

ACT, LEARN AND TEACH: **Theatre, HIV and AIDS** **Toolkit for Youth in Africa**



UNESCO-CCIVS project

Acknowledgments

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How to use this toolkit

This toolkit and associated material, including the CD-ROM provided, introduce you to Forum Theatre as a tool for HIV and AIDS education. The toolkit has been written with special consideration for youth groups and amateur theatre groups in English-speaking Africa who wish to address HIV- and AIDS-related issues in ways that are creative and engaging. The following provide the user with a description of each section:

PART I: THEATRE AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL provides a short background on theatre as a tool to raise awareness on different issues and gives special attention to the context of popular and contemporary theatre in English-speaking Africa. This section explains why theatre is a useful tool for HIV and AIDS education and introduces the concept of Forum Theatre, its historical background and the main elements of any Forum Theatre play.

PART II: THINK BEFORE YOU PLAY presents points one needs to keep in mind before setting out to create and perform a Forum Theatre play. Considering carefully your audience members, their culture(s), and the specific concerns they might have regarding HIV and AIDS will help make your Forum Theatre event a success. This section walks you through these considerations and introduces other important steps that you can use to help plan your play. Here, you will also find useful tips on how to dramatize HIV- and AIDS-related issues while using language that is appropriate to your specific audience.

PART III: CREATING A FORUM THEATRE PLAY looks at the nuts and bolts, the essential elements, of play making. It introduces the Forum Theatre actor and considers her/his role. You will also be introduced to the Joker, a unique and important character in Forum Theatre plays. You will learn essential tips on how to facilitate a play, how to engage the audience, and how to behave on stage. Finally, you will be given some suggestions on how to cope with unexpected pitfalls that may arise.

PART IV: ACTION! PERFORMANCE DAY presents ideas for welcoming and warming-up your audience and for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of your event after it is finished.

PART V: OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES will set you in the right direction for further developing your play and reinforce your knowledge of the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. **Annex A: Examples of Forum Theatre Scenarios** presents examples of Forum Theatre plays. You can perform these scenarios as they are written, or, for greater impact, you can adapt them to your specific context and audience using the considerations explained to you in Part II. Next, **Annex B: Basic Information about HIV and AIDS** summarizes facts about HIV transmission and prevention, HIV counselling and testing, and common myths about HIV and AIDS. You can refer to this section to check that the information on HIV and AIDS in your play is correct. **Annex C: Resource List** provides you with websites and other information for guidance and further inspiration. You will also find valuable information about participatory development and youth participation.



In addition, a **CD-Rom** has been included to facilitate your use of this toolkit. Therein, you will find helpful interviews with experienced Forum Theatre actors and Jokers, as well as clips of Forum Theatre plays. You will also have access to an electronic version of this toolkit (in Portable Document Format (PDF), readable with the Adobe Acrobat Reader computer application).

By introducing theatre as a dynamic educational tool, this toolkit and the accompanying CD-Rom are meant to inspire creative ideas and reflection on HIV and AIDS. However, be advised that the concepts, exercises and considerations found here should not be considered applicable or appropriate to all contexts, even within English-speaking Africa, for which this kit has been prepared. By using your best judgement at all times, you will be able to discern what is most relevant and useful to your community. We hope that, by using this resource, you will be encouraged to use and get creative with Forum Theatre in ways that strengthen your own community's unique response to HIV and AIDS.

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**PART I:
THEATRE AS AN
EDUCATIONAL TOOL**

Introduction: why use theatre?

When you want to cut wood, you use a saw or an axe. When you want to drive a nail, you use a hammer. The saw, the axe, and the hammer are tools one uses to achieve a given aim. While there are many forms of art that are used as education tools to raise HIV and AIDS awareness, including print, film, video, radio, outdoor media, posters, leaflets, discussion, and dance, interactive theatre has proven to be particularly valuable in HIV and AIDS education given its special ability to engage and connect with its audiences.

Theatre is live and human: it uses voice, speech, language, the body and emotion. It brings life and human reality to the audience as well as players. It makes people think and respond. We are all actors playing different roles in our lives, and the world is our stage. We become different characters depending on whether we are talking to our mother, lying in the arms of a loved-one, making a speech to many, or playing with a child¹.

Moreover, theatre groups can create space for storytelling and discussing because such theatre can convey information and still remain popular and entertaining too. It is relatively easy to create a play which is readily accessible to most communities, since there is no need for complicated or expensive technology or equipment. Forum Theatre performed live can deliver a message that its audience will remember because the audience itself is involved, but also because it is uniquely rooted in many peoples' cultures.

Box 1.1. The Positive Impact of Theatre

When theatre is well used, it can:

- Grab the attention and interest of a great number of people. This is because theatre is performed live and based on reality. It combines oral communication, physical expression, dance, image, music and song, which work together to maintain people's interest over time.
- Bring people together to openly discuss a problem.
- Arouse strong emotions. The whole person is involved when participating in a drama—the mind, emotions, prejudices, and passions; therefore, the experience and learning is not easily forgotten.
- Be adapted to local realities, because plays can be performed anywhere, at any time and in local languages presenting real life situation.
- Sensitise a community on priority issues and create collective ownership of individual stories.
- Promote tolerance and mutual understanding by allowing the audience or actors to experience a different point-of-view or a role. In facing the problems one faces, someone who was previously seen as the other becomes familiar and gains empathy.
- Encourage participation and self-expression, especially from those who often go unheard.
- Provide entertainment! Many people learn best while enjoying themselves.

” The purpose of forum theatre is to create a space where all people have the possibility and the right to be heard ”



Theatre for development in Africa

The traditions of theatre in Africa are rich and varied. They include storytelling, praise performances, dance dramas, national and historical performance sagas, ecclesiastical epics, peace plays, satirical comedies, children's plays, work performances, funeral and social dramatic commentaries, mimetic sketches, and graduation and initiation performances.

In many African traditions, theatre has been used for purposes beyond entertainment, such as to convey religious, educational, political, social or economic messages. However, the process of colonisation has influenced theatre traditions, like many other cultural practices in Africa. Nonetheless, new popular urban performance drew inevitably on the traditional culture while adapting techniques that came from foreign music, dance and film. For example, in South Africa there was marabi, ngomabusuku and isiBhaca or Gumboot Dance; in West Africa there was High Life; in Zambia and Malawi they practiced nyao and gure dances; in Malawi, beni; and in Zimbabwe, ingquzu².

Theatre for the purpose of social development came to be practiced following political independence in Africa. A major inspiration was Paulo Freire (1921-97), a Brazilian cultural and educational theorist and practitioner. Freire (1972, 1993) assumed that the people (especially those who were oppressed and marginalized) contain knowledge through their own life experience, but are persuaded by the oppressor to believe that knowledge is irrelevant and that they themselves are ignorant. Consequently, education then had become a process of banking knowledge that serves the privileged rather than all people. Freire believed that education should help people trust their own perceptions. This is done through dialogue that is people-oriented. Stimulating people to become conscious of what they know and to generate

knowledge in their own interests is called the pedagogy of the oppressed.

The influence of Paulo Freire also impacted African theatre traditions through the work of a student of his, Augusto Boal, who developed the 'Theatre of the Oppressed': a form of popular theatre, of, by, and for people engaged in the struggle for their liberation (Boal 1982). The rehearsal techniques practiced in Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' have been designed to help people learn ways of resisting oppression in their daily lives. It was also used as a tool for promoting self-expression, consciousness-raising, personal development, and collective empowerment. Boal drew up a set of methods and guidelines for provoking discussion and audience participation in theatre, called Forum Theatre, which we will explore in this toolkit. In this form, theatre is emphasized not as a spectacle, but rather as a means of expression that fosters critical thinking through the analysis and discussion of social issues. Groups learn to explore collective solutions to social challenges and enjoy the chance to express their views, learn new ways of communicating difficult emotions, and experiment with different behaviours and social situations. Please refer to the section on characterisation in Part III of this toolkit, where you will be able to read more about this aspect.

The international situation in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the resulting explosion of alternative theatre, and the influence of Freire's ideas, all gave rise to a people's or popular theatre movement in the developing world and elsewhere. In many parts of African societies, there has been a large development of projects based on Freire's educational concept that work with marginalized communities on issues such as primary health care. Moreover, Theatre for Development is now

PART I: THEATRE AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

widely respected as a creative, participatory and effective way to raise awareness and promote problem solving.



Performance: a live event shared between actors and an audience.

¹ This idea has been developed and explored thoroughly by Irving Goffman (1959)

² Marabi is urban music and dance; ngomabusuku is an urban traditional choral; nyao/gure are masked and often stilted cult dances; beni is a military style dance derived from colonial military bands; ingquzu is an urban Ndebele percussive dance. See Coplan (1985).

Using Theatre to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS

Theatre creates space and distance, which allows sensitive topics like sexuality to be addressed in an indirect way. Some issues feel too close and hard to talk about publicly, and drama enables people to explore personal issues safely and outside taboos. By discussing characters and their motivations, you can express your own ideas without feeling exposed. Interactive theatre creates a transitional space where you can safely try on different roles and test out new ways of behaving before using them in real life. Participatory theatre can help make sense of the world around you. For example, let's say you want to ask your partner to go for an HIV test but are not sure how to begin that conversation because you worry about how she/he will react. By trying out different arguments in a role-play, you can build your confidence and learn possible strategies.

People typically learn more by doing than by merely receiving information. Participatory activities (such as games, arts activities, and role plays) help people see things from a fresh perspective by sharing opinions, experiences, ideas, concerns, and by analyzing issues.

All of the above said, no single art form is the ideal educational tool for all HIV and AIDS awareness-raising tasks. Depending on the context, different art forms can be equally relevant. This toolkit focuses on the particular use of one drama method—Forum Theatre—in HIV and AIDS education.

What is forum theatre and how can it be used?

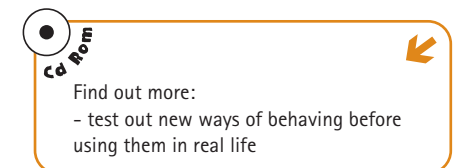
A forum is a public place where people assemble to debate social and political issues. The name comes from ancient Rome where people would meet at the town square and discuss important matters. Likewise, the purpose of Forum Theatre is to create a space where people can express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. In Forum Theatre, the main character confronts oppression, an unjust use of power that is maintained by a threat of force. Even though they are victimized, someone who is oppressed is not the same as a victim because victims don't fight back. The oppressed confronts a problem, analyzes what is happening and takes action to change his or her situation.

Forum Theatre gets audiences to discuss difficult issues in the open that they would otherwise be uneasy about in personal life. In the open and in fictitious settings, audience can take ownership of issues and their solutions. After collectively debating the challenges and identifying some problematic behaviour of the players, people are often motivated to avoid similar behaviour of their own that they might have been unconscious of before.

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, Forum Theatre is effective because it favours critical thinking and highlights social and psychological aspects of the pandemic. By presenting certain challenges related to HIV, such as stigma, and then demanding the whole audience to search for resolving the issues, Forum Theatre breaks the silence around HIV and AIDS. Ideally, spectators will leave with a renewed sense of their own personal responsibilities. For example, afterward some might be compelled to go for an HIV-test. Some could leave with the important message that it is possible for people to live a quality life with HIV. Hopefully, many will be leave with a greater commitment to support those who live HIV.

The Forum Theatre play enables a sustained experience. We usually quickly forget what was said in a speech, on the radio, or during a meeting. The play, however, is an event in the social life of the village, school, or the concerned community. The characters and the dramatic situations are discussed and remembered long after the performance; it is not rare that a character becomes a prototype in the common conversation of the group.

Theatre reaches the heart and the mind in a way that reading a pamphlet or listening to a speech likely will not. What happens to the characters, and the emotions one feels while participating in a Forum Theatre scenario, strikes people in a unique way and will likely be remembered long after the play ends.



Box 1.2. What Is the Forum Theatre All About?

The Forum Theatre presents real situations for the public to consider. At first, the theatre group shows a problem that is experienced by an individual and that in some way relates to the spectators' own lives. The problem is presented through a **model play**. The model play introduces a central character around whom the action revolves (the protagonist or oppressed character) and who is confronted with a challenging situation represented by another character (the antagonist or oppressor).

The **protagonist** is the person who is most intimately affected by the central conflict. In the context of HIV and AIDS, she/he suffers from a social condition which contributes to the spread of HIV; it could be a person living with HIV her/himself or someone else affected in a more indirect way (for example, a child who is stigmatised for a family member who lives with HIV, or a woman in an unequal relationship, who doesn't successfully negotiate the use of a condom). The **antagonist** is the character who blocks the protagonist from getting what she/he desires, through an abuse of power (for example, a parent, teacher, partner, doctor).

The story ends badly, without a solution to the problem. The failure and defeat the protagonist experiences must not be presented as the consequence of fate but rather as the result of an error of judgement or behaviour or a bad situation for which solutions can nevertheless be found. If the situation presented in the play were resolved, then there would be no reason to become involved. The overall purpose of Forum Theatre is to present a problem and to open the door for the audience to find solutions.

Forum Theatre aims to transform passive spectators into active participants, known as spect-actors. **Spect-actors** share ideas about issues that concern the community and engage in dialogue about how to create social change. In a Forum Theatre performance, there is an intermediary between the actor and the spectator, called a **Joker**: someone who liaises between the dramatic world of the characters and the real world of the spectators. She or he encourages the spect-actors and generally helps the play advance through his or her questions and comments. The phase during which key scenes are repeated and audience members suggest their own new strategies is considered the actual **Forum**. Moreover, the Forum is the part of the performance 'in which the audience, the spect-actors, start to intervene in the action, on the second showing', (Jackson 2002, p. xxvii).

The forum unfolds with spect-actors replacing the oppressed character (not the oppressor) in order to show what alternative strategies and attitudes are available for him/her to try on. It may be that there is more than one oppressed character, in which case the forum can focus on finding solutions for both.

Through this collective reflection, the protagonist finds a solution to the problem, how to stand up against the oppression or stigma that renders his or her life difficult. The solution results through an action undertaken by the protagonist, through which the antagonist can also grow in consciousness. The idea is that you cannot change the world itself, but you can modify the way you relate and respond to it.

- ” The play ends badly without a solution. ”
- ” A Joker is someone who liaises between the dramatic world of the characters and the real world of the spectators. ”
- ” You can't just replace the society you live in by a better one but you can modify the way you respond to it. ”



Protagonist: the main character around whom the action revolves and the spectators identify with the most.

Antagonist: the character who opposes the protagonist's goals and desires.

Spect-actor: the spectator of a Forum Theatre play who has been transformed from a passive observer into an active participant in the dramatic action.

Forum: the part of a Forum Theatre event in which the audience intervenes in the action, on the second showing.

The basic structure of forum theatre

Forum Theatre includes three parts:

- The **introduction of the model** : a theatrical introduction that explains the rules of the game, invites the public to commit to participate, and is followed by the performance of the model play.
- The **replaying of key scenes**: after the sketch is performed, the public is asked to find solutions to the characters' problems and the play's sequences are performed once again, this time with the participation of members of the audience.
- The **final dialogue**: this is an opportunity for the audience to discuss what has been seen and how the issues personally relate to them and to the community. The various strategies that were seen are now evaluated, local specialists or partners address the crowd and share resources, and the Joker offers a final synthesis.

Now let's look at each part of the Forum Theatre more closely...

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MODEL

The introduction of the model consists of four parts:

1. A dramatic introduction;
2. An explanation of the rules of the game;
3. An invitation to play is extended to the audience;
4. The presentation of the model play.

The Forum Theatre should begin with a **dramatic introduction** that captivates the audience's attention. The introduction should be enjoyable, entertaining, and confident. There are

many possibilities for how to achieve this, for example, you could use a song, dance, choral reading, presentation of still images, or play a few interactive games with the audience. The performance group should make the audience play, dance, applaud, laugh, and react, in order to set the game in a good mood. Singing a song that is familiar and appropriate to the audience is also a useful way to demonstrate appreciation of the local culture. By encouraging the spectators to join in the song or dance, an expectation of participation is set. If the event takes place in a public space, a lively song will also attract the interest of other bystanders who may have been hesitant to come closer initially.

The Joker plays an important role during this first part: she/he must explain very clearly the three stages of the Forum Theatre and the special role the public will play. Forum Theatre is a game. Joking, the role of the Joker, is a facilitation technique, the purpose of which is to remind the audience of the function of the performance (for example, to have a dialogue about HIV and AIDS, by means of theatre), to **explain the rules of the game** and to establish an agreement between the entertaining company, the sponsoring partners, and the audience. As with other games, one explains rules so that everyone is clear on how the game will be played. The rules can quite simply be understood as: 'First we play, then you play, then we discuss!'

The Joker should ask the crowd something like: 'Will you come and help us find solutions to the problems in the play?' ... and then she/he should wait for them to answer. She/he should explain that if they do not agree to play, the actors will not perform! You must train your audience to be active, to break away from the usual passivity that most performances require. For example, if the cast says 'Good afternoon!'

” First we play, then you play, then we discuss! ”



Dictionary

Cast: the ensemble of actors who portray characters in a play.



Cd Rom

Find out more:
- The Joker plays an important role



to begin the introduction, demand that the audience respond in kind. If they are passive and silent, repeat the greeting.

An invitation to play is extended to the audience. By asking the audience to agree to play, the expectation is made clear: we are entering into a dialogue that requires everyone to contribute. If this is neglected, the audience will feel manipulated when the play ends and they suddenly hear 'Guess what? Now it's your turn to act!'

Another way of explaining this might be: 'When you go to the theatre, what usually happens when the play comes to an end?' Allow a few spectators to answer ('everyone applauds and then goes home,' etc). 'What we are going to present to you this afternoon is not like ordinary theatre. In Forum Theatre, the end is really just the beginning... When the play comes to an end, it will be your turn to discuss what has happened and to suggest ways to change the situation.' Or, 'We're going to show you a play that we hope you'll find interesting. Afterwards, we'll have a discussion and show bits of the play again and you'll have the chance to explore other possibilities.' This 'rule' should be clear because you do not want your audience to leave when the play ends!

The Joker can also tell the audience to pay special attention to the main character so that they watch the play carefully and notice how he or she behaves. The Joker can say something like, 'Watch Sibongile like a hawk and notice how she deals with what happens to her.' Or, 'As you watch the play, identify the person who is in the worst situation and consider whether you would do anything different, if you were in this situation.'

In the box below is one example of a dramatic introduction;

the script explains the rules of Forum Theatre to an audience. You can view a performance of this by participants in the International Theatre Workcamp on HIV Prevention and Care in Wakiso, Uganda on the CD-Rom.

Once the dramatic introduction has been made and the audience understands and agrees to the rules of the game, the model play is performed.



Box 1.3. An Example of a Dramatic Introduction

Joker: Ladies and gentleman,

Cast: Good morning!

Joker: Today we will present to you a performance of:

Cast: Forum Theatre!

Joker: The Forum Theatre play is divided into three parts. In the first part...

Actor 1: In the first part, we will play for you

Cast: We!

Actor 1: We will show you scenes that will disgust you,

Cast: Disgust you!

Actor 1: torment you,

Cast: Torment you!

Actor 1: revolt you,

Cast: Revolt you!

Actor 1: ..and you will want to come on stage and hurt some of our characters. But,

Cast: Please! Don't do it, it's just a game.

Joker: In the second part,

Actor 2: In the second part, it will be your turn to play.

Cast: Your turn!

Important! Important! When the play ends, do not leave the stage! If you do, the audience will assume that it is over and time to go home. In Forum Theatre, the end is really the beginning; the audience should stay and explore the problem.



Find out more:
- See the dramatic introduction

Actor 2: You will come on stage to help the characters who have problems to find solutions to their problems!

Cast: Yes!

Joker: In the third part, we shall

Cast: Discuss!

Joker: Ladies and gentlemen, if you have any questions, you are free to ask. Or, if you have an opinion, you can express yourself. Now at this point I shall ask the actors to prepare themselves for a wonderful performance.

Cast: Oh no! Are you sure that they will accept to perform with us?

Joker: Oh yes, I am sure they will.

Cast: Ah, if they don't accept to perform, we won't play!

Joker: So what do you want me to do?

Cast: Ask them!

Joker: Ladies and gentlemen, the performance is compromised if you do not accept to come and help us to find solutions. When it is your turn to come, will you accept to help us, yes or no?

Audience: Yes!!!

PART I: THEATRE AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

THE REPLAYING OF KEY SCENES

After the model play is presented, it is replayed. This phase consists of three parts:

1. Discussion with the audience;
2. Sequential rerunning of the forum sequences;
3. The verdict of the audience and the last word of the spect-actor.

After the actors have presented the model, the Joker should introduce the forum and invite the audience to summarise what they have witnessed, discuss what they think the main problem is, and express their opinions about what they have seen. Discussion with the audience is key. It is important to allow the audience to talk about what happened in the play before asking them to come on stage. This enables the performing group to check whether the message that they intended to come through the play is what was in fact received by the crowd.

