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## **Ben ni walen**

Mobilising for human rights using participatory theatre



Raising *human rights awareness* can help people claim respect for and protection of their rights and it can contribute to peaceful coexistence. *Participatory theatre* can be an effective tool for working with people in communities who have had little or no formal education and cannot read and write. This is especially the case in rural areas.

This Guide is a basic introduction to using participatory theatre methods for exploring human rights issues with people in rural communities. Raising awareness is not a matter of lecturing human rights but of involving people in analysing their problems and improving their lives. They do so by relating those problems to universal human rights that *everybody* in this world is entitled to.

The Guide offers the general approach that is proposed to mobilise rural communities, and it introduces the basics of participatory research and participatory theatre methodology. It provides information on a range of participatory theatre methods, and provides illustrative examples of how to use them to explore human rights issues with rural communities. Background information on these specific issues is included. Most of the theatre methods could be applied to most of the human rights issues.

The Guide contains basic guidelines and suggestions rather than giving step-by-step directions on how to develop programmes. Users are encouraged to adapt the methods and adjust any given tool so that it fits their context and needs.

Special Programme on Africa  
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*Ben ni walen* is Bambara for 'Let's agree and take action'. Bambara is spoken in a range of countries in West Africa.

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## **Ben ni walen**

*Let's agree and take action*

Mobilising for human rights using participatory theatre

Special Programme on Africa



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#### On this Guide

*This is a well-developed Guide, easy to use and very well structured. Its strength, as I see it, lies in its ability to provide various options in participatory theatre methodologies in dealing with issues of human rights abuse. The inclusion of different information on various human rights issues, wide and broad ranging examples, and possible sources of accessing extra information, makes it a very important resource book... The language is equally formulated in a very simple but not simplistic manner, giving the Guide the potential for general appeal across the board. This Guide has something for the human rights activist, a lot for the theatre artist, enough for the community-based development worker and lots of useful materials for NGOs, governments and other development agencies interested in working with issues of human rights in their development agenda.*

Amollo Maurice, Amani Peoples Theatre, Kenya

*In Mali more than anywhere this Guide finds a place, because our country has suddenly and for the first time divided itself into 703 rural districts and boroughs (communes) as a result of the process of decentralisation. These new entities need many things, but in particular institutional expertise and know-how. They look to NGOs, IGOs and other governmental institutions for assistance. Human Rights NGO's have much to do since they must help change the old traditions of power based on an autocratic and monarchical system into a more people-centred, democratic system in which women, men, children, the poor, the rich, every citizen will have all their rights respected and protected. That is where this Guide becomes a precious tool.*

Saloum Traore, Director, Amnesty International Mali

Explanation of title: **Ben ni walen** is Bambara for 'Let's agree and take action'. Bambara is spoken in a range of countries in West Africa.

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Distributed by

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ISBN 90 6463 163 8

Copy-editing: Emma Gardner, United Kingdom

Cover painting: Lawson B. Sworh, Liberia

Illustrations: Abu Kanu, Amsterdam

Design and lay-out: Lies Ros, Amsterdam

Production: Willem Campschreur, Amsterdam

Printing: robstolk, Amsterdam

This publication was made possible by financial support of HIVOS, The Netherlands.  
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## Contributors

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Cristina and Teun wrote the first draft of this Guide together; thereafter Cristina incorporated comments and adapted the text after piloting the Guide in Liberia (see below).

### Additional contributors

First of all we would like to thank all the people involved in piloting the draft Guide in Gbarnga, Liberia:

- The drama directors Peter Ballah and Emmanuel M.P. Kailie of Flomo Theatre, and Kekura Kamara of Balawala International;
- The actors of the Kwakunyeilabo Drama Group in Gbarnga;
- The musicians and dancers of Balawala International;
- The communities in Gbarnga and Palala, group 11 of Methodist High School in Suakoko and the group of elders in Suokoko;
- Aloysius Toe and members of the Coordinating Committee for the human rights volunteer network in Bong County for their support in organising the pilot.

We would also like to thank for their valuable comments and contributions:

- Noor Tabbers, Special Project on Africa, Amnesty International, the Netherlands;
- Amollo Maurice, theatre trainer of Amani People Theatre in Kenya;
- Saloum D. Traore, Executive Director, Amnesty International Mali;
- Momoh Jimmy, Executive Director, Amnesty International Sierra Leone.

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## Introduction

### Why this Guide?

Raising human rights awareness can help people claim respect for and protection of their rights and it can contribute to peaceful coexistence based on equality, respect and tolerance. Participatory theatre can be an effective tool for working with people in communities who have had little or no formal education and cannot read and write. This is especially the case in rural areas.

This Guide is a basic introduction to using participatory methods for exploring human rights issues with people in rural communities. Indeed, raising awareness is not a matter of lecturing on human rights but of involving people in analysing their problems and identifying ways to improve their lives by relating those problems to universal human rights that *everybody* in this world is entitled to. This can only be achieved through processes, rather than one-off events.

In this Guide we are therefore encouraging human rights organisations to adopt a long-term approach to raising human rights awareness. Realising that human rights organisations often don't have the expertise and resources for long-term programmes, we propose that human rights organisations work together with community development organisations or other organisations already working with communities, with theatre directors and (amateur) theatre groups and of course with the communities themselves.

[Box]

In brief the approach we propose calls for:

- Social research with the full and active participation of the whole community;
- The development of multi-faceted long-term plans for action towards positive change taken by the community for the community;
- The use of participatory theatre to generate human rights awareness and mobilisation.

[End of box]

### Users of this Guide

We refer to the above-mentioned alliance of human rights organisations, theatre directors and groups, and community development organisations as The Organisers and this Guide is meant to provide information and suggestions for all of them.

### About this Guide

This Guide contains basic guidelines and suggestions rather than giving step-by-step directions on how to develop programmes. We encourage users to adapt the methods and adjust any part of the Guide to suit their own circumstances. We firmly believe that a tool such as this is only fully complete when the users adapt it and transform it to fit their context and needs and those of the communities they serve.

The language used throughout the Guide is informal (we often use 'you' or 'we'), as we do not want to dictate 'truths', but to engage in a dialogue where the reader is welcome to add to or deviate from our proposed approach and activities.

The human rights issues chosen to illustrate the theatre methods are just examples. In no way do we pretend that they cover all the important issues affecting rural communities in Africa, nor do we suggest that they are issues specific to Africa. You are encouraged to adapt the

scenarios to fit your socio-cultural context or even change the focus completely to an issue more relevant to your overall human rights programme.

This Guide has been produced as part of the efforts of the Special Programme on Africa of the Dutch Section of Amnesty International to contribute to the strengthening of civil society by furthering a human rights culture in Africa.

### **Example**

One of the drama groups in Bomi County that were trained by our theatre directors decided to perform a short forum theatre on the market ground after they heard the news that was around that the market superintendent had stolen all the money collected by the marketers and that they were all afraid to speak about it. So the team went to the market ground that morning and started performing for the marketers. When the actors had played the scene the people started shouting: "It is very true!" When the facilitator asked someone to take part in the acting, the whole group wanted to and so a few were selected.

When the performance was still going on the market superintendent heard about it and decided to come and defend himself. When he got there the entire crowd started booing at him, but he came to the stage and said, "Even though you guys use the drama show to get at us I also want to use this same drama show to tell you that you are not well informed. Therefore I am calling a general meeting tomorrow for all marketers so that you guys will know what has happened to your cash collected."

The marketers started clapping him and the programme was so great that everyone left happy.

*Contributed by Emmanuel M.P.Kailie, Liberia*

### **Structure of the Guide**

This Guide is divided into two sections:

- **Section I** presents the background to the writing of the Guide and its context. It explains the approach proposed to mobilise rural communities, and it introduces the different components of participatory research and participatory theatre methodology.
- **Section II** contains information on the range of participatory theatre methods, and provides illustrative examples of how to use them to explore human rights issues with rural communities. Background information on the specific human rights issues used as examples is also included. The combinations of theatre methods and human rights issues in this section are more or less interchangeable; you could apply most of the methods to most of the human rights issues.

It is recommended that you study all the theatre methods carefully in order to choose the one most appropriate and best suited to your objectives, the community or group you work with and the one you feel most comfortable with yourself. A set of considerations to assist you in making a choice is included in Section I under the headings 'Mobilising for change' and 'Participatory Theatre' in Section I below.

The Appendix contains information about some human rights instruments.

The last pages contain an evaluation form to let the Special Programme on Africa know how you have used this Guide and if you have any suggestions to improve it. We would encourage you to use this evaluation form so that we can continue to improve on this Guide.

[Box]

## **Design of the theatre methods**

Each theatre method in Section II is designed with the same format illustrated below.

### **Part 1: Description**

This describes the core characteristics of the theatre method and how it works.

### **Part 2: Illustrative example**

Each example uses a human rights issue to illustrate the theatre method. The examples are not a fixed programme you have to follow to the letter; on the contrary, these are just illustrations. We urge you to modify, amend or replace them to suit the needs of your work.

<b>Aim</b>	This identifies the aims of the theatre method and activity
<b>Actors</b>	This indicates how many and what kind of actors you are going to need in the case of the particular example
<b>Materials</b>	This describes what materials or props you will need
<b>Time</b>	This gives an estimate of how long it will take to carry out the activity as it is proposed here
<b>Activity</b>	This explains step by step how the sample activity is organised
<b>Follow-up</b>	This gives some advice on how to plan future activities to continue the learning process, awareness raising activities and processes of making positive changes

### **Part 3: Background information**

This part contains some questions and answers and general human rights information on the human rights issue chosen to illustrate the theatre method. It is aimed at encouraging the organisers to prepare themselves for the activity by researching the human rights issue, including reading national, regional and international human rights documents. This text is in no way a stimulus for the Organisers or facilitators to start lecturing or preaching; it is an encouragement for furthering the Organiser's knowledge and understanding of human rights.

[End of box]

## SECTION I

### 1. History of the Theatre Project

#### Why promote theatre for human rights?

Access to formal education in most African countries is very limited, especially in rural areas. This results in a high illiteracy rate. Girls and women in rural areas are the worst affected.

Although people are usually familiar with customary law and traditional forms of justice, they are less knowledgeable about their constitutional and human rights due to lack of formal education. This situation facilitates abuse of power by local authorities such as chiefs or police commanders, as well as abuses within the family. Awareness about their rights will help women, men and the young to claim respect for and protection of their rights and resist abuse of power. Awareness can also contribute to a culture of equality, respect and tolerance.

Theatre, songs, stories and other forms of drama are very popular in most parts of Africa. Participatory theatre in particular has proven to be an effective tool in raising awareness about community development issues such as health, sanitation and nutrition.

For those reasons Amnesty International's Special Programme on Africa (SPA) is encouraging human rights activists to make use of participatory theatre in their activities to raise awareness and mobilise people to claim respect, protection and fulfilment of their human rights.

#### Initial projects

SPA's first project was with a theatre group called The 5 C's in Kenya in 1997. They developed a play called *Dying to be free* dealing with different forms of repression. It was performed on stage and after the performance the actors, director and organisers would engage in a discussion with the audience.

We then learned about a form of theatre that invited the audience to participate in the performances, aim to change attitudes and find solutions to everyday problems. This was called 'Forum Theatre', developed by Augusto Boal from Brazil; this form of theatre is also referred to as Theatre of the Oppressed or Theatre for Development.

In 2001 and 2002, SPA, along with local partners, organised three pilot training projects in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Mali.<sup>1</sup> In each country a human rights organisation or Amnesty International Section worked together with theatre trainers and a community development organisation and of-course with the final beneficiaries: communities in rural areas. To share the experience of those pilot projects with the users of this Guide, we are providing below a brief description of each project and some lessons that we learned.

#### a. Kenya

Two community development organisations - Christian Partners Development Association (CPDA) in Western Kenya and Ilishe in the Coast Province - agreed to become partners in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Forum Theatre training projects were developed with the help of Jet Vos, a drama teacher from the Utrecht School of Arts in The Netherlands. The work was coordinated by Ada van der Linde of SPA.

project. They each selected two communities to participate in the project. Amani Peoples Theatre (APT) - a network of theatre trainers - coordinated the project. The Kenya Human Rights Commission was ready to give input and support on human rights issues when needed. Each of the four communities selected three members to participate in a two-week Forum Theatre training, provided by an APT trainer. Most of the participants did not have previous theatre experience. CPDA and Ilishe were to integrate the theatre project into their existing programmes. Violence against women was the focus of the theatre project.

After the training the participants developed a Forum Theatre play with a number of other people in their communities; in these groups the participants were the “animators”. Some groups created their plays during rehearsals while other villagers were present and giving input. They received support from APT trainers and community development organisations.

*Lessons learned:*

- When training community members - rather than actors - it is essential to use criteria for selection. They should be able to: absorb the training; share the skills learned with other community members; and be good team players.
- The training should also deal with how to create a group in the community after the training.
- The community development organisation should be fully committed to the project. They need to support the groups that develop the theatre plays (especially if they don't have previous experience with drama), and the issue (in this case violence against women) should be on the organisation's agenda. Theatre is a tool and cannot deal with important issues in isolation.
- The most difficult part of the process for the groups was to ensure audience participation in the play (taking over part of a role), instead of just making suggestions to the players.
- The “animators” with their newly created groups should receive follow-up training from theatre trainers some time after the initial training.

**b. Sierra Leone**

Amnesty International's Sierra Leone Section (AI-SL) and Conciliation Resources Sierra Leone (CR), working with communities on peace building and reconciliation, were the main partners in this project. They worked with a trainer from APT in Kenya and with a theatre trainer of Premier Media in Sierra Leone as co-trainer. The main difference from the pilot project in Kenya was the choice of working with already existing amateur theatre groups. The organisers selected 12 participants from four groups already working with AI-SL and CR. Access to justice was selected as the general theme. Before the training, the groups did some research on the theme and different (cultural) aspects of the selected communities. This had not been necessary in Kenya, as the trainees were selected from within the communities themselves. Premier Media also did some pre-training, so the participants were quite well prepared at the start of the Forum Theatre training.

After the training the groups continued undertaking more research in the communities on the theme of access to justice, before developing and rehearsing a Forum Theatre play. Each group performed in several communities.

*Lessons learned:*

- Working with (amateur) theatre groups ensures better quality performances, but creates more challenges when they perform in communities other than their own (e.g. cultural particularities, different language etc).
- A budget is needed for touring among different communities.
- Forum Theatre is an effective tool for generating discussions within communities.
- The activities of the theatre groups are well embedded in the programmes of AI-SL and CR because they had already worked together before.

### c. Mali

The experiences in Kenya and Sierra Leone resulted in a first draft for a manual on the use of Forum Theatre in raising human rights awareness. The pilot project in Mali was to test this draft.

The main partners were Amnesty International Mali and Centre Djoliba, a community development organisation. Both organisations already had experience with theatre in their awareness raising activities. Two professional theatre directors of TRACT (Troupes de Recherches, d'Animations et de Communications Théâtrales) were asked to develop Forum Theatre plays with their own groups on the basis of the draft manual. The members of these groups are full time actors. Violence against women was identified as the relevant theme. A complication was that very few women were part of the groups (in Mali, women are not supposed to travel and it is not considered respectable for them to participate in a theatre group after marriage), so male actors had to play female roles. The groups performed the Forum Theatre play in three places with different audiences. Interactions with the audiences took place towards the end of the play and were in the form of discussions, not acting.

#### *Lessons learned:*

- Because the actors were experienced, the acting skills were strong.
- Getting members of the audience to *act* their views instead of discussing them is the most difficult part of Forum Theatre.

### **Towards a more diverse and comprehensive approach**

We have drawn three main conclusions from the experience of the pilot projects:

1. Forum Theatre is not the easiest of participatory theatre methods. To avoid human rights organisations and theatre groups being put off using participatory theatre, we decided to publish this Guide with a wider range of methods beyond Forum Theatre.
2. It should not be taken for granted that theatre directors and actors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of human rights issues to make the link between the burning issues of communities and the added value of human rights. This Guide therefore clearly links theatre methods with human rights issues and human rights standards.
3. The combination of human rights organisations working together with community development organisations and theatre directors and theatre groups has worked very well and is therefore strongly encouraged.

#### **Example**

The Amuloma Theatre Group embarked on a Community Theatre exercise in the Torwama Community where they had earlier carried out some research, which had indicated that the issue of forced marriages was prominent.

In fact, the community had just finished the initiation process for young girls and women who were mostly school going girls from as young as ten years of age. These initiates had been

betrothed to men without their consent. Worse still, most of the suitors were relatively older men and no love relationship had existed between the suitors and their potential brides.

The village's traditional celebrations for handing over the young girls had been slated for the last Saturday of the month. The drama group, knowing this, seized the opportunity and got the necessary permission from the chiefs to perform at the community centre on the day of the celebrations.

During the performance, the Amuloma Theatre group used theatre to convey to the village congregation the need to seek the consent of the potential brides by highlighting the right to choose in marriage and the psychological burden of marrying a partner you do not necessarily love. The group also brought out very clearly that every girl child with abilities and academic pursuits should be encouraged to realise their dream (equal opportunities) since girls were capable of achieving all that boys or men could achieve.

This sparked off a lively debate among the participants. The lead actor facilitated this debate and the play ended when the community finally accepted and agreed on the need to seek the consent of the bride before marriage, as this would enhance happy and sustainable marriages in the community.

It was accepted that those suitors who had spent monies on the initiation ceremony could negotiate with the family heads for reimbursements if the bride did not consent to the proposed wedding.

*Contributed by Momoh Jimmy, Al Sierra Leone*

## 2. Mobilising for change

*Social norms* Social norms<sup>2</sup>, including gender norms (norms defining relations between men and women) are some of the strongest influences shaping men and women's lives. They provide the values that sustain and safeguard the community<sup>3</sup> as a group and its members individually. Nevertheless, social norms sometimes endorse discriminatory treatment.<sup>4</sup> Discrimination can be based on an individual's or group's social class or status, gender, physical or mental health status, national or ethnic origin, religious or spiritual beliefs, age, etc.

*Resistance to change* The process of accepting that some social norms and the practices linked to them are negative or against the well being of individuals and the community is often seen as threatening to the stability of society. Consequently, there is often great resistance to discussing them and even more so to transforming them. Frequently harmful social norms protect the interest of one group against another; for example, norms that discriminate against women, giving power to men. If men came to understand the harm caused by this imbalance, they might see the benefits of a more equal society where both men and women can fulfil their potentials.

*Incorporating human rights* As part of Amnesty International's efforts to promote recognition of and compliance with human rights standards, this Guide seeks to encourage human rights organisations to work in collaboration with individuals and communities in rural areas. It is hoped that by mobilising for change and incorporating human rights values into social norms, circumstances will be enhanced. This requires the acquisition of knowledge about human rights, the identification of human rights violations perpetrated in the community, and the development of processes that seek ways of transforming norms that support detrimental practices.

*Mobilising against abuse of power* Our vision in raising human rights awareness among members of rural communities is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims to mobilise people to defend themselves against practices such as abuse of power by local and national authorities (i.e. security forces and militias, chiefs, civil servants) and to take action to achieve respect for and protection of human rights by these authorities.

*Transforming harmful practices* On the other hand, our vision in raising human rights awareness aims at mobilising people to transform practices carried out within the community and which violate the rights of individuals and/or groups, such as stigma and discrimination against individuals with HIV/AIDS; domestic violence; forced marriages; female genital cutting; xenophobia, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Good and bad are defined by social norms and are the rules for how people should act in a given group or community. In sociology a norm is an expected pattern of behaviour in a given situation, the custom/tradition. In every country, even regions within a country, there are many contrasting norms about what is acceptable and what is not in relation to norms of marriage, education, burials, coming of age, etc. In many situations norms are unwritten and they become evident when they are not followed and sanctions are passed to punish the infraction. Mental disorders and some illnesses are also considered deviant due to their variance from that which is socially acceptable or understood by the social norms, for example, the stigma suffered by HIV/AIDS patients.

