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Name: Forum theatre

Time: minimum 45 minutes

Goal or purpose of the exercise:

Forum Theatre is a form of roleplaying that can be used for public action, as described in the article [Turkey- Building a nonviolent culture](#) or in training. The basic idea is to act out a scenario, perhaps leading to an undesirable conclusion or violence, and then begin acting out the scenario again but this time either a participant in the roleplay or any other observer can shout at 'freeze' and take over a role in the scenario to try to do something differently. The second time new players act out the scenario from the beginning, but when the roleplay is interrupted with 'freeze', the roleplay resumes at the appropriate place - that is the point when someone would do the newly suggested action.

How it's done/facilitator's notes:

A short forum theatre

Plot: Two members of your group visit a relevant state official to report an act of violence against your group. The trainer might identify the official and attackers more specifically according to the situation. It is unclear whether there was collaboration between the police and whoever attacked your group. Before entering the office, the group members decide what documentation they have about the attack and what they are actually wanting to achieve. The official is briefed on his/her attitude (ranging from generally sympathetic through feigning that s/he will take it seriously to downright hostility and counter-attacking on the provocative nature of the group) and also on motives (desire to keep group quiet, to find out as much about them as possible). The official should start by doing something to wrongfoot the group and taking the initiative him/herself (at least telling them how busy s/he is and perhaps asking to see their identity cards). S/he should also consider doing something friendly or scary - friendly would be reminiscing about his or her activist youth, claiming friendship with parents of some group members: frightening would be showing knowledge of private lives of group members. Note in replaying the scenario, the official introduce new challenges for the group members. Cast: 2 group members, 1 official, 1 official's receptionist Discussion points: What were reasonable objectives for the group members? How could they take the initiative in the situation? How much did they want to divulge about the group and its members? Were they putting other group members or their families at risk? If they convinced the official to promise to do something, how could they firm that up into an agreement and make sure he did it? How could they have prepared better for this visit?

Trainers notes:

There can be much more involved scenarios with many more players. Insist that someone who has an idea of how the group members something different to try, go and take their place and act out what s/he suggests.

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