

Who are we?

Training And Research Support Centre (TARSC) Zimbabwe is a non profit organisation registered in Zimbabwe in 1994. We are a learning and knowledge organisation, with a particular focus on building skills and evidence in communities, civil society and in the public sector. We work primarily in east and southern Africa. We work with civil society organisations (CSOs), professional groups, academia, governments, parliaments and intergovernmental organisations from local to national and regional levels.

What do we do?

We provide training, research and support services to develop capacities and evidence within state and civil society to interact on areas of social policy and socio-economic development.

To achieve this we:

- Carry out and build skills for research, including participatory action research and community based research;
- Provide evidence and technical advice to support policy dialogue;
- Provide organisational development support for membership CSOs;
- Support networking between state and non state institutions.

TARSC has responded to demand for research, training, policy analysis and advice over the past decade in areas such as

Health: Public health; Health systems; health equity; Primary Health Care; Participation, social empowerment and governance;

Labour: Occupational Health; work environments; employment law; export processing zones; HIV/AIDS and employment

Social policy, social security and health financing: health financing; budget analysis; resource allocation; social housing;

Child, gender and reproductive health: Responses to sexual abuse; Child health; adolescent reproductive health; HIV and AIDS

Food security: Child nutrition; food security; community monitoring; ethical relief

We do this to support dialogue, learning, sharing of information and experience and critical analysis. We seek to build knowledge and perspectives, shape effective strategies, and strengthen public alliances and networking to affirm and advance social and economic progress based on self determination, equity and social justice



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Research

TARSC research activities range from cross country formal research to local participatory and community based research. We build skills in basic research methods, mentor and support research, such as in the example below.

The community based research programme

In this programme the participating CSO decides on priorities for research based on issues relevant to their communities. In Stage 1 we provide basic skills in research methods, and develop the research questions, tools and protocol. We mentor the field work and prepare the data analysis. In Stage 2 training we covers analysis and reporting, working with the data generated. We facilitate stakeholder dialogue on the findings and on possible interventions. We also assess the interventions implemented. This work has covered areas such as the costs of health, Primary health care (PHC); Solid waste management; Social security schemes.



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Support to regional research networks

TARSC has since 1998 co-ordinated and been a secretariat for the Regional Network on Equity in Health in east and southern Africa (EQUINET), a network of professionals, civil society members, policy makers, state officials and others within the region who have come together to promote and realise shared values of equity and social justice in health (www.equinet africa.org).

EQUINET institutions research and publish technical publications, hold meetings, training and engage in policy forums and programmes. A searchable database of EQUINET and other publications on health equity is provided on the EQUINET website (www.equinet africa.org), with about 10 000 documents downloaded monthly.



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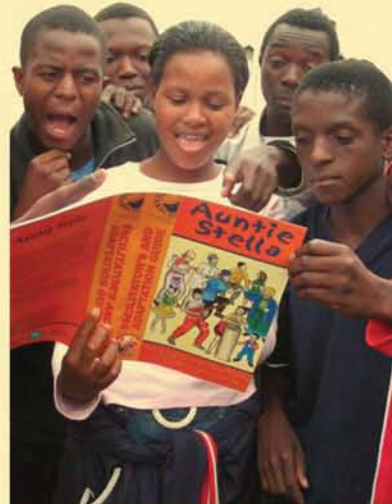
Capacity building

The capacity building activities in TARSC are implemented through formal training in workshops and short courses, through mentoring within specific research activities, and through exchange visits and attachments within TARSC and partner organisations with expertise. Our skills building ranges from direct participatory approaches to web based courses and materials. We have a portfolio of training materials that build on our use of participatory methods and involve innovative approaches.

We provide free interactive web based training materials in adolescent health at <http://www.auntiestella.org/> and in civil society and health at <http://www.tarsc.org/who>. Some examples of our capacity building activities are highlighted below.