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of user-friendly language, this Guide uses the terms 'the community' or 'the group'. It is however important to acknowledge **diversity** within each community or group: individuals and (sub)groups are in different positions, have their own interests, have diverging views, hold conflicting powers, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Victoria White, M.P.H., Dr. Margaret Greene, Ph.D., Dr. Elaine Murphy, Ph.D. (2003) *Men and Reproductive Health Programs: Influencing Gender Norms*, The Synergy Project, USA.

*Working together* The approach we are proposing as a means of developing human rights awareness programmes involves human rights organisations (HROs) working together with community based organisations and groups (CBOs<sup>5</sup>) and professional or amateur theatre groups<sup>6</sup> (TGs). Throughout the text of this Guide we refer to this coalition of HROs, CBOs and TGs as ‘the Organisers’. We believe that the combination of these three types of organisations, drawing together their distinct areas of expertise, can be a powerful force to support diverse groups within communities in combating human rights abuses and transforming their communities into places where human rights are protected and respected.

*Taking different actions* We advise the Organisers to work in partnership to establish long-term human rights programmes. We therefore recommend the use of participatory theatre as a channel to develop other activities, for example: lobbying of relevant local or national government authorities to meet their obligations under national and international law; integrating human rights messages into community events and development programmes; skills training courses; radio broadcasts dealing with rights issues, etc.

*Participatory research* The use of participatory theatre seeks to facilitate the exploration and analysis of local social attitudes, norms, behaviours, customs and social structures through community members’ own views and experiences. Through this process of research, and of reflection on experiences, the Organisers, individuals, and the community as a whole, aim to achieve respect for diversity and a consensus on what and how to foster change without being preached at.

*Follow-up* The Organisers should encourage the community to meet regularly to assess changes as a result of the programme and to continue discussing new issues that need improving, as well as to reinforce the learning from previous activities to ensure that these become customary practices. In other words, it is not enough to be told about human rights, or to know some articles of some declaration or convention. What is essential is to understand the values enshrined in the human rights framework (for example, equality, dignity and security for all) so as to put them into practice in every-day life.

*Long-term approach* Alongside the promotion of participatory methods, we encourage you to take a long-term approach to raising human rights awareness, as a means of ensuring sustainability. Rather than trying to reach out to as many people as possible in one-off activities, it is suggested that human rights organisations should commit themselves to focus on a certain community or group for a long period of time to accompany and support the mobilisation of the community and the implementation of positive changes. A long-term participatory human rights awareness programme aimed at internalising human rights values, in our view, should as a minimum have the following components:

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<sup>5</sup> For the sake of simplicity we are using the term Community Based Organisations (CBOs) for all local organisations and groups, including women’s groups, community development organisations, religious groups, social clubs etc.

<sup>6</sup> In the Theatre Groups we include the facilitator who may or may not also be a theatre director or an experienced trainer.

### **Preparing the programme**

1. Establishing the triangular relationship between the HRO, the CBO and the TG (the Organisers);
2. Conducting participatory research as a means of learning as much as possible about the community and identifying the human rights issues that need to be addressed (for further elaboration on this see the sub-section on 'What and how to do participatory research' below);
3. Preparing a proposal that should be drawn up by the Organisers in consultation with representatives of different interest groups within the community (taking into account sex, age, ethnicity, formal and informal leadership, etc);
4. Ensuring that the necessary resources are available to implement the proposal.

### **Implementing the participatory theatre programme**

5. Using participatory theatre activities to: create awareness; mobilise members of the community in implementing human rights friendly practices; support the other activities linked to your overall human rights programme (e.g. lobbying, skills development training, establishing community run literacy programmes, public education through radio, etc).

### **This newly acquired awareness through participatory theatre is channelled by, for example:**

6. Integrating relevant human rights messages into other community activities;
7. Putting pressure on local authorities to end certain abuses, for instance by sending a delegation, organising a peaceful demonstration, presenting a petition, etc;
8. Developing lobbying activities to promote the adoption of rules, norms and practices that respect the human rights you are advancing;
9. Requesting or producing radio broadcasts on rights issues;
10. Making key groups (i.e. religious leaders, community leaders, etc.) aware of the importance of supporting human rights activities.

(These last 6 elements, including participatory theatre activities, can take place all at the same time or separately; it will depend on the context you are working in, the strategy you have developed and the human and financial resources available).

### **Supporting long-term work**

11. Conducting participatory research and evaluation of the impact of the programme on harmful practices that violate human rights; informing the community of the impact of the programme; reflecting on what new activities may need to be developed in the short-term;
12. Ensuring follow-up activities to consolidate new practices in the longer term. It is recommended that follow-up activities be planned from the start and adapted as the research and evaluation of the issue and the community's experience develops.

### **The long term mobilisation spiral towards Human Rights respect** full colour graphic representation

#### **Example**

Christian Partners Development Agency (CPDA) in Kenya works with 'Neighbourhood Assemblies', a form of village or community parliament. All members, including women, men

and youths can become 'Honourable Members' and they elect a 'speaker' or 'convenor'. All members are free to table any motion for discussion. The 'Neighbourhood Assemblies' have solved many local problems and disputes that escape the attention of formal politicians and leaders. The Assemblies appeared to be a perfect forum for the consultation, preparation, development and implementation of Theatre for Human Rights.

### 3. Participatory research

#### What and how to carry out participatory research

To prepare a long-term human rights programme the Organisers need to involve the community in its design and implementation. This involves getting to understand the community's concerns in depth. To achieve this, the Organisers need to carry out participatory research.

Participatory research is defined as systematic inquiry with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting change.<sup>7</sup>

Participatory research attempts to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched. In this practice, research is seen not only as a process of creating knowledge, but simultaneously, as education and development of consciousness, and of mobilization for action of the community members involved.<sup>8</sup>

This research will help identify the issues and appropriate theatre methods for the participatory theatre sessions. It will also help involve the community and allow them to take ownership of the programme and contribute to a better understanding of power structures as well as the identification of perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses.

#### Participatory research requirements:

- A subjective commitment to the research on the part of the researchers (in this case, the Organisers) is essential.
- The researchers are social actors and change agents who combine their critical insight and knowledge with the local knowledge and resources of the programme beneficiaries as a means of triggering awareness of the shortcomings in the socio-economic realities, and devising appropriate strategies to solve them.
- The approach is problem oriented. Research is not mere information/data collection; rather, the fundamental objective of participatory social research is to understand the conditions underlying problems in order to transform them.
- The research process is conceived as an educational progression for the researcher and the researched alike. The close and active interaction between them, predicated on dialogue, actions and discussions, is ultimately aimed at positive action towards finding a solution to socio-economic contradictions or conflicts.
- This research demands respect for the people's own capabilities and potential to produce knowledge and to analyse it.

To do participatory research we suggest that as a minimum you follow the next steps:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Step - Preparation

- Discuss and agree how you will introduce yourself, with what aim and when the community can expect some activities based on the findings of the research.

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<sup>7</sup> Green, Lawrence W.; M. Anne George; Mark Daniel; C. James Frankish; Carol P. Herbert; William R. Bowie and Michel O'Neill (2003) 'Appendix C: Guidelines for Participatory Research in Health Promotion,' in Minkler, Meredith and Nina Wallerstein (eds), *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Hall, Budd (1993) 'Introduction', in Peter Park, Mary Brydon-Miller, Budd Hall, and Ted Jackson (eds.). *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

- Identify members in the community<sup>9</sup> and invite them to carry out the research with you.
- Visualise the area by making a map of the rural area including resources such as houses, bridges, religious places, water resources, etc. and continue to refine the map.
- Find out what other development activities are taking place in the community and what organisations are involved. Discuss possible cooperation.
- Make a list of topics/questions you would like to discuss.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Step - Fieldwork**

To carry out the research the Organisers along with the community members may consider dividing into small groups.

- After the introduction of who the Organisers are and the aim of the research, you may ask your interlocutors to draw a map (with you) to build up a picture of the village's characteristics to find out trouble spots, problems, as well as, potential meeting places, different groups in the community, etc.
- Explore issues that community members are raising.
- Explore jokes, proverbs, songs and dances common to the community.
- Explore whether some community members are interested in joining the Organisers in helping to set up the activities of the human rights awareness programme.
- Ask if the community members already have experience of awareness-raising (on rights) through theatre methods or other means, how was this done and if it was helpful – why/why not?

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Step - Analysing the findings**

The research should lead the researchers and the community members who have participated to an understanding of how and why abuses are being committed and who the perpetrators are.

With the community, the following points may help analyse the findings:

- What are the main needs and/or problems? Who are the perpetrators? Who are the victims? What can be done to improve the situation?
- Decide if the activities of the programme will cover an entire geographical area or only some smaller key pockets.
- Decide on the focus within the community: everyone, or individuals, organisations, interest groups, etc.
- Decide what needs to be achieved and formulate objectives.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Step – Planning activities for your human rights programme**

- Incorporate the participatory theatre session(s) into your programme - consider if they will take place throughout the whole year or only during a specific season.
- Ensure the theatre activities relate to and strengthen the other programme activities, such as lobbying, workshops, etc.
- Include from the beginning monitoring, review and follow-up in the short and long terms.

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<sup>9</sup> Identify and list individuals you need to involve in the research. Take care to include various ages, men and women, boys and girls, married, unmarried people, religious people, community leaders, most vulnerable groups (living in slum areas, refugee camps or Internally Displaced People), literate or illiterate, and any other relevant groups of community members.

### **Example of participatory research**

The participatory research of Amnesty International's Special Programme for Africa for the theatre project in Kenya was made up of three different visits. Artists from Amani Peoples Theatre (APT) took advantage of the already existing structures within the Vihiga and Mombasa communities to introduce the project and acquire information on the nature, extent, interpretation and causes (among others) of violence against women. A group of artists attended the Vihiga neighbourhood assemblies, sat in the people's parliament and followed the proceedings of the day. After the proceedings were concluded, the speaker of the assembly introduced the two artist facilitators to the "honourable members of parliament" as theatre artists who had something to share with them. They came across as jokers (and entertainers). Then the artists used a very popular performance mode in western Kenya, which was seen initially as entertainment. They used narrative (story telling), complete with song and dance as the 'honourable' members sat back and enjoyed the performance, joining every now and then in some songs and chants. The story was told of a woman who came from the lake, saved by a very poor man. The woman, Nyar Nam, turns out to be a magical lady who having been saved by Nyamgondho son of Ombare, turns the fortunes for Nyamgondho from one of the poorest of the poor in the community, to the most prosperous man in the land. Songs are made in his honour and success makes him big. But it also gets to his head. Soon he starts drinking, and doing everything those men in "Vihiga do to their wives, daughters and sisters". He ignores Nyar Nam, starts abusing her, verbally and physically, then marries several wives and gets even more macho... Soon Nyar Nam cannot take it any more and one morning she leaves with all the wealth that she brought Nyamgondho son of Ombare. The artists succeeded in taking the 'parliament' to the world of fantasy. The women joined in the songs and dance as the men nodded their heads in approval and sometimes disapproval. Then, led by a facilitator, a debate ensued about the characters of Nyamgondho and Nyar Nam. The second facilitator wrote down the responses from the participants. Then the speaker who had talked to APT facilitators earlier asked for volunteers willing to work with APT in the preparatory stages of the project. Ten people volunteered to join the initial preparatory phase of the project. With them, APT formed the research team. Members met for ten hours, did two more presentations in different settings, visited different homes and local development offices, and finally reported their findings to the local parliament. The use of community members guaranteed easy access to information, houses, working spaces and more importantly ownership of the final findings.

*Contributed by Amollo Maurice, Amani Peoples Theatre, Kenya*

## 4. Participatory Theatre

‘Theatre in development’, ‘popular theatre’, ‘community theatre’, ‘theatre of the oppressed’, ‘protest theatre’ and ‘theatre for social change’, these titles or names are often used interchangeably, and are associated with the promotion of transformation, involving individual and community participation. These theatre forms aim at combining entertainment, exploring attitudes and sharing knowledge, with initiating action for positive social change. Theatre is used as a tool for experiencing and interacting on *what is happening* in real life circumstances, and to enable people to reflect on actions and opportunities available to improve daily circumstances.

Participatory theatre is when the audience is involved in the performance/session<sup>10</sup> by taking part in the acting, and/or by suggesting how scenes can be altered and/or by participating in discussions about the subject represented. The audience can share, ask questions, make choices, provoke or challenge, in order to develop solutions to issues reflected in the performance or session. A session, *per se*, is not the end of the process, but it is the starting point for discussions, conclusions and follow-up.

### The major elements of participatory theatre

#### a. The facilitators

The facilitators<sup>11</sup> play a crucial part in orienting a session using participatory theatre. The facilitators should be: human rights activists with facilitation skills and experience of working with communities; theatre facilitators with knowledge and understanding of human rights; community facilitators with knowledge and understanding of human rights and preferably some knowledge of participatory theatre; or any combination of these.

The facilitators are the voices representing the Organisers and therefore the catalyst in helping the audience achieve the set aims. To succeed, the facilitators need the full support of the Organisers. The Organisers should always agree and sign a contract that clearly states what is expected of each facilitator and provide their full support and involvement in the process of preparing, staging and evaluating each session.

The facilitators introduce the aim of the session/performance, and manage the dialogue between the audience and the actors. The facilitators are also the intermediary between the performance and real life situations. In doing so the facilitators encourage the audience to find their own voice and develop solutions to problems.

When guiding the theatre activities the facilitators can use humour to make the audience feel at home and relaxed. Nonetheless, the main tasks of the facilitators are to contribute to the exploration of emotions, to positively transform attitudes, to increase knowledge, and to develop skills. The facilitators also need to ensure a safe environment where contrasting opinions are respected.

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<sup>10</sup> Not all methods presented in this Guide make use of a performance; in that case we use the word ‘session’. ‘Session’ is also used for follow-up activities.

<sup>11</sup> We recommend that you always work with two facilitators regardless of the complexity of the performance or activity. One facilitator can be familiar with the theatre methods and directing the actors, while the second facilitator can be knowledgeable and experienced in human rights issues and work. The second facilitator may also support the main facilitator, keeping track of how the proceedings are advancing and ensuring that nothing gets lost or is not noted.

If translation is being used the facilitators need to remember to allow time for translation and ensure actors also remember to pause for the interpreter to translate.

### ***The skills of the facilitators***

The facilitators need to be able to research, learn and explain to the audience the human rights issues and their relevance to the everyday reality of the audience.

A facilitator should be able to:

- ask open-ended, probing and encouraging questions in order to encourage participation;
- manage her/his own feelings;
- support the actors;
- observe emotions and be sensitive to them;
- deal with difficult people;
- hold the attention of the audience using different techniques;
- see issues through the eyes of the audience;
- underline key points;
- provide positive feedback;
- minimise unnecessary debates/arguments among members of the audience;
- summarise;
- draw conclusions;
- give suggestions for follow-up.

### **b. The actors**

The actors can be community animators, or from theatre groups, or community groups, or health related educational service providers, or they may be villagers who like to play drama. Either professional or amateur actors can be used, with or without theatre experiences, who are able to perform and develop an understanding of the link between theatre techniques and human rights discussions and contribute to the process of improving the quality of life of the community and its diverse members.

The credibility and familiarity of your programme with the community will increase by involving local people as (non professional) actors. Community members voluntarily involved in the theatre sessions may contribute a feeling of security, allowing the audience to openly air their views.

The actors should be able to carry through their role; for example they should not laugh when performing a tragic scene, even if the audience does. Or in the words of Liberian theatre director Kerkura Kamara “the way you act the people will react.”

Participatory methods require the actors to remain alert for the entire session, even after their acting roles have come to an end. They may be called at any time to respond to the audience’s comments to their role by commenting or acting out changes.

The Organisers should consider preparing a contract for the actors (and other community members and volunteers involved in the process), in which the terms of reference of what they are to do are described. This is important to prevent tensions and to ensure everyone understands what is expected. The organisers should also provide the necessary human rights training to ensure the actors fully understand the topics covered.

### **c. The director**

The theatre director is the person who supervises the actors and manages the actions to be performed by the actors. A theatre director oversees the mounting of a theatre activity by coordinating preparation of the script and the rehearsals. The director's function is to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the performance.

Different directors, depending on the structure and philosophy of individual theatre groups adapt different approaches or styles. We recommend a participatory approach where the script is discussed with the Organisers, the facilitators and the actors. The director needs to acknowledge input from the actors and with the approval of the Organisers decides what is included in the performances.

The director is considered a vital figure in the management and preparation of the actors and the theatre activities; however some theatre groups operate without a specified director. The director may or may not be one of the facilitators.

### **d. The rehearsals**

Plenty of time should be allocated for rehearsals to ensure that the actors are familiar with the method and their roles and that the facilitators have also had time to review the human rights content and are ready to deliver accurate human rights information.

The facilitators should be well prepared to present the case of how violence and human rights abuses are counterproductive to the development of the community without having to resort to preaching. The facilitators and the actors should always prepare themselves during the rehearsals in case the audience reacts negatively to an issue or overwhelmingly support an act that abuses human rights (i.e. mob violence against criminals). During the rehearsals short stories or anecdotes should be developed to use in such cases to help the audience reflect on their attitudes and the consequences.

The facilitators should be able to successfully encourage the audience to mobilise to change these negative situations - including the lack of action on the part of authorities - by presenting mobilisation and participation as the basis for achieving human rights in their community.

### **e. The audience**

Consider that the audience may be predominately illiterate and lives in a rural area. The audience may be an *ad hoc* community gathering, or an organized group of people or the whole community on a specific afternoon or evening. It may be women and/or men and/or youth, traditional leaders, or religious people or ethnic groups, etc. They may be stallholders and passers-by at a market place and they may be a mixed group, or they may be a specific group, such as when the theatre play is performed in a school, for example. Based on the research conducted, the Organisers must choose the appropriate audience to work with.

To identify the target audience, you may want to ask:

- Who should be reached and invited to participate, why and when?
- Do you invite everybody or do you select whom to invite?
- Is there a limit to the size of the audience? How large or small should the audience be?

When you are working with a targeted audience in a defined space you know the audience has allocated the time to participate in the session and will possibly remain with you throughout

it. But if you are working in a public space with the general public you need to consider that during the day people need to get on with their chores and may not be able to stay for the entire time of your session. You may therefore consider organising short activities during the day and longer sessions in the evening when people have more time and can relax and engage with your activities.

Always consider the balance between the composition of the audience, the method to be used and the composition of your theatre troupe.

#### **f. Interaction between the facilitators, the actors, and the audience**

Audiences can sit at the same level as the performers in order to have contact with them, and to have easy access to the stage in order to participate in the performance. The facilitators can involve the audience by:

- explaining what is going to happen;
- guiding warm-up exercises (i.e. songs, dances, drumming, etc.);
- inviting the audience to respond to questions posed by an actor by stopping the performance;
- asking for advice or suggestions from the audience, and asking actors to improvise on the basis of these suggestions;
- discussing positive and negative consequences of certain situations performed;
- allowing the audience to stop the play and asking the actor(s) to describe feelings, attitudes, etc;
- assigning the audience a role - such as farmers or teachers - in order to ask them to react to the scene from a particular perspective;
- assigning one of the actors to be part of the audience so as to influence the performance itself by laughing, shouting, applauding or asking questions;
- summing up proposed lessons learned, actions and future steps;
- closing with a warm-up i.e. a dance;
- finalising the performance by always thanking the audience for their participation and inviting them to future activities.

