



## **THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT SOURCE BOOK**

Compiled for Masaba'a Widows Group

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Theatre for Development (TfD) is a development practice that uses performance as a participatory tool to help individuals and groups share their experiences with the intent of social transformation. TfD offers a practical and theoretical exploration of the ways in which the arts can be used by communities to create social transformation on their own terms. The underlying components of all TfD work are democracy, participation and sustainability. Included in this source book are ideas of how to create a theatre for development piece, from identifying a subject to be addressed, to post-performance activities. We encourage you to try out new ideas and adapt the ones here to discover methods that work for you.

### **STARTING OUT**

#### **Identify a Need**

Before beginning, all participants should agree on the overall goal of the project; through discussing common issues and concerns the group should decide the following:

- Which subject is important for group to talk about?
- What issues would they like to address?

#### **Declare Group Aims and Objectives**

Once the subject matter has been chosen, the group can then declare what they would like to do specifically in regards to the subject matter.

For example, before creating the story of Rose, the Masaba group had already decided their declared aims as follows:

- Addressing spread of HIV/AIDS – getting to the root of the problem
- Poverty
- Need for Education
- Infidelity/ Promiscuity
- Idleness
- De-stigmatization
- Empower women who feel isolated
- Show life doesn't stop because of AIDS for a widow or her children
- Demonstrate usefulness of support groups such as MWG
- Promote active and healthy lifestyle
- It is also important to document the aims and objective in a way that is easy for everyone to refer to.

#### **Determine your Audience**

Once the need has been identified and the group aims and objectives determined, it is then important to decide on who the group would like their audience to be.

In deciding an audience, some important questions to consider are as follows:

- Who is it important to hear about this subject or gain awareness?
- Is there anyone it could be aimed at a policy making level?

Large audiences can be good for vast outreach whereas smaller ones can be good for transferring skills. TfD work does not always have to be directed at an outside audience as the purpose of the work can sometimes be for the sole benefit of the participants (ie work through conflict, stay active, etc.) Therefore an audience can range anywhere from group members, to members of the community, local decision makers, families, children, other women, widows.

### **Decide a Method**

Once the audience is decided it is important to consider the best means of presenting the subject matter to them. For example, is creating a play the only option or could the work also be presented through a series of song and dance? Is there a way that the message could be strengthened by having members interact with the audience or having the audience also take part in the performance?

### **Group Agreement**

In order to build a strong sense of trust among the group, it is important to have a group agreement where members of the group can suggest rules for all participants to abide by. This helps to build a safe work environment for ideas to be tested and explored. Some common group rules are to listen to one another, respect each other's ideas and to keep the work confidential. Rules that are specific to the community or group can also be included (e.g. adopting the Masaba's normal rule of paying a late fine.) Facilitators, observers and any outside guests that attend workshops are also bound by these rules.

## **FACILITATION**

The job of a facilitator is to remind the group of how the exercises and tasks at hand relate to the overall aim of conveying a message to the community.

In doing so it's important for the facilitator to *offer tools and suggestions* that help enable participants to create their own ideas rather than *teaching* participants the answers. A good tool for doing so is to ask open questions. An open question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

For example, instead of asking if Rose should hit Kariuke, ask what the participants think Rose should do next? These leading questions will encourage participants to arrive at their own their own conclusions.

### **Facilitation Pointers**

- It is usually best to have one person leading at a time so that the whole group can identify who the facilitator is.
- Be clear in explanations; Make sure all participants are clear before moving on to the next exercise, etc.
- Explain the relevance of each exercise to the group.
- Keep your own energy up so that the rest of the group will follow.
- Encourage all members to participate -- Pay close attention to those that are not so forthcoming and find a way to encourage them to also share their ideas.
- Plan Ahead – Prepare in advance by deciding an overall objective for each workshop and to decide what exercises will help obtain the objective.
- Be flexible – Don't be dismayed if the workshop begins to go in another direction, it may be useful to you.
- Keep the focus -- There is a tendency in large group discussions for the participants to get 'off track' and begin to speak about things that are not related to the project. It is the

job of the facilitator to keep the group focused on the subject matter and bring the conversation back to the important topic at hand.

- Let debates play themselves out -- the facilitator is also a member of the group so it is inevitable that they will also have their own ideas and opinions; however, for the sake of democracy, it is best for the facilitator to let the group come to their own conclusion without any biased leadership.
- Clarify group consensus - Once the group arrives at a decision, it is helpful to summarize the discussion and to ensure that everyone is in agreement.

## **STRUCTURING A WORKSHOP**

We suggest the following as a basic workshop structure:

- Warm up
- Recap
- Main Body
- Discussion
- Wind down
- Evaluation

Remember to have an objective for the workshop, for example to create a new character or to explore a certain area.

### **Warm up / Wind down exercises**

It is good to begin a workshop with a warm up exercise that includes all participants. Choose an exercise that ties in with the theme of the workshop for example if you are going to do some role playing in the main body of the workshop, it may be good to start with a warm-up that focuses on building energy. Other themes could be focus, team-building, rhythm etc. An important thing for the facilitator to remember when leading the exercise is that it is not about getting it 'right' but rather about the learning that happens along the way.

### **Re-Cap**

A Re-Cap discussion is helpful to remember the key points and important elements that were decided in the preceding workshop session; this is especially important to bring members up to speed if they were not in attendance at the last workshop.

### **Exploring Subject Matter & Devising Key Material**

The main body of the workshop should usually consist of exercises and discussions that build characters and events through which a story can be articulated. (*see suggested exercises*)

### **Discussion:**

Group discussions are helpful in order to explore ideas and arrive at a collective decision. All members should again be encouraged to speak. Try not to let conversations go on for too long, especially if there is an opportunity for ideas to be further explored through improvisation and role play.

A general rule to remember is:

'Less Talk – More Action'

### **Evaluation:**

It is very important to set aside time at the end of each workshop to give the participants a chance to reflect on their own progress and the progress of the project in relation to the group's

overall aims. Evaluations are also good opportunities for the group to share how they feel about the effectiveness the facilitator. (See *suggested Evaluation Methods*)

## **Suggested Exercises for Exploring Subject matter and Devising Key Material**

### **Character Creation**

Joe Blagg - Place a piece of paper on a flat surface and have one group member put their head and hands on to it, whilst the other group members trace their outline. As a group, you can now decide your character's identity and write the words in the head. This assures that characters are a mixture of all participants' suggestions. Suggested questions to answer are; Gender? Name? Age? Likes? Dislikes? Physical appearance? etc.

It is always good to embody a character and introduce it to the group once it has been created. To do this choose an accessible item of clothing that the character would wear and ask one group member to wear it whilst another reads out the characteristics that have been decided. This piece of costume is then a signifier of the character in future work.

### **Improvising and Role Play**

Improvisation and Role Play can be useful to help participants explore events of the story through action rather than words. This is done by having the group suggest situations in which characters that have been created might be in. Actors wear the character's signifier to embody the character and role play what they think they might do in that situation. The group can then discuss if they think the character's reactions were realistic or not. If group members disagree they can try role playing the situation with a different actor and different reactions. The group can also direct actors during role play, stopping action and changing what a character has said or done. A good way to do so is to use a clap of the hands to signify when to 'stop.'

#### **Pointers on Improvisation/Role Play:**

- Don't think too much -- Be spontaneous
- Accept the ideas that other group members in the role play are offering and build on them through the exercise
- Have Fun!!!

### **Still Image**

A still image can be useful to clarify what a character is thinking and feeling at any given moment. Create a frozen 'statue' of a character in a given situation and ask the group to alter the actor's body and facial expression to make the image a strong representation of what the character is doing and feeling.

For example, if Rose is low, she may be looking sad, crying, she may be seated on the floor and hugging herself.

### **Turning Points**

Turning points can be described as moments or decision in ones life where everything changes for better or for worse. Some turning points have a more drastic change than others and are therefore considered to be *Key Turning Points*.

For example, a turning point for Rose was when she visited the brewers whereas a key turning point was when she decided to start brewing.

### **Group's Resources**

When devising material, it is good to consider what cultural resources the group might already have that can be incorporated into the performance to help familiarize the audience more with the material. An example would be to incorporate traditional songs, dances, stories or poems that are relevant to the subject matter being addressed.

### **Socio-diagram**

Once you have created a number of characters, it can be useful to place them physically in a picture in accordance to their feelings towards each other. For example, if they are close in their hearts they will be close physically. Pay attention to how they would be looking at each other. Would they be touching each other? Or maybe they might have their backs turned to one another. Place all of the characters as 'statues' in the same picture.

### **Suggested Methods for Evaluation:**

**Proximity Evaluation:** The facilitator places an object in the centre of the space to represent the workshop. Participants place themselves in proximity to the object in accordance to how they felt about the workshop.

For example, if the participants enjoyed the workshop they will place themselves as close to the object as possible; if they did not enjoy it at all, they will place themselves as far away from the object as possible. If they have mixed feelings they will place themselves in between.

**Feedback:** Go around the circle to give each participant the opportunity to ask any questions that they may have and also say a couple of words about what they did/did not enjoy about the day's workshop.

**Open Ended Questions:** Facilitator asks open ended questions (questions that are not "yes" or "no") to the group. Encourage them to think constructively about what they did or did not like about the workshop. This can then lead to a discussion.

Examples of open ended questions are:

- What did you enjoy?
- What was not clear?
- What would you like to see more of?

**Sandwich Evaluation:** Participants share three statements about how they feel in regards to the workshop. The first statement is about something they liked, the second is about something they didn't like and the third statement is about something else they liked.

**Evaluative discussion –** Group conversation about what has been covered so far during the workshop process and what is still left to cover.

### **BUILDING A DRAMATIC STRUCTURE**

Always remember that a story will have a beginning, middle and end. Therefore decide where your story will begin and end and fill in the gaps in between with your dramatic structure. The dramatic structure is a record of the sequence of events in your performance. Once the key turning points have been established, we can begin to build a dramatic structure by asking questions that fill in the gaps about what has to happen before and after these points.

For example: If we know that Rose's turning point is when she decided to start brewing, we can then ask, 'What led her to that decision?' and 'What happens to her when she is a brewer?'

It is then good to decide the key events that are important for an audience to see and arrange them so that they lead up to and follow after the key turning point.

Creating the dramatic structure also helps us to see which key characters still need to be created in order to tell the story.

## **CREATING A PERFORMANCE**

Once the dramatic structure has been created, the group can then start to use it as a guideline to create an actual performance. When creating performance it is best to keep the performance methods simple so that they are easily accessible to the group and adaptable to any location of which the performance might be held.

Remember that it is not so much about doing a play but rather the experience that the group member's have in expressing the collective message. Therefore all group members should have a part in the performance.

### **Scripting of Scenes**

When creating scenes in accordance to the dramatic structure, it is good to document the key moments and dialogue that happen in the scene of which you feel are important to share with the audience. The scenes can then be used as a script or as guidelines for the group to refer back to in rehearsal as they continue to build the story through improvisation.

### **Casting of Characters**

Deciding who plays which character should be up to the group to decide as a collective and it is good to ask all members if anyone has a particular character that they would like to play.

### **Rehearsal**

The purpose of rehearsals is to repeat the performance multiple times in order for the group to familiarize itself as much as possible with the following:

- Content of the Scenes: what is important to share with audience?
- Places: where each member needs to be before entering and exiting the stage
- Cues: A signifier for when an actor is supposed to do or say something, such as entering the stage when a certain line is spoken.
- Performance skills (see suggested performance pointers)
- Time management: use time efficiently in order to get as much done as possible.
- For example, separate groups can be made to work in different locations to rehearse scenes independently of each other.

### **Stage Management**

In order to make your performance go smoothly it is necessary to organize stage management. The group should look at the scenes to determine what props (objects used in the play) are needed. The purpose of stage management is to keep track of all of the props and make sure that they are in the correct place when the performance starts. Stage management also ensures that the actors know the correct cues for when and where they should enter the stage.

