



ENGAGE:

USING PARTICIPATORY ARTS-
BASED METHODS FOR
ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN
AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES
ACROSS SOUTHERN SPACES

A guidebook for leadership building



Decolonial Disability Studies Collective



01 *Page 04*

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

02 *Page 06*

WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES & LEADERSHIP

03 *Page 08*

GUIDE DEFINITIONS

04 *Page 12*

PHOTOVOICE

05 *Page 22*

CELLPHILMING

06 *Page 34*

ZINE-MAKING

07 *Page 42*

DANCE

08 *Page 52*

THEATRE-BASED PERFORMANCE

09 *Page 58*

REFERENCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Despite the inclusion of persons with disabilities in many international frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention of Persons with Disabilities, young women and girls with disabilities in the South remain underrepresented. Globally, women and girls with disabilities represent more than half of one billion of people with disabilities in the world. However, they have been invisible in many social, economic, political, and cultural spaces. While international development programs have started to engage with the human rights of these women and girls, efforts in mobilizing their voices, agency and engagement have been limited, reinforcing the exclusion of many women and girls with disabilities across the world (DAWN Canada, 2019).

Young women and girls with disabilities in the Global South constitute a significant part of the disability community. It is estimated that there are nearly 240 million young people with disabilities worldwide (UNICEF, 2021). Young people living in the Global South in particular are highly marginalized from the disability, youth, and women's activist movements. However, research shows that young women and girls with disabilities can become powerful constituents in advocating for their rights when they are granted opportunities to do so (Dang, 2019; 2021; Nguyen, Dang, Mitchell, 2021; Nguyen, Gonick, & Bui, 2021). There is an imperative for disabled girls and young women in the South to engage in culturally appropriate approaches to transform exclusion within their communities (Azzopardi & Grech, 2012).

This guide is developed by the Learning with and from the global South: Opportunities for engaging girls and young women with disabilities across Southern spaces (ENGAGE) project. ENGAGE aims to create decolonial spaces for young women and girls with disabilities in the global South to develop their leadership knowledge and foster their inclusion. We will examine how young women and girls with disabilities and partners in the global South can engage, negotiate, and build their leadership as opportunities for decolonial and inclusive knowledge production. The guide is developed by collaborative work between faculty members and graduate/undergraduate students from Decolonial Disability Studies Collective (Carleton University), McGill University, and Institute of Development Studies Kolkata. It is used as a guide to conduct fieldwork for the ENGAGE research team members while providing a useful guide for community members, partners, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, Non-governmental organizations, students, and policymakers to apply this tool in a culturally appropriate approach which respects the relevance of contexts, methods, and methodologies, as well as its potential users.

The ENGAGE project is implemented in three different contexts: A Luoi (Vietnam), Uthukela District, KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), and West Bengal (India). These communities represent unique contexts in the Global South while sharing high levels of exclusion and insecurity for girls with disabilities. A Luoi is a mountainous area with a high level of poverty and exclusion among ethnic minorities with disabilities. Its local communities have experienced multiple impacts of war, ableism and racism against ethnic minorities (Nguyen & Stienstra, 2021). Some participants in A Luoi have engaged in the TDKRA project and have expressed an interest in continued participation in the research for themselves and their communities.

Uthukela District in South Africa has a number of small towns roughly 50 kms apart. Many families in this remote rural region experience poverty, poor health, inadequate infrastructure and high unemployment, and high rates of gender-based and racial violence. These factors all have a disproportionate impact on girls and young women (Treffry-Goately, Wiebesiek, De Lange & Moletsane, 2017). While the community's engagement with gender-based violence has been widespread, there have been few connections between the disability and feminist movements in empowering these girls and young women. ENGAGE has built connections between the disability, feminist, and youth movements by engaging across these spaces to develop intersectional praxis with women and girls with disabilities in this community.

With 7.52% of its population being disabled and a high rate of disabled women and girls living in rural areas, West Bengal provides a unique site for understanding the intersection between colonialism, disability, rurality, gender, and childhood experiences. The rural locations not only limit access to different forms of resources but also structure power hierarchies at different levels (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2018). While the network of women and girls with disabilities in India has provided a strong institutional basis for women with disabilities to mobilize their rights across local, national, and international spaces, girls with disabilities are still invisible within this movement.

With the severe and unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for all these communities, we also see the pandemic as an opportunity for bringing together the collective voices and experiences of young women and girls with disabilities across three very different contexts, creating opportunities for them to reimagine their spaces in connection to one another. As a decolonial tool for young women and girls with disabilities to engage, negotiate, and resist colonial power across Southern spaces, we hope that this guide will be used with a critical consciousness of their distinctive historical, cultural, and religious contexts, enabling the potential for building knowledge and relationships across these spaces as a form of collective learning and sharing.

WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES & LEADERSHIP

The term “leadership” is often used to denote a process by which political aspects of power and authority are used to influence or achieve some expected outcomes. However, what it means to be a leader, who is defined as a leader, and what approach to leadership can be used to achieve such outcomes are deeply contested. The dominant approaches to leadership are usually based on individualistic, charismatic, male-patriarchal, and hetero-normative ideologies. These approaches can be used to legitimize a specific social order (Jimenez-Luque, 2021).

By contrast, decolonial approaches to leadership emphasize the collective and relational aspects of everyday struggles that women, youth, trans-gendered, racialized, and disabled people encounter in their everyday lives in the face of colonial, imperialist, and other forms of structural violence. Decolonial leadership is defined as a process and praxis that aims to decolonize aspects of power imposed within the Eurocentric and other forms of colonial structures. These approaches are locally grounded, and yet, broadly connected to the socio-political struggles that lead to the collective identity formation of the leaders (Kandasamy & Soldatic, 2020). Decolonial leadership can have the potential to mobilize collective resistance to transform structures of domination (Jimenez-Luque, 2021).

Currently, there are no official statistics on the presence of women with disabilities in leadership or political decision-making (UN Women, 2021). This gap is even more poignant in the case of girls with disabilities, who are usually absent from existing leadership movements. Their perspectives have rarely been included in studies on ‘girl-led’ initiatives or girls’ leadership (Nguyen, Dang & Mitchell, 2021). However, young women and girls with disabilities have shown that they have the capacity to create collective practices to enhance their leadership by engaging in various spaces that are locally grounded and relationally constructed (TDKRA report, 2022). In a leadership program, for example, young women with disabilities can play a crucial role in facilitating, guiding, mentoring, and creating an enabling environment in which girls with disabilities feel safe and supported to speak their voices. Also, as a foundation of a girl-led program, the program developer, facilitators, and trainer should focus on creating an environment that allows the girls to engage to re-imagine their leadership (Nguyen et al., 2021).

In this guide, we introduce how young women and girls with disabilities' leadership can be decolonized and mobilized using participatory arts-based research. As a form of collective activism that has the potential to shift thinking about the participation of girls with disabilities and promotes social change, the use of participatory arts-based approaches can create a unique way of viewing leadership and inclusion based on the participants' lens and social positions (Nguyen, Dang & Mitchell, 2021). The facilitators play an important role in supporting and encouraging the participants to take leadership roles by discussing and negotiating their leadership skills and potential as well as the importance of working together as a team. This approach aims to empower young women and girls with disabilities to become young leaders in their communities by giving them the chance to take a lead to develop new initiatives, and then implement their agendas collectively and influence one another relationally. The participants have a right to decide who their audience will be and how to design their work plan to mobilize their own knowledge.

Decolonially speaking, however, the arts-based methods introduced in this guiding document should not be universally applied without the specificity of context and locally engaged practices. Rather, we hope that they will open spaces to utilize disability as a means of representation, breaking their silence, and standing up for their collective relationships and struggles. Through this process of empowerment, the participants can re-articulate their stories as a political praxis that enables them to enact localized initiatives while crossing generational boundaries (McQuaid, Vanderbeck & Mbabazi, 2021).

GUIDE DEFINITIONS

DISABILITY

Disability refers to a periodic or permanent form of physical or mental difference(s) which may be considered non-normal and/or less valuable in societies that privilege non-disabled bodies. It can be both visible and invisible.

ABLEISM

Ableism is an attitude or social practice that discriminates against those regarded as “disabled”. It assumes that some bodies, minds, and behaviors are more desirable and worthy than others. Ableism can present itself in diverse institutions and spaces including workplaces, schools, communities. Ableism results in discrimination, oppression, and segregation of disabled people.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership can be defined as an action or position of guiding, managing, and/or influencing a group of people. It is a form of power that can be used to organize and create changes in society. It is our understanding that all people can engage in leadership. Examples of this may include assisting community members, sharing one's lived experience or knowledge, or advocating for oneself and others.

DECOLONIALITY

Decoloniality can be thought of as both a concept and process that encourages us to think about how factors in the Western world have influenced our understanding and ways of being. As a concept it challenges colonial structures of power that shape our everyday lives, and allows us to make connections between these factors. Decoloniality also encourages us to come up with unique and inclusive ways of addressing coloniality by connecting theory and practice to create alternative forms of being, knowing, and existence that are distinctive from Western systems of knowledge.

DECOLONIAL METHODS

Decolonial methods are research approaches or strategies that speak to the social and cultural realities of diverse communities. They allow for a variety of perspectives and experiences to emerge through different forms of engagement that challenge Western concepts and ideas, while supporting the creativity and agency of diverse communities.

