



TREATMENT ACTION CAMPAIGN
RAITH BRIEFING UPDATE
FINAL

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OVERALL

Treatment Action Campaign kicked off the year on a better footing than it was twelve months previously. The final quarter of 2014 saw TAC turn a corner and 2015 sees TAC beginning on a much stronger footing with funding allocated via the services of a revamped RM department and stronger EXCO team. However its financial restrictions and funding situation remain critical with the loss of at least 50% of its core funding. The organisation has focused on its key five campaign areas while adding additional work supporting and partnering with other civil society organisations to stop the xenophobic attacks and address the dire needs of foreigners requiring assistance in South Africa.

•On the organisational strategy and change management areas going forward, the TAC Board and its Exco met on 15/16 January 2015 to discuss TAC’s organizational strategy, fundraising and objectives for 2015. For a number of reasons (changing donor and policy environment, funding challenges, identity crisis due to low morale, long term vacancies in the senior staff positions) and the inability to retain high quality staff, TAC had a major funding crisis in 2014 as a result of the reduction in funding for NGO’s globally.

The following organisational objectives were agreed by TAC Board and Exco members with a delivery date of end December 2015:

- (i) To transform the organisation to its required state
- (ii) To ensure that the organisation is sustainable
- (iii) To deliver on TAC’s programmes as outlined in TAC’s five key campaigns
- (iv) To increase TAC’s profile through both communications and donor engagement
- (v) To strengthen HR and Finance policies and practices.



Strengthening TAC for the future

Based on a strategic planning session with Exco and board members in early 2015, the following key areas were identified subject to secured funding for budgets being obtained.

- Ensure each support unit functions with optimal and permanent staff
Ensure sufficient staff are recruited and reduce the high attrition rate by improving the work environment
Improve staff morale through good organisational best practice
- To ensure that the Policy and Research team is better capacitated
To strengthen TAC's communication and outreach capacity by: (i) recruiting a Communications Manager (post the TAC salary review) and (ii) overseeing the development of a new TAC website;
To lead on developing a TAC volunteer programme
To ensure that a salary review takes place by the Board Salary Committee in 2015 and that the recommendations are implemented.

ASSESSMENT

- The current era of health reform on the backdrop of a faltering economy has, however, impacted organisational changes and affects its prominence as a leading campaigning and activism organisation.
- TAC continues to influence national policy and the HIV landscape through their engagement with the Minister of Health, Department of Health and SANAC. TAC has developed collaborative relationships these government stakeholders. This new relationship has reaped benefits for all parties and allowed TAC to pursue new challenges without constantly being at loggerheads with Government. Following a strategic decision in 2014, the organisation made significant strides towards strengthening its advocacy campaigns.
- TAC brought about increased awareness around public health system inadequacies such as essential medicines stock-outs, non-availability of services, staff shortages and poor levels of clinical care, and non-functioning or non-existing AIDS Councils. TAC also addressed related social issues such as the high prevalence of gender-based violence in many communities.
TAC mobilized communities to engage health officials and the public in these issues, and the organization can site many examples of successful outcomes and progress to report from this period.

Financial management

Despite the funding constraints TAC has balanced the books to provide value for money for donors and create an impact in a desultory health landscape in South Africa. It is noteworthy that due to its constitution to date TAC has not received any direct financial support from the South African Government or private companies. The essential focus of the financial department is to ensure that the budget is planned and fully funded for FY 2015/16.

Changes within the organisation



Personnel, staff vacancies, staff replacements, changes in salaries/in the salary structure - TAC faced multiple staffing, operational and governance challenges stemming from reduced funding and a general lack of confidence in leadership to manage and implement change successfully, resulting in many key management members resigning during the grant period. Many of these challenges were addressed successfully by engaging the services of a new RM Manager, Locunda Karam who has managed to orchestrate funding applications and solidify reporting which seemed to have been an area that had suffered in the past due to critical staff shortages. The turnaround in the RM department has resulted in the continuance of ongoing operations since October 2014.

Finance - The finance department under the stewardship of CFO Fanayi Tshabalala has managed the organisations finances through the change process, initiated new systems and seen to the reporting of retrospective close out grants some requiring 5 year audits.

Staffing changes - However, mid 2014 saw the appointment of Anele Yawa as the new General Secretary. Through accessing financial support from SANAC, TAC was able to appoint the interim Resource Mobilisation Manager and Human Resource Manager, which have subsequently been made permanent positions as additional funding has been acquired.

Positive repercussions have also resulted from this tumultuous period, including a proper assessment of the MEL system, culminating in a tender being put out to overhaul and re-design the model and make use of mobile technology.

Organisation structures - A new revitalized membership system has been implemented. This is allowing better tracking for members and given members new laminated cards to use when accessing assistance from TAC.

Management - One of the main appointments that emanated from the Board level was the appointment of an Acting Interim COO, Helen Chorlton from the UK Foreign Office. Her vast communication expertise steered TAC through the turbulent waters.

The remaining existing leadership of the Executive such as the Chief Finance Officer and the National Campaigns Manager who have guided and supported the offices through this transition has been with the organisation longer than 5 years.