For example, when Rose calls Anna's name, the actress playing Anna must enter from the left.

### **Directing**

The whole group should continue to be the ones making decisions about the relevance of the material being performed and how it relates back to the groups overall message and aims. The goal of directing is to highlight the key material to ensure that the message and story are both clear to the audience, help the performers make decisions about where to be on stage for each scene and also to create smooth transitions between each scene.

### **Characters Journey**

After all the scenes have been created in accordance to the dramatic structure, it is then helpful to document the 'ups and downs' of the main character(s) experience in order to recognize the

main obstacles they have had to overcome. One way of doing this is to have the participants choose one word and/or statue image that summarizes the characters emotional experience during each scene. One method of remembering the word, is to write it somewhere where it can be easily referred to, such as on the back of each scene. Participants can then create a graph that shows the 'ups and downs' of the character journey in accordance with the words. This is later useful to refer back to when remembering the character's experience in rehearsals.

### **Audience's Journey**

Just as the characters have a journey throughout the story; members of the audience will also have a journey whilst watching the performance. It is important to consider how what is happening on stage will impact on your audience. The audience does not have to feel comfortable with what is happening in the character's journey or even agree with the decisions she makes, however they should be able to relate to her experience. Similarly to your character's journey, you can also create a graph of your audience's journey, charting the emotional ups and downs of the audience.

### **Relationship between Performers and Audience**

Ultimately the audience knows that the performers are also members of their community, trying to convey an important message. There may be some very important members of the community in the audience of whom it is important to receive the message (i.e., town officials or policy makers) It is therefore okay for the performers to communicate with the audience as a part of the actual performance. This is a powerful way for the performer's message to become even clearer to those that are watching. Some performance techniques that help the characters communicate to the audience within the play are as follows:

- **Aside:** Character revealing thoughts to audience by speaking words to them that have not been shared with other characters
- **Monologue:** Character having a conversation with herself where the audience learns of her thoughts and or feelings.
- **Posing Questions:** Asking for audience's assistance when making a decision about how to deal with a challenging situation, if enough flexibility is left in the scene, the performer may then act on any answers they are given by the audience.
- **One on one Interaction:** Performers targeting and inviting response from specific people in the audience who are relevant to the issue being addressed.
- **Participation:** Performers encourage members of the audience to actually participate in the performance, by engaging in a scene, joining in a song or dance, etc.

### **Performance Pointers**

- **Avoid having your back to the audience**  
The audience would prefer to see your face and it makes it very difficult for them to hear you. (It is okay to have your back to the audience if you are walking away from them but not when performing to them.)
- **Audibility**  
Make sure that all of the audience can hear you. This can be harder when you are performing outdoors. Try to project your voice rather than shouting. Also try to make sure that everybody on stage is not speaking at the same time.
- **Sharpening Physicality**  
All gestures that a performer makes with her body should be strong and clear to the audience.

- **Upstaging**  
When you are onstage, try not to stand between another actor and the audience. Instead, try to stand to the side of the other actor. Sometimes this is hard to avoid.
- **Eye Contact**  
It is good to practice making eye contact with the audience by addressing them directly when a character is talking about her thoughts and feelings. This will help the audience to feel connected to the character and the decisions she makes.
- **A sense of purpose**  
Once an actor walks on stage, she should be 'in character' and very clear as to why they are there and what they are doing. Even when a performer makes a mistake, or something unexpected happens onstage, it is better to react to it 'in character.'
- **Have Fun!**  
A good actor is a confident one and there is nothing that an audience likes more than to watch performers enjoying themselves with confidence on stage.

### Directing Pointers

In order to ensure that the story is clear and the performance interesting, it is often good for a director to consider the following

- **Clarity of the story:** In order for the overall message to be clear, a director must be able to answer the following about each scene:
  - *Who* is in each scene and is it necessary to have them there?
  - *When* does the scene occur in the play? Is it accurate for the time scale of the story?
  - *What* is the key event that is happening in each scene? Is this clear to the audience?
  - *Where* does the scene take place? What is the best way to show this on stage?
  - *Why* is each scene important to the overall story? Are the key issues being addressed?
  - *What if:* A scene does not always have to offer an end or solution to a situation. It is sometimes better a situation unresolved and for the audience to draw their own conclusions. This encourages the audience to still think about the issues addressed in the performance even after it is complete. For example, in the scene when Rose tells Anna that she wants her to go to the VCT to get tested -- the audience does not find out whether or not Anna was in fact infected by Kariuki, but they are instead left to create their own conclusion as to what the outcome might be.
- **Giving Direction**  
Just as in facilitation, the job of directors is not to tell the performers what to do, but rather ask open questions that will help them draw their own conclusions about how they are portraying the story. Although its nice to have the whole group's input, it is important to have only one person at a time actually giving directions to the performer as it can be overwhelming for the actor to hear many things coming from the group.
- **Audience's Journey**  
It is important to keep in mind the audiences journey when directing. In order to make a performance as interesting for the audience as possible, it is good to consider how all of their senses can be incorporated into it: Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, and even Taste



## **POST SHOW ACTIVITIES**

- **Discussion** – Tell the audience that there will be a discussion after the show and to bear in mind any questions they may have during the performance. Choose somebody to lead the discussion – their job will be to make sure that the discussion runs smoothly by giving everybody a chance to speak. They may also need to begin the discussion by speaking about the subject and asking open questions.
- **Hot Seating** – If the actors are very familiar with their characters and are good at improvising, it may be possible for the audience to ask them questions about the decisions they made during the performance, which the actors must answer as their characters.
- **Interactive Role Play** – An extension of hot seating. Replay scenes from the performance where a character has made some important decisions and invite the audience to stop the action and change what the character has said or done, in order to see if the outcome would be different.
- **Providing information and resources** – It is good to have information available for the audience that is related to the subject matter. This can be in the form of leaflets or specialist guest speakers.

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Costumes:** Clothing and other attire that actor's wear when they are 'in character.'

**Costume Indicator:** A piece of costume or prop to use as a quick indication of when someone is playing a certain character

**Cues:** Something that indicates when an actor should enter or exit the stage (usually another character's line)

**Improvisation:** Creating imaginary circumstances to build scenes, events or characters

**In Character:** An actor acting as her character rather than herself

**Leading Questions:** Questions that help to give direction to a specific area of focus or subject Matter

**Off Stage: Area that** immediately surrounds the stage and is not in view of the audience.

**Places:** Set positions for actors to be in for the start of a scene or the beginning of the play

**Projection:** Adding volume to your voice (without yelling) so that the whole audience is able to hear you.

**Props:** Items or objects that are used by characters in each scene (ie., Rose's Jembe)

**Open Questions:** Questions that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'

**Script:** A record of the events or dialogue that happen within a scene.

## MWG Declared Aims for 'Vita Vya Wajane' Workshop Process

- Addressing the spread of HIV by getting to the root of the problem, including looking at poverty, the need for education, infidelity and idleness as contributors to its spread.
- De-stigmatizing women who may feel living w/ the virus through empowering them and showing them that their lives and the lives of their children do not have to stop because of a positive diagnosis.
- Promoting the importance of leading an active and healthy lifestyle and the role that support groups such as Masaba can play in promoting this.

## MWG Group Agreement for 'Vita Vya Wajane' Workshop Process

- Evaluation will take place at the end of every workshop.
- You must be on time; if you are late you must pay a fine of 20ksh
- Attend workshops as often as possible
- Be patient
- You must listen to whoever is speaking
- Conversations between individuals must be shared with the group
- We must respect each other

## MWG Dramatic Structure for 'Vita Vya Wajane'

Using 'before' and 'after' Rose to denote the time frame and placing the material we already had (in bold), we identified a structure as:

- **Rose on the shamba with landowner, life is hard since her husband died and she is very poor. She would steal to feed herself and kids. Kids aren't in school. She is tired.**
  - What happened to lead her to the decision she later makes (low turning point)? Was it something big (catalyst) or general build up of feelings?
  - How are the kids at this time?
- **Low turning point- Rose decides to brew her own beer in order to attract men to her house to sleep with to obtain money to support her kids. Emotions are lonely, sorrowful, stressed.**
  - Who are these men? Are they migrant truckers? Chance to discuss identified issue of infidelity.
  - She becomes infected with HIV. Receives diagnosis.
  - Effects of lifestyle on kids and other characters e.g. her being a 'loose' woman and also after her diagnosis.
  - How she is viewed in community – does this lead to feelings of isolation?
  - What makes Rose decide to find out about Masaba? Why did she not before (her husband has been dead 2 years)?
  - How does she go about finding out about joining requirements e.g. meeting with group or talking to an elder/counselor?
  - What are the requirements before she can join e.g. raise the joining fee by working hard and proving she is not idle?
  - What is the key moment when she decides to make the commitment?
- **Karibu Rose Song**

- **Rose's first meeting as an actual member. Told to keep the Masaba secrets and given the guidelines. Must be a good woman with a respectable lifestyle. She can depend on the other group members for help.**
  - Why was she late?
  - Why did she decide to meet with the counselors? Does every new member?
  - Rose meets with the counselors (opportunity to discuss identified issue of importance of leading to a healthy and active lifestyle).
  - Is there a moment of inspiration that leads to high turning point? (eg seeing role models, taking children into consideration, etc)
- **High turning point Rose is digging in the field and realizes her own strength and that she is empowered. This is after meeting with the counselors. She is open about having HIV, she has made decision to live 'positive' lifestyle; her kids are in school and she has food to sustain herself and family.**
  - We see Rose coping with further challenges.
- **Rose meets shamba owner – showing her strength in her day to day life.**
  - Who else is affected by the new positive Rose?
  - Positive effects on kids.
  - No longer poverty stricken?

### **SCRIPT: 'VITA VYA WAJANE'**

#### *Rose on Shamba*

- *Rose asks Shamba Owner for a job*
- *Shamba Owner offers weeding*
- *They argue about payment – agree on 5ksh*
- *Owner measures the land*
- *Owner leaves. Rose starts work.*
- *Rose steals and hides some vegetables about her person*
- *Owner returns*
- *Owner checks work and discovers theft.*
- *Owner questions Rose about theft.*
- *Rose denies*
- *Owner checks Rose. Says 'You didn't take care of your husband, that's why he died and now you have to dig.'*
- *Owner discovers stolen vegetables, tells Rose she won't pay her but gives her the vegetables as payment.*
- *Rose leaves crying*

#### *Rose's Monologue as she leaves shamba*

*Rose walks past brewery, upset and vulnerable. Monologue about effects on kids and feelings since husband died.*

#### *Rose and the Brewers*

*The Brewers have witnessed harsh treatment and call her over.*

- *The Brewers call Rose over, they give her a sip of brew.*
- *They ask 'What is wrong?'*
- *Rose explains and they advise her to stop weeding and start brewing.*
- *Rose accepts.*
- *They get drunk and dance.*
- *They tell her, 'It is good to drink, you will be happy and healthy and find a husband who will take care of the children'*
- *Rose is drunk and decides to take some of the brew back to her children (as it has nutrients in it).*
- *The brewers give Rose maize and yeast to brew with.*

#### *Rose Returns Home*

- *Rose walks home with maize*

- *She is drunk*
- *She is protective of ingredients*
- *She falls, passes out briefly and wakes searching for ingredients*
- *She struggles to reach home*
- *Her four older children are awake, waiting for food as the youngest sleeps*
- *Rose passes out upon entering house*
- *Children try to wake her – they are surprised by her behavior*
- *They take the maize to cook and eat*
- *Anna the oldest, asks “what kind of mother are you?” and compares her to another neighboring widow who is still able to take care of her children*
- *Children go to steal more food and return at midnight*

#### *Rose’s Low Key Turning Point*

*Rose wakes up the next morning*

- *Emotions are lonely, sorrowful, stressed.*
  - *She doesn’t remember the night before*
  - *She sees that her children have no food*
  - *She is speaking out loud to herself while asking her dead husband why he had to leave*
  - *She remembers the experience of losing her belongings to her dead husband’s family.*
- I had a god bed which was taken. My cow was taken. My utensils were taken.*
- *She is bitter*
  - *She decides there is no other way out but to start brewing beer for money.*

