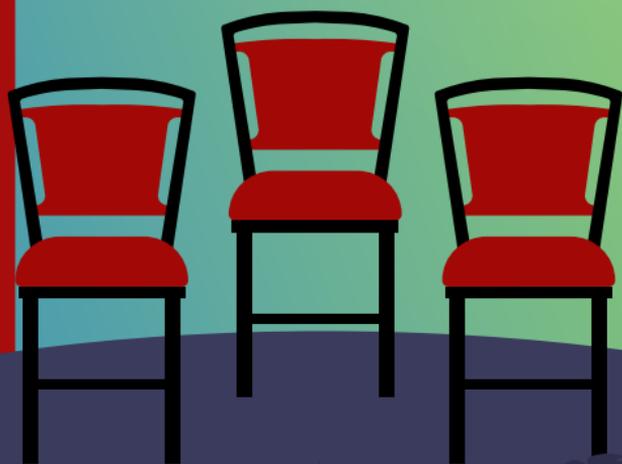




# MÉTHOD'ARTS

PREVENTING VIOLENCE THROUGH ART



THEATRE



# THEATRE

By putting at its center the human and social interactions, whatever the dynamics and themes addressed, the theater offers a magnifying glass on society and the individuals who constitute it. Roles, links, emotions are exposed on stage, giving a place of study of human nature and society. For the spectator, the format facilitates distancing with situations that echo his experience, which makes it possible to deal with sensitive and divisive subjects, while remaining in a dynamic of play, sometimes burlesque, which de-dramatizes the situation.

Forum theatre, developed by Augusto Boal in the 1970s in Brazil, seeks to immerse participants in situations they might face. Sketches presenting a problem are performed and the audience is led to react, or even to enter the stage to propose solutions. This theatrical format makes it possible to build a common representation of a problem and call to co-construct a solution. The playful aspect makes it possible to free speech, to establish a space for collective reflection and to explore different types of solutions in a secure and reassuring way for the public.

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION THROUGH THEATRE WORKSHOP - FORUM

Two formats can be considered depending on the funding and time available:

- A theater workshop is set up to teach amateurs to mount sketches and a forum theater situation that will then take place within the community.
- A theatre company is contacted to conduct one or more forum theatre performances.



## Human resources

In the case that a theatre workshop is set up in the preamble :

### **An actress host:**



- Mastery of the theme of violence
- In line with the organization's values
- Caring and empathetic
- Experience in workshop facilitation
- Serious and with good references

### **A co-facilitator**



- Member of the organizing association
- In charge of violence awareness and logistics
- Excellent mastery of the theme of violence
- Able to welcome the floor of participants and moderate discussions.



In case there is no theatre workshop strictly speaking before the performance of the forum theatre:

**A theater troupe** already used to dealing with this theme via the theater-forum.

## Conduct of the workshop



Participants: 15 people during the workshop-theatre. Spectators at the forum theatre: up to 80 people.



Duration: 10 sessions of 2 hours



Inclusiveness: Gender and age diversity is appreciated.



## Preparation

1

### Identification of a comedian for the animation of the workshop

- Contact local cultural associations.
- Invite artists to a presentation and discussion to share their visions of activities and gender-based violence.
- Choose the artists via a panel from the organization following this meeting.



*This step can sometimes take several months.*

2

### Organization of an awareness session

Organize basic training for the artist and his team around three key concepts: violence, equality and power. If the artist is not already trained in these themes.

3

### Workshop Planning

- Exchange on the workshop program and plan activities in detail (location, duration, equipment, distribution of tasks ...)
- Collectively choose the closing modalities of the workshop: place, date, guests, and method of restitution

🕒 3 to 4 sessions

4

### Identification of a location for the workshop

- A large indoor space
- A safe place for the expression of experiences, opinions and emotions.
- Accessible for anyone with reduced mobility.

5

### Organization of an awareness-raising workshop on violence for teachers

*If the workshop takes place in a school setting*

Make teachers aware of the process, get them to adhere and provide them with information for the referral of victims.

6

### Recruitment of participants

Via local associations, posters, or the school system, depending on the target pre-identified by the project. If the activity must take place in schools, consider enough time to obtain the agreement of the director, then of the staff in charge (guidance counselor, education, teachers ...).

7

### Organization of an information session on the workshop with parents

*If the workshop takes place with children and teenagers*

Collect the agreement of parents and make them aware of the process in order to ensure the presence of children / teenagers at the workshop.

