

# COSTUME DESIGN AND PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

## FIT FOR LIFE PROJECT



### WORKSHOP REPORT

## THIRD PHASE 2015

Tailoring and Costume Design in Theatre Productions is a continuation of the workshops series goes under the title; Costume Design and Production Workshops that organized at the Baba Watoto Centre under the project known as Fit for Life (FFL) funded by the European Union.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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We would like also to convey our gratitudes to the Goethe-Institut Tanzania, Ufa-Fabrik from Germany, Parapanda Theatre lab Trust and the Baba Watoto Centre for organizing and managing the project very well in achieving worthy goals. We thank also these institutions for giving opportunities to these young girls for them to learn tailoring and costume designs so that they can be able to raise their economies.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

Tailoring and Costume Design in theatre productions is a continuation of the workshops series goes under the title Costume Design and Production Workshops that managed by the Baba Watoto Centre under the project known as Fit for Life. This is a strategy that focuses on building the capacity of young people in the state of getting rid of poverty that exposes these young people into a life of risk, but with this help they can achieve their good visions of their bright future and also start living life with a daily bread assurance.

The twenty days of workshop training on Costume Design and Production was prepared which attended by different girls living nearby the Baba Watoto Center. The Costume Designs in Theatre Arts is a treasure, therefore, these girls are groomed to be more professionals so that they can be productive inside and outside the centre in the future.

## **SUMMARY**

The third phase of the workshop training on Tailoring, Costume Design and Production is a continuation of the training that have been provided in the first and second phase for the aim of increasing the number of experts in the stage arts and crafts. The Fit for Life project focuses on giving competence and professionalism to the children and youth of the Baba Watoto Center in the state of building capacity to the children and youth living in vulnerable environments, so that they can afford their life independently by making incomes through the arts and crafts industry. The Workshop training of Tailoring, Costume Designs and Production in its implementation this year, the participants have been able to learn different materials that can be used in Costume Designs, how they can be designed and sewing and all other ways of creativity to get the best costumes in the stage performance.

In the next year the project will have been last for three years and seventeen trained participants in this workshop will continue to be part of the Baba Watoto Center as treasury of the Center. Tailoring, Costume Design and Production Training have been led by the facilitators Grace Msemwa.

## **TEACHING METHODOLOGIES**

During the Tailoring, Costume Design and Production Workshops, the main methodologies were

### **I. Theory:**

There was thorough clarifications in different topics taught which was also written on the blackboard; different drawings and pictures were also presented to the participants in different shapes. There were also a Q & A (Questions and Answers) sessions as a part of provoking the minds of the participants together with the facilitators in making sure they together go deep into the topics intended for the workshops. Regular feedback to the facilitator or participants helped a lot in bringing more understanding of the topics before even they have been presented.

### **II. Practical;**

Much of the practical work was implemented started by identifying different types of Sewing Machines and their different devices, touching the sewing machines together with their different devices and working with them (fixing devices on a sewing machine); group works in repairing the sewing machines and their devices, the task of drawing parts of the clothes, Measuring and Cutting different ranges of clothes creatively.

### **III. Designing Costumes and Tailoring;**

The exercise of designing costumes and tailoring, the girls used the circus workshop and the Music of Samba Raggae at the third phase of the BIG WHEEL as part of their practical work experiences. So, the participants were given a task of critically observing all the artistic training and rehearsals that was taking place every day at the Baba Watoto Centre and then design costumes for the final performances of the Big Wheel as part of their practical experience in the real productions.

## **Objectives**

To empower the participants to know sewing and designing different costumes in different artistic productions so that they can use that knowledge and skills in their work of art.

## **Specific Objectives**

1. Help the participants to be able to identify different types of sewing machines and their different devices, maintaining them and use them for the relevant work.

2. Help the Participants to be able to do minor modifications and repairs whenever the machines and equipments stop working.
3. Help the participants to be able to design different costumes and sewing them for the different Stage Theatre Performances.

## **IMPLEMENTATIONS**

The implementation of the Tailoring, Costume Designs and Production workshop was accomplished in twenty days; only six days at a week while Sunday being the only day off. The training timetable allocated only four hours at a day for each of the training provided; having started at 08:00am to 12:00pm. The workshops were held at the Baba Watoto Centre premises, around Mburahati suburb - Dar es salaam.

## **THE FIRST WEEK**

### **TAILORING:**

The Facilitator began by explaining how the Sewing Machine systems work in different ways and how the sewing machine devices are used in the process of costumes production. But also the facilitator explained how the sewing machine devices are connected with each related devices. This topic also emphasized the importance of the use of original sewing machines lubricants and also the importance of cleaning their machines every time they use them.

Thereafter, the Facilitator had an opportunity to get feedbacks from the participants on what they have learned in the last year's training in order to understand the state of the participants to remember what they have learned. In the same feedbacks there were some weaknesses observed by the facilitator, but also she noted some new participants in the class of Costume Designs who were very new in the training, then she decided to divide the class in two groups especially during the designing lesson.