#### *Rose the Brewer*

*Rose doesn’t know the people coming to the house; the children are surprised at first but soon start asking customers for money; Rose becomes a drunkard; some of the men are married.*

- *Anna is helping Rose with glasses*
- *Rose is teaching Anna how to sell*
- *One of the customers, who is HIV+ propositions Rose; she is ‘tough’ and declines*
- *He returns and starts luring her with money*
- *He gives the children money for food – sends Anna to the kitchen to cook*
- *Rose becomes ‘soft’ and eventually agrees to go with the man (not knowing he is positive)*

*Anna becomes infected*

- *The man leaves Rose and returns to the brewery to find Anna alone*
- *He asks her name and whether or not she goes to school*
- *He asks about her shoes and indicates that he would like to take her shopping for a new pair*
- *He tells her he loves her*
- *Anna tries to be tough*
- *He gives her some money and pays the other children to leave them alone*
- *Anna decides to go*
- *Rose returns to find Anna gone*

#### *Rose’s Returns*

- *Rose enters the house, finds drinkers.*
- *She calls for Anna.*
- *Rose asks the drinkers ‘Where is Anna?’*
- *The drinkers tell her ‘Anna left with Karaoke, he is HIV positive’*
- *The second drinker says ‘I warned Anna not to go with him’*
- *Rose begins to understand and collapses.*
- *The drinkers follow her with bitter words.*

#### *Rose’s Nightmare*

*Rose is collapsed on the floor, as a statue*

- *The first drinker approaches and says ‘I warned you’*
- *Teresa approaches and says ‘What’s wrong?’*
- *The second drinker approaches and says ‘I warned Anna and now it is up to you’*

• *Mama Jane approaches and says 'You've been a good lady, but what has happened since you started brewing?'*

#### *Rose's Friends*

- *Rose is sitting, scratching.*
- *Friend from Kisumu enters: 'What is wrong? Why are you scratching? You have changed.'*
- *Rose: 'It is the water – it is bad and makes me scratch'*
- *Kisumu leaves.*
- *Neighbor enters: 'I saw that Karaoke's wife was buried last week and he is getting very thin'*
- *Rose: 'It's the water! I don't believe you, you're not a doctor! You are jealous, you wanted Karaoke and I got him!'*

#### *Rose's Monologue*

- *Singing to comfort herself*
- *She is coughing*
- *Feeling Cold*
- *She is Scratching*
- *Worried*

#### *Expressed as follows:*

*'I am so worried, all these women are saying Karaoke is HIV+, now his wife has died; even my daughter has been with him. I am going to die tomorrow; what will happen to my children; I can see my grave.*

#### *Rose with the VCT Counselor*

- *Rose: How are you?*
- *Counselor: How can I help?*
- *Rose: I've come to visit*
- *Counselor: I am happy to see you.*
- *Rose: I have been in a relationship that has not been okay; my husband died and left me with kids; life is tough; I have been brewing beer and going with different customers; one in particular we loved one another – I slept with him and my body is not okay; In short, I have come to be tested*

• *Counselor: It is not easy to get women to come here; are you familiar with the VCT? When you come here you are either positive or negative – both are considered positive; What will happen if you find yourself positive?*

- *Rose: When I came here from my home, I decided that whatever happens I will be positive*
- *Counselor: We will counsel you on what food to eat, and medicine to take*
- *Rose: If I am positive, I will thank God; if I am negative, I will thank God.*
- *Counselor: I will now take your blood and then take it to the lab where we will have to wait 20 minutes for the results – when I return I will give you the test results to look at yourself. Two lines means + and one means -*

#### *Rose's Test Results*

- *Rose sees the results and let's out a long sigh*
- *The counselor tells her that she is 'not going to die tomorrow.'*
- *Counselor advises Rose as follows:*
  - *Go home and continue life*
  - *If you are sick you need to get to the hospital*
  - *Avoid a lot of thinking*
  - *Eat a balanced diet*
  - *You will be able to live for many years and look after your children with this illness*
- *Rose: Thank you for helping me*

#### *Rose Learning of Masaba*

- *Rose is busy at home (whistling with joy and full of energy)*
- *She sees a widow she knows and gets to talking:*

*Rose: 'Where are you going?'*

*Friend: 'With my group.'*

Rose: 'Oh, you look so nice.'

Friend: 'So do you, Rose, you're a widow, why don't you go with us?'

Rose: 'I like your bag where did you get it?'

Friend: 'Merry-Go-Round'

Rose: 'I would like to be a part of this group.'

Friend: 'What happens the next time you get pregnant; I know about your lifestyle, Rose, and that you brew beer from your home.'

Rose: 'No, no I don't do that anymore, I have changed.'

Friend: 'I will speak to my group.'

Rose: 'Please ask them if I can join.'

*Karibu Rose*

- Begin with song before prayer
- Masaba Widow's Song
- Group is seated as Grace (chairlady) discusses Merry-Go-Round that is taking place and also informs group of new member who is interested in joining
- Group continues with Merry-Go-Round
- Rose enters
- Group stands and welcomes Rose with 'Karibu Rose' song
- Eunice (secretary) introduces Masaba rules and guidelines
- All members introduce themselves
- Rose thanks the group for having her and promises to commit to guidelines
- Group accepts Rose

*Rose's Meeting with Counselors*

- Secretary: Welcome Rose, the Masaba has accepted you; the counselors are here to guide young widows. There are certain guidelines that you must follow if you are going to be a member of our group.
- Rose: Can I have a friend?
- Counselor: One is that you cannot spoil our reputation. You cannot go around sleeping with men. Are you going to be able to follow these guidelines and stop the lifestyle of brewing?
- Rose: I have suffered and I am ready to stop
- Counselor: Look at these ladies; don't they look good? Don't they look healthy?
- Rose: I am ready to be like you; will I be smart like you?
- Counselor: You have to be patient; do you have any children?
- Rose: I have three boys and two girls
- Counselor: Look at the way you see us with our children. You should not go and make beer; look at the secretary – she has not slept with a man in 15 years.
- Rose: Will I be fat like her?
- Counselor: You will have an opportunity to do something good for yourself – to begin a micro-finance, sell fish, clothes or vegetables. You should not miss any meetings and you must trust in God.
- Rose: You have made my heart feel settled; Thank YOU!!!

*Scene ends with Rose extremely thankful*

*Rose and her children*

- It is morning; Rose is already awake and has been preparing breakfast.
- Rose wakes the children (John, Moses and Ruth) and sends them to get washed
- Moses cries because the water is cold.
- Rose scolds him and washes him briskly
- Rose sends the children to get dressed for school.
- They sit down to eat breakfast and Moses plays with his shoes.
- Rose pays Moses a shilling to go to school but tells him she will not do so every day.
- The children leave for school and Rose does the housework whilst singing.
- The children return from school.

- John tells Rose that Moses has been fighting at school; Moses then hits John and is told off by Rose.
- The children show Rose their school reports. Rose tells John he has done very well and Ruth that she must try harder.
- They eat dinner.
- Rose checks that they do their homework and helps them with it.
- Rose asks one of the children to pray.

Rose counsels Anna

Rose is cleaning her house.

• Rose: This house! I have a daughter but she is never here and now I must do all of the work. I am HIV + and the doctor told me that she may be as well. I must talk to her.

How am I going to tell her? I can't hide it from her. God give me strength

- Rose calls Anna. Anna enters.
- Rose: I want to talk with you. I have been doing a lot of work, where have you been?
- Anna: Why are you asking me all of these questions?
- Rose: You are never at home. I ask you as a parent! I haven't even told you why I want to talk to you.
- Anna: Sorry.
- Rose: Anna, I have been looking at your movements and they are not good. I think you should go to the VCT for testing.
- Anna: What is the VCT?
- Rose: It's a testing place, go there and bring your results back

Rose leaves

• Anna: What is Mummy saying this for? I am not sick, but could I be having the virus?

Let me go and talk to a friend and have more thoughts about this.

Rose's Micro-finance business

Rose is selling sodas and other items at her kiosk near her home

• Rose: I don't know if what I am selling will be enough. There is such a scarcity of food and so little money. Will I be able to survive?

Customer 1 enters

• Customer 1: I would like one kilo of sugar

• Rose: 80Ksh

Customer 1 leaves, Customer 2 enters

• Customer 2: I would like some rice but I only have 30Ksh

• Rose: The rice is 40 Ksh not 30.

• Customer 2: Ok, give me some matchbooks, salt AND rice

Customer 2 leaves, Rose is alone.

• Rose: This life is tough; I am HIV+, I am in need of drugs, I need to eat well; I don't know what to do. My kids are in private school and I don't want to remove them; I want them to pass and do well. I hear there are bursaries; perhaps my counselor can help me... I only own one point of land and my husband didn't finish the house before he died. I am a widow, I am sick; I have children – who will take care of them when I am gone; I thought Anna would take care of the children but now she is sick. If I can get some money for the drugs – I know I can live longer. Let me continue with my business to see what I can get.

Customer 3 arrives

• Customer arrives and tells Rose how 'fantastic' and 'smart' she looks; Customer asks 'what has happened' and 'where she has found the clothes?' Rose responds by explaining about the Masaba group, the Merry-Go-Round, her new business and how her life has changed.

Customer 4 arrives

• A customer comes and again compliments Rose – telling her that she knew she could do it and she is so happy that she is no longer living that lifestyle.

Customer from 'the old crowd' arrives

- *A customer comes from the 'old crowd' and asks Rose to fill her bottle with beer; trying to tempt her with booze, etc; Rose declines repeatedly, explaining how her life has changed*  
*Widow arrives.*
- *A widow comes and tells Rose of her situation; asks for her assistance including a small loan; Rose declines the loan saying that she does not want to mix business with personal – she instead encourages the widow to organize her own group; widow leaves upset*  
*Masaba secretary enters.*
- *A member of the Masaba (secretary) comes and 'checks in' on Rose to see of her progress and how the business is doing.*  
*They all leave.*
- *Rose takes a look at her business, her purse, her mobile phone and finally leaves proud*  
*Rose and the Shamba Owner*  
*Rose is walking through the market place and sees the Shamba Owner. The Shamba Owner repetitively calls to her. Rose pretends that her mobile phone is ringing and ignores the Shamba Owner.*





## IMPROVISATIONAL EXERCISES FOR THEATRE

### ALPHABET CIRCLE

- Everyone stands in a circle.
- One player starts by throwing an 'A' to another player. That player throws as fast as possible a 'B' to someone else.
- Keep doing this until you get to the end of the alphabet.
- If you work with a large group, you can divide them into 2 circles to see how fast each group can get to 'Z'.

#### Variations:

- Any player has the option to change the sequence from A-Z to 1-10 and vice versa.

### ASSOCIATION JUMP

- All players move about the space.
- Randomly the teacher yells a player's name. That player jumps into a frozen position.
- The other players watch the first player jump into a position, and then the rest of the players surround that player making a similar body expression.
- The end result is a still scene.

### EMOTIONAL MIRROR

- Players stand in pairs facing each other.
- One starts talking in gibberish, with a specific emotion (angry, happy, love, etc.)
- The other instantly copies the emotion of the first player, and speaks in his own gibberish. No need to try and copy the other player's gibberish, and both players keep talking, no pausing allowed.
- After about 10 seconds, the second player changes emotion, and the first one immediately follows her.

### THE SCREAM

- Everybody stands in a circle, and looks at the ground.
- When Facilitator says 'GO', everybody lifts their head and either looks straight, left or right.
- Whenever 2 people look each other in the eyes, they scream as loud as they can, as if they're startled, and then fall to the ground.
- Repeat until only one or 2 players are still standing

### WORD BALL

- All players stand in a circle.
- One player starts by tossing a word to another player.
- The receiver says out loud a word that he/she associates to this word and throws the association to another player.
- The exercise continues and so on.

