

# Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation Training Manual



## Foreword:

Ask two people what they know of the Democratic Republic of Congo and you may be surprised to find remarkably different reactions. One might talk about the five million deaths over the last decade, due to war and its consequences: more deaths anywhere in the world since World War II. The other may smile and start to cite the names of famous Congolese musicians and artists such as Papa Wemba or Kofi Olomide, who, in the words of some 'keep Africa dancing.' It is the marriage of this powerful Congolese creative spirit with the tragedy that is the reality for millions of Congolese of our generation that has given birth to this manual. For it is the creative power of theatre to touch people's hearts, to evoke compassion and deep understanding, and to enable issues to be raised and new solutions to be highlighted that has enabled SFCG to penetrate into conflict zones with a conflict transformation tool that is innovative, compelling and effective.

This manual could not have been possible without the contribution of a lot of very special people. Long hours of brainstorming in 2005 between SFCG Theatre Coordinator Don Tshibanda and the SFCG team led to the first draft of this manual. This draft was used in trainings with actors around the country in trainings led by Don, in the context of repatriation and demobilization issues. In the summer of 2006, interns from Columbia University Cary McClelland and Jeca Taudte worked long hours to deepen and structure the initial methodological ideas, and reinforce the marriage of ideas between participatory theatre and conflict transformation. By combining Forum Theatre Techniques initially developed by Augusto Baol in Brazil in the 1960s, with a 'common ground' approach aimed at seeking collaborative rather than adversarial solutions to conflict, the SFCG model of Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation began to take shape.

But it was through the two years of practice on the ground in war-torn eastern DRC, through over 600 performances in front of more than 500,000 spectators, that the techniques began to become the methodology that is presented in this manual. Many international practitioners have visited SFCG over the last two years to see and feel this work in progress, notably from the University of Manchester's In Place of War Project, Frederique Lecompte from the Theatre and Reconciliation initiative and Beatrice Pouligny from Georgetown University/Sciences Po Paris. Their observations and insights have been invaluable in moving SFCG forward and deeper in its approach.

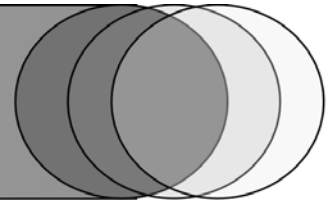
Without the support of generous donors, this work would have been impossible. The British, Swedish and American government support to SFCG's work over these years, with the initial support of the Congolese government's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion Commission (Conader) and subsequent consistent support since 2005 of the UNHCR enabled SFCG to put this methodology into regular practice.

SFCG in the DRC hopes that this manual will be an inspiration to creative artists throughout the world, but particularly those living and working in conflict zones, where amidst emergency food distribution and vaccination campaigns the relevance of artists is often questioned. SFCG believes that it is particularly in such dire situations that artists have a role, a responsibility and an opportunity to employ their creative talents. Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation is a way for artists to apply their creative energy to the cause of lasting peace.

~Lena Slachmuis  
Director

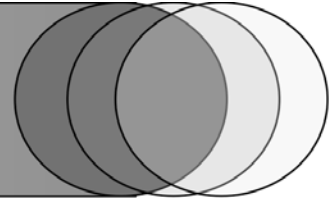
Search for Common Ground in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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## Conflicts and Participatory Theatre

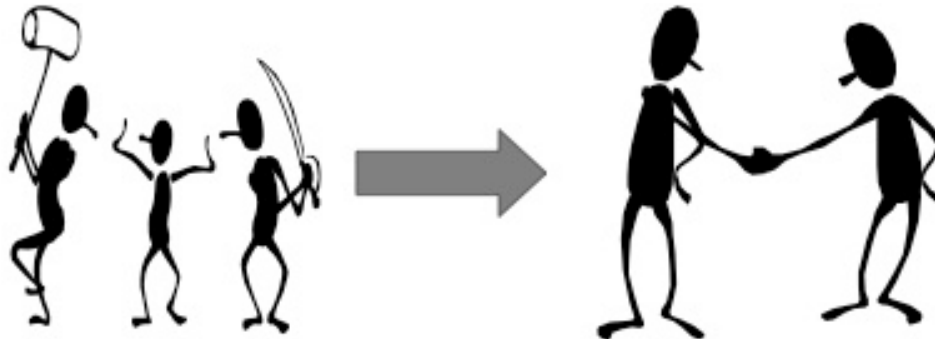
***We live in a world of differences - of ideology, belief systems, ethnicity, social and cultural values.*** These differences are completely natural. They're not something that we're going to be able to banish or get rid of. Nor would we want to - in fact, these differences enrich our lives.

But these differences can become the basis for conflicts when two or more people or parties believe that the other is an obstacle to getting what they want. Such conflicts take many different forms, from private disputes to widespread wars. They occur between adversaries as well as between friends and family members. They can be over something physical or emotional. And they can take many different forms. It is when disagreement devolves into violence that conflict can destroy communities, countries and relationships.

A conflict that is “transformed” can have numerous benefits. In fact, all social change stems from conflict. Without conflict, our society would not evolve, injustices would never be called into question, and relations would remain frozen. Conflicts can create progress, dialogue, better understanding of each other and even greater trust and intimacy.

How we deal with these conflicts is the difference between peace and war, between community and chaos. So often we think that the only result of conflict is winning or losing. We think we need to fight. But we actually have a choice – we can feed the conflict or we can transform it. You have that choice. Everyone around you has that choice.

Often we see the only possible outcomes of a conflict as either victory or defeat. We believe that we have no other option than to fight. But, in fact, we always have a choice - we can feed the conflict or transform it.



How do we transform conflict? By really listening, we can begin to understand that people's *positions* – what they say they want – is not always the same as their interests – what motivates them, what they need. These interests are important, they reflect the fears, hopes, values, deep desires of people. By identifying the interests at stake beyond the stated positions, we discover our common humanity. These form the basis from which we can find beneficial solutions for all parties. When we turn to the interests behind the positions, our perspective on conflict changes and our approach can never be the same.

This is what Search for Common Ground tries to do: change the way the world responds to conflict, replacing an adversarial approach, where one side wins and the other loses, towards a collaborative approach, whereby we all win. We believe that dealing with conflict constructively is a skill that can be developed, and participatory theatre is a powerful tool in developing that skill.

## Why Participatory Theatre?

As people of the theatre, we know that just as conflict is a natural part of life it is a critical ingredient of drama. From the ancient Greeks to modern day playwrights, from the comedic to the tragic, the theatre has long served as a place for a society to gather, witness their own conflicts, and reflect upon possible solutions. This has served diverse purposes for different communities from entertainment to eulogy to celebration to group healing.

When each of these forms is performed successfully, they elicit the audience's identification with the characters onstage. Theatre gives spectators the opportunity to stand outside a conflict, watch each adversary in action, and empathize to a degree with each side. Audiences have the chance to witness real people in the process of encountering these challenges in one another. As a result, audience members are better able to connect with the deeper wants and needs that motivate the core conflict of the play. Theatre, in fact, embodies many of the key techniques and tenets of the "common ground" approach, whereby deeper understanding can promote more effective solutions for resolving conflict.

Participatory theatre is even more effective in serving this mission. It not only encourages the spectator to identify with characters in conflict and then asks audience members to step onto the stage and literally fill a character's shoes. The act of empathizing is taken one step further as the public attempts to find novel and positive solutions to the conflict. Participatory theatre productions offer communities the opportunity to actively reflect together by using the stage as a place to explore new ways of living and to express new visions of the future.

Participatory theatre has a particularly important role to play in post-war societies. Here, conflict is a factor in the day-to-day lives of many communities, and the role of spectator risks disengaging them from the active pursuit of new ways forward. Inviting the audience to play a role in the resolution of their conflicts encourages these communities to take agency of their own futures. In the end, participatory theatre provides an outlet for the native interest both actors and audience members alike have in transforming their persistent disagreements into an opportunity for better communication, growth and development.



## What is participatory theatre?

We hear about “*development theatre*”, “*theatre for the oppressed*”, *popular theatre*, “*community theatre*”, and “*intervention theatre*”, “*protest theatre*” and “*theatre for social change*”. These are often used interchangeably and are associated with a transformation of a social reality, by using community and individual participation.

Participatory theatre is an approach in which the actors interact with the public, based on a real problem. Throughout the participatory event, the public participates to adapt, change or correct a situation, an attitude or a behaviour that is developed during the show.

This form of theatre aims to join entertainment with an exploration of attitudes and to share knowledge in order to stimulate positive social changes.

## How do we use it?

This form of theatre is useful in a number of ways. The play presented to the public becomes a mirror of the problems experienced in the community:

- ▶ The participatory approach provides an opportunity for the public to think, talk and ask questions about these problems;
- ▶ The public is forced to propose an approach that could improve the situation presented, avoid violence and transform the conflict. Different audience members are on stage offering ideas. They become stakeholders in the piece and at the same time agents of social change.
- ▶ The audience can "live" a different future, which could become the tomorrow's reality.

A representation is not, in itself, the end of the process. But the public experience - dialogue, reflection, and active participation in seeking the solutions to issues of concern in their community - is the beginning of a process of conflict transformation.

## History of Participatory Theatre

*"Theatre is a form of knowledge: It should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it."*

- Augusto Boal

*"I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing."*

- Paolo Freire

Any discussion of the history of participatory theatre must begin with a discussion of the work and theories of Paolo Freire, a Brazilian lawyer and educator; his theories of education and its role in effecting social change are fundamental to our theatre. Born in middle class Brazil, Freire's experience of hunger and poverty during the 1929 Great Depression shaped his life and commitment to assisting his country's disenfranchised. Though he studied law, he quickly gravitated towards education in his career, working early on primarily for the Brazilian Board of Education.