Board and Governance - TAC's NC unanimously resolved in a special meeting in June 2013 to bring into effect a Board of Directors as TAC's highest decision-making body. TAC's National Chairperson, General Secretary and Treasurer would sit on the Board, but with a majority of independent directors and an independent Chair. The NC also mandated the Executive Committee (Exco). In January 2014, Mr Qondisa Ngwenya was elected as the Board Chairman.

Sustainability - The largest challenge facing TAC as the grant period ends in February 2015 is the future funding and sustainability of TAC. Following a large fundraising drive at the end of 2014 through the newly appointed RM manager, TAC has now secured approximately 50 per cent of its funding needs. However, large scale proposals for the financial year are still to be approved and further thought is being given to the sustainability of TAC in 2016 and beyond by the senior leadership.

Funding diversification - Diversification of funding remains a key strategic objective and a challenge not easily resolved.

Gender policy – The organisation analysis membership by gender and age. The organisation through MEL measures outcomes under certain campaigns by male, females and children. In terms of gender equality in the work place South Africa has stringent compliance issues for recruitment based on race, disability, and male, female ratios to be representative in the work place. Unfortunately the system is



skewed and not reflective of either proper talent recruiting or favoring men. Men remain the most marginalized under the present system.

Description of Activities

Going Forward

For 2015/16 and beyond, TAC National Council has decided on five key campaigns and one flagship programme that will support the recent Xenophobia attacks. The five campaigns aim at both direct improvement of healthcare services and achieving knock-on improvements in the healthcare system. All involve advocacy for key constitutional rights. We are confident that with supporters such as Bread for the World we will be able to continue in delivering our core objectives of this and future projects.

During the project period, the TAC has taken a decision to transition away from a service delivery focus toward an increased advocacy focus. TAC's role must be to ensure that government does function for the benefit of every citizen and not just to line the pockets of cronies. This can only be achieved through coordinated activism which can hold Government accountable.

TAC continues to represent a diverse number of users of the public healthcare system in South Africa, and will campaign and litigate on critical issues related to the quality of and access to healthcare. The organisation currently has over 10 080 paid and unpaid members and a network of 182 branches and provincial offices in seven of South Africa's nine provinces.

TAC continued to work with beneficiaries and partner organisations during the project period, the production of the People's Health Manifesto is indicative of the ability TAC has to become the voice of the masses, this outlines the key health related issues that affect users of the healthcare system. This was circulated following extensive consultations with members and partner organisations. The TAC asked key political parties to respond publicly to the 11 issues and questions concerning HIV and TB, fixing the health system and issues on governance and accountability.

Stock-outs of essential supplies

Drug stock-outs still remain the most critical issue. In most of the cases that TAC was involved in, quick solutions were found, such as local health facilities getting more supplies in a reasonably quick timeframe. However, operational and administrative challenges will need to be addressed in order to curb the stock outs. TAC is cogniscent that it needs to work together with other partners to address this vital issue.

Availability and practice of Healthcare staff

Following TAC's intervention it was resolved through direct contact with hospital or clinic management, who ensured staff availability by changing duty rosters, and for example, ensuring that there was at least one doctor in the VMMC clinics. Towards the end of 2014, adverts were placed by the Free State and Eastern Cape provinces to appoint field workers to further our work on SRHR in the respective areas and Mpumalanga will appoint in January 2015.



Infrastructure

Such issues centered on water facilities and electricity for the most part, and with TAC's intervention and lobbying, these services were often restored. In some areas, TAC was advocating for the erection of health facilities, and commitments were made by the MECs concerned that the health facilities would be erected.

Functioning of AIDS Councils and other accountability structures

TAC has been successful in advocating for the launch of AIDS council and other accountability structures, with notable successes in the Free State, where TAC has launched or revived several local AIDS councils. TAC ensured that structures such as Clinic committees were fully functioning, with effective committee members. Other notable achievements relate to the induction training sessions that were facilitated, presenting the project and its objectives in strategic meetings to interested partners to form alliances.

Poor progress with National Health Insurance (NHI) pilot districts.

TAC has managed to raise awareness and created media attention to the fact that the scheme seems to be running out of steam even before its engine started. Through TAC's insistence it improved access for other civil society groups to become involved in the implementation processes and monitoring progress.

Beyond 2015

TAC is confident that with the benefit of hindsight looking towards the future and building on lessons learnt it will become even more of a vital cog in the wheel of civil society. TAC has currently undergone an evaluation as TAC's five year grant with Comic Relief nears its end.

Atlantic Philanthropies

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to capture inter alia (a) TAC's achievements in the period, especially in terms of improvements in health policy and implementation to benefit people living with HIV; (b) How TAC made that difference; and (c) Lessons learnt that should be taken into account for TAC's future work and role.

TAC leadership and membership view this evaluation as an excellent opportunity to highlight the outstanding work that TAC has achieved also to identify key pitfalls that TAC can use to strengthen the organisation. The evaluation will be participatory and will use an inclusive approach that enables TAC board members, political leaders, staff and members to reflect on, and learn from, the period of funding and put the learning into practice. The evaluation will also be gender-aware in its design, analysis and reporting. The results of this keenly awaited evaluation are due to be published at the end of June 2015.