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**A THEORY OF CHANGE**  
for **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

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**UZIKWASA**  
PANGANI DISTRICT, TANZANIA

## How We Did It: Surfacing UZIKWASA's Theory of Change

UZIKWASA's dynamic program posed a challenge to developing its theory of change: How do we capture the interplay of the many critical elements of the program to show how seemingly disparate pieces contribute to a comprehensive synergy? Further, since the UZIKWASA team has been deeply involved in research on the program for a decade, how might we lend structure to the knowledge and experience gained from practice so that others might learn from it, without imposing a fixed structure on it that undermines our commitment to remaining adaptable and relevant?

With these big questions in mind, we set out to *surface* the theory of change, rather than to *develop* it. The entire program's staff is deeply engaged in every step of programming: learning, sharing, planning, design, implementation, and more learning. The team's commitment to a culture of reflection meant that the theory of change, a comprehensive explanation of how and why change occurs, was already embedded in their work and understandings. Rather than create a theory from scratch, we needed to surface the existing theory through intensive dialogue—a process of mutual sharing and learning to make what was implicit, explicit.

To guide the process, UZIKWASA engaged a consultant to plan a five-day collaborative session to use backwards planning to surface its theory of change. The goals were

- To take the team outside the focus of daily work to see the broader arcs of change in 13 years of community work
- To connect the broader arcs of change from the particulars of injustice and suffering in Pangani communities, to program design and implementation, to the long-term outcomes
- To build a narrative of how UZIKWASA's program has adapted to the issues that have emerged through increasingly deep engagement with Pangani communities
- To build a narrative of, in light of the established record of change on other issues, UZIKWASA might expect change to occur on intimate partner violence (IPV)

The team engaged in a series of activities to facilitate the levels of focus, helping us to connect big-picture ideas and themes to fine details of our work. There were individual, pair and group activities like picture-building, long-term planning, vision building and reflective summary-writing that were drawn from literature on how to develop—or *surface*—a theory of change. These activities proved to be important to the process of guiding the team through surfacing the theory of change. One unexpected activity was revisiting how each previous

phase of UZIKWASA's interventions were developed from real community challenges, how those programs worked, and, critically, where they fell short. In each iteration, it became clear that the shortcomings of one program were accounted for in the design of the next phase.

**UZIKWASA combines the messaging power of film, theatre, children's literature and our own community radio station with the staying power of facilitative leadership development to address pressing social issues.**

**Multimedia campaigns start the conversation, Pangani FM expands it, and continuous facilitation turns it into community-led action.**

## The Program

UZIKWASA's dynamic programming on IPV is embedded in its dynamic sustained intervention package promoting reflective leadership and gender justice. Through intensive facilitated workshops with thoughtfully assembled multi-sectoral stakeholder groups, UZIKWASA has engaged grassroots leaders in Tanzania's Pangani District for over a decade on issues as diverse as community responses to HIV/AIDS, early forced marriage, sexual violence and parenting. From the beginning, UZIKWASA has sought to give communities a voice in addressing their own challenges.

Each round of focused workshops reaches all of Pangani District's 33 villages, and a newer iteration reaches each of the District's 34 primary schools. This deep continuous engagement of multiple stakeholder groups has a synergistic effect in challenging social norms. Each workshop includes elements of community engagement like forum theater, focus groups or community theater dialogues that communicate and validate participants' work and planning. And, each one ends with an adaptation to village development plans, infusing issues of HIV/AIDS, local gender needs, gender violence, child abuse, leadership challenges and education. Empowered through this process, communities lead the decision-making and adopt reflective methodologies to continue to develop and drive their own development agendas.

UZIKWASA also runs a multimedia campaign to sustain the voices of change among the communities it engages. With hugely popular locally produced feature films, magazines and other media tools, including its own community radio station, Pangani FM, reaching the entire district, UZIKWASA is able to permeate multiple levels of society, not just its workshop attendants. Engaging all levels of society in a social dialogue and in a process of personal and collective reflection, the complex intervention package is appropriate to the shape of complex social challenges.

