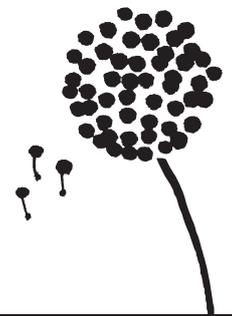


# Footsteps

No.58 MARCH 2004

THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT



TEARFUND

## Using theatre in development

by Tim Prentki and Claire Lacey

Theatre can break through language and cultural barriers and is an extremely useful communication tool...

- Theatre does not require literacy skills or clever speaking to be effective.
- Theatre communicates with the whole person – not just with our thinking and reason. It appeals to our emotions, passions and prejudices. It can challenge us to face up to aspects of our lives that we try to ignore.
- It is an entertaining way of sharing information. Both adults and children learn best when they are interested.
- Theatre does not only use words. It can also communicate effectively using mime, dance and images.

Theatre has been used in community development in various ways:

**Educational propaganda** Governments and NGOs may use theatre to deliver messages in a 'top-down' approach. For example, a development agency or community group may use a play encouraging the use of solar cookers as a means of preventing the removal of trees. Although this can be an effective way of passing on information about an issue, it will not be effective if it ignores the local situation, culture and the knowledge and experience of the audience.

**Encouraging participation** Theatre for development can encourage active participation from people whose voices are not normally heard in the community.

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Stories are used to help people express their understanding of what happens to them in their daily lives. These stories can encourage real participation. Theatre for development turns private, individual stories into public, collective dramas.



Photo: Tim Prentki

## Footsteps

ISSN 0962 2861

*Footsteps* is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tearfund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

*Footsteps* is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

Readers are invited to contribute views, articles, letters and photos.

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**Illustrator:** Rod Mill

**Design:** Wingfinger Graphics, Leeds

**Printed** by Aldridge Print Group from sustainable or renewable resources, using environmentally friendly processes

**Translation:** S Boyd, L Bustamante, Dr J Cruz, S Dale-Pimentil, N Gemmell, L Gray, R Head, M Machado, O Martin, N Mauriange, J Perry, L Weiss

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**Tearfund** is an evangelical Christian relief and development agency working through local partners to bring help and hope to communities in need around the world. Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8QE, UK. Tel: +44 20 8977 9144

**Published by Tearfund.** A company limited by guarantee. Regd in England No 994339. Regd Charity No 265464.

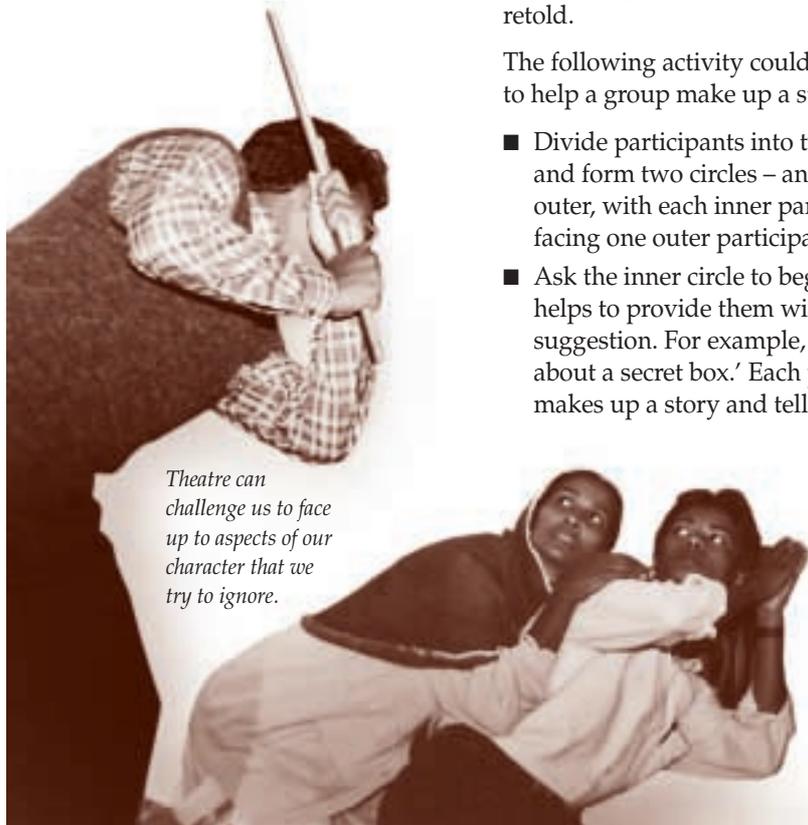
**Advocacy** Theatre can provide a way for the audience to participate in the issues raised. It can have a much greater impact than other forms of advocacy. Theatre can challenge people who may be able to respond to and take action about the issues raised.

**Therapy** Drama can be used as therapy to help people deal with trauma and emotional problems. This usually requires special training and understanding.

### Helping people develop their own stories

Stories can be used to help individuals and communities make sense of their place in the world. Outside facilitators planning to use theatre with a community need to spend time building up relationships with individuals. They need to build trust and confidence with people, by showing humility and interest and gaining understanding of local issues.

Finding an interesting way of encouraging people to talk about themselves is often a good start. Participants could be asked to bring to a meeting an object of personal value to them. Then they could be asked, in turn, to share the histories of those objects. People could also be asked to sing favourite songs.



*Theatre can challenge us to face up to aspects of our character that we try to ignore.*

Photo: Tim Prentki

### Glossary

- drama** the experience of communicating by actors
- play** a written script on which a drama is based
- role play** the method through which ordinary people take part in drama
- theatre** the communication between actors and audience; also a place where plays are performed

Sharing stories about the past requires trust and openness. Facilitators can offer their own story first, and then encourage other people to do the same. By sharing a variety of stories, the most important aspects of the community will gradually emerge.

### Developing stories

There are many techniques for this process. We might begin simply by getting people in pairs to tell each other stories. Then the listener can retell the story they just heard to another person.

Or participants could pass one story round a circle, with each person making slight changes each time the story is retold.

The following activity could also be used to help a group make up a story...

- Divide participants into two groups and form two circles – an inner and an outer, with each inner participant facing one outer participant.
- Ask the inner circle to begin a story. It helps to provide them with a suggestion. For example, 'Tell a story about a secret box.' Each person then makes up a story and tells it to their

outer circle partner for exactly one minute.