The Joker might say: 'Now it's your chance to help our characters find solutions to their problems. What happened in this play? What is the play about?'; 'What has happened in this family? What have we observed?', or, 'Turn to the person sitting next to you and discuss what you think the main problem affecting our characters is.'

This is a safe way to help the spectators get used to expressing themselves. Having gathered their thoughts, ask a few to share their opinions with the whole group. The Joker should never judge an idea or offer her/his own opinion about what has been said. Instead, the Joker should push the speaker to say more or ask for another viewpoint: 'Can you say

more?' or, 'What do you think of what Lebo has said?'

Key scenes are performed again. The Joker can then ask the audience which character they think is most oppressed, or: 'Which character was most affected in this play? Who suffers the most?' Now that the central character is identified, ask: 'Who is causing the problem? Who can do something about it? Raise your hand if you think that there was more that Ntombi could have done to improve her situation. Was it inevitable that things turn out the way they did?'

Allow the spectators to share their opinions. Then: 'Please turn to the person next to you and discuss at what points you think things could have gone differently for our characters.' This ensures that every person takes a moment to actively consider what other options were available to the character. Then ask, 'What is the very first point in the play where Ntombi could have done something different?'

The audience decides on the first sequence to be replayed. The Joker then asks: 'What would you like to think you would do, if you were in Ntombi's situation? What else do you think she could have tried? Who has an idea?' A volunteer raises her hand. Instead of asking her to explain her idea, the Joker invites her on stage: 'Wonderful! Are you willing to come on stage to try out your idea? Where would you like to begin? Who do you want to meet?'

The actor who is to be replaced takes one element of her costume (e.g. a hat) and gives it to the spect-actor to wear. The spect-actor then ceases to speak as her/himself and assumes the name of the character. Then the specified scene is performed again, with the spect-actor free to play as she/he likes. The actors try to maintain the plot of the initial

performance while taking into consideration the changes proposed by the spect-actor. The game is quite simple. The spect-actors play in order to bring the play to a different ending (where an oppression is broken), while the actors make every effort to bring the play to its original ending (with the oppressors succeeding).

While the scene is being replayed, the Joker should, through their positioning and eye contact, be available to the spect-actor, should she/he get stuck and want help. When it seems that the spect-actor has run out of ideas to try, the Joker can gently ask: 'Have you done what you wanted to do? Do you want to try more?'

Achieving the audience's verdict is the last important step in replaying the key scenes. This leaves the choice to continue playing or not entirely in the hands of the spect-actor. If she/he agrees to stop, then the audience is invited to give its opinions about what just happened. Many reactions are possible: approval, disapproval, frustration, or apathy.



Make sure that the crowd evaluates the strategy, not an individual's performance as an actor (a certain way to discourage others from playing on stage.)

Someone else might want to propose a better solution right away; if so, finish analyzing what has just happened before moving on to a new idea.

The Joker inquires whether the audience finds the proposed solution satisfactory. The key thing is to evaluate the strategy, not the individual's performance as an actor. The Joker should remind the audience of this if they begin to critique the acting itself, a sure-fire way to discourage others from playing on stage.

Some questions the Joker can ask when discussing an intervention include: 'Ok, what happened this time? What did she do? What strategy did she use? What impact did it have? What was Thapelo's reaction?' An essential place to start is simply: 'Was it useful? Positive? Has the situation improved?' The Joker then gives the spect-actor an opportunity to speak about what he attempted: 'What did you attempt to do? How do you feel about what you tried?'

Ask the crowd if such a situation is possible in this community: 'Does this happen in real life, in this community? Are there people like that in this community? Is it possible?' After there has been adequate discussion, or it seems like the crowd has begun to lose interest, invite another spectator to rerun the sequence and try out a different idea. The Joker can say something like: 'Now we have seen one attempt by the mother to change the problem. Is there someone else who has an idea of how the mother can handle this situation? Who else can help this girl?'

Another person volunteers to come on stage and demonstrate what she would like to do, if she were in this situation. She also decides whom she wants to replace and at what point in the play she would like to play from. Replay as often as

necessary, making sure to allow time to explore the opportunities for action in each scene of the model.

THE FINAL DIALOGUE

The final dialogue consists of three parts:

1. Discussion with the audience;
2. Speaking with specialists and local partners;
3. Final summary by the Joker.

Invite the public to express themselves on different aspects of the play. Ask them to share what they have seen and learned. Make sure the questions relate to the topic. Here are some examples of discussion with the audience in the final dialogue:

- Which strategies do you think were most effective?
- What have been the learning points in this session?
- What is one word that sums up what you have experienced today?
- What would you do in this situation? What can you do to ensure that you don't take such risks?
- What advice would you give this family?

When discussing the various strategies, do not ask if the spect-actors interventions were realistic. That reinforces a sense of a lack of possibility. Instead ask if they are possible. Ask, what could be done in that situation, rather than what would probably happen. Remember, a particular action may be difficult for a character to take, but still possible.

Ideally, this discussion will help the spectators connect the dramatic situation to their personal life. Spectators tend to want to analyze the situation, advise and criticise the

characters, as if the problem is not relevant to them. In the closing discussion, the community may need to be reminded to practice what they preach or be provoked to see how the scenario relates to their personal lives. The Joker can say something like, 'What we're playing with now in theatre has very serious implications for life.'

In Forum Theatre, people come to understand that if the main character is affected, we are all affected. The Zulu concept of ubuntu captures this idea in the saying, 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu': a person is a person through other persons. In that sense, we are the characters in the play. What happens to them might happen to us; what concerns them is of concern to us.

” We are the characters in the play. What happens to them might happen to us; what concerns them is of concern to us. ”



During the final dialogue, the Joker should not preach to the people, but sum up what the collective has expressed in the process.



Find out more:
- Invite the public to express themselves

Other questions to help spectators reflect on what they have seen:

- Did you recognise something in this story?
- What have you heard today? What has moved you?
- Can this happen in real life, in this community? Has this happened here? Are there women like that in this community?

Speaking with specialists and local partners can be introduced at this juncture. If there is a partner organisation that hosted or collaborated in planning the event, the Joker can ask them to address the crowd (or, if shy, be interviewed). It is beneficial to invite someone from the local community, school, community-based organization, or health clinic—someone who is informed about HIV and AIDS and who may also provide further information about what resources are available in the community. The specialist can answer the audience's questions, respond to what they heard during the forum, offer factual information, and share available resources.

Advise the audience on how they can get further information and support. For example, was the play about the importance of going for voluntary and confidential counselling and treatment (VCCT)? Then a local expert can tell the community where they can go to get VCCT or whom to speak to if they want to get more information later.

Finally, the Joker should sum up the main ideas and review the strategies that arose during the forum. The Joker should not over-simplify when summing up the main points that emerged. Rather than pretend there is consensus, it is acceptable to say 'some of you think... ..while others thought...'

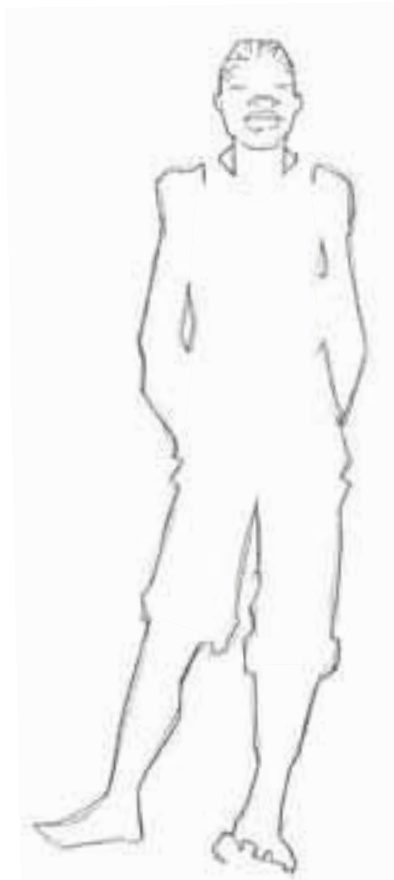
Strive to create participatory discussions with the audience

by creating an atmosphere where spectators feel free to express their views, knowing that they will be understood and where ideas are explored in depth. When facilitating discussion, Jokers should ask simple, open-ended questions, encourage everyone to contribute, and listen actively to what each person shares.

Table 1.1. The most successful programmes

- Involve people living with HIV, and the wider community, in all project stages (in planning, implementation and evaluation)
- Recognise the realities that people face in their daily lives, and take people's own needs and interests as a starting point (rather than, for example, starting from your own assumptions about people's knowledge, beliefs or attitudes)
- Create open attitudes and accept how people are (rather than being critical or judgmental)
- Use positive images and friendly messages (rather than being frightening or authoritarian)
- Develop skills and knowledge (rather than telling people what to do)
- Win support from people in positions of authority (for example teachers, doctors, religious leaders, professional associations, government officials)
- Recognise that even well planned approaches sometimes fail (and, therefore, review progress and adjust the programme when needed)
- Carry out some form of evaluation, however brief (so that the activity can be replicated or improved by the same group or by others in the future)

Source: Aggleton, Peter. "What Works Best?" AIDS Action, Issue 39, Health Link, United Kingdom. Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, 27/28 Woburn Square, London WC10AA, UK



**PART II:
THINK BEFORE
YOU PLAY**

Some basic considerations

The first step in creating a play is to consider your own personal motivation. Before trying to educate others with Forum Theatre, you should reflect on your own perspective, values, behaviour, and the language that you use to discuss HIV and AIDS issues. This is crucial because your confidence and commitment to these motives will influence not only the motivation of everyone you collaborate with and perform for, but also the success of your project.

Each member of the performing group should ask themselves:

- What are my reasons for participating in this project?
- How have HIV and AIDS personally affected me?
- What are my fears about HIV?
- In response to the AIDS epidemic what are my commitments?
- What is the context in which I am working?
- What is my involvement with the audience?

It is important at this point to recognize that a Forum Theatre play is the sum of the attitudes and motives with which it was created. If the play is created by those who demonstrate respect among themselves (for their ideas, views, and experiences), then by similar token, a certain respect can be created with the audience. The forum theatre will be a success if the whole endeavour is marked by sincere commitment and mutual respect.

As a group, discuss your objectives. What do you hope to achieve? What do you hope that your audience will discover? What impact do you want to have?

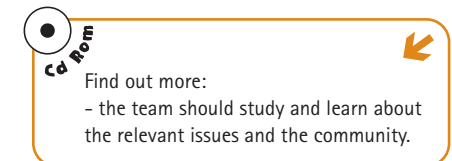
Before going into the community, the team should study and learn about the relevant issues and the community. One

important method will be to involve community resource persons in the preparation of the piece. Here are nine suggestions on acquainting yourselves with a future audience:

- 1. Specify your audience.** The target audience can be broad (as in all the residents of a particular locality) or very specific (primary school children, women, farmers, leaders in local government, sex workers, or university students).
- 2. Identify the problems that people in that community face and interview a range of people to discover their concerns.** Never assume that you already know the community's difficulties, even if you are an insider but especially if you are not a member of it. Interview as many people as you can—local leaders, young people, neighbours, and health workers—to find out their concerns. To prepare for possible problems, consult with local counterparts and professionals. Sharing your own experiences about HIV will help people relax and open up. While collecting information, observe people's mannerisms, dress, accents, and affectations—everything that can help in writing and acting out the script.
- 3. Be curious and learn about the community.** Some forms of learning about communities alienate, while others help people relax and open up. This is even more important with intimate and sensitive issues relating to HIV and AIDS. Going round with a notepad and pen (or worse, a tape recorder or video camera) will in most situations be inappropriate—particularly if the subject matter is of a sensitive nature such as discussing sexuality, which is at the centre of the HIV and AIDS complexity. Instead, have team members begin conversations by talking about themselves. Sharing your own experiences, for example by talking about HIV will help people relax and open up. You have to develop the

” You must be the change you wish to see in the world

Gandhi ”



Find out more:
- the team should study and learn about the relevant issues and the community.

ability to make mental notes and write them up later when not using a notepad or an audio or video recorder. While collecting information, the team needs to be aware that their research is going to be used for playmaking and acting. Central to the dramatic process are people: the way they talk, their ideas, their stories, and their behaviour.

4. Find out the level of awareness in the community about HIV and AIDS and how it is viewed. Try to find out what people know about HIV and AIDS and what misinterpretations or taboos exist among the people you will perform for. This will:

- Help you understand your audience
- Give you an idea of which specific false assumptions to address in the play
- Provide a way to assess whether the Forum Theatre intervention shifted any of the group's perceptions about HIV and AIDS.

If you are working with schoolchildren, visit the school to discuss with the head teachers and to see the physical location before you create and perform your play. Or, if you are performing for the public, speak to people in the market or the taxi rank to find out what views are commonly held. You can use one of these research strategies:

- Conduct a survey. Prepare a simple paper questionnaire that people will fill out themselves. This will inform you of how much people in the target group already know about HIV and AIDS.
- Alternatively, conduct interviews that ask pre-determined questions. This is especially appropriate if you are learning about and from people who are not literate.

- As you cannot speak to every member of your audience, you can organize a discussion with a small focus group that represents the community (such as a single classroom)
- Interview community leaders, teachers, health workers, and others who know the target group well and can comment on what issues affect them most.



By simply spending time with people from that community and learning about their lives, you will discover how they view their problems. This information will inform the dramatic piece, making it relevant and appropriate to the spectators.

Box 2.1. Questions You Can Ask People in the Target Community About HIV and AIDS

Here are some questions that can help you find out how much knowledge about HIV and AIDS exists in your target group and how they view people who are living with HIV.

Basic knowledge about HIV and AIDS transmission and prevention

- What do 'HIV' and 'AIDS' stand for? Can you explain the difference?
- What causes AIDS?
- How is HIV transmitted?
- Can HIV infection be prevented? If yes, how?
- How can you tell if someone is HIV positive? Do they show symptoms?
- If you get infected with HIV, does that mean you will develop AIDS?
- Can AIDS be cured? Is there treatment?
- What percentage of people in this community are living with HIV?
- Do you know where to go if you want to get an HIV test?

Myths and opinions about HIV and AIDS

- How did you first hear about HIV and AIDS?
- What do people in your neighbourhood say about people who are HIV positive
- What have you heard about AIDS?
- Is it acceptable for women to ask men to use condoms?
- Is the probability of a person becoming infected with HIV influenced by the number of sexual partners he or she has?
- If a colleague or friend became infected with HIV, would you want them to work with you?
- Should an HIV-positive teacher continue teaching?
- If a member of your family became infected with HIV, would you want it to remain secret?
- In your opinion, what is an effective way to communicate information about HIV and AIDS in your community?
- Does traditional medicine cure AIDS?
- Can traditional healers be helpful in response to HIV and AIDS?

PART II: THINK BEFORE YOU PLAY

5. **Involve people who are living with HIV, if possible.**

People who are living with HIV know what it is like to live with the virus and face stigma and discrimination. They can share their valuable personal experience, provide ideas about how to develop the theme or specific characters, and give feedback about what does and does not work in the play. You must be careful not to disclose someone's HIV status without their consent. Be mindful of the fact that it is the exclusive decision of the person if she/he does not wish to communicate openly to the community. Let the person know that any participation is very much appreciated.

6. **Ensure that the performance is culturally appropriate.**

If you are not familiar with the reality of your audience, begin by seeking that out. Engaging the community will ensure that the life reality of the audience is brought into the play and their way of life will be reflected more genuinely.

Talking about HIV and AIDS demands clarity and straightforwardness, which can easily be perceived as culturally unacceptable or taboo. Understand the myths and taboos around partnership, marriage, and sexuality. It is important to find a way to transmit a message which respects the community and will not be seen as disturbing its functioning.

The role of myths and taboos is very important in African societies. It is easy to say that a particular myth is wrong; the problem is that myths and taboos have functions. Examine the underlying purpose of the taboo to separate its method from its aim.

As informed activists, we cannot remain silent in front of practices that put people at risk of contracting HIV, nor can we invent a counter myth to balance incorrect myths. We

have to find a way to transmit our message in an acceptable way that does not put people off or shy away from telling the life-saving truth.

7. Perform in the local language and use appropriate dialogue. When possible, the play should be performed in the local language. Taboo or sensitive topics are best communicated simply and using common language. If playing to a diverse group, a mixture of languages can be used.

Be flexible and take into consideration what is suitable to the specific group being played for. If you present a play to primary school students, adjust the dialogue so that it is appropriate and understandable to children of that age.

Sometimes it helps to perform for a group of only men or women. This can release spectators from their inhibitions. In a community where women are not encouraged to express themselves, their participation in the Forum Theatre may be deterred if men are present in the audience.

8. Plan how the project will be evaluated. After the show has been performed, there should be a follow-up discussion with at least some of the audience members and an evaluation of the Forum Theatre's effectiveness. Before the project begins, the performing group and local partners should decide how they will evaluate and follow-up on the project.

” A creative project which ignores the opportunity for true participation and collaboration in the search for solutions, is a lost opportunity.

Helen Gould, Creative Exchange

” We have to find a way to transmit our message in an acceptable way that does not put people off or shy away from telling the life-saving truth.



Dictionary

Myth: an expression of complex beliefs, intended to establish rules for the community to live together



CD Rom

Find out more:
– culturally appropriate



Theatre and messages about HIV and AIDS

Box 2.2. Key Considerations When Planning a Forum Theatre Play

To review, here are some key questions to ask when preparing to create a Forum Theatre play:

- Who is our audience?
- What are the problems that people in that community face? Have we discussed with a range of people from that community to find out what their concerns are?
- What is the HIV prevalence and what factors influence the spread of HIV infection?
- How much do people know about HIV and AIDS and how do they view it?
- Have we, if possible, involved people who are living with HIV?
- Is the performance culturally appropriate for our audience?
- What beliefs are commonly held about HIV and AIDS?
- Is discussion about sexuality straight to the point?
- Will we perform in the local language?
- Do we have a plan for how to evaluate the project's effectiveness?



It is often the case that HIV and AIDS communication messages merely ask the public to passively listen to a slogan about prevention, like, 'Abstain, Be Faithful, and Condomise.' People hear it and read it, but then what? Forum Theatre may do more for HIV and AIDS education, because it provokes the performers and spectators to go deeper, to actively participate in developing the message, and connect it to their own life and behaviour. In this way, Forum Theatre is a rehearsal for life.

As theatre practitioners and activists, we must be purposeful and responsible about how we portray HIV and AIDS issues in Forum Theatre, by asking, 'What is the message that we want to emphasize?' The play should first show that there is a problem. This problem is analysed in the Forum Theatre by looking at its causes, manifestations, and consequences. By doing this, the problem is no longer viewed as a fatality, but as the result of particular actions. When a spectator hears and helps create the message, a change in outlook, attitude or behaviour becomes more likely.

The play should emphasise motives, misbeliefs, accurate facts and possible consequences. It should centre on a dramatic situation, not a righteous slogan. For example, instead of preaching 'you must not have sex when you are young because it is not good,' a Forum Theatre play would rather introduce a young girl who is confronted with the consequences of having unprotected sexual intercourse (such as unwanted pregnancy, acquiring a sexually transmissible infection or HIV, or dismissal from school). In this way, the spectators will sympathise and may even identify with her situation and consider how her story relates to their own lives.

- ” What I've been told: I can hear it.
What I can see: I hold it.
What I do: I know it, I believe in it ”
- ” Forum Theatre is a rehearsal for life ”



As a performing group, imagine yourselves as an audience. What prevention messages would you yourself listen to?

Possible themes for a play about HIV-related issues

The AIDS pandemic is very complex and influenced by a number of social, cultural, economic, and biological factors that can be creatively examined in Forum Theatre. Below are some of the priority problem areas that a dramatic scenario about HIV and AIDS can explore:

1. HIV Prevention

- Fears about HIV and AIDS and misbeliefs about how the virus can be transmitted
- Myths people have about HIV, condoms and cures
- Reasons for abstaining from (or delaying first sexual intercourse) having sexual intercourse
- Faithfulness or consequences of having multiple sexual partners
- Negotiating condom use
- Condom use among married couples
- Stigma related to possessing and buying condoms
- Incorrect or inconsistent use of condoms

2. Testing and disclosure

- Fears about going for VCCT (Voluntary and Confidential Counselling and Testing)
- Asking one's partner to go for VCCT
- Disclosing one's status to a lover, family, friends, employer, or community

3. Positive living and HIV-related stigma

- Responding to HIV- and AIDS- related stigma and discrimination
- Improving the quality of life for people living with HIV
- Positive living
- Lack of access to anti-retroviral treatment
- Impact of HIV and AIDS at the workplace (absenteeism and loss of work opportunities)

4. Other issues

- Peer pressure (at school and elsewhere)
- The influence of peers on when one first has sexual intercourse
- Sexual decision-making and negotiation
- Discussing sexuality with one's parents, children, and other family members
- Transactional sex (sexual relationships based on the exchange of money or material goods; for example, 'sugar daddies')
- Sexual violence and rape
- Religious communities and their views on HIV issues

- Care for children who lost a parent/s to AIDS related diseases
- Traditional healers
- Cultural practices, such as widow cleansing, or widow inheritance
- Risk of HIV transmission through some traditional practices (scarification, tattooing, circumcision, etc.)