He rejected the "banking concept" of education – whereby students are empty vessels that have to be filled with "deposits" of information by teachers who manage the till. He argued against this model, fearing that the teacher-student dichotomy was counterproductive to the real aims of education; to Freire, this hierarchy deadened the student, limited their ability to develop important critical faculties, and most importantly, robbed them of the agency students needed to make their education truly relevant in their lives. He saw this having particularly negative consequences in the education of his country's poor, who were rarely given active means to find means of advancement through learning. In this context, education was far from neutral, but had become political; whether deliberately or inadvertently, it was becoming another mechanism ensuring the suppression of the voices of the poor.

*Freire felt deeply that every human being, even the most "ignorant", may be able to have a critical eye on the world around.*

Freire's efforts were largely poured into revolutionizing the education of the poor and disenfranchised. He felt deeply that every human being, no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the culture of silence he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at the world around them. He developed a more democratic



educational theory where the teacher serves as a facilitator of a dialogue between students rather than a dispenser of facts. In this environment of equals, the class learns more than facts, but by sharing experiences, responses, and reflections, they learn how to make those facts relevant to their lives and apply them practically. Dialogue is central to the Freirian methodology, setting all parties on an equal playing field and encouraging collaboration and the development of critical skills of analysis, interpretation, and articulation. The teacher thereby provides tools for a discussion that transforms the class by encouraging cooperation, building social capital through networks of communication and understanding, and developing proactive and collaborative ideas for community progress.

His first efforts with this theory were a remarkable success. In Brazil at the time, one could not vote if one could not read. Therefore, Freire launched a series of initiatives aimed at improving literacy amongst the rural poor to help them gain a voice in their government. The programs were all very dialogic, encouraging participation, collaboration, and group learning. In his first 45 days, over three hundred sugar cane workers learned to read and write as a result of their participation. This first experiment's success launched it as a national literacy effort. Unfortunately after a coup in 1964, Freire was labelled a dissident for his theories and was exiled from Brazil. He spent much of his career working at the world's most prestigious universities, including Harvard and Cambridge. In 1974, he wrote the seminal text of his theories Pedagogy of the Oppressed. When the political winds changed in 1980, he returned to become the Secretary of Education for Sao Paulo.

The originator of many of the techniques we consider a part of "participatory" theatre is a contemporary and compatriot of Paulo Freire named Augusto Boal. Indeed, their lives contain many parallels. Like Freire, his early experiences encountering poverty in Brazil crystallized a commitment to work for social change. Joining Rio de Janeiro's prestigious Arena Theatre after graduation, Boal used theatre to reach new audiences in the country's poorest communities. He hoped to provoke a revolution of social and economic justice through his art, encouraging his audiences to demand more rights and opportunity. However, he quickly grew disenchanted with the classical theatre. Similar to Freire's observations of the teacher-student divide, Boal began to grow uncomfortable with the conventional dichotomy between the actors and audience that pervaded the theatre around him.

*Boal has used theatre to reach new audiences in the poorest communities in the country. He hoped to provoke a revolution in social and economic justice through his art by encouraging its viewers to seek more rights and opportunities.*

He admits candidly to the failures of his own theatre as a result of this classical divide. Early in his career, he attempted to perform theatre with a revolutionary message. Performing for the country's poorest communities with a message that encouraged them to demand more rights and opportunity. He found many audiences left cold, left angry, interrupted performances, largely communicating that they weren't a part of the event that was happening on stage. He vividly describes one moment where surprisingly the opposite occurred: An audience member waited for the troupe after the production, armed to the teeth, ready to join them and start the revolution that moment. Boal unfortunately had to talk the man down, explaining they were only artists and had to wish to cause violence; the many stormed off yelling, "when you speak of revolution, you mean that it's our blood that must be spilled, not yours." This experience in particular caused Boal to begin to question the merits of a troupe of actors entering a new community and dogmatically telling the public there how they should change their lives, how they should seek new opportunities, and how they should behave to better their lives. These early challenges convinced him that the classical theatre that divides the actors and audience, where ideas travel only one way and there is no space for feedback and dialogue, was potentially only replicating the very politics that he wanted to change.

*Boal has worked to transform his troupe... Not to be distributors of a message to passive spectators, but a group that could create a space for dialogue with and among the spectators.*

As a result, Boal sought to apply many of Freire's techniques for the classroom as a way to democratize the theatre. If change within a community was going to occur, it would not be triggered by outside ideas imported by a troupe of actors, but would happen only when a community was given a forum for sharing their own ideas, understanding one another, and developing ways of affecting change together. Like Freire's vision of a teacher as a facilitator, Boal worked to transform his troupe; they would be no longer the dispenser's of a message to a passive audience, but a group that could create a space for dialogue with and within their audience.

As a result, he began to fold the audience into the creative process, experimenting with a technique called "simultaneous dramaturgy"; in which audience members would provide possible solutions to the conflicts presented onstage. This naturally led to the invention of Forum Theatre, where audience members take the stage to replace an actor and embody their ideas, giving life to their proposals. Boal's participatory theatre has expanded into a range of techniques, all of which motivate the spectator to become a "spect-actor," one who actively contributes to the dialogue onstage and help search for new collaborative ways forward. Has built new techniques, and new schools of

theatre have taken inspiration from the participatory toolbox, including theatre of the oppressed, community theatre, populist theatre, legislative theatre, newspaper theatre, image theatre, and invisible theatre. He has taken participatory theatre out of the political struggles of the poor of Brazil, and put it to work in psychotherapy, education, and legislation. Like Freire, his methods were considered so effective and so dangerous to those in power in Brazil at the time that Boal himself, in 1971, was arrested and exiled to Argentina, shortly after the publication of his first book, *The Theatre of the Oppressed*. Today, Boal has returned to Brazil and opened the Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed, which is considered one of the foremost loci for the practice of participatory theatre.

Participatory theatre has grown far beyond the legacy of Boal's early experiments. Many have built on his early forum theatre techniques, and new schools of theatre have taken inspiration from the participatory toolbox, including theatre of the oppressed, community theatre, populist theatre, legislative theatre, newspaper theatre, image theatre, and invisible theatre.

## Participatory Theatre around the World

No longer solely rooted in the politics of Brazil, participatory theatre is now widely applied in a variety of fields—from public health to education to conflict transformation—as a useful tool to reach new communities and effect positive discourse and change.

### Latin America

In Sao Paulo's prisons, forum theatre has become a routine part of the government's rehabilitation and education of state criminals.

### Europe

In **France**, Proscenium specializes in Forum Theatre. Their work addresses issues such as drug abuse, sexual violence, domestic violence, and current political debates.

In **Great Britain**, Theatre Fforwm Cymru uses theatre based on real stories and real issues to promote emotional literacy and active citizenship in individuals and communities. The FfC train others in Forum theatre techniques, and work with community groups, professionals, legislators, schools, excluded children, and many others. Their work investigates changes in policy and law using public theatre as a forum for debate. The Rehearsal for Reality (R4R) project brings communities into contact with decision makers, and creates spaces for them to work creatively through theatre to develop solutions.

In **Wales**, local community groups stage an annual legislative theatre festival to provoke discussions that ultimately help guide lawmakers in developing government policy.

### Middle East

In **Palestine** and **Israel**, ASHTAR is a non-profit NGO that was established in 1991 in Jerusalem, and inaugurated its second base in Ramallah four years later. It aims at making theatre a fundamental need within the Palestinian society, through stimulating cultural awareness, awakening perceptions towards aesthetics and arousing artistic sensibility and taste.

### Africa

Across Africa, from Burkina Faso to Botswana to Rwanda, participatory theatre is recognized as an effective means of promoting sexual education and combating the spread of AIDS.

In **Burkina Faso**, Atelier Theatre Burkinabe seeks to use theatre for development by consciousness-raising and through the use of specifically African theatre styles.

In **Congo**, Atelier-Theatr'Actions uses participatory theatre to address health and AIDS/HIV education, environment, human rights and education issues

### Asia

In **India**, Jana Sanskriti Centre has nearly 30 theatre teams throughout the country presenting performances that deal with state insecurity, social stratification and caste issues, and religious tensions.

In **Nepal**, Aarohan Street Theatre, started performing street plays about the problems of deaf people called Aawaj (The Voice). They have moved on to put on plays about voting rights and democracy, calling the audience to participate in the first parliamentary elections; about the relation of population and environment; about sanitation, based on a famous folk story of Nepa; and about leprosy, among other topics.



## Participatory Theatre: Different Styles

There are various styles of participatory theatre in which the audience participates together with the actors:

**Theatre of the Oppressed and the Forum Theatre:** are the terms used to describe techniques initiated by Augusto Baol. This features a performance from start to finish, followed by interventions by spectators, replacing actors, and changing the way the plot unfolds.

**Debate Theatre:** This technique features a performance from start to finish, followed by discussions immediately after the show. The issues are directly linked with the show, and the discussion seeks to encourage the sharing of opinions, advice and clarifications.

**Image Theatre:** This is the presentation of an image by the actors immediately, or after one or two scenes, to the public. While the actors are "frozen," a facilitator asked the audience what they see in the image presented by actors. This is followed by questions and discussions.

**Invisible Theatre:** With this technique, the actors present themselves in a public place, without informing viewers that they are actors. In other words, the actors arrive in the place using behaviour similar to the people in the community. However, the way the show unfolds and the roles that each actor will play are well planned in advance. At one point, some actors start a performance and gradually they attract public attention. Other actors who are also at the scene get involved with precise timing, according to the reactions of the public, in order to guide the scenario. The show can end without the public knowing that it was the actors causing the scenario, or actors may show towards the end they are actors and that the scenario was theatre and not reality.

**Playback Theatre:** This technique is an appeal to the audience members to share their stories, whether directly "played" by the actors. The actors thus serve as a mirror of the experiences of the public directly. A facilitator or driver invites a member of the audience on stage to tell a story that has happened. The driver, actors and audience listen attentively. Using the techniques of improvisation, music, song and movement, the actors play the history of the person who remains on stage. In the end, the person is asked to discuss what they think of the 'story' just acted out.

