their families.



## MY TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY WITH TFT



by Peter Wilhelm Mshomba, Tanzania

My name is Peter Wilhelm Mshomba, I live in Arusha region of Tanzania. I am a teacher by profession at the secondary level and I work with an organization called Youth Development and Transformation (YODET), which addresses various issues, including offering training in areas such as self-awareness and entrepreneurship. I also serve as the Secretary of YODET.

My journey with TFT (Training for Transformation) began in 2022 when I attended an introductory course. There were 47 participants in this course. In 2023, 16 of us from the original group were selected to receive further training at the certificate level. This training was followed by another program called Training of Trainers (T.O.T), which prepared us to teach other people. In 2023, I also had the opportunity to participate in another TFT program, this time with youth from various regions of Tanzania, which was also at the certificate level.

In April 2024, I began the TFT Diploma program, which is offered in South Africa. I am still pursuing this program and expect to graduate in August 2025. Throughout this journey, I have learned many lessons, but one of the most significant lessons was the topic of Putting Freire into Practice. This was my first encounter with Paulo Freire and his educational methods with an emphasis on empowerment rather than mere teaching.

The concept of the Banking System of Education, which was explained through an image of two people at a petrol station one standing and pouring petrol into the sitting person's head resonated deeply with me. This image depicted the traditional approach to education, where teachers fill students with knowledge. After encountering Freire's ideas, I realized the importance of an inclusive approach to teaching, one that encourages students to evaluate themselves and focus on the issues that truly matter to them. I applied this philosophy every time I facilitated a training session, shifting from being just a teacher to being a facilitator.

TFT has significantly transformed me, and it wasn't a quick change but a gradual process. Since I began this training, I have felt different at every stage. One of my biggest challenges was speaking in front of others. I used to fear public speaking and believed I was not capable of leading. However, through self-reflection and goal setting, I started making changes. I now feel more confident speaking in front of groups and have even accepted leadership roles. I serve as the Secretary of YODET and I am also the Chairperson of the Youth at my Church. Additionally, I am the chairperson of another church youth group called "Unity in Action" and serve as the Youth Representative in my community fellowship.

TFT has also helped me manage my time better and organize my daily schedule. I have learned to live peacefully with others, respecting our differences, and have been able to set a personal vision for the next 10 years something I had never thought of before.

This personal growth has not only benefited me but has also had a positive impact on my family, organization, and community. My family has noticed the changes in me and greatly appreciates the growth I have experienced. I have been involved in various community projects, including poultry farming and vegetable farming, which provide for my family and the local market. I also participate in community clean-up activities and at my church, where I have planted trees in various areas. These actions have had a positive impact on both my church and my community.

Through TFT, my organization, YODET, has benefited as well. We now have clear group goals, and we respect our differences, using them to benefit the group. In my role as a facilitator, I have kept in touch with several participants from the workshops I have conducted. Below is a testimony (words) from one of the participants that attended one of the workshops I conducted.

“My name is Aisa Mremi from Singida. I work at a private institution focused on Anti Human Trafficking. The first time I attended the training from Peter was in 2024. Initially, I thought it was a training like other trainings, and I didn’t think it would be such an amazing training like how it was. On the other hand, the training was getting me out of a box tied up with many ropes. The training sparked a fire within me and increased my capacity and understanding to analyze things, and set achievable and realistic goals. In the institution where I work, I raise awareness among people of all ages. Also, TFT has enhanced my creativity in my work, for example, delivering messages through games which sometimes bring much energy to the participants. Beyond work, this training has motivated me to revive businesses that I had previously given up on and to set strong, achievable goals. The workshop was really amazing as it made a new chapter in my life.”



Following the training, Aisa’s organization launched a program specifically for males, which aims to help men of all ages understand themselves better, particularly with the bodily changes they go through. This will be with the help of a male doctor. She wanted to know if I could guide her on how she can incorporate the methods we were using (Freire’s Approach). She was particularly concerned about the challenges they might face when reaching older individuals, as teaching them might be difficult, but allowing them to engage in conversation themselves would greatly help them reach the place they want to. Additionally, she asked if I could be part of the program whenever they need me.

By now I have reached more than 820 people with my trainings within and outside of my region. I have formed a youth Group called Unity In Action, a group that focus on helping each other in personal and spiritual growth, we also visit different people who are in need and help them in different tasks including cleaning around their homes. My fellow youth and I are also looking forward to start cultivating two crops (we are thinking of cultivating Ginger and Garlic). We are in the final stage of collecting data about the total price of planting. We expect to start this in June.

Lastly, TFT helped me to meet fellow youth from 8 African countries and one from Asia. We keep in touch and exchange ideas. For me this is a great connection.

There have been challenges along the way, though. One notable challenge occurred during a workshop I facilitated when I needed to arrange chairs in a semicircle without tables. Some participants resisted, as they were accustomed to sitting with tables. It took more than five minutes for them to accept this new seating arrangement. By the end of the workshop (after three days) the participants came back, apologized, and admitted they had never experienced such an approach before.

Another challenge I faced was from some youth in my community who ridiculed me for cleaning the environment. They believed that I had no work to do, but through my actions and persistence, I was able to show them the value of contributing to our surroundings.

In conclusion, TFT training has brought significant hope and positive change into my life. It has not only transformed me but has also had a ripple effect on my family, community, and organization. The lessons I have learned have empowered me to become a better leader and facilitator, and I look forward to continuing this journey of growth and transformation.