Annex A: Examples of Forum Theatre Scenarios and the CD-Rom provide several examples of how to explore HIV-issues on stage.



CD Rom

- examples of how to explore HIV-issues on stage (see "Plays")



Box 2.3. Storyline ideas

Develop an idea for a Forum Theatre play from one of the following premises:

- A woman learns how HIV is spread and suspects her husband has been sleeping around. She depends on the man economically. She does the logical thing and suggests they have safer sex. He does not want to and becomes violent...
- Or vice versa: A man tells his lover he wants her to start using condoms. She thinks he no longer trusts her...
- A restaurant owner discovers that one of his waiters is HIV positive. The boss confronts him and says he does not want his customers to get infected and so must fire the waiter. What can he do?
- The family of a young girl is unable to pay her school fees or buy a new school uniform. The girl is hungry and desperate. A neighbour offers to give her money and presents if she has sex with him. What choice does she have?
- A learner is failing her mathematics class. If she does not pass, she will be held back in school. Her teacher offers to tutor her alone after school. Only, he has more than tutoring in mind...
- A man goes for VCCT and finds out he is HIV positive. How will he tell his partner, with whom he has had unprotected sex?
- Person's friend lives with HIV and is rejected by some members of the community. Together with the friend he or she attempts to change this situation. They propose an idea for a play, which shows what are some of the problems, and some potential solutions for the characters to use.
- A man has invited his girlfriend to go dancing tonight. As he does not know how the party will end, he plans to buy condoms. When he arrives at the shop, there is his neighbour standing in line, and that makes him feel afraid to buy the condoms. Instead he buys something else. Imagine what happens next...

Considerations for using drama for HIV and AIDS sensitisation

In this section, we will look at some points to bear in mind when devising your play so that you do not convey stigmatising or discriminatory attitudes or false information unintentionally.

What meaning will the community walk away with if:

- Hear a character described as a 'helpless victim'?
- Perceive someone who is infected as weak, powerless, or hopeless?
- Observe a character that has developed AIDS never speaking assertively and pitifully crying throughout the play?
- See scenery centred on a coffin or a tombstone?

Will the spectators conclude that it is possible to live positively with HIV? Will they understand that people who are living with HIV are entitled to the same rights as others? Or will they feel justified in making moral judgments?

When creating and rehearsing your play, ask yourself, 'How would someone who is HIV-positive react to what is portrayed? How might they feel about themselves after watching your Forum Theatre piece?' Many people choose not to publicly disclose their status for various reasons; this is one more reason to be ever-mindful of the potential impact your language and the way you speak about HIV and AIDS has on others.

Avoid death scenes in Forum Theatre, as they usually overtake the rest of the dramatic action and will strike the spectators as being most significant. This is not to propose that dying should play no part in theatre. But in Forum Theatre, we want to explore solutions to address difficult situations.

Finally, use inclusive language and avoid reinforcing an

approach of 'them' versus 'us.' This can happen when HIV transmission is shown to be a concern for certain groups. If HIV is only portrayed among foreigners, men who have sex with men, sex workers, or other groups that your audience may not associate with, this could lead the spectators to see HIV and AIDS as an issue of other people.

The next section on Stigmatising Language examines how language can contribute to stigma and discrimination or can positively reinforce and encourage equality.

” How would someone who is HIV-positive feel about themselves after watching your Forum Theatre piece? ”



Stigmatising language

Often, we are unaware of our words' underlying meaning or affects they may provoke. Although we might have the best intentions, our language may contribute to discrimination against people living with HIV. As drama practitioners who engage people in looking at HIV and AIDS issues, we seek to model respectful and judgment-free language, and avoid inadvertently perpetuating HIV related stigma.

In striving to use gender sensitive, non-discriminatory, and culturally appropriate language that is respectful to universal human rights, the following five tips may be useful:

1. Avoid negative connotations. Resist moral judgments about marginalised people and communities or sexual behaviour. An example is to refer to 'unprotected sex' instead of 'risky sex.' Risky contains a value judgment, while unprotected just describes the activity (intercourse without a condom).

2. Be precise. Use the terms 'HIV' and 'AIDS' correctly. Because of their medical complexity and the different meanings the words can take on in different social, economic and cultural contexts. Being precise will make sure the message that is passed on is the same for the sender and the receiver.

In general, to avoid confusion or making incorrect assumptions, use 'people living with HIV' unless you are specifically talking about someone who has developed AIDS. Another example is 'dying of AIDS', instead use 'dying of an AIDS-related illness,' when referring to a person in her/his last days of living with AIDS.

3. Use gender-sensitive language. Gender refers to socially accepted and constructed roles of men and women. Gender

Box 2.4. How We Stigmatize

We ALL stigmatise

We stigmatise when:

- We say things like 'she was promiscuous' and 'he deserves it'
- We isolate people living with HIV and exclude them from participation and decision-making

The MAIN CAUSES of stigma include:

- Insufficient knowledge, disbeliefs and misconceptions about the way that HIV can be contracted
- Moral judgements about people who live with HIV
- Fears about death and disease
- Lack of recognition of stigma

The main FORMS of stigma include:

- Physical and social isolation from family, friends, and community
- Gossip, name calling, and condemnation
- Loss of basic rights, participating and being part of decision making body of one's community

Other forms of stigma include:

- Self-stigma—when people living with HIV blame and isolate themselves
- Stigma by association—when the whole family is affected by stigma
- Stigma by looks/appearance/type of occupation

The EFFECTS of stigma include:

- Kicked out of family, house, work, rented accommodation, organisation, etc
- Dropout from school (resulting from peer pressure, being insulted)
- Depression or its worse consequences (for example, drug or alcohol use)

Source: Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma: A Toolkit for Action. Training guide by the CHANGE project and the Academy for Educational Development (2003).

Box 2.5. Questions to Ask About Stigma When Creating Your Play

- When we talk about sexuality what words do we use? What are we communicating about sexuality?
- Do the messages in our play encourage viewers to care for people living with HIV? Or will our play add to stigma against people who live with HIV?
- If your fellow actors use stigmatising language or make false statements, bring it to their attention so that the integrity of the play's message is preserved.
- If the spect-actors say things that are untrue or stigmatise (by saying something like, 'condoms transmit HIV' or 'people with HIV are sinners and deserve to die'), the Joker should challenge them on it or provoke the audience to respond and not overlook the inappropriate comment.

stereotypes such as women being naturally more sensitive, kind, and caring or men being tough, or harsh by nature often unintentionally find their way into plays. It is important to avoid reproducing stereotypes. Be sensitive when speaking about women and men relations, and ensure that the play's message respects the equal rights of men and women while only using a language that is not discriminating against either sex (male or female).

Avoid having characters that reinforce gender norms and stereotypes, unless the purpose is to critically examine them; in this case, the Joker should discuss this with the audience during the forum and encourage them to evaluate the stereotype.

4. Limit using sensational language. The use of superlatives (the 'worst') and strong adjectives is often an expression of opinion or judgment. Such language should be avoided. For example, do not refer to AIDS as a 'killer disease,' 'scourge,' 'plague' or discuss the 'dreaded HIV and AIDS.' These are sensational terms, which can fuel panic, discrimination, and fatalism. Instead, simply talk about the AIDS pandemic.

Another example is to use 'response to HIV and AIDS' instead of the war against HIV and AIDS. Although the second phrase is used widely, it is considered militaristic and stigmatising and may lead to the mindset that people living with HIV should be 'fought' or eliminated.

5. Discussing specific populations. While speaking about a specific group the best thing to do is to ask someone who belongs to the discussed group to read the script or attend a rehearsal to check for the appropriateness and accuracy of your terminology. If you are portraying someone who is

HIV positive in your play, consider having someone who is living with HIV watch the play and give you feedback on what he or she hears in the script.

Also, try not to speak of 'high risk groups' since the terms implies that belonging to a particular group (versus engaging in certain risky behaviours) can be the cause of contracting HIV. This gives a false sense of security to people who do not identify with the particular group but do behave in a way that puts them at risk for HIV infection.

For example, a sex worker who practices safer sex is at a lower risk for contracting HIV rather than a married man who engages in unprotected sex. The risk involved is due to behaviours that place individuals in positions in which they may be exposed to HIV, not membership in a group.

Box 2.7 Principles to Guide You in Communicating About HIV and AIDS

- Ensure that accurate information is presented.
- Be sensitive to and respect people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.
- Convey messages that do not reinforce the stigmatisation and discrimination of people living with HIV.
- Avoid perpetuating stigma by associating HIV and AIDS with a specific group, community, occupation, ethnicity or country.
- Do not endorse stereotypes, which might provoke exclusion or xenophobia.
- Highlight the risks associated with practices that can lead to contracting HIV.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and confidentiality of people living with HIV.



Box 2.6 Naming Stigma

Ask participants to perform the following drama:

A young woman has been brought up in a religious family. She goes to church every day and follows strict moral values. Then she leaves the village to study as a teacher and finds herself in a very different world from the one she grew up in. She meets someone and has a serious relationship, which lasts two years until she starts to get sick. Her boyfriend blames her for 'bringing this sickness' and leaves her. She returns to the village where her mother welcomes her, but her father wants to chase her. Her mother takes her to the clinic but the nurses are very cold to her. Her father will only let her stay if she sleeps in the shed at the back of the house.

Discussion:

- What happened in the drama?
- Have situations like this happened in your community? Give examples.
- How do you feel about this?

Source: Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma: A Toolkit for Action. Training guide by the Academy for Educational Development and the Change Project (2003).



Think before you play: how are we addressing stigma in this piece?

PART II: THINK BEFORE YOU PLAY

Table 2.1 Common Examples of Incorrect or Stigmatising Language and the Appropriate Terms to Use Instead (Source: UNESCO)

Problematic term	Explanation	Preferred term
AIDS virus	There is no such thing as the AIDS virus. AIDS is a syndrome not a virus. There is only the HIV virus that can cause AIDS.	HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus The virus that causes AIDS
To catch AIDS To contract AIDS	AIDS cannot be caught or transmitted. People can contract HIV.	To become infected with HIV, to contract HIV
PLWHA PLHA	All people living with AIDS also live with HIV, but not all people living with HIV also live with AIDS . It is insensitive to objectify HIV positive people by referring to them as an acronym.	Use 'People living with HIV'
Victims Sufferers	NOT victims, as victims cannot do anything about their situation – people living with HIV can! Avoiding words like victim also helps to promote VCT by providing a more hopeful presentation of what is possible when living with HIV. NOT sufferers, as not all people living with HIV suffer.	People living with HIV (PLHIV)
To die of AIDS	AIDS is not a disease . It is a syndrome or a group of illnesses, resulting from a weakening of the immune system. People die from opportunistic infections or AIDS-related illnesses, such as tuberculosis (TB) or bronchitis.	To die of an AIDS-related illness.
Innocent victims	'Innocent victims' is often used to describe HIV-positive children, orphans due to AIDS or people with medically acquired HIV infection (through blood transfusions, etc.). It wrongly implies that people infected in other ways are guilty of some wrongdoing and deserve punishment. This feeds discrimination, particularly homophobia, and should be avoided.	People with medically acquired HIV (transfusion, health care providers infected during work, etc.) Children with HIV
Prostitute	Prostitute is considered a disparaging term and does not reflect the fact that sex work is a form of employment for a sex worker and not a way of life.	Commercial Sex Worker
Drug abuser Drug addict Junkie	Many people who use drugs consider that they are in control of their use of drugs and not abusing them or addicted to them. It is the act of injecting with a contaminated needle and not the drug use itself that can transmit HIV. Furthermore, drug use is only one part of a drug user's life.	Intravenous Drug User (IDU) Injecting Drug User Drug Use Drug Users Drug misuse
Promiscuous	Promiscuous is judgmental, accusatory and derogatory	Having multiple partners
Homosexual (men)	When addressing men having sex with men (MSM), first inquire about the most appropriate term in use in the specific socio-cultural context. ' MSM ' is an inclusive term that refers to men who have sex with men regardless of their self defined identity (guy, bisexual, or heterosexual), lifestyle, or the status that is imposed on them by their society. 'MSM' simply refers to the sexual behaviour between men.	'Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)'

To learn more, consult the source of this information: UNESCO Guidelines on Language and Content in HIV- and AIDS- Related Materials (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001447/144725e.pdf>)

**PART III:
LET'S CREATE
A FORUM THEATRE
PLAY!**

The construction of the play

In this section, we will look at a few ways that will guide your group in devising a play and then we will explore the seven main elements involved in constructing a Forum Theatre play, which are:

- **Developing the theme**
- **Building the plot**
- **Characterisation**
- **Dialogue**
- **Setting and sound**
- **Scenery, props and costuming**
- **Staging**

The Forum Theatre play is meant to provoke the spectator and raise a sense of indignation revolt toward an issue and instil a need for change in response. The model should have a single, clear message that is portrayed indirectly. When you create a forum play, it is always useful to think in opposites. For instance, if you want to make a skit about good governance, you would do so by depicting examples of bad governance. Or, to put it another way, you could look for examples of where good governance runs into trouble. Viewing an ideal example of how politicians ought to behave does not provoke the audience, but rather makes them feel like they are listening to a preachy sermon, advertisement, or propaganda. Forum Theatre does not give answers or advice. Rather, it asks questions so as to incite answers from the audience.

The Forum Theatre creates a space where the actors and audience learn together, not one where actors give propaganda or a moralising message to the audience. For example, instead of saying 'You must not get drunk because it is not good'; a Forum Theatre drama will present the consequences

of what happens to a man who gets drunk and does some awful things. A Forum Theatre play should not promote a simple slogan like, 'Use condoms.' Rather, the play should show what happens if you do not use a condom (and all the complexities that surround that decision). In this way, people can decide for themselves what they think and what they can do about such situations in real life.

The play or sketch should be relatively short and not exceed ten to fifteen minutes so that there is enough time for the play to be re-enacted during the forum segment. Ideally, it should be of good artistic quality, convincing and pleasant to watch. It should also involve the audience emotionally so that they share the joy and anger of the characters.

As explained in Part I of this toolkit, a Forum Theatre play must first finish on a negative note, leaving the protagonist without a satisfactory solution to her or his problem.

That said, the drama should also end with energy and passion in order to keep the audience interested and concerned enough to want to do something to help the situation. Ideally, the play should tackle shocking and difficult situations that provoke the spectators to leap from their seats, revolted, and insist that they do something to help the character in trouble!

” Forum Theatre does not give answers or advice. It asks questions and incites answers. ”



Box 3.1. Drama Example #1.

A drama could show what happens when a family rejects their son who lives with HIV. In this particular skit, you become concerned for the son, gain an understanding of the challenges he faces, and become outraged by the way his parents treat him. Instead of just giving a solution to the audience (such as having the young man bring his father to an HIV counsellor to get support and information), the play simply shows what the problem is. Afterwards, the Joker may ask 'With whom can we work to help these parents accept their son?' Then the public can express many ideas to improve the situation.



Creating a play together

Once you have come up with the storyline, it is time to develop the script – either through writing, improvisation, or a mixture of both. The play can be the work of a single author, a group of authors, or a collective creation of many people. It takes a group of very motivated people to work together as a truly complete ensemble where everyone has an equal role. As a result, it is more likely that there will be a leader guiding the creative process and facilitating input and ideas from everyone involved.



Find out more:
- Variations: newspaper theatre

Box 3.2. Ways to Spark Your Creativity

Here are a few exercises to initiate the group's creativity in the development of an original sketch that will resonate with each performer.

Newspaper Theatre

Purchase different newspapers. Collect all the stories that cover HIV, in particular, those about individual people and their personal experiences. Excerpts from any of these articles can become a starting point from which to create a dramatic sketch and in some case it may be just a paragraph or two sentences that grab your attention. Then, using the group's imagination, ask, 'What do we think could have been the beginning of this story, what could be the end, and how can we develop this further?'. Out of respect for the individuals mentioned in the original article, always give your characters different names from those of the actual people unless explicit permission is given.

Interviews

When possible, interview people who are affected by HIV and AIDS. Ask them to tell you their personal stories and share significant memories; however, use the utmost sensitivity and consideration when conducting the interview. Do not be aggressive or invasive and respect their privacy. Use elements of their stories as the basis for a play but be sure to gain their explicit permission for the use any direct references, names or personal information.

Actors' Stories

If trust has been developed in the performing group, ask the actors to share some of their real-life experiences with each

other. 'How have you personally been affected by HIV or AIDS? Do you recall a moment in your life when you experienced oppression, possibly in a relationship or in the area of health? What happened? What was it like for you?'

Use elements of several people's stories to create a scenario that will touch and provoke.

Skit Creation

Divide into smaller groups of three to five people. Give each group sufficient time away to create and practice a skit. Afterwards reconvene all the groups and have each one perform their sketch. This exercise can be conducted with any number of instructions to keep things fun and surprising.

Suggestions for skit assignments:

- Give each group a different object, person and place to include in the skit that they create.
- Give each individual a role of a famous person or character to play in his or her skit.
- Give each group a well-known event or occasion on which to base their skit (for example, a baptism, football game, or wedding).
- Give each group a type of relationship to explore (for example, mother and children, siblings, students and teacher, etc.)
- Give each group a specific issue or theme on which to base a short skit (asking a partner to go for an HIV test, peer pressure, or positive living).

Skits can combine any of the above or countless other options to keep ideas flowing. The purpose is to get groups working together to create and perform a short play for an audience.



Developing a theme

A Forum Theatre experience must provide the audience with entertainment and knowledge. A good forum play has a declared purpose. As a performing group, create a goal that will inspire you and the people participating in your forum. The task of a Forum Theatre play is to present a challenge and emphasise the causes of the difficult situation. The play gives an 'anti-message' from which the audience can take away a positive message. The piece does not necessarily have to perfectly model effective behaviour, but rather, it should depict a mistake or failure that will incite the audience to react to the harmful behaviour performed on stage. This will ensure that the audience finds new solutions and methods to improve the situation portrayed.

Because of its unpredictable, personal, and inciting nature, Forum Theatre has the potential to create unexpected results. Its risky potential is contained if the message is reliably received. Therefore, the group should carefully consider the message they want to express and how best to communicate it dramatically.

After learning about the problems that affect the community, consider all the issues you think would be worthwhile for them to discuss. What messages do you want the spectators to walk away with? List them. Then, from all the topics identified, select one theme that you think is especially urgent or relevant for your audience(s). Themes could include items such as: a new partner's pressure to have unprotected sex; the difficulty of a married woman in negotiating the use of condoms; the stigma facing children whose parents live with HIV; the pressure of older men on girls to have sex in exchange of a gift; the misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted; the difficulties and consequences related to disclosing one's HIV status and many other topics...

The theme of the drama should be clear, precise, and present one issue. If this is not clear and intentional, you could easily get into trouble when the forum starts. The Joker cannot control what happens during the forum, which can easily end up addressing unintended periphery issues if the message is not clear.

The force of a dramatic message relies on the repetition of the same message under different images and dramatic situations and on the repulsive effect of counter examples.

If the play references a number of problems—say, alcohol use, HIV-related stigma, sexual abuse, or poverty—the forum that follows the model may go in a very different direction than what was intended and the audience may be confused about what to do. Do not raise two issues in one play; leave no choice for the audience but to discuss the single issue you wish to explore with them. You may have only one chance to be with your audience, so it is important to get the message right the first time.



As a performing group, brainstorm all the potential issues and messages you would like to address in your play. From the list, select one theme that the group believes is most urgent and relevant to the community who will watch it.

” The theme of the drama should be clear, precise and present one issue. ”



Do not attempt to cover every aspect of HIV and AIDS in your play. Present one issue for your audience to explore. The success of Forum Theatre depends on how reliably the message is presented.



The theme is communicated by presenting a problem and its cause (not by depicting an 'ideal' example of how to live or by presenting a slogan).



Theme: the underlying meaning or main idea of a play



Find out more:
- select one theme
- get the message right the first time



The model of your play must present the problem you choose and its implications as clear as possible. All aspects of the drama should emphasise this.

– For example, in a story of a man who is violent towards his partner who suggested using a condom, the play should ask: why is he so abusive? If the reason is related to his culture's strict gender roles, then making a reference to this should be made in the dialogue. The actor's body language, positioning, and dialogue, should reinforce this as well.



Box 3.3. Drama Example #2.