8

### For forum theatre without a preliminary workshop

#### 1. Choice of target audience

- Identification of communities and venues for the forum theatre
- Obtaining the agreement of the local authorities

#### 2. Identification of a theatre group

- Identify opportunities with local cultural associations.
- Invite the troupe to a presentation and discussion to share their vision of the activity and gender-based violence.
- Choose the troupe via a panel from the organization following this meeting

### 3. Choice of scenarios

- Different sketches are proposed by the theatre troupe and several are retained by the organizing association.
- The issues raised by these sketches must be adapted to the socio-cultural environment where the forum theatre takes place, to the age of the audience, and must be in the local language.



*It is essential that the organizing association knows well the community in which it wishes to intervene.*



## Conduct of the workshop

## The theatre workshop / Duration: 10 sessions of 2 hours

1

### Introduction

Presentation of the comedian and participants.

Sharing of workshop rules: respect, trust, empathy, non-disclosure of confidences made by participants

Share modalities (schedules, location, people to contact in case of absence, final restitution)

Formulation of expectations and concerns

Introduction to the theme of violence. Participants are invited to define what violence is for them and to question their representations.



*Participants must leave this first meeting with the feeling of having found a safe place with caring people. Facilitators must be in an open posture and be particularly encouraging with participants.*

🕒 1 session

2

### Implementation of theatrical exercises

Learn to embody a character and work on emotions, gestures, empathy, the relationship to the body and the notion of consent (how to touch, catch).

🕒 3 sessions

3

### Writing sketches

- Creation and presentation by the participants of sketches, in teams, on themes that concern them, such as unplanned pregnancies, sex without consent, discrimination against homosexual people, sexuality (knowing oneself, consent to oneself, how to take care of oneself, of the other, etc)
- Think about how to approach these situations, avoid them and how to react to them.
- The facilitators are present to help them and to support the script.

3 sessions



The situations must be in line with the socio-cultural reality of the place where the play will be presented and the age group targeted. Relying directly on the reality of learners allows more impact and strengthens links within the group. This phase therefore requires active listening, a lot of trust within the group, and empathy.

4

### Rehearsals

- Work on the staging to find the right tone to be impactful
- Consider as many proposals as possible from spectators and prepare for them.

🕒 3 sessions

## The forum theatre / Duration: 2h

Forum theatre takes place in three parts:

1

### The presentation of the sketches

- These sketches are performed in front of the spectators, must not stigmatize or judge characters, nor caricature or overplay.
- They must raise problematic and/or conflictual situations and echo the experience of the spectators.

2

### Discussion with spectators

- A **joker**



- I. A person external to the sketch
- II. It serves as an interlocutor between the actors and the audience, invites the audience to express themselves on their feelings, to identify the issues raised, to decipher the characters and their behaviors to better understand the dynamics at play. The idea is also to develop empathy towards each of the characters.
- III. Afterwards, the joker invites the audience to think about a solution. This moment opens the discussion between peers by putting the spectators in front of a situation that is external to them although it can concern them all. A collective reflection, the co-construction of one or more solutions is put in place.

3

### Experimenting with solutions on stage

- Spectators are invited to come on stage and become comedian in turn to "play" their solution
- These solutions are tested and make it possible to show the good example or the resistances that can still take place.
- Spectators react and propose other solutions if necessary.

Forum theatre requires a detailed understanding of the issues raised during the sketches so that actors can react in the most accurate way possible and thus show the dynamics that are intertwined in systems of violence.

Effective communication of the forum theatre will be made via posters and WhatsApp groups.

The forum theatre, if intended for a wide audience, will be held in outdoor public spaces, facilitating the participation of as many people as possible.



## Evaluation

A quick test during the first session of the theatre workshop and during the last session is carried out on themes related to violence to check the good acquisition of knowledge by the participants. The last session is also an opportunity to collect the opinions of the participants on the whole workshop.

A satisfaction questionnaire is distributed to the spectators of the forum theatre.



## Necessary equipment



A large indoor space for the theatre workshop



A large quiet indoor or outdoor space for the forum theater



Benches or seats



## Resources to go further

- Boal A. (1985). Theatre of the oppressed. Theatre Communications Group.
- Mitchell, K. S., & Freitag, J. L. (2011). Forum Theatre for Bystanders: A New Model for Gender Violence Prevention. Violence Against Women, 17(8), 990-1013.

*For more resources, scan this QR code.*



*Founded in 1993, Médecins du Monde Switzerland is a medical association of solidarity active in several countries around the world, including Switzerland. In 2022, MdM Switzerland undertook experience capitalization work on violence prevention workshops through art implemented since 2016 in Benin, Cameroon and Mexico. Similar Method'art sheets on photography, theatre, puppetry, writing/slam, and painting are available at:*

<https://medecinsdumonde.ch/news/atelier-prevenir-la-violence-a-travers-art>

For more information on Médecins du Monde.  
[www.medecinsdumonde.ch](http://www.medecinsdumonde.ch)

**FEDERATION  
VAUDOISE  
COOPERATION**



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To share your experience with us,  
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