## What is conflict?

When one raises the question of what a conflict is, it is typically defined with a list of negative words, such as violence, population displacement, hatred and war. In reality, we live with conflicts in our daily lives, and they are not necessarily negative. Rather, they are normal, natural and neutral, but the way they are managed will determine whether their impact has a positive or negative impact on our lives.

In other words, conflicts are inevitable, violence is not. Conflicts are the result of human diversity and may have positive consequences as much as negative. Conflicts management based on cooperation can lead to social progress and change.

A conflict is a situation where two or more individuals or groups pursuing their goals or ambitions that they did not think they share with the other side. A conflict is not necessarily violent. The conflict often occurs during a change. Some want change, while others oppose it. If their disagreement or conflict is addressed peacefully, the process can be positive. But when the conflict is not managed properly, it becomes violent.

## What are the Causes of Conflict?

Despite conflict being a normal and natural phenomenon in our environment, it is important to recognize some factors contributing to the occurrence of conflicts in society. Wherever one is in the world, one can anticipate a conflict where:

- ▶ Resources are unfairly distributed. For example for land, housing or in employment;
- ▶ There is little or no communication between two or more groups;
- ▶ The groups have misconceptions or prejudices about each other;
- ▶ There are old unresolved tensions;
- ▶ Power is unevenly distributed, with the exclusion of certain groups.

# Analysis of a Conflict

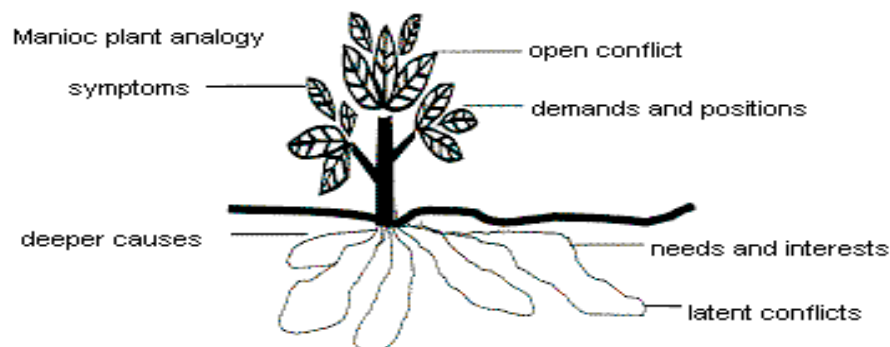
As an actor using the techniques of participatory theatre for conflict transformation, it is imperative to analyze conflicts found in communities.

If conflicts are addressed judgementally without listening, the theatre might distort the current situation, and even lead to other conflicts and misunderstandings. This section of the manual is therefore essential to enable actors to perform this technique well.

## Positions and Interests

The first step in participatory theatre is to analyze the conflict in question. It begins by identifying the positions and interests of different actors.

To understand the relationship between positions and interests, it is helpful to compare the conflict to a plant – a manioc plant, for example. The manioc plant is among those that grow very rapidly. If you want to clear manioc plants from a field, you can't just cut the leaves or branches that are visible at the surface. They are only the exterior signs (symptoms) or the official declarations – or the **POSITIONS**. The positions effectively hide the deeper causes of the plant's health (the roots and the tubers of the manioc), which are hidden underground. These are the **INTERESTS** or **NEEDS**.



The real needs that push people to act are found deep: they are the responses to their substantial interests (like land, water, money), *psychological* interests (the right to respect, equality, and trust), or to their *procedural* interests (the right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making, etc)

In brief, we can define these terms as:

**A conflict:** is a question waiting to be resolved, of which the issue is important for the people involved and for considering the different positions of those involved.

**A position:** represents what the person wants – why? This is their “stand” -- what they say they want, what they declare or act upon.

**An interest:** represents what is important for an individual or a group. It is a need, a deep motivation. Interests include fears, worries, needs and motivations of the parties involved. An interest may often be unstated, but it is real. There is at least one interest behind every position.

*Asking why is a useful way to identify the interest or need that lies below a position.*

- ▶ *Why do you want that?*
- ▶ *Why do you need that?*
- ▶ *Why do you say that?*
- ▶ *Why do you think that?*

While these definitions seem straightforward on paper, positions and interests are not always so easily identified in real life. We have included a list of examples of both, as well as some scenarios to help you begin conflict analysis.



## Examples of Positions

- ▶ *Declarations*
- ▶ *Accusations*
- ▶ *Blames*
- ▶ *Discussions or debates*
- ▶ *Promises of revenge*
- ▶ *Threats*
- ▶ *Demands*

## Examples of Interests

### Autonomy

- ◆ *To choose one's dreams, goals, values*
- ◆ *To choose one's plan for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values*

### Celebration

- ◆ *To celebrate the creation of life and dreams fulfilled*
- ◆ *To celebrate losses: loved ones, dreams, etc (mourning)*

### Integrity

- ◆ *Authenticity*
- ◆ *Creativity*
- ◆ *Meaning*
- ◆ *Self-worth*

### Interdependence

- ◆ *Acceptance*
- ◆ *Appreciation*
- ◆ *Closeness*
- ◆ *Community*
- ◆ *Consideration*
- ◆ *Emotional safety*
- ◆ *Empathy*
- ◆ *Reassurance*
- ◆ *Respect*
- ◆ *Support*
- ◆ *Trust*
- ◆ *Understanding*
- ◆ *Warmth*

### Spiritual Communion

- ◆ *Beauty*
- ◆ *Harmony*
- ◆ *Inspiration*
- ◆ *Order*
- ◆ *Peace*

### Physical Needs

- ◆ *Air*
- ◆ *Food*
- ◆ *Movement, exercise*
- ◆ *Protection from life-threatening beings: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals*
- ◆ *Rest*
- ◆ *Sexual expression*
- ◆ *Shelter*
- ◆ *Touch*
- ◆ *Water*

# Conflict Scenarios

Although these definitions seem clear on paper, it is much more difficult to distinguish the positions and interests in reality. Here are some examples and scenarios that can help you make your first steps.

## 1. Family conflicts: husband and wife

Sylvie and Frank are married and both work a lot. Frank works all day in the local factory while Sylvie works part time as a seamstress. When Frank comes home he does not help his wife Sylvie the housework. This makes Sylvie angry and they fight all the time.

**Sylvie's position:** equality in the home;

**Sylvie's interest:** to be respected and have the fact that she works as well recognized;

**Frank's position:** Its women's work;

**Frank's interest:** I work a lot and am very tired when returning to the house. I want a beer.

## 2. Family conflicts: parents and children

Philomène is 17 years old and meet an 18-year-old boy at a club that she was volunteering with after school. She began to date him, but the parents didn't like it. They tell him that she is still a child and that she cannot go out with him.

**Philomene's position:** she wants to date;

**Philomene's interest:** She wants to be recognised as an adult, not a child;

**The parent's position:** You are too young to date;

**The parent's interests:** The parents have protected their girl for 17 years. They are scared that the boy might harm their girl psychologically, morally and physically.

## 3. Family conflicts: reintegration of soldiers (criminals)

A demobilised soldier comes back to his place and having been trained in carpentry the state gives him a little money month to strengthen his attempt at becoming a carpenter in the community. He lives with his parents and brothers. When his brother falls ill, his parents tell him to use his monthly salary that the state gives him to treat his brother if he wants to continue staying in the house.

**The Soldier's position:** It's my money and I want to use it as I'd like;

**The Soldiers interest:** I want to be able to live my life or I will be forced into the same situation that I was in before without prospects for a stable job;

**The family's position:** You must help your brother;

**The family's interest:** As a family, we must help each other.

#### **4. Social Conflict: Repatriation**

A group of demobilized soldiers arrived in a transit centre where they are to learn various skilled occupations. The group of ex-soldiers are living together in the centre have been given beds and they have three meals a day. Their dependants are also living in the centre, but do not live with the soldiers. Not long after their arrival, the men stop eating and refuse to even enter the cafeteria. The centre's administrators are not only angry that the men are so hard to satisfy, they start to worry that these men are in the middle of plotting something dangerous.

***The administrator's position:*** You are becoming unsatisfied and belligerent. You are not better than the others here;

***The administrator's interest:*** We are doing our best to provide you with food and we want our efforts to be respected;

***The soldier's position:*** I don't want this food;

***The soldier's interest:*** I feel guilty eating so much food when my family and my friends are on the other side of the barrier and are unable to eat and support themselves while I'm here.

#### **5. Social Conflict: Repatriation**

After three years on the other side of the border where they fled during the war, two sisters and their children come home. They go directly to the parcel of land that their father had, but are wondering if the little hut in which they grew up had survived the fighting. The rainy season approaches and they do not know what they will do with their children. But when they arrive, the hut is no longer there. In its place, there is a big house with four bedrooms inside. They fall into a difficult situation with the owner of the house, who claims that he has spent a lot of money to build this house and that he had no idea that they may have a claim on his house. They accuse him of being a thief who took advantage of their misfortune.

***The sisters' position:*** You are a thief and you have stolen our property;

***The sisters' interest:*** They need a roof for their heads as well as their children's.

***The house owner's position:*** This house is mine and you don't have a right to claim it.

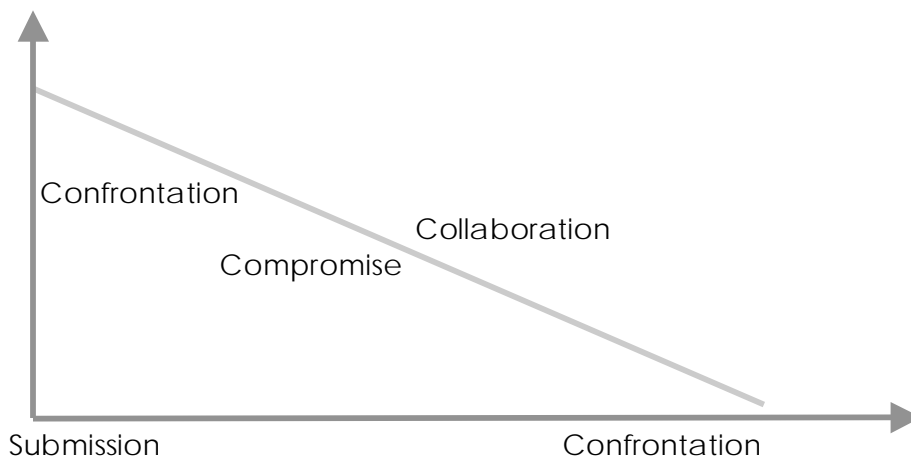
***The house owner's interest:*** To also have a roof over their heads and not lose what was spent on the house.