### **Variations**

- Instead of just tossing a word, have the players throw a soft ball, or a towel tied in a knot to each other.
- Try with multiple 'tossers' at once.

### **THREE LIES**

- Participants' sit/stand in a circle.
- Everyone says 3 things about themselves. Two are true and one is a lie.
- The group has to guess which fact is a lie.

### **WHO ARE WE?**

- Explain to the group that they are going to respond to the question 'who are we?'
- Each person in turn should answer this question with a sentence, for example, 'we are young, we are women, we are farmers, we are parents, etc.'
- After each response, the participants raise their hands if they feel they are included in that particular description.

### **Variations**

- Participants sit in a circle. One person goes into the center of the circle to finish the sentence 'We are...' For example 'We are women, young, etc.'
- Anyone who feels that they fit that description gets up out of their seat and finds another place to sit in the circle.
- The last person still standing continues the exercise with a new 'We Are...'

### **WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

- Participants stand in a circle.
- One person goes into the center and begins to mime an action.
- Another person goes into the center and asks that person the question 'What are you doing?'
- The first person answers with an action that is completely different than what they are miming.
  - For example. If they are miming the action of brushing their teeth, they might respond to the question with something like 'I am riding a horse.'
- The second person then takes their place in the center of the circle and begins to mime the action that the first person said (i.e. they ride a horse.)
- Another person enters the circle to ask 'What are you doing?' and the game continues on.

### **MARIA MARIA MARIA!**

- The group stands in a circle.
- One person enters the circle and says the name of another member of the group three times.
- The person whose name is being said, has to say their name once before the person in the center says it the third time. Otherwise that person must then enter the circle and repeat the process by saying another member's name.

### **MIRRORS**

- Ask that the group divide into pairs (Person A & Person B)
- A begins by making movements in slow motion, keeping constant eye contact with B
- B then begins to copy A's movements as if they were a mirror.

## **YES LETS!**

- All players move about the space.
- One person shouts out an idea for the rest of the group. For example, 'Let's climb a tree!'
- The rest of the group responds by shouting together 'YES LETS! And then miming that action.
- Another person shouts out an idea to continue on the same theme, for example 'Let's pick apples from the tree.'
- The group responds with 'YES LETS!' and mimes the action.

## **STILL IMAGES**

- The group moves around the space.
- The facilitator claps his/her hand and calls out an emotion (fear, excitement, etc.)
- The rest of the group must then stop and create a still, statue like image of that emotion. They then hold the Image for a few seconds and until the facilitator tells them to begin to move again
- Facilitator calls out a new emotion and the exercise continues.

## **INTRODUCTION IN THREE ACTS**

- Each person stands in front of the group and gives a small performance in three acts
- The first act they say their name.
- The second act they say how they are feeling
- The third 'act' they say their favorite thing about themselves.
  - *It is important to treat each act as a performance, paying close attention to how each participant is presenting themselves to the others. For example, can they be heard? How are they standing? What does their body language say about them?*

## **TELEPHONE**

- Group stands in a circle.
- One member of the group begins the exercise by quietly whispering a short sentence into the ear of the person to their left.
- The person to their right then relays the sentence to the person to their right and the exercise continues until it has completely gone around the entire circle.
- The last person to receive the sentence announces it out loud to the group.
- The first person to say the sentence then reveals what they originally said to see how the sentence was changed through out the exercise.



## Curriculum to Teach about Wangari Maathai

### A Profile of Wangari Maathai:

When I was a young person, I grew up in a land that was green, a land that was very pure, a land that was clean. And I remember going to a small stream very close to our homestead to fetch water and bring it to my mother. We used to drink that water straight from the river. I had this fascination with what I saw in the river. Sometimes I would see literally thousands of what looked like glass beads. I would put my little fingers around them in the hope that I would pick them and put them around my neck. But every time I tried to pick them, they disappeared. I would be there literally for hours desperately trying to pick these beads, without success.

Weeks later I would come back, and there would be these thousands of little tadpoles. They are beautiful, pitch black, and in that water they would be energetically flying around and I would try to get them. You can't hold them, they are wiggling and they are very slippery. They eventually disappeared and then the frogs came.

I never realized that the glass beads were jelly sacks of eggs or understood the three stages of frogs until I went to college and learned biology. Once I had all this knowledge about the miracle of science I came home from college to discover that the creek had dried up and my homeland was suffering much environmental damage.

—Grist Magazine 15 Feb 2005

Wangari Maathai was born in Nyeri, Kenya in 1940 to farmers in the highlands of Mount Kenya. Although it was very unusual for girls there to be educated, her older brother persuaded her parents to send her to school. She was an excellent student and eventually earned a scholarship to study in the United States. She studied Biology, graduating from the Mount St Scholastic college in Kansas in 1964. Two years later she completed her Master of Science Degree at the University of Pittsburgh. She continued her graduate studies both University of Nairobi. Many male students and faculty in Nairobi were skeptical of her studies or thought that she should not be there at all. Despite this, she earned her Ph.D. She was the first woman from East or Central Africa to do so. She then taught at the University of Nairobi and worked her way up to Associate Professor and head of the faculty for the department of Veterinary Anatomy by 1976. It was around this time that she introduced her tree planting ideas.

“The Green Belt Movement in Kenya started in 1977, when women from rural areas and urban centers, reflecting on their needs at organized forums, spoke about environmental degradation. They did not have firewood. They needed fruits to cure malnutrition in their children. They needed clean drinking water, but the pesticides and herbicides used on farms to grow cash crops polluted the water. The women talked about how, a long time ago, they did not have to spend so much time going out to collect fire wood that they lived near the forest. They spoke of how, once, they ate food that sustained their health. Now, while the food does not require much energy to grow, it does not sustain them. The women feel their families are now very weak and cannot resist diseases, that their bodies are impoverished because of an environment that is degraded. The National Council of Women, a nongovernmental organization, responded by encouraging them to plant trees. In the beginning it was difficult because the women felt that they had neither the knowledge, the technology, nor the capital to

do this. But, we quickly showed them that we did not need all of that to plant trees, which made the tree-planting process a wonderful symbol of hope. Tree planting empowered these women because it was not a complicated thing. It was something that they could do and see the results of. They could, by their own actions, improve the quality of their lives.”

—from *Speak Truth to Power*, May 4, 2000

As the tree-planting spread, and the Green Belt Movement developed, rural women organized themselves into groups to address their own problems. This made the government at that time nervous because they did not have control over these groups and did not know why they were organizing. Wangari Maathai and others realized that they needed to create more democracy in order to keep doing what they were doing. This is how a tree planting movement became a pro-democracy movement.

During the 1980s, Wangari Maathai protested against the government of President Daniel Arap Moi. She became known as a troublemaker for speaking out. The president called her a "mad woman," and "a threat to the order and security of the country."

Her husband apparently agreed. They divorced during this time, and he is reported to have said she was "too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control".

In 1989, the president planned to take over Uhuru Park, the only park left in Nairobi, to build a sixty-two-story skyscraper. Not only would it displace the park, but he also would have borrowed lots of money from foreign investors and put the country further in debt. Wangari Maathai and others protested in the park. Police beat them. They took the case to court because they thought the project was criminal and irresponsible. They lost the court case. Eventually though, they won. Foreign investors withdrew their money because of all the protests. Following this, Parliament tried to have the Green Belt Movement banned as a subversive organization.

Wangari Maathai returned to the same park in 1992 with a group of women whose son's had been imprisoned for demanding more democratic rights. She was beaten unconscious and ended up in the hospital. The next year there were rumors that the president wanted to turn control of the government over to the army. Wangari Maathai and others released a statement in support of general elections for a change of government. The president decided to have them arrested for inciting violence. Wangari Maathai fled to her house and locked herself in it for three days before the soldiers with their guns broke into the house and took her to jail.

“This was only one of many times she was arrested during Moi's presidency. Many people in Kenya were afraid to show their support for her. Until a few years ago, people used to come up to me in the street and whisper, “I am with you and I am praying for you.“ They were so scared of being identified with me that they did not want to be heard. I know a lot of people were afraid of talking to me and being seen with me because they might be punished”.

—interview in *UNESCO Courier* 1999

Her efforts did receive some international attention as well. One time she was released from prison after a letter writing campaign from Amnesty International. Wangari Maathai ran for president against Moi in 1997, but her party withdrew her nomination on a technicality before the election took place. She continued to resist development projects that destroyed the environment without helping the ordinary people.

Karura Forest, 1,000 hectares on the outskirts of Nairobi, faced destruction for a luxury housing project. Wangari Maathai and a group of twelve women went to the gate to replant trees, along with six members of Parliament. The trees would be a symbol of the forest belonging to the public. On that morning, the police tasked with guarding the area passed their duties on to a group of 200 hired men.

The men carried whips, swords, clubs and other crude weapons. According to a Time Magazine article from December of 1998, "when she saw the force arrayed against her inside the gate...she told her group "these thugs are spoiling for trouble and the police will not protect us. Let's plant one tree outside the gate and leave."

The crowd of hired men did not want to let her plant that one tree. As she walked forward, the men charged and began beating the protestors. Many were beaten severely. Wangari Maathai was whipped in the head and knocked to the ground. Some of the other women surrounded her and they made it to a car. They went to a nearby police station. As she had predicted, the police were not very interested in investigating the incident. Maathai insisted on filing a police report though. She signed it with the blood from her head wound before being taken to the hospital. She remained in the hospital for several days, stating "as soon as I recover, I shall return to Karura Forest, even if they bury me there."

After many years of protesting, Wangari Maathai finally saw governmental change in 2002, when Mwai Kibaki defeated Moi and became the president. Maathai herself was elected to Parliament with an overwhelming 98% of the vote for her district. Kibaki named her Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife in January 2003.

Wangari Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. The Nobel committee explained:

Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa. She has taken a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally.

To date, the Green Belt Movement has planted about 30 million trees in Kenya.

#### Timeline:

- 1940 Born in Nyeri, Kenya, the daughter of farmers in the highlands of Mount Kenya
- As a child, she was sent to school only after her older brother pressured her parents. She excelled at school and eventually earned a scholarship to study in the U.S.
- 1964 Degree in Biological Sciences Mount St. Scholastica College, Atkinson, Kansas
- 1966 Master of Science degree from University of Pittsburgh
- 1971 Ph.D. from University of Nairobi
- 1976 Becomes chair of department of veterinary anatomy at University of Nairobi
- Introduces her tree planting concept to ordinary citizens, this develops into Green Belt movement
- 1977 Becomes associate professor at University of Nairobi
- 1980s Divorced from husband who described her as "too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control"
- Imprisoned multiple times for demanding multi-party elections and an end to political corruption and tribal politics
- 1992 Beaten unconscious by police during a hunger strike
- 1999 Whipped on the head and arrested while trying to plant saplings to replace trees felled by property developers
- 2002 Elected to Parliament with overwhelming 98% of the vote and appointed as Deputy Minister for the Environment
- 2004 Wins Nobel Peace Prize

"Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in

Africa. She has taken a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally.”

– The Nobel Committee

“It is evident that many wars are fought over resources which are now becoming increasingly scarce. If we conserved our resources better, fighting over them would not then occur...so, protecting the global environment is directly related to securing peace...those of us who understand the complex concept of the environment have the burden to act. We must not tire, we must not give up, we must persist.”

– Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize

“As I continue to plant trees, and to protect those that are standing, I try to remember that victims of human rights reflect our human values as a civilized society. Since we claim that we are civil, we can make our world a better place for all mankind. In the meantime, it is important to remember that while the rest of the species on the planet can survive without us, we cannot survive without them. Respecting the rule of Nature is equally important. As I have said elsewhere, Nature is unforgiving so let us work with her for our own good. In ensuring the survival of other species and respecting their right to be, we ensure our own survival.”