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health and relationships

The Auntie Stella: Teenagers talk about sex, life and relationships' is about adolescent sexual and reproductive health and relationships. TARSC has developed and provides training support for an activity pack targeted at 12-19 year old youth, in and out of school, in east and southern Africa. Based on participatory research and pre-tested in the region it uses a series of 42 letters, each written as though to a newspaper agony aunt. Letters are accompanied by a reply from Auntie Stella, questions for small-group discussion and material for teachers/facilitators. Young people read the letters and responses in small mixed-gender groups, and do role-plays, drama, quizzes, debates, interviews, research projects, songs, stories, maps and diagrams that encourage critical thinking and reflection. Auntie Stella' is available in English, Shona, Ndebele, Swahili, Chichewa and Portuguese.



Health literacy program

Our health literacy programme in co-operation with national CSOs covers occupational and public health, health literacy, health financing, HIV and AIDS, health equity, social security, food security and nutrition, gender equity, child and adolescent health and social development and reproductive health. Since 2007, TARSC has provided materials, training and mentoring for CSOs to implement health literacy in countries in east and southern Africa. The programme builds CSO capacities and resources to carry out participatory approaches to health literacy to community level. Through this the programme supports communities to engage with authorities on policies on social determinants of health and health systems, particularly in PHC.



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Organisational development and networking

TARSC personnel participate in numerous regional and national intersectoral bodies and technical advisory committees on health and social policy. We have built links with and provided evidence and technical advice to government ministries, the relevant parliament portfolio committees and regional bodies such as the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA HC), the Southern African Development Community, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and the Southern and East African Parliamentary Committees on Health (SEAPACOH). We do this in co-operation with institutional resources within the region.

We have for over 15 years nurtured and built capacities in membership based organizations working in health and social policy. The Community Working Group on Health, www.cwgh.co.zw a vibrant autonomous network of health civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, was formed and nurtured at TARSC. We have provided capacity support to the labour movement in Zimbabwe and the region, and to membership based CSOs working on housing, with youth, with local government and in other areas of social policy.



5 Information, communication and publication

We have a range of information resources to support research and training for civil society and public sector organisations. We welcome use of the information resource centre at TARSC, where there are over 3 000 publications on major areas of social and economic policy, and hardcopies of TARSC publications.

Our website at <http://www.tarsc.org/index.php?/tarsc/resources/> provides databases with TARSC publications, searchable by topic, and documents can be downloaded as pdf files. On the site there are also databases of materials

on civil society

by or about civil society in Zimbabwe and southern Africa

on equity in health



The image shows a screenshot of the TARSC website. The header features the TARSC logo and the text 'TRAINING & RESEARCH SUPPORT CENTRE'. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories such as HOME, TRAINING ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES, AUNTIE STELLA, WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY, RESEARCH, COMMUNITY BASED, GENERAL, RESOURCES, TARSC PUBLICATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND HEALTH, EQUITY IN HEALTH, GENERAL CIVIL SOCIETY, ASSETS, CAPACITIES, PARTNERS, and REPORTS. The main content area includes a 'HOME' section with the title 'Training and Research Support Centre' and a description of TARSC's mission. Below this, there are two announcements for the 'WINTER SCHOOL 2010', one stating it is being held from July 5-10, 2010, and another stating that applications are closed. The website URL 'www.tarsc.org' is displayed at the bottom. To the right of the website screenshot is a photograph of several people sitting around a table, engaged in a training or research activity.

6 Our capacities

We have a range of capacities at TARSC or in TARSC programmes, including public health and epidemiology, biomedical, health policy, medical sciences, participatory and formal research skills, statistics, health economics, social science, material development, information sciences, accounting and computing. We co-operate with institutions that provide IT, economics, legal, labour relations and other relevant skills, and network nationally and regionally to build interdisciplinary approaches. We believe in building capacities of working people - those at TARSC and those we work with.

Where to contact us

For more information about TARSC and the work of TARSC contact us at
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