To involve more women from the audience to participate actively in the sessions you need to have several women actors, not just one, and one of the facilitators should be a woman.

Some theatre groups use plants<sup>12</sup> in the audience to stimulate discussion. If you do use plants ensure that these do not monopolise the discussion, and allow room for a truly diverse exchange, which also includes the expression of negative views on human rights.

#### **Example**

At a girl's school in Nairobi tension had been building due to what the students termed dictatorial leadership in the school, and what the teachers called failing disciplinary standards among students. A major strike was in the offing when the school's headmistress called on Amani Peoples Theatre (APT) to work with the girls on "issues of self discipline." APT employed the use of forum theatre and later role-plays to try and find out what was going on among the students. Soon it emerged that the students were actually in a very advanced stage of organising a very destructive strike to "teach the teachers a lesson." While the workshop was going on some teachers and the headmistress joined the students and soon the headmistress found herself playing the role of a student while one of the girls played the

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<sup>12</sup> By 'plant' we mean members of the theatre group who stand amongst the audience and intervene as if they were not related to the Organisers and the theatre group.

role of the school's chief executive. Acting out each other's parts, they saw into each other's inner self and actions and each party later sat back and laughed so much about the image they had created of the other: how the other talked, how the other walked, how the other responded to questions, gave directives, etc. A discussion followed in which the students revealed their grievances and plans to the headmistress in the most open and candid manner she had ever seen. "Is that what I do?" She had asked after the play as the girls thundered back, "Yes!" The headmistress and the students present at the workshop agreed to talk to each other about anything from then onwards. The strike was averted and the school has to date never experienced any strikes due to the culture of open and true dialogue created that day on the stage.

*Contributed by Amollo Maurice, Amani Peoples Theatre, Kenya*

### **g. The venue**

When choosing the venue for your session you may want to consider the following:

- Should there be unrestricted access to the performance/session?
- Should it be linked to a special occasion?
- Should there be a limited number of people present?
- Is the venue accessible?
- Is the acoustic good? Is a sound system needed? What type of sound system?

You also may want to consider if you want to work in a circle or have the audience form a semicircle. If you are working in an open space to get the audience to create a semicircle get the drummers who first attract the public to place themselves against a wall or fence or tree. Working with a semicircle means the facilitators and the actors can better address the audience and it is easier and more pleasant for everyone to follow the action and the discussion.

### **h. Review and follow-up**

The Organisers and facilitators may want to review (in writing or orally) the implementation of each session, which may also help in deciding on follow-up. To prepare such a review you may want to consider the following points:

- How did the session develop?
- How was the aim of the session clarified and explained to the audience?
- How was the aim achieved?
- How much did the audience participate?
- How did the audience react and relate to the human rights issue?
- How did the participatory theatre methods that were used work?
- How was the interaction between the audience and the performers?
- How enjoyable was the session?
- How did the discussion go?
- How were the positive outcomes summarised?
- What impact did the theatre method have on the audience?
- What, if any, were the learning points the audience acquired?
- What, if any, were the new skills learnt by the audience?
- What, if any, were the changes in attitude?
- Describe any actions the audience decided to take to bring about change and how you can follow them up.

[Box]

A checklist of what you need to have decided/organised before a session/performance

- ✓ Title
- ✓ Aim
- ✓ Human rights issue
- ✓ Activity
- ✓ Implementers (institution/organisation)
- ✓ Number and names of actors
- ✓ Number and gender of audience
- ✓ Venue
- ✓ Costs involved
- ✓ Date
- ✓ Time
- ✓ If there is an entry fee
- ✓ Length of theatre form
- ✓ Materials distributed
- ✓ Any activities before event
- ✓ Any activities after event
- ✓ Publicity
- ✓ Length of discussion(s)
- ✓ Audience/actors comment on the event as a whole
- ✓ Follow-up
- ✓ Support

[End of box]

### **Example**

In the suburb of Niarela, there was only one street for a huge population. So the street was always crowded with people, cars, lorries and carts, resulting in a continuous traffic jam. The community leaders tried many solutions without success.

One day the mayor identified a strip that he thought could be a street, but it was an indescribable jam of rubbish heaps, women drying clothes, weavers and merchants, donkeys and horses lying everywhere. So nobody could imagine a street there but the mayor was convinced that this would be the right place for a new street and decided to drive away everybody and to build a road.

But it was not that simple and many previous mayors had failed. When the people heard about the plans of the new mayor they got very angry and started rioting. The mayor then decided to call a Theatre group for help in finding a solution for the problem.

During a whole week the actors were interviewing and talking with the people in the area to explore their views and why they resisted the mayors plans. They also interviewed the mayor.

Based on this research the theatre group developed the following play.

#### The play: Our road

Mister Traore, a weaver, has been waiting for a late visitor is looking many times at his watch, walking round and round. The visitor Mister Kone arrives at last.

*Kone:* Good evening.

*Traore:* What's up, why are you so late I am ready to go to bed. You should have arrived here at 6 pm and we are now 10 pm.

*Kone:* There is no road.

*Traore:* What are you trying to tell me? How do other motorists move to and from their businesses.

*Kone:* Every time I have to come here I have worries. It may take more than two hours to run the 300 metres between the big mosque and the Hotel de l'Amitié. The mayor has to find a solution.

*Traore:* Did you say the mayor?

*Kone:* Yes it is his responsibility to organize the city and traffic is an important factor in city life.

*Traore:* But his job is not directing the traffic, policemen are here for that.

*Kone:* I don't mean that. He must find another road; the only one inside Bozola is unable to assure fair traffic.

Another man called Diarra arrives and greets them in a loud voice.

*Diarra:* Assalamou Alaïkoum.

*Traore:* Allaïkoum Salam, Diarra. Have a seat here. What can I do for you?

*Diarra:* Just to greet you.

*Traore:* It is kind of you, how are your wives and children?

*Diarra:* They are fine. But I have also a problem to tell you. The mayor of Commune II tells us to leave the place we have been occupying for ten years because they want to build a road.

If he thinks about a road it is because he has a place where to sit.

How are we going to earn our living if we have to leave this place?

*Traore:* The town is big enough.

*Diarra:* Show me a place where to set my weaving machine.

*Kone:* Have you paid for the place where you are now?

*Diarra:* Pay what? I am a citizen of this town and I deserve a place to exercise my job.

*Kone:* Don't you know that that place is a street and that a street is a common property?

*Diarra:* Of course I know. But we must get a place where we can earn our living.

*Traore:* Have you ever used the street from the mosque to Hotel de l'Amitié?

*Diarra:* Of course that bloody traffic jammed street.

*Traore:* Very well. Now the only solution to avoid people to lose time on this street is for the mayor to build another road in the surroundings and only the street we are occupying now is the answer.

*Diarra:* Are you sure that they are not giving the place to people of their political party?

*Kone:* No they will give the place to all the citizens because the road is for all.

*Diarra:* If they are really building a road there I am ready to leave my place but what about the women who are dying clothes there, what about those who keep their animals there and all the others.

*Kone:* If no one's goat is killed no one will eat a good sauce. If you are convinced that the road is important for all we can call a meeting to explain the matter to the public.

*Diarra:* Why not, why not, let's do so. I am going to ask Sidiki the drummer to inform people.

The drummer (walking along the streets of the quarter): Dong dong dong. "*People of Niarela*" dong dong dong, "*people of Bozola*" dong dong dong "*you are all called for an important meeting which will be held in the community centre on Monday afternoon. To see for yourself is better than to have a thousand people see for you. So no one should miss this important meeting. The subject will be about our road.*"

*A meeting was held. The panel was composed of Misters Kone, Diarra and their friend the weaver.*

*Diarra (standing up):* Dear ladies and gentlemen, people of Niarela and Bozola, on behalf of my two colleagues here I must thank you for attending this meeting in great number today. We are not mayors, not MP's, not any other authorities. We are only three members of this community. In fact we have called you particularly to this place to discuss a common problem. As everybody knows the only road passing through our quarter is always traffic jammed and it is all but a pleasure even to pay a visit to a relative in this area. My colleagues here present and myself occupying the greatest part of this street have decided to free our places and enable the community leader to carry out the plan of constructing a road here.

We know that it is not easy for everybody but we place the general interest above our own interest. We know that a second road here will free the street by which everybody is obliged to pass now. We believe that the mayor and his staff will do their best to find a place for us. As speech is a sauce that is not succulent in only one mouth, I am going to ask Mr. Kone to continue.

*Kone:* I know that under the pressure of different authorities we will one day leave this place so why don't we leave while moving is parading. A road in this part of our quarter is really a necessity. It is a puzzle to pass by this street and the mayor's proposal to build a road is like lungs for someone who hasn't breathed for a very long time. Our quarter will be clean. All along the new road there will be lights to keep away burglars at night.

At the end of this play the facilitator asked the public for reactions. Several women responded positively: "Our place will be beautiful"; "The filthy water ponds will disappear"; "Our children will be healthy." A chorus from the public said, "Let's go for the road!" A man came up to the stage and introduced himself as the representative of all those concerned by the problem of the road. He thanked the actors on behalf of the association and said, "They seem to have looked inside our hearts and our minds. We have understood their message. As a result we declare solemnly that we are going to free this place today. The mayor can begin working the road tomorrow. Not only we accept to leave the place but we will help him with the work. He has not promised us any place, but we know that he will do his best for us."

The mayor was so glad that he literally ran onto the stage to thank the actors and the bold women and men who were leaving the place where they used to earn their living without compensation. Addressing the public, he said, "People of the suburbs of Niarela and Bozola, you are showing wisdom and maturity. This decision is a challenge for us community leaders. This magnanimity is a proof of citizenship and an example for our neighbouring communities. Be thanked for that. For the time being, we have not a precise place to give you. But your relocation will be written among the priorities of our development plan.

*The scene ended with a spontaneous drumming party that brought everyone to dance in celebration.*

*Contributed by Saloum D. Traore, Amnesty International Mali*

## SECTION II

### Theatre methods and illustrative examples

It is recommended that you study the approach to ‘Mobilising for change’ and the theory on ‘Participatory Research and Theatre’ in Section I before looking at the theatre methods in this Section. A clear understanding of Section I will enable you to choose the theatre method most appropriate and best suited to your human rights objectives, the community or group you work with, and what you feel most comfortable with yourself.

#### Summary of theatre methods presented in this Guide

**Improvised play** Short scenes are developed, rehearsed and performed in front of the audience. Members of the audience are asked for suggestions to adapt the scenes. These suggestions are considered and immediately integrated into a modified scene, which is improvised there and then. The first method is useful to illustrate a situation and provoke reflection while the latter method is useful for introducing issues to an audience and provoking initial reflection on such issues.

**Snapshots** Actors show the audience a static representation of a scene (as in a photograph). The subsequent ‘snapshots’ portray a development from the first scene. In this way the snapshots show a sequence of static and mute scenes to illustrate a short story. The facilitators ask the audience to look at the scene carefully to describe what they see. The audience is then invited to change the snapshots to improve the situation or make it worse. At this stage the audience can be invited to create a dialogue to accompany the snapshots. This method is useful for involving the audience in analysing situations and suggesting how to improve difficult situations.

**Storytelling** Actors, but also the audience, can tell real life or fictional stories about a certain issue in order to explore a problem. You should use a story that will appeal to the audience. The audience participate by airing their views and transforming the story in the process. We have included two variations on how to use this method: imaginary storytelling, and storytelling with a gap. This latter method is useful in helping members of the audience to exchange experiences.

**Role-play** Members of the audience act out a particular situation in the role of another person. Interaction between the various persons involved is more important than how well people are performing. This method is often used to assess and reflect on attitudes and behaviour. It is a difficult method to employ effectively; we recommend you take great care when using it.

**Short play** A story is created by constructing a dialogue based around a message or problematic situation. To do this you need to identify the location of the story, describe the characters involved, and prioritise the sequence of events. You need to be clear about what the situation is, and what the problem is. This method is used to introduce an issue to the audience and to start discussing it with a view to finding ways to improve a situation.

**Forum Theatre** Actors perform a short scene. The action is then stopped as it reaches a crisis or a climax. Members of the audience are encouraged to take up a role and to change the direction and the outcome of the action. This method is used for developing alternative ways to solve problems.

[Box]

To energise the audience during the session it is very effective to use art forms such as songs, dances, drumming or jokes. We have not included examples of these art forms, as it is impossible for us to include in this generic Guide all the wealth of African cultural traditions. We recommend that you include them according to your traditions and customs.

[End of box]

## Summary of the human rights issues presented in this Guide

### The human rights issues included in this Guide:

<b>Human Rights</b>	<b>Method 1: Improvised-play</b>
<b>Domestic violence</b>	<b>Method 2: Snapshots</b>
<b>Xenophobia</b>	<b>Method 3: Imaginary storytelling</b>
<b>Abuse of power</b>	<b>Method 4: Storytelling with a gap</b>
<b>Discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>Method 5: Role-play</b>
<b>Excessive use of force</b>	<b>Method 6: Short play</b>
<b>Forced marriage</b>	<b>Method 7: Forum Theatre</b>

The first issue is human rights since we suggest that a long-term programme with a group or community should start with a general introduction to human rights. The few rights we have chosen to illustrate this activity should, if necessary, be interchanged with other ones, which may be more relevant to the issues faced by the particular community. We do not think it is necessary to start by presenting all the different rights, but just those most relevant, and then plan and take action towards their implementation.

Method 2 and Method 7 relate to two endemic abuses faced by women and girls; we are aware that there are many other issues such as female genital cutting, rape, or the right to ownership and inheritance rights, which also affect the lives of girls and women. As with other issues, we encourage you to develop new activities using one of the theatre methods presented in this Guide to develop activities and campaigns to address these other abuses.

We have included the issue of xenophobia (to illustrate Method 3) because ethnic conflicts and/or hostility against foreigners are often manipulated to fuel violence and wars to protect the interests of small elites, causing great suffering.

Method 4 uses as an example the issue of abuse of power and Method 6 excessive use of force. These two issues are linked, since they both represent an abuse of authority by a government official or armed militia. Nevertheless we have included them both, as they are in their different forms major impediments for individuals and communities to access justice and to economic development.

Last but not least Method 5 uses the issue of discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. We are aware that discrimination is only one of the many problems people with HIV/AIDS face, and we encourage you to develop your own activities using some of the theatre methods given here to deal with these other issues, including lack of access to medical care, the protection of orphans, prevention, etc.

We have tried to choose some of the most pressing issues in and around Africa. Those issues we have omitted are no less important or pressing, but we just simply did not have the space to cover them all. We are also conscious of the importance of you, the activist on the ground,

choosing those issues most relevant to your reality and designing each activity to match the socio-cultural reality of your context.

[Box]

**Main steps to organising a session:**

- Research;
- Choose issue, audience and theatre method;
- Study related human rights information;
- Write script/story and programme for session;
- Rehearse and prepare props;
- Choose venue and advertise or invite the audience;
- After the activity review and decide on the follow-up.

[End of box]

## **THEATRE METHOD 1 – IMPROVISED PLAY**

### **Part 1: Description**

Improvised play is a form of theatre in which the actors modify a scene in response to directions from the audience. The scene should present real-life situations that will be easily recognisable to the audience. It should be short and basic in order to leave space for the audience to make suggestions for changes.

The actors create one to three scenes, depending on the issue you want to deal with (but three scenes/issues should be the maximum). They build the scenes based on: the ‘what’ (the issue), the ‘where’ (the setting) and the ‘who’ (the characters).

After the actors have played the scene, the facilitators ask the audience for advice on how it can be transformed to become more realistic or how to find a solution to or improve the situation. Then the actors will improvise the scene as suggested by the audience. Be attentive to all advice or suggestions; only if very silly or absurd should suggestions not be incorporated.

This method requires preparation and flexibility by the actors to improvise the suggestions made by the audience. To practice, the actors should become familiar with incorporating advice improvised by other actors. Plenty of rehearsal time should be allocated.

You will need about six actors. Not all of them will necessarily play at the same time, but they should support each other and alternate. If one of the actors feels he/she clearly understands the suggestions of the audience he/she could take over the role played by one of the other actors. To indicate that he/she wants to take over the part he/she should gently touch the shoulder of the other actor who can then withdraw.

The improvised play is particularly suitable for familiarising an audience with an issue or a problem and encouraging them to look for solutions. To demonstrate the method of improvised play we are using the example of human rights.

### **Part 2: Illustrative example - human rights**

#### **Aim**

- To introduce the subject of human rights by focusing on a few concrete examples that the community can recognise from their daily life.
- To show how it is possible to formulate actions to bring about positive human rights changes.
- To interest the community in taking an active part in your human rights programme.

**Actors**            Six

**Materials**        Props

**Time** 90 to 120 minutes: about 15 minutes per scene, excluding preparation and rehearsals.

### **Activity**

The Organisers start with introducing themselves and their organisations if it is their first activity with the community or group. One of them should also present the aim of the overall programme and why they are working with this community. It should also be mentioned that they are going to relate their work to the research they have done within the community, and that the research has helped them identify the issues that they will explore through theatre.

If this improvised play is the first activity of a longer-term programme, to start creating a good atmosphere with the audience you could use some warm ups or energisers (song, dance, drumming).

Then the facilitators should explain the method and the aim of the activity. When that is done the actors play the first short scene.

For example, to set out the context in which human rights exist you could start by acting out a brief scene with a man who has just been appointed chief of the local authority. He is very happy about it and calls his wife and a few neighbours (two adults and a youth) to share the good news with them. His neighbours and wife start telling him excitedly about the many good things he can now implement to improve life in the community (i.e. build a school, get a new generator for the clinic, a new well, etc. – ensure they are realistic needs of the community). However, he does not want to listen to this advice, as he is too busy being conceited about his new power and what he can gain for himself. The new ‘chief’ tells his wife to shut up and his neighbours that he is now too important to be listening to their whingeing.<sup>13</sup>

After the scene is acted out the facilitators ask the audience to tell what they saw happening and what they would like to change in the scene, how they would like the new chief to behave and what they would like him to do.

Then the actors should replay the scene incorporating the changes suggested by the audience.

When the first scene has been re-enacted and discussed, one of the facilitators tells the audience that now a new scene representing one of the rights mentioned in the last scene will be performed. Two more scenes about different rights can be performed and consequent discussions and improvisations performed.

For example a scene about an aspect of the right to education could be acted out, where the actors perform a short scene in a class where students run around with nothing to do because the teacher is absent. The scene could convey that the teacher has not been there for three days, and the students have fun playing, but not learning.

Then the facilitators ask the audience what right they think was shown. After the replies have been exhausted and consensus reached the facilitators ask the audience if they have suggestions on how to modify the short scene so as to find a solution to the problem posed in

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<sup>13</sup> This scene has been adapted from the piloting of this Guide in Gbarnga, Liberia in January 2005.

the scene. The actors listen to the suggestions, and if necessary ask the audience for clarification before playing the scene as directed by the audience.

The actors then decide which suggestions are most appropriate and adapt the scene accordingly while improvising it in front of the audience.

A maximum of three scenes should be played in one event, in order not to make it all too long and tiring. If in your research you have identified more than three pressing issues you want the audience to start relating to human rights, plan a follow-up activity where you can introduce the remaining issues.

### **Follow-up**

The facilitators should make sure that the activity has contributed to building some common language and understanding about human rights.

You may want to propose selecting one of the issues that emerged from the play for a follow-up activity with one of the other theatre methods, as a means of exploring the issue in more depth. If appropriate, try to identify ways in which the community can develop actions to seek solutions to the problem. The Organisers may need to organise several activities to develop an initial understanding of and empathy with the issue, and later devise activities that can achieve solutions.