- Ask the outer circle to move round one place and then pass on the story they have just heard to their new inner circle partners. This time, however, they must include something new in the story – for example, ‘a leopard’. Again, time the story telling for exactly one minute. (Suggest words to stimulate thinking about specific topics such as bullying, violence and gender. However, it is important to add silly ideas too, to ensure a sense of light-heartedness.)
- Ask the outer circle to move round one place again to the next inner circle person who will repeat to them the story they have just heard – again including ‘a secret box’ and ‘a leopard’ and one more new idea.
- Continue this process of moving the outer participants on one place each time. Participants will alternately listen to a story and then pass it on to another person – always adding one new idea. Stop when all outer participants have partnered with all inner circle participants. Stories will become very muddled and confused, but this is all part of the fun!
- By the end of the exercise, each person will have a unique final story which includes input from each participant. Now divide the participants into several small groups. Ask each of them to tell their final stories to each other and decide which story they prefer.

These stories can then be told to the other groups. Decisions about what is included in the stories will reveal a great deal about the group as a whole – how they feel, what they think and believe, and how they relate to others in the community.

## Turning stories into plays

The quality of the performance is likely to relate to the degree of ownership that participants feel towards the material. Participants should therefore agree together which story to choose to develop into a play. The facilitator may need to highlight practical issues concerning what is possible to act out! They may also be able to combine parts of discarded stories into the chosen story.

## EDITORIAL

Every issue of *Footsteps* brings new challenges and learning. This issue has been a particularly interesting one to put together. I've always been aware of how enjoyable role play can be to watch. In recent years I've realised, too, how gifted ordinary people can be at using role play. This issue has given me a new awareness of the power of using theatre to encourage understanding about all kinds of development issues.

Acting out development issues can provide a very powerful tool for communicating information and can challenge our attitudes and behaviour. The use of theatre builds upon local culture and traditions such as travelling theatre, story-telling, puppet shows, mimes, songs, dance and riddles. The audience can be involved in the performance in all kinds of ways – through discussion, participating in the acting, deciding what should happen next, planning new scenes or in planning advocacy action in response. Involvement with the audience is what distinguishes the term *theatre* from other terms, such as *drama* or *role play*. This is why we have used this term throughout the issue. We hope all of you will be encouraged to consider how to include the use of theatre and culture in your work. Teachers will be particularly interested to hear of the way in which the PAX project used children's imagination as a resource.

Unfortunately, the recent mailing list update has meant that over 13,000 names were taken off our mailing list. If your colleagues are among these, make sure they contact us to renew their subscription. The next issue will look at caring for our environment, with a particular emphasis on pollution.

*Isabel Carter*



## Exploring issues

Many sensitive issues, which may be too delicate or dangerous to discuss openly, can be explored through the use of drama. Playing the role of a different character allows people to say things that would not be possible in their own voices. Humour can sometimes help to share difficult or sensitive issues in ways that do not cause offence.

People do not have to base theatre around their present situation. Other situations or different cultural settings can be imagined.

Theatre can sometimes provide several alternatives in the story with their resulting consequences, rather than providing any one definite solution. This can encourage people to think through the alternatives and consider how they, personally, would respond.

Give careful thought about how to involve the audience. Could they be involved:

- as other actors?
- as participants in the debate?
- through follow-up activities and discussion?

Sustainability in the use of theatre is very important, once outside facilitators leave. Wherever possible, people within the community should be identified who can be trained in facilitation skills to enable the process to be continued by the community without outside help.

*Tim Prentki is Professor of Theatre for Development at King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK. He has recently co-authored a book, Popular Theatre in Political Culture (see page 14). E-mail: Tim.Prentki@wkac.ac.uk*

*Claire Lacey is a nurse, at present studying theatre for development at King Alfred's College, with a particular interest in using theatre to help combat HIV/AIDS. E-mail: claire@cslacey.co.uk*

# Aarohan Street Theatre

In the Nepalese language, *aarohan* means to climb – either up a mountain (in a country that has many of the highest mountains in the world) or onto a performing stage. Aarohan Street Theatre has been established for many years. It began performing on stage and later changed to street theatre. In Nepal, there is a tradition of open-air performances. Folk dances and theatre are performed with participation from the community. Street theatre is easily accepted by the people.

### Subject matter

Aarohan has performed many plays on a wide variety of subjects, including the problems faced by deaf people, voting rights and democracy, the relationship between people and the environment, the importance of good sanitation, leprosy, family planning and forest conservation. Plays about corruption and political issues are more successful in the cities – while in the villages, plays about environment and leprosy are more appreciated.

### Reaching the people

Performances are usually staged for very large groups – as many as 2,500 to 3,000 people in the cities, fewer in the villages.

Nepalese people are hard to reach, especially outside the Kathmandu Valley. Nepal is a hilly country and transport to remote areas is very limited. Sometimes actors have to walk for many days. Few people have access to television, and the circulation of newspapers is low. Only radio has been growing steadily over the years, since a handful of community radio stations started operations.

### Interactive theatre

Recently, Aarohan has begun using *kachahari*. This is a kind of interactive theatre where the audience directs the play and determines the outcome of the performance. For example, Aarohan presented a play portraying a love story between a low-caste man and a high-caste woman. When it was performed in the villages, people ended up not wanting to let the actors leave the stage until they had made a happy end to the play. They wanted the two lovers to marry each other, despite caste

training local people, youth groups, children and community members, who select the subjects, prepare the plays, and participate as actors during the performances. Many drama groups trained over the years by Aarohan are still active and provide an informal network with enormous potential for social change.



Photo: Anders Thormann

differences. Such a play can be very powerful to the audience who participate in its development. Such theatre has also been used with ethnic groups on the theme of conflict resolution.

### Areas of work

There are three important areas of work for Aarohan Theatre:

**Training new groups** Training provides a way of expanding the use of drama to hundreds of villages that otherwise could not be reached. By regularly forming new groups, Aarohan multiplies the impact of using theatre to create community awareness and participation. Small groups of people are trained during one-day workshops. The training generally targets youth groups that have more time available. Workshops have been conducted in more than 40 districts,

**Research for new plays** Wherever staff members of Aarohan travel, they learn about local concerns, local music and any existing use of drama. A play is then written, including the local dramatic traditions and the present social setting.

**Audience interaction** Some plays encourage interaction with the audience during the performance. Discussions take place after every performance and are key to establishing if the communication process has been successful. This ensures that the messages have been correctly understood and passed on.

### Constraints

At first, when the Aarohan team performed in remote areas of Nepal, the differences of language, culture and lifestyle were a real problem. Now, with their strategy of training local people, this difficulty has been solved. However, there

is still a challenge to get the right style and content for each community.