– Address to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, June 19, 2006

### **Curriculum Vitae\***

Wangari Muta Maathai, PhD, EBS

Personal

Date of birth: April 1, 1940

Nationality: Kenyan

Family: Three children (Waweru, Wanjira and Muta)

### Education

PhD, Anatomy, University of Nairobi (1971)

MS, Biological Sciences, University of Pittsburgh (1966)

BS, Biology, Mount St. Scholastica College, USA (1964)

### Personal Achievements

Director, Kenya Red Cross (1973–1980)

Founder and Coordinator, The Green Belt Movement (1977–2002)

Founding member, GROOTS International (1985)

Member of Parliament, Tetu Constituency, Republic of Kenya (2002–Present)

Assistant Minister, Environment, Natural Resources & Wildlife, Republic of Kenya (2003–Present)

### Academic Appointments

Chair, Department of Veterinary Anatomy, University of Nairobi (1976)

Assoc. Professor, Department of Veterinary Anatomy, University of Nairobi (1977)

Endowed Chair in Gender & Women's Studies named “Fuller-Maathai”, Connecticut College (2000)

Montgomery Fellow, Dartmouth College, USA (2001)

Dorothy McCluskey Visiting Fellow for Conservation, Yale University, USA (2002)

### Professional Affiliations

Member, United Nations Advisory Board on Disarmament, USA

Member, UN Commission on Global Governance, USA

Member, Advisory Board, Democracy Coalition Project, USA  
Member, Earth Charter Commission, USA  
Selection Committee, Sasakawa Environmental Prize, UNEP, KENYA  
Board Member, Women and Environment Development Organization (WEDO), USA  
Board Member, World Learning for International Development, USA  
Board Member, Green Cross International  
Board Member, Environment Liaison Center International, KENYA  
Board Member, the WorldWIDE Network of Women in Environmental Work, USA  
Board Member, National Council of Women of Kenya, KENYA  
Honorary Degrees  
Doctor of Law, Yale University (2004)  
Doctor of Agriculture, University of Norway (1997)  
Doctor of Science, Hobart & William Smith Colleges (1994)  
Doctor of Law, William's college, MA USA (1990)

#### Awards

2004 Nobel Peace Prize  
2004 Sophie Prize  
2004 Petra Kelly Environment Prize  
2004 J. Sterling Morton Award  
2004 Conservation Scientist Award  
2003 Elder of the Burning Spear, Republic of Kenya  
2003 WANGO Environment Award  
2002 Outstanding Vision and Commitment Award, Bridges to Community  
2001 Excellence Award, Kenyan Community Abroad  
2001 The Juliet Hollister Award  
1997 One of 100 in the world who've made a difference in environment, Earth Times  
1995 International Women's Hall of Fame  
1994 The Golden Ark Award  
1993 The Jane Adams Leadership Award  
1993 The Edinburgh Medal  
1991 UN's Africa Prize for Leadership  
1991 Global 500 Hall of Fame, United Nations Environment Program  
1991 The Goldman Environmental prize  
1990 The Offeramus Medal  
1989 The Woman of the World  
1988 The Windstar Award for the Environment  
1986 Better World Society Award  
1984 Right Livelihood Award  
1983 Woman of the year award

#### Wangari Maathai's Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Honorable Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I stand before you and the world humbled by this recognition and uplifted by the honor of being the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate.

As the first African woman to receive this prize, I accept it on behalf of the people of Kenya and Africa, and indeed the world. I am especially mindful of women and the girl child. I hope it will encourage them to raise their voices and take more space for leadership. I know the honor also gives a deep sense of



pride to our men, both old and young. As a mother, I appreciate the inspiration this brings to the youth and urge them to use it to pursue their dreams.

Although this prize comes to me, it acknowledges the work of countless individuals and groups across the globe. They work quietly and often without recognition to protect the environment, promote democracy, defend human rights and ensure equality between women and men. By so doing, they plant seeds of peace. I know they, too, are proud today. To all who feel represented by this prize I say use it to advance your mission and meet the high expectations the world will place on us.

This honor is also for my family, friends, partners and supporters throughout the world. All of them helped shape the vision and sustain our work, which was often accomplished under hostile conditions. I am also grateful to the people of Kenya - who remained stubbornly hopeful that democracy could be realized and their environment managed sustainably. Because of this support, I am here today to accept this great honor.

I am immensely privileged to join my fellow African Peace laureates, Presidents Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the late Chief Albert Luthuli, the late Anwar el-Sadat and the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

I know that African people everywhere are encouraged by this news. My fellow Africans, as we embrace this recognition, let us use it to intensify our commitment to our people, to reduce conflicts and poverty and thereby improve their quality of life. Let us embrace democratic governance, protect human rights and protect our environment. I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion. I have always believed that solutions to most of our problems must come from us. In this year's prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has placed the critical issue of environment and its linkage to democracy and peace before the world. For their visionary action, I am profoundly grateful. Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come. Our work over the past 30 years has always appreciated and engaged these linkages.

My inspiration partly comes from my childhood experiences and observations of Nature in rural Kenya. It has been influenced and nurtured by the formal education I was privileged to receive in Kenya, the United States and Germany.

As I was growing up, I witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations, which destroyed local biodiversity and the capacity of the forests to conserve water.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In 1977, when we started the Green Belt Movement, I was partly responding to needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income.

Throughout Africa, women are the primary caretakers, holding significant responsibility for tilling the land and feeding their families. As a result, they are often the first to become aware of environmental damage as resources become scarce and incapable of sustaining their families.

The women we worked with recounted that unlike in the past, they were unable to meet their basic needs. This was due to the degradation of their immediate environment as well as the introduction of commercial farming, which replaced the growing of household food crops. But international trade controlled the price of the exports from these small-scale farmers and a reasonable and just income could not be guaranteed. I came to understand that when the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged, we undermine our quality of life and that of future generations.

Tree planting became a natural choice to address some of the initial basic needs identified by women. Also, tree planting is simple, attainable and guarantees quick, successful results within a reasonable amount time. This sustains interest and commitment.

So, together, we have planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter, and income to support their children's education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds.

Through their involvement, women gain some degree of power over their lives, especially their social and economic position and relevance in the family. This work continues.

Initially, the work was difficult because historically our people have been persuaded to believe that because they are poor, they lack not only capital, but also knowledge and skills to address their challenges. Instead they are conditioned to believe that solutions to their problems must come from 'outside'.

Further, women did not realize that meeting their needs depended on their environment being healthy and well managed. They were also unaware that a degraded environment leads to a scramble for scarce resources and may culminate in poverty and even conflict. They were also unaware of the injustices of international economic arrangements.

In order to assist communities to understand these linkages, we developed a citizen education program, during which people identify their problems, the causes and possible solutions. They then make connections between their own personal actions and the problems they witness in the environment and in society. They learn that our world is confronted with a litany of woes: corruption, violence against women and children, disruption and breakdown of families, and disintegration of cultures and communities. They also identify the abuse of drugs and chemical substances, especially among young people. There are also devastating diseases that are defying cures or occurring in epidemic proportions.

Of particular concern are HIV/AIDS, malaria and diseases associated with malnutrition.

On the environment front, they are exposed to many human activities that are devastating to the environment and societies. These include widespread destruction of ecosystems, especially through deforestation, climatic instability, and contamination in the soils and waters that all contribute to excruciating poverty.

In the process, the participants discover that they must be part of the solutions. They realize their hidden potential and are empowered to overcome inertia and take action. They come to recognize that they are the primary custodians and beneficiaries of the environment that sustains them.

Entire communities also come to understand that while it is necessary to hold their governments accountable, it is equally important that in their own relationships with each other, they exemplify the leadership values they wish to see in their own leaders, namely justice, integrity and trust.

Although initially the Green Belt Movement's tree planting activities did not address issues of democracy and peace, it soon became clear that responsible governance of the environment was impossible without democratic space. Therefore, the tree became a symbol for the democratic struggle in Kenya. Citizens were mobilized to challenge widespread abuses of power, corruption and environmental mismanagement. In Nairobi's Uhuru Park, at Freedom Corner, and in many parts of the country, trees of peace were planted to demand the release of prisoners of conscience and a peaceful transition to democracy. Through the Green Belt Movement, thousands of ordinary citizens were mobilized and empowered to take action and effect change. They learned to overcome fear and a sense of helplessness and moved to defend democratic rights.

In time, the tree also became a symbol for peace and conflict resolution, especially during ethnic conflicts in Kenya when the Green Belt Movement used peace trees to reconcile disputing communities. During the ongoing re-writing of the Kenyan constitution, similar trees of peace were planted in many parts of the country to promote a culture of peace. Using trees as a symbol of peace is in keeping with a widespread African tradition. For example, the elders of the Kikuyu carried a staff from the *thigi* tree that, when placed between two disputing sides, caused them to stop fighting and seek reconciliation. Many communities in Africa have these traditions.

Such practices are part of an extensive cultural heritage, which contributes both to the conservation of habitats and to cultures of peace. With the destruction of these cultures and the introduction of new values, local biodiversity is no longer valued or protected and as a result, it is quickly degraded and disappears. For this reason, The Green Belt Movement explores the concept of cultural biodiversity, especially with respect to indigenous seeds and medicinal plants.

As we progressively understood the causes of environmental degradation, we saw the need for good governance. Indeed, the state of any country's environment is a reflection of the kind of governance in place, and without good governance there can be no peace. Many countries, which have poor governance systems, are also likely to have conflicts and poor laws protecting the environment.

In 2002, the courage, resilience, patience and commitment of members of the Green Belt Movement, other civil society organizations, and the Kenyan public culminated in the peaceful transition to a democratic government and laid the foundation for a more stable society.

Excellencies, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

It is 30 years since we started this work. Activities that devastate the environment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own – indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. This will happen if we see the need to revive our sense of belonging to a larger family of life, with which we have shared our evolutionary process. In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

That time is now.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has challenged the world to broaden the understanding of peace: there can be no peace without equitable development; and there can be no development without sustainable management of the environment in a democratic and peaceful space. This shift is an idea whose time has come.

I call on leaders, especially from Africa, to expand democratic space and build fair and just societies that allow the creativity and energy of their citizens to flourish.

Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills, and experiences and even power must be role models for the next generation of leadership. In this regard, I would also like to appeal for the freedom of my fellow laureate Aung San Suu Kyi so that she can continue her work for peace and democracy for the people of Burma and the world at large.

Culture plays a central role in the political, economic and social life of communities. Indeed, culture may be the missing link in the development of Africa. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time, consciously discarding retrogressive traditions, like female genital mutilation (FGM), and embracing aspects that are good and useful.

Africans, especially, should re-discover positive aspects of their culture. In accepting them, they would give themselves a sense of belonging, identity and self-confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is also need to galvanize civil society and grassroots movements to catalyze change. I call upon governments to recognize the role of these social movements in building a critical mass of responsible citizens, who help maintain checks and balances in society. On their part, civil society should embrace not only their rights but also their responsibilities.

Further, industry and global institutions must appreciate that ensuring economic justice, equity and ecological integrity are of greater value than profits at any cost.

The extreme global inequities and prevailing consumption patterns continue at the expense of the environment and peaceful co-existence. The choice is ours. I would like to call on young people to commit themselves to activities that contribute toward achieving their long-term dreams. They have the energy and creativity to shape a sustainable future. To the young people I say, you are a gift to your communities and indeed the world. You are our hope and our future. The holistic approach to development, as exemplified by the Green Belt Movement, could be embraced and replicated in more parts of Africa and beyond. It is for this reason that I have established the Wangari Maathai Foundation to ensure the continuation and expansion of these activities.

Although a lot has been achieved, much remains to be done.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude I reflect on my childhood experience when I would visit a stream next to our home to fetch water for my mother. I would drink water straight from the stream. Playing among the arrowroot leaves I tried in vain to pick up the strands of frogs' eggs, believing they were beads. But every time I put my little fingers under them they would break. Later, I saw thousands of tadpoles: black, energetic and wriggling through the clear water against the background of the brown earth. This is the world I inherited from my parents.