**The Costume Design Workshop facilitator Ms. Grace Msemwa instructing the workshop participant how to apply lubricants on a Sewing Machine**

In clarifying the topic, the facilitator had to go through some past lessons trying to repeat some important areas of the topics taught last year so that she can be able to bring focus and awareness of the participants in the present advanced lessons in the workshops. And the approach used here was more of theories with some graphical presentations for the participants to be able to identify different devices and the connections of each device as they are used in sewing.

These girls were also instructed how to make some minor adjustments and repairs to the sewing machines they will be using.

The Facilitator hinted the topics of flicking the wheel of a sewing machine, which is the basic training to every beginner in tailoring career. The girls also were introduced into the use of special paper which are always used in training the lesson of taking measurements of clothes and cutting them. This lesson came after learning how to handle the scissors in order to cut the cloth properly. The participants also learned the better ways of keeping Measurements and the Tape/Tape Measure. All the girls were therefore instructed how best they can take care of their Tapes/Tape Measure; and that is by hanging them on their neck.

## **THE SECOND WEEK**

The Facilitator in the Costume Designs started by explaining how to join different pieces of clothes which are usually designed separately such as hands, the folding pieces of skirts and all other different pieces of designed clothes without twisting the fringes (sewing lines). The participants also trained how to make various designs of folding the clothes on the joining edges. The participants drew different pictures showing different areas of the foldings. All participants were given the task of designing and sewing two skirts; one skirt with the pulling folds and the other second skirts with the arranged folds. This exercise was not easy for the participants, especially those who were new in the class. Thereafter, the participants were given another practical exercise of drawing different designs/sketches of costumes that would fit in the fields of dance, drama as well as acrobatics. Such drawings/sketches were therefore applied some various colors which was also taken as part of another lesson on the use of colors in the costume designs especially in theatre productions. The facilitator in the colour lesson was based on explaining different types of colors and also defining the meaning of colors as used in the productions of costumes in theatre arts.

This topic of colors was completely related to the use of lights on the stage. The participants were therefore instructed to use colors in their drawings/sketches of designs.

Swaumu Idd showed great skills in the areas of color design and arranging them in her artwork. This lesson was well interpreted by all the participants especially when asked to design the costumes in sketches, although all these girls are still having low capacity on designing production costumes. This class was divided into three main groups and each group was given a different task from the other; group A were given a task of designing for the group of acrobatics and their colors, while Group B were supposed to design costumes for the group of musicians and their colors. But group C was required to design costumes for the group of traditional dances. All these three groups sketched their designs in some special paper provided by the facilitator and then presented their designs before the class. And finally the participants were able to get different costumes that used in the BIG Wheel performances, organized on June 19th, 2015.



**The Costume Design Workshop participants in a group practical assignment**

### **THE THIRD WEEK**

During this third week's training workshops, the main task was focused in giving practical lessons to the participants so that to get to know their working knowledge and skills. The exercises were given in groups, and the groups were organized by the facilitator for two participants in each group, this is to make sure they are getting used to be able to work collaboratively in teams. The facilitator wanted also to make sure the

participants are helping each other in any situations of need under his very minimal supervision. The main working focus was in the areas of repairing the sewing machines and devices, setting and arrangements as well as cleanliness of the machines, devices and the tailoring office. Another role was learning the costume designs and sewing different costumes for the groups of Acrobatics and the Samba Reggae Musicians.



**The Costume Design and Production Workshop in different sessions**

The task of design costumes on the performing groups on the Big Wheel performances, was given in the practical divided groups. Therefore, two participants from group A and B was selected to go to the shops in town and buy some costumes as designed for the acrobatics performers and also buying some yarns for making costumes for the Samba Reggae Musicians. Lucy Ndauka and Amina Said went to Kariakoo accompanied by the Accountant of the Fit for Life Project to buy some costumes for the acrobatics artists and also supervising the printing of the T-Shirts chosen for the Big Wheel final event. The other group with Swaumu Idd and Mwanisha Selemani went to Kisutu Streets to find pairs of Kitenge with the chosen and agreed colors for making costumes for the Samba Reggae Musicians. These two girls also accompanied by the Accountant of the Baba Watoto Centre.

Thereafter all the materials being bought and accepted by all the Costume designing class as agreed, the participants under the supervision of their facilitator were then started cutting the fabrics and sew all the costumes together.

## **THE FOURTH WEEK**

This was the final week for the workshops series organized under one big cultural umbrella which is the Big Wheel. Unlike the other three first weeks for the Tailoring, Costume Design and Productions, this fourth final week had only few days of class training. The participants were therefore more focused on Dressing Rehearsals which started from fitting the Costumes to the Big Wheel participants and finalize the remained

days on theory studies. Many questions were asked by the participants trying to do some little research about costume designs market, they were curious to get to know if there is still an open market for the costume designs in different artistic groups in the industry here in Tanzania. They also wanted to know some other designers who are currently designing costumes in the industry such as Subira Wahure and the Africa Sana of Mr. Merinyo, who are trying to make themselves vary with the other models.