PARTICIPATORY ARTS-BASED METHODS

Participatory arts-based methods refer to a set of methods that use arts and other creative forms of representation to engage with the public. These methods can be visual, auditorial, theatrical, or performance-based. They can also be employed to address power imbalances between the researched and researchers through the processes of creating, interpreting, and engaging with the audience. Framed within a decolonial perspective, participatory arts-based methods can generate alternative ways of knowing from the standpoint of the colonized and excluded.

GLOBAL SOUTH

The Global South refers to socio-political spaces historically colonized and/or controlled by Western imperialist nations. This term is commonly used in contrast to the Global North to highlight patterns of inequalities relating to wealth, power, and cultural influences. It replaces previously used terms such as “developing countries” and “developed countries”, which have negative and ahistorical connotations (i.e., developing countries are behind and inspire to be like developed countries).

PARTICIPATORY VISUAL METHODOLOGIES

Participatory visual methodologies (PVM) refer to methodologies that engage and mobilize people at a grassroots level. These methodologies include different techniques such as drawing, photography, collage, video work, and storytelling. They work not only to empower people but also as a tool for advocacy. These approaches enable people to express, share, and analyze their experiential knowledge of life and their circumstances, and to plan and act upon these circumstances. Using PVM shifts the boundaries of traditional approaches to doing research. Visual data produced within the research can become the intervention (a photo exhibition, a video documentary); community members (organizations of people with disabilities, teachers, students, and so on) can all be part of the interpretive process, and thus policy-making can start at the grass root level.

Photovoice

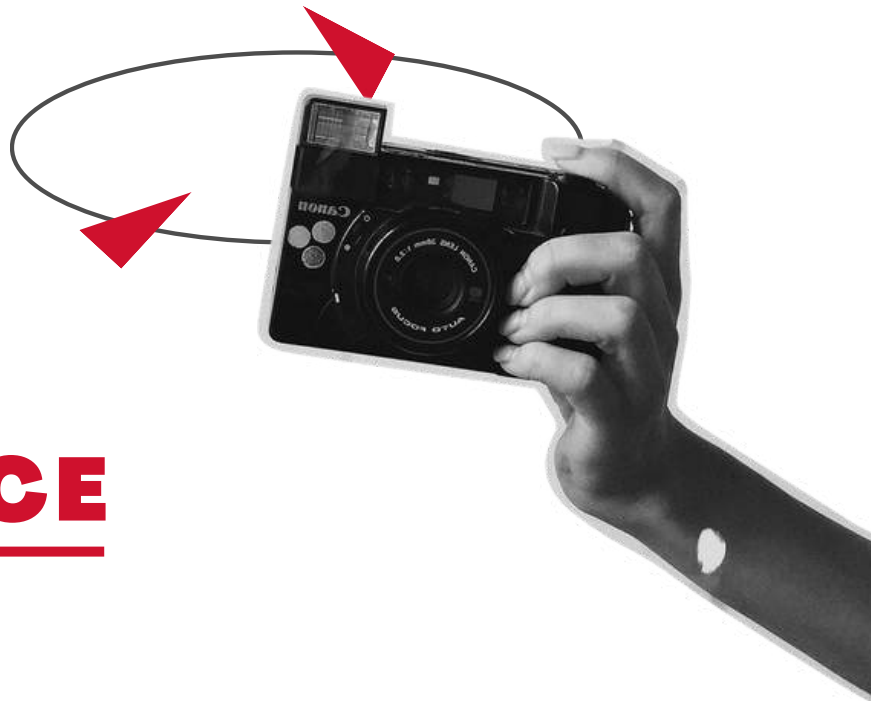
Cellphilmimg

Zines

Dance

Theatre-Based Performance





PHOTOVOICE

WHAT IS PHOTOVOICE?

Photovoice is a visual methodology in which participants use cameras, smartphones, tablets or other similar devices to take photographs about critical issues in their lives. Photovoice gives people an opportunity to represent and discuss sensitive social issues which may be difficult to put into words.

WHY IS PHOTOVOICE APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES? HOW HAS IT BEEN USED IN OTHER PROJECTS?

Around 15% of the world's population live with some form of disability. Visual representations in the media of people with disabilities are often very negative. In private or public settings for example disability is represented as a tragedy, horrific experience or lack of ability. These representations shape and organize people's understanding of disability and people with disabilities. Few representations are created by people with disabilities.

In Photovoice, photography is used as a social medium to record reality, communicate events and attitudes, and prompt discussion. Photographs enable people to forge connections and see a world which people with disabilities may have been excluded from. Through photovoice, participants capture their own perspective or worldview and provide an alternative point of view to the negative representations that society offers.

Once the pictures are printed out, they can be shared with peers, community members, and people who can assist in disrupting the status quo in society and bringing about positive social change.



AN OVERVIEW OF HOW PHOTOVOICE CAN WORK

1 Materials Required for Photovoice

- A digital camera, smartphone, tablet, or iPad.
- Big sheets of paper or poster board.
- Glue, tape, pins, or clips for attaching photographs.
- Pens, pencils, crayons for writing about the photographs.
- A small portable printer (optional- photographs can be printed out at a photo studio).
- A long cord for displaying photos.

2 The Prompt

Determine the purpose of your project and developing a prompt. One of the most important points is to come up with an appropriate prompt or question that will guide picture taking. The prompt should be open-ended so that participants can give their views, but it should not be so wide open that it is hard to see any themes or focus. In this Photovoice project the prompt is:

What is one issue you feel is most urgent that needs to be addressed in your community? Why do you feel it is urgent?

Other Examples of prompts:

- What makes you feel safe and not so safe?
- What helps you maintain your wellbeing?
- What do you like/dislike about your neighborhood?
- The best/worst part of my life is....
- During the pandemic, it has been challenging to.....

3 Ask yourself the 3 W's

Where?

Choose a safe area where participants can take photos. Will they be safe to go around in small groups outside or should they stay in the community center, or other space selected for the workshop? Safety is important since the participants will be using iPad or other devices that could put them in a vulnerable position if they are out in the community .

When?

Choose a suitable time frame for the photovoice workshops. Will you carry out the workshop over a weekend or will it be a series of sessions.

Who?

Recruit interested participants from the population with whom you wish to work, facilitators, and translators (if need be).

BEFORE TAKING THE PHOTOS

01.

GET THE PARTICIPANTS INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT AND TAKING PICTURES!

- Engage the participants in a short discussion on photovoice and its objectives.
- Let the participants know that they are the ones who are going to take the photos.
- You might want to show to the participants some examples of photos that have been taken in previous photovoice projects. Showcase a few photos that have been enlarged or appear a PowerPoint and ask them questions similar to:
- What do you see?
- What is the message of each photo?
- What is the focus of each photo?

02.

INTRODUCE THE DEVICE THE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE USING

- Demonstrate the basic functions of the camera the participants will be using.
- It is a good idea to provide the participants with a chance to experiment with the camera.
- For participants with visual impairment, it is best to use cameras with tactile buttons.
- Participants with hearing impairment need illustrations through images.
- Those with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties may need to be guided through one-on-one instructions.
- Be prepared to help when required.
- Encourage participants to work in pairs or groups so that they can help each other.

03.

INTRODUCE VISUAL ETHICS

Introduce the ethics of taking photos. A very effective way to do this is to display through PowerPoint or on the wall 6-8 enlarged photos that show different types of photos that may or may be problematic. You can have some examples ready to give clear guidance about taking ethical photos.

-Photos of objects.

-Photos of people depicted in a way that makes it impossible to identify them (e.g., hands or silhouettes).

- People at a distance
- Scenes with no people in them
- Close up photos where it is possible to identify people

Engage the participants in a discussion about ethics:

- Which photos do you think would be okay to take and show? Why?
- Which photos do you think would not be okay to take and show? Why?



04.

THE PHOTO SHOOT

- Have the participants work in small groups (in groups of 3 or 4)
- Ask them to take a photo of their group. This will help with matching the participants with the photos later.
- Instruct them on how many photos each group is expected to take (no more than 15-20 photos). If possible, everyone in the group should get to actually manipulate the device. Ideally each person in the group should either take (or direct) two photos..
- Let the participants know where they can take their photos (inside or outside the workshop room) and how much time they have. Remind them of safety issues or make provisions to ensure safety. They should have at least 30-45 minutes.
- Remind them about the visual ethics.
- Send the groups off to take photos.

05.

PREPARING THE PHOTOS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO WORK WITH

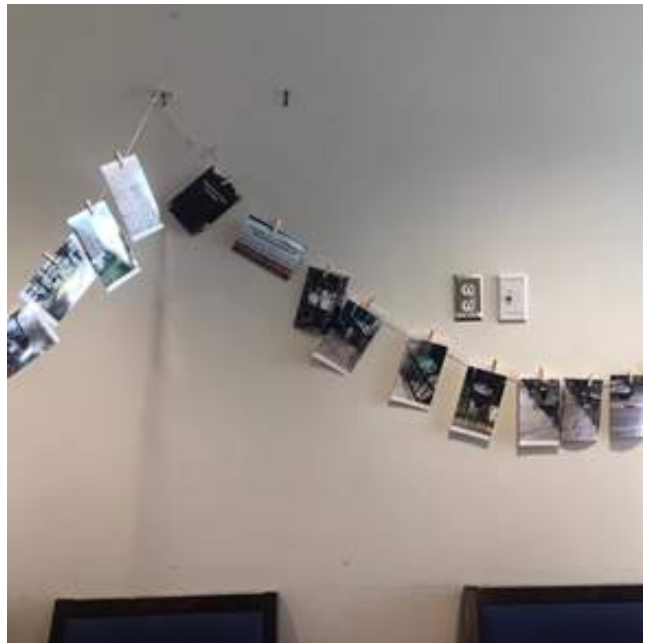
You can make hard copies of the photographs by printing them out using a portable printer or have them printed out at a local photo studio. They might also be downloaded onto a laptop and displayed through an LCD projector.