Today, over 50 years later, the stream has dried up, women walk long distances for water, which is not always clean, and children will never know what they have lost. The challenge is to restore the home of the tadpoles and give back to our children a world of beauty and wonder.

Thank you very much.



**A Tree Grows in Kenya ©2006**  
**The Wangari Maathai Story**

Written by: Amanda Pressner, Holly Corbett, Jennifer Baggett and Irene Scher  
Performed by: Common Ground

**Characters**

Grandmother Constance  
Granddaughter Faith  
Young Wangari  
Grandmother Maathai  
Adult Wangari  
UN Representative/Nobel Prize Presenter  
Wangari's Husband  
President Moi  
Police Officer/Head Thug  
Female Voting Official  
Chorus (Women, Thugs)

**Scene 1: The Family Farm, 2006**

(Grandmother Constance is busy planting trees at stage right. Granddaughter Faith enters the scene from stage left. She runs around her grandmother excitedly, motioning for the old woman to join her...)

**Faith:** Bibi, Bibi! Come watch me play a game of cati with my friends!

**Grandmother Constance:** Maybe later, little Faith, but right now I am working on something very important.

**Faith:** But why can't you come? What are you doing that's more important than playing!?

**Grandmother Constance:** Come over here and I'll show you. (Faith walks over to her Bibi to look) Today I am planting a tree for Kenya. I am placing this seed into the ground. Soon it will sprout into a sapling. Over time, with water, sunshine and my care, it will grow into a big, tall tree.

**Faith:** But what does planting a tree have to do with Kenya?

**Grandmother Constance:** That's a very good question. In fact, a little girl just like you asked her Bibi the same question nearly 60 years ago. The answer would mark a new chapter in Kenya's history. Come sit with me, Faith, and I'll tell you the story.  
(Faith sits down next to her grandmother. They turn their backs to the audience and shift to the side of the stage.)

### Scene 2: The Maathai Farm, 1946

(As Constance begins to explain the story, young WM and her grandmother enter stage left. They are focused on a fig tree on the family property. Grandmother Maathai is tending to the fig tree by breaking up soil and watering it).

**Wangari:** Good morning, Bibi.

**Grandmother Maathai:** Good morning, Wangari.

**Wangari:** You sure do love your tree, Bibi. But why do you pay so much attention to this one?

**Grandmother Maathai:** Well, Wangari. This is a fig tree, which is very sacred to our people. It helps keep our land beautiful by carrying water from the river through its roots to share with smaller plants and bushes. It is our duty as Kenyans to protect this special fig tree and make sure that future generations do the same.

**Wangari:** Wow, Bibi. This tree is very important. What can I do to help?

**Grandmother Maathai:** Keep tending to this tree. Always remember that the land, the trees, the animals and the people are all connected. By giving your love to one living thing, it spreads to other living things.

### Scene 3: The Family Farm, 2006

(Constance continues to narrate stage right)

**Grandmother Constance:** Little Wangari went off to school when she was seven years old, but she never forgot what her bibi told her about the fig tree. Even as she passed through primary school and high school, the love of her family's land stayed fresh in her mind. At her convent school, she excelled in the sciences and graduated near the top of her class. Her dedication to learning was enough to win her a Kennedy Scholarship to study in America.

**Faith:** America?

**Grandmother Constance:** Yes, the USA! She earned her Masters Degree in Biology. That's the study of living things, like the fig tree that she and her grandmother loved so much. Later, after she came home to Kenya, she went on to become the first woman in East Africa to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Nairobi in biological sciences.

**Faith:** Wangari must have been a smart woman! But didn't she ever miss her family and her farm?

**Grandmother Constance:** Of course she did. That's why after getting her degree in America, she headed straight home to visit the people and places she loved in Kenya.

### Scene 4: Nyeri Region, near Mount Kenya, circa 1970

(WM enters from the back of the room and walks towards stage left. The smile on her face quickly disappears as she looks around. The trees in Kenya have been cut down, the streams have dried up and women in the village are walking, heads down, searching for wood unsuccessfully. They crisscross that stage in a steady stream, not paying any attention to Wangari's presence.)

**WM** (calling out to various women): What has happened to our beautiful town? Where are all the trees? Is this the same river in which I used to fish for tadpoles?  
(The women ignore her. WM comes to the center of the stage where the fig tree is placed, it's now dead).

**WM** (tears streaming down her face, she grabs the hand of the woman walking by): What's happened to my grandmother's fig tree?  
(The woman tries to walk away, but WM pulls her back)

**WM**: Please, I beg of you, explain to me what's happened to this land. It once was green. Now it's brown. It once was filled with tall trees. Now they're dead. It once had a clean, flowing river. Now it's dried up.

**Woman 1**: We used to be able to find firewood by our homes. But all the trees have been cut down. We have to walk for hours and hours to find a single piece of wood. Our children are left alone while we search.

**Woman 2**: The land was stripped. Fertilizer was poured on the ground to grow cash crops. But the rain washed away the dirt and fertilizer, making the river dirty and brown. There is no longer clean water to drink. My family is thirsty.

**Woman 3**: I, too, have no clean water to drink. With no trees left, the sun is drying up the soil. The dry soil will not allow crops to grow. I don't have enough food to feed my family. We are hungry.

**Woman 4**: The government is to blame. They should be providing us with water!

**Woman 5**: The trees are gone because my neighbors keep cutting too many of them. (Pointing to woman #3) I saw you cut the last tree!

**Woman 6**: But your husband poisoned the soil with fertilizer. Now there is no clean drinking water left.  
(The group of women argues amongst each other, pointing fingers and placing blame)

**WM**: Women, women! Your fighting will solve nothing. It will not help the trees to grow. It will not bring clean water. It will not grow food. We must all work together to find a solution and fix the problem before it's too late.

**Woman 7**: But what can we do to help? The problem is too big and I am so tired.

**WM**: My grandmother once told me taking care of one small fig tree can help because all living things are connected. Every one of us is capable of planting a tree. Anyone can dig a hole, put in a seedling and nurture it. When you plant a tree, you feel connected to the earth and have a stake in its survival. Here, take these seeds and start planting them near your homes, on your farms and in the community. Share the seeds with your neighbors and encourage them to do their part to bring life back to our land.

**Chorus**: We can do this! Let's start now!

(WM hands the group seeds and all the women gather around to start planting. More and more women enter the stage to join in until it's full of women planting.)

Scene 5: Nairobi, Kenya, 1981  
(Constance continues to narrate)

**Grandmother Constance:** At first, the movement started small. The women planted in whatever containers they could find, including old tin cans and broken cups. Just as these first few plants began to sprout and flourish, so did the movement. In 1981, their first big victory was to capture the attention of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

**UN Representative:** Of Behalf of the United Nations, we'd like to present you and the women of the Green Belt Movement with this large sum of money to purchase more seeds for planting. This funding will transform your efforts from a few tree nurseries to a large number with thousands of seedlings.

**WM:** Thank you so much. Due to your support, we'll be able to mobilize thousands of women across Kenya to begin planting more trees in their own communities. These foresters without diplomas are essential to the survival of the movement as well as Kenya as a nation.

Scene 6: Various Kenyan towns and cities, circa 1983

(The planting gets underway across various parts of the stage. Women work alone and in small groups, helping and praising each other's efforts)

**Grandmother Constance:** Wangari was right. The Green Belt Movement started spreading like a brushfire across the country—but not everyone was in support of these women taking action.

**Wangari's Husband:** My wife should be at home cooking my dinner, not running around until all hours and taking other women away from their husbands. Wangari is too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control. We must divorce immediately.

**Police Officer:** Wangari's actions are inappropriate. She shouldn't be encouraging groups of women to meet. Plus, it's against the law to meet with more than nine people without a license.

**President Moi:** Wangari is a threat to the order and security of the country. She is a madwoman who speaks out too much and must be stopped!

**Woman 8:** I know Wangari is trying to help, but how can she expect us to go against our husbands and the government? I'm too afraid to join her movement.

**Grandmother Constance:** Despite her opponents, Wangari felt in her heart that she was doing the right thing. These challenges only fueled her passion and commitment to continue promoting the Green Belt Movement and fighting for what she believed in.

Scene 7: Karura Forest, 1999

(WM and group of women go to protest the deforestation of an area for a luxury housing project. They gather near the front gate, bags of seeds and spades in hand.)

**WM:** Women, friends, we are here today to defend a national treasure and resource, the Karura Forest. This forest is the life blood of Kenya, and if we allow it to be cut down for luxury housing developments, we will only see a greater rift between the rich and the poor.

**Woman 1:** But how will we stop them? They have already started to clear the forests.



**WM:** We will start by replanting trees at the gate. Although they may try to stop us, the trees will be a symbol of the forest belonging to the public.  
(The thugs start to file out on the opposite side of the stage, brandishing clubs, whips, and other crude weapons)

**Woman 2:** (shrieks) Look there inside the gate! Hundreds of men are coming our way!

**Woman 3:** They are carrying weapons!

**Woman 4:** What should we do?

**WM:** There are nearly 200 of them and fewer than 20 of us. These thugs are spoiling for trouble and the police will not protect us. Let's plant one tree outside the gate and leave. (Wangari begins to walk forward, a shovel and tree seed in hand, the women close behind)

**Thug 1:** Stop her! Do not let her plant a single tree!

**Thug 2:** Get them!

(The men charge; they yell and pretend to beat the women. The leader whips WM in the head as she kneels to dig the hole, and she falls to the ground. The women surround her to protect her and take her to the far side of the stage tending to her wounds.)

**Faith:** Was Wangari alright? What happened next?

**Constance:** Well, as Wangari predicted, the police did not help her and would not investigate the accident. She insisted on filing a police report, however, and signed it with the blood from her head wound. Wangari had to spend several days recovering in the hospital, stating...  
(Her voice trails off)

**WM:** (Wangari rises from her position on the stage). As soon as I recover I shall return to Karura Forest, even if they bury me there!  
(All cast files off stage.)

#### Scene 8: Kitale, Kenya, 2002

(Constance continues to narrate. Two boxes are placed center-stage to represent voting booths. Women are lined up to cast votes on oversized piece of paper. They are holding signs "Vote Mwai Kibaki" and "Make your voice heard!" At stage left, women are listening to speeches given in support of the Green Belt Movement and Wangari Maathai.)

**Grandmother Constance:** Despite incredible setbacks like the one at the Karura Forest, regular beatings during peaceful demonstrations, vilification by the government and forceful resistance by the police, Wangari never stopped fighting for the principles that she believed in and the land that she loved. It took decades, but the Green Belt Movement swept the country and gained overwhelming support among the people of Kenya. Even as Wangari was beaten down, other women carried on her legacy.

**Woman 8:** Wangari fought to restore the beauty of Kenya and maintain a true democracy. Let's keep her vision alive!

**Female voting official:** (monitoring the voting): Step right up, cast your vote in the 2002 multi-party elections! Every voice is important; every vote counts!  
(Women continue to vote, shoving papers in the ballot)

**Grandmother Constance:** The Green Belt movement was also instrumental in causing the collapse of the repressive presidential regime under Daniel arap Moi. Wangari's fight for justice, along with the support of tens of thousands of women across Kenya helped to bring democracy to the country through peaceful means.

**Female voting official:** (pulling the ballots from the box) The votes have been tallied and the new president of Kenya is....Mwai Kibaki!)

**All women:** Hooray!!

**Women 1:** (running in from stage left) This just in! Wangari Maathai has been voted to the national parliament with a landslide victory...over 98 percent of the votes! Kibaki has appointed her as the Deputy Minister of the Environment!

**All women:** Praise the lord! Our prayers have been answered! Hooray!

Scene 9: Nairobi, Kenya, 2004  
(Constance narrates as WM accepts the Nobel Peace Prize.)

**Grandmother Constance:** It seemed that Wangari's faith and commitment to the future of Kenya had brought her many new blessings...but one of the best achievements was yet to come.