The participants in the International Theatre Workcamp on HIV Prevention and Care discovered how the wrong message can be conveyed when touring a play throughout secondary schools in Wakiso, Uganda. The original message of the play was intended to demonstrate how negative peer pressure can be resisted. In the play, one character, Stella, had been happily dating Peter for some time. While socialising with his friend, Notorious, Peter admits that he has not had sex with Stella. Notorious is shocked and says 'Peter, you're not a real man if you don't have sex. You should be enjoying your love with Stella the same way I do with my partner.' Peter feels shy but decides to discuss this with Stella. He gives her an ultimatum: 'If you don't agree to do this, Stella, I will find another girlfriend.' Stella is devastated. Her mother reminds her to focus on her studies and wait until she is married to have an intimate relationship with a man. Stella's friend Bako disagrees and says 'Peter will love you more if you have sex with him.' Stella is confused about whose

– In a drama about how neighbours ostracise someone who is HIV positive, the playwrights should focus on what causes people not to care for someone living with HIV, and not what causes the infection itself. The problem here is stigma, which is in itself an obstacle to prevention.

EXAMINE THE THEME

When you write a play, it is extremely important to either have good knowledge of the theme yourself or consult with

advice she should follow: her mother's or Bako's? The play ends with Peter demanding, 'What's it going to be? Yes or no?!' Not wanting to lose her boyfriend, Stella nods hesitantly. Appearing anxious and terrified, she leaves the stage, holding hands with Peter...

The performance group intended for the students to intervene by demonstrating different strategies that Stella and Peter could use to resist the influence of their friends. Instead, students insisted that Stella should do as her mother said and abstain. If she did not, she was a 'bad person.' Each spect-actor's attempt had Stella triumphantly resist Peter's advance. Though the intended message was about how to handle peer pressure—the students instead heard was, 'abstain from sex... or else!' This is what can happen when the message of a play is moralistic or unclear. The post-performance dialogue had an atmosphere where only one kind of response seemed correct. The students did not express differing viewpoints.



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theme to advise you on which you are writing. With Forum Theatre, this is even more important, for two reasons:

- 1) The audience should be able to identify with the characters and their problems (strive to accurately portray them).
- 2) The actors must know enough about the theme in order to be able to improvise effectively during the forum.

Having decided on the theme of your play, begin studying the topic further. Evaluate how much you already know about the topic. Read whatever relevant material you can find. Talk to as many different people as you can who represent different viewpoints, occupations, and segments of society. If you choose to create a play about a family caring for someone who lives with AIDS, try to speak to actual parents, siblings, and children who are experiencing this situation; to people who are infected and have had different experiences sharing that news to their families; to health workers, counsellors, neighbours, community leaders, and other experts. In this way, you will learn everything you can about the issue and possible motivations and concerns, of which you might not have been aware. This learning process will contribute to the authenticity of the play and the complexity of its characters.

Once the script or storyline has been created, it should be discussed with someone who knows about the issue, for instance, some of the people who were interviewed during the preparation phase. Incorporate their suggestions into the piece before rehearsing it with the actors.

Once the play has been developed and rehearsed, you should try to pre-test it, meaning, perform it for people that reflect the audiences you will be playing for. Afterwards, ask this

audience what they thought of the play, what stood out, and what they think the message of the play was. After receiving their feedback, make any necessary changes so that the message is conveyed as clearly as possible.

Box 3.4. Being Responsible with the Theme



Theatre is effective because it touches one's emotions and makes a lasting impression (which may be recalled by the spectator long after the performance). The performing group must therefore exercise great responsibility regarding the message they portray, in order for the spectators not to walk away with inaccurate information or unintended conclusions about the issue.

Box 3.5. Things to Keep in Mind When Selecting Your Theme



- Carefully choose the theme of your play after you have learned about the community you will perform for as well as the problems they are most concerned with
- Look at ONE main issue in the play
- Make sure everyone in the performing group learns everything they can about the issue
- Interview people who know about the issue and get their advice about how to dramatise the story



Motivation: the reason a character says or does things.
Script: the written text of a play.
Conflict: the point in a play where two opposing persons, forces, or ideas meet, which gives rise to dramatic action.

Building the plot

THE IDEA

We are often inclined to think that a good idea for a drama is found at the heart of exceptional events. But a good idea for a Forum Theatre play can actually be inspired by ordinary experiences in your daily life. Simply observing what is happening around you each day, can allow you to discover dramatic treasures all around. It is just a matter of being interested, examining everything, and trying to find connections among ordinary events in ways that are interesting and attract attention.

THE CONFLICT

Conflict is the fundamental aspect of every play. Without it there is no play. Like a voyeur, the spectator enjoys watching different stages of a conflict evolve. For that to occur, you must propose a strong conflict. The conflict should be based on almost irreconcilable differences and the most important thing to remember is that the nature of the conflict must be clearly depicted. If the conflict is not apparent to the spectators, they will feel no urgency to get involved.

THE UNUSUAL

The play should spark the spectator's imagination and curiosity. Even though the situations depicted in the play (or the ideas that inspired it) might be commonplace, the conflict should, as much as is possible, strive to be bold, unusual, and surprising. The spectator should be intrigued and find the premise inspiring. A conflict that is too ordinary is less likely to captivate and touch the spectator. To attain this novel and exciting flavour, exercise imagination and

creativity. Otherwise, the crowd will be bored and disinterested.

THE CONTRAST

Within this conflict, truly divergent interests and positions should exist. The needs of the characters should clash and tangle so that a dramatic crux can be created. Create tension to allow the conflict to take place. Because people are so accustomed to hearing the usual messages about HIV and AIDS (abstinence, faithfulness, and condom use), it is crucial to create an original, spicy, and intriguing situation. The audience must be surprised, and view the performance from the edge of their seats!

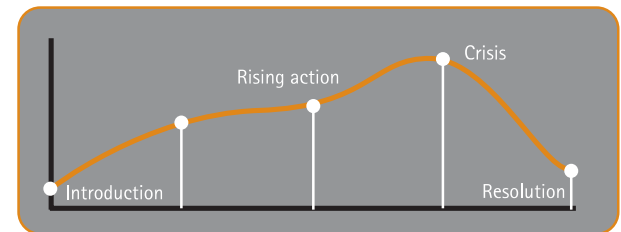


Having chosen one theme, create an idea of a story to bring to the stage. Decide on a central conflict around which the action will revolve. What can you add to provide contrast and something unusual to the story?

Having researched and developed a theme for your play, it is time to create a story. A dramatic plot is a story that brings the characters involved in a conflict of interests face to face. A play's dramatic curve comprises four sections, as depicted in Table 3.1.:

- 1) An introductory scene,
- 2) A rising action,
- 3) A crisis, and
- 4) The resolution.

Table 3.1. The Dramatic Plot



The plot scenario, as seen in the graph in Table 3.1., must have a beginning, a middle stage, and an end. Once you have these, decide how to build the central conflict and create smaller conflicts that involve other characters. Be careful that the sequence of events is accurate and believable. It is not realistic to show a character that, in a moment of passion, has unprotected sex with his girlfriend on Friday, only to suddenly feel sick with AIDS on Saturday! Such a scene would confuse and give false information to the spectators about how HIV affects the body.

The introductory scene: The first part of the play presents what is at stake in the looming conflict, introduces the key

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characters, and refer to the obstacles that the characters will have to face before attempting to resolve the conflict. These first scenes must be captivating without overloading the audience with too much information. The scene must give the spectator the desire to find out how the events will unfold for the characters and convey relevant information about what happened before the play began.

Rising action: Rising action is when the plot thickens and the story progresses. The nature of the characters and their motivations are clarified as we see them handle minor conflicts. When deciding how the story will unfold, choose only the most interesting and important events that relate to the drama. Leave out any unnecessary information that is not critical to the story. Keep the play short and to the point. Build on suspense. Do not give the audience time to anticipate or expect what will happen next. Leave them wondering what else will happen; let the audience follow you through the play.

The crisis: The crisis, or climax, is the most intense moment of the play. At this stage, give the impression that everything is at a standstill and there is no constructive solution to the conflict(s). The opposition reaches its strongest level at this point. In that moment, the characters are helpless, as their search for positive solutions has not yielded much.

The resolution, or denouement, is one of the most sensitive parts of a drama. When the tensions and conflict have reached a level high enough to earn the spectators' allegiance, you cannot suddenly bring everything together with a magic wand, destroying all the imaginative work marvellously proposed so far. On the contrary, the author is compelled to find a smooth, clever conclusion, which stays true to the

conflict and leaves the problem unresolved and the spectators eager to intervene.

Some performing groups choose to end the model play at the horrific moment of crisis, when the crowd is most incensed, skipping the resolution phase entirely. This approach can also be effective. The choice is yours so long as you consider all the advantages and disadvantages involved.



Box 3.6. Building the Plot

- Develop the plot of a story about a man who is scared to purchase condoms. Choose a starting point, middle stage, and moment of crisis.
- Propose three possible resolutions for the same story and choose the one you think is most appropriate. Justify your choice.
- Sketch out possible ideas for an introductory scene, rising action, crisis, and resolution of the play you have been developing. What happens in your story? How can you amplify the dramatic tension so that it will captivate your audience?



Plot: what happens in a play; the sequence of events, generally including rising action, crisis, and resolution.

Rising action: the part of a plot where matters are discovered which give rise to conflict.

Crisis: a decisive point in the plot which determines how the rest of the dramatic action will unfold; the point of greatest dramatic tension.

Resolution: the ending to a play's conflict; the wrapping up of events.

Characterisation: the process of developing a personality or character in a play (through thought, action, costuming, attitude, and dialogue).

Characterisation

The play relies on consistent and convincing characters. A character is the fictional person in a play, represented by an actor. The model play should give some information about the character and emphasise her/his point of view, beliefs, and the consequences of her/his actions. The motivations of each character must be clear to the viewer.

The protagonist is the most crucial character as s/he is most intimately affected by the central conflict. Remember that, even though the characters might have to deal with very difficult issues, they are not passive victims who cannot change the situation. While the protagonist experiences a bad situation in the play, s/he should be presented with opportunities to take action. The model play portrays a situation where the efforts of the protagonist are inadequate and fail to lead to a satisfactory resolution.

The play should have a single character that prevents the protagonist from getting what s/he desires—the antagonist. If the story involves a problem related to a health care system (for example, difficulties acquiring medicine), the institution must be represented by one concrete character, like a nurse or health counsellor who personifies the institution—an actual human being with whom the protagonist will interact and struggle.

The antagonist or oppressor that causes and/or presents the problem has been misinformed, is in error, and therefore has opinions that can be changed. Be careful not to inadvertently make the antagonist character too sympathetic. Her or his character should be complex and recognisable to the audience but not so charming or humorous that the audience identifies with that character more than the protagonist in trouble.

The characters of the protagonist and the antagonist should

have at least one ally each—a lesser, supporting character that helps them to fulfil their desires. The spect-actors playing the protagonist can turn to these friends or sympathisers for assistance during the forum. When writing the play, you can refer to other potential allies that do not appear in the model's action. For example, you can refer to the existence of a teacher, uncle, neighbour, counsellor, policeman/woman, or a friend, without actually meeting that character. Be sure to mention the potential ally twice in the dialogue so that the spect-actors will remember to call upon them during the forum. One of the actors prepares to be this character in case a spect-actor wants to involve them in finding a solution. The Joker can even call on another spect-actor to assume the new role if she or he senses that there is someone in the audience ready to come on stage. This increases the variety of strategies the spect-actors will attempt during the forum.

Flesh out the biography and personality of each character. Who are they? Where do they come from? What do they want? Even the most minor characters should be well rounded. The actors should imagine and explore their character's motivation, personality, background and relationship to the other characters in order to be convincing on stage and to be able to improvise during the Forum when the spect-actors suggest on how to change the situation.

Constantly seek to portray the characters as sincerely as possible. Explore their complexities, psychological tendencies, and personal biographies to avoid presenting flat, stereotypical or shallow characters. The better you know your character the easier you will find new ideas to add to the conflicts and enrich the primary idea.



Who are the characters in your play? Describe them in regards to personal details, social status and their position in the drama (i.e. are they a major or minor character?), how do they relate to the conflict and so on.



Mention the existence of potential allies twice in the model play. Spect-actors can call upon these characters when the scenes are replayed in the forum.



A character is not a puppet. He or she must have a complex life and experience sincere emotion in the face of conflict. For this reason, the author of the play and actors must question their characters to explore what underlies their behaviour in the play.



Ally: a character united with either the protagonist or antagonist, who supports them in achieving their desires

Dialogue

Box 3.7. Acquainting the Actor With Her/His Role

Actors can ask these questions of their character:

- What do I want? Be very clear about what motivates your character. What is your desire? If you are unsure, your performance will not be convincing.
- Why am I in this situation? What caused me to be here, what is at the source of my condition?
- Where am I? You must know where you are, in order to know who you are. Ask, where does this story take place? What is life like for people in that community? Is this characterisation true to life for people in this community? For example, the kind of HIV-related stigma that occurs in a big city is experienced quite differently than in a rural area—one's performance should take such things into account.
- How old am I and what is my status in relation to the others?
- What is my relationship to each of the other characters? How can I make that clear to the audience?



The dialogue onstage carries the relationships between the characters. Dramatic dialogue should be coherent, simple, and lively. The dialogue should keep the spectators concerned and attentive. The spectator must not be distracted by any irrelevant information.

The play should give the audience the impression that it is witnessing an event occurring in real life. In drama, we try to imitate life and so characters should speak to one another purposefully. Each meaning should be conveyed with as few words as possible, to keep it clear; the spectators should easily comprehend the message directed to them. Actors need to speak clearly, in a lively and natural way and loud enough to be heard by the audience. This seems easy and obvious, but it is crucial to keep the play engaging.

The dialogue should reflect the way of thinking and background of the characters who speak. For example, a twelve-year-old character should speak, act, play, and move through space as a twelve-year-old would and not like an adult.

Do not be afraid to use movement and action in the course of the dialogue. The audience wants to watch people interact, not stand like frozen statues. Use the entire stage, move around, and show expression. Keep the action exciting. If the play has a long family conversation, where everyone stays seated by the fire, the audience will quickly lose interest. An outburst, some tension, or an urgent movement will keep spectators wanting more.



- Write a dialogue between two of your characters. Reread it and ask, is each word necessary? Is it possible to convey the same message with fewer words?
- Make three characters speak about a conflict. Express emotion and use movement to make the dialogue lively.

” Keep the action exciting; an outburst, some tension, an urgent movement, will keep the spectators wanting more. ”



Avoid having characters make long monologues or chat unnecessarily



To help the audience understand the story and the relationships between the characters, say the name of each character at least twice during the play.



Dialogue: the words spoken by actors on stage.

Setting and sound

Unlike some conventional theatre where people are asked to come to an enclosed playhouse, Forum Theatre goes directly to the people. According to the purpose and type of your play, give careful consideration when selecting a place to perform it. A forum can take place anywhere there is room for people to gather. This is yet another area in the planning where you can be creative.

The Forum Theatre play can take place in a performance venue (such as a theatre, cinema, or arts venue) or in a public place (such as a market, public square, taxi rank, schoolyard, workplace, park, church, bar, nightclub, street, or wherever there is space for people to gather). Identify a location that is busy, where there is likelihood of finding a potential audience. Pick a time of day when your audience will be available. In general, admission should be free and available to all who want to participate.

Once you have chosen the site, then the task is to transform it into a theatrical space. The stage should not be too wide; otherwise it would scatter the game and energy. Nor should it be too narrow as the actors will feel crowded and constrained. If the performance takes place in the open air of a semi-circular area, it is important to put enough seats or mats on the ground so that a large part of the audience can sit. This will increase what the audience is able to hear and see and will help control an audience that would otherwise tend to move around and be inattentive. Have the area of the stage clear so that as the audience arrives, enough room remains for the performance to occur and be visible to all.

Using a sound system can help the audience to hear the performance clearly, especially what happens during the

forum as spect-actors tend to speak more quietly than actors. Be careful that the handling of microphones does not distract from the action. The use of a microphone should not prevent spontaneous reactions from the spectators (for example, if they must wait for it to be passed around). Rather, have several microphones available, if possible, so that people can express themselves freely and as soon as they have the urge. It can also be argued that by not using a public sound system, the audience is encouraged to sit closer to the stage and intensify their engagement (rather than sitting at a safe distance, detached from the action). The use of microphones can also be a reason for spectators to be afraid to take the floor. If you decide not to use any sound system the Joker will have to solicit the spect-actors if they do not speak loud enough..

” A forum can take place anywhere there is room for people to gather. ”



Take a walk. Visit a market, park, or town centre. Notice the public places where people meet or pass through. Would these spaces serve a performance well? Where could the stage be? Is there enough room for people to gather? What time of day would attract the biggest audience? How could you manage other street noise so that the performance can be heard?



Scenery, props and costumes

Now we will examine the physical environment of a play: the scenery, props and costumes used by actors, and the stage. Designate a single entrance onto the stage, marking the ground if necessary. All actors should enter and exit the stage from that point. The actors must know where there are coming from; if they do not, the play will not be convincing. A good stage must be balanced; avoid having all the action and characters concentrated on one side without a particular reason.

You do not need a lot of furniture; one or two items can symbolically represent the location where the action takes place: a gas bottle and a pot for the kitchen, a stool and a glass for the bar, a chair with clothes on it and a bedside table for the sleeping room, and so forth. Use props that are appropriate to the story and find objects that are commonly used in the community's households. Use objects realistically; for example, take time to eat; show the action happening in real time so that the spectators are convinced that the character truly is eating breakfast. Remember, the audience must feel what you feel.

Costumes visibly identify characters. Each character's clothes and props should make their status and role visibly obvious. Give an old man a walking stick; cover the head of a married woman, dress children in a school uniform, and so on. Also, designate an aspect of the character's costume, like a scarf, a bag or a pipe, which can be given to the spect-actor to help them assume the role during the forum.

Select props and costumes that can be used during the forum to make new scenes and characters appear credible. If a doctor is mentioned in the play, have a white lab coat or a stethoscope on hand.

Painted banners may be used to make a message extra clear to the audience. For example, an adolescent who is involved in a human rights campaign at school may hold up a banner, which lists some of the rights. This visual aid supports what is being said in the dialogue.



What is the setting of your play? What are some simple objects that will visually create that environment? What props and costumes will make the action and the nature of the characters obvious?

” Give the spect-actor a representative object or piece of clothes of the character whose role they assume during the forum. ”



If the story goes to a new place for example from a schoolyard to a garden then change the set!



Set: the physical environment of a play
Stage: the space where actors perform a play
Props: physical objects used by actors on stage

Staging

The play should appear active, shimmering and above all, rhythmic. You can freely incorporate other artistic resources into the production to help it come alive. Music, singing, poetry, traditional dance, and audiovisual images or videos, can all add intrigue, variety and bring added emphasis to specific key moments during the performance.

Make realistic use of the space. For example, it would appear unnatural to have all the characters sitting in a straight line. Use the space to represent the characters' differing power status. For example, an authoritarian father can be seated in a large chair, with his legs apart, in front of his daughter who sits meekly on the ground behind him. The actor's physical position should reinforce the dynamics of the plot and resonate with local cultural practices. Ask, 'How do wives sit with their husbands in this community?' The stage setting should reflect this.

When speaking, actors must always face the audience and speak clearly, mindful to make themselves heard. If they do not, the audience will not want to participate in the play. If the audience is placed all around you, make sure that you face everyone in the audience at various intervals and that they can see you from the front. Do not stand still too long, but do not move without a reason either. Your words, gestures and movements must be meaningful and justified; otherwise you will render the play nervous and hectic and distract the audience from the actual message.

A critical moment can be highlighted by using any of the actor's resources (body, voice, positioning), music, a lighting system, or one of the most efficient dramatic resources: silence. Silence can be used before or after the significant moment. If the sequence is meant to lead the spect-actors into deep reflection, allow the silence to be sustained,

The actor's part

emphasising the psychological atmosphere. Meanwhile, the actor who is inwardly experiencing this conflict can move forward.

Box 3.8. Tips and Exercises on Staging



Keep in Mind

- Actors must not get tired in Forum Theatre!
- Remember, there is a clear difference between the character you want to portray and yourself. The character in a play is not you; do not put too much of yourself into your character!
- Use the names of the other characters in your dialogue, so that the audience can learn who is who.
- Be mindful of the language you use and the message it conveys. For example, if your character's role is to care for the oppressed one, then as their ally, you should avoid contributing to the stigma they experience by saying something accusatory like 'I told you not to go there, you never listen...'
- Keep the dialogue brief. If you deliver a long speech, you will lose the audience's attention.



Avoid

Avoid turning the character into a fool by making him/her look ridiculous.



Exercises

- Choose a character from your play or one of the scenarios in this toolkit.
- Tell the life story of this character, as you imagine it.
- What does this character desire and why?
- Walk like this character. Speak like this character.

Participation in Forum Theatre is an artistic and social choice. A conventional theatre actor considers her/himself an artist. A Forum Theatre actor considers her/himself as an artist with a social mission.