Funding is always a concern for the actors. Limited funds to pay actors may prompt them look for other jobs.

There is always a risk that a play turns out to be either too superficial or too heavy on propaganda. Often, the development agencies sponsoring a play would like to see many messages crammed into it. Some actors also like to include too much entertainment during performances, thus weakening the

messages. Sunil Pokharel, the Director, thinks there should be a balance of entertainment and education in every play.

*Sunil Pokharel is the Director of Aarohan Street Theatre. Their work has been supported by a number of agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, Save the Children, United Mission to Nepal, Nepal Leprosy Trust and the Danish Association for International Cooperation. Sunil's address is: GPO Box 12819, Kathmandu, Nepal.*



Photo: Anders Thormann

*Interactive theatre – asking the audience how the love story about a low caste man and a high caste woman should end.*

## Crossing over into reality

*by Alex Mavrocordatos*

Kolo village needed a new well. The older wells were running dry, their walls collapsing with the degeneration of the soil into sand as the Sahara crept slowly southwards every year. The chief and his advisors did not seem to care – perhaps because the chief, at least, had a perfectly good well in his own yard. Not like the rest of the villagers, whose women would get up at four or five o'clock in the morning to queue for their bucketful of scarce water.

So the village actors put on a play. It showed a poor family talking to the chief, telling him about the desperate need for a new water source. It urged him to request a new well from the NGO which was working with the village.

Most of the village community turned out for these weekly plays, including the chief and elders, the women who

struggled with the water every day, and the children – who would pass on everything to those who hadn't been able to attend. Workers from the NGO would also be present.

When the chief (in the play) agreed to meet with the NGO partners and request their support in this matter, everyone in the audience was aware of the irony.

And when the actor portraying the chief then trudged across the performance square and addressed the NGO officer in the audience, everyone was aware that the youth was now actually holding the meeting with the NGO that he and his peers had wanted the elders to hold all along. And there was no going back...

Alex comments: 'The Bambara culture in Mali does not allow young men to express their views in public meetings. However, theatre allowed them a voice. The performance had a very significant moment when the actors stepped beyond the boundaries of theatre into the reality of the audience. They directly addressed the NGO workers who were watching the 'play'. The workers responded to this public meeting just as if it had been a meeting with the 'real' chief. And so the meeting was held and the NGO agreed to participate, while explaining the self-help terms on which a partnership could be founded.'

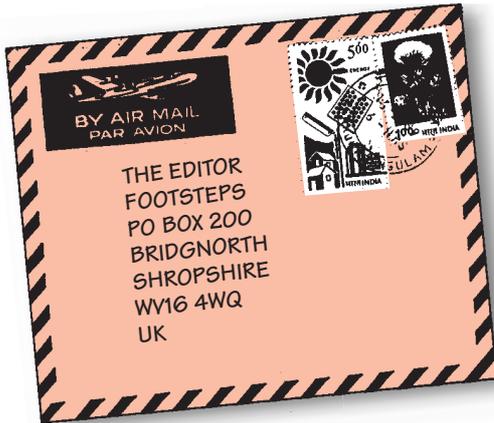
*Alex Mavrocordatos of the Centre for the Arts in Development Communications has considerable experience of using theatre in development in many countries. He is senior lecturer on the MA in Theatre and Media for Development at King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK.*

*Further information on Participatory Performance Practices is available on the website: [www.cdarts.org/ppp](http://www.cdarts.org/ppp)*



Photo: Alex Mavrocordatos

*A young actor portraying the chief addresses the NGO officer in the audience – in effect, holding the meeting with the NGO that he and his peers had wanted the elders to hold.*



## Snail farming request

We are working to fight against poverty, malnutrition and social problems in rural areas of Cameroon through improved farming methods. One project we have carried out is the rearing of snails. After a year, over 2,000 of them died of a strange disease. Can anyone help us with ideas on how to manage these animals better? We would also like to know if there are any uses for their shells.

*Revd Father Dominic Nyuyilim  
Save Our Souls  
PO Box 257, Dschang, West Province  
Cameroon*

## Ideas for snail farming

Snails are forest animals and they tend to be more active when they are shaded by trees – especially inside cocoa or kola nut plantations. We recommend keeping them under the shade of trees. Also, try to avoid the use of metal cages or housing.

*Oluwafemi Ogundipe  
GPO Box 11602, Dugbe  
Nigeria*

*E-mail: oluwafemilawon@hotmail.com*

## Solar energy

Our department of solar energy works hard to teach local people about the importance of trees and the consequences of deforestation. We also teach about the advantages of solar energy and how to make and use a solar oven. Solar energy is free and will never run out. In contrast, using wood as a source of energy burns up trees and in the long term can lead to desertification. Among the trees which people cut down for

firewood are those with medicinal properties. We are making every effort here to make the use of solar energy more popular.

*Emmanuel Mufundu  
Anamed – Solar Energy Centre  
BP 4830, Kinshasa/Gombe  
Democratic Republic of Congo*

*E-mail: anamedban@yahoo.fr*

## The risks of pregnancy

Pregnant women should occupy a place of honour in our societies. Instead, however, they face all kinds of risks:

- health issues including anaemia, haemorrhage, complications during birth, and sometimes death
- socio-economic issues including reduced access to work, marriage and schooling
- issues of justice.

Reducing the risks of motherhood is a key issue for our organisation. In the town of Goma, we discovered that 85% of pregnancies are not wanted. Also, that 90% of women do not have access to contraception because of various obstacles including ignorance, the attitude of husbands, customs and poverty.

We need to establish strategies which have legal backing, to protect the rights of all mothers.

*Emmanuel K N'solo Bitangalo  
Coordinator, LICOSAMI (Ligue Congolaise  
pour la Santé Maternelle et Infantile)  
Goma  
Democratic Republic of Congo*

## Rural Women's Radio

Our society helps women, particularly widows, to solve their numerous social, economic and health problems. Women have learnt skills in food processing, good nutrition and health, and self-help groups have been encouraged.

We are now developing a new programme – Rural Women's Radio. Women are encouraged to exchange good ideas and news through local radio stations. This includes recipes, improved farming methods, food preservation, healthcare, hygiene and political participation. Radio booths will be established in 50 villages, where women can listen to the radio programmes and hold discussions.

We will be pleased to hear from interested individuals and organisations.