# Conflict Transformation

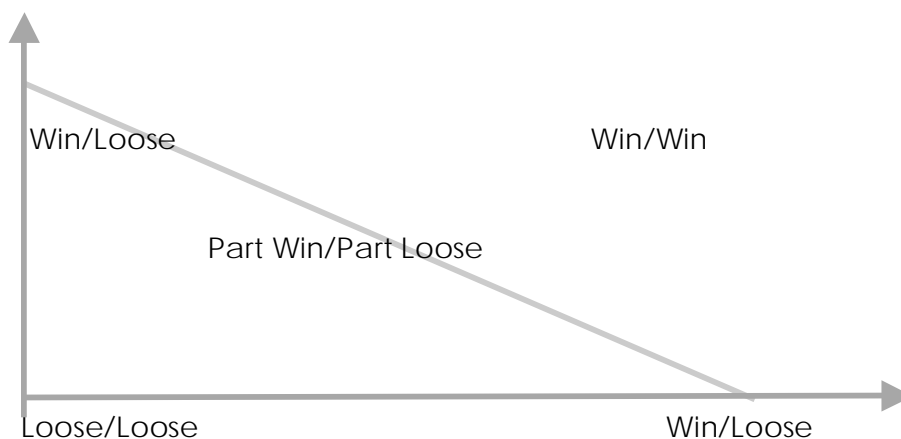
Conflict analysis is not enough. If our goal is to transform a conflict, we must add what we've learned by analyzing positions and interests to a framework for understanding what can possibly happen in a conflict situation.

There are several ways to understand how people react to conflicts: argument; evasion, conciliation, compromise, or collaborating. Each reaction affects a conflict's possible outcomes and determines whether the conflict can be transformed.

## Styles of behaviour during conflicts



## Possible results of conflict





## Behaviour Styles during Conflict

*In a conflict situation, each one of us resorts to one of these five general reactions and can go from one reaction to another based on the evolution of the situation.*

**CONFRONTATION** (or opposition): Each one of the parties in conflict chooses to fight the other. The result is a win-lose situation, which creates grievances and desires of vengeance.

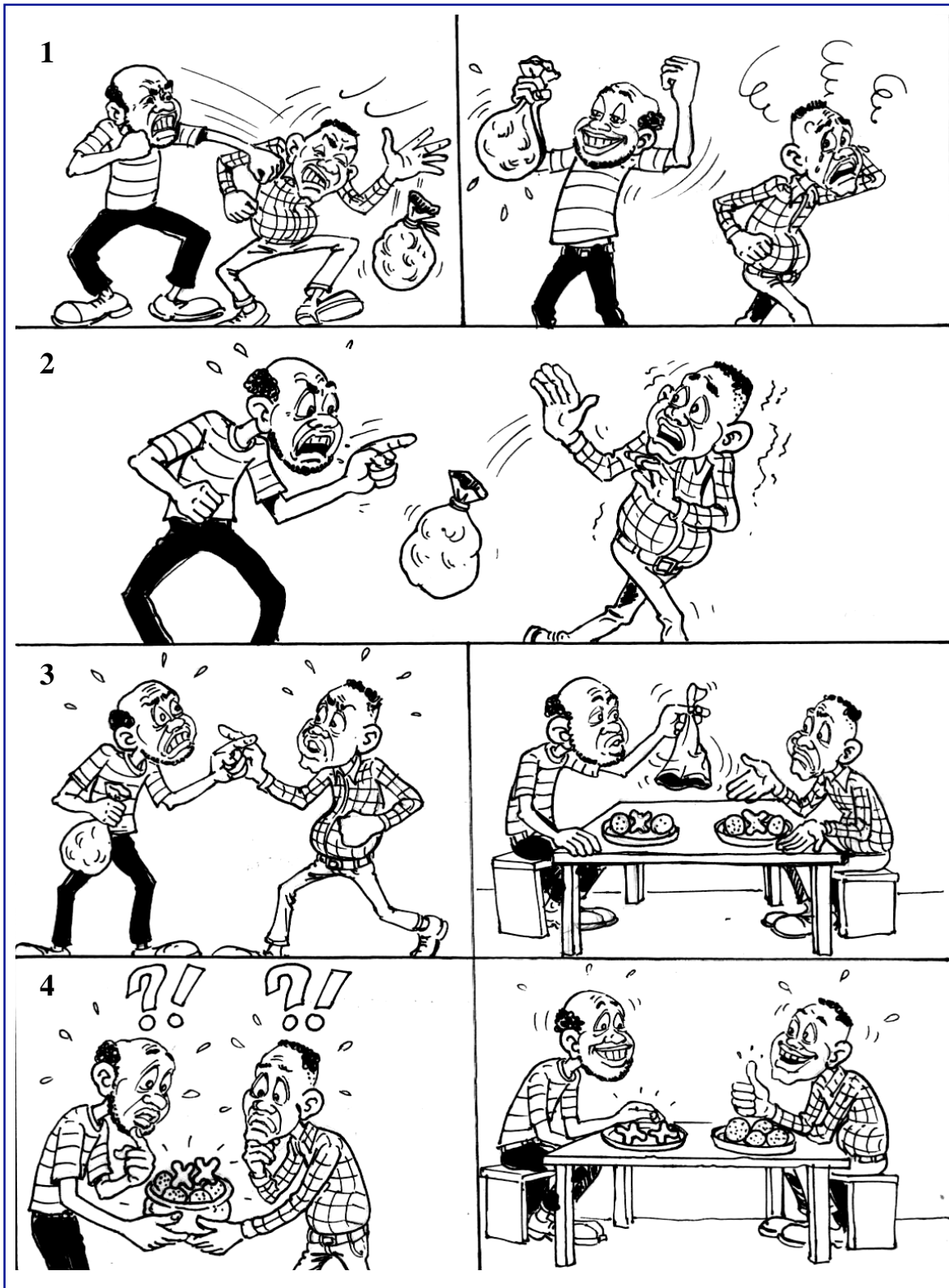
**AVOIDANCE:** One of the parties avoids the temptation to resolve the problem or confront the other.

**MEDIATION:** One of the parties chooses to make concessions in order to preserve the relationship with the other party.

**COMPROMISE** (or sharing): The parties in conflict choose to share the gains from a conflict situation.

**COLLABORATION** (or working together): The parties in conflict choose to work together to find an agreement. Result: the relationships are preserved and each party wins something.

# The Four Types of Behaviour during Conflict:



# How to Transform Conflict

When conflict breaks out, we tend to immediately adopt a stance where the other becomes our enemy and where the goal is to win the game. Such an approach could cause irreparable damage to our relationships without solving the problem in the long term.

Most of us are aware that there is a more constructive way to deal with conflicts. We call it the cooperative approach ("win-win") that can be applied to any type of conflict, from small everyday disputes to wars between countries. We call this the common ground approach, where the parties involved respect their differences and reach an agreement that takes into account their respective shared interests.

But how can we move from one approach to another? When we are engaged in a destructive conflict, how can we transform it into something positive and seek common ground? This requires a change in behaviour and attitude that one can learn through practice and experience. Here are some tips to help you:

1. **Accept that conflicts are part of life:** Our planet has 7 billion people who must find a way to share its resources and live together in harmony. Conflicts are a natural consequence of our differences. We all have different beliefs and needs and there will always be conflicts.
2. **See conflicts as opportunities:** Conflicts are not positive or negative as such. It's how you approach the situation and people involved that will determine the consequences. Conflicts are not necessarily violent and destructive; they may also represent an opportunity for learning and better communication.
3. **Be aware of your reactions and take a deep breath before taking action:** We all have instinctive reactions to situations of conflict: we want to flee, we want to justify; or we want to avenge. Our first reaction will depend on the situation and the other party. It is important not to get carried away by emotions and to think about how best to proceed.
4. **Choose your approach:** Each conflict offers a choice. Some are not worth the trouble to respond or are concluded by a simple negative answer. If you wish, however, solve the problem in a constructive manner; a cooperative approach will help you. Be aware of your choice between a confrontational approach - where the other is regarded as the enemy and the source of the problem - and a cooperative approach - where you are working in partnership to find a satisfactory solution.
5. **Listen and learn:** We all want to be listened to and understood. Sometimes to be heard is really what we are looking for. If you don't listen to the other side, it is unlikely that they will listen to you back. Ask questions and just listening until you make sure you understand his point of view. Find out at one another; conflicts are often the result of a lack of information or beliefs wrong.

6. **Discover what is really important:** We tend to think we compete on the basis of our positions - how we see things. We rarely speak of our needs and our interests - why we take these positions. Discuss your needs honestly and try to discover the motives of others. Often you find that your needs are similar and that a solution can be found based on these interests.
7. **Be respectful:** Conflict can be very emotional. Whatever happens, always try to respect the dignity of the other side. A solution can only be sustainable if it is based on a relationship of trust. Admit your share of responsibility in the conflict and avoid blaming your interlocutor; you risk increasing their hostility.
8. **Find the Common Ground:** Finding common ground and understanding does not necessarily mean being complacent about finding the lowest common denominator or coming to a compromise. On the contrary one should seek to find the highest common denominator, to define a common vision with the other side and work in partnership to achieve it.
9. **Be creative:** There are still many ways to find a solution to a problem and respond to a need. When a relationship is based on trust, a solution is possible. Think about all the options and make sure you do not attack the symptoms but the causes of conflict to prevent it from coming back a few months or years later.