In Forum Theatre, actors must be able to think on their toes, listen to each other, and take offers from fellow actors as well as return them, especially during the forum. An actor cannot predict what the audience will do or say, and so, must be able to react on the spot and respond in a way that is consistent with their character. The actors have only one instrument: the body, which they must care for. Physical exercises are as important as one's psychological preparation.

Qualities that a Forum Theatre actor should seek to develop:

- A creative mind and the ability to react and improvise on the spot, while remaining true to one's character.
- The ability to listen and act according to a change or new suggestion from the spect-actor, in order to match one's own attitude and approach.
- The wisdom to distinguish whether the suggested change is reasonable or not, to decide whether to submit or resist the proposed action.

One of the greatest qualities of an actor is sincerity. During preparation and performance, the actor must concentrate and develop a great ability to listen. If s/he does not listen to the other actors and to the rhythm of the play, the performance will become awkward and inauthentic.

” A Forum Theatre actor is an artist with a social mission ”



Be careful

Do not use the real names of your actors in the drama. This helps maintain the boundary between actor and character.



Caution

Find out more:
- an artist with a social mission

The actor plays in the forum

When the scenes are re-enacted, the actors must be alert and ready to replay the sequence indicated by the Joker at a moment's notice. At the first signal, the actor playing the central oppressed character transfers her/his role to the spect-actor. The actor gives an element of their costume to the spect-actor who wishes to replace them, so that the latter becomes the character. The actor playing the oppressor gets ready to resume the oppression again.

In the forum, the actors should stick to the same storyline to avoid confusing the spect-actor with new information. Allow the spect-actor to be the one to change the action. The original relationships between the characters (established in the model play) remain consistent in the forum.

Improvisation must happen within the context of the issue at hand. No matter what the spect-actor offers, it is the task of the actors to relate it to the issue at hand. If the intervention strays from the theme, simply bring it back. Do not allow the forum to go off in an irrelevant direction. For example, if something like this occurs, you can say: 'This is an interesting idea, but it doesn't solve my problem! What can I do?'

Actors can help the Joker provoke the crowd by addressing them directly (in character), by asking them something like: 'Can you believe he did that to me?' or 'What options do I have? What can I do? What would you say to him?'

THE 'YES, BUT'

During the forum, the game of the actor playing the antagonist (who is the troublemaker) relies on the 'yes, but' technique. When a spect-actor comes on stage and proposes

a new idea or condition, the actor accepts it (the 'yes'). Subsequently, the actor puts forward another idea or a new attitude that logically results from the proposed change (the 'but'). This is a new challenge for the spect-actor to respond to. It forces the spect-actor to be spontaneous, think on her/his feet, and further their idea. After all, if the forum resembles the real world, it must pose real challenges. In real life, problems usually aren't resolved with just one simple action. When the actor offers a 'but' statement, it gives the spect-actor the opportunity to rehearse a potential strategy to use in real life. For example, in a play about alcohol and peer pressure, a spect-actor could try a strategy like: 'I don't feel like drinking tonight. Come, let's dance instead.' The antagonist might then consent to dance ('yes'), but say 'everyone is drinking malwa (local brew), I cannot enjoy myself without it. Here, take some' (the 'but').

The antagonist can ask the spect-actor a series of questions to provoke the spect-actors to clarify their opinions and say more about what they are trying to accomplish. The actor should listen carefully for any subtle changes that occur in the spect-actor's performance and modify her/his own attitude, language, tone, and context in return.

The other actors make sure that the spect-actors do more than just speak, but play with the dramatic situation. The actors do this by inviting the spect-actors to perform actions, emphasizing the dialogue's expressiveness, leading them around the stage, and making the spect-actors play with props. If a spect-actor is nervous on stage or not playing the game energetically, the other actors should pull them into a playful situation rather than permit them to just give a speech or stand still. The actor often reformulates or pretends to misunderstand the spect-actors' ideas in order



Avoid

Actors, let the spect-actors try out their idea. It is not useful to jump in and completely block their attempts to improve the situation by being reasonable.



Be careful

Actors should position themselves between the spect-actor and the audience to make sure the spect-actor always faces the crowd. If a spect-actor speaks quietly, an actor can pretend they have not heard what was said to provoke the spect-actor to speak louder.

to raise their interest and provoke them to be more precise.

During the confrontation with the spect-actor, the antagonist can be convinced to change her/his ways and surrender to the spect-actor's idea. This should happen gradually. When the antagonist admits defeat at last, it must seem logical. This change in character should only occur if something new crops up. As long as the spect-actor does not propose something new, the oppressor should keep on playing from the same position. But when a spect-actor offers a reasonable argument, the antagonist should accept it!

The 'yes, but' lasts as long as the Joker thinks that the spect-actor's proposals do not resolve the problem in a satisfactory way. The forum is only successful if, at the end of a sequential replay, the antagonist gives in and is willing to change her/his position in response to the spect-actor's strategy. Ultimately, the Joker will ask the audience to determine whether the idea works or not.

AND WHEN IT IS ALL OVER . . .

After the model has been performed, the sequences replayed, and the final discussion with the audience has taken place, there is one last thing to do: acknowledge the performers! An excellent way to do this involves having the actors introduce themselves in front of the audience.

The actors line up and one by one, name the character they played, give their real names, and what they personally believe about the issues in the play. It is powerful to hear how the actors view their character's opinions, what they personally believe, and how they exercise responsibility in life. Part of each person's costume can be removed while

this is happening, for extra effect. The actors can say: 'I was playing the role of . . . My real name is . . . And I believe that . . .'

The actors can use this moment to summarize the key points they want the audience to walk away with, emphasising the central message of the play. At last, the audience can applaud the actors and the actors can acknowledge the audience in return for their excellent participation!

Box 3.9. Important Things to Remember About Actors and Their Roles



- During the forum, the actors should stick to the original storyline and characterisation until the spect-actor proposes a change. Do not introduce new information, which conflicts with what was shown in the model.
- No matter what the spect-actor offers, the actors must relate it to the issue in question.
- The actor playing the oppressor should not have an inflexible position. The point is not for the actors to win at this game, but for the spect-actor to succeed by proposing a good solution.
- Actors can introduce themselves at the end of the forum. This lets them detach from their character and declare their true beliefs in front of the audience.

” When a spect-actor offers a reasonable argument, the antagonist should accept it! ”



Keep in mind that the actor playing the antagonist must avoid having a fixed and inflexible position. A rigid actor will discourage the spect-actor and give the impression that the issue is irresolvable, that there is no solution to the problem. Every problem has to be seen as solvable (through community awareness and solidarity) and every antagonist must be shown as a person who can ultimately learn from his or her errors of judgement or behaviour.



The 'yes, but' technique: method whereby the antagonist first accepts a change proposed by the spect-actor and then responds with a new opposing attitude, resulting from the proposed change.

The joker's part

Think of the Joker as a host. The Joker is responsible for the whole process and maintains a close eye on the audience at all times. S/he intervenes throughout the forum as the audience's ally. The Joker explains the rules of the game and makes the spect-actors feel at ease when the sequences are replayed. The spectators should identify with, believe, and be interested in the Joker. The Joker presides over the forum by speaking directly to the public, determines the order of sequences to the forum as requested by the public, and stops the replay of a scene when the essential part seems to have been told.

The Joker encourages the public to say what they really think and to propose solutions. Then the Joker consults the public to learn whether the spect-actor's proposition is acceptable or not, if it is magical or plausible. The Joker can ask the spect-actors to say more about what they were attempting or ask another volunteer to play.

The actors also have an ally in the Joker, who helps them find useful replies that keep the spectacle lively. Should the occasion arise, the Joker can bring the forum back around to the intended issue by nudging the actors and prompting them with additional points to make, if they get stuck. The Joker helps the actors incite the spect-actors to be more precise about the logic of their proposed change. The Joker is an expert and must be able to quickly provide the right information to make the forum move forward.



” Jokers ask open-ended questions and are ready to hear what the crowd offers, even if it is not what they were looking for or expected to see. ”

Table 3.2. Ten Steps to Good Facilitation

1. Ask questions

Use simple, clear, and 'open' questions that allow for many different answers and discussion.

2. Wait for responses

Give people time to think and come up with an answer. Do not overwhelm them with more questions.

3. Encourage everyone to contribute

Make eye contact, use hands, walk close to shy people and use names.

4. Use minimal encouragements

'Yes...I see...and then?tell me more...!' They help keep the person talking.

5. Listen actively

Use eye contact and body language. Praise and encourage—but do not over praise.

6. Rephrase

Briefly restate what people say in your own words, to make sure you have heard and understood.

7. Probe

Ask follow-up questions to explore issue and make it clearer—'Why? Tell me more. Can you explain further?'

8. Redirect

Get others to contribute: 'She said..... Do you agree? What do others think?'

9. Observe

Look around and see who is participating and who is left out. Are people still interested?

10. Summarise

Restate what people have said in a simple, brief form. This will make it easier for people to contribute.

Source: Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma: A Toolkit for Action. Training guide by the Academy for Educational Development and the Change Project (2003).

The joker's character

The Joker figure is, in different contexts and combinations, the director, referee, facilitator and workshop leader; in the context of Forum Theatre, the Joker is the person who acts as intermediary between audience and performers, and is attached to no one party—just as the Joker in a pack of cards belongs to no one suit but floats between them (Jackson 2002, p. xxvi).

The theatre Joker who makes people laugh (think of the verb, joke) and ensures that the spectacle is always entertaining, will have an easy time getting volunteers to come on stage. He or she strives to create a playful atmosphere by emphasising that here, anything can be tried. The effective Joker displays mastery of the topic, is eloquent, and has the ability to direct questions to the public in different ways (such as asking questions of individuals and the group). The Joker can act as a narrator or storyteller, if needed.

Jokers are democratic and let as many people in the audience make themselves heard as possible by creating a non-judgmental environment where all ideas can be expressed. They create an atmosphere of true debate by striving to bring out the minority's views. They encourage the silent to speak, but never force anybody to express themselves if they choose not to. The Joker should appear engaged, curious, and neutral, and should not share her/his own opinions, for example, by saying 'that was a very good idea' or 'I'm not sure about that.' Jokers ask open-ended questions and are ready to hear what the crowd offers, even if it is not what they were looking for or expected to see.

The Joker must be animated, confident, and charismatic. She/he should avoid having long discussions with the audience, but prefer to see their ideas on the stage. The Joker acts a bit like a referee, protecting the actors and managing discussion. She/he will not let the audience

evaluate a spect-actor's dramatic performance or to personally criticise them. Rather, they invite the crowd to discuss what happened and whether the strategy worked or not, which encourages participation at all times. If the crowd laughs at a spect-actor's performance, they can be corrected by saying something like, 'Remember, it's hard to be up here on stage. Please give her/him your support.'

The Joker should summarise what was said and draw logical conclusions from the spectators' ideas. If it is always the same spect-actor who has a suggestion to make, the Joker should encourage the others to express themselves. One way to do this is to ask the audience to applaud or raise their hand if they agree with what someone has said. Another method is to ask the crowd to turn and discuss with the person seated next to them. Often more individuals will be willing to speak publicly, having safely formulated their thoughts on the issue with those around them.



Box 3.10. The Joker's Role



Jokers,

- Make your audience feel welcome,
- Create a non-judgmental environment where all ideas can be expressed,
- Ask open-ended questions and remain open to what the crowd says, even if it is not what you were looking for or expected to see,
- Avoid having long discussions with the audience, ask to see their ideas on the stage,
- Encourage participation by making sure that spect-actors are not personally criticised, and
- Mix opportunities for individual and collective responses.



Jokers, always ask yourself: Is this useful?



Find out more:

- The theatre Joker who makes people laugh
- creating a non-judgmental environment

The forum begins

Before re-enacting the scenes from the play, it is helpful to engage the audience and ask them to reflect on what happened in the play. The Joker can ask questions, like:

- What have we observed?
- What is this play about?
- What has happened in this family?
- Was there anything in the play that wasn't clear, or, do you have any questions about what you just saw?
- Was there a problem?
- Who is causing the problem?
- Who is most affected by the problem? Or, who suffers the most?
- How many of you think there was more she/he could have done?
- Is it inevitable that the play should end this way?
- Some say this, some say that... Excellent. Now, does anyone have a different view?
- What else can this character try?
- What would you like to think you would do if you were in this situation?
- Would you like to come on stage and show us?

Instruct the spect-actors to speak loudly so they can be heard. When they come onstage to show their ideas, supply them with props or part of the costume of the character they are replacing to help make the transformation visible to the audience as well. Remind the crowd that this is just a game and neither the actors nor the audience should ever use physical force towards at any stage of the play.

The audience's reaction will reveal if they have witnessed magic. If, when a scene is replayed, a character who feels she cannot leave her husband because she has no way of

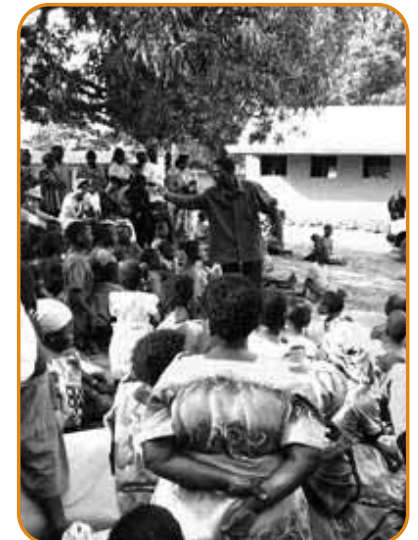
supporting herself suddenly finds a large sum of money under a rock, the audience will give an unconvinced groan. The Joker can provoke them to speak up: 'What is that look? Explain this to me, you've never found a large sum of money like that? Apparently that doesn't happen in real life; let's see another idea.' The Joker asks spectators to consider what can be changed and what cannot. Another spect-actor might step into character and suddenly becomes very assertive, and still not convince the crowd. The Joker asks them, 'Is what you have seen possible? Is it difficult? Why is it difficult for the character to speak to her husband like that?' Then ask them to take a step backward, 'What can she do to acquire that kind of confidence?' Explore that idea on stage.

After attempting a number of strategies to improve the situation of the protagonist, the forum may branch out to explore what other characters can do to improve the situation; this depends on the preference of the performing group. This can be a way for the community to take ownership of the problem, for the public to show what they can do about the situation as neighbours, teachers, friends, religious leaders, and so forth.

Box 3.11. 'Joking Around'

The whole point of joking is to lower the stakes. People will come up with many reasons not to come on stage. If the Joker makes the process seem really significant, the spectators will feel intimidated and stay in their seats. Rather, negotiate what will work for the audience by warming them up with games and discussion, so that it is easy to participate. The spectators should not be pressured, but made to feel like it is not a big deal to intervene and play on stage.

” The Joker's gaze works like a spotlight, directing the audience's attention. If the Joker looks intently at an individual, everyone else will too. ”



Using a 'stop' forum

One way to conduct a forum after the play is to facilitate a **'stop' forum**: after the performance of the model play and discussion with the audience, the cast performs the model a second time at a slightly quicker pace, leaving the plot exactly as it was.

The audience is instructed to yell 'Stop!' at the first moment when they believe the oppressed character could have acted differently to improve his or her situation. Then the spect-actor who stopped the play comes on stage to replace the main character in order to show what they would like to think they would do in that situation.

Here are some lines the Joker can say to begin a stop forum:

- Everyone, practice shouting 'Stop!' [Do this several times so that everyone gets comfortable with saying 'stop']
- Turn to those around you and discuss two or three moments when you think things could have gone differently for our character.
- When was the first time when he or she could have done something different?
- Now we're going to run the play again, but this time when it gets to a point where you think there was something else [name the main character] could have done, you can yell 'Stop!' and come and replace the oppressed character and show us what you would like to think you would do if you were in his or her shoes.

The Joker should make it clear that if the spectators do not yell 'Stop!', they will see the very same play a second time, with the same outcome—which will be quite dull!

Seek consensus from the audience to select the first scene where the character had the opportunity to behave differently.

Instruct the actors to start playing that scene until someone from the audience shouts 'Stop!' The crowd cheers for the daring spect-actor, who comes on stage and tells the Joker at which precise point she/he would like to begin, rewinding the action if necessary. The actors resume playing as usual, but with the spect-actor now taking the role of the protagonist. The play unfolds as before, until the spect-actor takes a new action which the actors must respond to in character.

This continues until, sensing that the idea has been sufficiently explored, the Joker checks whether the spect-actor has tried what she/he wanted to. She/he can do this by saying 'Freeze!' so the actors pause their performance. Then the Joker asks the spect-actor if she/he wants to do more. If yes, the scene continues. If no, the Joker invites the audience to applaud the spect-actor for her/his efforts and asks them to discuss what they have seen. The same scene can be replayed several times in order to see many spect-actors' ideas. If a spect-actor uses a strategy identical to one which has already been tried, the Joker can again freeze the action to ask the crowd whether the spect-actor is trying anything new or different. It is not helpful to have a forum that gets the same result over and over. The Joker must control the process and prevent it from going into the same situation each time.

Once the Joker senses that a particular scene has been exhausted, she/he asks for the next scene to be performed by saying something like, 'Are we going to solve this situation here?' and the group moves forward to explore opportunities for action in the next scene. In the stop forum, only situations that are presented in the model are initially explored. Once a scene has begun, the spect-actor can lead the forum in a whole new direction, of course.

Discussing each intervention

The Joker listens carefully for the right moment to stop an intervention. If it seems like the action is engaging and moving forward, allow it to continue. If you sense that the spect-actor needs a break, but it is still interesting, pause the action and discuss with the crowd how they think it is going. Then, resume the intervention by saying something like, 'Let's see where it goes from here.' If it seems like the spect-actor's idea has been played out, or if they look at you for help, ask them: 'Have you tried what you wanted to try?'

After each sequence is rerun, the Joker can ask questions like:

- What happened this time? What have we observed?
- Has the situation improved?
- What did this spect-actor do differently? What strategy did he use?
- Was it useful?
- What was the impact?
- What was the father's reaction?
- Is this realistic? Can that happen in this community? Is it possible?

When an intervention is not successful, begin by asking what about the strategy worked and what the spect-actor did that was different from other attempts. Then, ask the crowd to consider the reasons why it was not effective. Ask the spect-actor to express her/himself outside of character by explaining what she tried to do, why, and how she/he felt the intervention went and what surprised her/him. Then ask who else has an idea they would like to try on stage: 'Now we have seen one attempt by the mother. Maybe there is someone else who has another idea of how the mother could handle the situation?'

Potential pitfalls to be aware of

The Joker should be confident and able to handle diverse situations, such as a shy or indifferent audience, one that is hostile or noisy, an audience that has been manipulated by a person or group, or one which is violent. Maintain self-control in front of a hostile or boisterous public and do not concede to use verbal violence if frustrated. Exerting control over one's self, body language, speech, and a relaxed attitude will help the Joker's role as facilitator to calm the crowd.

If there is one person, or a small group of people, who are being hostile, it is best to let them speak. After they have expressed themselves, ask the rest of the group for their opinion. Acknowledge a positive aspect of their contribution and make them aware that they, too, are responsible for the success or failure of the forum. For the forum to be truly participatory, everyone's voices must be heard. However, in some dire situations, the Joker may find the need to simply ignore the troublemakers, isolating them in an unspoken manner.

Sometimes spectators will get upset by what another person said. When this happens, the Joker should remain neutral and preserve the democratic space by responding with something like, 'She's talking about what she observed. Ok, you saw something differently. Tell us what you think...'

If an intervention starts to get boring and the spect-actor seems lost, the Joker should make eye contact with them and prompt them to 'get what they want.' Then they remember why they came on stage in the first place and move forward more energetically.

If the audience is apathetic, call out to them, ask more provocative questions, or enlist one of the group's leaders

to collaborate in bringing confidence to the group. Perform a sequence of the play, especially chosen because of its shocking nature, and at the end, ask the audience to engage the scene. If no one is courageous enough to go on stage, ask 'So you agree with this situation, is it okay with you? There's nothing else we can do here?' Then, when people sense that the oppressive situation may be left unchanged, they will agree to play.

It may occur that the audience chooses to answer the Joker's questions while refusing to play in the forum. That is their choice. A worthwhile discussion can still be had. If the crowd does not respond much, use another strategy, such as asking them to signify whether they agree or disagree with a statement, and then invite individuals to defend their view. If no one wants to come on stage, the Joker can ask a reluctant spectator to prescribe actions to be carried out by the actor.

Box 3.12 Reasons Why An Audience May Not Be Responsive

If people are not participating, either:

- They do not care,
- They have been put off, discouraged, or offended, or
- They may not understand how they can participate.

If given the opportunity, people will play. The right story for the right audience will push the right buttons.