## The Theory of Change

Changing attitudes and behaviors at the social normative level is a complex process. Individuals and communities vary significantly in the constitutive meanings and cognitive frameworks with which they arrive in workshops and consider multimedia messages and narratives. Accepting and working with that complexity is necessary for successful programming to affect attitudes and behaviors on a broad scale, and to an extent that is sufficiently deep to last. Every individual has her own change journey, and every Village Leadership Council has its own collective, shared and contested change journey. UZIKWASA's work accepts and accommodates the complexity of change journeys for the individuals and groups among the communities we seek to empower and mobilize.

UZIKWASA's workshops aim to inspire deep individual change on the issues in focus. However, we believe the boundaries of the socio-ecological model can be misleading: Considering we work with every village leader in Pangani, the individual change among the workshop participants we facilitate each year adds up to structural change. The depth of our thoughtfully designed workshops allows us to move participants through multiple stages of our modified version of the trans-theoretical model of behavior change. Participants finish the workshops as committed agents of change, not only in their positions as leaders, but in their families and personal relationships.

With Pangani FM as its backbone, UZIKWASA's multimedia campaign continues the conversation beyond the closed doors of workshops to the broader community. Narratives and messages designed to challenge the underlying beliefs that promote or allow violence are deliberately situated among the existing contestations in the social dialogue in which we and our work are embedded. Deep understanding and ongoing reflection about the social context in which we work is critical to designing programs, messages and narratives that resonate. A radio drama about intimate partner violence, recorded in our own studio with actors from across Pangani, and feature films about gang rape and child marriage can successfully challenge the underlying assumptions around gender inequity because they are deeply relevant to people's lives. This helps move the conversation forward at a broader level, engaging more members of the community in a movement for change alongside their leaders.

UZIKWASA's Theory of Change is based on our adaptation of the trans-theoretical model of behavior change. Although social change is complex and non-linear, this model provides a good framework for programmers to consider the whole process of change and how to move individuals, leadership structures and whole communities along it. The adaptation has five stages, not six, as UZIKWASA believes that there is no termination stage as in the original model: We all remain in the maintenance (*Uendelevu* or *Maintenance & Deepening*) stage to ensure that change endures the ever-evolving social context.

## Change Starts with the Self: Institutionalizing Reflection

Before any of our facilitators works with Pangani communities on any issue, they must embark on their own journey of reflection and learning. For that reason, UZIKWASA's facilitators are engaged in a conscious endeavor to support each other in their own individual change processes. UZIKWASA believes that effective change can only be facilitated by people who have committed to live the values and principles that come with facilitation of change and who share a culture of reflection at every step of their own path of growth. Only after we

have worked on ourselves do we engage communities, making us more credible agents of transformation since we have already embarked on our own change journeys.

It is also the most challenging part of the work. The level of individual and organizational consciousness that enables us to see our own resistance to change is difficult to achieve. Sometimes we need to show our own vulnerability as humans in order to gain the respect of others. While this requires exceptional individuals with a lot of energy and the ability to inspire others for change, failing to work on the “self” may pose a threat to the credibility of the organization, be it through individual staff members who fail to share our values, or fail to be a role model in the eyes of the community we serve. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individuals, their behavior and their environments. We all need to be both: an agent for change and responder to change by being role models for others. As one of our staff members said, “Ni kama tunatibu mgonjwa wakati sisi mwenyewe ni wagonjwa.” [*It's like we're treating the patient while we are sick ourselves.*]

Finally, at the organizational level, the ability and commitment of the entire organization to identify new developments and to put in place measures to respond to them is vital for effectively playing our role as part of a growing movement for transformation. UZIKWASA's management is committed to maintaining a culture of learning and reflection among the team through providing staff with space for their personal and professional growth and investing in team building events and formal trainings of staff to become Facilitators of Organizational Learning and Development among other learning opportunities.

## Stage 1: Kutojitambua

Individuals making up both communities and structures are not aware of, or are not open about, the problems in their community and their roles in them. Social, cultural and religious norms dictate behavior that violates rights and undermines dignity. *Kutojitambua* is literally *not to recognize oneself*, or, more directly, *ignorance*. We sometimes refer to this as the comfort zone, where, without recognition of the contradiction between how things are and our beliefs in how they should be, there is no awareness of the problem, nor of the role of oneself in the problem—and therefore no impetus for change.