*Pastor CP Udo  
Society for Empowerment of Widows and  
Rural Women  
Ntezi PIECHARTS Centre  
PO Box 10, Enugu 400001  
Nigeria*

*E-mail: widowsandruralwomen@yahoo.co.uk*

## Children's theatre

Children have many talents and are capable of extraordinary creativity. We work with child actors to produce plays. Most of our actors are children who are victims of abuse or neglect. These children gain inspiration through learning about their rights and about the love of God. Our plays are inspired by the Bible and by the issues that concern these children. Through drama, they find healing through acting out the ill-treatment they have suffered and encouraging audiences to defend children in similar situations.



*Spreading the word about solar energy in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

The theatre work is self-financing. We organise shows, tour schools and take part in awareness-raising events. The money collected contributes towards paying the school fees of the children.

Our weekly rehearsals begin with prayer, Bible study and teaching about theatre. At present, we perform five plays. One is about the effects of war on children. It refers to children who are displaced because of war and lose their parents, to child soldiers, to children who are

sexually abused, and to children with disabilities.

In the future, we hope to produce these plays on video and DVD in a professional manner and want to find partners with whom to exchange experiences and ideas.

*Paul Omandji*

*Le Mouvement pour l'Enfant Congolais  
45 Av Lisala, Commune de Kasa-Vubu, Lisala  
Democratic Republic of Congo*

*E-mail: mec\_oman@yahoo.fr  
or: mecrdc@hotmail.com*



*A child actor in one of MEC's plays.*

## Useful lessons for theatre in development...

- **Do get your facts right. There is nothing worse than giving people wrong or misleading information – for example, about how HIV/AIDS can be transmitted.**
- **Do be aware that the effectiveness of theatre will depend on the confidence and abilities of the producers and actors.**
- **Do watch what is being said and done in your organisation's name – theatre can often reach very wide audiences!**
- **Do be aware that the cost of developing and performing theatre using professional performers can be high.**
- **Don't just use theatre to tell your community what to do or how to behave – if you are only telling, you are not listening!**
- **Don't try to include too much – theatre which covers too many issues may just confuse people.**
- **Don't expect to change attitudes or behaviour with just one performance – it is a slow and careful process which takes time, respect and encouragement.**
- **Don't try to influence the emotions or fears of the audience to achieve your own purpose.**

### Child protection

Cultural activities are often seen as fun and free of risk. Sadly, there are cases where child abusers have used them to gain access to children. It is very important to ensure child protection in cultural projects and provide adequate management and monitoring.

If you have any queries or concerns, there is a brochure available called *Setting the Standard*. This provides very practical guidelines to organisations to make sure

that children are protected. A free copy is available from:

*People In Aid  
Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street  
London, N1 9RL  
UK*

*E-mail: info@peopleinaid.org*

It can also be downloaded from the publications section of:  
[www.peopleinaid.org](http://www.peopleinaid.org)



Photo: Tim Prentki

# Practical tips

for using theatre and culture in development

## Opportunities

Theatre in development provides a creative way to engage with a local community or target group and to learn from it.

Spend time researching local cultural issues – talk with people, including community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, artists, craftspeople, storytellers, young people and elders. Include some of their ideas in the work, so that it is local and fresh.



Photo: Tim Prentki

What is the impact of theatre on the audience?



Photo: Anders Thormann

Encourage the use of local cultural forms, including music.

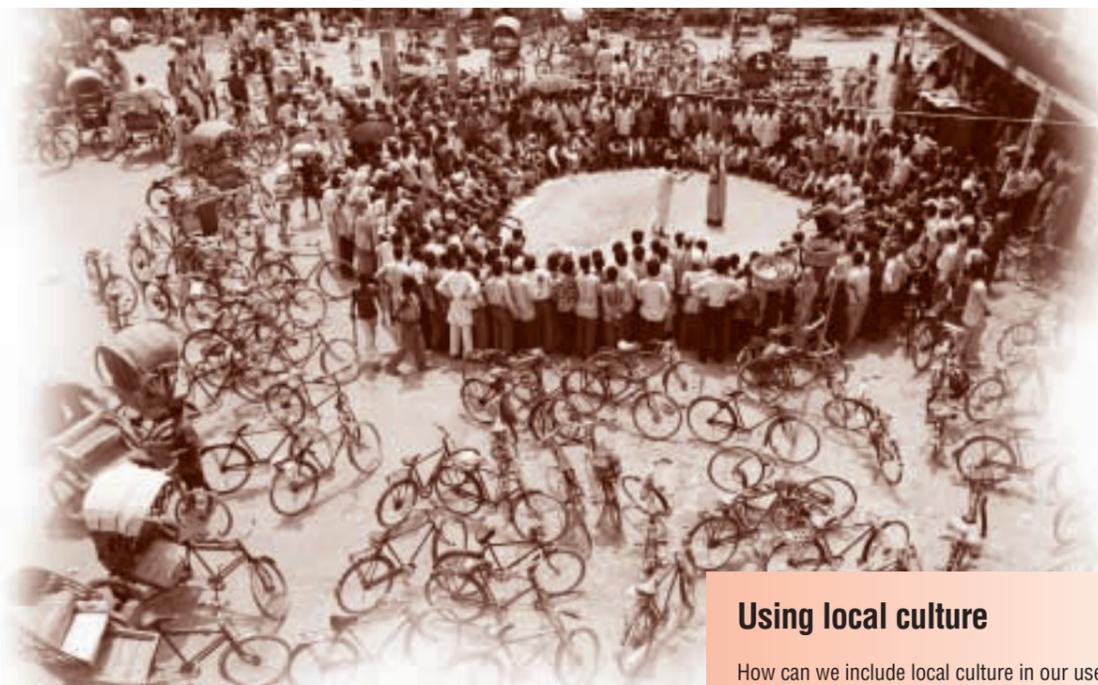


Photo: Anders Thormann

## Planning

What are we trying to achieve? Why could including local culture be an effective way of achieving it?

What are our key issues and concerns? What are the cultural factors that affect these? These could include issues such as traditional practices, seasons, attitudes and taboos and local communication methods.



Photo: Isabel Carter

A role play in Brazil about marketing.

## Using local culture

How can we include local culture in our use of theatre?

- How do people live? greet each other? dress? joke with each other?
- Can we include cultural forms such as dance, stories, games, music or visual images? What problems could there be in using these?
- How can we use cultural activities to encourage lively participation and communication?

Remember that some groups may not be able to participate in certain forms of creative activity, such as dance or music. Will our activity enable everyone to join in or will some people feel left out?

