

Contribution 1:

hey!

Can 'theatre' and 'drama' be synonymous notions?

If not, what is the difference?

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Contribution 2:

Dear Cydelle and Ken!

This is Olesya Kochkina (26), Consultant on Young People and HIV/AIDS, UNFPA, the Russian Federation. Thank you very much for your very valuable and inspiring contribution to this magnificent on-line discussion.

What came to my mind when I was reading your editorials is that actually peer theatre is very sophisticated tool, which limits it's possibilities to reach out to a large audience, like radio, TV and Internet broadcasts can do. On the other hand,theatre can be a very good tool to reach out to hard-to-reach and at-risk populations, particularly the ones that don't have much access to television or Internet. At the same time the nature of your methodology makes it very appropriate to use with the most-at-risk populations as it can be very sensitive and adaptable.

Thus I have two suggestions:

- to think what can be done to overcome the limitations of peer theatre methodology and scale it up (may be combining it with other resources like TV or Internet? May be something else?)
- to think how can we in our countries use peer theatre in order to reach hard-to-reach populations with health messages.

And I have a traditional suggestion on having a Y-PEER Drama Festival in Russia with participation of NiteStar, but let's talk about it some other time... :)

Best regards,

Olesya

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Contribution 3:

Hello!

I have been faced with some criticism and skepticism/disbelief in the effectiveness of theatre based education in the past, which led me to research more on the topic some time now. Bandura's social cognitivism postulates that learning is an internal process which may and may not change behavior. It is a well known fact that information alone is not enough. Theatre, with its effect on emotions, also builds motivation and sense of (self-)responsibility.

I believe that performances alone can have a valuable effect on putting certain issues on the table. We witness all the time how all sorts of media can put all kinds of issues in public discourse and on political agenda. So, as Cydelle and Ken stated, raising awareness is the first-step effect. Post-performance workshops and, generally, follow up activities are what puts this one step further - towards behavior change.

I would also like to put an emphasis on what was mentioned before - stigma and discrimination. Theatre allows and even encourages to play with concepts of sex, gender, different stereotypes because it certainly has a higher degree of freedom to do so ('artistic freedom' is encouraging since it attracts attention). Here, a potential lies in questioning norms, introducing discussions about facts on the one hand and artifacts on the other, only to prove that very little of those ('norms') are facts, and quite a lot are artifacts, and therefore not 'written in stone', but flexible and changeable categories of culture, which is very important when dealing with issues that are so deeply rooted in public, such as all those discussions on traditional values vs. modern trends. I believe it is very important to bare this quality in mind when planning/designing a program, because, when smartly applied, it can offer a totally different perspective to the audience, which is then perceived as thrilling, eye opening, and even enlightening. True pieces of art have always brought changes.

To conclude, I think theatre based education is a very wide area with a great developmental and applicative potentials in all fields - from theory to practice.

Best,

Ilija

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