Box 3.13. Ways In Which the Joker Can Minimize Potential Pitfalls



Jokers: When you are on stage, remember:

- Questions are the only tool a Joker has; and so they should be very precise. How you formulate the wording of a question will affect the response you will get.
- Do not judge or evaluate a spect-actor's idea by saying something like 'That's wonderful, good answer.' Though it may be difficult, stay neutral at all times, otherwise the audience will hesitate in expressing themselves.
- During discussions, always repeat what is said. This lets everyone in the audience hear what was expressed and ensures that you understood them correctly.
- Whenever someone in the audience has a clear idea about what could be done about the problem, ask them if they would like to try it on stage.
- Ask which character the spect-actor wants to become and where they would like to begin.
- Follow their attempt with interest.
- The Joker never sits. Position yourself so that you follow the action, always available to give the spect-actor your eye contact and support.
- If they look at you for help, stop and help them. If you feel the scene is getting a bit long and nothing new is happening, do not ask the spect-actor if they 'got what they wanted'; rather, ask if they have 'tried their idea.'
- Thank the spect-actor for their contribution and ask for applause.
- Ask the audience to analyse the attempt they just observed. 'What happened? What was the impact of this new strategy?'
- If someone criticises the spect-actor's performance, stop them and say 'If you have another idea, you are welcome to try it on stage..'
- It is important to finish reflecting on one intervention before proceeding to the next one.

Variations of forum theatre

Below are six techniques to use instead of, or in addition to, the Stop Forum.

1. MINI-FORUM

A popular way to structure a Forum Theatre event is to present several mini-forums instead of one long play. A mini-forum is a play which lasts a few minutes and cuts straight to the chase by presenting the critical moment of a conflict without telling the whole history of how the situation came about. As with any Forum Theatre play, it concludes in crisis, ready for spect-actors to intervene and express what they would like to think they would do in that situation.

The performing group can create several different mini-forum plays about different conflicts, issues, and characters. In each one, there is a straightforward encounter: a problem, an oppressor, a bad situation. And in each one, there is the question: What else can be tried? After presenting three or four mini-forums, the Joker says to the audience, 'Here's a menu. Which one of these plays would you like to work with?' This gives the audience a sense of ownership from the beginning. One advantage of this method is that it keeps the focus of the event on the forum rather than the model play. There is always plenty of time to replay the scenes of a mini-forum to find solutions to the problem. People in the audience easily become an audience, wanting to watch you act; the mini-forum barely gives them time to recline in their seats before demanding that they participate!

You can read two examples of mini-forums by Soundtrack 4 Life in Annex A and view a performance of Happy Anniversary on the CD-Rom.

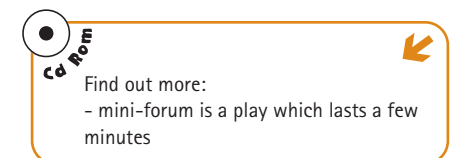
2. OPEN FORUM

In an open forum, the Joker asks if anyone in the audience believes that there was more the protagonist could have done to improve their situation. If so, the Joker asks, 'Are you willing to come on stage, replace the protagonist, and show us your idea?' If willing, the spect-actor should then indicate at which point to begin and who s/he would like to meet. Once this has been determined, the actors begin playing the scene.

An advantage of this method is that time is not lost in replaying unnecessary parts of the play. The action begins wherever it is most useful to the spect-actor. A disadvantage of the open forum is a loss of momentum; the energy of watching a scene be replayed in a Stop Forum often drives spectators out of their seats with the spontaneous desire to change the situation.

Often, the solution cannot be found right there in the scene. It is possible in an open forum for the spect-actor to propose a new scene that does not occur in the original drama, such as a moment that happened prior to the events in the play or a new situation that could benefit the protagonist. The performing group prepares by rehearsing alternative scenarios that spect-actors are likely to suggest.

For example, a spect-actor playing a character that is lonely and stigmatised could choose to go to a support group for strength and friendship. When building a new scene, the Joker can ask the spectators, 'Does anyone here know something about support groups? How does one find out about one? How do they work? What do you think the next step would be?' Enlist a spect-actor from the crowd who has



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experience with the topic to come and facilitate a support group in the skit. Ask other members of the cast and audience to play other roles as necessary.

3. LIGHTNING FORUM

Some Jokers recommend having a 'lightning forum' to save time and keep the groups' energy elevated. In this technique, spect-actors who have an idea they want to try, line up offstage and take turns acting out their ideas, one after another, without pausing to analyse a single intervention.

Afterwards, the Joker facilitates a general discussion about the effectiveness of all the actions which have been tried. An advantage of the lightning forum is that it moves at a quick pace, maintaining the group's interest. It is participatory and allows a variety of attempts to be seen and a number of voices to be heard. A disadvantage is that it does not allow any single attempt to be evaluated in depth, which can be very useful in applying it to real life situations.

4. THE SPECT-ACTOR GIVES ADVICE

Suppose that while discussing an intervention, someone from the audience criticises what they have just seen. The Joker says, 'It sounds as if you have another idea. Would you like to show us?' But the spect-actor says, 'No.' If the Joker sees that a spect-actor has an idea of what can be done to address the problem, but senses that he is shy or unwilling to come and express that idea on stage, the Joker should remain playful and try another way to draw out the spect-actor's idea: giving advice.



Box 3.14. How to Respond When the Spect-actor Gives Advice

Respecting the spect-actors' freedom to choose how much they participate, the Joker asks, 'Ok, that's fine. Who do you think can do something about this problem?'

'Ntonto.'

'Ntonto, come over here!' Speaking to the spect-actor, 'Give this woman some advice. What else can she do to improve this situation?' 'She should go and tell the nurse that she has the right to receive treatment.'

The actor rushes to tell the nurse exactly what the spect-actor said, listens to that character's response, then runs back to the Joker and the spect-actor.

'I told her that and then she said that there is a long waiting list and that there's nothing she can do. Then she told me to come back another day. Now what do I do?'

'Ntonto, go back to the clinic and talk to the receptionist. Speak to her nicely and ask about her children's health. Thank her for doing her job so well. Make her smile. Then ask to speak to the doctor in charge.'

The actor thanks the spect-actor and does exactly as she/he is told. She/he is granted a meeting with the doctor. Out of breath, she/he rushes back to the spect-actor to find out what to tell the doctor...

As this scene progresses, the spect-actor may become more comfortable and begin shouting the lines to the actor, rather than waiting for her to run back and forth. It can even happen that the spect-actor steps closer to the action and eventually starts playing the part her/himself. The key here is for the Joker to keep the whole spectacle very light and playful. It is a wonderfully silly and spontaneous technique.

5. HOT-SEATING

Hot-seating is a technique that can be used in rehearsal to refine an actor's portrayal and to clarify the motivation of their character. It can also be used as an alternative way for the spectators to explore the story, especially if there is not enough time to replay the scenes from the model play to come up with new solutions.

It works when an actor sits in a hot seat in front of the group. Then the spectators, Joker, and other characters interrogate them. The actor answers each question in

character, defending their actions and opinions and revealing how they view the events in the play. The Joker can ask the first few questions to demonstrate how it works, and then the spectators take over, asking her/him anything they please. In this way, the spectators express themselves, provoke the characters to rethink their views, share information that will help them make responsible choices, and give them some sisterly or brotherly advice. You can view an example of hot-seating by DramAidE on the CD-Rom.

6. POSITIVE ENDINGS

Hopefully the Forum Theatre will end on an encouraging note, with the audience arriving at a victory of sorts and believing that solutions to the problem exist. If the forum fails to uncover a successful strategy that resolves the problem, the spectators may feel resigned. In this situation, the Joker can suggest a new game that will create a sense of enjoyment and hopefulness.

One option is for the Joker to end the session with a **realistic ideal**. 'If the protagonist used all the strategies you've proposed, where could he reasonably end up in two years? Where do we hope to see him, what is he up to?' Ask the audience to consider what potential bright futures lay ahead for the character. Choose an occasion to dramatise, establish a few facts, and invite many spect-actors to participate in the new scene. For example, the crowd could meet him two years later at his birthday party. In this way the forum ends positively and looking forward.

Image theatre can also be used to end the forum. Ask the audience to create images or tableaux that depict the ideal future they desire for the characters. Let the group observe

and reflect on what is revealed in these group sculptures. It is the difference between the real image and the ideal image that we need to step over in life in order to reach our goals and overcome the oppression.

The **'boxing match'** is another fun way to close the forum. In this game, spect-actors replace both the oppressor and oppressed characters in a theatrical boxing match! This time, the characters receive equal amounts of sympathy from the audience. They each get three spect-actors to come on stage and coach them on what to say. The Joker is the referee and rings a bell to signal that the round has started (Ding ding! Round one!). The protagonist and antagonist face off in a scene, each trying to fulfil their desire. As they play, their coaches shout suggestions and encouragements to their boxer. If the Joker senses that they are stuck, unsure of what to say next, or nothing new is happening, she/he sends them back to the 'corner' to prepare for round two! The spect-actors retreat and huddle with their coaches who advise them on what to do or say next. Then, having been encouraged with a new idea, they run back and deliver the lines to their opponent. The audience decides who won and everyone is amused.

After the final discussion with the audience occurs, the cast can perform a **prepared alternative ending** that presents their version of how they hope the story will end, in order to conclude the Forum Theatre. This version will leave the audience with a memory of the characters behaving constructively and responsibly. One drawback is that this technique is not participatory (unless what is performed is truly a reflection of the strategies the spect-actors invented).



Always ask: is this technique useful to the people? The games exist to serve the people, not the other way around!



Tableau: a silent and motionless image, pose, or 'photograph' created by still bodies.

PART III: LET'S CREATE A FORUM THEATRE PLAY!



**PART IV:
ACTION! THE
PERFORMANCE
DAY**

Getting ready to perform

The day has come that the group puts all its efforts and organizing to work. Before the play begins, however, there are a few measures that you can carry out that will help ensure the success of your play. We explore these measures here.

1. GET THE WORD OUT!

All that effort you put in organizing your play will be wasted if there are no people to participate in the play. Your audience, or spect-actors, will attend only if they've been properly informed that something is happening.

There are many ways to mobilise the community you want to perform with. You can work with a crowd that is already organised, such as at a school or for a group of employees.

Or you may participate in a larger outreach campaign and have the assistance of a partner organisation that will promote the performance. Then again, it may very well be up to you to draw an audience from the general community. Below are a few ideas that you could use to mobilise an audience.

Advertise the event through local media. Inform the staff at your local newspaper, community radio station, or television news programme that there will be a Forum Theatre performance happening. Tell people to pass the word and/or write up a one-page press release that very clearly states:

- What is happening,
- When and where it will take place,
- Who is sponsoring or involved with the project,
- Why it is of interest to the community, and
- Contact information.

A **press release** should provide the facts in a very clear manner so that the journalist who receives it immediately grasps what the event is about. Fax, mail, or deliver the press release one week prior to the event and provide a second copy the day before the event as a reminder. Let the journalist know that someone from the performing group is available to be interviewed.

Box 4.1. Example of a Press Release and Flyer

Tired of hearing the same old slogans about HIV and AIDS? Would you rather express your own message or opinion instead?

The group ABC will perform the Forum Theatre play 'Are you not my wife?' on Friday, the 18th of August at 3pm at the central square in town.

The play presents a loving wife expecting a child, concerned with the protection of her and the baby's health. The task becomes more difficult than she expected...

The event is organised in collaboration with the National Health Initiative and supported by the Youth and Development Foundation.

In Forum Theatre the audience actively participates in the construction of the play. Come and play with us!

For more information contact Taariq (email, phone)

Create **posters** (printed or painted by hand) that give basic information about the event. Choose an image that will get attention. Hang them all around the village or city centre, in schools, at the market, by the taxi rank, in shops, outside the health clinic, on street posts, and so forth, a week or two before the event.

Develop a paper invitation (full-page or cut into four pieces) that names the play and when and where it will be performed.

Hand these out to people on the street a couple of days before or on the day of the performance.

Organizers at the International Theatre Workcamp on HIV and AIDS Education in Uganda had a novel and effective idea. They enlisted a truck that was outfitted with a public address system to drive around surrounding villages several hours before the performance. It played music to entertain the neighbours and once it had their attention, the organizers informed them about the event with a microphone.



2. WARM UP THE ACTORS AND THE STAGE

In preparation for their performance, the actors should take time to go through some warm-up exercises. Drama games help stretch the body, voice, and mind, preparing the actors' listening skills, timing, and spontaneity, which are imperative in Forum Theatre. Such activities help actors 'get into character' while also preparing them to be on stage in front of the public, ready to make some noise!

Thami Mbongo, from Soundtrack 4 Life, advises that you warm yourself up in order to prepare and be ready for the audience. He advises you to then ensure that the space itself is warmed up as well. Generating energy in the performance space creates a physical environment which is ready to receive the public. Energy is created through the designation of the stage and the spaces for the public, the concentration of the actors, the music you may play and various other elements you use that can focus the attention on the performance space. If you are ready, the space will be. The audience will perceive the energy, which will draw their attention to the event.

3. WELCOME YOUR AUDIENCE

From the moment the audience members arrive, the performing troupe should put them at ease. Actors should be playful, outgoing, humorous, and socialise with the spectators from the start. The group can greet the audience by offering some kind of present, flowers, a snack, or by serving cool drinks as a way to demonstrate welcome. Do people in your community have a special way of welcoming others? If so, replicate that. Use a common cultural practice that fits your context. You want your guests to feel at home.

Providing a warm and friendly welcome and interacting with the audience prevents them from settling into the typical passive way of being an audience member, where one merely observes an event in order to be entertained. Be intentional, so that every interaction with the public sets the expectation that they will be involved in the process of performance and discussion. When it comes time to rerun the model play, participation should not come as a surprise to the audience, who will be accustomed to taking part in the process by this stage. When the company is intentional about this preparation and plan how they will welcome and warm-up their audience, the spectators will easily accept to participate in the Forum Theatre, having received a genuine welcome and invitation to play.

4. WARM UP THE AUDIENCE UP TOO!

The next task is to build the spect-actors' enjoyment, bring some joy into the space, and get them used to participating to prepare for the forum. The intention is to acquire and maintain the audience's attention and participation for the entire event. As hosts, you immediately invite them to play, rather than give them a reason to stay at a distance and observe the spectacle instead of being a part of it. This can be done in several ways:

Song, chant, music or dance are very effective in warming up the audience by getting everyone's attention. The group can perform for the public or invite them to also sing or dance for an even more participatory experience. If the crowd is to join in, choose a song that is recognisable, simple to learn, and/or expresses their culture. An example of this is Amatingalo, a simple song and dance facilitated by DramAidE. The song is easy to learn, warms up the body,



Find out more:

- make sure that the space itself is warmed up
- Amatingalo



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and allows the spectators to express themselves as leaders within the activity.

During rehearsal, the performing group can also compose an **original song** of their own that addresses the theme of the play. In this way, they express their creativity and the audience begins to think about the issue right away.

Games and activities are invaluable for introducing the issue and getting the spectators to actively participate. There are dozens of activities at the Joker's disposal. A game can be silly, warm up the physical body, educate, and/or serve as a way of drawing out spectators' viewpoints.

The Joker plays an important role in warming up the audience. It is, after all, her/his duty to explain in a very clear manner how the Forum Theatre works and to invite the audience to play. The Joker's task in warming up the audience is to immediately build a rapport with the public and prepare them to play on the stage, in order to solve the problems that will arise in the model. Warm-up activities establish the relationship between the performers and the audience.

The Joker should always be in dialogue with the audience, ask them questions and enable them to express themselves. A lively Joker who cracks some jokes and has a light-hearted presence, will help warm-up the audience.

Do not underestimate your audience and the degree of participation they will be up for. For example, sometimes people say that older adults do not like to play games, but as long as the Joker clearly believes that the activity is worthwhile and fun, the crowd will happily play along. Playfully participating in a ridiculous game makes everyone laugh and relax. When performers and spectators do silly

things together, then a sense that 'we're all in this together' develops. The games help the audience discover that it is fine to be in the space, express themselves, or do something out of the ordinary. Awino Okech says on the CD-Rom, 'A simple activity ... loosens them up and makes them come closer and allows them to begin engaging because you have said 'you are part of us, we are going to be doing this with you.'" How the games go in the beginning can determine the success of the forum. When people are comfortable and enjoying themselves, they will be willing to act on stage.

The warm-ups serve another purpose: they can provoke the audience's attitudes. By playing with the people, you can pick up where they are at, what their views are, who may be shy and what you can do to make them feel comfortable. Choosing games that relate to the play's theme also helps the audience get ready to discuss the topic.

At this stage, you the actors are ready to perform and your audience is ready to participate. This is the moment you have been preparing for. Good luck, and as they say in the theatre world, 'Break a leg!'



A basic secret to a game's success lies in the welcome the audience members receive when they arrive. When the actors and the Joker take the time to get related with the participants, they will find their audience willing to trust them and play.



- Find out more:
- Warm-up activities establish the relationship between the performers and the audience
 - You are part of us, we are going to be doing this with you
 - By playing with the people



After the performance

1. ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE

Your Forum Theatre performance is not complete when the performance ends and the audience leaves. It is always essential to make a thorough assessment of your performance because you will want to gain important insight about:

- The overall impact of the play,
- What messages the audience understood and whether they correspond to the intended messages,
- The quality of the delivery of your play, and
- Whether audience members' attitudes shifted after viewing it.

Also, if your group is receiving financial or other resources from donors, it could be that they require an evaluation in return for their generosity or as part of their regular practice. Either way, assessment can enrich the project. The evaluation can happen immediately following the performance, or it can happen later if the audience can be contacted (for example, by making a follow-up visit to a school classroom). The context of the performance will determine which techniques are appropriate.



2. EVALUATION METHODS

The benefits of participatory arts can be tricky to track quantitatively. For example, how does one prove that spectators gained confidence or view people living with HIV more sensitively after watching a play?

'The more crucial outcomes are: how many people were influenced by the project, or changed attitudes and behaviour, and did these changes improve quality of life? Since the principal benefits of creative activity are the opportunities for improving dialogue, communication, and personal and community empowerment it makes sense to look at their impact in terms of their success in stimulating contact between stakeholders, getting information to those who most need it, giving people confidence and prompting them to change their behaviour' (Gould, 1999).

Qualitative methods are useful for evaluating the effectiveness of arts projects because they allow participants to express what they personally got out of the experience. Qualitative methods highlights people's opinions, hopes, fears, and beliefs that influence their health. Common techniques are focus groups, observation, in-depth interviews, and other participatory activities. A neutral evaluator can best observe and assess the programme's impact.

Programme monitoring involves looking at the extent to which the project is being implemented the way it was planned. Are you reaching the audience you intended to? Is the programme occurring the way it was planned? If it is not, look at what is in the way or what is missing.

Documenting and recording the process can be part of

Forum Theatre's flow of participation and reflection. It is important to be mindful of how power dynamics come into play in the course of programme monitoring and evaluation.

The trust and safety that is created with the audience will influence the quality of the feedback. If the audience received an authentic welcome, felt free to express themselves, and found that their views were respected during the forum, they will be willing to provide their honest feedback.

Evaluation can take on several other forms, such as:

- Prior to performing the play, interview representatives of the audience to find out how they already view the issue.
- Deliver simple questionnaires to the audience before and after the performance to learn if their views or awareness of HIV and AIDS changed after seeing the play.
- Observe the reactions of the audience throughout the event. Are they thoughtfully engaging? Are they giving practical advice?
- Count the number of people who were in attendance.
- Keep a record of all the questions that were asked throughout the duration of the project.
- Put up a graffiti wall, a long piece of paper or posters where spectators can anonymously write comments about the performance, what can be improved, and/or what they learned.
- Organise an informal debate immediately after the performance (see below).
- Conduct further debates with people to find how they feel about the issue and to check whether their views shifted over time and if they have taken any actions as a result of participating in the project.

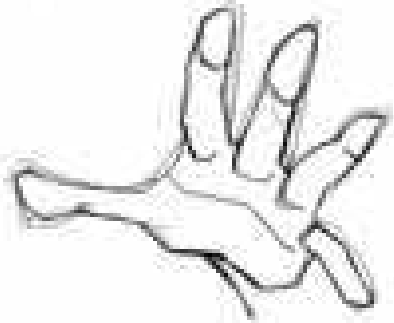
After a few weeks or months have passed, you can conduct

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the performing group to find out whether their objectives were met: if the drama was understood as intended, if subsequent debate was created among friends, couples, family or the community, and if any attitudes or behaviours changed as a result of the Forum Theatre. Did the Forum Theatre make a difference? What was the impact?

Considering that the purpose of Forum Theatre is to create an environment where all people can participate and express their opinions freely, this same intention should underlie the monitoring and evaluation process. **Participatory methods**, such as an improvised role-play or visual mapping activities, let participants actively demonstrate how they view themselves before and after the project.

Image theatre can also be used to show how a group was impacted by Forum Theatre. The Joker asks the audience to work in small groups and create a group image or sculpture with their bodies that shows the way forward, what opened up for them out of their participation, a challenge, or a highlight of the project (particularly when there has been ongoing involvement with the group over time).