How can the programme be adapted to ensure that everyone can be included. For example, should separate performances be given for women or different castes?



Photo: Alex Mavrocordatos

Village musicians listening to their music – recorded for the first time!

## Evaluation

Set aside time and resources for evaluation. Remember that many changes happen long after the work is finished – can we find out later what has happened as a result?

How will changes in attitude and practice be measured? Can we measure them creatively – for example, using drawing, mapping, participant diaries or video?

Do collect stories about the impact of theatre on individuals, their families and communities. Theatre may affect them emotionally, financially, socially, politically. Could you track four or five people before, during and after?

## Cultural rights

Respect for people's culture is important to the process of development. The UN Declaration of Human Rights says some important things about cultural rights:

'Everybody, as a member of society, has the right to the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for their dignity and the free development of their personality'

'Everyone has a right to participate in the cultural life of their community'

The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child also says that children have the right to nationality and identity, to their culture, freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion and beliefs, and to participate in cultural life, play and recreation.



Photo: Isabel Carter

'This information is in our own language – Yoruba!'

## Management

Who will supervise the theatre work? What experience do they have of combining cultural issues with development issues? Which people in the community will be able to advise?

Who will monitor our progress and activities? Are there people in the community or local NGOs who could help with this? How can we make sure that the activities represent the values of our organisation or church or donor?

Will participants be safe?

Be flexible – creative processes often have unexpected results!

How will the work be followed up?

Compiled by Helen Gould, Coordinator of Creative Exchange, a network of 170 organisations and practitioners in 26 countries who are using arts and culture for social change.

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Photo: Tag McEntegart

# The imagination

## an unlimited and free resource for teaching!

by Tag McEntegart

The PAX Project was a small peace-building education project started by CARE International in 1996 as part of its reconstruction work in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia after the conflict there. The PAX Project's central concern was to promote and re-establish healthy, peaceful and reconciled communities throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Some of the legacies of war are the scars of trauma which can affect several generations. The nature of these scars varies from person to person and from group to group. Recognising and

understanding this trauma is a necessary part of education for life. By working through theatre, the project used stories as a way of helping people to explore their lives, their traumas and the implications of these. As a result of new understanding, students were helped in the healing of these scars.

The work continues today because those involved wanted to keep it alive in their daily work. The project included both formal and non-formal education, developing materials for use in classrooms and with youth clubs and community groups. The principles used in this project can be adapted for all sorts of situations.

Using theatre as the main teaching and learning 'tool' was a new approach. The work introduced different situations with questions and problems and then helped participants to reach their own answers and solutions.

One person, with skills in using participatory drama as an educational tool, worked with local teachers to develop a manual of classroom lessons. These were based on the Bosnian curriculum and ensured that lessons followed the necessary subjects, length and teaching guidelines. This helped teachers obtain permission to take part in the project. It also made it easier for the work to be officially accepted. New and creative thinking was introduced through changing the approach to teaching and learning. The usual model in Bosnian schools was based on 'memorising facts' but the new model encouraged students

## The Fox's Judgement

A lesson for 8–9 year olds, based on a local folk tale, with the curriculum aim of Bosnian language comprehension. PAX Project's additional aim was to examine the implication of the desire to take revenge.

### The story

Students imagine the setting as a clearing in the forest where all the animals have gathered for an emergency meeting of the Forest Council.

The students act out the roles of the animals, such as snakes, foxes, birds and others, including humans. The role for the teacher is the wise old owl, Chair of the Forest Council.

### Setting for the drama

The drama begins just as the human is about to hit the snake with a stick. The foxes have decided the snake needs to be punished. The wise old owl flies over and prevents the snake's injury or death. She then calls together all the animals and humans who live in the forest, for an emergency Council meeting to consider the case. They must consider the implications of the snake's threat to the lives of birds and humans. They must also consider the consequence to the snake's life of being hit with a stick.

The Council has to consider its opinion on a number of issues before reaching a decision...

- How do the birds feel about the snake entering their nests?
- How did the humans feel about the snake threatening to bite them?
- How will the snakes respond if one of their family is killed?
- What will these acts mean for the peace and future security of the wood?
- One fox has already judged that the snake should be punished. Will the Council reach a different decision? What recommendations will it make to protect and increase the security of the forest?

### Useful visual aids

- a stick
- a snake made from a circle of newspaper cut into a spiral with the head attached to a stick
- a shawl or scarf to represent the wise old owl's wings.



Photo: Tag McEntegart

The PAX Project encourages students to learn by using their imaginations and carrying out practical tasks.

to learn through using their imaginations and carrying out practical tasks. It changed the relationship of the students to their learning from passive recipients to active participants. Students showed improvements in emotional and social health, as well as significant educational progress.

The manual was called *In the Garden of the Imagination – Sowing the Seeds of a Peaceful Future*. Towards the end of the project this was formally accredited by the Ministry of Education for use in Bosnia-Herzegovina's schools.

Six regional workshops were held, involving 350 teachers in addition to the 60 teachers involved in developing the manual. From these, volunteers were recruited to share the programme with their colleagues. Each volunteer agreed to introduce the manual and its methodology to at least six other colleagues. In this way, another 1,200 teachers and approximately 6,000 students were reached by the project.

## How does the process work?

Three aspects are developed for each lesson:

- a story which will develop the theme of the lesson
- roles which enable the teacher and the students to participate in the practical tasks set
- preparation of simple materials from everyday objects that are available to

the teacher – to help the students in understanding new ideas.

*The Fox's Judgement* is a practical example used with a class of 8–9 year olds (see box).

## Advantages and principles

The PAX approach builds on children's natural skills, confidence and energy in playing, rhyming, word games, storytelling, guessing, singing and dancing. This is a very different approach to the usual one of encouraging children to learn by memory, repeating information and following complicated instructions, which often makes children feel inadequate.

### Damage from elephants

A lesson for 6–7 year olds centred around an argument between an elephant and a mouse. The elephant had eaten and damaged most of the mouse's field of corn. The students acted it out as a role play, while the teacher took the role of the fox who had the task of judging the conflict. The fox asked advice from the students in their roles as either elephants or mice. They discussed what had happened and what should be done in the future to avoid such incidents.



The PAX approach takes the view that:

- What we hear, we forget.
- What we see we remember.
- What we do, we understand.