06.

VIEWING THE PHOTOS

Hang all the photos on the wall (on a cord) and ask the participants to do a 'walk about' to view all the photos. Ask participants questions similar to:

- What do you notice about these photos? (e.g., Do these photos have anything in common? What are they? Are there particular themes or issues?)



Viewing the photos: A walk about

07.

WORKING WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS

- Provide each group with their photos and give them time to go through all of them and enjoy the printed photos.
- Participants with a visual impairment may need to have their peers describe the photos to them. Before moving to the next step allow enough time for this peer-support activity to take place.
- When photos have been captured, they become the topic of discussion and open up a dialogue about the issues addressed or depicted. This way participants will be able to talk about sensitive issues which may be difficult to talk about. Encourage each participant to tell stories of each photo using a method called **SHOWeD** (in English):
 - What do you **See** here?
 - What's really **Happening** here?
 - How does this relate to **Our** lives?
 - **Why** does this situation, concern **exist**?
 - What can we **Do** about it?

It is very important to set aside some time to interact with some participants one-to-one who have difficulty communicating with others. Make sure to communicate with them individually or with a support person so that you can integrate the feedback and reflections that they may not have been able to voice during the larger group sessions.

Creating a poster-narrative

A poster narrative is:

- Put the participants in small groups and hand them a sheet of poster board or cardboard. Allow time for the group to select the most prominent or interesting photos together (usually 6 to 10 photos). After that the group mount the photos on the poster board or cardboard and write their comments next to the selected photos. This activity might take 30-45 minutes.

Presenting the poster-narrative:

- When the poster-narratives are ready ask each group to present it to the large group. During the presentation encourage the participants to ask questions or leave comments respectfully. This increases opportunities for dialogue and ensures the facilitators that the presentations are meaningful, and others are listening.

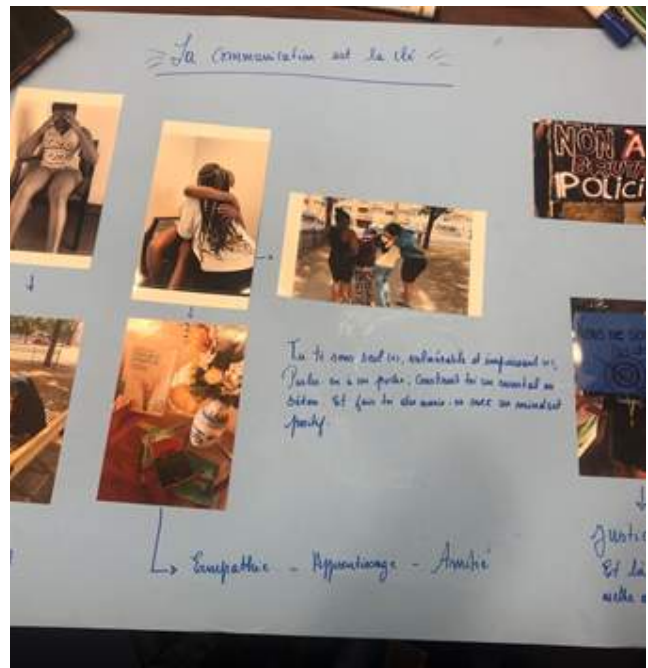
Individual activities

Ask participants to select one of the photos that is the most prominent and create a caption for it. They can tape the photo onto a larger piece of paper so there is room to write the caption under the photo. A caption is a short description of 10-15 words about the photograph. Participants can write their captions using sentences similar to:

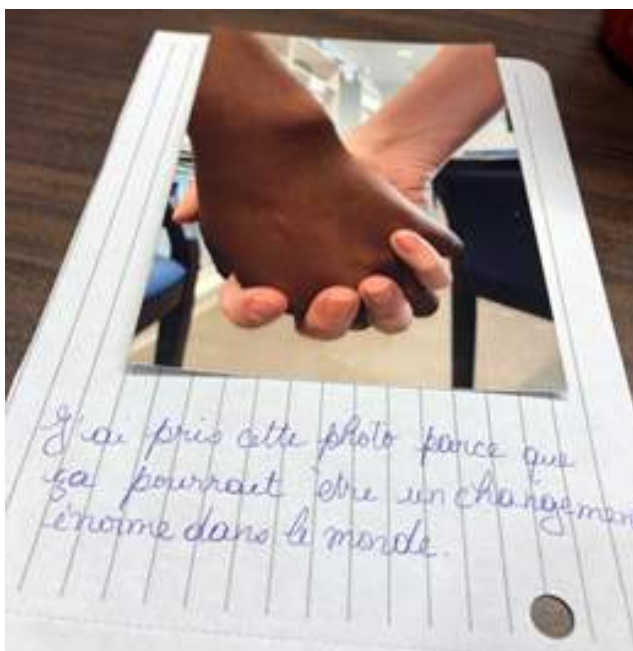
I took this photo because...

I like this photo because....

I chose this photo because....



Working with the photographs: A poster-narrative



Working with the photographs: Avoid single word captions

08.

HAVING AN EXHIBITION

One of the most important uses of photos is that they can provoke critical dialogues amongst various audiences including parents, community members, educators, and policymakers when they are carefully and artfully displayed. This can be done in a community-based exhibition that is often conducted in different steps:

1. Planning: Encourage participants to plan this exhibition by discussing questions such as:
 - How can these photos/poster-narratives lead to planning and change?
 - Who is the audience?
 - When will it take place?
 - Which photos/poster narratives will be exhibited?
 - What are the main messages that you would like to convey in this exhibition?
 - What is the title of the exhibition?
2. Developing a curatorial statement
 - A curatorial statement is a short explanation of the exhibition (200-300 words) that can be written by the participants as a group. The aim of the curatorial statement is to give context to the exhibit and usually includes:
 - Title
 - Context and aim of the photovoice project
 - Prompt guiding the photos
 - Theme/main message
 - A question or two to prompt or challenge the audience
 - Names of photographers (with their consent) and acknowledgements for any funding, support or special permissions

09.

AT THE EXHIBITION

While you can invite the participants to attend the exhibition, it is important to respect the wishes of the ones who prefer to be anonymous.

Explain the purpose of the project and a summary of the process in which the photos were taken.

Encourage the audience to reflect using questions similar to:

- Which photo is the most captivating? Why?
- What messages do you think the photos contain?

10.

REFLECTING

Reflection questions

- What did you like best about doing photovoice?
- Was there anything you found challenging?
- What are the main messages in the photos?
- Who should see your photos and exhibition?
- What do these images say about leadership?



Having an exhibition: Curatorial statement developed by the Jimma Community School students for Family Day

CELLPHILMING

WHAT IS CELLPHILMING?

Cellphilming refers to a visual methodology in which participants use cameras, smartphones, tablets or other similar devices to create a short video (between 1-5 minutes). The goal of cellphilming (cellphone+ film/video) is for the participants to represent their ways of looking at a particular issue in their everyday lives through a constructed video.

WHY IS CELLPHILMING APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES?

Cellphilming is an exciting and integrative methodology and draws on participants' existing media-making practices. It can also be easily taught to participants who have less experience with mobile video-making. Moreover, in each step of cellphilming (e.g., brainstorming, storyboarding, filming, screening, and discussing) data is generated and this can encourage dialogue with/or among participants and community members, and lead to opportunities for discussions of social action. Cellphilms can show peoples' ideas and suggestions for change through powerful images through a documentary-style as well as fictional and can easily be shared in a community-based event, via phone, tablet, or on social media including Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

A group of girls and young women with disabilities in Vietnam made cellphilms about "an issue or concern in the lives of girls with disabilities" in response to families' and communities' concerns about the inclusion of girls with disabilities in education and society. The use of cellphilms allowed girls and young women with disabilities to respond to their issues in a creative way. Also, cellphilms gave the girls a chance to become aware of the issues that are affecting their daily lives.

AN OVERVIEW OF HOW CELLPHILMING CAN WORK

1 Materials Required for Cellphilming

- A digital camera, smartphone, tablet, or iPad
- Big sheets of paper or poster boards for brainstorming and storyboarding
- A computer, projector, and screen to share the cellphilms. If not available, participants can share their cellphilms on private groups on WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, or Instagram or share them using device to device technology (Bluetooth, airdrop, or USB sticks).
- Internet access if participants choose to text or e-mail their cellphilms to the workshop facilitator and/or upload their cellphilms to a video sharing site such as YouTube or Vimeo.

2 A 'No Editing Required' (NER) Approach to Cellphilming

Cellphilms can be created using an editing software such as VideoCam. However, participants can create their own cellphilms with a 'No Editing Required' (NER) Approach. As the name suggests in NER the cellfilm is created without having to edit it, however, it is important to note that for using this approach the shots need to be carefully planned with the aid of a storyboard. Two variations of the NER approach are:

- No-editing required: a shoot-pause-shoot-pause method is used to create a cellfilm
- 'one-shot shoot video': a method where cellphilms are shot in only one take

NER is a very efficient and accessible approach for supporting community engagement with as little time required. However, it is also possible to use a 'one-shot shoot video' method where cellphilms are shot in only one take.

