

# Time

Minimum 45 minutes

## Goal or purpose

- To provide a forum for people to find solutions and invent new ways of confronting oppression.
- To explore and analyse different options in an oppressive situation.

## How it's done/facilitator's notes

Forum Theatre is a form of role playing that can be used for public action or in training. The basic idea is to act out a scenario - which perhaps leads to an undesirable conclusion or violence - and then do the scenario again. The second time, either a participant in the role play or any other observer can shout '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. When the role play is interrupted with 'freeze', the role play stops, then resumes at the same point with someone doing the newly suggested action.

## A short forum theatre

(There can be much more involved scenarios with many more players; here is a simple plot to begin with.)

**Cast:** two group members, one official, one official's receptionist

**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 the attitude to take (ranging from generally sympathetic through feigning that they will take it seriously, to outright 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 wrong foot the group and taking the initiative themselves (at least telling them how busy they are, and perhaps asking to see their identity cards). The official should also consider doing something friendly, or scary - friendly would be reminiscing about their 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 can introduce new challenges.

## Discussion points

- What were reasonable objectives? How could they take the group 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 it was done? How could they have prepared better for this visit?

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