*Tag McEntegart is a Senior Lecturer with the Centre for International Development and Training at the University of Wolverhampton, UK. She worked with the PAX Project for over four years, developing the manual In the Garden of the Imagination – Sowing the Seeds of a Peaceful Future in 1999 with the Centre for Drama and Education, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Printed copies of the manual are no longer available. However, for more information about the project or the manual, Tag can be contacted through CIDT, University of Wolverhampton, Priorslee, Telford, TF2 9NT, UK.*

*E-mail: T.McEntegart@wlv.ac.uk*

### Strengthening children's feet

This new approach to teaching was used for a physical education lesson in Republika Srpska with 8–9 year olds. The aim of the lesson was 'Walking to strengthen children's feet'. Usually, this lesson would be carried out in the playground, with the children marching up and down in lines like an army, with the teacher keeping order. Due to the weather, the lesson was held in a classroom, with desks pushed to one side. The teacher took each exercise and encouraged the children to use their imaginations. They had to:



- imagine carrying a heavy burden on their heads
- step like a ballet dancer
- walk like a traveller in the wind
- walk like an elephant and a giraffe in pairs
- walk like a centipede as a whole class
- pretend to be fountains of water in groups
- walk like fashion models.

Every exercise was turned into play, and the children thoroughly enjoyed their physical education. What was usually a military exercise was turned into a lesson in which the children, with their teacher, imagined the joys of living.

# The Rampa Fund

## Promoting culture in Kyrgyzstan

by Alexander Balbekin

Social life in Kyrgyzstan today is very difficult. There is much poverty, apathy, despair and lack of trust, and little cultural activity.

Against this difficult background, the Rampa Fund seeks to encourage people and bring an appreciation of the varied culture of Kyrgyzstan. We provide an interactive street theatre programme to poor people living in remote places.

We use the Kyrgyz language and our national instruments – the *komuz* and *temir komuz* – and include national ceremonies and dances in our performances. As our performers are professional musicians and artists, they attract much attention in bleak village landscapes!

We perform stories from the Bible – such as David and Goliath, and Jonah – and use an inflatable stage. Trampolines in the street have been accepted with delight in poor residential areas! People's trust in us has grown with our reputation. In addition to sharing Bible stories and cultural performances, more recently we

have begun to use our programmes to challenge attitudes in society.

We use interactive methods of theatre to educate people about their democratic rights and freedom and the need to reduce poverty. We use theatre to encourage audience participation on topics such as alcoholism, family and ethnic conflicts. People have become more confident and interested in developing their own culture and national traditions through contact with our plays. We use games with children and teenagers to teach them about other cultures.

Both Muslims and Christians have appreciated and supported our theatre programme. We have found people are hungry for spiritual teaching. Our cultural and educational programmes have brought many people to faith and this brings us great joy!

During our trips to remote regions of Kyrgyzstan, we have found that our performances are often the first time in ten years when people have been able to enjoy and celebrate their traditional culture. This has brought people great pleasure and joy. We have found that cultural activity changes, and can even transform, the attitude of poor people in positive ways. It can encourage people who feel lost and marginalised (such as the homeless or alcoholics) and give them new purpose and direction in life.

After a recent visit to a remote region, one letter commented: *'We want to thank the Rampa Fund for the pleasure and spiritual food which you have brought through your theatre training for adults and performances for children. We impatiently await your return...'* We receive many such favourable comments.

For those who organise the visits, our cultural and educational activity helps them look at the problems of poor people in their area. They are encouraged to consider long-term opportunities to overcome poverty.

We would like this kind of activity to continue, and encourage a planned approach to combining culture with education on different themes. We would recommend opening a Cultural Centre to help tackle poverty in Kyrgyzstan. Through our use of cultural programmes, we have seen people change and become more involved in life issues. These changes are fundamental – not only to tackling poverty, but to building society as a whole.

*Alexander Balbekin is the director of the Rampa Fund based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.*

*Building trust on the inflatable stage.*

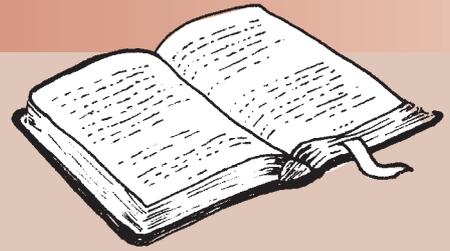


Photo: Rampa Fund



Photo: Rampa Fund

## BIBLE STUDY



### Valuing different cultures and ethnic identities

by Dewi Hughes

In Genesis chapters 1–11 we read about the beginnings of many things – the world itself and all its creatures, marriage, agriculture, sin, cities, music and metalwork. We also learn about the beginnings of nations or ethnic identities in Genesis 10:1–11:9. Some people find lists of names boring, but the lists in the Bible, including this one in Genesis 10, remind us that God is interested in the families, clans, tribes and ethnic identities to which we belong.

#### Read Genesis 10

- What happened to Noah's descendants, as described in Genesis 10?
- Did God approve of the scattering of people over the earth? See Genesis 9:1 and 1:28.
- What are some of the key differences that developed between people as they travelled further from each other?

As the descendants of Noah increased, they spread out and became separate ethnic identities, living in different places and speaking different languages, as God had always intended they should. Genesis 11:1–9 tells of an early attempt to stop this process from happening.

#### Read Genesis 11:1–9

- What did those responsible for the project of building Babel hope to achieve?

- Why did the builders of the tower want to prevent people from wandering off and becoming different?
- How did God stop the building of Babel?

Throughout history there have been ethnic groups that have tried to get rid of diversity in order to increase their power, so that they can 'build a tower reaching to heaven and make a name for themselves'. Every time, God has caused these empires to fall, so that diversity can be re-established. God has his own way of uniting different ethnic identities and cultures without destroying their differences.

#### Read Revelation 7:9–10

List the differences between the way the builders of the tower of Babel and true followers of Christ deal with ethnic and cultural diversity.

Churches that build 'towers of Babel' force us to become like them so that we can be 'saved' – those who follow Christ encourage us to be saved just as we are...

We should value, respect and celebrate the differences between ethnic groups as we encourage the use of theatre, song and dance in our work.

*Dewi Hughes is Theological Advisor for Tearfund, with a particular interest in ethnic diversity. E-mail: dewi.hughes@tearfund.org*

## Exploring issues with role play

■ Ask one participant to begin improvising a scene. They can either create a scene about anything they choose, or the facilitator can ask them to create a scene around a particular topic, such as violence, power, child birth or sickness. When another participant recognises the scene they shout 'Freeze!'. The scene is frozen.