3 Cellfilm Genres and Styles

There are many different styles and genres to choose from that can produce meaningful and impactful cellphilms.

- Melodramatic Stories: Melodramas are a type of role play where participants act out a particular narrative relevant to the theme or prompt.
- Media Message Cellphilms are short (sometimes only 30 seconds long) video inspired by Public Service Announcements (PSAs). They typically address a very specific issue (e.g. early marriage, access to sanitary napkins, domestic violence) and conclude with a very clear message or slogan calling for a specific action.
- Video Capsules are short interview videos where one person answers another. These video capsules are usually no more than a minute to 90 seconds long and can be used in a variety of ways: as introductions, a summary, as a 'sound byte'.
- Monologues use the idea of just one person speaking (and are often the same genre as vlogs)
- Talk Shows and Interviews build on the television genre of 'experts' being interviewed about their experiences.
- Investigative journalism using a documentary style.
- Cue card approach - where a series of cue cards are used to convey the message.

Some questions that might influence your choice of genre:

What is the purpose of the cellfilm? Who is the audience for your cellfilm? How long will it be?

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Screening sample cellphilms

Showing participants one or two cellphilms gives them a better idea of what they can create. On [this page](#), you can see the winning cellphilms of previous McGill International Cellphilm Festival.

Setting up an accessible workshop environment

Identify the accessibility needs of the participants. Ensure that there is ample space for participant movement—especially for those who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs. For participants with visual challenges, ensure that there are volunteers or support workers to guide them into the workshop space and describe the environment. Make sure that there are places set up for participants to be comfortable: tables and chairs that accommodate the specific accessibility needs of those in the workshop. Prepare papers and pens beforehand and ensure that you have volunteers to support participants in the filmmaking if they want support. However, if participants prefer to work independently respect their choice and ensure that they have enough space to do so.

GETTING STARTED ON YOUR CELLPHILMS

01.

WORKING WITH THE PROMPT

Determine the purpose of your project and develop a prompt. This may be done with the whole group collaboratively or before the workshop. The prompt should be open-ended so that participants can give their views, but it should not be so wide open that it is hard to see any themes or focus. Therefore, it is helpful if the topic or prompt is clear and simply stated, while also open to multiple interpretations. For example:

- Feeling safe and not so safe at school
- Challenging gender inequality in my life
- What is it like to be a girl/boy/woman/man?
- What is it like to be a girl with disabilities?

02.

VISUAL ETHICS TRAINING

Issues of visual ethics are complicated. It is important to spend time discussing visual ethics in relation to specific images with participants. It is also important to ask a lot of questions. Discussing examples could be a good exercise.

Sample Questions to Discuss:

- Do you think this person knows they are being filmed?
- What should we be filming instead?
- Is this cellphilm revealing of someone? Why or why not?
- What could you do to make a cellphilm less revealing?
- How do visual ethics link to human rights?

Using a 'no face' approach to increase anonymity in cellphilms:

This approach promotes creativity and can include filming:

- objects and things
- scenes or buildings without people in them
- people from a distance so that no one is recognizable
- parts of the body, such as hands and feet
- people's shadows, or from behind
- hand-written signs, or making a 'note card' video
- sounds to convey a message (for example, a scream off camera)

Avoid filming other community members who are not part of the cellphilm workshop.

The goal of visual ethics training is to reflect critically on what is OK—and not OK—to film, the importance of asking permission to film, and some different options for filming in ways that increase anonymity.

03.

BRAINSTORMING

Ask participants to brainstorm story ideas that are related to the topic. This can be done in small groups, individually, or with volunteers and support workers. These ideas are all written down on a piece of chart paper so everyone can see them. Once a number of ideas have been generated, the group (or individual) narrows down the possibilities for what they may want to film. They could do this in several ways. One way is to have each person vote for their favorite topic. For example, each participant could use a colored sticker to vote with or just write an "X" on their favorite topic.

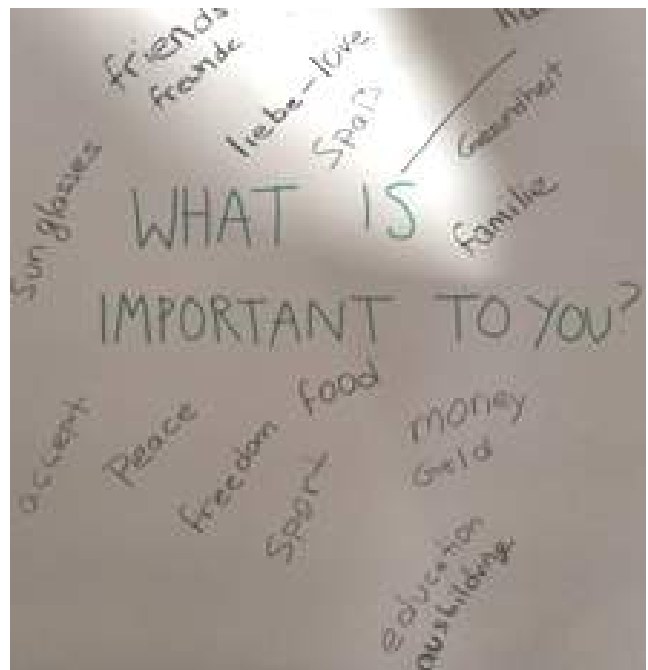
Once it is clear which topic or idea is their favorite one, participants can decide if they are interested in creating a fictional style piece, a public service announcement, or a documentary-style cellphilm.

It is important to give a great deal of time to participants to ensure that everyone's voices and ideas are being well represented. Facilitators should be reminded that participants may need more time to complete each step. Facilitators should support participants to understand the opportunities and challenges in creating a fictional or documentary style cellphilm. In particular, participants must be able to consent to participate in the cellphilm project. If there is a concern that participants may not be able to give informed consent, they may be encouraged to help with the cellphilm production, but should not be forced to be on-camera actors.

If participants require support with writing the ideas down, the facilitator or a support worker might offer to write the ideas generated in the brainstorming stage. Participants who have intellectual and/or physical challenges should be supported with comfortable places to brainstorm—ideally this would be set up in Step 1, before participants arrive.

At this point, participants should also think about how long their cellphilms might be (e.g., 1 minute vs. 5 minutes) and how they might tailor their story to fit this timeline. What kinds of stories might they want to tell, and how might facilitators and support workers help participants to tell these stories within the time limit?

It is a good idea to ask participants to identify the audience for their cellphilms. Whom would they like to see the cellphilms? Choosing the audience will help the participants to shape the content of their cellphilm to best fit the needs and expectations of their audience (e.g. other workshop participants and/or policymakers and/or community members). These decisions about audiences may need more support from the facilitator, and this piece should be attended to carefully before proceeding with the filming.



Brainstorming: Anonymous brainstorming sheet with youth in Vienna, Austria.

04.

CREATING A STORYBOARD

A storyboard is a planning activity where people work in small groups to plan or sketch out their ideas and place them in a detailed order before they begin filming.

If participants require support with writing or drawing, the facilitator or a support worker might offer to write the ideas generated in the brainstorming stage. It is important to give a great deal of time to participants who need it to ensure that their voices and ideas are being well represented. Facilitators should be reminded that participants may need more time to complete each step. Further, participants who may feel it is difficult to brainstorm ideas should be supported with comfortable places to brainstorm—ideally, this would be set up in step 1, before participants arrive.

In small groups, with a support worker, or individually, participants will think about how they might combine dialogue, narration, and images to plan what they will film. In other words, they will discuss what they want to include in each scene and what the overall message of their film is.

05.

FILMING

Make sure participants know how to use the basic functions before going to film the cellphilms. Facilitators need to support blind and visually impaired participants. These are some of the functions that may be used but they look different on every device such as zooming in/out, turning on the flash, or switching between front and rear cameras. The location of the microphone on the device should be pointed out and known to everyone. When filming the actual video, think about the following:

- What location will you choose?
- Will there be any interference with sound?
- Are other groups filming close by? Will you be able to hear them?

Because the films are very short, groups should be encouraged to film them several times. One piece of advice: practice, practice, practice!

06.

SCREENING CELLPHILMS

After participants have created their cellphilms, the workshop facilitator should bring the group together to screen the cellphilms.

Identify the accessibility needs of the participants who will be attending the screening. Ensure that there is ample space for participant movement—especially considering those who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs. For participants with visual challenges, ensure that there are volunteers or support workers to guide the participant into the screening space and describe the environment so that they are comfortable. Ensure that the cellphilms have subtitles for participants with hearing impairments. If possible (and the technology is available), the cellphilms may be screened on a projector.

If a projector is not available, participants may share their cellphilms in small groups from their mobile technologies (e.g. smartphones and tablets).



07.

REFLECTING ON THE CELLPHILMS

There can be several different layers of reflection, including having cellphilm-producers reflect on their own cellphilm productions, reflect on each other's' cellphilms, and having the wider audiences view and reflect on the cellphilms as well.