3. ASSESS THE DELIVERY OF THE PERFORMANCE

Your audience is can be a valuable source of constructive critique for assessing your play. People tend to associate the subject matter with the style of presentation; portraying health issues in a fun and enjoyable way can change people's expectation that listening to and learning about HIV and AIDS issues must be a gloomy experience. An exciting presentation style challenges their expectations; when people actually enjoy hearing the message, they are more likely to hear something new and bring their lives to the conversation. The story, characters, and what was discovered will hopefully be remembered. But how can you be sure? One way to find out is to get opinions from your audience about the performance and its delivery.

In this regard, some important questions that you can ask your audience members after the performance are:

- What did you think of the play? Was it entertaining?
- What did you enjoy most about this event?
- What did you expect it was going to be like?
- What surprised you about the play?
- What was the main message of the performance?
- What did you appreciate about the sketches?
- What aspects of the scenes can be improved?
- Was there anything about the story or the characters that wasn't believable?
- What do you think was missing? Do you think we left something out?
- Could we have done more with any aspect of the play?

4. ASSESS ATTITUDE CHANGE

Early in the project's preparations, you set out your reasons for participating in the project and your moral commitments to helping make a change in your target community. Therefore, one of the most important tasks—and perhaps one of the most fulfilling—that you can do after the performance is to assess whether the project is changing attitudes. To do this, members of the performing group or partner organisation can interview audience members (individually or in a focus group) after the event to find out how the message was received, whether their opinions have shifted, and what opened up for them after viewing and participating in the Forum Theatre. Then, based on their responses, draw conclusions about the project's general effectiveness. (Some of these questions are most appropriate to be asked during a follow-up visit with audience members, others are fine to ask immediately after the performance.)

Here are some questions you can ask your audience members on how they were affected:

- What did you see that they had not seen before? What did you see for the first time?
- What opened up for you? What became available for you out of your participation in this event?
- Where did you see yourself in the production?
- How did the play and the conversation relate to your life?
- What did you learn?
- How did the play affect your attitudes about people living with HIV?
- How did the play impact the way you make decisions in your sexual relationships?
- Did the play stir any dialogue about HIV-related issues in the family or community?

- Did the sketches provoke any controversies? If yes, among whom and about what?

The above questions are also useful when asked to the members of your performing group since your group probably has its own observations of the audience's reactions during the performance.



5. MOVING THE AUDIENCE INTO ACTION

Forum Theatre is a tool that is intended to create new opportunities for action that arise out of the performance and discussion. In this regard, the Joker can provoke the audience by saying something like 'It's great to come and see a nice show, but now what? Who is responsible to do something about this problem? It's up to you to take what we have learned and discussed today to your community. What are you going to do about this?'

Discuss as a group what can be done to build a local network and keep people in communication and action after the event ends. If the audience members see something of value for themselves, what will they do in turn to educate and make a difference in the lives of others in the community? The spectators will be more likely to meet and plan follow-up action in the future if the performing group gives them time to do this on the day of the performance.

As part of the final discussion, ask spect-actors to gather in smaller groups and discuss the issue and what they think happened in the forum. Each group could then summarise the main discussion points and afterwards convey them back to the larger group. The discussion should lead people forward with confidence, eager to discuss the issue further and find more possibilities to solve the problem. A representative of the performing group (or partner organisation) can observe each group, take notes on the discussion, and ask them what they discovered and what message they will take away. What is discussed will help you evaluate the success of the project, through discovering what the spectators found meaningful or challenging.

In performing your play, it is possible that you may be

'preaching to the converted', conveying messages to people who are already informed about HIV and AIDS. Therefore, you will want to help guide them to do something about the problem, to take an action that will spread beyond just the people who were in attendance. Inviting the spectators to commit to some action is critical. A commitment has value when it is stated and brought into reality—when it is spoken or written down. A promise that is not declared is just a good idea.

”Theatre is effective because it is entertaining and affects people emotionally.”

Box 4.2. Further Questions That Can Encourage Follow-up Action

- What do you think it is going to take to impact people's mind-sets?
- What would you have to do to influence attitudes in your community?
- Who would you have to be to make a difference to others?
- What are you going to do about this problem?
- What concrete commitment are you willing to make today? (For example, go for an HIV test, befriend a neighbour, organise a group to plan an advocacy campaign)

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Here are three participatory activities for inviting the group to declare their commitments:

– **Commitment Toss:** (Typically for smaller audiences). The Joker asks everyone to make a circle. Select a ball, a toy, stuffed animal, or some other object that is easy to toss. Ask a volunteer to begin by declaring to the group what action they promise to take and by when. They then toss the object to someone else in the circle who says what they will commit to. Continue until every participant has a chance to go.

– **Spider's Web:** Similar to the Commitment Toss, here the Joker asks the group to form a circle and gives a volunteer a ball of wool to hold onto. They begin by sharing with the group what they will take away from today (or what they will commit to). Then they unravel some of the wool, and holding onto the end of the yarn, toss the ball to someone across from them in the circle. That person shares what they will take away, unravels more wool, and tosses the ball to another person. In time, a spider's web forms that connects all the members of the group.



Once everyone has shared, the Joker can say something about how we are all connected and must support each other in making a difference in the community. Instruct the participants to break off a piece of the wool and tie it around another person's wrist, making a bracelet to wear a reminder of the commitment they made today.

– **Mural of Promises:** Choose a space to create a mural of promises, either a wall, get a long roll of paper, or tape together several pieces of poster board or cardboard. Prepare paint or thick marker pens. Ask participants to write and draw what actions they promise to take in the future on the mural surface. This is an especially good activity when working with a group that regularly meets together. This can then be hung in a public place (perhaps at a community organisation or school) to remind people of their commitments. Ask the group leader to refer the group to it in the future so that it does not disappear. See an example of what some university peer educators committed to in the photo below.



Ask open-ended questions which will let people give their honest opinions about the performance.



– Discuss



6. DEBRIEFING

After the play has ended and the audience has gone back home, the performers should discuss what happened—what worked and what did not, how the audience reacted, what was missing, what could be improved, and what came up personally for each person. Forum Theatre is a deeply personal endeavour; actors bring their lives to the performance. Sometime actors are really affected or moved by what happens during the forum, even in a play that they have performed dozens of times. When this happens, the other members of the group should support them and give them the chance to say whatever they need to get complete.

Some questions to discuss during debriefing sessions:

- What struck you about the spectators today?
- What kinds of reactions did you observe?
- How did the games work?
- Do you think they felt free and comfortable to participate fully?
- Did anyone become angry or upset?
- Did any individuals remain outside the group? If so, what can we do to overcome this next time?
- Was there a sense of motivation and commitment in the group?

A **project diary** can help assess the impact of the project on the actors of the group. Invite each person in the group to write about their impressions of how the programme is going, reflect on the emotions that come up, and to write about what they learn from doing each performance. They can write about what they think should be done differently, what was missing, and how they feel about their personal contribution. This diary can be used to assess the effect that participating in Forum Theatre has on the actors over time.

**PART V:
ANNEXES**

Annex A

Examples of forum theatre scenarios

What follows are five examples of Forum Theatre scenarios to give you some ideas to use as you create your own original Forum Theatre play. Several of the plays and interviews with members of DramAidE and Soundtrack 4 Life, can also be found on the CD-Rom.

You may choose to perform one of these sketches. If you want to, we advise that you think carefully about which one will be most appropriate for your audience. What are the important issues facing that community? Select a play that communicates a message that will be relevant and interesting to your audience.

How old are they? Are you playing to a group of adults? If so, then the scenario 'Are You Not My Wife?' might be a good pick. Or to an audience of adolescents, many of whom are sexually active? Then you may want to perform 'Let's Condomise!'. 'Does 'No' Mean 'Yes?'' and 'Happy Anniversary' both look at issues pertaining to couples who are deciding whether to have sex for the first time; these might be right for a younger audience which is not yet sexually active, but who still might face pressure to behave sexually. 'Home Economics' looks at the stigma associated with people who are living with HIV and is appropriate for any age group, including children.

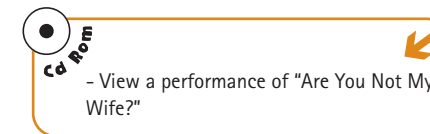
Regardless of whether you choose one of these scenarios, you will want to rephrase and change some parts of the play to adapt it to your audience and cultural context. Feel free to change the setting, the biographical details of the characters, and aspects of the conflict and action.



- Plays and interviews with members of
DramAidE and Soundtrack 4 Life



'Are You Not My Wife?' DRAMAIDE



Themes: Voluntary and confidential counselling and testing (VCCT), negotiating safe sex, faithfulness, gender norms

MAMA ...I must tell you what they said at the clinic. You see, at the clinic, they have this new check-up that's done to every pregnant woman.

BABA What check-up? Talk! I'm tired; you must try and be quick so that I can rest.

MAMA Baba, you have to listen to this one carefully. At the clinic they said, you know, when you are pregnant. . .

BABA Ah! Just get to the point! You are wasting time. I want to rest! What did they say?

MAMA (Speaking quietly) Baba, they said we should have, uh, an HIV test.

BABA What?

MAMA HIV test!

BABA (Shouting) Oh my word. Turn on the TV: HIV. Read the newspaper: HIV. Turn on the radio: HIV. Now, even in my house, HIV! Why an HIV test? Aren't you married? Are you not my wife! Is this baby mine, or someone else's kid? Where'd you get HIV from, huh? They are saying you have HIV now?

MAMA I'm telling you about the test and now you are accusing me.

BABA What test, what test?

MAMA We have to think about it!

BABA Did you have a test when you came here to marry me? Now what is the test for? Do you mean to tell me that this kid is not mine? I'm sick and tired of you woman. Test, test, test! (Storms out of house in a fury)

MAMA Come back, coward man! (She addresses the audience). Stupid guy. I knew he was going to react that way, don't you think? I am left here. In fact, I am the one who is supposed to be very upset with him, banging the door like that. Because the last time he came, he gave me an STI. Do you know how it feels to have an STI, to me as a woman? It's horrible. I'm his faithful wife. But he goes away to wherever to look for jobs and brings me an STI. I'm pregnant as it right now. The clinic told me that I must go through PMTCT (Preventing Mother-To-Child-Transmission of HIV). Now they also have to test him so that we can protect our baby. But you see, he's banging the door at me. What if he has another partner, who's HIV positive. I think I might have a test. Whether he wants to or not. I am going to have an HIV test. I am tired of these things, I'm tired!

BABA (Baba comes back to the house) Well, I'm back. And I'm very tired, as I said. I need to go and rest, my wife. (Yawns)

MAMA Wait, Baba, we haven't finished talking.

BABA We can finish later.

MAMA Baba, please. We have to talk about this tonight.

BABA We can finish talking later. For now, let's go to the bedroom.

MAMA Baba, I understand, but we have to decide now.

BABA Decide what? We can finish that later. For now, let's go to the bedroom, now!

MAMA At the clinic, they gave me something else, maybe it would be helpful.

BABA Just follow me to the bedroom. Are you coming or not? Are you still my wife?

MAMA Yes, Baba.

BABA Are you still married to me?

MAMA Yes, Baba.

BABA So come to the bedroom, please.

MAMA Baba, at the clinic, they gave me . . .

BABA What's that?

MAMA Condoms.

BABA What?!

MAMA Condoms.

BABA (Laughs, in disbelief) Is this a marriage that we have, or something else? What are those condoms for? Since when in this house, since we have been married, since when do we use condoms?!

MAMA But they said...

BABA For the few months I've been away, now you decided to change this house into a brothel? Now you need to use condoms? Are you coming to the bedroom or not?

MAMA Should I . . .? (Holds condoms up)

BABA Are you still my wife? Are you still married to me?

MAMA Yes I am.

BABA (Lowers his voice) Come to bedroom, then.

MAMA Should I . . .? (Looking at the condoms)

BABA Let's go!!!

MAMA (He takes the condoms from her) Baba!

BABA Me in my marriage now going to be using condoms? In my house? Never. (He throws the condoms across the stage and drags his screaming wife offstage)

'Let's condomise!' DRAMAIDE

from 'A facilitator's guide to 'See you at 7: a video about developing gender responsibility'

Themes: Negotiating safe sex, HIV prevention, traditional healers, caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, positive living

THE CHORUS OPENS WITH A SONG ABOUT USING CONDOMS.

NARRATOR Phikinkani and Thembi think they are in love. They have talked about it. Some young men think it's important for a woman to prove she can have a baby before she gets married. But if she gets pregnant how will she tell her parents? How will she raise a child? What about her schooling? And what about the risk of HIV and AIDS? She may regret a decision to have sex without protection, what do you think she should do? Let's see what happens in the story.

PHIKINKANI [NODDING HIS HEAD REPEATEDLY] Thembi! You must be in love with someone else.
THEMBI [SURPRISED] What? [LOOKING AT HIM SEARCHINGLY] How dare you speak to me like that?

PHIKINKANI [ANGRILY MOVING AWAY] Thembi, ever since we fell in love you never said we must use a condom when we make love, and besides [pointing towards her now] you know that for us to get married I must know whether you can give birth to a child or not. Nangaphandle kwalokho nje mina anginabo onesi, nodokotela namaphoyisa okulahlwa nje. Cha, cha, cha! (Besides, my sperm could be a nurse, doctor or policemen and it's not to throw away. No, no, no!)

THEMBI Darling, [DRAWING CLOSER TO HIM] there are sexually transmitted infections. There is also HIV and that one is incurable. It is also acquired mostly through sex. Why do you want to take a chance like that?

PHIKINKANI What! AIDS! Darling, you speak about that troublesome disease? Ugxagxa, is a traditional healer, inyanga enkulu (a well-known healer), he can cure AIDS. There is no disease that is incurable to him. Futhi – ke izinyanga eziningi seziyakwazi ukuyelapha ingculaza (And for your information, many traditional healers are curing AIDS).

THEMBI They can't. Daluxolo's father is a traditional healer. He told his son to use a condom when he makes love with his girlfriend.

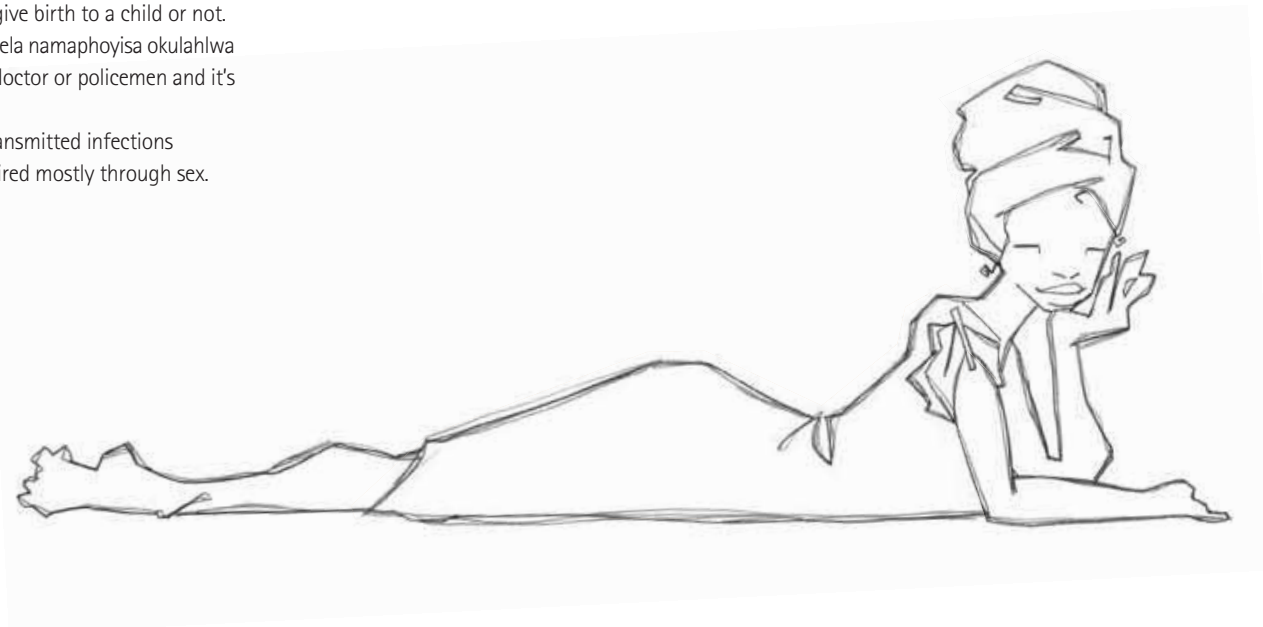
PHIKINKANI How did you know that?

THEMBI Daluxolo's girlfriend told me. She insisted we must use a condom too.

PHIKINKANI Ungena ngaphi othandweni lwethu, ngizombamba (What has she got to do with our love. I'll get her). I refuse to use a condom. Listen to me – I hate them and what use are you if you don't have a child. You come here or that's the end of it.

THEMBI Well we will have to do as you say.

CHORUS SINGS A SONG.



'Let's condomise!' DRAMAIDE

from 'A facilitator's guide to 'See you at 7: a video about developing gender responsibility'

Themes: Negotiating safe sex, HIV prevention, traditional healers, caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, positive living

NARRATOR	Time has past. It is 8 years since we last heard of Phikinkani. He is at home. He looks very thin and pale. He's been lying down for at least a month. One of his old girlfriends, Thembi is visiting him.	GXAGXA ENTERS WITH HIS BAG OF UMUTI (traditional medicine). GXAGXA What's wrong young man? PHIKINKANI They say I am HIV positive [PHIKINKANI HANDS OVER HIS CARD TO GXAGXA].
THEMBI	How are you Phikinkani?	GXAGXA LOOKS AT THE CARD AND NODS HIS HEAD.
PHIKINKANI	I'm very weak. I don't like food. I don't have an appetite. My stomach is always running. They told me I have AIDS.	GXAGXA AIDS! I thought it was just headache. I'm sorry I can't cure AIDS. I've failed several times. My patients have died many times.
THEMBI	What? You mean you will die Phikinkani, and I might be infected also? I wondered why I was not feeling well in the last few months.	THE CHORUS SINGS A FUNERAL SONG.
PHIKINKANI	Oh! No, we won't die Thembi. I've sent someone to call Gxagxa inyanga enkculu izongelapha (The great healer will come and cure me).	JOKER [TO THE AUDIENCE] Could anyone have acted differently? Is there a scene you would like us to replay so that the ending would be different?
THEMBI	Gxagxa cannot cure AIDS, I told you that we must use a condom but you never listened to me. [CRYING]	

Various members of the audience will offer suggestions about how some of the scenes could be played differently. The joker encourages a member of the audience to come forward and play Thembi's part. Hopefully a member of the audience will take a stronger line and insist on using a condom. If Phikinkani refuses to change then Thembi might leave him and have nothing more to do with him. The joker encourages as many people to participate as time allows and while interest is maintained. It is also possible to play Phikinkani differently and show him listening and agreeing to use a condom.

The joker always asks the audience if the way the scene has been re-played is possible. Can people interact like that in real life?

The scene where Phikinkani is sick could also be replayed introducing more caring from the characters, discussion of how one can live a healthy life while being HIV positive and a suggestion that Thembi goes for an HIV test.

'Does 'no' mean 'yes'?' DRAMAIDE

from 'A facilitator's guide to 'See you at 7: a video about developing gender responsibility'

Themes: Sexual coercion, decision-making, and pregnancy

ALL ACTORS ARE ON STAGE SINGING A SONG ENTITLED 'Isizwe sakithi' [HELP THE NATION]. THE NARRATOR ENTERS. THERE IS A LOT OF NOISE. THE NARRATOR PLEADS WITH THE AUDIENCE FOR ATTENTION.

NARRATOR Attention! Ladies and gentlemen! Attention! I want to share a story with you. In one of the High Schools in Mtubatuba there were two lovers. They were Sipho and Hazel. They came from the same village. Sipho was doing standard nine and Hazel was doing standard seven. They enjoyed many things together. Their love began to grow and grow.

SIPHO AND HAZEL STEP OUT OF THE CHORUS.

SIPHO Hazel, do you love me?
HAZEL Oh! Yes, Sipho with all my heart.
SIPHO I love you too, can we meet at 7 'o clock tonight?
HAZEL Oh! No, Sipho, my father would kill me.
SIPHO Don't make me a fool Hazel, you said you love me.
HAZEL Yes, I love you Sipho but..
SIPHO No, don't hesitate Hazel, if you love me.
HAZEL I said I love you but I don't feel ready yet. Please, no Sipho.
SIPHO I know that you really mean yes — you have to show me that you love me.
HAZEL Well, I will see you at 7 'o clock.

NARRATOR Yes, it happened, they met at 7 'o clock that night, though it was difficult for Hazel, but she did it to satisfy her lover Sipho.