An individual, group, structure or community can only remain in this stage if they do not engage with the contradictions between the way they see themselves and the suffering they are causing others by participating or being complacent in oppressive norms and systems. UZIKWASA believes in engaging communities and their constituent individuals where they are—both physically and in terms of their journeys of change. We avoid passing judgement on practices that we accept as harmful, opting to reflect on ourselves and our own ignorance and the

impact of our behavior on others before we walk with the individuals and communities we facilitate to forge new shared understandings.

## Stage 2: Kumbe

The *Kumbe* stage is a complex process of surfacing consciousness, overcoming resistance and accepting responsibility. In our workshops, transformative facilitation processes take participants through deep consideration of how violence and injustice exist in their own communities, schools, offices and homes. Multiple days of surfacing the complexity and intersections of challenges and suffering pushes participants to a new view of their individual role—as parents, leaders, teachers and neighbors. The process of surfacing consciousness is directionally opposite of raising awareness: Realizations of contradictions emerge from within decent people participating in indecent structures. When the realities of suffering are contrasted with the comfort level of *kutojitambua*, the process reveals to participants what is already within them, rather than attempting to impose new ideas through raising awareness.

Similarly, Pangani FM and our multimedia tools serve as catalysts and forums for dialogue about these contradictions that continuously engage the broader community. Stepping out of *Kutojitambua*, participants and listeners alike see themselves and their roles in others' experiences from a new perspective. When the process is effective, participants' *Kumbe (Aha!)* realizations cannot be unseen. If the contrast between the way a participant wishes to believe herself to be and the way she now sees her new role is strong enough, it is irreconcilable. This may happen over a long period, which we believe is the process for radio listeners and film viewers, or more quickly in an intensive reflection process in the context of a workshop.

If the contrast between the comfort zone and the new lens cannot be reconciled into a vision of oneself as good and decent, one must change.

The process requires an individual not just to surface the very real effects of challenges in their community, but to admit and accept their responsibility, as a resident of the comfort zone, for contributing to it. Resistance to accepting one's place in the problem can prevent the *Kumbe*, or *Aha!* moment from occurring, since it can be painful to accept one's place in violent or unjust systems of oppression. UZIKWASA's trained and experienced facilitators are responsible for guiding the process for participants to find their own *Kumbe*, as individuals and as members of families, communities and structures. Participants must negotiate the contradictions they see in their own lives, and accept their responsibility for their contribution to injustice and oppression before they can change.

The knowledge and skills of facilitators, and their conscious practice for personal growth in guiding this process constitute critical elements in determining the success of catalyzing behavior change. Intensive training, years of guided practice and continuous personal reflection and learning are necessary for the development and sharpening of adaptable skills for guiding the sensitive and complex process of critical self-reflection.

### Stage 3: Halafu

The *Halafu* stage moves participants from the realizations of *Kumbe* to a shared vision and plan for change, the doorstep of actual behavior change. Surfacing consciousness and seeing oneself from a new perspective (the *Kumbe* stage) yields a transformed understanding of the challenges in focus, but a shared vision of the possibilities for action—and a plan—must emerge next. In our workshops, participants prioritize opportunities for action, consider existing and attainable resources, collective capacity and other key stakeholders, constraints on mutually contingent individual and collective change, and they negotiate efficacy within the planning process. *Halafu (And then)* is the process of consolidation and negotiation of individual realizations leading to a collective decision about taking practical steps of change.

UZIKWASA's thoughtful stakeholder selection brings together community members, elected officials, religious leaders, educators, law enforcement and many others whose shared experience of individual transformation will position them to close gaps from otherwise disparate ends of systems to protect rights and promote dignity. The value of diverse stakeholder voices in an open dialogue is realized through a planning process that mitigates fears about individual capability and threats to collective efficacy. Intimate partner violence, for example, is more effectively prevented in a community where religious leaders, the police, educators and village leaders work in concert rather than in fragmented, uncoordinated efforts that might contradict and undermine.

