

That Takes Ovaries

Celebrating gutsy women around the globe –
because courage is contagious

Dear NGOs, Nonprofit Organizations and Groups,

We are approaching you because of our two groups' common area of interest in promoting women and girls rights and empowering women and girls, including those who have been sexually assaulted, prostituted or are vulnerable and at-risk. I am writing to see if our programs, trainings and replicable model of empowerment might fit well under the umbrella of your organization, perhaps under the auspices of your client services program. Please pass our information on to any in your organization concerned with this type of programming.

We have used our That Takes Ovaries (TTO) and Leading a Bold Life (LBL) programs of empowerment in rural and urban areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America. We offer our exciting, fun, celebratory, audience-participatory workshops for women and girls' empowerment, as well as a Training of Trainers, to any community, but we can also focus our work for specific communities and constituencies. For example, in India we worked for 1-2 months each, on 3 separate trips, with the NGO Apne Aap and their constituents: children and women from red light districts who had been sex trafficked and prostituted, and women from "at-risk" communities, such as slums and other vulnerable areas. There, we also trained local leaders and social workers so that they could continue using our easily replicable model long after we were gone. In Guyana, South America, we were hired as consultants by the long-standing NGO Partners of the Americas, with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. There, we worked for 10 days using our model of empowerment with vulnerable and at-risk teen girls. We also lead a week-long Train the Trainers program where we taught social workers from around Guyana how to lead their own TTO workshops in their home communities long after we departed.

Upon request, we can discuss with you our training agenda. Also, feel free to view our website and promo video at www.ThatTakesOvaries.org.

What follows is a description of our work:

We are That Takes Ovaries (TTO), the primary project of Ark Theater, an NGO based in the U.S. and active around the globe. Our empowerment model combines storytelling with the arts and activism to encourage and guide women and girls to speak up and be all-around confident, strong, risk-taking females. TTO celebrates the bold acts of women and girls through an open mike movement, a play, and a best-selling book. Our focus is the use of story-sharing and drama therapy to raise women and girls' self-esteem and leadership skills.

Our model encourages everyday women and girls to gather together and relay real-life stories about times they were courageous, often in their fight against sexism, discrimination and sexual assault. This simple but important act of sharing affirms the storyteller's confidence and determination to keep taking risks in her life, personally and politically. Participants are motivated to step through their fear of public speaking. Men and boys can join our workshops and proudly tell about the courageous deeds of their mothers, daughters and partners. We also facilitate group discussions for action plans for sustainable, long-term change, to be initiated by workshop participants themselves. Our events have a transformative effect on people's lives long after the meeting is over.

The result is a fun, replicable organizing tool for women and girls' empowerment. To date, we have held over 800 gatherings worldwide -- across North America, in Central and South America, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia.

Our objectives include:

- Encourage participants to celebrate being women and girls.
- Create spaces where women's experiences and lives are heard and respected.
- Support women and girls to speak up through our step-by-step process of telling stories of times they were courageous.
- Inspire women and girls to be bold, confident risk-takers for personal and social change.
- Guide them in learning how to speak out about their needs to higher authorities.
- Encourage women to not accept limits imposed on them by a sexist society.
- Develop women and girls' leadership and activism.
- Guide women through the process of learning how to be organizers for women's voices and causes.

At our briefing for the U.S. State Department J-TIP (sex trafficking) staff, we received the following feedback about our model of work; they said it is:

- Highly effective
- Low cost
- Easily replicable by staff in the field

It is worth noting that our international workshop coordinator Bobbi Ausubel is also a Parent Educator, Life Skills teacher, and certified Drama Therapist. She weaves these skills and techniques into our TTO workshops and trainings in order to:

- Help participants to overcome trauma and heal -- a tool that can be effectively used with any group, including with those who have been sex trafficked.
- Organize public participant-performances for the larger community to attend. This helps raise awareness about significant issues such as assault and trafficking. It is an effective educational and preventative tool, and has been useful for educating the public and authorities, such as judges and police.

Sincerely yours,

Rivka Solomon
Executive Director
That Takes Ovaries
Rivka@ThatTakesOvaries.org
c. 781-583-1515
www.thattakesovaries.org

Bobbi Ausubel
International Workshop Leader & Artistic Director
That Takes Ovaries