■ The second participant now enters the scene. At a signal from the facilitator, the two players now continue the improvisation.

■ After a short time, the facilitator can freeze the scene again and ask 'What does this scene need?' or 'What is missing from this scene?' They invite suggestions from the rest of the group.

■ Ask participants to add another character to the scene. Ask the character their name, who they are and how they relate to the other characters.

■ Repeat this process until the scene is complete.

This exercise is designed to highlight issues for further discussion within the group. The activity might then be developed by the group into a play which presents a problem associated with a particular issue.

### Using this exercise with orphans in a children's home...

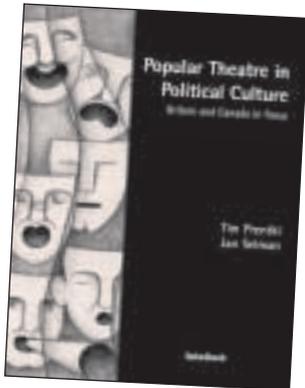
Once the facilitator has established a good, trusting relationship with the children, they can ask for a volunteer to begin to act out a scene about life in the children's home. The child begins – perhaps acting out the first meal in the home. A second child recognises that experience and shouts 'Freeze!' and then joins in as a second character – maybe another child in the home – and the activity continues. Experiences relating to life in the children's home are then highlighted. A sensitive facilitator can help the children to discuss these issues. The children

may then decide to develop the scene into a short play, deciding which sections to include and which to leave out. They might then perform it to people involved in the children's home, such as social workers, carers, and teachers. Since the play is based on a communal story about a general issue relevant to most participants, there is no personal agenda.

After the performance, the audience can ask the children questions about the play. They could also participate in re-doing the play, this time including themselves or another professional who they believe might make a difference to the situation. In this way, possible solutions to highlighted problems associated with child care can be acted out, allowing for discussion with everyone involved.

*Adapted by Claire Lacey from Project Artpad by J McCarthy and K Galvao (2002), University of Manchester, UK.*

## Books Newsletters Training materials



### Popular Theatre in Political Culture

by Tim Prentki and Jan Selman  
ISBN 1 84150 847 0 paperback

This book studies the history and practice of popular theatre. The global mass media have begun to threaten the survival of popular theatre companies. This study traces the development of various types of community theatre, from the 1970s to the present day.

Several issues are highlighted, including:

- distinctions between popular and mainstream theatre
- influence of Theatre for Development from Africa and Asia
- popular theatre as an art form, a process of self-empowerment and an instrument of cultural intervention.

The book costs £14.95 (US \$29.95) Postage costs £2.05 in the EU, (UK free) and £4.05 elsewhere. It can be ordered from:

Intellect Ltd  
PO Box 862, Bristol, BS99 1DE  
UK

E-mail: [orders@intellectbooks.com](mailto:orders@intellectbooks.com)  
Website: [www.intellectbooks.com](http://www.intellectbooks.com)

### Agricultural cartoon booklets

by Paul Latham

The Salvation Army in the Congo has recently produced a series of cartoon type booklets for farmers and extension workers. They provide an excellent source of very practical and well-

illustrated information. They are on the following subjects:

- Tree planting for health
- Indigenous vegetables
- The production of edible caterpillars and their food plants
- Mushrooms and their preparation
- Beekeeping

The booklets have been written in French, some with Kikongo subtitles. English translations are now available on a CD ROM, cost £15 for the set. The booklets cost £3 each (US \$4) including postage and packing and are available from:

Paul Latham  
Croft Cottage, Forneth, Blairgowrie,  
Perthshire, PH10 6SW  
UK

E-mail: [paul@latham9.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:paul@latham9.fsnet.co.uk)

...or from:

Major Gracia Matondo  
Armee du Salut, Kinshasa  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
E-mail: [Gracia\\_Matondo@kin.salvationarmy.org](mailto:Gracia_Matondo@kin.salvationarmy.org)



### Healthlink Worldwide's Resource Centre Manual

This is a second edition of this useful manual. It is designed for health and disability workers planning to set up and develop a resource centre within resource-poor communities around the world, and will be particularly useful to people operating on a limited budget.

Written in simple-to-understand English, with clear illustrations and diagrams, the manual is an essential toolkit, full of practical tips, examples and checklists. It includes information on computers and electronic communication, reviews of database software packages, lists of electronic information sources and further reading, and lists of resource suppliers and distributors.

The Manual is available to download free of charge from Healthlink Worldwide's website at [www.healthlink.org.uk/pubs.html](http://www.healthlink.org.uk/pubs.html)

Printed copies of the manual cost £15.00 for developing countries and £25.00 for others. Limited printed copies will be available free of charge where considered appropriate.

E-mail: [publications@healthlink.org.uk](mailto:publications@healthlink.org.uk)

### Art Therapy for Groups: A handbook of Themes, Games and Exercises

by Marian Liebmann  
Published by Brunner/Routledge  
ISBN 0 415 04327 1

This new second edition of this useful resource contains guidance on how to set up and run art therapy groups and discusses the differing needs that groups may have.

### Bicycle trailers bring relief

A Sri Lankan design for a bicycle trailer allows women to fetch a large supply of water in one trip. Poor rural women are the traditional fetchers and carriers of water, putting heavy demands on their time and health.

The design was developed by Premadasa, a young mechanic in Suriyawewa, Sri Lanka. It was tested and approved by the the Intermediate Technology Development Group. Premadasa now trains groups to manufacture these cycle trailers. Over 500 of them are in use.

For technical instructions on the design of bicycle trailers, see:  
[www.itdg.org/html/transport/expertise.htm](http://www.itdg.org/html/transport/expertise.htm)



The book contains numerous practical exercises to use with groups. Though designed for use in therapy, many of the exercises could prove useful for theatre training. The book is well illustrated with line drawings and black-and-white photographs.

It costs £17.99 in paperback and is available from Blackwells. Postage costs £2.00 in the UK, £3.50 in Europe and £4.50 for the rest of the world.

*Blackwell's Mail Order*  
50 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BQ  
UK

E-mail: [mail.ox@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:mail.ox@blackwell.co.uk)

## When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre

*Published by Zed Books, London*  
ISBN 1 58391 218 5

This book shows how drama and theatre can be used in social development and explores the relationship between intervention and participation, and the potential of theatre for mobilising communities. It also examines the role of theatre in providing genuine two-way communication and in encouraging people's own cultural expression. The author is a South African poet who has used theatre for development in Lesotho and has considerable experience in social mobilisation and using theatre in various different ways.

