

A STUDY VISIT REPORT

BABA WATOTO CENTRE

FIT FOR LIFE PROJECT 2015.

“Educating vulnerable youngsters in the arts and creative industry’s in Dares Salaam”



To strengthen and enhance the creative training and management activities at the Baba Watoto Centre for Children and Youth.

PREPARED BY	Ms. ISSA, Habiba
PROJECT	FIT FOR LIFE
PLACE	CHICHILI - BLANTYRE, MALAWI.
DATES	October 02nd – 04th, 2015

1. Summary/Description of the project

Name of the Beneficiary	Babawatoto Centre for Youth and Children	
Title of the Action	Study Tour	
Duration	three (3) Days	
Place	Blantyre Cultural Centre.	
Partner Organisations		
Role	Name	City
Partner n° 1	PARAPANDA THEATRE LAB	Dar es Salaam
Partner n° 2	UFA FABRIK	Berlin

PREAMBLE

The project was executed in two phases: the first phase was the training of the Children and Youth whose roles and responsibilities was to carry the new techniques. The second phase was performance presentations to the community.

The Fit for life project has started in 2013 with several activities including four study visits, 2 east African country and 2 inside the country.

The Fit for life team of 17 participants did travel to Malawi to the Blantyre Arts Festival 2015. The group performed on festival and had workshops for children and youth who volunteer in a festival from 02nd up to 4th Oct.

The aims of the Study visit

- To provide participants with a firsthand experiences.
- To enhance and build capacity for the local trainers to conduct the workshop with difference children
- Local trainers receive the possibility to exchange their methodology with other organizations and share practical ideas.

The communication between Fit for life and Blantyre Art Festival was started from the Ms. Habiba Issa and Thomas Chibambo who were participants in Sub Saharan Africa Cultural Management training 2009 conducted by Goethe-Institut in Berlin. These two Cultural Managers made a strong network by exchanging information about culture in their countries. Eventually Thomas Chibambo invited Fit for Life to the 7th of Blantyre Art Festival in Malawi.

The Trip

The Fit for Life group started the 1773 km trip to Blantyre by bus on 30 October morning with 17 participants. It was long trip were the team slept in Uyole in the Mbeya Region and the other day continued with the trip a day and night. In the morning of 02 Oct they reached Blantyre City. The organizers of the festival, Mr.Emmanuel Chamuhanya, welcomed the group. Since the accommodation was not yet confirmed, they had to wait for a long time outside of the hotel. Everybody was too tired to attend workshop for the first day. The Fit for Life team watched the live performances at night and played samba reggae music.

The second Day

On the second day, Fit for Life had a rehearsal for 2hrs on the main stage. The process went well. It also was a way to remind the children what they have been training for that production. Then they had lunch together and after 30 minutes the performance started at 3.00pm. The audiences were about 70 people. Despite the few audiences the performance was so nice, full of energy and they did a great job to make wonders for the people. The performance was about 50 minutes - a production of Samba Reggae, juggling, trapeze and acrobatic.

After the show people came to talk to the children and congratulated them for their show. Mr. Oscar Chiwawa was asked for the CD of Samba Reggae music and he was advised to record it. Other organization like Solo monic Peacocks theatre and others asked to connect with Fit for Life. Mr. Mcarthur Matukuta liked Samba Reggae music also wants to buy a CD. He was so fascinated by Aidan Mpangala and Adam Seleman who look so young in a group and do acrobatic.

In a show Samba Reggae music started by a Shabo's music with a group of eight including Shabo Makota, Daud Joseph, Christina Elisha, Amjed David, Mwajabu Omary, Mwanaidi Salehe, Adamu Seleman and Rashid Ramadhani. Three pieces were played and thereafter the juggling and acrobatics were performed accompanied by Samba music.

The children watched other performances and were happy to see the others performing. Solomonic Peacock showed story telling of KALULU. Also Munya from Zimbabwe did show poetry and others.



The third Day

This day the children had a workshop with other schoolchildren from SMARTON PRIVATE SCHOOLS and other youth. The team was divided into different disciplines (acrobatic, juggling, Trapeze and Samba reggae) and asked people who love to participate. The local trainers and advanced children train others under supervision of artistic director Mr. Mkude Kilosa. The workshop went from 10am to 01pm. Each class had participants who were new to acrobatic and Samba Reggae as well.



A sound and mass media workshop took also place and was conducted by Dj FOSTA from South Africa. Mwanaidi joined the class although she had a big challenge of language. The common language in the class was the Malawian language Chichiwa. The workshop was about how to sell their work through social media including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and others. They learned how to create a page and make it visible. The six workshop participants came from different art groups who participated in a festival.

WORKSHOPS RESULTS

The Children were able to learn every training provided at a very highest level of understanding, almost every lesson taught by their teachers in classes, the children and Youth already accustomed to climb the equipment and play with Diabolo & Juggling and also playing a rhythm of the Samba Reggae percussions.

- Children expressed good level of discipline in their classes and they respected each other.
- The local trainers from Tanzania added some more skills in training the children. This is because they met new children in the new area, so, the environments forced them to be even creative just to make sure the children understand the lesson and are able to integrate what they have learnt in classes for the production of one nice performance especially during the final performance presentations. They were also ready to receive expertise from new children and the youth from BYF as well.
- Participants were able to learn different new knowledge from other artists such as the language; youth and children from the two centres were exchanging experiences friendly and teach each other English and Kiswahili language.
- The performance staged during the Jam session night at the Uganda National Theatre motivated the participants a lot to keep the spirit of doing acrobatics and the Samba Reggae music when preparing the final performance.

The trainers from Tanzania and the children especially were also very happy to get an opportunity of exploring the Blantyre City.

CHALLENGES

- The main challenge in this study tour was the language, although it is believed that the arts always have its own language. The local trainers were forced to use English as a language of instruction.
- The timetable was not followed as planned; this is because there was not enough staff to work in festival. There was also a lack of information for organizers.
- The number of audience in the festival was poor, per day only below 100 per watching the performances. This is because the price of entry was higher compare to the other festivals in Malawi.