

# MAKING ACCESS REAL

Trans Inclusive Feminist  
Movement Building

Trans Bantu Zambia (TBZ)





**Title: Trans Inclusive Feminist Movement Building**

**Name of Organisation: Trans Bantu Zambia (TBZ)**

**Country: Zambia**

**Date: December 2016**

**Who are we?**

Transbantu Association Zambia is an organization that promotes and protects the rights of young transgender and intersex communities in Zambia through outreach and practical support including peer support groups, parent support, skills development such as sport and art as well as psychosocial counselling. It aims to build a strong transgender and intersex movement through youth targeted training and capacity building, and advocates for policies and institutional practices that recognise and respect the human rights of transgender and intersex people.

**What was the issue?**

Despite having common agendas around the issues of access to health the trans movement in Zambia and the feminist movement were not working together to strengthen their advocacy.

Although there was a desire to collaborate it was important to address specific misunderstandings before the movements could engage in and then intensify joint advocacy and work in solidarity to advance access to health in Zambia.

Misconceptions existed among the transgender and feminist communities as to what the two communities really are and represent, resulting in certain prejudices based on lack of understanding about different lived realities.

Trans women felt unaccepted and their issues were not taken up in feminist organising.

**What was the change we wanted to see?**

The local trans community had expressed interest in joining forces with feminists over the years, due to an appreciation of, and resonance with feminist values. Local feminists also expressed a willingness and openness to engage with and include trans people in their spaces. The change we wanted was genuine interaction, dialogue and experience sharing between the transgender community and feminists and their organisations in order to build alliances and solidarity for more effective joint action.

**What did we do?**

We organised an orientation meeting where participants could meet and greet and where we could assess participant's understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression as well as feminist ideologies.

We conducted a joint training and consciousness raising exercise using a mix of the "looking in and looking out" [LILO] methodology, consciousness raising and feminist ideology. Some of the feminist values contributed greatly to the process enabling everyone to deepen their own consciousness of power. Interestingly, some feminist participants began to question if indeed they were feminist, considering the way they had viewed trans issues in the past.

We held follow-up meetings to address prejudices. Feminism was at this stage dealt with in great detail and participants also looked at how feminism and LILO could be linked. Most importantly, it was through this process that the two parties realised that their struggles have the same goals and face the same issues, specifically access to health and health services, and that joint advocacy on issues was essential for both movements.

**What did we achieve?**

Greater consciousness of feminist ideas amongst TBZ members.

Greater understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression amongst the feminists.

Understanding of LILO by the young feminists.

Creating an enabling environment and support systems for trans and intersex persons within the feminist spaces.

On-going learning through exchange of knowledge and skills on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression and HIV and AIDS.

The development of a trans-inclusive feminist manual.

Increasing the ability of young feminists to articulate and represent the issues that are important to trans activists in spaces that are out of reach for the trans advocates. The rights of trans persons are defended by the young women who actively speak on gender diversity. This has increased the reach of the messaging. Trans Inclusive Feminism has now evolved into a support group for women.



## What were the key lessons learned?

### Solidarity

Building solidarity is an on-going process especially when there are misconceptions and misunderstandings. Providing a platform for people to come together, share their realities and address issues is critical and leads to stronger networks.

**Influence** Due to a whole range of factors, there are still spaces that are not open to or safe for trans activists. Through this programme young feminists are better able to raise the issues of trans people, built on a much greater understanding of our lived realities, and in some cases similar shared experiences.

### Shared Ownership

The motivation for wanting to genuinely understand the issues of each other is critical. Both trans activists and feminists took ownership of the process from which a strong platform was built and continues to grow.

This Case Study was prepared by TransBantu as part of the CAL Conversations Series: Co-creating Conscious Learning Cultures. These sets of Conversations are a part of the KP REACH Project, funded by the Global Fund through Hivos.

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