One last point...**we all can make a contribution:** Working to find common ground is a learning process for all parties involved. It takes courage, because it is rarely the shortest and easiest solution, but it is certainly one that will produce the best results and greater satisfaction in the long term. By choosing a cooperative and respectful stance towards others, you are contributing to create a world where differences of opinion are allowed and where conflicts do not lead to violence.



Collaboration, is our objective, not compromise:





## The Participatory theatre process:

Participatory theatre for conflict transformation includes a number of steps. Each step has its own value and they all contribute to the success of the following step.

### These steps are:

1. Information collection;
2. Compiling information;
3. Scene development;
4. Character development;
5. Preparation of the performance location;
6. Interaction with spectators;
7. Role of the director.



# Step I. Information Collection

The themes, characters and conflicts in your play should reflect the reality of the community where you are performing as much as possible. The first step is to understand the community in a way that will allow you to create a true portrait.

To do this, the actors should go out among the population to understand the context. The actors are trying to understand:

- ▶ How the population lives (their way of life, the type of work and jobs in the context, cultural aspects and customs in their daily life, relationships among the genders and the generations);
- ▶ The community structure (relationships between the population and the authorities, the role of tribal chiefs and other influential people in the community);
- ▶ The average education level;
- ▶ Religious norms;
- ▶ The existence of other associations and social or cultural movements that have an influence in society;
- ▶ Conflicts experienced by the population, more specifically:
  - The parties in conflict (their positions, their interests)
  - The responses, the attitudes, the behaviours in relation to the conflict until now: who intervened and how until now
  - The efforts made and/or the desires about how to transform the conflict;
  - The aspects that could result in the outbreak of violence in the conflict

## TIPS FOR HOW TO GATHER THIS INFORMATION:

**Make your approach polite and respectful.** The way people respond depends on how you approach them. Explain what you're doing. You want to gain their confidence. Be confident. Assume they will want to talk to you. The trick is to make people realize that your project is both fun and important.

**Practice active listening.** You can do this by focusing attention on the speaker and suspending your own frame of reference. Often it is useful to paraphrase back to them what you have heard them say. Include not just their words or story, but also their underlying emotions.

**Avoid talking too much,** even when asking questions. Your role is to gather as much information about the community and their experiences as you can.

**Your posture should be open and empathetic towards them.** Always avoid expressing a judgment – positive or negative -- out loud about what they are

telling you. Keep in mind that your job is to gather the information, not editorialize.

However, be sure to **evaluate the quality of the information** they give you. Do they seem to be sugarcoating a situation? What are their biases? Do these biases shed light on the community's conflicts?

**Ask simple, open questions that don't have clear yes or no answers.**

- ▶ *A yes/no question:* Would you like things to be different?
- ▶ *An open question:* How would you like things to be different?

**Ask how, who, what, where, when, and why.** Why is a good follow-up question: Don't assume you know why everything is important. Have your interviewee explain the significance.

**Ask for examples or anecdotes if they speak in generalities.** If they say, "our conflict comes from the military," ask for examples of military behaviour that have caused conflict. This will help you later when you choose your play's themes and create scenes. It will also allow you to analyze the conflicts.

**When possible, take notes.** People typically remember only half of what they hear, so taking reliable and clear notes is the best way to be sure you gather the specific information you will need to analyze the conflict and create the theatre. Keep in mind, however, that a notebook can make people uncomfortable. Be aware of what kind of reaction they have toward the notebook and be sure you ask their permission to take notes. Remind them it is for informational purposes only.

**You should talk to a cross-section of the local population.** You are seeking diversity in your research so be sure to include not only different kinds of institutions, but also different types of people:

- ▶ Authorities
- ▶ Other NGOs who do similar conflict work
- ▶ Religious leaders
- ▶ Business people
- ▶ Regular members of the public – vendors, storekeepers, guards, children, etc.
- ▶ Women and men
- ▶ Poor people and rich people
- ▶ Old people and young people.

**Find out who else in the community would be helpful to talk to.**

Common Problems during the information collection	What to Do
<b>You don't have enough diversity</b>	<i>Not only does talking to a widespread number and type of people tend to produce a greater number and variety of possible conflicts on which to base your play, but it will also tend to provide a deeper, more complex and more true to life portrait of any one conflict by revealing a wider array of positions and interests. If you think you will have problems reaching out to a diverse enough groups, assign a particular type of person or group to each of your teams.</i>
<b>Authorities who give false information</b>	<i>It is not always wise to confront an official whom you think is giving you false information. Instead, try to evaluate their description of the community's conflicts based on feedback from others. Keep in mind that authorities often have an interest in protecting their own policies.</i>
<b>People who demand money for talking to you</b>	<i>Giving money for information is not good practice. It will give you and your work a reputation that will only prove problematic in the future. Keep in mind that when you refuse to give someone money, they are likely to become angry. Politely thank them for their time and move on.</i>



## Step II. Compiling Information

An exchange between the actors after their experience with the population. The goals of the compiling session are:

- ▶ To put together all the information collected by the actors on the ground;
- ▶ To identify the most serious conflicts, especially those which could result in violence;
- ▶ To identify the conflict which are related to the theme or the goal of the mission;
- ▶ To choose the conflict that will be the object of the scenario you will develop.

Common Problems during the compiling session	What to Do
<b>Disagreement among the actors about the central conflict</b>	<i>Each actor or group of actors who talked with the community should have a list of many different conflicts. Focus on where these lists overlap. When you disagree on the central conflict to address in the play, try to focus on what seems the most liable to end in violence. Focus on the conflict that seems to have an impact on the greatest number of people. Keep in mind that you other conflicts can be part of individual scenes and transitions. Also, keep your ego out of this discussion; your work is about the community not who was able to divine the conflict.</i>
<b>An actor who monopolizes the conversation and diverts energy from the effort to create a the play</b>	<i>Every group has its own dynamics and its own style of leadership. Encourage each other, however, to practice the same kind of listening techniques and exhibit the same kind of respect that you used during the information collection when sharing your ideas.</i>

## Step III. Scene Development

- ▶ Each actor suggests a story around the chosen conflict;
- ▶ On the basis of these proposals, the most relevant parts proposed are selected from each story;
- ▶ The ingredients of a story are agreed upon, based on the best ideas proposed by the actors with the appropriate characters (see below for description of the development of characters);
- ▶ The actors review the story to make sure it is appropriate with:
  - The theme of the mission;
  - The environment in which the performance will be made;
  - The socio-cultural and security environment.
- ▶ The actors enter further into the creation of characters, plots and scenes
- ▶ The scene development must take into account the following:
  - A maximum of four scenes;
  - For each scene, setting, the characters involved in this scene and stage directions all must be clear;
  - The duration of the scenes will be determined by the scope and the target audience, but should not last too long.
- ▶ The actors' roles are distributed in relation to their artistic skills and physical profiles.



## Step IV. Creating Characters

Conflict analysis skills – the ability to distinguish between a person's positions and their interests, to assess the critical needs of each party, and to encourage collaborative and creative solutions to overcoming obstacles – are not only useful for the *sensitizers*, but are critical to the development of our characters and the scenarios we perform.

There is no expectation that the audience will be fluent in the technical language of conflict analysis that you have just learned. Therefore, actors need to develop two important skills. First, before performance, we must clearly understand and be able to articulate the differences between our characters positions and interests. Then, during the performance, we must know how to actively embody these two levels so as to make the difference between them visible to the audience. This may not seem simple, but keep a few key lessons in mind and they will help guide the way.

In the *information collection*, we begin by observing people's overt positions – their initial statements of intent, claims, demands, and emotions – as it is the level we first encounter. Then, through careful investigation, active listening, empathy and deductive reasoning, we are able to gain a glimpse of the person's interests – the simple but powerful needs and desires that lay underneath and motivated them to adopt the original position we encountered.

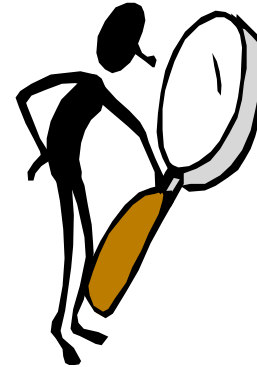
When we develop scenarios and characters, we need to work in the opposite direction, from the interest first to develop the position. Having identified conflicts in the community, and assessed the interests that motivate each party, we must use these interests to activate the journeys of our characters. If we believe in our mission, we believe in the transformation of conflicts, then we must also believe that, while people's interests may be fundamental, their positions can change.

*Therefore, to find the core of the character, we must look first to the interests, and then later build the positions that emerge from and then mask those interests.* As actors, we must develop an intense and constant commitment to the pursuit of those deeper objectives at all times during the play; they need to motivate every word, gesture, and decision we make onstage. If we can truly identify with the deep needs and desires of a character and commit to pursuing them, then this connection will help us, afterwards, to make choices about the various positions we will adopt in our scene work in pursuit of our deeper objectives. We ask audience members to make themselves vulnerable and expose themselves in a variety of ways – emotionally, physically, and intellectually. They join us stage, publicly present their new approach to the conflict we present, replace a member of our troupe, and they attempt to make their ideas work. Therefore, as actors we need to find ways of realistically

adapting to the new circumstances they offer so as to give a legitimate chance for their suggestion to succeed or fail on its own merits.