The new participants who just began, they needed extra time to learn how to sew first especially more different clothes so that they can improve in tailoring before just jumping into designing while at the same time sewing. Mariam Shabani expressed her strong desire to know more about fashion designs, and wishing to be a fashion designer. She was able to draw a different sketches of designs, and when designing she was more focused to dress the Modern Musicians. Although she appeared to be experiencing a lot of family problems which make her fail to attend the class for three days.

There is one girl in the class called Asifiwe, she is one of the participants who have been attending these workshops from the beginning, but she has got unique problems that needs to be helped very much by the center. She likes learning so much since she believes that is the only thing which will help her in her life. This is because she is an orphan, living with a lonely person who doesn't help her with any kind of support, he doesn't give her even humane supports instead of making her to be his maid. So, for her being absent in most of the lesson in class, it is because of some health reasons, she was sick and didn't get any support even of medicine. But she has shown great potential especially in measuring, cutting and sewing different clothes although she is still not good at costume designing. So, I urge the Baba Watoto Center to pay attention on her and bring her closer by helping her so that she can achieve her dreams.

Unexpectedly, before the end of the workshop, the participants were given the test. The facilitator was trying to test their ability of understanding well the lessons. Fortunately, almost 80% of the class did well that test provided especially in practical lessons. This test was designed to see their level of understanding in the areas of making repairs of sewing machines and the devices, connecting the sewing machine devices ready for use, applying lubricants to the machines, taking measurements of different designs and of different types of clothes, cutting and sewing skirts with different folds as well as arranging the dresses with collars.



**The Costume Design and Production Workshop participants in a Theory Test**



**The Costume Designers (in a one line, left) and the Acrobats (right) in costumes designed by these designers; in the event of receiving Certificates of Attending the Workshops**

## **SUCSESSES**

The workshop went very well as planned observing the specific objectives achieved largely.

- i. All the participants are now understands sewing.
- ii. Participants can now repair the sewing machine and its devices and connecting the devices ready for use.
- iii. Participants are now able to clean and keep the sewing machine and all its devices in a safety conditions.
- iv. The participants are now able to make measurements, cutting and sewing different types of clothes under minimal or non supervision of an expert.
- v. The participants are now able to design various small items that can help them generate or increase their individual incomes such items like small and big hand bags for packing and carrying some small things, etc.

## **CHALLENGES**

- i. The number of the participants has been increased this year; there was nine new participants in the class, this forced the facilitator to keep repeating some topics taught last year especially in the areas of costume designing so that he can help these participants.
- ii. There was insufficient of the teaching materials in the workshop; this created challenges especially in the practical lesson when we wanted to produce some costumes or even some small items like hand bags.
- iii. Most of the participants do not know the meaning of costume design and do not have any experience with issues of art.
- iv. The Sewing Machines of the centre are very old, and this leads to the breakdowns all the time.
- v. The duration of the workshop is not enough compared to the size of the class, the participants are too many in the class.
- vi. Some of the participants have been always coming with a lot of excuses; some concerns with health and some are of family problems.

## **LESSON LEARNT**

- i. The girls are very committed, dedicated and eager to learn about the costume designs and productions.
- ii. The participants are not used accordingly after these workshops, they are just left with their skills.
- iii. Most of the Participants feeling so exhausted when spending more time listening to the teaching (theory) and taking some notices (writing).

- iv. Some of the participants feels more desire on doing just tailoring than doing costume designs especially in the art industry.
- v. The participants loves a lot to learn about tailoring, and they are more curious to get to know the opportunities in the industry.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The Baba Watoto Centre should think of looking for some costume designing deals or even some intern opportunities from the partners of the centre so that the participants can keep getting regular exercises and practical experience in the theatre industry especially in the areas of costume designs and productions.
- ii. There should be a training session about costume design and productions into the centre (Baba Watoto Centre) at-least twice a week out of the Fit for Life Project.
- iii. The Centre (Baba Watoto Centre) should establish a culture of giving opportunities by taking the children and youth from the centre to the different theatre performances and cultural concerts in a state of making them start loving cultural performances and feel highly curious getting to learn the professional ways of performance productions.
- iv. There should be regular maintenances on the centre's Sewing Machines.

## NAMES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

DATE	NAME
1	ZAITUN MBONDE
2	MAIMUNA HASIRA
3	RUKIA KIWANGA
4	RAKBI HEMEDI
5	LUCIY NDAUKA
6	MARIAM SHABAN
7	HADIJA ISMAIL
8	ASIFIWE SIKUNYINGI
9	AMINA SAID
10	HELENA HASSAN
11	TAUSI BAKARI
12	SWAUM IDD
13	HAMIDA HUSSEIN
14	MWANAISHA SELEMAN
15	MARIAM JUMA
16	ZAWADI HAULE
17	PILLY SHABANI