The following questions are effective in reflecting on cellphilms:

- What do you like best about the cellphilm?
- What is the message and why is it important?
- What do the cellphilms tell us about the lives of girls and young women with disabilities?
- What do you want people to understand after viewing your cellphilm?
- How does your production represent _____ (the topic chosen by the group)?
- What inspired you to create this cellphilm?
- How does this work “speak back” to traditional understandings of _____ (the topic chosen by the group)?
- What were your reactions to seeing other cellphilms?
- Which images stuck out for you? Which stories?
- Who is the audience and why did you choose this audience?
- How does the cellphilm help to address a particular problem or concern in relation to gender?
- What would you do differently next time?

If some participants have challenges communicating in the group setting, it is a good idea to make time to speak to them in a one-on-one interaction, or with a support person, so that you may integrate their feedback and reflections.

Some tips:

- Make sure that participants are comfortable and voluntarily choose to participate in the cellphilm workshop and that they do not feel coerced or forced to participate.
- it is important to create a comfortable atmosphere in the workshop. It can be helpful to begin with some ‘get to know you’ activities to help the participants feel comfortable. One activity can be to ask participants to share their entire life story in a short period of time (e.g. 30 seconds). This activity can create a fun environment and also gets participants to think about storytelling (you cannot tell your whole life story in 30 seconds, so what pieces are most important to include? What might be most appropriate to include for this audience?
- Make sure that participants have enough time to complete all of the steps for the cellphilm. This might be done in one 3-hour workshop, or potentially each step might be explored in a series of workshop dates. Think about what might work best for the group that you are working with.
- Technological challenges can (and often do) arise in a cellphilm workshop. Make sure to have charging cords on hand. If cellphilms cannot be screened on a projector due to technological challenges, instruct participants to share their cellphilms phone-to-phone or tablet-to-tablet.
- While participants are filming, take on the role of a support person. Intervene in the cellphilming only when participants ask for your help.

If the above is not culturally appropriate or accessible, some alternatives can include working in larger groups to create one cellphilm together (drawing on participants' own media-making practices and technologies).

08.

ORGANIZING A CELLPHILM SCREENING EVENT

1. Planning the screening event

Several planning meeting might be required:

- Decide on an audience

Select which cellphilms to show at the event

- Give the event a title
- Chose a location and date

Optional: Combine cellphilms screenings with other types of performances, such as a drama or poetry reading

3. Prepare materials for the event

This step might take some time and multiple working sessions.

- Write a curatorial statement.

Think ahead:

How will you capture audience reactions?

Optional:

- Prepare a short PowerPoint presentation that can be shown with the screenings.
- Develop a handout for an audience member.
- Organize refreshments, if possible/appropriate.

5. The event

The audience members have arrived, and you can feel the anticipation in the room!

One person should introduce the event, and explain what cellphilming is.

Each group should introduce their cellphilms.

After the screening have a Question & Answer (Q & A) period. This is the time for the audience to ask questions and for the cellphilms-producers to speak about their cellphilms

2. Spreading the word

Creating a 'buzz' is a critical aspect of planning an event that is well-attended.

Advertise the event.

Options: Posters, flyers, handouts, announcements in class, word of mouth.

Send out written invitations, if appropriate.

4. Setting up the venue

The day of the event can be very busy and there are many logistics to consider. For examples:

- If a participant has asked to be seated in close proximity to a door, rest room, or refreshment table this should be respected
- Make sure that tables are at least 4 feet apart with aisles in between to allow participants with mobility devices to circulate freely.
- Make sure that all aisles in the room are kept free of tripping hazards, such as extension cords and cables.
- Make sure the equipment works before the audience arrives
- If there are chairs, set them up in a theatre-style
- If possible, cover the windows so that it is dark enough to see the cellphilms.

6. Capturing the audience's reaction

How will you know what the audience thinks?

All the following suggestions are optional:

- Prepare a "comment book" or "comment wall" for audience members to leave their written feedback
- Conduct interviews with audience members. What did they think?
- Take photographs at the screening event. If you choose this option, it is important to get permission from all the audience members.

09.

DEBRIEFING AFTER SCREENING EVENT

Screening events can create strong feelings. Maybe it went well and generated a lot of excitement. Maybe there were difficult comments or questions from the audience. Maybe the event was poorly attended. All of these possibilities mean that it is important to meet with the cellphilm producers after the screening event to debrief what happened. Some possible discussion questions include:

- How did you feel about having community members watch your cellphilm?
- What did you like best about the cellphilm screening?
- What do you think attracted the audience the most to your cellphilm?
- Do you think the audience interpreted your message the way you intended? Why or why not?
- What new ideas do you think the audience received about the issues addressed?
- What changes do you hope will come about?
- If you were to organize another cellphilm screening event, how would you do it differently?



ZINE MAKING

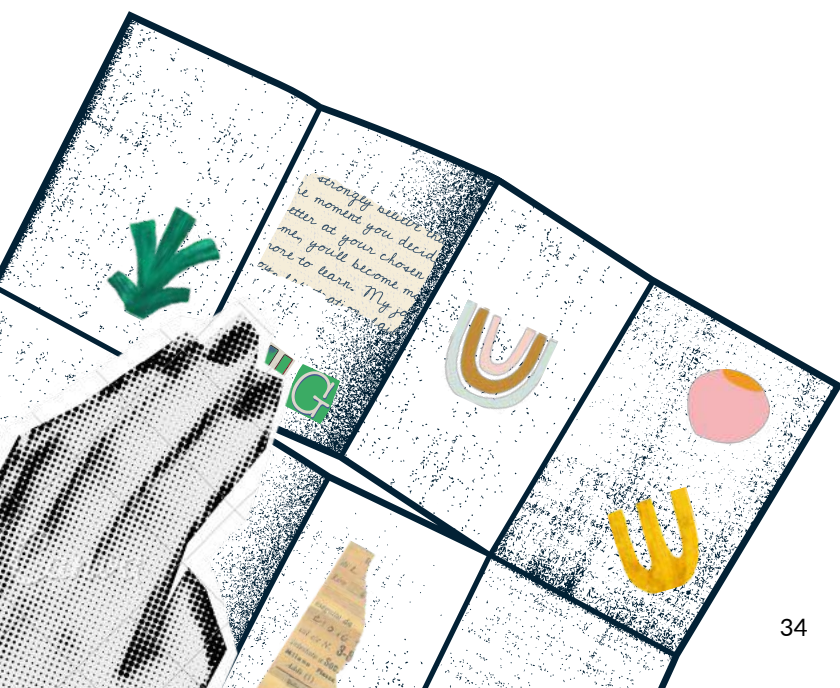


WHAT IS A ZINE?

The word “zine” (pronounced zeen) comes from the term fanzine (short for fan magazine that emerged during the 1930s). In the 1970s zines were used to promote punk rock when this type of music did not receive much attention from the mainstream press. Today zines encompass any self-published booklets. There are so many different types of zines (for example art zines, personal zines, political zines, and health zines).

WHY IS ZINE MAKING APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES? HOW HAS IT BEEN USED IN OTHER PROJECTS?

Zine-making provides girls and young women with disabilities a safe platform for independent self-expression. Similar to pamphlets, scrapbooks, and manifestos zines enable girls and young women with disabilities with limited economic resources to write about their issues. Zine-making gives space to topics that are not given enough attention in society. In our modern world zines have found their place on the internet giving underrepresented voices such as girls and young women with disabilities a chance to display their issues to a wide range of audiences. Zines can be visual, textual, or a mix of both and this can enable girls and women with disabilities to share their personal experiences in different forms.



AN OVERVIEW OF HOW ZINE MAKING CAN WORK

1 Materials Required for Zine making

Materials Required for zine making:

- A piece of paper and cardstock
- Writing and drawing materials: markers, pens, pencils, crayons, color pencils, etc.

Extra materials:

- Collage materials: magazine, scissors, and glue sticks

2 Decide on your topic/theme

There's an infinite number of zine topics and themes. These include but are not limited to:

Art / Poetry / Shortstories / Book reviews / Fanfiction / Photography / Music / Comic strips / Manifestos

In small groups or individually make a list of topics or subjects you are interested in. After that, create a list underneath each topic and write down all ideas you could include on that topic. For example poverty, homelessness, climate change, well-being of newcomers, gender inequality, health care availability, mental health awareness, social issues, etc.

3 Planning the features of your zine

When you have chosen the overall theme of your zine, it is time for planning out its content

4 Choosing the format of the zine

Zines can be in different shapes and sizes. For example, there are: pocket-size zines / one-page poster zines / eight-page mini zines / zines made from recycled newspaper / scroll style zines / accordion-style zines, but, the most common format is a basic folded paper booklet that is held together with staples

First, make a list of all the features you want to include by discussing questions similar to:

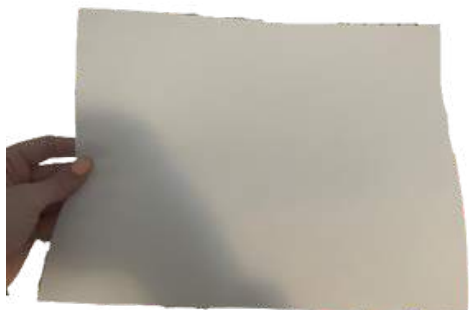
- How many words will you include on each page of the zine?
- How many images will there be?

For example, your zine might be about a local music band might that include a 500-600 words and 2-4 photos of a live performance and details of their upcoming tour, taking up a full double-page spread.