### Character development: an example

*During our time in the community, we may learn that one of the most prevalent conflicts is a domestic dispute between unemployed husbands and their wives who have recently found work. In particular, we hear of a difficult story in which a husband steals his wife's money each night she returns home with her paycheck, drinks the money away the same evening, and then returns to his wife in a verbally and physically abusive mood.*



*When we encounter this husband, his position may be somewhat aggressive: that he is the head of the household, that his wife has no business working, that a woman's place is at home, that if he wants to drink the money away then so be it, that this was a hard lesson to prove just who is the boss and put her back in her rightful place. The husband may be trying to intimidate his wife, to control her, to hurt her; to make her scared, to disempower her, etc. Nevertheless, none of these actions seem to change his comportment, and he repeats the same pattern week after week.*

*But underneath these positions, his interests tell a more complicated story. The husband may behave this way because of his frustrations at being unable to find work, his unwillingness to find a new role in the home, the social and community pressures he feels demand that he provide for his family, the shame he feels at his inability to do so, loneliness and feeling "abandoned" by his wife each time she leaves for work, and likely a genuine measure of affection and perhaps even love that he feels isn't being reciprocated back by his wife who now doesn't "need" him. If we take all this to be true, then his interests are work, a living wage, dignity, attention, understanding, and/or affection. Addressing any or all of these fundamental needs will likely begin to bring about a change in the husband's behaviour.*

*This example may seem extreme, but if we choose to embody a scenario similar to this one, the actor playing the husband faces a difficult challenge. It is not important for him to condone the husband's actions, or to agree with his position, but it is necessary that he identifies and to a degree empathizes with the character to be able to perform those actions. An actor, who is unable to access the husband's interests and attempts to do this by only committing to overt positions the husband originally presented, will likely encounter several challenges:*

*An actor who does not understand the profound interests of his character and merely replicate its positions and behaviour will find himself facing several difficulties:*

- ▶ *Their performance will lack credibility and depth to its audience.*
- ▶ *If the actor performs in a manner that enables the public to take on the character's interests, members of the audience will not propose good solutions in their interventions.*
- ▶ *If the actor is confined to the original positions, it will not know how to react to the proposals from the public and change the behaviour of his character accordingly. It may repeat the same behaviour despite the change of circumstances or a change too sudden and hardly credible.*

*It is for this reason that, in participatory theatre, a profound commitment to the interests of each character in performance is so crucial. Yes, as actors, it is important to have a detailed and precise diagnosis of a character's position at the debut of the play. In the opening scenes, emphasizing these positions to make them clear and visible will help the audience to understand them. But, when the audience intervenes, we are asked to change those positions based on the nature of the audience's contribution. What helps guide our reaction, what motivates us to find new responses, what helps determine the new positions we will take in response to the audience member? The interests do.*

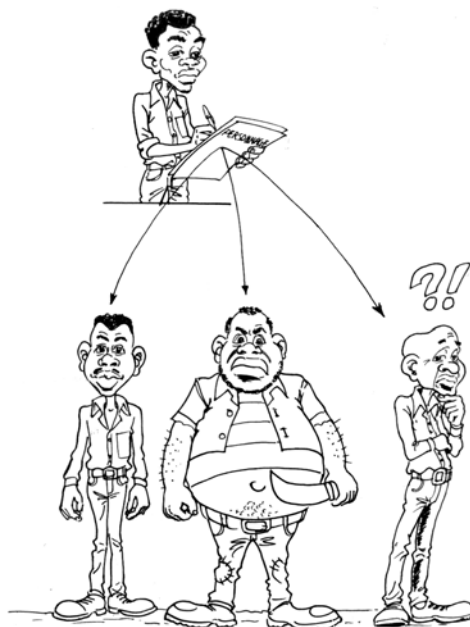
## USING CONFLICT ANALYSIS IN THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE

CONFLICT ANALYSIS	CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
<p><b>Interest</b> – A person’s true needs and wants. Regardless of the heated rhetoric and elevated emotion often present in conflicts, these deeper desires are really what motivate each and every action a person takes in a given conflict. It is the intense desire for these core interests that drive people to adopt positions that often escalate tensions between parties.</p>	<p><b>Interest</b> – This the answer to the old theatre question: “what’s my motivation?” It is the true objective that inspires every word, gesture, and action during performance. Actors need to identify personally and viscerally with their characters’ interests and pursue them actively at all times.</p>
<p><b>Position</b> – What a person claims they want. People are always adopting positions of some kind, as a way to make ourselves understood, communicate, and attempt to achieve our goals. Although these are rooted in the deeper interests, positions rarely exactly reflect the interests at their core. Especially, when people are in conflict and sense danger, positions can be full of emotional exaggeration and strategic posturing.</p>	<p><b>Position</b> – These are the tactics and strategies deployed by the actor in pursuit of their interests. If the interests are the fuel, then the positions are the moving parts: the engine, wheels and chassis of the actor. Every word and gesture will be part of an overall position, or strategy, to achieve their interest. A person in love may use humour, insults, affection, and pity to try to win the heart of another. In conflict, there are a range of positions we can take, from the aggressive, to the submissive, to the collaborative, to the empathetic.</p>
<p><b>Transformation</b> – The positions of each party can often contribute to the escalation of a conflict. They conceal and confuse each party’s understanding of what is the other truly needs and wants. Aligning positions with their underlying interests is the first step in conflict transformation. This comes through the articulation and understanding of one another’s true interests. Once this is achieved, it can often help parties in conflict find novel collaborative solutions.</p>	<p><b>Transformation</b> – In our theatre, develop scenarios that cadre with the interests and positions we witnessed in the conflicts of the community. In the original play, actors adopt these positions, while retaining a committed pursuit of their interests at all time. When the audience joins the scene, this commitment will help guide their responses to the new ideas contributed by the audience. If the audience member truly addresses the core interests of the actor, then his comportment will change accordingly.</p>



## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: KEY CONCEPTS

1. It is important to develop characters that resemble the target audience that you whose attitudes and behaviours you are trying to influence. They should share common customs and values with the listeners such as language/dialect, names, activities, daily and weekly rituals, food, tastes, etc. The listeners should feel at the end of the play that the characters are “ just like them ” or closely resemble their community. For example, the characters can listen to the same radio station as the listeners!
2. Kind acts and punishments should be presented as deliberate behavioural choices by the character, otherwise they will seem to be due to random chance. For example, someone who doesn't use protection during sex may contract HIV, but it won't happen due to an attack by thieves.
3. The characters may be created based on three main models: positive, negative, and transitional.
  - a. The **positive** models symbolize those who respond admirably to the challenges posed and are rewarded as a result.
  - b. The **negative** models respond destructively to the challenges posed and are punished accordingly.
  - c. The **transitional** models are the central figures. They are the people who are split between the positive and negative models, who are tempted by the various options presented and who eventually, slowly, and in a realistic manner react to a change – toward the positive that you are trying to encourage. The audience can identify with these characters and, through them it can understand the difficulties and the consequences of a change that someone decides to implement in his/her attitudes and his/her behaviour toward someone in life.



## Step V. Preparation of the Performance Location

Based on the location, the group will use the appropriate tools to effectively create the setting, in a visible and secure place, taking into account the challenges and obstacles of the location.

### Where can you perform?

- ▶ In a place that is accessible to the target audience: if it is the general community, it could be in a room, in the street, next to the market or where you could attract a large number of people.
- ▶ This theatre can also target a specific audience (ex. women, the handicapped, the demobilized) and for this reason, it could be performed in a closed-off place to create trust among the target group.

### How do you choose the place?

- ▶ Access to the performance shouldn't be subject to any restrictions;
- ▶ The place should be large enough to accommodate the audience;
- ▶ It must be accessible;
- ▶ The acoustics must be good – if they aren't, you should use a sound system;

### How do I arrange the location?

- ▶ In a circle or a half-circle

For the half-circle, you should look for a background: place yourselves either against a wall, a tree, or a barrier. Working in a half-circle lets the actors and conductors better address the audience and it is easier for everyone to follow the action and the discussion.

### Promotion and publicity

It is always important to inform the local authorities and ensure that your company has permission to perform in public. This is important in the sense that your troupe could arrive in a community without knowing that there are tensions and insecurity.

To ensure that the public is informed about your mission, it is also important to notify the public of your show through appropriate means for transmitting information in the community: for example, by radio, through posters, announcing your visit to the church, or through the schools.

Ideal Places	Ill-Advised Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Market</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Anywhere you can have a steady stream of people from the community</i></li> <li>▶ <i>A large room if you plan to perform indoors</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Beside a main road</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Anywhere that is inaccessible to the majority of your target audience</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Places where it is illegal to be.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>The weather forecast</b> – Is the weather likely to change suddenly? Do you have a back-up location?</li> <li>▶ <b>Sun</b> – audiences who are uncomfortable are not likely to participate or even stick around for the whole show. An hour or two under direct sun will make them cranky. It will affect not only the audience, but the actors as well.</li> <li>▶ <b>Public/private</b> – Sometimes your goal will be to reach the greatest number of people from the community as possible. Other times, you may be focused on a group that feels vulnerable. Consider how comfortable your audience will feel and how much their privacy in speaking up during the intervention phase matters.</li> </ul>	

## Step VI. The Performance and Interaction with the Audience

Here's how a show unfolds and interaction with the public is organized. This description provides a model that could be amended in relation to the target audience and context.

1. **The actors welcome the audience:** This can be done through theatrical games, singing, drumming and dance, or interactive games with the audience. This is done to encourage trust with the audience, and to create an interest on the part of the audience to pay attention to the show.
2. **Introduction:** The conductor presents the goal of the show and the reasons why it is taking place. He/she announces the show and invites the audience to pay attention, in order to participate later through participatory theatre.
3. **Beginning of the performance:** The show begins with the first scene. The whole show is played out.
4. **First questions:** The conductor asks for reactions from the public, by asking (for example), “ Do you recognize this situation? ” “ What do you think of the situation described in this show? ”
5. **Repeat the play:** If necessary (based on the context and audience concentration), have the actors redo the show in its entirety.