**Nobel Peace Presenter:** And the winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize is....Wangari Maathai!

**Audience:** (erupting into applause) Woo-hoo!

**WM:** (entering stage left in a nice dress and walking to stand behind a podium): Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand before you and the world humbled by this recognition and uplifted by the honor of being the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate.

As the first African woman to receive this prize, I accept it on behalf of the people of Kenya and Africa, and indeed the world. I am especially mindful of women and the girl child. I hope it will encourage them to raise their voices and take more space for leadership. As a mother, I appreciate the inspiration this brings to the youth and urge them to use it to pursue their dreams.

I know that African people everywhere are encouraged by this news. Let us embrace democratic governance, protect human rights and protect our environment. I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion. I have always believed that solutions to most of our problems must come from us.

**Grandmother Constance:** Wangari felt that the Nobel Committee had given her the award to send a message that protecting and restoring the environment contributes to peace. The day she received the news that she had been selected, she celebrated by planting a tree in her home region of Nyeri in the face of Mount Kenya. The words of her speech not only echoed through the crowd that day, but were passed from woman to woman, from mother to child for years to come.

**Woman 2:** Together, we have planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter, and income to support their children's education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds. Through their involvement, women gain some degree of power over their lives, especially their social and economic position and relevance in the family. This work continues.

**Woman 3:** Although initially the Green Belt Movement's tree planting activities did not address issues of democracy and peace, it soon became clear that responsible governance of the environment was impossible without democratic space. Therefore, the tree became a symbol for the democratic struggle in Kenya.

**Woman 4:** In time, the tree also became a symbol for peace and conflict resolution, especially during ethnic conflicts in Kenya when the Green Belt Movement used peace trees to reconcile disputing communities. Using trees as a symbol of peace is in keeping with a widespread African tradition. For example, the elders of the Kikuyu carried a staff from the *thigi* tree that, when placed between two disputing sides, caused them to stop fighting and seek reconciliation. Many communities in Africa have these traditions.

**Woman 5:** I would like to call on young people to commit themselves to activities that contribute toward achieving their long-term dreams. They have the energy and creativity to shape a sustainable future. To the young people I say, you are a gift to your communities and indeed the world. You are our hope and our future.

**Woman 6:** Africans, especially, should re-discover positive aspects of their culture. In accepting them, they would give themselves a sense of belonging, identity and self-confidence. Ladies and Gentlemen, In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.

**Whole cast chorus:** That time is now!

Scene 10: The Family Farm, 2006  
(Everyone except Constance and Faith file offstage.)

**Faith:** Wow, Bibi. I had no idea how important this tree—and all trees—are to our land and our country. Wangari Maathai sounds like an amazing woman, and I want to be just like her when I grow up.

**Grandmother Constance:** That sounds like a great idea, Faith. Wangari Maathai is a role model for all women. But why do you have to wait until you grow up to be just like her?

**Faith** (thinks about it for a moment): You're right, Bibi, I can play cati later. I've got something more important to do now. (Pause) Bibi, will you help me to plant a tree.

**Grandmother Constance:** Of course I will. Let's dig a hole and get started.

(Constance and faith dig a hole; they take a sapling and together, place it in the ground.)

**--THE END--**

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## **Youth Health Education Theater**

### A Simple Guide to Producing Your Own Play\*

This document was created to empower youth to establish a community theatre group. Community theatre groups can serve as an educational forum for social and health issues while giving youth a way to express their core challenges. As a volunteer, your role is of a cheerleader and a facilitator; a person who keeps the momentum going through enthusiasm and encouragement. Remember that the main body of material and ideas must come from the participating community and to keep programs sustained well beyond your volunteer service, it's imperative to help to solidify group leadership by consensus.

### **YOUTH LEADERS**

Below are some guidelines as you form and manage your own community youth theatre.

#### **Your identity:**

- Bring together the youth in your community to announce your plans to form a theater group.
- Create a mission. What is the broadest impact you hope to have on your community? Would you like to create thought-provoking, entertaining, educational, enlightening theatre? Try to say it in a sentence or two.
- Together, choose a name for your theater group that reflects your group goals and spirit.

#### **Building a creative team:**

- Involve your target population and build a creative team most able to address health education and adolescent issues.
- Give everyone an opportunity to join your group and give all a chance to express their ideas.
- Have Fun!!!

### **BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

#### **Share the News**

Once you have made the decision to put on a youth health education theater production, tell everyone you know. This will help you get people involved and excited.

Assess the needs of your community

Every community has special and often urgent needs. It is important that your production speaks to the specific needs and strengths of your community. Keep in mind:

1. Teen beliefs and myths
2. An effective method for presenting messages for youth.
3. The play must be educational while entertaining.

#### **Define your audience, content and format**

- Is your audience just youth or the entire community?
- You might consider interviews and other means of research to narrow what you will cover in the play.
- It is assumed that you already have a specific topic you want to address with a play (i.e. AIDS awareness, teen pregnancy, unhealthy or unjust practices, etc.)

### **Questions you may want to ask your youth group could include:**

- Do you have suggestions on how this issue could be presented in the play?
- If you were creating a play on this issue, what kind of characters would you have?
- What kind of scenes?

The play needs to be a simple, short and low or no budget performance. This way it is able to travel and be staged in different areas to reach several members of the community.

### **Most important:**

- Address key issues that are relevant to your community.
- Identify a small number of priority messages.
- Show both sides of an issue to create dialog after the show.

## **WORKING WITH SCRIPTS**

### **Casting actors**

- You can work with the students in your school or youth in your community, even if they have never performed before.
- Youth of all ages should be included in on the casting of roles.
- Screening questions should be included to determine the actor's comfort with the subject matter.

### **Training Techniques**

- Guest speakers on the topic, especially if controversial.
  - This may include health education workers, social workers, and Village Volunteers who volunteer in your village, etc.
- Health education exercises and theater games. See other documents
- Provide accurate information about the topics in the play.
- Keep in mind that some teens may react emotionally to the material being discussed due to previous experience. Don't be afraid to discuss these issues through as the participants' growth and empowerment during the creative process is just as important as the audience's journey in the actual production.
- Creating the script or working with a pre-existing story
  - You can either create your own play, by coming up with ideas and scenes using a team of young actors, or you can use a pre-existing play as your template and then adapt it to your community's individual needs.
  - It is nice to have a balance of male and female, and younger and older characters if that matches your population profile. You can always adapt an existing script to have the desired number of characters and types of characters.

### **Tips on developing a script:**

- Develop goals and objectives that you want to accomplish with the play. If using an existing play, assess if your needs are met with the play, and if not, work through some of the steps listed below to adapt it to your needs.
  - Outline key messages and information to be conveyed to the audience.
  - Brainstorm and improvise ideas for characters, story lines, and scenes. Use theater games, techniques, warm-ups, provided as an attachment to this document.
  - Make the material relevant to your particular community. For example, is there cultural song, dance or folklore that is specific to the community and can somehow be incorporated into the piece. Outline the story and determine character's conflict. (What will the main character or characters overcome in this story?)

- Assign actors characters before the dialogue is written or to help rework an existing play.
  - Conduct games with actors in character.
  - Have each actor write an essay, answering questions about their character's background, likes and dislikes, goals, etc.
  - Have each actor go through an interview process with the rest of the group where they must answer questions as their character.
  - Ask the actors to improvise and write dialogue for their characters and scenes.
  - Ask teen leader for feedback regarding storyline, characters and conflicts.

**Key script messages:**

1. The importance of HIV and AIDS education.
2. What kind of HIV testing is available in your community?
3. What kinds of stigmas or cultural stereotypes prevent people from getting tested?

**Brainstorming and improvising:**

After a group of students worked through many exercises, they came up with the idea to have two friends talk about an important family member who has just been diagnosed with AIDS.

- Story outline: Karen tells her friend Linda that her mom has AIDS.
  - Karen and Linda discuss Karen's mom and how she found out that she has AIDS.
  - Linda asks Karen if her father has it too.
  - Karen says she does not know and her father doesn't want to go get the test.
  - Linda tells Karen that her uncle died of AIDS last year.
  - Linda tells Karen about the ways she knows you can get tested for HIV, which is what you get before you get AIDS and says most of her family has been tested.
  - Karen explains that just because you have HIV though doesn't mean you'll get AIDS. There are nutritional guidelines to prolong your life and sometimes medication is available.
  - Linda and Karen discuss the problems with getting medication.
  - Both Karen and Linda discuss their fears in regards to getting tested
  - Karen says she wants to get tested.
  - Linda says she wants to get tested too.
  - Linda gives Karen a hug and tells her how sorry she is about her mom.
  - Karen thanks her and says she just wishes her family had learned more about HIV and AIDS earlier.
- After outlining the scene, the actors could improvise with the characters through exercises, develop the background of the characters, and develop dialogue.
- This is a good time to get feedback from others involved with the production, including teen PA's, to form a consensus in regards to the material's accuracy and relevance.

- It is good to test out the dialogue with select members of your target audience before performing the play. Have the actors read it aloud for presentations to the test audience and get audience reaction and feedback. This can be done with just a few people.

## **DEVELOPING THE PRODUCTION**

### **Staging the production**

#### **Block the actors**

Determine where and when they will move, walk, sit, stand for each scene. Make sure that no one is standing in front of characters and that the audience can see and hear everyone on the stage.

**Costumes:** Actors can use their own clothes or create simple costumes if needed.

**Props:** small items an actor might use during the performance, such as a glass, book, etc.

**The set:** Use whatever would seem natural in the environment of the scenes, such as a chair.

**Music:** A simple drum beat can create a transition from scene to scene.

#### **Working with actors and the creative team**

- Develop a list of ground rules.
- Consider having some kind of opening and closing ritual.
- Meet with each actor individually every so often to see how they are doing and if they have any concerns or questions.

#### **Where to perform**

- Schools
- Community gathering spots
- Anywhere you can think of -- Market places or busy areas where interest can be invoked

#### **Evaluating the response**

You can have a question and answer session following the performance.

- Make sure it is clear to the audience if they have questions or want more information, how to find it.
- Prepare some lead in questions to provoke responses and dialogue from the audience just in case they are not immediately so forthcoming with questions.

#### **Where to find Funding and Support**

- Health Centers
- Churches

#### **Resources**

- Books
- Community health educators
- Other community groups doing similar theater based work in the area

\*Adapted from "A Guide for Developing Youth Health Education Theatre," Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Honolulu, Hawaii.



**AIDS Education in Africa:**  
The Uses of Traditional Performance  
Joy Morrison

**Introduction**

In Africa, social development projects, usually designed by western "experts," are continually being implemented. In these projects, there is usually communication support designed to inform and persuade the beneficiaries of the advantages of this development. The support frequently uses top-down communication models, with the state or a development agency as the source sending a message to a specific group of the population. Many media are used, ranging from radio, television, posters, and video to more traditional forms of communications such as griots, puppets, theater, and folktales.

Communication scholars have recognized that in Africa, television, radio and newspapers primarily reach urban people, resulting in an ever-widening information gap between rural and urban populations.<sup>1</sup> If rural people are to be reached and persuaded to change behavior, expanded uses of more traditional media are needed. One such approach is forum, or interactive, theater where communication, to share, is the foundation of this medium. Among its most important characteristics are that it encompasses cultural factors such as the oral tradition and social learning through performance, that it uses techniques to enhance audience identification, that it is inclusive, and above all, that it is participatory and stresses the equality of the input of all parties involved.

For two decades, forum theater has been used as a popular means of community development in West Africa and Kenya to bring healthcare and other social development messages to rural people. These messages are brought in a format, dramatic performance, which is enthusiastically received. This two-way communication permits audience members to act out and hopefully internalize concepts such as healthcare, nutrition, sex and AIDS education, and family planning.

**Theoretical framework**

Performance is the oldest vehicle for education in Africa. From praise singing by griots, to storytelling and masked dancing, oral histories and lessons have been passed down the generations through traditional communication forms. Children learn of values, tradition, history and behavior through observation of cultural artifacts, and absorb via metaphor. The level of abstraction is very high at times, and the performances are rich and sophisticated. Forum theater is a new genre of performance used to educate the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa over the past twenty years.