FOLDING THE PAPER GUIDE

1

**FOLD THE SHEET OF PAPER IN
HALF LENGTHWAYS**



2

**REINFORCE IT BY PRESSING IT
DOWN A FEW TIMES.**



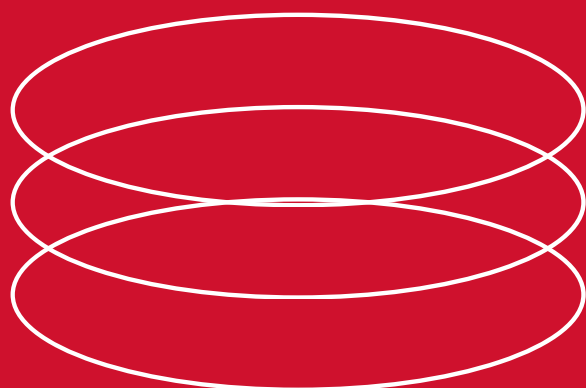
3

UNFOLD THE PAPER



4

**FOLD IT IN HALF CROSSWAYS
MAKE SURE YOUR FOLD IS GOOD
AND DEFINED**



Notes on facilitation:

An important part of the zine-making process is the cutting and folding to create the zine format. However, for some groups, it might be helpful to have a set of blank 'pre-made' zines ready for the girls to complete.



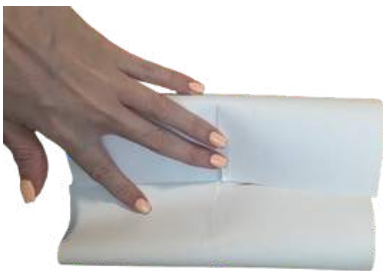
5

UNFOLD THE PAPER AGAIN



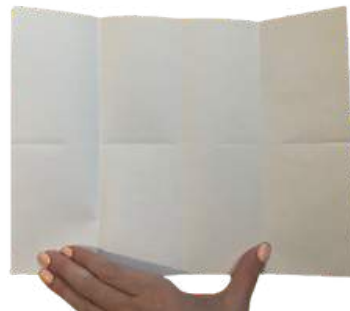
6

NOW FOLD BOTH SIDES FROM OUTSIDE INTO THE MIDDLE



7

UNFOLD THE PAPER. YOU SHOULD HAVE 8 SAME-SIZED RECTANGLES



8

FOLD THE PAPER CROSSWAYS ONCE MORE



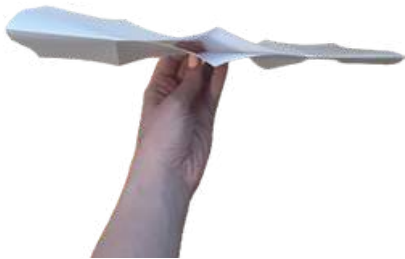
9

**USE SCISSORS TO CUT
HALFWAY ACROSS THE CREASE
AND CREATE AN OPENING IN
THE MIDDLE OF YOUR PAPER**



10

**NOW OPEN THE PAGE AND FOLD
IT INTO HALF**



11

**PUSH THE ENDINGS TOGETHER
TO MAKE A CROSS SHAPE**



12

**FOLD IT UP LIKE A LITTLE
BOOKLET**





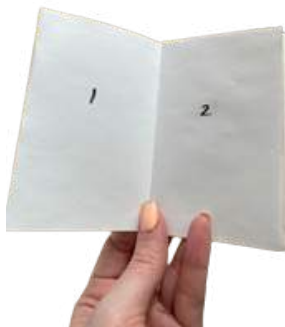
13

LABEL THE FRONT AND BACK PAGES



14

ADD NUMBERS IN BETWEEN TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PAGE ORDER IS CLEAR



15

UNFOLD THE PAPER. YOU SHOULD HAVE 8 SAME-SIZED RECTANGLES WITH LABELS



16

DRAW/DESIGN YOUR ZINE!



5 Designing your Zine

Start to fill in your zine by adding artwork to each page. You can use any kind of visual media to make your artwork such as collage, paint, or pen and ink. You can cut some parts of newspapers, magazine or even print text/photos from computer and paste it into your zine.

6 Sharing your Zine with the group

Once your zine is ready you can share it with the large group by answering questions similar to:

- What is the purpose of your zine?
- Who do you hope to share it with?
- Where can you find your audience to share the zine?

Reflections

In a final activity groups can share their reflections about zine making and looking at other zines.

Questions about zine making:

- What do you like best about the zine?
- What is the message and why is it important?
- What do the zines tell us about the lives of girls and young women with disabilities?
- What do you want people to understand after seeing your zine?
- What inspired you to create this zine?

Questions about looking at other zines:

- What were your reactions to seeing other zines?
- Which zines stuck out for you? Which stories/messages?
- Who is the audience and why did you choose this audience?
- How does the zine help to address a particular problem or concern in relation to gender?
- What would you do differently next time?

Notes on facilitation:

An important part of the zine-making process is the cutting and folding to create the zine format. However, for some groups, it might be helpful to have a set of blank 'pre-made' zines ready for the girls to complete.



Designing your zine: Zine by Dr. Maria Ezcurra



Designing your zine: Zine by Dr. Maria Ezcurra



DANCE

WHAT IS A DANCE?

While there are many forms and variations of dance, this approach can generally be thought of as an art form that uses bodily movement – often set to music or an alternative sound – to convey a story or express an emotion. In the context of a workshop for girls and young women with disabilities, the goal of a group dance performance can be to have participants work together to create a cohesive story through movement, while also individually engaging in creative freedom in their own diverse, unique bodies. This can mean that participants plan, create, and perform a dance piece together in collaboration, using set choreography and/or improvisation (these terms will be defined in Step 4: Creating the dance). Dance can be a decolonial practice by reflecting local cultures while decentering dominant Western culture. Dance performance can create and reflect non-colonial identities, relations, and collectives.

WHY IS DANCE APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES?

Dance has great potential to facilitate participants' self-determination, artistic expression, and bodily autonomy. When working with girls and young women with disabilities, dance must be approached with a focus on access, creative freedom, and the celebration of diverse bodies. Emphasis should not be placed on techniques, precision, or cleanliness, but rather on collective storytelling and creativity. The group should be encouraged to focus less on looking a certain way (technical, precise, unified), and more on approaching the dance with a shared artistic goal, for example, expressing what it means to be a girl with disabilities. Participants may also want to focus on using dance to celebrate their cultural traditions — participants may be familiar with diverse culturally-specific approaches to and/or uses for dance, and such approaches should be welcomed and encouraged.

Dance is excellently suited to girls and young women with disabilities who prefer non-verbal forms of communication and expression. Dance allows individuals to perform their bodies, engaging in an appreciation and celebration of their bodies' aesthetics and capabilities. Further, making creative decisions during the process of putting on a dance performance is a way for participants to learn about and feel empowered in their own bodies. The process requires participants to consider their bodies' abilities, how different emotions can travel through their bodies, and what feels good in their bodies.

Creating a dance performance through collaboration is an opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue with each other, and to learn and accommodate each other's abilities. Public dance performances can start discussions of social action among participants and community members.

GETTING READY TO DANCE IN A GROUP WITH DIVERSE BODIES AND ABILITIES

1 Setting up an accessible dance space

- The room must be wheelchair-accessible.
- There must be adequate space for the group – keep in mind that wheelchair users may need more space than others.
- The floor must be safe – hardwood is ideal (surfaces like carpet or stone are less safe and should be avoided where possible), and the floor must be kept clean.
- To aid visually impaired dancers, participants can wear clothing that contrasts with the surroundings in the room. Bright, solid colours like orange, red, and yellow reflect the most light and thus are easiest to see. The room must have adequate lighting.
- To aid hearing impaired and visually-impaired dancers, the room should have good acoustics – participants and facilitators should be able to hear each other as easily as possible.
- It is ideal (though not necessary) for the room to have a mirror on one wall – this way participants might watch themselves and each other while they dance, which can help them to remember their dance piece and look for elements they'd like to improve or change in their piece.

2 Setting safety rules

- Facilitators should take a moment before each session to have participants inform each other of their bodily limits for that day – participants must communicate their safety needs to the group prior to each session. Participants may need assistance from facilitators in communicating their safety needs.
- Participants should agree to not touch or move people without asking, unless to prevent injury.
- Participants should agree to be aware of and respect each other's space to the best of their ability. The kinesphere is the sphere of space that the body can reach without stepping out of place. Participants must be aware of each other's kinespheres, and use mutual care and attention when entering/intersecting with others' kinespheres. Participants must not rely on sight alone to respect and attend to each other's space: when dancing with visually-impaired individuals, vocal cues can be used to ensure safety (for example, 'I'm on your left' or 'I'm moving closer to you').
- Participants should create and agree on additional safety rules that are relevant to their specific group and its specific needs.

3 Creating an inclusive environment for collaboration

- Participants should agree that everyone's voice matters when planning, creating, rehearsing, and performing a dance piece. Facilitators should ensure that each participant has the ability to communicate effectively with others, offering assistance where needed.
- Participants should recognize that individuals may have different abilities and levels of experience with dance. Facilitators can begin the workshop by allowing participants to briefly share their level of experience and/or abilities in dance, emphasizing that all skill levels and abilities are welcome at the workshop. Facilitators should encourage participants with more experience to offer support to those with less experience. Facilitators should clearly communicate that all participants are expected to welcome, encourage, and support each other, regardless of ability and level of experience.
- Participants should agree to work towards a collective story or message, while allowing space for each other's individual creative freedom. The workshop should be approached as a community activity, where participants' personal interpretations of the group's collective message are welcomed.
- Participants must agree to solve problems in the artistic process as a group.