6. **Summary:** The conductor asks the audience to give a summary of the show, by pointing out the message targeted by the show. Ask the audience if there is anyone among them who has experienced a similar story.
7. **Feedback:** The conductor invites the person to give a testimony of his story, and to explain the link between his own story and the story that was just played out. Ask the person how he/she would have reacted when faced with this situation. After having given his/her point of view, have the person play the role of one of the actors to show a different version of the same scene.
8. **Intervention of one of the audience members:** The person replaces one of the actors in the scene; he acts until the moment when he can clearly see the change. The conductor stops the show and asks the audience its opinion on the suggested change supplied by the audience member.
9. **The cycle continues with different scenes:** It is important to address different aspects of the conflict in order to show the different changes in attitude and behaviour that are possible, from the perspective of different characters, in order to transform the conflict.
10. **Conclusions:** End the show after having proposed with the audience several behaviours and attitudes that could transform the conflict you are addressing. It's also the time for the conductor to repeat the information and the specific facts concerning the problem of the conflict (ex. reintegration of combatants, land laws, etc.) which will help the public to not believe false information and rumours. This information will also help in conflict transformation. The length will depend on the context and the atmosphere.

# Step VII. The Conductor

## 1. Definition

The conductor is the bridge between the members of the audience and the actors. He creates a link between what is presented in the show and the reality of the audience. He makes sure the performance achieves its goal of addressing a precise theme, without going off point or diverting. By facilitating the dialog and active participation of the population, he facilitates the conflict transformation element through the use of theatre.



## 2. The skills of a conductor

A conductor must be able to understand theatrical performance as well as the target theme. He must be able to understand in depth and to inform himself about the themes relative to human rights, democracy, and health – in a language that allows the spectators to perceive the importance of the information in their daily lives.

### **A conductor must be able to:**

- ▶ Ask open, pertinent, and stimulating questions in order to encourage audience participation;
- ▶ Master his own feelings;
- ▶ Support and motivate the actors;
- ▶ Observe the emotions of the audience and be sensitive to them;
- ▶ Identify and react to the challenges presented to the audience before, during and after the show;
- ▶ Know how to maintain order, discipline and respect of others during the play;
- ▶ Ensure that the show uses humour and good communication to always attract the audience and keep them at ease;
- ▶ Ensure that the information transmitted through the actors and audience interventions isn't defamatory, injurious or negative in relationship to good cohabitation;



- ▶ Manage dialog between the audience to find constructive proposals;
- ▶ Find conclusions in a way that is quick and accessible to the audience.

<b>Challenges to the conductor</b>	
<b>Risks</b>	<b>What to Do</b>
<b>Letting one person dominate the performance</b>	<i>Participatory theatre is meant to include as many voices from a community as possible. If someone is dominating the interventions phase, the conductor must find a way to move on to other participants. In order to keep the dialogue going, he or she can ask direct questions to try to help the person explain their basic point. But if nothing else works, the conductor can explain the protocol to the person who is dominating, as well as the entire audience,</i>
<b>Allowing rumours, false information or injurious comments to be disseminated</b>	<i>Even if you aren't from the town where you're playing or even if you aren't sure whether something is rumour or not, you can often tell by a person's tone or by the reaction of the crowd when they are spreading false or defamatory information. The conductor must be aware of how this will jeopardize the entire discussion and address the rumours and false information.</i>
<b>Allowing the theme to be lost</b>	<i>The conductor must be clear on the theme from the start and keep the actors from deviating from it. He or she also must ensure that those who intervene have understood the theme and that their advice addresses this theme in some way. If they do not, the conductor has a choice to re-explain what has happened in a scene to redirect the intervention, or he or she can thank the person and move on to the next intervention. This last choice is only advised when redirection seems hopeless. Otherwise you risk sending the signal that people will not be heard.</i>
<b>Allowing people (actors or audience members) to be humiliated</b>	<i>The conductor should always be aware of how people are reacting to the play, both as it unfolds and as the interventions are played. If it appears that emotions are running high and there's a possibility that people will be hurt or humiliated by continuing, the conductor should find a way to pause or stop the play and redirect it. If the person doing the intervention is being heckled or humiliated, the conductor should both defend their right to intervene and thank them for having the courage to do so.</i>
<b>A loud, rambunctious audience</b>	<i>The conductor should seek to calm the audience reminding them that the play is for them and that they have a central role in it. If the conductor is unable to calm the audience and refocus their attention, the actors should come to his or her aid.</i>

# Ingredients for Successful Participatory Theatre

## COMMUNICATION

Understanding the other is a convincing form of respect and responsibility. In this play, communication is very important between the actors and the audience. Our interaction must be inspired by a deep and unprejudiced interest. The key is to grasp the underlying motivations related to actions and, in order to have a better understanding of the deepest interests and needs of the person with whom you are communicating. As long as people have the impression that you are really trying to understand them, they will begin to treat problems and other people in a more constructive manner.

## ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a communication tool used by the mediator and the moderators in order to help the parties clearly communicate their message and to assure themselves that they were heard. It is used:

- ▶ To show the other person that his/her message was understood;
- ▶ To help the listener clarify the factual and emotional content of the message;
- ▶ To help the speaker explain himself/herself and to encourage him/her to explain in greater detail the analysis of the situation and his/her feelings;
- ▶ To encourage the expression of feelings and to show that they are accepted and useful to understanding;
- ▶ To create a structure in which the parties feel free to express themselves.

## RELEVANCE

- ▶ Ensure that the theatre is based on the realities faced by the public, including their problems, their stories, and the characters that they are familiar with.
- ▶ Create realistic characters that have a life outside of the "messages" that you are trying to get (for example, a woman who plays a role in the search for peace can be married to a husband who mistreats her).
- ▶ Create circumstances which correspond to reality, although they will differ from this reality by trying to find different paths towards a solution to the problem presented.
- ▶ Integrate the local context in various lines of the plot (such as urban and rural) to attract different groups to listen and identify with the show in question.
- ▶ Devote a lot of time to rehearsals to ensure that players are familiar with

the method and with their roles.

#### ENGAGING STYLE

- ▶ Include unexpected jolts in the plot;
- ▶ Be creative and original and use suspense for the attention of the public;
- ▶ Using contemporary popular music that is rooted in the local context (such as introduction and transition music) to attract the attention of listeners and give the performance an overall atmosphere that listeners feel a part of.
- ▶ The song plays a very important role in the show. It could express anger, sadness or joy. The songs are often created by the troupe in connection with the theme of the piece;

The song can be played at the beginning of the show, to attract public attention, and also during the scenes intervals and at the end of the show to either fill in these pauses or express something discovered in a scene.

#### A GOOD ACTOR FOR PARTICIPATORY THEATRE IS:

- ▶ Able to quickly internalize conflict-related material encountered in the field in order to avoid presenting false realities on stage;
- ▶ Able to interpret a given role, in spite of audience reactions;
- ▶ Able to be attentive during the whole show, and to concentrate on what is happening on stage;
- ▶ Flexible and able to improvise changes in the plot based on the audience's suggestions;
- ▶ Able to interact with a member of the audience, putting him at ease while staying in character;
- ▶ Be respectful, tolerant with a sense of the dialog;

With participatory theatre, you can have a director who directs all phases of preparation and performance. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that this technique is quite participatory and therefore a director is not necessarily the leader as in classical theatre.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF PUBLIC

It is sometimes necessary to target a portion of the population, instead of just play for the general public. To identify the target audience, you will need to consider the following questions:

- ▶ Who should be targeted and invited to participate, why and when?
- ▶ Should we invite everyone or selectively choose?
- ▶ The number of spectators should be limited? How big should be the public?

## Risks of Participatory Theatre

For all its benefits, participatory theatre carries a distinct set of risks that involve both the actors and the public. It is your duty to yourselves and your audience members to consider these risks and plan for how to avoid them or deal with them as needed as you mount a participatory play.

There is a fine line between presenting a play in which audience members recognize themselves and their conflicts and presenting a scenario that hits too close to home. As you seek to show them something that is “just like us,” keep in mind there is such a thing as being too realistic. If, for instance, you were to put on a play about the local militia leader’s constant pillaging of the local countryside and some militia members are present, you risk provoking a reaction from them. This could endanger the safety of both you and your audience members. Those who have the courage to intervene are also likely to be in danger as they speak out publicly.

Weigh the need to be realistic against the goal of conflict transformation. Will realism jeopardize your efforts to engage and inform the public on how to find common ground? In some cases where the conflict is too present, it may be helpful to employ analogy and symbolism to address your true subject.

Similarly, caution must be taken during the information collection. Sometimes people will be so worked up about a conflict that they will begin naming names about who is doing what sort of ill in a community. They could go on and on in this manner – and all of the information they are offering may seem useful to developing a good play. But who is listening besides you? Has a crowd gathered? Your interviewee may be exposing him or herself to recriminations and conflict. Always be aware of who is present and how they are creating. You may need to redirect your interviewee back to more general territory.

The actual interventions may also provoke a direct – and quite public – critique of local authorities said to be responsible for certain aspects of the conflict. In this case, it is the conductor’s job to be vigilant in curtailing this kind of rash talk and guiding the person undertaking the intervention away from accusations that could endanger them as well as the rest of the audience, the troop and the event.

All artistic endeavours seek an emotional response and often spark debate and discourse. In post-conflict societies, artistic efforts to address conflict can provoke unexpectedly sharp emotional reactions. As an actor and a troop involved in participatory theatre for conflict transformation, you bear some responsibility to know how to react if an audience member becomes emotional. Not only should

you be prepared to handle their emotions in the moment, but you should be armed with concrete knowledge about which local people and institutions can provide support for them both in the short- and the long-term.

This is not only true for emotional responses but for physical ones as well. Because participatory theatre includes physical interaction, it can put people in positions they are unused to and unprepared for. In addition, because the play is meant to address conflict, it will include subjects and situations where emotions like anger, sadness, and frustration are piqued. This can be a potent mix and as much as we want people to identify with the situation, they can become too involved. Be aware of how both the emotions reactions and the physical play are escalating and have a plan to calm either if they should threaten to become unmanageable.