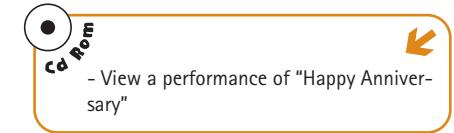
SIPHO Hazel, do you love me?
HAZEL I told you with all of my heart.
SIPHO I love you my beauty s'ncanakazana (baby). Let's do it.
HAZEL But it's..
SIPHO No buts... sweetheart..
HAZEL Please Sipho, not yet!

SIPHO Don't you love me?
HAZEL Oh! Yes, I do.

NARRATOR They did it for the first time. Three months later Hazel discovered she was pregnant. Her parents got very angry and dropped her from school. She lost her bright future. Sipho was nowhere to be found. It was only heard that Sipho continued with school and became a principal in one of the schools in another circuit. And later he married a nurse that was working in a nearby clinic.



'Happy anniversary' Mark Hoeben, SOUNDTRACK 4 LIFE (mini-forum)



Themes: Sexual decision-making, risk, HIV prevention, drug use, trust

BREYTON AND CHERONTINE-ANNE DISCUSS THEIR PLAN TO HAVE SEX TONIGHT, IN THE CONTEST OF A SIX-MONTH RELATIONSHIP.

BREYTON ENTERS, SINGING:

BREYTON This is the night tonight, everything's gonna be alright
This is the night tonight, everything's gonna be alright (3x)... Baby, lama baby...
CHERONTINE-ANNE Breyton, we need to talk.
BREYTON Huhhh???
CHERONTINE-ANNE We NEED to TALK.
BREYTON Oh, are you not feeling well?
CHERONTINE-ANNE Mmmm, no....
BREYTON Ag shame, my Cherontine-Anne ... Don't worry your little head. I'll make it all better....
This is the night tonight...
CHERONTINE-ANNE Seriously, Breyton, we REALLY need to talk.
BREYTON About what?
CHERONTINE-ANNE Ummm, about ... tonight.
BREYTON What about tonight?
CHERONTINE-ANNE Ag amn, you know.
BREYTON Are you nervous? Is that what's going on?
CHERONTINE-ANNE I'm scared.
BREYTON You see, I told you to have another drink... to put you in the mood. You know, try some Tik again [a drug]. It will make you feel lekker warm [loose translation: really aroused]. It's OK, I'll look after you. You don't have to be scared when Breyton's near. Baby, let's go somewhere quieter...to talk.

[THE CHARACTERS WALK...]

CHERONTINE-ANNE Breyton, I'm not.....I'm not ready.
BREYTON What do you mean you're not ready?
CHERONTINE-ANNE Ummmm....mmm

BREYTON WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT READY? Do you know how LONG I've waited for this? Huh? SIX months...180 days...4,320 hours.... Yes, I've been counting. Must I count the minutes and seconds for you? Ahhh, you can't make me suffer one minute longer. Don't be so cruel!
CHERONTINE-ANNEBut... Breyton, what if I, I fallpregnant?
BREYTON Don't worry, baby, that will never happen. Anyway, I'll look after you. This is the night toni—
CHERONTINE-ANNE But what about diseases? Like.... AIDS?
BREYTON Like what?
CHERONTINE-ANNE AIDS.....I'm sorry.
BREYTON What are you saying? Hmm? You think I've got AIDS? Don't you trust me? Aaaaaagh! What kind of a man do you think I am?
CHERONTINE-ANNE Ummmm... ohhh... Breyton!!
BREYTON After all I've done for you! I can't believe this.
CHERONTINE-ANNE Sorry...
BREYTON Now, it's up to you. You coming?

CHERONTINE-ANNE RELUCTANTLY WALKS TOWARDS HIM AND THEY GO OFF TOGETHER . . .



'Home economics class'

Mark Hoeben, SOUNDTRACK 4 LIFE

(mini-forum)

Themes: Disclosure, rights and responsibilities of people who live with HIV and those who are HIV negative, fears about HIV and AIDS, stigma, confidentiality

TEACHER: What are you doing out of class, young lady?!

JOSIE: Sir, I'm getting the First Aid kit.....come quickly!

TEACHER: Slow down, Josie. Take a breath and tell me what's happening.

JOSIE: Nomsa just cut herself.

TEACHER: Nomsa who?

JOSIE: Er...Nomsa Maduna, sir.

TEACHER: Nomsa Maduna? Oh my goodness!!!

JOSIE: Nomsa Maduna just cut herself chopping veggies in Home Economics. She was bleeding all over. We tried to stop the bleeding but it was everywhere, like a flood. So gross.

TEACHER: (To himself) I KNEW something like this would happen. I WARNED them.
(To Josie) I'm worried about the rest of you. Are you sure none of you had any open cuts when you tried to stop the bleeding?

JOSIE: Um...What are you saying, sir? What's wrong with Nomsa?

TEACHER: No, it's nothing.

JOSIE: Um...You're making me scared, sir.

TEACHER: Look, just forget I said anything. This is not your business. And Josie, don't mention this to the other girls, OK. Uh, just be extra careful around Nomsa. That's all I'm saying.

NOMSA: Josie, where's that plaster I asked you to get? I need it quickly.

JOSIE: (Backing away) Don't touch me! What's wrong with you?

NOMSA: (After silence, looks at Teacher, then at Josie, then back at teacher) How could you do this, sir?

TEACHER: Get back to class, Nomsa. And in future, Josie, I'll have less talking back from BOTH of you!

Discussion points:

- This play examines disclosure, the rights and responsibilities of people who live with HIV and those around them who are not HIV negative. What happens when these rights are in conflict or affect the other?
- This play also looks at the rights and duties of educators, their disempowerment and their duty to protect and to act in a certain manner, sometimes without adequate training and consultation themselves.
- What is friendship? Is it necessary to always tell your friends everything? Does keeping something private mean you do not trust or are not trustworthy? Or honest?
- What are the legal policies around HIV, confidentiality, and care at your school or workplace?
- What are your rights? What are your feelings?

Annex B

Basic Information about HIV and AIDS

(HIV AND AIDS FACT SHEET, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

HIV AND AIDS FACT SHEET FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **FAQ**

1. WHAT IS HIV AND HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus and it is the virus that can develop to AIDS.

The most common ways that HIV is transmitted are:

- Through unprotected sexual intercourse,
- By sharing needles or injection equipment with an injecting drug user who is HIV positive,
- Mother to child transmission either during pregnancy or birth, or postnatal via breastfeeding. Although this mode of transition may be prevented if the mother takes medication that is relatively accessible at the global level nowadays,
- Through transfusions of infected blood.

2. WHAT IS AIDS? WHAT CAUSES AIDS?

AIDS, the Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome, is the latest stage of HIV development. But HIV weakens the body's defence (immune) system until it can no longer fight off infections such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, tumours, cancers and other illnesses.

Today there are medical treatments that function for many people. This medication (anti-retroviral treatment) can slow down the rate at which HIV weakens the immune system (anti-retroviral treatment). There are other treatments that can prevent or cure some of HIV-related illnesses. As with other health issues, early detection offers more options for treatment and preventative health care.

3. CAN I CONTRACT HIV FROM 'CASUAL CONTACT' WITH AN INFECTED PERSON?

No. This means that it is OK to play sports and work together, shake hands, hug, kiss, sleep in the same room, breathe the same air, share drinking and eating utensils and towels, use the same showers or toilets, use the same washing water and swim in the same swimming pool. You cannot contract HIV virus through spitting, sneezing or coughing or through tears or sweat, or through bites from mosquitoes or other insects.

4. WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM HIV?

HIV prevention includes various safer sex behaviour strategies that informed individuals who are in a position to decide for themselves can choose at different times in their lives to reduce their risk of exposing themselves or others to HIV.

These are often referred to as the ABCs of combination prevention (Global HIV Prevention Working Group, 2003

<http://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/hivghpwpwpackage.cfm>).

A is for **Abstinence** – not engaging in sexual intercourse.

B is for **Being faithful** – in case both partners know that they are HIV negative and remain faithful.

C is for **Correct and Consistent Condom use** – using a condom correctly, and using one every time you have sex. You should learn how to use condoms and how to negotiate the use of condoms with your partner. (Please also see: www.unaids.org/hiv/aids/info/faq/condom.html)

A, B, and C interventions can be adapted and combined in a balanced approach that will vary according to the cultural context, the population being addressed and the phase of the epidemic.

(Source: 2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, UNAIDS.)

5. HOW CAN I AVOID CONTRACTING HIV THROUGH INJECTING DRUGS?

Seek help to stop using drugs.

Meanwhile use sterile needles, syringes and other equipment every time, do not share injecting equipment, and clean equipment between use.

(See also AVERT.ORG : <http://www.avert.org/druguse.htm>)

6. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM UNSURE OF MY STATUS?

If you are not sure of your status, for example because you have had unprotected sex, you should ask your physician about having HIV test. Many communities have testing centres, which provide HIV tests and confidential counselling. By knowing your status you will be able to take care of yourself and others. Early detection of HIV combined with appropriate medication can make it possible for yourself to live a healthy life and to avoid the spread of the virus through blood donation, unprotected sex or through needle sharing.

8. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I KNOW THAT SOMEONE HAS HIV?

Treat them equally just like anyone else, irrelevant of their HIV-status. It is, however, of major importance not to disclose that person's HIV status to anyone else and to respect his or her privacy. Disclosure is one's own right. Moreover, people with HIV have the same rights to be active members of a society - the right to work, education, travel, etc. - and in general they have the right to make their own life decisions.

Annex C Resource list

UNITED NATIONS

Useful websites from the United Nations concerning general issues on HIV/AIDS:

UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) is the leading advocate for coordinated global action in response to the epidemic. It brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN agencies: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank.

UNAIDS both mobilises the responses to the epidemic of its eight cosponsoring organisations and supplements these efforts with special initiatives. Its purpose is to lead and assist an expansion of the international response to HIV on all fronts: medical, public health, social, economic, cultural, political and human rights. UNAIDS works with a broad range of partners – governmental and NGO, business, scientific and lay – to share knowledge, skills and best practice across boundaries.

UNAIDS
www.unaids.org

UNHCR
www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/protect?id=401915744

WFP
www.wfp.org

UNICEF
www.unicef.org/aids/index.php

UNDP
www.undp.org/hiv/

UNFPA
www.unfpa.org/hiv/index.htm

UNODC
www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug_demand_hiv_aids.html

ILO
www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/

UNESCO
www.unesco.org/aids

WHO
www.who.int/hiv/en/

Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma: A Toolkit for Action

Training guide developed by the Change Project – a cooperative agreement between the Academy for Educational Development and USAID. This resource has 126 creative activities designed to develop awareness of and action against HIV-related stigma.

It is available to download at:
www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/StigmaToolkit.pdf and
www.changeproject.org

Strengthening Community Responses to HIV/AIDS, UNDP Toolkit, 2000

The toolkit can be obtained via internet:
www.undp.org/hiv/publications/index.htm

School Health Education to Prevent AIDS and STD

This practical step-by-step manual includes (1) Handbook for curriculum planners; (2) Teachers' Guide, and (3) Students' Activities. Produced jointly by WHO and UNESCO, it is available in several languages:

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=36024&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNICEF Training, Teaching and Learning Materials about HIV and AIDS

www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_14926.html

AIDS: Working with Young People by AVERT, 1993

This training manual is intended to be used with young people aged 14 and over in youth clubs, training schemes, and schools. It includes exercises and games introduced by background text that gives an overview of the medical and social aspects of AIDS as well as advice on HIV and AIDS education.
www.avert.org

Voices of Youth (UNICEF)

VOY is a youth community Web site created by UNICEF. It is a platform where young people can explore, discuss, and partner on issues related to human rights and social change by using tools like e-discussion boards, guidelines, and news.
www.unicef.org/voy/

Chezesalama.com

This site, available both in English and KiSwahili, presents adolescent sexual and reproductive health information, along with HIV and AIDS information, based on both the Si Mchezo and FEMINA magazines in Tanzania.
www.chezesalama.com

Kimasomaso

This is a BBC World Service Trust/BBC Swahili service program that incorporates a glossary of information on sexual and reproductive health for young people. (Web site is in Swahili.)
www.bbc.co.uk/swahili/highlights/cluster/2005/07/050629_kimasomaso.shtml

Soul Beat Africa

SBA is a space for communicators across Africa to share experiences, materials, strategic thinking and events, and to engage in discussion and debate. The site focuses specifically on Africa, providing an opportunity for the unique experiences and issues of the continent to be shared and debated, while helping to strengthen communication for development and social change. The project is a collaboration between Soul City and The Communication Initiative. www.comminit.com/africa/

AIDS Map (Internet site with extensive information about treatment for HIV and AIDS).

www.aidsmap.com

FOCUS on Young Adults

www.pathfind.org/focus.htm

Go Ask Alice!

Provides answers to questions about relationships, sexuality and general health. : www.goaskalice.columbia.edu

Harvard AIDS Institute

www.hsph.harvard.edu/hai/

ICASO (International Council of AIDS Service Organisations)

www.icaso.org

International HIV/AIDS Alliance

www.aidsalliance.org

UNESCO's Culture, HIV and AIDS Project

www.unesco.org/culture/aids

UNFPA Peer Education resources

www.youthpeer.org

Youthnet

www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/index.htm

THEATRE, YOUTH PARTICIPATION, AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Games for Actors and Non-actors

Augusto Boal. New York: Routledge Press, 1992.

The Theatre of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal. New York: Routledge Press, 1982.

Playing for Life: Performance in Africa in the Age of AIDS

Louise Bourgault. Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2003.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire. New York: Continuum International, 1993.

Improvisation for the Theatre

Viola Spolin. Northwestern University Press, 1963.

Theatre-Based Techniques for Youth Peer Education.

This training manual contains four peer theatre training workshops, a series of theatre games and exercises that can be used in trainings, and information on developing and building a peer theatre programme. Developed by UNFPA and Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER), it is available on the internet. www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/Publications/peeredtoolkit/TheaterTraining.htm

100 ways to energise groups: Games to use in workshops, meetings and the community.

This is a compilation of exercises that can be used by anyone working with groups of people, whether in a workshop, meeting or community setting. It sets out to build practical skills, provide a training resource and continue learning. Published by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. www.aidsalliance.org/sw7452.asp

Y-PEER Icebreakers Index Cards

Pocket size full colour Icebreaker Cards for peer education training developed by UNFPA within the framework of Y-PEER programme. The Icebreaker cards are intended to be used by trainers and peer educators during peer education training sessions. www.youthpeer.org/upload/resources/190_ResFile_exercise_cards.final.pdf

Games for Adolescent Reproductive Health: An International Handbook

Includes tips on getting started; 45 games that are fun, easy-to-use and

educational; guidance on creating your own games; and ready-to-use card sets.

www.path.org/publications/pub.php?id=676

Stepping Stones

A manual for facilitators to help run community workshops on HIV/AIDS, communication and relationship skills, it is used in many countries in all regions. Has an excellent range of games and group activities. Includes a video. Published by Action Aid. Available for sale from: TALC (Teaching AIDS at Low Cost), PO Box 49, St Albans, Herts AL1 5TX, UK. Tel: (+44) 1727 853 869.

REFLECT

REFLECT is an approach to adult learning and social change. It was conceived by ActionAid and developed through innovative pilot programmes in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador between 1993 and 1995. It started as a fusion of the political philosophy of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, with the practical methodologies developed for participatory rural appraisal (PRA). To learn more about REFLECT, visit: www.reflect-action.org and to find out about Reflect in Africa, contact:

Pamoja Africa Reflect Network
Block 244, Plot 2983 Muyenga Kisugu
P.O. Box 676 Kampala, Uganda
Email: pamoja@infocom.co.ug
Telephone: +256 (0)77 767738/(0)41 231311

Participatory Workshops: A sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas & activities, Robert Chambers.

This fun to read book presents a variety of creative and practical ideas for facilitating participatory workshops, discussions, and evaluations. Includes activities for analysis and feedback, attitude and behaviour awareness and change, and dealing with dominators and helping the silent speak. Earthscan: www.earthscan.co.uk

Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning, and Implementation

The Youth Participation Guide seeks to increase the level of meaningful youth participation in reproductive health (RH) and HIV/AIDS programming at an institutional and programmatic level. The target audience includes senior and middle management, programme managers, staff involved in implementing activities, and youth who may be engaged at all levels of an organisation's work.

www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/ypguide.htm

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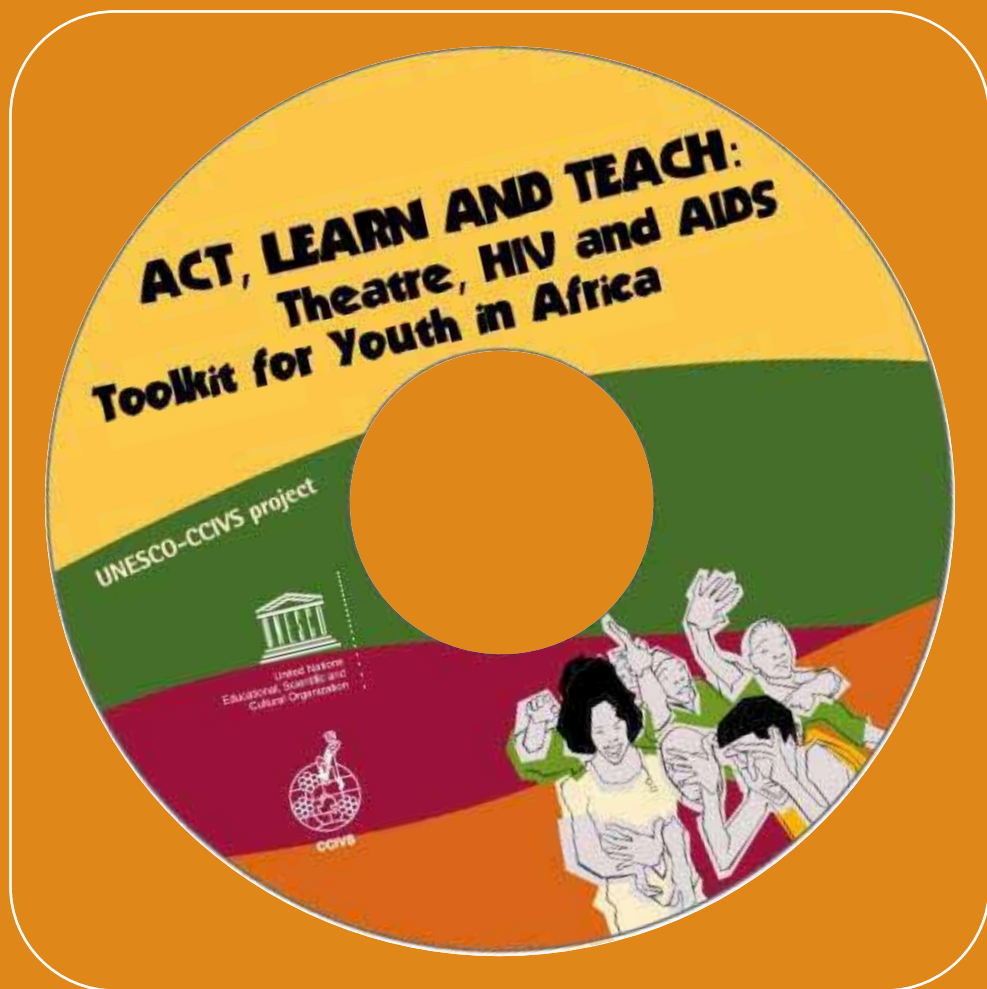
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Minimum system requirements:

Windows 98
Pentium 100
Internet Explorer
CD Rom display
Audio card



Project coordination:

CCIVS and UNESCO

Editing:

Laura Myers

Copy-editing:

Casey Walther

Graphic design:

Cantiere Giovani Comunicazione, Italy
Elisa Cuenca Tamariz (concept and graphics)
Raffaele Russo (flash developer)

Illustrations:

Margherita Tramutoli, Italy

Video editing:

Eva Gilliam, South Africa
Rural Development Media Communications (RUDMEC), Uganda
Raffaele Russo, Italy
Elisa Cuenca Tamariz, Italy

Photography, video, and radio footage:

Kim Elverding, Netherlands
Eva Gilliam, South Africa
Laura Myers, South Africa
DramAidE, South Africa
Soundtrack 4 Life and Kairos Moment, South Africa
Eastern Africa Workcamps Association, Uganda
Mr. Sebagala, Radio Sapientia, Uganda
Miranda Guhrs, SEKA (Sensitisation and Education through Kunda Arts), Zambia

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
Culture, HIV and AIDS Project
1, rue Miollis
F-75732 Paris cedex 15, France
Tel :+33145684330
culture.aids@unesco.org
www.unesco.org/culture/aids

UNESCO BREA
12, Avenue L. S. Senghor
BP 3311 – DAKAR, Senegal
Tel. +221 8492323
b.sarr@unesco.org

CCIVS
**Co-ordinating Committee for
International Voluntary Service**
UNESCO House
1, rue Miollis
F-75732 Paris cedex 15, France
ccivs@unesco.org
www.unesco.org/ccivs