At the end the facilitators inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity/ies (if possible announce date, venue and the Organisers). And to conclude, the facilitators invite members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under 'Review and follow-up' on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

## **Part 3: Background information on human rights**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and prepare for the performances and the discussions. It is meant to encourage familiarity with human rights concepts: both the theoretical definitions and the values involved.

We encourage the Organisers to adapt or develop their own questions, answers and other background information more closely related to the context and the issues included in the long-term programme. We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue of human rights**

Q. Why do we need human rights?

- A. Human rights can be defined as those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity as human beings. Human rights are the foundation of dignity, justice and peace. Their respect allows the individual and the community to develop fully and have security. The development of human rights has its roots in the struggle for freedom and equality everywhere in the world. Human rights cover a wide range of human activities relating to the liberty of the individual and the community to act as long as they do not hurt others. These rights include freedom of speech, freedom from torture, freedom of movement, etc. There are also human rights related to the conditions necessary to meet the basic conditions / standards of life, such as the need for food, the need for health, the need for a clean environment, etc. The basis of human rights - such as respect for human life and human dignity - can be found in most religions and philosophies. Human rights are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and many other documents. Many countries in Africa have also included obligations to respect and protect human rights in their constitutions and laws.
- Q. What does the word dignity mean? How should we all have the possibility to live in dignity?
- A. Dignity is the condition of being respected or receiving the respect due to all human beings. Some may claim that there are some people who do not deserve to live in dignity. For example, you may need to be prepared to explain why a criminal in prison has as much right to be treated with dignity while being punished for a crime he/she was convicted for as any other person.
- Q. Who is responsible for protecting human rights?
- A. The duty to protect human rights falls mostly on governments. To respect rights means that they must refrain from violating rights. To protect rights means that they should take active steps against those who have violated rights or who might do so, and that they should monitor the human rights situation and report their findings. To fulfil human rights means that they have an obligation to devise systems, codes of practice and laws that would make it much more difficult to violate any rights, and which provide victims of human rights violations with redress. However, individual citizens and communities have a responsibility to promote, protect and respect human rights, as well as the right to have them fulfilled.
- Q. What makes a human right different to a law?
- A. Human rights are legal standards protecting the fundamental needs of all humans regardless of sex, ethnic background, religion, political belief etc. and agreed by governments at the regional or international level. At the regional level, African States have agreed on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. At the international level countries worldwide recognise the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A law is a legal standard established at the national level. National and local laws have to respect the principles and values of human rights, but they are not only concerned with the fundamentals of human dignity, but also with other practical aspects of organising and regulating society, for example traffic rules, or taxation, etc.
- Q. How do traditional or customary justice systems and practices relate to human rights?
- A. Human rights are the highest and ultimate standards recognised by African governments as well as other governments worldwide. Traditional and customary law should respect the principles and rights set out in human rights standards, and should

certainly not violate them. That is why, for instance, human rights organisations oppose forms of traditional justice that use physical punishments that amount to torture or ill-treatment.

Q. What should I do if my human rights are violated?

A. You could file a complaint against the person(s) who has violated your rights with the help of a lawyer or a human rights organisation. If the judicial system does not work properly, is corrupt or not accessible for whatever reason, you could consult with your community and get their support to take action to bring the violation to the attention of the responsible authorities, possibly with help from a human rights organisation. Human rights organisations could also help the community to understand more about human rights.

Q. What can I do to promote respect for and protection of human rights?

A. It is a popular refrain that respecting human rights begins at home, by ensuring equal respect for the rights of women, girls, boys and men. If we use violence at home, or exclude some children from going to school for example and in doing so violate the rights of those closest to us, how can we respect the human rights of others? Respect for human rights also extends to social relations, so we need to respect others within our community and people from other communities or ethnic groups. Basically, the first step to promoting and protecting human rights is by practising respect and treating everyone with dignity. You can also initiate or contribute to human rights programmes that promote greater understanding of human rights. Many of these are aimed at the authorities, chiefs and the community at large.

## 2. Information on human rights<sup>14</sup>

This next section provides some general human rights information. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

Any group, in which human beings come together for any length of time, requires some mechanism to ensure its collective stability. Among other things, that mechanism must ensure a predictable degree of conformity by the members of the group to some coherent rules of conduct determining things that the group can do and/or should refrain from doing, in given circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

### *Characteristics of human rights*

Human rights do not have to be given, bought, earned or inherited. They belong to people simply because they are human - human rights are 'inherent' to each individual. Human rights are inherent because we are born with them.

Human rights are the same for all human beings regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity, political, or other opinion, national or social origin. We are all born free and equal in dignity,

<sup>14</sup> Most of this text has been adapted from *SINIKO: Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa*, June 1999, AI Index: AFR 01/003/99, available from AI's website ([www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)).

<sup>15</sup> Paul Sieghart (1983) *The international law of human rights*, Oxford University Press, UK.

and rights - human rights - are 'universal'. Human rights are universal because they apply to everyone in the world.

Human rights cannot be taken away. No one has the right to deprive another person of his or her human rights for any reason. People still have human rights even when the laws of their countries do not recognise them, or when they violate them - for example, when slavery is practised, slaves still have rights even though these rights are being violated. Human rights are 'inalienable'.

To live in dignity, all human beings are entitled to freedom, security and a decent standard of living concurrently - human rights are 'indivisible'.

### ***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

The most widely accepted statement of human rights in the world is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Its core message is the inherent value of every human being. The UDHR was unanimously adopted on 10 December 1948 by the United Nations (although 8 nations did abstain). It sets out a list of basic rights for everyone in the world whatever their sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status. It states that governments have promised to uphold certain rights, not only for their own citizens, but also for people in other countries. In other words, national borders are no barrier to helping others achieve their rights. Since 1948 the UDHR has been the core international standard for human rights. In 1993 a world conference of 171 states representing 99% of the world's population reaffirmed its commitment to human rights and the principles enshrined in the UDHR.

Even though the UDHR is the inspiration for most international human rights law, it is not itself a legally binding document. However, as a general statement of principles, it does have power in the world of public opinion. Its principles have been translated into legal force in the form of various human rights treaties. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are the foundation for international human rights law. Countries that have ratified these Covenants commit themselves to making laws in their country to protect the human rights as set out in these Covenants. However, over half the countries of the world have not ratified the ICCPR or the ICESCR.

There are also Regional Human Rights Instruments inspired by the UDHR such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights. Many national legal codes also guarantee human rights.

### ***The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights***

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights was adopted in June 1981 by the eighteenth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)<sup>16</sup>, held in Nairobi, Kenya. This same conference also reaffirmed the member states' adherence to the principles of human and peoples' rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other declarations, conventions and other instruments adopted by the OAU and the United Nations.

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<sup>16</sup> The African Union (AU) in 2002 replaced the Organisation of African Unity. The AU is Africa's premier institution and principal organisation for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent, aiming at greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.

The committee that drafted the Charter was guided by the principle that “it should reflect the African conception of human rights, [and] should take as a pattern the African philosophy of law and meet the needs of Africa.” It also recognized the value of international human rights standards that many African countries had already promised to respect.

As a result, the Charter sets out to combine the specific needs and values of African cultures with standards that have been recognized as universally valid. One of the African Charter’s distinctive features is that it recognizes the rights of ‘peoples’, such as the right of all peoples to self-determination. The African Charter is also unique in emphasizing the responsibilities of the individual towards the community and the state, and for giving people fleeing persecution the right not just to seek asylum, but also to obtain it. African States also established the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights to oversee the implementation and fulfilment of the African Charter.

The main functions of the Commission are:

- To promote Human and Peoples’ Rights by undertaking research, organising seminars and conferences, disseminating information, supporting and cooperating with international, regional, national and local human rights and other relevant institutions, and by making recommendations to governments where appropriate;
- To formulate and lay down legal principles and rules relating to human and peoples’ rights on which African governments may base their legislation;
- To ensure protection of human and peoples’ rights as set out in the African Charter;
- To interpret provisions of the African Charter at the request of a State party, an institution of the AU or an African Organization recognized by the AU.

## THEATRE METHOD 2 - SNAPSHOTS

### Part 1: Description

This method aims to create a sequence of photographs or snapshots of real life situations to help the audience reflect on them and think how they might generate change for the better. In this method actors or volunteers from the audience enact a moment of everyday life by posing (without moving). Initially there is no verbal dialogue as it is a snapshot. This means that there is an emphasis on facial expressions and body language.

To analyse a situation you may need to develop a series of three to six snapshots, which demonstrate a developing situation. At a later stage, when the audience understands the representation in the snapshot, you may want to have the audience develop lines for the characters in the photographs. These should be a short line of dialogue, a bit like the bubbles in a comic strip.

The actors should start with the first snapshot to give the audience an idea of how this method works. Later on, volunteers from the audience can be invited by the facilitators to become the characters in other snapshots.

The snapshots should represent realistic images of the issue to be addressed. This method is useful in getting the audience to analyse problematic situations and develop solutions.

To demonstrate the snapshots method we are using the example of domestic violence.

### Part 2: Illustrative example - domestic violence<sup>17</sup>

#### Aim

- To present domestic violence as a violation of human rights.
- At this session and/or a follow-up session, to identify ways in which incidents of domestic violence can be stopped so as to improve the lives of men, women and children.

**Actors** Six

**Materials** You may want to use a photograph from a magazine to explain how this method works.  
You may want to have some bits of furniture - a stool for example - to create a more domestic atmosphere, and a bucket where the water is contained, but you can also do it without props.

**Time** 120 minutes, excluding preparation and depending on the number of snapshots played.

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<sup>17</sup> This activity has been adapted to follow the performance organised during the piloting of this Guide in Gbarnga, Liberia.

### Activity

The facilitators welcome the audience and introduce the aims and the method to be used. To illustrate the method the facilitators can show a photograph from a newspaper advert or magazine and ask the audience what they see and what the expressions of the people's faces or the position of their bodies tell. The method that will be used is very similar to actual photographs, as the actors will stand in a position as if they were in a picture, or snapshot. The audience will discuss the actions being represented and will be invited to transform them.

Two actors make a snapshot of two friends who have not seen each other for a very long time and by chance run into each other on the street. At this point no words should be spoken.

One of the facilitators invites the audience to pay attention to the body language, gestures and facial expressions of the actors. The facilitator then asks the audience to tell him or her what they think is happening and why? How would they describe the mood?

When the audience has spotted what is happening and why, the facilitator asks the audience to say what they think the people in the snapshot would say (i.e. "Goodness what a surprise!!" or: "Oh! Is that really you?" or: "It has been so long!!!" – these lines always have to be short). After a few contributions, ask the actors to say their line. If this process is taking quite a bit of time, remember to tell the actors to relax and just stand, as it can be painful to stand frozen in the same position for a long time. If necessary, the actors, when asked by the facilitator, can resume the snapshot pose.

Here the same facilitator asks for four volunteers from the audience to come forward and asks them in pairs to think of how they would represent the same snapshot differently. While the four volunteers are preparing themselves, one of the facilitators can lead a song to keep the rest of the audience energised.

After the volunteers have enacted their snapshot, explain to the audience that the actors will now represent a series of snapshots representing events in a family.

#### Snapshot 1

	DESCRIPTION OF POSE	DIALOGUE
Father	Pointing at the daughter	"Go and sell water!"
Mother	Addressing the father	"But she should go to school!"
Daughter	She is carrying a bucket of water or water bags and looks unhappy	

Scene by scene ask the audience to describe **what** they see. After two or three interventions ask **why** they think it is happening. Then ask them to say what they think each character is saying. After a few contributions from the audience, the actors get to speak out their lines. As in the example above, these should be brief and to the point.

#### Snapshot 2

	DESCRIPTION OF POSE	DIALOGUE
A man	Paying for water	
A Young man	Holding books in one hand and expressing surprise with the other	"Why weren't you at school?"
Daughter	Selling water to the man	"My father wants me to work"

**Snapshot 3**

	DESCRIPTION OF POSE	DIALOGUE
Mother	Looking angry and telling daughter off	“How could you lose the money?”
Daughter	Looking at the floor with her hand expressing “I don’t know”	“I don’t know, mum. Sorry!”

**Snapshot 4**

	DESCRIPTION OF POSE	DIALOGUE
Father	Slapping his daughter	“You are useless!”
Daughter	Protecting her face	“Dad, you are hurting me!”
Mother	Prostrated, begging her husband	“Please don’t beat her!”

**Snapshot 5**

	DESCRIPTION OF POSE	DIALOGUE
Father	Has taken his belt off and is hitting the mother	“It is always your fault!”
Mother	On one side on the floor protecting her face	“Please don’t!”

After you have gone through each scene, open a discussion about domestic violence and its consequences. When some reflection has taken place, invite the audience to divide into groups, depending on the size of the audience and the time you have available. The groups should comprise of about six to eight people each.

Tell the groups that they are working with the same scenario they just saw (father, mother and daughter). Ask them to prepare a series of three snapshots starting from the snapshot when the daughter comes home without money (if you ask the volunteers to replay all the snapshots it can become too long and boring for the remainder of the audience).

The volunteers should be asked to produce snapshots that show a more constructive ending to the story, and one that does not involve violence. For example the daughter comes home without money, the parents ask her, “What happened?” They allow the daughter to explain, and they find a solution to either ensure that the daughter does not lose the money again, or that she can go to school.

While the volunteers are preparing their snapshots, one of the facilitators can do an energiser with the remainder of the audience. Before the snapshots by the various groups are presented, the facilitator may want to invite the remainder of the audience to react to what they will see happening by booing or clapping, depending on whether they agree or disagree with the action in the snapshot. It is important that everyone understands that the booing or clapping should not refer to the quality of the acting or the volunteers themselves, but the actions being portrayed in each snapshot (i.e. clap when there is negotiation and talking; boo when there is shouting or violence). If the audience does not feel like reacting, they do not need to. Instead of clapping and booing you can also use green and red cards.

You could also get the audience to come forward and directly reshape the positions of the people in the snapshot to some other pose that seems more appropriate to them.

Remember, for each snapshot you must first get the audience to describe what is happening and then get them to say **what** the different characters in the snapshot are saying and **why**.

When the two or three groups have finished their representations (make sure you don't get too many groups, otherwise it becomes too long and the audience may lose interest), continue the discussion.

### **Follow-up**

The facilitators assist a discussion about the relevance to the community of the issues presented in the activity.

After some interventions from the audience, one of the facilitators introduces the definition of domestic violence attached below. The facilitators may want to rephrase it to make it user-friendly to the audience, but make sure not to dilute its meaning.

To generate suggestions for action, the facilitator asks the audience how they would tell others (in the family, at work, at school, etc.) about their experience of this session.

As a follow-up to this activity, the Organisers may want to select one of the issues that emerged during the discussion to explore in depth. They could use the same or one of the other theatre methods. You may have to organise several different activities to develop understanding of and empathy with the issue, before devising actions that can bring about change.

To measure change, the facilitators should ask the audience to develop indicators that would show how the problem of domestic violence in their community could be improved. You could make use of indicators used in other programmes like health care services for victims of domestic violence. Some examples of indicators could be:

- Community members try to intervene and stop it if a woman is being beaten up by her husband;
- A woman gets support from members of her community when she plans to report domestic violence to the police.

You may want to develop the indicators in groups or plenary depending on the size of the audience and how the energy level is.

Next, facilitate a discussion to elaborate a number of steps (actions) that could be taken to achieve the improvements identified through the indicators. For instance: prepare a representation to local elders seeking change; or organise meetings with men to discuss the problem of domestic violence; or ask the local radio to do a series of programmes on the harmful effects of domestic violence and the important role the police should play in stopping it. As a result of the session(s) with a community or group it could be that women raise questions about the police not taking their complaints seriously. This eventually could become a focus for further action.

When you have developed strategies for action, invite the audience to come back in a couple of month's time to another session to reflect on what has happened in the meantime.

At the end of each activity the facilitators inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue, etc.). To conclude, the facilitators invite

members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

In activities addressing domestic violence, the beating of children may be raised along with other types of violence against women. The Organisers could consider organising a follow-up activity specifically dealing with children's rights.

The Organisers could cooperate with women's groups that specialise in addressing domestic violence. These groups could advise on how to address domestic violence within the community and eventually what action to take so that the authorities and the police take this human rights abuse more seriously. Someone from these specialised groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under 'Review and follow-up' on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

### **Part 3: Background information on domestic violence**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

#### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue of domestic violence**

Q. What is domestic violence?

A. Domestic violence is usually defined as physical, emotional, sexual and other abuse by someone (usually, but not always, a man) of a person (usually, but not always, a woman or a child) with whom they have or have had some form of close relation such as marriage or parenthood, in order to maintain power or control over that person. Some examples of such power and control are: physical violence; emotional abuse (including coercion, threats or intimidation); forced isolation; male privilege and forms of economic abuse. In the example given in this Guide we have used an instance of abuse through intimidation and physical violence, but the Organisers need to consider how to reflect the forms of abuse most common in their community. They should try to introduce them by using one or more of the different participatory theatre methods in this Guide.

Q. How can we improve relationships between men and women, in order to reduce, if not eliminate, (domestic) violence?

A. Actions or interventions could address different levels of the problem: at the individual level; at the family/couple level (including addressing issues such as the division of tasks within the home and the unequal status of different family members); or the

social/community level. They could also deal with issues such as condemnation and retribution for those who commit violence against others in the family; and/or discuss how violence can be reduced in practice – for example, how to come to a fair solution to a dispute. Be prepared for the fact that during the audience discussion solutions might be suggested that discriminate against women, since traditional or customary resolution of conflicts is often prejudiced against women and children in favour of adult men. This discussion also needs to be realistic in understanding that change will be gradual in terms of developing safeguards and changing often entrenched attitudes.

- Q. What would a domestic violence free future look like? What needs to change in men and women? And what would the consequences be for men and women?
- A. Answers could dispel the fear of the potential chaos that equality between men and women could bring, or may fix on how much and how difficult it could be for both men and women to change their present attitudes, or the audience may refer to tradition and how important this is.
- Q. What resources are needed to address domestic violence and where can you access them?
- A. Answers to such questions could deal with: access to counselling for victims of domestic violence; information about the damage and cost of domestic violence; the existence of ‘safe-houses’ for the violent person to cool off; and shelters for the victim to seek protection. The Organisers will have to carry out research into resources available prior to the session.

## **2. Human rights information relevant to domestic violence**

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of domestic violence. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

Major regional and international human rights standards uphold equality between men and women. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaims that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. It also states that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out in the Declaration, without distinction of any kind, including that based on sex or age. Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights both oblige states to ensure equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights states “Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his [her] life and the integrity of his [her] person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right”. As reflected in the UDHR and the African Charter, Africans have recognised and asserted the principle of equality amongst all people, including children; and have proclaimed the right of everyone to physical and mental integrity.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, considering that discrimination and violence against women was such a major problem in the world, saw the need to develop a Convention dealing specifically with this issue. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in December 1979. At the time of writing this Guide, 176 countries worldwide have ratified the Convention and 44 in Africa are legally bound to respect it and incorporate its articles into local law and custom. You can check on the website of the UN if your country is party to the Convention, and you can also find there the full text of the Convention and other relevant texts ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). If your country has not ratified the Convention, you could use these workshops to raise signatures to ask Parliament to do so.

In the preamble of the Convention it is stated "...discrimination against women...hampers the growth and the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women..." It continues by acknowledging that "change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women." It goes further as it asks States to "take all the appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women..."

CEDAW obliges States to ensure equality in most spheres of life: in education, in marriage, as parents, in employment, in relation to property, health-care services (including family planning) etc. Crucially, it obliges States to take action to eliminate discrimination. This means that States can be held accountable at an international level for failing to take action to end discrimination, whether that be passing legislation to ensure equality or taking practical steps to make sure that that legislation is being implemented in practice, right down to the individual level (i.e. that people are being prosecuted for discriminating against women). Notably in this regard the Convention establishes the responsibility of all States to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women that they participate in and benefit from rural development."

