

Case Study 6.1

Using drama and theatre to address gender-based violence

This case study draws on examples of participatory drama and theatre to address violence and social issues. Theatre and other forms of community entertainment can be organized in the workplace or in communities where workers and managers live, raising awareness and influencing behaviour on sensitive issues.

Forum Theatre – An opportunity for anybody to intervene

Forum theatre, widely used by groups in parts of Asia and Latin America, is a technique that acts out a scene, led by a trained facilitator. The group watching is encouraged to stop the action when they think it necessary, and suggest a different course of action. At other times, the actors themselves can stop the action and ask for help. This can be a good way to explore how people react to different situations e.g. when working under pressure how workers react to a) verbal abuse and b) encouragement. Forum theatre and role-plays based on real-life stories can be very effective when giving training to workers. Forum theatre was developed by a Brazilian theatre maker called Augusto Boal. Audiences become ‘spect-actors’ rather than spectators. Sharing ideas in this improvised practical way can provide fresh insight into a role and stop the drama from becoming stale.

Examples of how this technique is used to explore social situations can be seen in two short films:

i) *Theatre in Tanzania*: a short film from a project with communities in Tanzania (about how people deal with climate and environmental changes, and what policies they want) is a good example of how this technique is used and illustrates how the methodology can be applied to gender-based violence. For further information see: <http://www.parteciparte.com/eng/videos#1> and https://youtu.be/gckv_-nuNbA.

ii) *Amore Mio*: A forum play about masculine violence and ways to tackle it, created in Rome by Parteciparte, is an example of how participatory theatre can addresses gender-based violence. (English subtitles). See: https://youtu.be/Q_IFOVekbfQ. More about the methodology can be found at <http://www.parteciparte.com/eng/methodology>

Theatre for Development in Bangladesh – challenging child marriage

Plan International Bangladesh has worked with local partners to carry out more than 450 Theatre for Development (TFD) performances on different child protection issues every year. TFD enables individuals to tell their own stories and engage in dialogue on issues identified by the community. TFD has empowered the community to participate actively on issues that are normally too sensitive to discuss. One show looked at the consequences of early child marriage and the advantages of birth registration. Critical to audience attendance are rural women, who often are unable to leave their communities. When the show ends, young people are met by their TFD mentors and they reflect on their performance and the impact of the message they were trying to convey. The youth-led Theatre for Development groups have reached more than 596 villages and communities in Bangladesh.

For further information see: Parteciparte: <http://www.parteciparte.com> and Plan International Bangladesh: <https://plan-international.org>