The value of engaging a variety of stakeholders is realized in the planning process. Police, parents, teachers and religious leaders can reinforce each other's confidence that their individual change plans are part of a movement for change, not isolated actions. Collectively, school management committees can do their work with knowledge that the village leadership coalition will support their agenda—when members from both are represented. Individual commitments are strengthened by the collective cognitive shift and shared expectations around the new vision and plan for change. The end of the *Halafu* stage is where UZIKWASA sees the line of accountability for its contribution to the change process.

## Stage 4: Chukua Hatua

Chukua Hatua is Kiswahili for *Taking Steps* or *Taking Action*. This stage requires communities and participants themselves to take steps on their own. There is a line of accountability around this step, where UZIKWASA can contribute before and after, but cannot take steps on behalf of communities. The focus of UZIKWASA's work is most effectively focused on making the stages leading up to taking action so that it is sustainable and embedded in the community itself. It is only after the initial steps are taken that UZIKWASA can work with community members and leaders to ensure change is meaningful and lasting.

A chairperson in Stahabu village "saw himself" and his behavior during a Reflective Leadership workshop. He realized that he was never able to be an effective and empathetic listener and that he had ignored the needs of his community. In other words, he had his *Kumbe* moment. As a result of his realization, he saw the need to become a better listener and to build relationships with his fellow villagers through creating spaces for them to voice their concerns and be committed to work on them.

At the coaching session that followed the Reflective Leadership training, he has moved from his realization to actual change. As a first step in his change process, initiated special days to attend to community concerns and take the time to listen to people and take care of their issues. For example, he committed himself to address longtime land conflicts in Stahabu. The initial stages of action are the community's to take, but UZIKWASA's work does not stop here.

## Stage 5: Uendelevu

Continuous engagement at multiple levels serves to identify and close gaps that emerge as new cognitive frameworks are realized in transformed attitudes, behaviors and systems. UZIKWASA maintains its engagement with communities beyond the initial stages of change. Follow-up facilitation provides technical support for change plans, validates challenges through acknowledgement and successes through appreciation, engenders continued growth for individuals and structures, and fosters adaptability to an ever-changing environment. Revisiting action plans—negotiated during UZIKWASA's transformative workshops—with the lens of practical experience fortifies early changes into transformed social norms and reflective systems.

Within systems of justice and among communities, new behaviors become habitual, reflection is institutionalized and growth, learning and progress toward gender justice constitute new social norms. In accepting the complexity of undermining and changing negative social norms, UZIKWASA acknowledges that each iteration of workshops, using participatory methods and reflective methodologies, will reveal the frontier challenges and emerging questions

whose shape will inform the next stage of programming, messaging, workshop themes, objectives and stakeholder selection.

As each phase of interventions nears its end, the communities we work with are taking hold of the pieces of our message and our methods they have chosen to pick up—while we are starting the process anew: changing ourselves before we attempt to facilitate change in Pangani. Beginning with meaningful community empowerment for HIV/AIDS, each development in our thematic focus has taken us deeper into the lives of the communities we work with in a process of mutual learning and sharing and, critically, a process characterized by mutual respect. It is in the depth of our commitment to reflective methodologies, not in the technicality of intervention design, that we find the roots of the change we see in Pangani. And that is why our goal truly is the journey.

# UZIKWASA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

## on INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

UZIKWASA's complex program works holistically to promote gender justice and reflective leadership in coastal Tanzania's Pangani District. Through transformative leadership interventions and thoughtful multimedia campaigns, we work to facilitate a movement for change on a number of pressing social issues.

Our latest focus on intimate partner violence (IPV) has brought us greater clarity on the interdependence of the underlying social drivers of multiple forms of violence. IPV, violence against children (VAC), and forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and violence against women and girls (VAWG) more broadly are not distinct occurrences, but categories of symptoms of the same social challenges.

Although our program works to address all of these through deep community reflection on gender and power, this theory of change shows how we think our work affects IPV specifically.