You may ask why bring up the issue of discrimination when talking about domestic violence. The reason is that a major cause of domestic violence is the mistaken belief by men and women that men are superior and consequently have power over women to exclude them, to order them about, and to inflict physical or mental punishments on them. Until this erroneous belief is dismantled and banished, discrimination, abuse, and injustice against women will continue to be endemic in Africa as in many other parts of the world, jeopardising the region's development and peace.

### ***Children's rights***

Considering the many abuses children and adolescents are subjected to, the UN elaborated a Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>18</sup> adopted in November 1989. The Organisation of African Unity on 11 July 1990 also adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The aim of these treaties is to set standards for the defence of children against neglect and abuse.

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<sup>18</sup> The term 'child' here refers to anyone below 18 years of age unless under the applicable national law majority is attained earlier.

Both the international and regional treaties are careful to allow for different cultural, political and material realities. Nevertheless, the most important consideration is the best interests of the child. This is made explicit in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which declares that “State Parties to the present Charter shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian or school authority or any other person who has the care of the child.”

Overall we can say that the rights and obligations set out in both treaties can be broadly organised in three groups:

- Provision* The right of children to possess, receive or have access to certain things or services such as a name, a nationality, refugee status, health care, education, care for disabled and orphans, rest and play, etc.
- Protection* The rights to be shielded from harmful acts and practices such as physical and sexual abuse, separation from parents, engagements in warfare, and commercial and sexual exploitation, etc.
- Participation* The right to be heard on decisions affecting their lives. As their abilities develop, they should have increasing opportunities to take part in the activities of society such as freedom of speech and opinion, culture, religion, and language, etc.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This description of the rights of the child has been adapted from materials produced by UNICEF-UK.

## THEATRE METHOD 3 – IMAGINARY STORYTELLING

### Part 1: Description

In this method, a group of actors tells a story. Each actor says one or two sentences of the story in turn, and then one actor repeats the story as if it had happened to him or herself.

With this method you need to use an invented story, but one that reflects reality. While developing the story, the Organisers, the facilitators and the actors have to make sure the story is logical and realistic. Several rehearsals are recommended. The actors' lines should be written down to ensure that they are learnt and delivered appropriately. The story should **not be too long or complex** so as to keep the audience's attention and allow for the audience to develop possible solutions to the issue being raised.

All the actors sit in a semicircle, ensuring that they face the audience. One of the actors starts telling the story. This actor says the word "AND" when his or her part of the story is finished, and looks at the next actor to the left who then continues, and so on. The actor who finalises the story will say at the end "AND THIS WAS THE STORY". Then the next actor will personalise the story by telling the same story as if it had happened to her or him.

After some discussion, one of the facilitators invites the audience to create their own stories about the same subject in small groups, aiming at positive change.

The actors need to remain alert during the remainder of the session in case the audience wants to hear how it felt to tell such a story or they want to propose changes to the story for the actors to act out.

This method is a powerful tool to illustrate a situation and provoke reflection on the part of the audience.

To demonstrate this method we will use the example of human rights violations caused by xenophobia.

### Part 2: Illustrative example - xenophobia

#### Aim

- To identify human rights violations resulting from xenophobic acts.
- To become familiar with the rights of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- At this and/or a follow-up session, to identify actions that can be taken to address xenophobia.

**Actors**            Eight storytellers

**Audience**        Because group work is involved, we recommend that you limit the audience to no more than 30.

**Materials**     None

**Time**            120 minutes, excluding preparation and rehearsals.

**Activity**

One of the facilitator explains the aims of the session to the audience and the theatre method that is to be used. He or she also mentions that the story is about an elderly man who is a foreigner.<sup>20</sup>

First actor:     Yesterday afternoon an elderly Malian man was detained, apparently because he was wearing a Muslim robe. He had gone on an errand when the police were searching the village where he lives in Ivory Coast, and...

Second actor: ...He was seen by a group of police officers that ordered him to approach them. One of the police officers told the old man that he was going to be killed because he is a foreigner, and...

Third actor:    ...After the man heard that threat he started running, trying to escape. Unfortunately he was caught by another group of police officers, and...

Fourth actor: ...The elderly man begged for their forgiveness, even though he had done nothing wrong. But he figured it was more important to save his life than his pride, and...

Fifth actor:    ...He was then led to another place where there were 13 other detainees. Even though he was old his mind was still sharp so he took the time to count how many others were detained there, and...

Sixth actor:    ...When he joined the group he was ordered to take off his robe. All the prisoners were made to lie on the ground. The police asked them what their place of origin was. That is how the old man came to know that there were men and women from Burkinabé, Mauritania, Mali and...

Seventh actor: ...The police started beating them with the thick iron buckles from their belts. They also kicked as hard as they could. They were especially tough with the younger men, but left the old man more or less alone because he was elderly; and the story ends here.

Eighth actor: Repeats the story but as if it had happened to him or her.

The facilitators then ask the audience questions like:

- What would you feel for the elderly man if he were living in your village?
- How would you imagine life to be if you lived away from your native village?
- What are the obstacles that foreigners or displaced persons face?
- Who or what is creating these problems? Why?
- How would you be able to improve the life of foreigners and/or displaced persons living in your community?

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<sup>20</sup> This story has been developed from a case presented on the website of Human Rights Watch World Report 2001: *Africa Côte d'Ivoire: Politicians Incite Ethnic Conflict*.

- How could the elderly man be safer?
- Etc.

Allow time for members of the audience to have a brief discussion with just one of their neighbours. They then share the outcome of their discussion with the facilitators.

Some of the outcomes of these pair discussions could reveal for example that some people think that immigrants/refugees/IDPs are involved in crime, or that they should go to another place because there is not enough food, or the ethnic group they come from are all bad people. Ensure that in the discussion the audience gets to reflect on the relationship that community members have with foreigners/strangers, and on the contributions that foreigners/strangers have made to the community.

Then one of the facilitators invites the audience to divide into groups of six people (if your audience is 30 people you will have 5 groups). Each group is to develop a short story in which **positive action** against xenophobia takes place in the community. Give the groups some 30 minutes to devise their story, and then invite them to tell it to the other members of the audience. If they want they could act it out.

### **Follow-up**

After the various groups have presented their stories the facilitators facilitate a discussion, allowing the audience to express their views and how they felt about this activity.

The Organisers and the facilitators should take note of those issues related to xenophobia that have not been covered during the activity so as to deal with them in a follow-up activity with the same audience, possibly using another of the theatre methods suggested in this Guide. The Organisers might need to organise several different activities to develop an initial understanding of and empathy with the issue, and later devise other activities that can bring about change.

A discussion aimed at devising actions to combat xenophobia could concentrate on looking at the suggestions that were given by the audience. A list with suggestions should be generated. As an example, some of the following aspects could come up:

- Everyone should be aware that they should respect the physical integrity of foreigners.
- The elders and other authorities should protect foreigners as well as any other member of the community.
- If suspected of a crime, foreigners/displaced people should be considered innocent until proven guilty by a court of law and be provided access to a defence.
- Police officers should not ask for money or abuse foreigners physically.
- A committee could be established to inform others of the findings of this session, and a representation should be made to the authorities.
- Members of the committee could inform human rights organisations about abuses they witness or hear of.

A subsequent follow-up activity could aim to review the actions taken concerning police conduct or the conduct of authorities or organisations responsible for refugees and IDPs and to assess if a more positive attitude towards foreigners is developing in the community overall.

At the end of each activity the facilitators should inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue, etc.).

The Organisers could cooperate with organisations working with IDPs, or refugees, or with associations of migrant workers. These groups could advise on the problems faced by these groups, but also present possible solutions to improve their situation. Someone from these specialised groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under 'Review and follow-up' on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

### **Part 3: Background information on xenophobia**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

#### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue of xenophobia**

Q. What is xenophobia?

A. It is that feeling of dislike or hatred towards all that is foreign. The object of repulsion does not need to come from another country, but could be someone from another region or even from the village next door. Often xenophobia is sparked by ignorance of other people's culture and fear of accepting that there are different ways of doing things (speaking, preparing food, dressing, arranging one's hair, dancing and singing, etc). Xenophobia is one of the main root-causes of ethnic tension and discrimination.

Q. Why are there so many negative rumours about refugees, IDPs and migrants?

A. To justify restrictions on refugees and IDPs, national and local authorities often say that they are not victims of oppression or war, but just left their homes to get a better standard of living. They call them 'economic migrants'. Migrants are accused of taking the resources away from the local people. The contribution of migrants to the community is often denied or ignored. However, migrants often have skills that are needed in the country or take commercial initiatives that create wealth.

Q. What actions could be taken by the community to protect the rights of foreigners and combat xenophobia?

A. Communities could organise cultural events where people learn about each other's culture, for example food and music events. They could have speakers in community meetings explain why they have left their homes and what they want to contribute to the community they now live in. Internally displaced persons, refugees and/or migrants could be invited to join sport events, i.e. football games. Young people could be encouraged to develop bonds and understanding through religious festivals, etc.

## 2. Human rights information on IDPs, refugees and migrants

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of IDPs, refugees and migrants. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

Every year tens of thousands of people have to leave their homes and often their countries because of persecution or war. These people become internally displaced persons (IDPs) when staying within their own country. Refugees are those who leave their own country for another country. They nearly always have to move suddenly, leaving their possessions behind, tearing families apart. Many are never able to return to their homes. In 2003 there were over 17 million refugees and 25 million IDPs in the world. Most refugees and IDPs just seek safety.

At the same time millions of people leave their native village, town or city to migrate inside their country or abroad in search of paid work and better prospects for their family. Nowadays it is rare not to know of a family member or an acquaintance that has migrated near or far to seek a job or to study.

Regardless of why one has left one's place of origin one has the right to the protection of human rights and the law.

### *Internally Displaced Persons*<sup>21</sup>

In Africa, which is the worst affected continent with nearly 13 million IDPs, rebel activities and inter-communal violence are key factors in the displacement of civilians. However, in several other countries government armies or allied militias force people to flee. Although fighting has subsided in a number of countries, this has not necessarily led to the return of IDPs, or even to an improvement in their humanitarian situation. The inclusion of durable solutions for IDPs in peace agreements is essential for the success of these initiatives.

Many IDPs are exposed to violence and other human rights abuses during their displacement. Often they have no or only very limited access to food, shelter, employment, education and health care. Large numbers of IDPs are caught in desperate situations amidst fighting or in remote and inaccessible areas, cut off from international assistance. Others have been forced to live away from their homes for many years, or even decades, because the conflicts that caused their displacement have remained unresolved.

Even where IDPs manage to find shelter in camps or private accommodation away from the most dangerous areas, they remain vulnerable to physical violence. IDP camps are targets for attack, for example in Uganda, where in 2003 there were reports of widespread sexual abuse of women and children (who in most cases make up the majority of internally displaced populations). In nearly half the countries affected by internal displacement, IDPs were exposed to forced recruitment and forced labour. As a result IDPs often suffer from

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<sup>21</sup> This information has been taken from *Internal Displacement: A Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2003*, Norway.

psychological stress. To make things worse, the majority of IDPs live in countries facing numerous other challenges such as poverty, natural disasters, and epidemics like HIV/AIDS.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, issued by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on IDPs in 1998<sup>22</sup> enshrine the right of IDPs to enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as other persons in their country. They should not be denied the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the grounds that they are internally displaced.

The Guiding Principles also emphasise that national authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs within their jurisdiction. IDPs have the right to request and to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these authorities and should not be persecuted or punished for making such a request.

These Guiding Principles are to be applied without discrimination of any kind, such as colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, legal or social status, age, disability, property, birth, or on any other similar criteria.

### ***Refugees***<sup>23</sup>

In 1951, the United Nations adopted the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and in 1967 added an additional Protocol. To date there are 145 State Parties to one or both of these instruments. Countries that are a party to this Convention commit to giving protection to refugees and agree not to force them to return to their country to risk persecution or death. Article 33 of the Convention says: "No Contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." This also applies if a government wants to send a refugee to another country from which the refugee might be sent home. Moreover, governments must hear the claim of a refugee who wants to find safety (seek asylum) in their country. This principle applies to all states, whether or not they are party to the 1951 Convention.

According to the Convention, a refugee is someone who has left his or her country and is unable to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of ethnic background, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. The 1951 Convention also says that refugees should be free from discrimination and should receive their full rights in the country where they go to be safe. In general, the Convention calls upon member States to provide refugees, lawfully staying in their territory, the same rights as nationals, particularly in relation to welfare and social security.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights says in Article 12, "Every individual shall have the right, when persecuted, to seek and obtain asylum in other countries in accordance with laws of those countries and international conventions. A non-national legally admitted in a territory of a State Party to the present Charter, may only be expelled from it by virtue of a decision taken in accordance with the law. The mass expulsion of non-nationals shall be prohibited. Mass expulsion shall be that which is aimed at national, racial, ethnic or religious groups."

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<sup>22</sup> UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, dated 11 February 1998.

<sup>23</sup> This background information has been adapted from page 134 and 135 of *SINOKO: Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa*, Amnesty International, 1998, Index: AFR 01/003/99 and with text from [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch).

*Migrants*<sup>24</sup>

On 1 July 2003, the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (the Migrants Rights Convention) entered into force. The Migrants Rights Convention acknowledges the role which the migration of workers plays in the global economy and provides international standards to address the treatment, welfare and rights of migrant workers regardless of their status, as well as setting out the obligations and responsibilities of states who host migrant workers and members of their families.

The Convention covers rights and protection for migrant workers at all stages of their migration, from their preparation in their country of origin, the period of transit, their stay in states of employment and their return to and resettlement in their country of origin.

It also extends the concept of “equality of treatment” by calling for migrant workers and members of their families, who are non-nationals in states of employment, to be treated equally, within certain parameters.

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<sup>24</sup> This background information has been adapted from Amnesty International’s web page on the rights of migrants – [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org). The text of the Migrants Rights Convention can be found at [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch).

## THEATRE METHOD 4 – STORYTELLING WITH A GAP

### Part 1: Description

In this method a storyteller tells a story, leaving out an essential part. Volunteers from the audience fill in the gap.

The Organisers take a real life story that has actually happened in or is familiar to the audience. Then they should choose the particular part of the story that addresses the main issue(s) the Organisers want to explore with the audience and they should remove that part from the story. This part of the story should either tell of a positive situation that could be further improved, or about lack of action that could provoke the audience to think about positive efforts that could be taken in the future. The storyteller will omit this part when telling the story the first time.

It is important for the storyteller to have rehearsed the story several times so as to **know when to stop** to allow for the gap to be left for the audience to fill it. If the storyteller goes too far in telling the story there might not be much more to be added by the audience, consequently reducing their chance of participation and involvement.

As it is a real story familiar to the audience, the storyteller, while telling the initial part of the story can start involving the audience by asking them to fill in details such as names or locations.

After the story has been told, the storyteller chooses a volunteer from the audience to come to the front and to convey the missing part of the story from his or her own point of view or experience. Alternatively, the volunteer could be asked to suggest how the story could have gone differently, aiming towards positive change. Before the volunteer tells his or her part of the story, the storyteller repeats the last paragraph before the missing part (the gap). Depending on the time available, when the volunteer has finished telling his or her part of the story, you could choose to have more than one volunteer filling in the gap.

Then the storyteller should tell the full story, including the part that had previously been omitted.

Subsequently, the facilitators should guide a discussion about the differences and similarities that have emerged between the original story and the different versions filling the gap told by the volunteer(s).

Storytelling with a gap is particularly suitable to review an event and to try to learn from it. It can encourage discussions on how to improve everyday situations and to seek the protection of individuals or the community.

To demonstrate this theatre method we are using the example of abuse of power.

### Part 2: Illustrative example - abuse of power

**Aim**

- To explore how abuse of power can take place and how it relates to human rights violations.
- At this and/or in a follow-up session, to identify strategies the community can implement to bring abuse of power to an end.

**Actors**            One storyteller

**Materials**        None

**Time**              60 minutes, excluding preparation and rehearsals.

**Activity**

The facilitators present the aim of the gathering and explain the method to be used, giving emphasis to the importance of listening so as to be able to participate in filling the gap in the story. Then the storyteller is introduced.

The storyteller starts narrating the real-life story: *Tubmanburg City's Checkpoints*

In July 2001 several residents of Tubmanburg City had complained about the worsening security around the many checkpoints set up by militias. In particular, the President's militia, the so-called Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU) had erected an obstructive checkpoint at the entrance to the centre of the city. Like all other checkpoints, this became a place for extortion of motorists, passengers and pedestrians.

That same month Samuel Bloh and his wife Ruth Howard, both of them from the town of Bopulu, were travelling in an old pick-up truck on their way to the centre of Tubmanburg. The insecure situation in Bopulu had forced them to flee. They felt quite desperate and did not yet know where they could stay in Tubmanburg City. Their car was loaded with all kinds of household goods. Four more people were travelling with them, sitting on top of the goods.

At the checkpoint in the centre of town they were stopped like most other cars. Four young men with guns gathered around the car looking at the passengers with harsh and cold expressions in their eyes. Another man, a bit older, was keeping some distance, but he did not look any friendlier. He was clearly in charge of the checkpoint.

The people in and on top of the car looked terrified. One militiaman stopped at Samuel's window. "Get out! GET OUT!!!" he yelled. Samuel, petrified by such a violent outcry, did not move immediately. The young militiaman took his gun and bashed down on Samuel through the open window with the butt of his rifle. Another one joined him, opened the door and together they dragged Samuel out of the car. They beat him up and shouted that he had to give them all his money.

In the meantime the other two militiamen ordered the people sitting on top of the goods to jump off the truck. Three of them did immediately, but the fourth one, an elderly woman, climbed off more slowly. A militiaman pulled her by the leg and the elderly woman fell on the ground.

The militiamen started pulling very violently at the household goods, throwing pieces all over the place and breaking several things.

Meanwhile the commander had approached the car at Ruth's side. He said: "Hey sweetheart, would you like to come with me?"

At that moment three people approached the scene. The oldest, a man, started talking to the commander. "Sir", he said, "why are you harassing these people? Why are you beating them up and destroying their property?"

"Who are you? How dare you interfere with our business!" shouted the commander.

"We are members of the local County Coordinating Committee for human rights volunteers. We want to point out to you that you are breaking the law and violating these people's rights."

"Mind your own business and get away from here or otherwise I will shoot you!" yelled the commander.

The three human rights volunteers ran away, taking no chance, because they knew that those militiamen, especially of the Anti Terrorist Unit, could be very dangerous.

[Box]

***This is the gap, the part to be omitted in the first telling of the story:***

At a safe distance the human rights volunteers stopped and continued to look at the scene. The militiamen continued to pull off all the goods from the car. The commander vanished with Ruth.

"What shall we do?" asked the youngest of the three human rights volunteers? "Should we report this to the police?"

"That would not have any effect, they are as bad as the ATU" replied the older man.

"I agree with you," said the woman of the three. "We should go to the county authorities. Probably the Superintendent or the Mayor could stop this abuse."

"I think that would be a good idea," said the older man. "But we should not go alone. We should get a group of community leaders together and ask them to send a delegation".

[End of box]

Continuation of story:

A few days later the oldest of the three human rights volunteers went with a delegation of community leaders and told the Superintendent and the Mayor what he had seen. Others in the delegation added other experiences and in the end they asked the Superintendent and the Mayor to use their influence to get the checkpoint removed. The authorities did not promise anything - probably they did not want to appear weak - but two days later the checkpoint was dismantled and gone.

The story ends here.

