

## Digitizing data to improve advocacy for people who use drugs

A support organization for people who use drugs, who are at higher risk of transmitting HIV, digitizes its data collection and management process to advocate more effectively on behalf of the people it serves.

### BACKGROUND

The Tanzania Network for People who Use Drugs (TaNPUD) was founded in 2011 by a team of people who themselves use drugs and wanted to advocate for their rights. The issue of drug abuse in Tanzania is connected to other critical challenges, including HIV transmission through sharing needles for injecting drugs. As an advocacy organization, being able to make an evidence-based case (in proposals, in lobbying efforts, etc.) is critical to support their constituents' well-being.

### PROBLEM

Although TaNPUD has a track record of delivering remarkable work to advocate for people who use drugs, TaNPUD is facing several significant challenges. A mostly paper-based process of data collection and management makes it difficult to provide reliable data to inform decisions and to support advocacy and fundraising efforts. TaNPUD's data-related capacity and skills are relatively low, and low utilization of online platforms in advocacy and outreach activities.

An example of a paper-based form used by TANPUD.

### SOLUTION

Data Zetu, through its partner Tehamalab, worked with TaNPUD on several components:

- Deploying a mobile data collection platform based on ODK ([ona.tanpud.or.tz](http://ona.tanpud.or.tz)), a low-cost data collection tool, to help TaNPUD perform digital data collection and management;
- Providing data literacy training and trainings on mobile data collection using ODK platform, including practicing the process by digitizing existing completed paper forms.
- Spinning up a lean, modern organizational website ([tanpud.or.tz](http://tanpud.or.tz)) to support TaNPUD on online communication. The website is equipped with Google Analytics for tracking user engagements.

### PROCESS

Initial meetings in 2018 between TaNPUD, Tehamalab, and IREX helped to kickstart the engagement, understand and prioritize the challenges faced by TaNPUD.

After developing a joint action plan, Tehamalab established a website and the ODK data collection platform. These tools were deployed with periodic feedback and input from TaNPUD

in an agile manner. Hosting charges were covered for an initial period, to allow TaNPUD time to build a value proposition and mobilize the resources necessary for further sustainability.

Data Zetu through Data Fellows provided TaNPUD basic training on general data literacy skills, as well as how to use the data collection tools. Technology handover was planned in a way that ensures TaNPUD is equipped to maintain the provided website and data collection system by providing relevant documentation and sustainability recommendations, in keeping with concepts of sustainability in the Digital Development Principles.<sup>1</sup>



Data Zetu's Data Fellows provide basic data literacy training to TANPUD staff.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

*“The way we used to prepare our report for crisis response using manual paper-based records it could takes up to a month to a complete reports, through Data Zetu trainings and mobile data collection the process will become much more efficient.” – Marinus Mtogole, coordinator of TaNPUD’s crisis response team.*

Although recent, the digitization process has already proven useful to TaNPUD who have already **digitized more than a hundred records** previously collected in paper form. Increased staff skills working with that data will influence TaNPUD’s productivity and, consequently, their impact.

Happy Assan, TaNPUD coordinator, also explains that, during a recent office move *“there was a high risk of damaging or losing data packed in boxes. Digitizing our data collection and management will help us to avoid being getting into this situation again”.*

Data Zetu’s Data Fellows complemented this digitization effort with exposure to data literacy skills. All six trained TaNPUD staff reported an increase in their ability to use (access, clean, or share) data, with one of them sharing that *“[These activities] help me identify things that I did not know and will also help me...in various aspects of my work in general.”*

## KEY COLLABORATORS



<sup>1</sup> [www.digitalprinciples.org](http://www.digitalprinciples.org)