4 Sharing and drawing on traditional styles

- Participants may want to make use of local, traditional, and/or Indigenous styles in their dance performance.
- Facilitators can encourage participants to share local, traditional, and/or Indigenous styles of dance that they are familiar with among the group. Facilitators may allow time at the beginning of the workshop for participants to share their experience or cultural proximity to any local, traditional, or Indigenous dance styles. Facilitators should encourage the group to learn from those knowledgeable participants.
- Facilitators should clearly communicate that participants should aim to honour and respect such styles, while accepting that they may not be performed identically by all participants, given the diversity of bodies and abilities in the workshop. Facilitators should encourage the group to use such styles (if they choose) in a way that allows for everyone to participate.

5 **Creating a safe space for gender and sexual diversity**

- Dominant (Western) forms of dance typically rely on normative ideas about gender and sexuality. For example, dance partnerships usually consist of one man and one woman, and love stories are usually portrayed between one man and one woman.
- These dominant, normative ideas do not allow space for individuals who may not necessarily identify as man or woman, or who prefer any diverse forms of gender identity and presentation. These ideas also do not allow space for individuals who are inclined/oriented to sexual or romantic relations that do not consist of one man and one woman.
- Facilitators should strive to create a safe space for gender and sexual diversity among participants. Facilitators can verbally affirm that participants do not need to adhere to any typical or normative forms of gender in the workshop space and in the dance performance. Facilitators can verbally affirm that participants who are inclined/oriented to sexual or romantic relations other than those between one man and one woman, are welcome in the workshop.
- Facilitators should verbally affirm to all participants that no one is required to share their gender, sexual, or romantic preferences, inclinations, or identities in the workshop.
- Facilitators can encourage participants to think about how they can create a dance performance that embraces gender and sexual diversity. Participants can discuss what this might mean to their unique group.

STEPS TO PUTTING ON A DANCE PERFORMANCE

01.

DEVELOPING A PROMPT

Determine the purpose of your project and develop a prompt. This may be done with the whole group collaboratively or before the workshop. The prompt should be open-ended so that participants can give their views, but it should not be so wide open that it is hard to see any themes or focus. Therefore, it is helpful if the topic or prompt is clear, and simply stated, while also open to multiple interpretations. For example:

- Feeling safe and not so safe at school
- Challenging gender inequality in my life
- What is it like to be a girl/boy/woman/man?
- What is it like to be a girl with disabilities?

02.

BRAINSTORMING

Ask participants to brainstorm story ideas that are related to the topic. This can be done in small groups, individually, or with volunteers and support workers. These ideas are all written down on a piece of chart paper so everyone can see them. Once a number of ideas have been generated, the group (or individual) narrows down the possibilities for what they may want to perform. They could do this in several ways. One way is to have each person vote for their favorite topic. For example, each participant could use a colored sticker to vote with or just write an X on their favorite topic.

In this stage, participants should be encouraged to think more broadly as opposed to specifically. Some helpful questions may be:

- What feelings do we want to express in our movement?
- What do those feelings look and sound like?
- Are we performing for a specific audience? Is there someone or a group of people that we're directing our message to?
- Are there certain feelings we hope to spark in our audience when they watch us? How might we guide our audience to those emotions?
- Alternatively, do we want to focus on our own feelings and expressions, disregarding the audience?
- What questions might we want to leave our audience with?

03.

MAKING CREATIVE DECISIONS

Once the topic for the dance piece has been chosen, and participants have brainstormed adjacent ideas and feelings, participants can begin making creative decisions for the performance.

- Dance style/genre – what kind of dancing fits our topic? What kind of dancing do we feel good for performing? Do we want to make use of traditional styles? Do we want to mix multiple styles in one piece? Why?
- Sound – what do we want our audience to hear? What does our topic sound like? Do we want to dance with music, spoken word, natural sounds, or silence? Do we want the sound to be produced live, in the room of the performance?
- Space – what kind of space do we want to perform in? Where do we want our audience to watch from? Do we want to face our audience straight on? Do we want our audience to surround us?
- Visual elements – what do we want our audience to see or feel, beyond the dancing? Will props aid us in conveying our story? What colours might fit with our topic? Can these colours be visually displayed in what we wear, or in a backdrop? How might colours or other themes be expressed through non-visual means? For example, if a group decides that their piece/story feels like the colour red, facilitators should encourage participants to think about how ‘red’ might be translated into non-visual senses: ‘red’ might feel like heat, loud sounds, or spice – facilitators may aid participants in incorporating these non-visual senses into the audience experience. Input from visually impaired participants should be centered when translating to non-visual senses.

04.

CREATING THE DANCE

Choreography is a planned dance movement. To choreograph a dance, participants can take turns showing each other ideas for movements, and the group can learn the movement by copying each other. When working with visually impaired participants, facilitators can encourage and assist participants in verbally describing their movements to enable those visually impaired participants to learn them. Choreography is typically planned in accordance with the sound/music for the piece, so participants may find it helpful to plan movements on the beats or lyrics of the music – in this case, facilitators or participants may want to try counting the beats of the music out loud to help the group stay on track. When working with hearing-impaired participants, facilitators can visually express the counts of the music, by counting on their fingers in a spot that is easily readable by such participants. Further, facilitators should encourage and assist participants in ensuring that hearing-impaired dancers are able to watch others to stay on track.

An improvisation is a form of dancing without planned choreography (choreography is planned dance movement, that is typically rehearsed repeatedly to achieve consistency). Improvisation is when dancers make up dancing on the spot, allowing their bodies to move to the music freely. Improvisation can be a very helpful tool when brainstorming, planning, and choreographing a dance piece. It is useful to try improvising according to different prompts (ie. dance like you're stuck in the mud, dance like you're a bird who's just hatched, dance like the color blue). Improvisation requires dancers to be willing to experiment and make mistakes. Extra care and attention are required to ensure safety during improvisation. In a community workshop, participants may want to take turns improvising in smaller groups to allow everyone more space.

Participants may want to mix choreography and improvisation in their performance, though facilitators should encourage participants to at least agree on a loose plan that will convey their artistic vision and story.

Start by determining the beginning, middle, and end of the story for the dance. Pick out the most important points in the story, and decide where they fit into the music/sound. If there are different characters in the story, determine when important interactions happen in the music/sound.

Use improvisation to spark ideas for choreography. Allow all participants to share ideas and opinions. Make sure that all participants are able to perform the choreography safely, and make appropriate accommodations where necessary. For example, if certain participants cannot perform jumping movements safely, allow them to replicate the movement while staying on the ground, or perform a different but complementary movement. Facilitators should encourage participants to listen and learn from each other. Here are some things to consider when choreographing:

- You don't need to start at the beginning. For example, you can choreograph the end, then the beginning, then the middle of the dance piece.
- Pay attention to the music/sound – are there moments of tension? Are there layers to the sound (ie. vocals, a bass line, and a drum that can be brought out individually through different movements)? Are there moments that sound still, where the movement should pause?
- All participants do not need to perform unified movement for the entire performance. For example, there may be moments where half the group does one sequence and the other half does another at the same time. Variation can be effective for conveying different characters or feelings.
- Consider what formations you want to dance in. Consider how you want the group to move around the space. Changing formations can make the dance more interesting, though safety must be prioritized.
- Don't underestimate stillness – it can be just as expressive as movement.
- Consider how you can best showcase each dancer's abilities. Allow moments for individuals to be featured as the focus.
- Keep your focus on conveying a cohesive, logical story.

05.

REHEARSING THE DANCE

Where the movement in the piece is not improvisational, the first stage of rehearsal should be for dancers to practice the movements repeatedly to ensure that everyone feels comfortable performing them. For those participants who can, it is helpful to memorize the piece at this point. For participants who require assistance in remembering the piece, facilitators may aid in showing the movements on the side of the room, or assigning them a partner participant to watch and copy during the piece. For visually impaired participants, it may be helpful for a facilitator or a participant to clearly shout out directions for the movement in time with the sound/music – these directions may be able to be integrated into the performance.

Once everyone knows and feels confident in the movements, set goals as a group for the performance. Do you want your movements to be unified and precise, or more unique and varied? This might change at different points in the piece, depending on what you want to convey. If you want to make certain movements precise, discuss the form of the movement together and mirror each other. However, recognizing that everyone's bodies and abilities are unique and different, and that everyone's performance may not look exactly the same, is critical. Pay attention to timing – if there are points where everyone should be moving at the same time, practice those points to achieve unison. What feelings are you attempting to express? Think about how you can perform facial expressions that align with your story.

Next, engage in collaborative critique. Split the performance group into two or three smaller groups. Have one group perform the dance while the others watch, then allow the participants who watched to give feedback. Switch groups until everyone has performed and received feedback. This is a moment for participants to give positive comments, constructive criticism, and ask questions or raise concerns about the performance piece.

At this point, it may be helpful for a facilitator to record the entire group performing the dance and letting participants watch themselves. Participants can reflect on what they like, what they don't like, and what is or is not being expressed effectively.

06.

ORGANIZING A DANCE PERFORMANCE EVENT

It is important to share the dance performance with various audiences. Planning a dance performance event is an opportunity for participants to feel empowered by their creation, their dancing, and their community impact.

