**Healing Through Song**

**Music Therapy After-Care for Sexual Violence Survivors**
Panzi Foundation USA

"What’s really important about this project is the innovative element; music therapy is still not often used and to pilot this kind of work especially in Congo is groundbreaking. The project goes beyond traditional techniques to treat the participants not as patients but as artists which is really empowering for the women. It highlights their dignity and reconnects them in a way that traditional talk therapy and perhaps other forms of group therapy don’t achieve.”

Naama Haviv, Panzi Foundation USA

In the wake of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the extent of sexual violence is well documented. In May 2011, the american journal *Public Health* noted that over 1100 women and girls are raped every day in DRC. Increasingly, children under the age of five are subject to sexual violence and being brought into the local hospital in Panzi with horrific injuries. Using music therapy, this project is a crucial and innovative way to try to rehabilitate the survivors of this abuse, to reintegrate them back into society and to prevent ongoing abuse from taking place in the future.

The messages delivered through this music can raise awareness that leads to the change necessary for future prevention. The programme will also serve as a beacon to bring more women to the hospital to receive treatment.

"After the first rape, my husband left me. He said I must be contaminated. When they see me they laugh at me … She can’t hold a household, she can’t have children, … as they say that, I feel terrible pain inside. I tell you my story because so many people don’t know! I want you to tell others."

Quote from patient at Panzi Hospital
Project Title: Music Therapy After-Care for Sexual Violence Survivors and Other Vulnerable Groups

Key Information:
Grant awarded: 2014 Large Grant
Lead organisation: Panzi Foundation USA
Partners: Panzi Hospital, Panzi Foundation DRC, Make Music Matter (Implementation Partner), Jewish World Watch (Funding Partner), Norwegian Church Aid (Funding Partner)
Project Base: Panzi Hospital, Bukavu, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Field Testing Locations: Bakuva and Goma, DRC

Summary:
Combining the expertise of the Panzi Hospital and the power of music therapy to help patients and their communities recover, reintegrate, and secure their human rights for the future.

What humanitarian need is being addressed?
Music therapy is provided for treatment/rehabilitation of survivors of sexual violence. The message delivered through this music aids in their reintegration into the community and can raise awareness that leads to the change necessary for future prevention.

What is the innovative solution?
Innovation and a greater understanding of how best to provide treatment for survivors of sexual violence are required to significantly contribute to the problem rather than risking making it worse. Dr. Mukwege and the staff at Panzi Hospital have evaluated the music therapy programme and determined that there is application for such an intervention in all phases of treatment and reintegration.

In our experience, survivors want their stories to be told and their situation to be understood. This is how they become a person again and begin the healing process. Often this is easier to do in song.

Implementation:
The programme was developed and piloted by Make Music Matter in Rwanda with youth as the primary target group. It has now been piloted in Bukavu with female survivors of sexual violence through the Panzi Hospital in DRC in partnership with Make Music Matter. In the second phase of the project, activities have been scaled up to increase the number of participants and introduce the programme at the Panzi site in Goma.

Service Innovation:
Improvements to psycho-social counselling provided to Panzi patients and extension of the healing to the community level.

How does the innovation build on and improve existing humanitarian practice?
All too often humanitarian assistance provided to survivors of sexual violence ends with the treatment of injuries, unwanted pregnancies, fistula and HIV. If counselling is offered, it may not necessarily be incorporated into the whole treatment process, ignoring the very real interaction that exists among physical, psychological, and social traumas.

Existing therapies often do not extend to survivors’ families and communities. Some inroads have been made to address this issue such as the initiative by the International Rescue Committee to embed cognitive processing therapy in the DRC health system that was funded this year by the Humanitarian Innovation Fund. Given, however, that sexual and gender-based violence is currently at the level of a global crisis, all possible efforts and resources should be devoted to exploring how best to ensure the successful treatment of survivors. The music therapy programme can only help strengthen these existing initiatives.

What materials or research outputs are likely to be produced?
In all cases, the following materials will be produced in an ethical manner respecting the rights, safety, and privacy of the participants:

- Music, stories, and pictures shared through a number of channels (locally in the communities, on the radio, through social media) to raise awareness of the issues and provide information to other organisations working in similar fields.
- A replicable and scaleable model of music therapy integrated into a hospital care programme for survivors of sexual violence created, documented, and disseminated.
- Through the International Centre for Research International Centre for Advanced Research and Training (ICART), articles will be produced for journals.

Every day of my life
I feel betrayed by my image
All the time when I look myself in the mirror I lose faith
Every night a lot of tears flowed on my cheeks
I’m afraid of the dark
I’m afraid to be alone in the road with a lot of unexpected
And I often buckle my suffering with a laugh or a smile
And if you knew how much I’m suffering
Because of my memories I don’t have faith in the future
And when I talk about my life, I only see death around me
How can I forget it
How can I advance
How can I stop all-other rapes
So I drown, drown, drown myself
I hide faraway everything
Because I’m in pain
My sister also was attacked and raped in our home
She was taken to Panzi hospital and was treated
Glad she is still alive
But I am still hurt, until now

Artist: Neema Martha | Group: Staff Panzi | Producer: Jojo
Date production started: April 27, 2015
Title: Tuta enda Wapi? (Where can we go?)

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