Forum theater developed indigenously in Burkina Faso modeled after a traditional form of community problem solving, the Koteba, although the ideas of the Brazilian educators Paulo Freire (1974) and Augusto Boal (1979) strongly influenced its development. Boal developed a type of forum theater as a mechanism for self-liberation of oppressed peoples in Brazil and Peru, and Freire used this interactive theater as a process to encourage dialogue in education.



This study examines the use of forum theater to evaluate whether its use as a cultural medium might be expanded, and to contribute towards a better understanding of African media and communication.

Scholars have recognized the importance of culture in rural communication projects. Servaes comments that the cultural and communication dimensions of development have long been given short shrift. He links these two dimensions together and states that "only in the last ten years has it been realized that culture and communication could well have a fundamental impact on the entire question of development" (1986: 203). Girard (1982: 26) argues that a cultural product that is transmitted or reproduced does not have the same cultural value as a work communicated directly at a live performance, one of the basic premises for this study of a cultural form. According to Weete "a development strategy that focuses on people, as the initiator and beneficiary of the process, indubitably depends on people" (1988: 39). Current strategies of top-down, one-way communication are decontextualized and a-cultural and often fail for these reasons.

The most important element to consider is the oral tradition in African societies. Conversation remains vital in Africa. Although radio is a popular medium, people in rural societies still prefer to use interpersonal speech (Pratt, 1987). Laye reminds us of the African love of talking:

***We touch upon one of the fundamental aspects of the African soul: the word, the love of palaver and dialogue, the rhythm of talk, that love of speech that can keep the old men a whole month under the palaver tree settling some dispute that what really characterizes the African peoples. (1984: 26)***

This love of words and speech manifests itself in many ways in Africa. Obeichina (1975) states that village story-telling, as well as other forms of oral tradition, is a living reality to African villagers and helps to inform and direct their attitudes. A feature of stories and tales is the use of proverbs. In many African cultures a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology emerges particularly and clearly in proverbs (Finnegan, 1970).

Obeichina (1975) suggests that the oral tradition persists in Africa because Africans are still largely illiterate, because most live in traditional, and culturally and linguistically homogenous village settings which foster oral culture, and because those who do live outside village settings still maintain close contacts with their orally based roots. He argues that the oral tradition persists in Africa because it expresses a consciousness atypical of the literary tradition. Shared metaphors or shared meanings are the basis of the common collective consciousness of rural people and may be very different from a cosmopolitan, urban ethos.

The spoken word also has an educational function. In most developing countries, traditions and cultural performances are the primary ways of educating the young and of promoting beliefs and values among adults. Ong (1982) considers that people in oral cultures learn by apprenticeship, by listening, by repeating what they hear, by mastering proverbs and ways of combining and recombining them, by assimilating other formulary materials, and by participating in a kind of corporate retrospection. However, when attempting to bring new ideas to rural cultures, one is adding to or adjusting the stored knowledge; this needs to be done incrementally. Ong suggests that this way of learning—orally and incrementally—is not understood by Western communication scholars, whose own theories of learning and media effects may be different.

Traditional, or folk, media are employed in Africa to communicate new ideas. Drums and gongs often transmit news, puppets are used in morality plays, and even to convey political ideas in some countries. These media are grounded in the metaphors of an indigenous culture produced

and consumed by members of a group, and they reinforce their values. The important purpose of "oramedia," as Ugboajah refers to those media that employ language, is to provide teaching and initiation to members of society, with the object of imparting traditional social values. According to Ugboajah (1985: 9), an oral medium such as dramatic performance is expected to "teach." He continues:

***Traditional media linked to belief systems are effective tools in development programs of governments. As entertainment they can attract and hold the interest of large numbers of people. As oral media in local languages, they can involve the poorest groups and classes who are often left out of development activities because of illiteracy or lack of understanding of the English or French language. As dramatic representations of local problems, they can provide a codification of reality which can be used by participants in analyzing their situation.***

With this in mind, it is possible that an entertaining performance permitting audience input can codify reality and focus the spectators' attention on a particular problem. The role of performance is central to all African cultures, and for generations Africans have been communicating with each other through performance of different kinds (Banham, 1976). Performances communicate ideas and values and teach important lessons of behavior in every aspect of life. They function as a storehouse of cultural knowledge which is passed on to the next generation through the performance. In addition to the function as a social learning mechanism, performance is considered pleasure, a leisure activity in Africa. Events such as these are rare in a village, and therefore are an attraction, a social occasion, and an opportunity to interact with each other. Another important element is the notion of community. In Africa the group still generally takes preference over the individual. At the village level many problems are solved communally. A performance that brings together the village and involves all in problem solving is likely to be more appropriate than other approaches.

Theories of performance, such as the notions of role-playing and empathy, are important elements in forum theater. Boal discussed the importance of audience identification with roles and circumstances: "The actor must be guided by criteria of verisimilitude [the appearance of truth], as well as having his clothes and other personal items as authentic as possible" (1979: 181). Empathy with the actor is achieved with greater ease when a character performs an easily recognizable task of a domestic or professional nature. Communication is achieved through empathic role-playing rather than through roles with which spectators cannot identify.

Thus, the content of a play should reflect the realities of African village life. African playwrights strive to incorporate the audience into the performance through performing "in the round" in an open village square. Stone (1986: 241) says that Africans "often think of performance in a transactional sense. Like two people pulling at either end of a tug-of-way rope, rather than two people simply standing alone, one part rarely exists without the other". Theater in general, and forum theater in particular, can, therefore, be an effective communicator of new ideas to rural people in Africa, because of the orality of communication, the preference for face-to-face communication, theatricality in African tradition, and the need to interact that is met through this medium.

### **How it works**

There are three parts to a forum theater performance. First, the actors perform a play, in which social problems are depicted in ways intended to displease the audience. Second, a moderator invites the audience to re-enact certain parts that they did not like. Scenes are then replayed and spectators intervene as actors to propose changes and improvements, to engage in role playing, and to provide commentary. And third, there is a verbal exchange between audience,

actors, and health officials with the aim of clarifying the information. It is the aim of this endeavor is to transfer information that empowers people.

The role of the moderator is crucial. He, or she, controls the forum, and interrupts the spectator, who is replaying a scene, in order to ask the audience if they agree with the particular point of view being voiced. If the audience disagrees someone else volunteers to play it a different way. This continues until the audience is happy with the words and actions. The same role could be played several times until a generally acceptable solution is found. In this way audience input is solicited and received and this participation is the key element to success. The primary aim of forum theater is to engender feedback. Thus the feelings, opinions, and reactions of healthcare recipients are solicited and received in a constructive environment. Volunteers, usually children, are also asked to come onstage and respond to questions concerning the content of the play.

No formal attempt has been made to measure the effectiveness of the forum theater performances as would be expected of a traditional diffusion study. There are no quantitative measures that might indicate a change in behavior -- the norm for an evaluation of a typical development communication project. Social change is a process, and local knowledge is increased incrementally through many forms of communication and learning.

In my research in Burkina Faso in 1989, performances were all held in the open-air, often in a communal gathering place. On two occasions there was a stage, but typically the play was performed in the round which is the traditional mode of African performance. Children sat around the edge of the three-sided performance area, their numbers usually increasing greatly during the performance and the forum.

The performances I studied concerned family planning and AIDS prevention. Gender tensions were played out, and there was never any lack of input from the audience. Young women, usually reluctant at first, recreated the role of the lead female role, taking a stand against her husband who refused to allow any form of contraception. Elders in the audience were eager to replay the part of the older man to explain his position as the patriarch and to emphasize the need for large families and were treated respectfully by younger men, who nevertheless disagreed with their views. However, younger women seldom argued with an older man. Discussions of sex generated much laughter and applause, and the women replaying the role were greatly encouraged by female audience members. The ability to play a hypothetical role seemed to embolden the women. The forum appeared to give them a rare public platform to air their feelings, and there seemed to be solidarity between women in the audience. I observed a number who were moved emotionally by the play and generally there seemed to be great sympathy for the female character.

In general the spectators were pleased with the performance. Typical comments were that "the play informs people," "it teaches," "we can express ourselves," "it poses the problems that we experience," "we can learn many things," "everyone participates," "it permits an exchange of ideas," "it allows us to participate in searching for solutions to problems," "it makes us more aware," "it's a game that distracts," and "it helps the people to better understand certain things." A common response was to mention the play's consciousness raising effect on "the masses." Respondents generally thought that this was one of the only means for exchanging ideas with most of the village present. Participants appreciated being able to say what they felt about the topic as it was a forum for both old and young to voice opinions and discuss differences.

During follow-up visits, health personnel reported having learned a great deal about village attitudes from the forum. They were generally satisfied and reported increased sales of contraceptives which could be attributed to the scene dealing with AIDS and its prevention. Personnel also reported increased visits to the clinics. A doctor felt that "in the play there were

situations that are very real in the lives of people. Everyone knows someone like this in his or her neighborhood, so the situation portrayed is very realistic". Health personnel also felt that the people who saw the play talked about it and the message was spread many times. A midwife said "theater gives a practical example as opposed to other forms which provide only theory, such as loudspeakers or talks. People do not know how things should happen". A young man told me that he was impressed with the proverbs used in the play as "they come from the ancestors, you cannot dispute them. It comes from our customs and even the old people accept what you are saying".

A health worker said "theater allows for questions and statements that might otherwise be seen as vicious. People know that in the play they will not be judged by the questions they ask or the statements they make". Another said that these productions create a social context and introduce certain behavior that is imitated. "People see aspects of real life and elements of society in the play, and they can learn how they should behave from these performances. Plays permit us to introduce negative aspects and show positive responses." He found the forum very useful and said, "It permitted me and my staff to ascertain the level of perception among the audience and to assess what work was still needed in family planning from the audience reactions. This feedback is important, as it provides information about how the people think about certain topics."

This opinion was shared by a UNICEF communication officer who reported that forum theater was the best adapted communication means because it is based on "la palabre africaine." For him the instantaneous feedback is invaluable as a source of social data. "For instance," he said, "when audience members take positions vis-a-vis the problem, exposing their divergent feelings and opinions, their feedback provides a synthesis of ideas which emerges as a system of dominant thought. This information forms the subsequent healthcare and other social information campaigns." (Solo Baro. August 8, 1989).

## **Conclusions**

Villagers learned from the performances. They obtained and retained family planning and AIDS information. The play had generated an awareness of the availability of options and this translates into some empowerment for women, and families generally.

The opportunity for dialogue resulted in people's voices being heard, and a feeling of contributing in community problem-solving. These elements of feedback and sharing are missing in so many development communication projects.

An oral medium such as this conforms to the preferred means of communication--interpersonal. Audiences appreciated the use of proverbs, and other cultural specifics which appeared to have made an impression on villagers. This entertaining medium appears to be well-received and very popular.

At a cost of approximately \$600 per performance, and an average audience of 100 plus the multiplier effect, it is cost-effective. Feedback on the topic presented is instant, and opposition is publicly aired. Village attitudes are thereby shared and incorporated into future projects. The theater and other forms of traditional participatory media are popular and effective methods of achieving genuine communication. African values play a very important role in successful communication with rural people. The orality of the people, the preference for interpersonal communication, and the traditional of performance in the culture are the main reasons for the acceptance of theater as a medium of education and communication. It is a step towards a more egalitarian society. It provides an opportunity for dialogue between the people who are powerful and those who are powerless, the educated and uneducated, urban and rural, and men and woman at the village level -- a necessary steppingstone for progress.

## Notes

1. Radio has been used in many countries for the dissemination of social information, but more often than not it is listened to only for entertainment such as music. (Ugboajah, 1972).
2. Personal communication. Burkina Faso Ministry of Health and Social Action, May 5, 1989. They estimated the multiplier to be ten.

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