## EMPOWERED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



by Charity Mutambo, Zambia

During a Monitoring and Evaluation session with members from the United Church of Zambia, we heard about the many wonderful that UCZ has been doing.

Below a testimony from Deaconess Charity Mutambo (2016-2017 TFT Diploma course)

TFT has been used as a tool to open my eyes and mind to see opportunities surrounding my life. The training made me gain self-confidence and believe in myself. I'm able to see life with a positive mindset and approach issues in a different way compared to before training.

One of the things I've been doing is a project of women empowerment. With this Women Empowerment Project, we are doing Village Banking and self-help projects where we are bringing women together, they form groups and they start saving. From their savings, they start giving each other loans. So this project has been there since the time I did my training until now and so far I have formed about 75 groups of 20 people each. The stories of these women have changed. Women are able now to build their houses, they are able to take their children to school, and they are able to provide food on the table.

Another project was the provision of wheelchairs to people living with disabilities, seeing that people with disabilities can also contribute to their well-being and that of their families, even at community level and the nation at large. I sourced wheelchairs so that they can move from one place to another so that they can do whatever they can manage to bring food on the table.

I also advocate on alcohol and drug abuse. I started speaking and conducting seminars and workshops on alcohol and substance abuse.

We looked into the effects of social media, human trafficking among youth and discovered there are so many factors contributing to moral decay and poverty is one of them. Parental care has reduced because both parents are busy looking for food while children take care of themselves and tv and social media are teaching children. Conducting seminars have shown we can bring children to where they should be.

Promoting girl-child education with an NGO, Family Matters (an organisation that promotes education of the girl-child) They bring the parents and girls together, started training them. They train the girls how to conduct themselves at home and how to relate to their parents. They train parents the importance of educating a girl-child. This project motivates both parents and girls.

Networking with other stakeholders: With the skills gotten from TFT, I found to achieve what I want, I cannot work alone so I seek stakeholders, including Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC).



We also work with health and government officials. You need to identify the people in your area who are doing the same things, and are promoting what you are.

In Lusaka Presbytery :12-13 diaconal workers in different districts plan and work together. Including a project a project on peanut butter-making, one for tailoring and designing, jam-making, making tomato sauce in the area of value-addition. We do it together so that it can be seen diaconal workers are doing this, rather than doing it alone on small-scale. I have been able to do this because of the skills gotten from TFT.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



by Veronicah Wangari Muraya, Kenya

I am Veronicah Wangari Muraya from Kenya. My work is to form, train and monitor groups of people in a program called SILC (savings and internal lending communities). The groups consist of 70% women and 30% men, a maximum of 20 people in each group. In a report by the United Nations, it was discovered that savings and loan groups in Kenya help women to succeed in farming, small business and also paying of school fees to children. SILC is an improved version of these groups in that the process has improved to proper record keeping, transparent accountability and a constitution. Groups assemble for meeting weekly or after two weeks. The savings make loan funds that revolves within creating a small interest of 10% per month as agreed and captured in a constitution. The groups have the liberty to elect a management committee and form rules for easy governance. By the end of the year, a share out is done using a formula and all the lump sum cash is distributed to members and they start a new cycle. SILC has proven to be helpful especially to women because they are able to achieve many goals like owning properties, initiating income generating activities, improving lifestyles and becoming financially stable.

I count myself lucky to have trained with TFT (2018 -2019). The training changed my way of thinking and seeing things. I started appreciating myself and my family and I developed resilience. Political economy, opened my eyes to see the evils that were caused by corruption and I decided to start with myself to stop it and follow the right procedures in my day to day living- it has been peaceful for real. I encourage groups to follow straight paths especially while securing tenders with the government. I also learnt we had the ability to utilize our resources without waiting for grants from developed countries and we have started farming and irrigation to make sure every household have organic food.

I was trained facilitation skills and how to make a workshop design. This has helped so much in saving facilitation time, harvesting knowledge from participants, root causes of the problems and finding solutions. I have been able also to clearly identify my intentions and organize ideas then reflect on what worked well, what didn't work and how to do it better another time.

Having worked with the communities for a couple of years, I, realized that people have different behaviors and characteristics. These have taught me a lot and helped me in mirroring my deeds. I embrace the fact that everyone has a different way of thinking and all ideas count.

Listening survey has been very useful. I have learnt there are so much meaningful ideas in listening and nobody is empty. By listening and dialogue in groups, I am able to plan and achieve useful projects. I also have a mentor who journeys with me and he is very instrumental in my progress.

I would like to share a story of one group among many who have benefited from my work. It's called St. George's women SILC. The group members have improved there farming skills to modern though using minimum pesticides. "Through workshops we have learnt and improved our Families lifestyles through saving and borrowing cash from our group."

"Sometime back I borrowed from a certain microfinance and our cows were auctioned because I was unable to pay the high interest that was incurred. This program has brought a lot of relief to me and my family and for the past six years, I have learnt to manage my money and help my husband pay school fees not mentioning other small activities that I sort alone. This has earned me dignity and respect," says Salina, a member of the group.





Beatrice says, “Having been in the formal sector for over thirty years, I have never experienced so much wisdom and knowledge compared to when I joined SILC. Our private service provider (psp) is always well equipped with knowledge and zeal to push women to prosperity.”

Scholastica, group treasurer, “I am very happy for the opportunity to work with very empowered women in leadership and personal growth. We are twenty - five sisters willing to change our surrounding

and impact the upcoming generation with equal rights and respect to all genders. We are teaching our boys that cooking, cleaning and washing are basic life skills and not gender roles. We’ve seen that empowered women are a blessing to the family and community”.

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