After the story has been told, one of the facilitators invites a volunteer from the audience to add the missing part from his or her own perspective. This can be from personal experience in a similar situation, or using his or her imagination to propose positive action. Before the volunteer fills in his or her part, the storyteller repeats the last paragraph before the gap.

Several volunteers can be asked to fill in the gap in the story, but the facilitators should explain that subsequent contributions should be different from the previous one(s). If a volunteer starts speaking about something that is not relevant to the issue or does not fit in with the story, the facilitators should stop that contribution and clarify what is expected of the contributions.

After a few volunteers have contributed, the storyteller should tell the original story, including the omitted part: the gap.

### **Follow-up**

One of the facilitator assists a discussion about the differences and similarities that have emerged between the original story and the stories told by the volunteer(s).

Depending on the reactions from the audience, subsequent activities could be used to explore the issue in more depth, or focus more on seeking possible ways for change. The same or one of the other theatre methods could be used. You may have to organise several different activities to develop an initial understanding of and empathy with the issue, and later devise activities that can bring about change.

When you have developed strategies for action, invite the audience to come back in a couple of month's time to another session to reflect about what has happened in the meantime.

This issue is likely to encourage the audience to take action to lobby the authorities. Follow-up sessions could be planned to discuss different options and develop strategies. You may also want to consider following up by providing some skills' training to boost the confidence of individuals in the community when addressing the authorities.

At the end of each activity the facilitators should inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue, etc.). To conclude, the facilitators should invite members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

For the follow-up you should develop criteria to evaluate how the strategy you have developed with the community is being implemented and what improvements, if any, can be seen after some time. The community should meet regularly to review the work being done.

Someone from relevant specialist groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under 'Review and follow-up' on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

## **Part 3: Background information on abuse of power**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and

prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you to reflect on the issue of abuse of power**

Q. What is the abuse of power?

A. Abuse of power can be defined as the misuse of power (by influence or by force), by a person in a position of authority, for his or her own benefit. The primary problem with abuse of power is that when the offence is committed by an agent of the State or someone in authority, the police or justice officials are often reluctant to have the offence reported to them and to take action.

Q. Who are those responsible for protecting the right to security, including protecting against the abuse of power?

A. Government agencies at the village, regional or national levels should develop programmes to protect the community and prosecute offenders.

Q. What actions could be taken in order to resolve situations like the one in the short story when militias or government agents abuse their power?

A. You could seek a specific remedy for the damages suffered by the victims of unfair treatment, police brutality and governmental abuse of power. Or you might need to look first at the government's security policy and organise to lobby the authorities to change it or add new guidelines that protect the right to security. Or you could explore customary law to see how this could help.

Q. How can you get more support to combat abuse of power by government agents or people in authority?

A. By dispelling the myth that common people do not deserve the same rights as others and getting other communities or other organisations, such as religious or educational bodies to support your efforts.

### **2. Human rights information on the abuse of power**

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of the abuse of power. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

Abuse of power often happens in countries with a weak state structure and institutions - so-called failing States - and where there is little or no rule of law. Weak accountability gives the impression to the powerful and their cronies that they can do as they please. Public and private abuse of power is almost inevitable in the absence of functioning mechanisms to ensure accountability. An entrenched culture of political patronage undermines efforts to strengthen accountability and to eliminate abuse of power.

Aware of the inability of weak legal systems to protect victims of crime and abuse of power, the UN adopted the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power in November 1985.

The definition of a victim of abuse of power in the Declaration reads: "Victims means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that do not yet constitute violations of national criminal laws but of internationally recognized norms relating to human rights." The Declaration recommends that states incorporate "into the national law norms proscribing abuses of power and providing remedies to victims of such abuses. In particular, such remedies should include restitution and/or compensation, and necessary material, medical, psychological and social assistance and support."

In that same Declaration it is stated that "where public officials or other agents acting in an official or quasi-official capacity have violated national criminal laws, the victim should receive restitution from the State whose officials or agents were responsible for the harm inflicted... In cases where the Government under whose authority the victimizing act or omission occurred is no longer in existence, the State or Government successor in title should provide restitution to the victims."

The Declaration goes further to recommend that "Judicial and administrative mechanisms should be established and strengthened where necessary to enable victims to obtain redress through formal or informal procedures that are expeditious, fair, inexpensive and accessible. Victims should be informed of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms."

Abuse of power can manifest itself in a number of ways, many of which are addressed in international human rights law - for example, such as the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (adopted in 1957). Another international human rights instrument that addresses abuses of power by agents of the State is the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (adopted in December 1984), which outlaws the use of torture and ill-treatment by agents of the State (such as police, members of the armed forces etc.). And a new instrument is the Convention Against Corruption (adopted in October 2003), which aims at preventing corruption and developing accountability.

International human rights law also provides for the right of victims of abuses of power to obtain a remedy. Vital to this right is Article 2(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which obliges state parties to the Covenant to ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms (as set out in the Covenant) have been violated should have an effective remedy, whether or not the violation has been committed by a person acting in an official capacity; that the victim should have a right to have their claim determined by a competent authority; and that the authorities should enforce remedies when granted.

## **THEATRE METHOD 5 – ROLE-PLAY**

### **Part 1: Description**

Role-play is a technique that allows some participants to play roles reflecting a reality, in order to experience how they would feel, think or act in that specific situation. For this reason it needs very experienced and skilled facilitators to be successful.

Role-play can be used to explore an issue, to visualise attitudes, emotions and reactions or to employ an activity to impart new skills.

After presenting the objectives of the role-play, one of the facilitators invites volunteers from the audience to take part in the role-play. The facilitator gives the volunteers clear instructions about the roles they are to play, out of sight and earshot from the rest of the audience.

The roles should be played spontaneously, but the volunteers could be allowed a few minutes to prepare.

In the meantime, the other facilitator divides the audience into groups and presents a question to each group and a specific perspective from which they should observe the role-play (for instance: as teachers).

After the role-play is performed, the facilitators first ask the role players to talk about what they have experienced. Then the audience groups will give feedback based on the question(s) and from the perspective assigned to each group. Feedback from the audience should not refer to the acting itself but to the role that was played.

After the observations have been shared, the facilitators should individually “unroll” the players by specifying that they are no longer playing their roles and that they should be called by their real names.

For all theatre methods it is important for the facilitators to be well prepared in advance, but for role-play it is even more essential as the facilitators will be working without the support of actors.

This method is often used to analyse and reflect on behaviour and attitudes which are harmful.

To demonstrate this method we will use the example of discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS.

### **Part 2: Illustrative example - Discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS**

#### **Aim**

- To illustrate the harm that is caused by discriminating against people with HIV/AIDS, their families and those looking after them.

- At this and/or in a follow-up session, to identify steps to respect and advocate for the rights of people with HIV/AIDS.

<b>Audience</b>	Role-play is not suitable for large audiences.
<b>Actors</b>	Role-play requires volunteers from the audience, but you will need music or help with entertaining the audience while instructing the volunteers.
<b>Materials</b>	Props: The social activist wears an HIV/AIDS ribbon; the politician wears a band around his chest; and Fatima holds a schoolbook. You also need four stools and something looking like a microphone.
<b>Time</b>	90 to 120 minutes, excluding preparation and rehearsals.

### **Activity**

The facilitators welcome the audience and present the aims of the session and the theatre method that is going to be used.

One of the facilitators asks for four volunteers from the audience. The role players are always volunteers and you should never press anyone into a role they don't want to play. The facilitator should also encourage the role players by ensuring they feel safe and comfortable enough to be able to play the role.

Away from the audience, one facilitator explains the role-play to the volunteers.

The role-play is a radio talk show with a debate between three people about discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. One of the roles is a radio presenter chairing the debate. The other roles are:

- A politician;
- A social activist sympathetic to people with HIV/AIDS;
- A young woman whose family is affected by HIV/AIDS.

#### ***a) The role of the radio presenter***

The radio presenter will introduce the topic of the radio programme and the speakers. He or she may need to prompt questions to facilitate the debate, and will close the programme by thanking the speakers and wishing good night to the people listening at home. The radio presenter is a professional and wants the radio programme (20 minutes) to go well and thus is also the timekeeper.

#### ***b) The role of the politician***

The politician will talk about his or her country; about how many people there are affected by HIV/AIDS in the country and about how these people are discriminated against (the Organisers could gather this information in advance and provide it to the volunteer). He or she will argue that there should be better solidarity between people because you might be the next one to be discriminated against. As a politician he or she is trying to encourage the radio audience to be active in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and wants discrimination against those suffering from HIV/AIDS to stop because it is affecting the economy.

***c) The role of the young woman***

The young woman is called Fatima and is 17 years old. She talks about her parents who have died of AIDS, about her two elder brothers who are HIV positive and cannot find work because no one will employ them, and who have no access to treatment. She also talks of how her neighbours and others treat her badly as if she is HIV positive herself, just because everyone else in her family is infected. She was kicked out of school and has had problems finding little jobs to help support herself and her brothers. She talks about her experience because she wants people to understand how hard it is and how the prejudice against HIV/AIDS also damages people like her who are not infected.

***d) The role of the social activist***

The social activist talks about how engaged he or she is: involved with the football team which brings kids together; with a motorbike bringing neighbours to the hospital when needed; visiting people with HIV/AIDS to talk to them; doing those chores that have to be done and that they can no longer do because they are too sick. Then he or she talks about how, regardless of all the activities they undertake to encourage solidarity, the attitudes of the people are not changing. He or she therefore asks the radio audience what needs to be done to change: how can we be more supportive of Fatima? This social activist feels a bit alone and wants to try to convince other people to volunteer and help in the many tasks to support people with HIV/AIDS and prevent the spread of the disease.

While the volunteers take a few minutes to think about the roles that they are going to play and pick up the props, the other facilitator gives roles to the audience by dividing them into four groups: two groups made out of only women and two other groups made out of only men. Two of the groups of each gender will look at the role-play as if they were HIV positive and the other two groups will look as if they are not HIV positive.

The facilitator should give each group some questions to help them focus while they are observing the role-play. These questions should be clearly explained (or written on a sheet of paper for each group) before the role-play, as they will have to answer them after the role-play.

As an example, you may want to use the following questions for the role-play:

- In what way do the characters relate to one another?
- With whom does the audience feel sympathy and why?
- What types of discrimination were present?
- What are the myths and the facts in the role-play?

When the role-players are ready, all the explanations have been given to the audience and the stools and other props are ready, the role-play can begin.

After the role-play is performed, the facilitators allow time for each group to discuss the answers to the questions presented earlier, from the perspective assigned to them. The facilitators should again explain that the observations should be addressed to the name of the role and not the name of the person who played the part: the feedback should not be on the acting of the role-players (not be personalised) but on the content of the roles. Feedback should not be based on interpretations but on specific observations.

The facilitators first ask the role-players to talk about how they felt acting out the role-play. Subsequently the audience groups are invited to make observations.

The facilitators then ‘un-role’ the role-players by specifying that the players are no longer playing their roles and that they should be called by their true names. For example, one of the facilitators says to the person playing the role of the 17-year-old Fatima: “You are no longer Fatima. Everyone should call you by your real name.” Here the facilitator should mention the real name of the person for everyone to hear.

At the end of the role-play the facilitators should refer to the aims and objectives of the session and to the relevance of the role-play in people’s private or professional life.

### **Follow-up**

The facilitators assist a discussion and only if necessary provides some background information on what HIV/AIDS is and clarifies any misinformed statements that may have emerged during the activity.

As a follow-up to this activity the Organisers may want to select one of the issues that emerged to explore in more depth in a subsequent activity. They could use the same or one of the other theatre methods. Depending on the reactions from the audience, the subsequent activity could be used to explore the issue in more depth, or focus more on looking at how to mobilise change. You may have to organise several different activities to develop an initial understanding of and empathy with the issue, and later devise activities that can bring about change.

When the audience and the Organisers have agreed what steps they could take to advocate the rights of people with HIV/AIDS and end discrimination, the facilitators invite the audience to come back in a couple of month’s time to another session to reflect on what has happened in the meantime.

At the end of each activity the facilitators should inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue, etc.). To conclude, the facilitators invite members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

The Organisers could cooperate with or invite organisations working on HIV/AIDS issues to participate in the activity. These organisations could provide information and also ideas for activities that could be undertaken to stop discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS, and their families. Someone from these specialised groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under ‘Review and follow-up’ on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

## **Part 3: Background information on discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and

prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

### 1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue of HIV/AIDS

Q. What is AIDS?

A. AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is a condition caused by a virus called HIV. This virus attacks the immune system (the body's 'security force' that fights off infections). When the immune system breaks down, you lose this protection and can develop many serious, often deadly infections and cancers. These are called 'opportunistic infections (OIs)' because they take advantage of the body's weakened defences. You have heard it said that someone "died of AIDS." This is not entirely accurate, since it is the opportunistic infections that cause death. AIDS is the condition that lets the opportunistic infections take hold. And what is HIV? HIV is a virus, like the flu or a cold. HIV mostly infects T-cells. These cells are white blood cells that turn the immune system on to fight disease. Once inside the cell, HIV starts producing millions of little viruses, which eventually kill the cell and then go on to infect other cells. All of the drugs marketed to treat HIV work by interfering with this process.<sup>25</sup>

Q. What is stigma?

A. Stigma is negative thoughts about a person or a group, based on preconceived ideas and prejudices, often without grounds. Stigma always results in discrimination when negative decisions are made against a person, resulting in them being treated unjustly on the basis of an actual or presumed fact: for example their presumed HIV/AIDS status. "In Africa as in other parts of the world condition stigma results in rejection, denial, and discrediting, and consequently leads to discrimination which inevitably frequently leads to the violation of human rights – particularly those of women and children."<sup>26</sup>

Q. Why are people with HIV/AIDS so stigmatised?

A. Maybe it is because people don't know enough about the disease, or because people are ashamed to talk about it as it is spread predominantly through sexual activity, or because it is linked to sexual promiscuity or because of fears of infection, or because the authorities have denied its seriousness and are making people believe that everything is OK, or a mixture of many different factors.

Q. What actions should be taken in order to improve the conditions in which people with HIV/AIDS live?

A. Answers to this question could deal with the conditions of people at an individual level in the sense of helping an individual who feels so excluded as to be fearful to admit to his or her condition; or the family level where instead of banishing the person with HIV/AIDS there could be more support and help to avoid contagion; or the social/community level, organising support for orphans, accepting widows and allowing them to inherit; as well as developing educational campaigns to prevent HIV/AIDS infection. You should adapt such answer to the resources available.

<sup>25</sup> This definition was adapted from [www.AIDSmeds.com](http://www.AIDSmeds.com), where you can also find more information.

<sup>26</sup> UNAIDS, Regional Consultation Meeting on Stigma and HIV/AIDS in Africa, 4 - 6 June 2001, Dar-es-Salaam, [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org). For more information you can also go to [www.hdnet.org](http://www.hdnet.org).

- Q. What resources are needed to improve the situation of people with HIV/AIDS and their families and where can you access them?
- A. Answers to this question may want to explore the issue of procurement of medicines; or look at the situation of children of people with HIV/AIDS - for example the establishment of day-care centres for children whose parents are sick or who have died. This discussion needs to be factual, and you may need to have made links with development or other organisations already working in this field that have the capacity to support the community in developing support mechanisms for people with HIV/AIDS.
- Q. What are the resources you need to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS?
- A. Answers could deal with access to information about HIV/AIDS, or education about using condoms. Again you may want to link with specialist organisations working in HIV/AIDS prevention to help you develop these answers.

## **2. Human rights information on HIV/AIDS**

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

### ***Discrimination relating to access to treatment for HIV/AIDS***

Article 16 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) refers to the right to health: "Every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health." In clause 2 of this Article it more specifically calls on States Parties to the Charter to "take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick." This is particularly relevant to HIV/AIDS since most sufferers in Africa have no or very limited access to medicines.

Article 12(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that: "The steps to be taken by the State Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for: ... (c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemics, endemic, occupational and other diseases." Worldwide it is recognised that HIV/AIDS is endemic and consequently according to this Covenant States are obliged to take the necessary steps and provide people with the necessary preventative information and treatment.

### ***Discrimination in terms of employment***

Article 15 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights clearly states that every individual shall have the right to work. In general most internationally recognised human rights documents do not allow any discrimination with regard to the right to employment.

### ***Denial of education***

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights clearly states in Article 17 that every individual has the right to have access to education. Many other international human rights standards also recognise this right, most crucially the International Covenant on Economic,

Social and Cultural Rights, which in Article 13(c) also states “Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means...”

## THEATRE METHOD 6 – SHORT PLAY

### Part 1: Description

In this theatre method, a short play is created by putting together and performing a story. The story should have a specific issue that you have identified during your research, which you want to explore with the community. The issue can be explored by engaging the audience in discussion after the performance.

The Organisers, the facilitators, a group of actors and others involved sit together to discuss the issue of concern, identifying the aim of the short play and what audience they want to reach. They then discuss the content of the short play, which characters will be played in the story, and decide where the play should be performed (i.e. market square, railway station, community room, school, etc).

When the Organisers have a first draft of the short play, they pilot it together with the actors, facilitators and some members from the community by rehearsing it and then critiquing it.

You need to allow for two to three days preparation, in order to create the story, rehearse it, gather the human rights information relevant to the issue and ensure the Organisers are familiar with it, etc.

A short play should last about 10 minutes.

Short plays can be particularly useful in discovering the views of the audience on a particular issue, as the interventions by the audience after the play can provide inroads to understanding various opinions held.

To demonstrate the method of the short play we are using the example of excessive use of force.

### Part 2: Illustrative example - excessive use of force

#### Aim

- To explore how excessive use of force violates human rights.
- At this and/or in a follow-up session, to identify steps to advocate controls on the use of force.

**Actors** 12-15

**Materials** You need props for the different stalls representing the market, plus two police badges or police caps.

**Time** 60-90 minutes, excluding research, scriptwriting and rehearsals.

#### Activity

To write the play it helps to answer the following questions:

- What is happening?
- Who are the characters/actors? You could develop characters' roles by interviewing people like them.
- Why are things happening?
- How are things happening? Describe them.
- Where does the action happen?
- When does it all take place?

Questions that might be asked when viewing the rehearsal:

- How does it relate to the aims of the play?
- How does the message of the short play come across?
- How does the play encourage the audience to act upon it?
- How to can the characters' roles be improved?

The facilitators welcome the audience, present the cast and explain the aims of the activity. The facilitators also tell the audience that the short play will last about 10 minutes, and after the performance there will be a discussion involving the audience.

The short play

A very thin boy is walking around some stalls, in a busy market place. The boy stops to look at some fruit (thinking that he has not eaten for more than a day and he is very hungry). As he sees that the stallholder is busy negotiating prices with a woman (the boy thinks he will not be noticed), the boy grabs a big mango and starts running. The stallholder sees it all and starts shouting: "Thief! Thief! Thief! Thief!!!" at the top of his lungs and runs after the boy.

Immediately a group of two men and one woman join the stallholder in the chase.

The boy is startled by the noise. A man stops him and the crowd encircle him. Some people start kicking and punching and shouting insults at the boy. Others just watch. The boy is in pain and is screaming for help, begging them to stop, explaining that he is an orphan and has no food and is very hungry. After a few minutes of senseless violence the police arrive and with their sticks they manage to disperse the crowd around the boy. The stallholder is agitated. He is shouting at the police that the boy is a thief and that the police should let them beat him up more. The boy is hardly standing up, very scared and crying. The two police officers take hold of the boy by his hair and drag him away, pushing and shoving him.

The short play ends here.

To start the discussion one of the facilitators asks the audience to look at the different roles in the short play: boy; stallholder; crowd; policemen.