- Plan the event
 - Decide on an audience. Who do you want to see your performance?
 - Give the event a title.
 - Consider combining other performances (drama, poetry, films, etc.) into your event.
 - Choose a location – what kind of space do you want to dance in? Where do you want the audience to watch from?
 - Choose a date.
- Spread the word
 - Creating a 'buzz' is a critical aspect of planning a well-attended event.
 - Advertise the event through posters, flyers, announcements in school or community spaces, word of mouth, and/or social media.
 - Send out written invitations, if appropriate.
- Prepare materials for the event
 - Prepare an introductory statement.
 - Organize refreshments if appropriate.
 - Consider creating handouts for the audience. Handouts can include the themes of the piece, and the names of the performers and contributors.
 - Plan how you will capture audience reactions.

07.

DRESS/TECH REHEARSAL

A dress/tech rehearsal is an opportunity for your group to rehearse the dance in the exact space of the event, using the exact materials you will be using for the event. The dress/tech rehearsal is a practice that mirrors the real performance event as closely as possible, without the audience. Wear the clothes you plan on wearing for the event, and use the equipment you plan on using for the event. Make sure the dance fits in the space, make sure the technology works, and make sure there are no issues with your clothing. The dress/tech rehearsal is the time to make small, last-minute adjustments, and prevent mistakes during the actual performance.

08.

PERFORMANCE

On the day of the performance, spend a moment before the audience arrives to discuss your intentions for the dance and to encourage each other. In the time directly leading up to the performance, avoid discussions and instead concentrate on being present, feeling the body, and gathering energy and confidence. Have one or several participants introduce the event, explain why you chose dance, and introduce the piece(s). After the performance, hold a Question & Answer (Q&A) session. Allow the audience to ask the participants questions about their performance. Facilitators must aid participants who require extra assistance in communicating with the audience.

09.

CAPTURE AUDIENCE REACTIONS

Possible ways to capture audience reactions:

- Set up a 'comment book' or 'comment wall' for audience members to leave their written feedback.
- Conduct interviews with audience members.
- Take photographs at the event. If you choose this option, it is important to get permission from all the audience members.

10.

REFLECTING ON THE PERFORMANCE

Have a group discussion after the event to reflect on the performance, your feelings, and the audience reactions. Possible questions to discuss:

- What did you want to express through your performance? What story did you want to tell?
- Do you think the audience understood your dance's story/messages? Why or why not?
- What new ideas or questions do you think you left your audience with?
- How did you feel about having community members watch your dance piece?
- What did you like about performing? How did it feel?
- What went well in the performance? What did not go well?
- What do you think audience members liked best about your performance?
- What changes do you hope will come about?
- If you were to organize another dance performance event, what would you do differently?



THEATRE-BASED PERFORMANCE

WHAT IS THEATRE?

Theatre is a collaborative form of performing art that uses live performers to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gestures, speech, song, and dance. The technical elements of theater are the set/scenery, costumes, props, lights, sound/music, and makeup. The strongest impact on the audience is made by acting, singing, and dancing, followed by a spectacle—the background/set, light, and music against which those activities take place. Theatre is a collective art. Theatre requires many people – actors, writers, designers, technicians – all to work together in a period of rehearsal and creative exploration towards a common goal. Whatever the benefits experienced by the participants along the way, Theatre is evaluated by how well performance communicates to its audience.

WHY IS THEATRE APPROPRIATE FOR WORKING WITH GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES? HOW THEATRE HAS BEEN USED IN OTHER PROJECTS?

Theatre is appropriate to be used at 2 levels: one for developing the skills of girls and women with disabilities to think about their issues, frame them within a text, communicate using drama to an audience and emerge as confident self-advocates; two to send a message to the communities about the issues that women with disabilities feel concerned about and ways in which they can be addressed. Theatre has been used in community development and for the capacity building of marginalized sections of the society, their families, and caregivers through various ways and projects:

- Mass awareness and Sensitization of Community stakeholders on the issues of Disabilities and human rights: We use theatre to deliver messages, passing on information about an issue.
- Theatre for development: We use theatre for capacity building, and leadership development among the groups of persons with disabilities and others. Theatre is also useful for encouraging active participation from people whose voices are not normally heard in the community. 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.
- Using as a training tool: Dramatization of the journey from charity-based approach to right-based approach helps to develop conceptual understanding in the training on Disability and development.
- Advocacy for mainstreaming disability: We use theatre as a tool for advocacy. It has 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.
- We use theatre as a tool for the staff development process.

AN OVERVIEW OF HOW THEATRE CAN WORK

1 Materials Required for Theatre

- Notebook and pens
- Chart papers, colours
- Everyday items as props (once theme is developed and script is ready)
- Easily available musical instrument

2 How do we do it

The workshop process will be facilitated by 2 resource persons who are theatre practitioners and sensitized on the issues of girls and women with disabilities. The participants will be girls and women with all types of disabilities, so the resource persons should know how to communicate with them. We will organize the reasonable accommodation for the participants, ISL interpreter, if needed.

The participants will go through a process which includes:

- Know your body and mind and how to connect both for self realization and communication
- Participants will explore different types of communication process.
- They will experiment and learn the process of expressing oneself.
- Experiencing Theatre games to believe the strength of collective effort, team work and for building the leadership.
- Fun-based activities.
- Breaking habitual-bound thinking.
- Understanding the language of expressions.
- Working with rhythms and patterns.
- Exploring transformations.
- Understanding and exploring improvisations and characterizations.
- Exploring theatre-based presentations.

3 Ask yourself the 3 W's

Where?

The choice of issue and the preparation of the play have to be in a safe area where participants can be free to express themselves and practice. The place should be barrier free and have all accessibility options as required. The girls and women with disabilities will be encouraged to open up about their own lives and analyse the situation. Privacy is also important in terms of choice of place.

The performance of the play will be in a public space keeping in mind accessibility and safety.

When?

The theatre workshops will involve a series of sessions over 3-4 days depending on resources available and the convenience of the women.

Who?

Girls and women with disabilities, facilitators for the theatre workshop and interpreters will participate.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR A THEATRE PERFORMANCE

01.

WHEN WORKING WITH A GROUP

- Provide each group with support and time to work on their scripts and allocate parts and responsibilities.
- During the rehearsals, open up a dialogue about the issues addressed or depicted. This way the participants will be able to talk about sensitive issues which may be difficult to talk about.
- It is very important to set aside some time to interact with some participants one-to-one who have difficulty communicating with others. Make sure to communicate with them individually or with a support person so that you can integrate the feedback and reflections that they may not have been able to voice during the larger group sessions.

02.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE (30 MINUTES)

The participants will be asked to think about ways in which the different stages of the theatre production have affected them, their understanding of themselves, and the issues

- The planning
- The production
- The performance and audience

03.

SET OUTCOMES

- Learn team-building and working together as a team,
- Develop leadership
- To Respect each other
- To reflect on the roles we play in life and the impact of our choices on ourselves as well as others
- To develop critical thinking and improve decision-making
- To promote self-awareness, improve emotional health and well-being

STEPS TO PUTTING ON A THEATRE PERFORMANCE

01.

INTRODUCTION AND WARM UP (15 MINUTES)

Knowing each other and sharing of the objective of the workshop. There will be debriefing for all the participants encouraging them to explore their interests, skills and resources.

02.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE (30 MINUTES)

The participants will go through the prompt made for the purpose of selection of the issue.

Examples of prompts:

- What is one issue that affects you the most and needs to be addressed in your community?
- Why do you feel it is important?
- What makes you feel safe and not so safe?
- What helps you maintain your wellbeing?
- What do you like/dislike about your neighborhood?
- The best/worst part of my life is....
- During the pandemic, it has been challenging to.....

The participants will analyze and discuss the issues affecting their lives and their community in an open forum. They will discuss and select 1-2 relevant issues on which to develop their theatre performance.

03.

PREPARING THE SCRIPT (60 MINUTES)

The participants will be encouraged to develop a script on 2 of the issues identified in 2 groups of 10-15 girls and women each. The script will be a performance of around 5-7 minutes.

Nonverbal and verbal communication about the issue and storytelling for developing the script.

The script will be developed by:

- Highlighting the main issue
- Focusing the barriers and possible solutions
- Using common/ everyday language

Each group will be guided by 1 resource person to develop their play/skit for performance. The participants will work together to finalize the script.

05.

PRESENTATION OF THE PLAY - (TOTAL 30 MINUTES FOR ALL GROUPS)

Each group will present their play to the larger group.

06.

REFLECTION / FEEDBACK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE PRODUCTION (60 MINUTES)

After the performance, the constructive discussion and feedback will be provided by the audience on the idea/theme, content, presentation etc.

Reflection questions:

- What did you like best about doing the play? How were the different stages experienced?
- Was there anything you found challenging?
- What are the main messages in the play?
- Who should see your play? When you performed in open spaces, what were the reactions? How did you deal with it?
- What does this play say about leadership?

One of the resource persons can facilitate the process of discussion, help the participants not to be judgmental but for sharing the constructive feedback.

One of the most important uses of theatre is to stimulate a critical look at attitudes and structural impediments. This can be done in a community-based performance that may be conducted in different steps:

Encourage participants to plan this community performance by discussing questions such as:

- How can this play lead to planning and change?
- Who is the audience?
- When will it take place?
- What are the main messages that you would like to convey?

We will make a plan for community performance as feasible.

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