The book costs £15.95 from Zed Books. As a special offer for *Footsteps* readers, they will not charge for postage!

*Zed Books*  
7 Cynthia Street, London, N1 9JF  
UK  
E-mail: [sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk)

## Some useful websites

**[www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com)** The Drum Beat – an essential reference for Communications and Change projects. Contains some very interesting stories and reports about theatre and development called *Making waves* by AG Dagnon.

**[www.creativexchange.org](http://www.creativexchange.org)** Creative Exchange's website contains a resource centre with 500 contacts and over 100 publications.

## Tearfund resources...

### Guide Our Steps

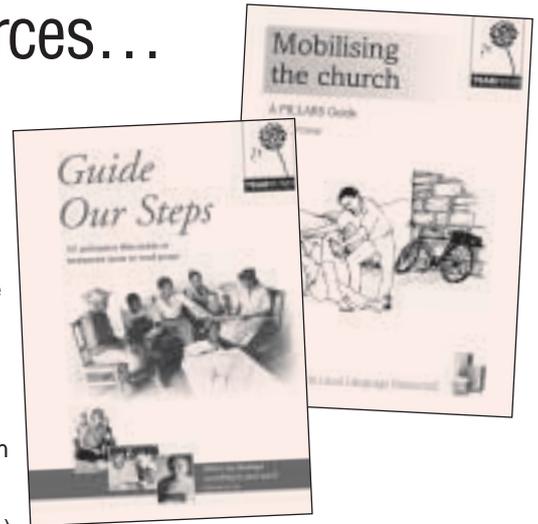
This is a completely new edition of a very popular resource, *Guide My Steps*. It contains 101 participatory Bible studies on a variety of development issues. Many of these are taken or adapted from studies used in *Footsteps*, *PILLARS* guides or *ROOTS* publications. It contains advice on how to use the materials for small-group Bible study. It also includes guidance on how to prepare new Bible studies.

This resource costs £7.50 (\$13.50, €11) including postage and packing.

### Mobilising the Church

This is a new and exciting *PILLARS* guide. As with all *PILLARS* guides, it is designed for use in participatory discussion with small community groups. However, this guide is different in that it is written specifically for use within churches. Each page includes Bible studies to use as part of the discussion material. The guide is designed to encourage church members to widen their vision. It contains material on the role of the church, leadership, Bible study groups, understanding the needs of the community, planning, working within the community and developing and maintaining the vision of the church. This resource will challenge, excite and equip all church members keen to widen their vision.

The guide costs £5 (\$9, €7) including postage and packing.



To order either of these items, or for more information, please contact:

PO Box 200  
Bridgnorth  
WV16 4WQ  
UK

Fax +44 1746 764594  
E-mail: [roots@tearfund.org](mailto:roots@tearfund.org)

## Doctors of Joy

In Brazil, the organisation Doctors of Joy sends professional clowns into children's hospitals. They dress up in doctors' uniforms and entertain sick children, their parents and health professionals. This involves spending time playing and joking with each child, after evaluating their needs. As a result:

- The children become less passive and more active.
- They become less worried about medical treatment and more positive about being in hospital.
- Children often recover faster.
- Parents find their children's time in hospital becomes less stressful.
- A better relationship between health professionals, parents and children is created.

The impact of the clowns on children's health and general well-being has been amazing. Humour really does help sick children get better!

Website: [www.doutoresdaalegria.org.br](http://www.doutoresdaalegria.org.br)  
E-mail: [doutores@doutoresdaalegria.org.br](mailto:doutores@doutoresdaalegria.org.br)

## These Rights are Mine

by Ann Shrosbree

These Rights are Mine is a project that explores the rights of the child with young people in Uganda. It uses theatre in secondary schools as a way of encouraging information-sharing and the participation of young people.

Students were given information about human rights for children, based on the UN Charter of Human Rights. They were encouraged to think about the relevance of these in their lives, and also of the responsibilities of young people that go with those rights.

About 180 pupils from six secondary schools in Kampala, Uganda, worked with Small World Theatre, a UK-based theatre group. Each school chose up to five of the rights most important to them to form the basis of a play. Together, pupils researched, planned and practised a play about the 'rights of the child' for their school, nearby primary schools, the local community and policy makers. Forty students also took part in three performances for the National Theatre in Kampala which brought a lot of interest from the media.

An exercise known as the 'Seven Ws' (see below) was introduced by Small World Theatre as a simple and quick way of creating a story for a central character. This method was developed

### The Seven Ws...

- WHO** is this? (name, nationality/tribe/culture, age, economic status and so on)
- WHAT** is happening to them? (situation relating to the chosen rights)
- WHAT** have they decided to do? (What action are they about to take?)
- WHY** did they decide this? (influences, emotions)
- WHO** else is affected? (other key characters)
- WHAT** caused this situation? (past)
- WHAT** are the consequences? (future)



A play showing abuse within a family.

with Alex Mavrocordatos during participatory theatre training in Nepal with street theatre performers (including Aarohan – see page 4).

This exercise uses seven questions to help create different aspects of the situation of the central character. The questions encourage people to move forward and then back in time, to explore the causes and consequences of the characters' actions and those of others affected by the situation.

The project aimed to explore what the 'rights of the child' actually meant to young people in Uganda. It used participatory theatre to create stories from the experiences of the participants. Sexual abuse within the family emerged as a particularly important theme for these young people. Each group of participants is encouraged to create an interactive play that can be used to educate other students on child rights.

The students have developed a very lively way of handling audience discussion. They ask people to suggest ways of changing scenes in the plays to improve the situation. For example, in a play about sexual abuse within a family, the audience agreed to resolve the situation by using the elder sister, who had herself suffered abuse. She refused to leave the younger sister's side, though her father tried various ways of separating them. In this way, the father's plans were frustrated.

The project is supported in partnership by the British Council, Uganda, and Small World Theatre. For more information, contact Ann Shrosbree, Small World Theatre, PO Box 45, Cardigan, SA43 1WT, UK.

E-mail: [smallworld@enterprise.net](mailto:smallworld@enterprise.net)  
Website: [www.smallworld.org.uk](http://www.smallworld.org.uk)

**Published by:** Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

**Editor:** Dr Isabel Carter, PO Box 200, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4WQ, UK

Tearfund staff spend considerable time dealing with many thousands of funding requests that we are unable to support. This is taking them away from their work of bringing good news to the poor through current partnerships. **Please note** that all funding proposals will be rejected unless they are from current Tearfund partners.