To explore further what the audience thinks about what happened to the boy you could continue the discussion by asking:

- What kind of effect did the short play have on the people in the audience?
- How did the play motivate them to think about excessive use of force?
- Are there wiser solutions to mob violence? And Police brutality?
- What are the types of excessive use of force used in our community? Why?
- Why is there so much violence?

- Why, in general, do the police use excessive force?

### Follow-up

The facilitators assist a discussion about the relevance to the community of the issue of excessive use of force. After some interventions from the audience the facilitators may want to introduce a definition of excessive use of force and provide some background information on how the use of force should be regulated. The facilitators might also want to provide information on what the responsibilities of the police are and/or clarify any misinformed statements that might have come out during the course of the activity.

[Box]

If the interventions from the audience are mostly supportive of mob violence you may want to rehearse in advance the telling of the following additional story to help the audience reflect on the issue.<sup>27</sup>

One night a man and his wife are getting ready to go to sleep when they hear a big fracas outside and a neighbour shouting, “Stop the rascal!” The man remembers that just ten days ago some rogue had stolen two of his chickens and tells his wife that he is going out to stop this criminal. The wife begs him not to go as it is dark and he might get hurt. The man brushes her aside and goes out in his evening dress.

As the man steps out of his house the rascal crashes against him and they tumble onto the ground and start struggling. The rascal turns out to be stronger and immobilises the man, as a crowd of angry people from the neighbourhood appear around the corner. The rascal starts shouting, “I got him!!! I got him!!!” At that point the crowd is upon them and the rascal moves away as the crowd go on to beat up the man.

The wife, hearing all the violence and noise outside her threshold, goes out and sees the mob in action beating up someone, who with a closer look she recognises as her husband. At that point she tries to stop the mob, but it takes her some time as they have all lost control.

The poor man suffers serious injuries.

The story ends here.

[End of box]

As a follow-up to this activity the Organisers may want to select one of the issues that emerged to explore in more depth in a subsequent activity. They could use the same or one of the other theatre methods. Depending on the reactions from the audience, the next activity could be used to explore the issue in more depth, or focus more on seeking possible ways to bring about change. You may have to organise several different activities to develop an initial understanding of and empathy with the issue, before devising actions that can bring about change.

A possible follow-up session could deal with how the community could avoid such excesses. To do this you could ask the audience to generate different ideas to prevent violence within the community (i.e. domestic violence, beating of children at school, police brutality, rape of young girls, beating or lynching of alleged criminals, etc). For example a suggestion to stop

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<sup>27</sup> This short story was developed during the piloting of this guide in Gbarnga, Liberia.

police brutality could be to establish a commission to make representations to the police or other local militias to address the problem of excessive use of force. Another example could be the production of messages encouraging people not to use violence in the streets or at home and placing these messages in key locations, and asking community and religious leaders to repeat these messages to their constituents.

When the audience and the Organisers have agreed what steps they could take to advocate controls on the use of force, the facilitators invite the audience to come back in a couple of month's time to another session to reflect on what has happened in the meantime.

At the end of each activity the facilitators should inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue, etc.). In concluding, the facilitators should invite the members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

The Organisers could cooperate with or invite organisations working on issues of policing to participate in the activity. These organisations could provide information and also ideas for actions that could be undertaken to stop the excessive use of force by police. Someone from these specialist groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under 'Review and follow' on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

### **Part 3: Background information on excessive use of force**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

#### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue excessive use of force**

Q. What is excessive use of force?

A. In the modern notion of the Nation State it is envisaged that the State is the only one who has the right to use force (or violence) to protect itself and its citizens. In this sense law enforcement officials (i.e. civil police, military police, and government militias) are the only ones with the power to use force and carry weapons. It is internationally agreed that the use of force by law enforcement officials should be exceptional and it should be used only when reasonably necessary under the circumstances for the prevention of a crime. In other words, law enforcement officials should only use force that is proportionate to the threat faced. When law enforcement officials use force that is not proportionate and which is unnecessary, they are using excessive force, and violating recognised human rights standards.

- Q. Does the concept of excessive use of force also apply to the civilian population?
- A. A Code of Conduct regulating the legal use of force has been adopted by the UN for law enforcement officials (UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted in December 1979). However, to judge if individuals or groups in the community are also abusing the use of force, one can apply the same measures of proportionality and necessity – is it proportional for a strong adult to hit with a belt a young boy? No, if the threat presented by the young boy is lesser than the use of force used in the hitting. Is it the only way to correct a mistake made by the young boy? No, it is not necessary to hit him with the belt; there exist other more proportional and rational ways.
- Q. Why do we think it is right for the police and the crowd to beat the boy up?
- A. He is doing something wrong and he should be punished. We know the police are going to let him go so we punish him. We are fed up with so much stealing and crime. We are used to such violence, so we just use it. And anyway, it never killed anyone and it teaches respect. Some people may justify the use of excessive force and think it is reasonable. You need to have your arguments ready as to why it is better to develop more humane punishments, why physical punishment is counter-productive, and how violence at school, in the streets and or at home engenders more violence in society. If we beat up criminals and do not allow for rational process to find solution for social problems, who stops the police from feeling free to beat up any citizen they do not like?
- Q. How could we reduce or eliminate violence in our community?
- A. By demanding that the authorities improve policing and the administration of justice. By encouraging more dialogue and mediation rather than using force when there are conflicts and by exploring and understanding how violence hurts individuals, families and our community as a whole. By analysing the reasons why some crimes - like in the short play - are committed, and trying to resolve the root problem rather than using excessive force.

## **2. Human rights information on physical integrity and the use of force**

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of excessive use of force. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights very clearly states, "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his [her] life and the integrity of his [her] person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right." This means that no one has the right to deprive another person of their life or to violate their physical and mental integrity. The right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture or ill-treatment (contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and further developed in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) are crucial here. Unfortunately these rights are violated daily in the public sphere

by government officials using force unduly and in the private sphere by men and women using cruel punishments or violence, sexual abuse, etc.

As mentioned above, the use of force by the state and its agents has been regulated in various international standards as well as in national law. More information about the principles underpinning these standards is provided below. However, international standards can also be used to measure the presence of excessive use of force within the civilian population.

***Principles for the use of force:***

1. The principle of **proportionality** requires the exercise of restraint in the use of force, so that the force used is in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved. This means that it needs to be relative to the force being confronted. Was the beating of the boy by several adults proportional to the threat that the boy posed to them by stealing a mango? Was the boy posing such threat that the police needed to use physical force to restrain him?
2. The principle of **legality** requires that the use of force should be legitimate. This means that it should be used only when necessary and only as long as it is needed. Self-defence is a situation when force can be legally used.
3. The principle of **accountability** aims to minimize the damage and injury caused by the use of force and to respect and preserve human life by ensuring that all individuals are answerable for their actions. Care should always be taken not to cause injury or death. For example, if one is obliged by the circumstances to defend oneself, force should not be aimed at vital organs and should try to minimise the damage caused. Only if there is a direct threat to life can the use of deadly force be justified. This requires that you must account for the use of force applied. In the case above, the crowd were in fact trying to cause as much damage as possible to a defenceless boy. The police officers maximised physical injury to a detainee who posed no threat as he was already injured. The fact that he had stolen something does not justify excessive use of force. The crowd and the police must be answerable for their actions in using force and be held liable for going beyond what was proportionate to the threat.
4. The principle of **necessity** requires that the use of force has to be absolutely necessary. In the case above, after the boy was apprehended there was absolutely no need to beat him up and when the police got him from the crowd they had no need to push him even less to beat him up at the station as the boy was offering no resistance or trying to escape.

## THEATRE METHOD 7 – FORUM THEATRE<sup>28</sup>

### Part 1: Description

Forum theatre is a participative form of theatre that invites the audience to take an active part in the drama, with the aim of finding alternative solutions to the problems posed in the course of the play.

A group of actors perform a scene in which the main character (protagonist) feels oppressed. The solution to the problem, offered by the main character, is not an adequate or suitable one. The play ends leaving the main character dissatisfied because he or she is not able to overcome obstacles and achieve what he or she wants.

The actors stay on 'stage' as the scene will be performed once more, exactly as it was the first time. However, the second time around the actors or a facilitator invite the audience to stop the play the moment somebody does not agree with the choices the main character makes in the play. Instead of discussing why the choices were wrong, the member of the audience who intervened is invited to **play** how he or she would do it differently. The relevant actor steps aside while the other actors help the volunteer develop their role by responding to him or her in character.

The actor who was replaced by a member of the audience should be ready to resume acting the moment the participant decides to conclude their intervention. Another person from the audience may come forward to play out another solution and so on.

After several members of the audience have played out their solutions, the actors or a facilitator invite the audience to discuss the proposed solutions to the problem of the main character.

It is essential in forum theatre that the scenes in the play depict the daily reality for the audience and the environment in which they live. They should not only recognise the problem portrayed, but also the characters. This will provoke them to propose and act out their own solutions. To achieve this, the actors need to conduct thorough research within the community, their problems and the environment they live in.

The scene should not be too long, as it will be played twice.

In forum theatre a facilitator usually guides the session and forms the link between the performers and the audience. The facilitators encourage the audience to act out their solutions and guide the discussion afterwards. The facilitators should not take the lead and dominate the event but take a modest role leaving it up to the actors and the audience as much as possible.

Forum theatre can be a very compelling form of theatre that incites people to action. Therefore, we strongly advise that forum theatre be used only if regular support can be provided to guide subsequent processes of change. As with other methods presented in this guide, it is preferable that forum theatre be one tool in a more comprehensive programme of activities, and certainly not a one-off event.

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<sup>28</sup> Adapted from Augusto Boal, *Games for actors and non-actors*, 1992.

To demonstrate this method we will use the issue of forced marriage.

## **Part 2: Illustrative example - forced marriage**

### **Aim**

- To raise awareness about the suffering caused by forced marriage.
- At this and/or in a follow-up session, to identify actions that can be taken to encourage communities to change this practice.

### **Actors**

Nine: Maria, the daughter  
 Father of Maria  
 Mother of Maria  
 Brother of Maria  
 Grandfather of Maria  
 Uncle, father's elder brother  
 Suitor  
 Two companions of suitor: Guest one and Guest two

You could combine some of the male character if not enough actors are available.

**Materials**     Some stools

**Time**            90 minutes excluding preparation and rehearsals

### **Activity**

One of the facilitators welcomes the audience and presents the aims of the session and explains what is going to happen. He or she should tell that the audience is going to be invited to participate in reshaping the play after the first performance.

The actors could use the following script, but are encouraged to adapt it to the context you are working in.

### ***Performance***

*The scene is set outside a traditional local homestead. It is late afternoon and the sun is about to set. A conversation about village life has been going on for some time. The grandfather is speaking:*

Grandfather: Yes, we have brought this great clan of ours far, and we have followed our traditions faithfully. That is why we still stand proud among the great clans of this land.

Uncle: *(Thinking of Maria)* She is coming back today from school, is she?

Grandfather: Yes my son, and she is running late already

Father: *(Seeing his wife arriving from the farm with firewood on her head)* My wife, why do you always have to stay on that farm for so long? Look what has happened now! We are expecting Maria's suitor here any time and nothing is ready yet.

- Mother: My husband, the rains are already here and unless we plough the land soon, we will not be in time for planting. I have to work extra hours to clear the land.
- Grandfather: You mean you have to talk extra hours with fellow women by the river. Talk, talk, talk, that is what you women do, while I stay here, an old man, hungry, with no food the whole day. Where is your daughter?
- Mother: Maria is late but she will be here any time.
- Father: When she arrives, do not tell her anything. I am the one who will break the good news to her, OK?
- All: OK.
- Father: Now get us something to drink, and bring something to eat first; this is a great day.
- Maria: (*Arrives with a suitcase and greets everyone with a handshake*) Hello grandpa, hello uncle, hello father, mother, brother.
- Uncle: How are your teachers? Did you have a good time in school this time round?
- Maria: Everyone is well uncle. I also studied French this last term.
- Brother: Wow! You mean you can now speak like Frenchmen?
- Maria: Exactly. But I still need to have more practice to be proficient.
- Father: That is my daughter, always very quick.
- Mother: Yes always very quick.
- Maria: Thank you pa, thank you ma. I am going to take an advanced mathematics class next year...
- Brother: Next year? What about your husband?
- Maria: Husband? What husband?
- Father: Oh shut up! I said I would tell her the good news myself, big mouth! (*Taking Maria aside*) You see my daughter; a very rich man came here and asked for your hand in marriage. He paid me fifty thousand shillings - money which we have already used to deal with various problems - and promised to add another two hundred thousand. He has also promised us many other things as our future son-in-law, including building your mother a better house. And you know what? He will be here in a while, so go and get ready to see your husband.
- Maria: My husband? What do you mean father? I am still in school, and besides, couldn't you have waited and at least asked for my opinion?
- Grandfather: Your opinion? Did you hear that? She wants to be asked her opinion! What a stupid girl. Since when did women, let alone a child like you, give opinion in this village?
- Maria: But I am the one who is supposed to marry this... whoever he is. Shouldn't you wait and...
- Mother: It will be OK my daughter. Your father is right. He is the right man for you.
- Maria: How can you say that mother? You want me sold off like a piece of...
- Father: Shut up! I am your father. You will marry him. Where do you think I will get fifty thousand to pay this man, eh? Do you want me to go to jail? You child who came from my own loins? You will marry him, even if it means me tying your hands and handing you over to him. (*Turning to his wife*) That is what you teach my children, to disrespect me?
- Mother: Maria! How could you talk to your father like that? Haven't I always taught you to respect your father and the elders of this community?
- Maria: But mother how can I just be given away like a piece of cloth for a fee? Don't I have a right to choose the man I want to marry?

- Uncle: Who decided for your mother? Was it not Atoka her great father? Isn't she a respectable woman in this village? You, (*Pointing menacingly at Maria*) the way I see you, you are going to bring problems to this community.
- Maria: What problems...?
- Grandfather: Shut that mouth of yours. (*The sound other people arriving, Maria's brother rushes to check and comes back running*).
- Brother: It's him! It's him! The man who was here the other day!
- Father: How many are there?
- Brother: Three.  
(*The family quickly regroups and re-organizes their seating arrangements. The suitor's entourage arrives and the suitor is sandwiched in the middle of two men. He is about sixty years old. The guests are welcomed, and greetings exchanged. The suitor having greeted everyone sees Maria and heads for her, expecting a hug. Maria runs off in disgust as everyone is left looking embarrassed*).
- Mother: (*Apologetically*) Don't worry. She is just shy. I will go and get her. (*Mother and father leave the scene. The suitor is a very disappointed man. The other men start small talk.*)
- Grandfather: It is raining a lot!
- Guest one: A lot my father. I think this year the harvest will be big.
- Guest two: It is good that we will become relatives after today's union.
- Uncle: (*Gets up and speaks, calling everyone to attention*) My great brothers, as we all know, a frog does not jump for no reason in daylight. If you see it jump, you know someone is after its life.
- All: Mmm, yes, that is true.
- Uncle: Today we are blessed with your visit. Please tell us what brings you. (*He sits down*)
- Guest one: My brother here has put it well. A frog does not jump for no reason in daylight. There must be a reason. As we say, when a mother is hungry, she does not say, I am hungry. No. She says, please roast something for the children to eat.
- All: Mmm.
- Guest one: Today our land is hungry, and we have come. (*They laugh as he sits down*)
- Uncle: Very well spoken, my brother. May we know how you came?
- All: Yes, how?
- Guest two: We come with 250,000 thousand in cash (*Gasp from the others*), 20 heads of cattle, 13 goats, and 40 blankets (*More gasps*). As we come from the land of the plenty, we shall add another forty bags of maize in forty days and forty nights.
- Uncle: (*Gets up very excited*) Thank you my brother. May we have all the gifts placed here so that all may see (*At that moment, the father and mother re-enter the scene looking exhausted*).
- Father: Uncle, forget about it. Maria has run a way (*Shock waves run a cross those seated*).
- Suitor: (*Gets up angrily*) What? What do you mean she has run away?
- Father: I am sorry.
- Suitor: Don't sorry me! The girl or my money!
- Father: Don't worry my son. We will get the girl for you.
- Suitor: When? She just ran away from me. My money! Give me back my money, now! 50,000! (*The family get really scared*). OK. I see what you people are up to. You use your girls to con people, eh? Just you wait (*He gets a mobile phone*

*and begins to dial numbers*). I am calling the police. You are all conmen. My money now, and you (*Pointing at the father*), you said your daughter only did as you said. Where is she now? You will pay for this. I have connections in government and police. You will see...

The performance ends here but the actors stay on 'stage'.

One of the facilitators explains that the actors will play the scene again, and invites members of the audience to say, "Stop!" when someone thinks that the father should use another argument or change his conduct. The member of the audience intervening can come to the stage to play the role of the father the way they think it should be done. The other actors should respond and adapt to the new role played by the member of the audience.

When the intervention from the audience is over, the actors continue until somebody else shouts, "Stop!"; and so on.

If necessary, the facilitators can invite the actors to restart the scene from the beginning.

Once several members of the audience have participated and are seated again, the facilitators can declare the play over.

### **Follow-up**

One of the facilitators invites the audience and the actors to have an open discussion about the issue of forced marriage. The aim of the discussion is to hear different arguments about the pros and cons of the tradition of forced marriage. If there is nobody from the audience who questions the practice, the actors could start asking questions, but they should NOT declare their own views against forced marriage. The aim is to make the audience think about the tradition and not to condemn it. The facilitator should ensure that the actors (or other outsiders present) only ask questions to help the audience think and don't start arguing with the audience or condemning the practice. Only if members of the community start questioning the tradition themselves (this could happen in the first session but could also take several sessions) could the facilitator add to the discussion and stimulate further consideration including by referring to relevant human rights standards (see Part 3 below).

The Organisers and the facilitators should take note of those issues related to force marriage that have not been covered during the activity so as to deal with them in a follow-up activity with the same audience, using another of the theatre methods suggested in this Guide. The Organisers might need to organise several different activities to develop understanding of and empathy with the issue, and later devise activities, which can lead to solutions.

At the end the facilitators should inform the audience about a subsequent follow-up activity (if possible announce date and venue). To conclude, the facilitators should always invite the members of the audience to become part of the human rights awareness programme, as they are always looking for volunteers, actors, ideas, etc.

The Organisers could cooperate with organisations working on the rights of women or children. These groups could advise on the problem faced by young girls forced to marry, but also present possible solutions to improve the situation. Someone from these specialist groups could also help the facilitators with the discussion by answering queries on the issue or asking relevant questions.

The Organisers, director, facilitators and actors should meet after the conclusion of the activity to review how it went and decide on the follow-up. To carry out this review you may want to use the list suggested under ‘Review and follow-up’ on page 23 of Section I of this Guide.

### **Part 3: Background information on forced marriage<sup>29</sup>**

The background information below is neither meant to represent the information or questions you could expect to present to the audience, nor the answers that you should give. It is solely meant to help the Organisers, actors and facilitators reflect on the human rights issues and prepare for the performances and the discussions (see also general human rights information provided in Part 3 of Theatre Method 1 above). We strongly discourage the Organisers and facilitators from using the background information to lecture the audience.

#### **1. Some questions and answers that might help you reflect on the issue of forced marriage**

Q. What is the right to marriage?

A. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Article 24 provides that no marriage should be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses. Moreover, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Article 16 calls for “State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of man and woman: (a) the same right to enter into marriage; (b) the same right to freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent.” Similarly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women requires that states parties shall, “ensure on a basis of equality of men and women the same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their full and free consent.”<sup>30</sup> “A woman’s right to choose a spouse and enter freely into marriage is central to her life and her dignity and equality as a human being.”<sup>31</sup>

Q. What is the difference between arranged and forced marriage?

A. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. However, a clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage; however the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the individuals marrying. In forced marriage at least one party does not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Forced marriage involves a lack of free will and consent on the part of at least one of the parties to the marriage. This is unlike arranged marriages where both spouses freely consent to the marriage.