## HOW CAN THEATRE BUILD PEACE?



1. By giving voice to the "voiceless" and the marginalized;
2. By providing a mirror to problems in the community and creating a forum where these problems can be addressed;
3. By presenting solutions that have yielded positive results in other contexts;
4. By presenting attitudes and behaviours which may seem difficult to imagine for polarized communities torn apart by war, but could be adopted;
5. By introducing models that best meet the challenges and difficulties we experience in a context of war and provide a "way out" (for example for child soldiers who are trying to restart their lives and their relationship with their community in a post-conflict context);
6. By dealing with issues and sensitive subjects, such as justice and reconciliation, which are difficult to tackle for communities in crisis;
7. By promoting dialogue and agreement between the protagonists of the play as an ideal to follow, and which can become a catalyst for change;
8. By encouraging artists living in a combat zone to engage in the search for peace more vigorously.



# Theatre Exercises

## Physical Exercises

### **a. 8 -1 SHAKE OUT**

Count down from 8 to 1 while moving your arms and legs. Begin with the left while counting 8 and then move to the right arm, left leg, right leg etc. until you get to 1.

### **b. DEVAMPAYA**

**Chant:** Devampaya, oh oh oh; Devampaya (two times); yo, devampaya (two times). The actors are in a circle and take a step forward to dance in the circle, throwing the leg forward and then backward.

### **c. COLUMBIA HYPNOSIS**

Two actors are face to face. One has an outstretched hand to the face of another, who has their gaze fixed on the palm of hand and then follows the movement of the hand.

### **d. NAME WITH MOVEMENT**

The first actor gives his name accompanied by a movement and all the actors repeat his name and movement. Each actor does it in turn.

### **e. SOUND AND MOVEMENT**

Two actors are facing. One makes a sound and the other creates a movement that reflects the sound. Everyone does this in turn with different sounds and movements.

### **f. THE BIG WIND BLOWS**

The actors sit in a circle. There is one in the middle of a circle and gives a quality of each. The exercise is to stand up when one finds oneself in the category mentioned and try to take someone else's place. Those who can't find a space are put inside the circle.

*Ex: I call on all those who go dancing at night. I call on all paternal orphans.*

## Improvisational Exercises

### **a. WORD PASSING BALL GAME**

An actor says a word and throws the ball to someone. This person says his word and throws the ball to another person, and so on. The game can go on with two balls as well.

### **b. FROZEN STATUES**

This technique consists of three actors who present an image taken from a given story. This might be an image that represents peace, being at war, sadness, etc.

### **c. STORY MOMENT**

With this exercise, we listen to the story and choose three important points in the story. The actors then represent these points through physical expression.

### **d. STORY LINE: MOVEMENT / SOUND/ SENTENCE**

This is a listening technique. The actors listen carefully to a story told by someone, to another. Three actors listen to the story told by a forth and afterwards each actor expresses the emotions of this story through one movement, one sound and one sentence.

## **Mental Exercises**

### **a. READING OF EMOTIONS**

In this technique, you try to read the mind of another. How does it happen? The actors are face-to-face, gaze closely into the eyes of one another.

### **b. TRANSMISSION OF EMOTIONS**

In this exercise, the actors are face to face, looking into each other's eyes. Everyone thinks of a situation or an event that has already happened in his or her head. One tries to transmit the emotion that the event brings up to the other.

## THE TENETS OF THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH AND PARTICIPATORY THEATRE

Common Ground	Participatory Theatre
<p><b>Accept that conflict is a part of life:</b> Our planet is made up of 7 billion inhabitants who must find a means of sharing its resources and living together in harmony. Conflict is a natural result of our differences. We all have different beliefs and needs and we will always have conflicts.</p>	<p><b>Conflict is a critical ingredient in theatre.</b> Theatre in fact focuses on these struggles and disagreements and asks critical questions about our reactions and their consequences. Participatory theatre offers the chance for audience to dialogue together about the conflicts central to their community.</p>
<p><b>See conflicts as opportunities:</b> Conflicts are not positive or negative. The manner with which you approach the situation and the people involved will determine the consequences of a conflict. Conflicts aren't necessarily violent and destructive. They can just as easily represent a chance to learn and to communicate better.</p>	<p><b>Participatory theatre offers communities a chance to imagine and enact multiple possible solutions to the problems in each play.</b> Stories always offer the possibility of a number of endings. Usually an author chooses to resolve a story in a particular way, satisfying or no. Participatory theatre pauses before this moment of choosing and invites the audience to explore a variety of different paths. This "opportunity" allows them to explore the many alternatives, dangerous and otherwise.</p>
<p><b>Be conscious of your reactions and take a deep breath before acting:</b> We all have instinctual reactions when faced with conflict situations; we want to run away to justify ourselves, to stick with our positions and to seek revenge. Our first reaction will depend on the situation and the person involved. It is important to not be guided by your emotions and to think about the best way to act.</p>	<p><b>Participatory theatre provides communities a chance to break set habits and think outside of their given contexts.</b> As the audience intervenes in the performance, they are encouraged to explore options that previously would have been unacceptable or impossible to imagine. The stage provides a neutral space for them to attempt to take risks and attempt certain adventures that may break some problematic reflexes.</p>
<p><b>Choose your approach:</b> Each conflict offers you a choice. Certain conflicts aren't worth the trouble of reacting or are finished with a simple negative response. When you wish to resolve the problem constructively, however, a cooperative approach is useful. Be aware of your choice between a conflictual approach – where the other is considered the enemy and the source of the problem – and a cooperative approach – where you work together to find a satisfactory solution.</p>	<p><b>Audience members must reflect upon the problem and articulate their proposals before entering the scene with the actors.</b> This demands they make an active and considered choice of how to act before intervening, which encourages the audience to exercise self-aware and introspective problem-solving techniques.</p>
<p><b>Listen and learn:</b> We all want to be listened to and understood. Sometimes, to be really heard is all we need. If you don't listen to your interlocutor, there is little chance that he/she</p>	<p><b>Participatory theatre gives communities that are often voiceless and marginalized the chance to engage with the questions of peacebuilding, future shaping, and conflict resolutions.</b> Many of</p>

<p>will listen to you in return. Ask questions and listen until you are sure you understand the other's point of view. Inform each other; conflicts are often the fruit of a lack of information or erroneous beliefs.</p>	<p>the communities most affected by conflict are also vulnerable to poverty, geographic isolation, limited communications infrastructure, disease, malnutrition, etc. As a result, they are often unable or unwilling to access such media as television, print and radio, let alone contribute to them. PT offers these communities a chance for entertainment, reflection, and dialogue that may be lacking.</p>
<p><b>Discover what is really important:</b> We have a tendency to fight based on our positions – the way in which we see things. We rarely speak of our needs and interests – the reasons why we take these positions. Explain your needs in all honesty and try to find the true motivations of others. Often you will find the your needs are similar and that a solution can be found on the basis of your shared interests.</p>	<p><b>Playing with the actors can help community members viscerally connect with the deeper interests that lie at the root of each conflict.</b> Conflict resolution discourse can often be technical and intellectual, but PT is anything but. It offers the opportunity for the community to embody the various sides of a conflict and begin to understand better, in action, each side's motivation.</p>
<p><b>Be respectful:</b> Conflicts can bring out emotions. Whatever happens, always respect the dignity of the other person. A solution cannot last unless it is based on a trusting relationship. Admit your role in the conflict and avoid placing blame on the other person, which will only increase his/her hostility</p>	<p><b>Actors trained in participatory theatre can play a useful role as mediators for a community's exploration.</b> Participatory theatre is a theatre with rules, a code of conduct, and a troupe of actors guiding the experience. As a result, it offers a structured forum that may encourage the audience to address previously unacknowledged grievances honestly and openly.</p>
<p><b>Find common ground:</b> Finding common ground does not necessarily mean to be satisfied with a compromise or in finding the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, it means finding the highest common denominator, finding a common vision with the other person, and working together to achieve it.</p>	<p><b>Participatory theatre is about common ground.</b> It pursues a rigorous investigation of the way opposites interact, disagree, and find resolution. Its central tool is dialogue: dialogue between characters in conflict, between the actors and the audience, between one member of the public and another. Through dialogues, participatory theatre encourages all parties to seek a common understanding.</p>
<p><b>Be creative:</b> There are always many ways of finding a solution to a problem and responding to a need. When a relationship is based on trust, a solution is possible. Reflect on all the possible options and be sure that you are not just working on the symptoms of the conflict but also on the deeper causes so the conflict will not resurface several months or years later.</p>	<p><b>Participatory theatre harnesses the creativity of artists, actors and members of the public in the pursuit of peace.</b> Artists often have a difficult time finding ways of applying their work towards social change during periods of conflict. Participatory theatre provides an outlet to writers, actors, and musicians alike, and helps their voices contribute to the process of reconciliation. It also encourages the public to engage creatively in the process of conflict transformation.</p>

# Our Mission



Our mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict, towards cooperation and away from violence. Our vision is a world where differences of opinion promote social progress at the individual, organisational and governmental levels. We want to see cooperation and dialogue be the means for resolving all conflict.

## OUR FONDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

***Conflicts are normal and can be resolved.*** Conflicts are inevitable, but violence is not. Conflict is the result of human diversity and can have both positive and negative consequences. Management based on cooperation allows conflicts to affect social progress.

***Finding common ground is not the same thing as coming to a compromise.*** Common ground cannot be found at the lowest common denominator or by compromising ones interests. To the contrary, it is found at the highest common denominator, our shared humanity.

***Conflicts can be transformed.*** As well as wanting to help people resolve conflicts, our objective is to change the way that people, their communities and their societies address and manage their differences toward resolving their problems through dialogue and cooperation.

***Peace is a process.*** Peace is not a singular event. The best way to make and build peace is to engage for the long term and find solutions that respond to the needs of all the parties involved.

### ***Humanity is interdependent.***

The world is more and more interdependent—and vulnerable. The more people and nations seeking security grows, the more our own security is guaranteed.

For more information visit our website: [WWW.SFCG.ORG](http://WWW.SFCG.ORG)







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