<sup>29</sup> Extracts from Sara Hossain (Interights) and Suzanne Turner (Partner), *Abduction for Forced Marriage*, at [www.soas.ac.uk](http://www.soas.ac.uk).

<sup>30</sup> Article 16(1)(b) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted December 1979.

<sup>31</sup> Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 21, UN Doc HRI/GEN/1/Rev1(1994), at p 90, para 16.

Q. What actions can be taken to stop forced marriages from taking place?

A. By organising discussions, relating testimonies of victims (about the ordeal experienced and its consequences), highlighting that a marriage is not official (lawful) when one of the individuals is coerced, and demonstrating how forced marriages damage the victim, the family and the community, (physical/medical damage, loss of productivity), etc. By organising the establishment of sanctuaries where victims of forced marriages can find protection and help. These should be established with the full involvement of members of the community. By devising ways of condemning those who participate in practices of forced marriage and seeking punishment, while at the same time devising ways to mediate to prevent forced marriages. To achieve change in relation to forced marriage, a long-term commitment is needed to change attitudes and beliefs which are often deeply embedded.

## **2. Human rights information on forced marriage**

This next section provides some general human rights information on the issue of forced marriage. We recommend that the Organisers prepare and share information on relevant national and/or customary law relevant to the issue chosen and its relationship to international, regional and national human rights law. The facilitators should present the major human rights issues raised in the session in simple language that the audience can understand.

The right to marry is clearly established under human rights law and protected by national law in many jurisdictions. However, ineffective enforcement of the law in many countries, cultures and communities adversely affect many women, men and children. Victims of forced marriage are subjected to mental abuse including emotional blackmail and physical violence including abduction, false imprisonment, rape, sexual abuse and even murder.

Forced marriage involves the breach of a number of international human rights norms. Most central of these is the right to marry (Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), which incorporates the right to decide when, if and whom to marry, as indicated above.

Forced marriage often involves children, who may not have yet developed the capacity to give full consent. In fact governments are strongly advised by several UN agencies and human rights organisations to set up a minimum age for marriage to protect children by law. Amnesty International considers that underage marriage amounts to the denial of the right to physical and mental integrity, and may also amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Forced marriage also often violates the right to personal liberty and security and the right to freedom from arbitrary detention. It may also involve breaches of the right to access to justice; the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law; the right to an effective remedy and the right to freedom from gender-based discrimination.

The more extreme cases of forced marriage may violate the right to life and the right to bodily integrity, including freedom from gender-based violence. They may also be considered to constitute acts of slavery. Indeed, 'slavery-like practices' have been described as including

practices whereby ‘a woman without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage.’<sup>32</sup> Further, forced marriage has been considered to be a form of trafficking of women or children, which in itself constitutes a contemporary form of slavery.

Approaching the problem of forced marriage from a human rights perspective is critical to framing adequate responses and providing effective redress to survivors. It makes it possible to argue that States can be held responsible for their failure to prevent violence perpetrated by private, non-state, actors. Human rights norms create an obligation on States parties to international human rights treaties to undertake positive actions to protect the human rights of their citizens. In the context of forced marriages, States are held responsible if they fail to act or to exercise due diligence in preventing, investigating and punishing cases of forced marriage. Thus they may be responsible for ensuring that their legal system recognises and enforces the right to choose, when, if and whom to marry, and criminalises all forms of traffic in women or the abduction and sale or traffic in children, for any purpose, including forced marriage.

In addition, States may be required to ensure effective access to justice for potential and actual victims of forced marriage, for instance, through public education, dissemination of information on rights and remedies to concerned authorities or individuals, or the provision of legal aid or of emergency shelters. They may also need to provide for guidelines to ensure prompt, systematic and effective investigation and prosecution of such cases by the police.

International human rights law establishes a duty on States to modify or abolish existing customs or practices that constitute discrimination against women (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). Insofar as forced marriages clearly discriminate against women, there is an obligation to end the practice.

### **Example**

Flomo Theatre was asked to perform a short theatre play during a sit-in of the Women In Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET); they were protesting against the capture of children who were taken into the fighting force by President Taylor’s men. The theatre programme took place in the City Hall where the women held their sit-in; they were so moved by the forum theatre that they began to take active part as spectators. One of them came on the stage and said: “If it is up to me I am ready to move on the streets of Monrovia without clothes so as to show my dissatisfaction with this forced recruitment of child combatants.”

Another one got up and said: “Look you are joking with tears in your eyes. I want us to go now and march to the Executive Mansion and I am now going to undress just like how I was born and we all will go right to that President of ours and tell what we feel about him.” The other women began to cry and tried to stop their friend from undressing.

This anecdote shows how powerful Forum Theatre can be, and why it should be used with care.

*Contributed by Peter Y.Ballah, Flomo Theater Productions, Liberia*

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<sup>32</sup> Article 1 of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery 1956.

## Appendix I – Human rights instruments

### Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948*

**On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.”**

#### ***PREAMBLE***

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,  
 Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,  
 Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,  
 Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,  
 Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,  
 Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,  
 Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

#### **Article 1.**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### **Article 2.**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

#### **Article 3.**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

#### **Article 4.**

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

#### **Article 5.**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

#### **Article 6.**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**Article 7.**

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 8.**

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 9.**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 10.**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11.**

- (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

**Article 12.**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16.**

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18.**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 19.**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**Article 21.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

**Article 22.**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**Article 23.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**Article 24.**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

**Article 25.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26.**

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**Article 27.**

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**Article 28.**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29.**

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 30.**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

**Summarised list**

A summarised list of the rights guaranteed in the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is included below. This list might help you choose human rights issues to focus on in your programmes.

### **Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

01. Right to equality
02. Freedom from discrimination
03. Right to life, liberty and security of person
04. Freedom from slavery
05. Freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
06. Right to recognition as a person before the law
07. Right to equality before the law
08. Right to remedy by a competent tribunal
09. Freedom from arbitrary arrest and exile
10. Right to a fair public hearing
11. Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty
12. Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence
13. Right to free movement in and out of the country
14. Right to asylum from persecution in other countries
15. Right to a nationality and freedom to change it
16. Right to marriage and family
17. Right to own property
18. Freedom of belief and religion
19. Freedom of opinion and information
20. Right to peaceful assembly and association
21. Right to participate in government and in free elections
22. Right to social security
23. Right to desirable work and to join trade unions
24. Right to rest and leisure
25. Right to adequate living standards
26. Right to education
27. Right to participate in the cultural life of the community
28. Right to a social and international order that reflects the rights in the UDHR
29. Community duties essential to free and full development
30. Freedom from State or personal interference in the above rights

## **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**

adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986:

### **Part I: Rights and Duties**

#### **Chapter I – Human and Peoples' Rights**

##### **Article 1**

The Member States of the Organization of African Unity parties to the present Charter shall recognize the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in this Chapter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them.

##### **Article 2**

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

##### **Article 3**

1. Every individual shall be equal before the law. 2. Every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law.

##### **Article 4**

Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.

##### **Article 5**

Every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited.

##### **Article 6**

Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his freedom except for reasons and conditions previously laid down by law. In particular, no one may be arbitrarily arrested or detained.

##### **Article 7**

1. Every individual shall have the right to have his cause heard. This comprises: (a) the right to an appeal to competent national organs against acts of violating his fundamental rights as recognized and guaranteed by conventions, laws, regulations and customs in force; (b) the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty by a competent court or tribunal; (c) the right to defence, including the right to be defended by counsel of his choice; (d) the right to be tried within a reasonable time by an impartial court or tribunal. 2. No one may be condemned for an act or omission which did not constitute a legally punishable offence at the time it was committed. No penalty may be inflicted for an offence for which no provision was made at the time it was committed. Punishment is personal and can be imposed only on the offender.

##### **Article 8**

Freedom of conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed. No one may, subject to law and order, be submitted to measures restricting the exercise of these freedoms.

##### **Article 9**

1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information. 2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.

##### **Article 10**

1. Every individual shall have the right to free association provided that he abides by the law. 2. Subject to the obligation of solidarity provided for in 29 no one may be compelled to join an association.

##### **Article 11**

Every individual shall have the right to assemble freely with others. The exercise of this right shall be subject only to necessary restrictions provided for by law in particular those enacted in the interest of national security, the safety, health, ethics and rights and freedoms of others.

##### **Article 12**

1. Every individual shall have the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of a State provided he abides by the law. 2. Every individual shall have the right to leave any country including his own, and to return to his country. This right may only be subject to restrictions, provided for by law for the protection of national security, law and order, public health or morality. 3. Every individual shall have the right, when persecuted, to seek and obtain asylum in other countries in accordance with laws of those countries and international conventions. 4. A non-national legally admitted in a territory of a State Party to the present Charter, may only be expelled from it by virtue of a decision taken in accordance with the law. 5. The mass expulsion of

non-nationals shall be prohibited. Mass expulsion shall be that which is aimed at national, racial, ethnic or religious groups.

**Article 13**

1. Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law. 2. Every citizen shall have the right of equal access to the public service of his country. 3. Every individual shall have the right of access to public property and services in strict equality of all persons before the law.

**Article 14**

The right to property shall be guaranteed. It may only be encroached upon in the interest of public need or in the general interest of the community and in accordance with the provisions of appropriate laws.

**Article 15**

Every individual shall have the right to work under equitable and satisfactory conditions, and shall receive equal pay for equal work.

**Article 16**

1. Every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health. 2. States Parties to the present Charter shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick.

**Article 17**

1. Every individual shall have the right to education. 2. Every individual may freely, take part in the cultural life of his community. 3. The promotion and protection of morals and traditional values recognized by the community shall be the duty of the State.

**Article 18**

1. The family shall be the natural unit and basis of society. It shall be protected by the State which shall take care of its physical health and moral. 2. The State shall have the duty to assist the family which is the custodian of morals and traditional values recognized by the community. 3. The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. 4. The aged and the disabled shall also have the right to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs.

**Article 19**

All peoples shall be equal; they shall enjoy the same respect and shall have the same rights. Nothing shall justify the domination of a people by another.

**Article 20**

1. All peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen. 2. Colonized or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community. 3. All peoples shall have the right to the assistance of the States parties to the present Charter in their liberation struggle against foreign domination, be it political, economic or cultural.

**Article 21**

1. All peoples shall freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources. This right shall be exercised in the exclusive interest of the people. In no case shall a people be deprived of it. 2. In case of spoliation the dispossessed people shall have the right to the lawful recovery of its property as well as to an adequate compensation. 3. The free disposal of wealth and natural resources shall be exercised without prejudice to the obligation of promoting international economic cooperation based on mutual respect, equitable exchange and the principles of international law. 4. States parties to the present Charter shall individually and collectively exercise the right to free disposal of their wealth and natural resources with a view to strengthening African unity and solidarity. 5. States parties to the present Charter shall undertake to eliminate all forms of foreign economic exploitation particularly that practiced by international monopolies so as to enable their peoples to fully benefit from the advantages derived from their national resources.

**Article 22**

1. All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind. 2. States shall have the duty, individually or collectively, to ensure the exercise of the right to development.

**Article 23**

1. All peoples shall have the right to national and international peace and security. The principles of solidarity and friendly relations implicitly affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirmed by that of the Organization of African Unity shall govern relations between States. 2. For the purpose of strengthening peace,

solidarity and friendly relations, States parties to the present Charter shall ensure that: (a) any individual enjoying the right of asylum under 12 of the present Charter shall not engage in subversive activities against his country of origin or any other State party to the present Charter; (b) their territories shall not be used as bases for subversive or terrorist activities against the people of any other State party to the present Charter.

**Article 24**

All peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development.

**Article 25**

States parties to the present Charter shall have the duty to promote and ensure through teaching, education and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the present Charter and to see to it that these freedoms and rights as well as corresponding obligations and duties are understood.

**Article 26**

States parties to the present Charter shall have the duty to guarantee the independence of the Courts and shall allow the establishment and improvement of appropriate national institutions entrusted with the promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the present Charter.

**Chapter II – Duties**

**Article 27**

1. Every individual shall have duties towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities and the international community. 2. The rights and freedoms of each individual shall be exercised with due regard to the rights of others, collective security, morality and common interest.

**Article 28**

Every individual shall have the duty to respect and consider his fellow beings without discrimination, and to maintain relations aimed at promoting, safeguarding and reinforcing mutual respect and tolerance.

**Article 29**

The individual shall also have the duty: 1. to preserve the harmonious development of the family and to work for the cohesion and respect of the family; to respect his parents at all times, to maintain them in case of need; 2. To serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service; 3. Not to compromise the security of the State whose national or resident he is; 4. To preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity, particularly when the latter is threatened; 5. To preserve and strengthen the national independence and the territorial integrity of his country and to contribute to its defence in accordance with the law; 6. To work to the best of his abilities and competence, and to pay taxes imposed by law in the interest of the society; 7. to preserve and strengthen positive African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and, in general, to contribute to the promotion of the moral well being of society; 8. To contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African unity.

## African Charter on human and peoples' rights – Summary

**African States who are members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) recognize that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples; pledge to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa and to strive for a better life for the peoples of Africa; emphasize the importance of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization and that everyone has responsibilities and duties to society as well as rights; underline the need to pay particular attention to the right to development and the fact that civil and political rights cannot be dissociated from economic, social and cultural rights; emphasize the rights of peoples as well as of individual human beings; are conscious of their duty to achieve the total liberation of Africa and to dismantle all forms of discrimination; and reaffirm their adherence to the principles of human and peoples' rights and freedoms contained in international declarations and standards.**

**Article 1.** States which belong to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and which agree to this Charter must recognise the rights, duties and freedoms in the Charter and make them effective by law.

**Article 2.** Each person is entitled to the rights and freedoms in this Charter, no matter what his/her race, tribe, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

**Article 3.** Each person is equal before the law and must be protected equally by the law.

**Article 4.** Every human being is entitled to respect for his/her life and to safety.

**Article 5.** Each person has the right to respect for his/her dignity and legal status. No form of exploitation or degradation is allowed, especially not slavery, torture, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment.

**Article 6.** Each person has the right to liberty and to safety. No one's freedom may be unlawfully taken away. In particular, no one may be arrested or detained without a lawful reason.

**Article 7.** Each person has the right to a fair hearing and a fair trial in a proper court. No one may be punished until he/she is proved guilty of breaking the law. No one may be punished for another person's crime.

**Article 8.** Everyone is free to hold his/her own beliefs, and is free to practice his/her own religion, as long as it is with respect for others.

**Article 9.** Each person has the right to give and receive information freely, and to express his/her opinion, within the law.

**Article 10.** Each person has the right to mix freely with others, within the law. Each person is free to mix with others as long as he/she follows Article 29.

**Article 11.** All people have the right to meet or assemble freely, as long as they do not break the law and do not disturb the rights and freedoms of others.

**Article 12.** Each person has the right to move freely inside and outside his/her country as long as he/she follows the law. Any person may get lawful asylum in other countries if he/she is persecuted.

**Article 13.** Every citizen has the right to take part in the government of his/her country. Each citizen must have equal use of the country's public service and public property.

**Article 14.** Each person has the right to own property, except when it is against the law because of public need or the general interest of the community.

**Article 15.** Each person has the right to work under good conditions and to equal pay for equal work.

**Article 16.** Each person has the right to health and medical care when sick.

**Article 17.** Each person has the right to education and cultural life. The State has the duty to protect and promote morals and traditional values recognised by the community.

**Article 18.** The family is the natural unit and basis of society. The State has the duty to protect and assist the family, especially women, children, the aged and the disabled.

**Article 19.** All groups of people must be equal and have the same respect and the same rights. Nothing can justify the domination of one group by another.

**Article 20.** All peoples have the right to exist and to determine their own future. All people have the right to political, economic and social development. Any people struggling to free themselves from any kind of foreign domination have the right to help from member States.

**Article 21.** All peoples have the right to their country's natural resources and wealth without foreign exploitation.

**Article 22.** All peoples have the right to their economic, social and cultural development. States have the duty to ensure these rights.

**Article 23.** All peoples have the right to national and international peace and security. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the OAU must govern relations between States.

**Article 24.** All people have the right to a satisfactory environment in which they can develop.

**Article 25.** States have the duty to promote and teach respect for the rights and freedoms in this Charter. States must make sure their citizens understand the rights and freedoms as well as the obligations and duties of the Charter.

**Article 26.** States must make sure that the law Courts are independent. States must protect the rights and freedoms of this Charter.

**Article 27.** Each person has duties towards his/her family and society, the State, other communities and the international community. Each person must exercise his/her rights and freedoms without disturbing the rights of others.

**Article 28.** Each person has the duty to respect others, no matter who they are.

**Article 29.** Each person has the duty to preserve and respect his/her family, parents and nation. Each person must protect the security of his/her State and work for national solidarity and independence. Each person must work and pay lawful taxes, and promote positive African values and African unity.

*The remainder of the Charter (there are 68 Articles in all) deals primarily with the establishment of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the manner in which it will operate.*

This handout has been adapted from *SINIKO: Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa. A manual for teaching human rights*, Amnesty International, 1998; and available from AI's web site [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

## Appendix II – Some helpful literature and websites

### 1. Human rights

SINIKO, Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa. A manual for teaching human rights, Amnesty International, 1998.: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

Amnesty International Campaigning Manual (ACT 10/002/2001): [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

For further information on human rights and human rights education you could visit the websites of Human Rights Education Associates: [www.hrea.org](http://www.hrea.org).

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch).

### 2. Participatory theatre

Participatory Methods Toolkit, viWTA/King Baudouin Foundation 2003: [www.kbs-frb.be/code/page.cfm?id\\_page=153&ID=268](http://www.kbs-frb.be/code/page.cfm?id_page=153&ID=268)

Women's Voices and African theatre, Article 19 2003: [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org) >> publications

Theatre and Development (research papers): [www.kit.nl](http://www.kit.nl) >> e-publications

Augusto Boal (1992) *Games for actors and non-actors*. To be ordered through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Amollo Maurice Amollo & Babu Joseph Oyindo *Reflections on impact assessment Indicators: Issues in the arts and peace building*. Published by Amani People Theatre, Kenya: [apt@aptkenya.org](mailto:apt@aptkenya.org).

## Appendix III – Evaluation Form

To help us improve future republication of this Guide we would be grateful if you could send us your comments and suggestions by answering the following questions. You can write to us, fax your replies or e-mail them to us.

Special Programme on Africa  
Amnesty International, Dutch Section  
PO Box 1968  
1000 BZ Amsterdam  
The Netherlands

Fax: +31 20 624 0889

E-mail you answers to: [spa@amnesty.nl](mailto:spa@amnesty.nl) or [p.vanderhorst@amnesty.nl](mailto:p.vanderhorst@amnesty.nl)

Please, in your message do not forget to tell us who you are:

Name of Person filling this form

Name of Organisation.....

Postal address.....

Telephone number.....

Fax number.....

E-mail address.....

Please write your answers in separate sheets of paper:

1. What is your experience of the long-term participatory approach suggested in Section I of this Guide? Did you find our presentation clear, why?
2. What theatre method(s) presented in this Guide have you found most useful, and why?
3. What theatre method(s) presented in this Guide have you found less useful, and why?
4. How did you find the human rights background information, why?
5. What other part(s) of this Guide do you think need improving, and why?
6. Do you have any examples of theatre methods or activities that you have used which we might want to consider adding to a future republication of this Guide?

Thank you for helping us to improve this Guide.