



PLANNING PEACEBUILDING PERFORMANCE INITIATIVES

Designing a peacebuilding performance initiative requires a combination of strategic thinking and also openness to creative intuitions and emerging serendipities. The following questions are intended as prompts, suggesting areas for inquiry, conversation and reflection. We recommend that you briefly consider all of the questions, and then focus on the few that seem most relevant to the context in which you are working and to the players who will be involved.

The more candid your responses, the more helpful they will be to your work and to the growing community of peacebuilding performance practice. However, please take care not to place the respondent or others at risk.

Where possible, we encourage groups considering working on an initiative to discuss these questions together. We also recommend reading Recommendations and Action Steps, another document in the toolkit, and one or both volumes of the *Acting Together* anthology.

For inspiration during the planning process, take breaks and watch some of the short videos that are a part of this toolkit. You will hear, or be able to imagine, how **Acting Together** artists and peacebuilders would answer the questions you are facing. The videos “Analysis and Assessment in Peacebuilding Performance”, “Links between Peacebuilding and Performance”, and “A Powerful Fire” invite you to consider a range of voices and views.

Space has been allotted on each page to jot down notes, with additional room on pages 9 and 10. If you need more, please feel free to use the back of these pages or to develop your ideas further on a computer.

planning peacebuilding performance



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

CONTEXT

What are the salient historical, socio-economic, political and cultural backgrounds of the communities where we plan to work?

- What are the issues in these contexts that performances might help address? What questions “need to be sorted”?
- What kinds of violence are present? At what stage are the conflicts?
- What relationships are in need of healing or restoration?
- What silences are in need of expression?
- Are communities grappling with questions of memory, identity, justice and resistance? If so, how? Could performances help communities consider different approaches to these imperatives?
- What are the hopes and dreams of the people you intend to involve or to reach with this initiative? What possibilities might performances help communities work toward?
- In many contexts of violence and oppression, the communicative, relational, artistic and ethical capacities of people have been impaired. Sometimes these capacities are sharpened. How would you assess the strengths and limitations of the communities where you intend to work – especially in term of people’s abilities to work toward their hopes and dreams?
- Who are the people and which are the institutions with the power and the resources to make a difference in the conditions under which people create their lives and their futures?
- What are available sources of resilience?

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

What cultural, historical, financial, organizational and human resources are available in the community?

- What relevant skills and talents already exist with the performance group or those planning the initiative? (these might include skills in performance, facilitation, outreach, marketing, cooking, photography, sewing, singing, fundraising, etc.)
- What workspaces are available?
- What documents might the group wish to draw on?
- What funds are, or might be, available?
- What local and global performance traditions might you draw on?
- Who are the people who might want to participate or volunteer on the project; who could be recruited?
- Who holds the relevant and important stories? In whose memories or archives do they reside?
- Who are the important culture-bearers?

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

RISKS OF DOING HARM

How can responsible decisions be made in light of the very real risks involved in peacebuilding performance? (Please review Minimizing Risks of Harm guidelines and consider the following questions in relation to your own situation.)

- How can the risk of epistemic violence be minimized?
- How can the risk of re-traumatizing individuals and communities that have suffered violence be minimized?
- How can artistic and cultural integrity be protected?
- How can the risk of perpetuating injurious and unjust power dynamics be minimized?
- How can risks to artists and cultural workers themselves be minimized – especially for those working in contexts of government repression and polarized paramilitary formations?
- How can the leaders of the planned initiative minimize risks of unwittingly supporting the interests of unethical players, and unknowingly diverting resources from existing effective initiatives?

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

BALANCING IMPERATIVES

Peacebuilding performances engage with some or all of the tensions that confront communities dealing with violence and oppression. Which of these issues are salient for the communities where you are working? How will your project situate itself in relation to these seemingly competing imperatives?

- The need to remember the past and the need to create a new, interdependent future
- The need to validate and strengthen distinct identities and the need to enhance acknowledgment of interdependence
- The need to honor individual rights and the need to strengthen collective identities
- The need to hold perpetrators accountable and the need to acknowledge and transform the conditions that gave rise to the violence
- The need for to hold perpetrators accountable and the need to restore relationships
- The need to acknowledge suffering and the need to cultivate and celebrate resilience
- The need to honor tradition and the need to innovate and experiment
- The need to play and the need to be serious
- The need to respect the ‘deep pessimism’ of people living in contexts of intractable violent conflict and the need to inspire hope and vision for better, more just, less violent, conditions
- The need to act with urgency and the need to be patient with people and complex processes
- The need to create spaces of relative safety to support trust within the creative process and the need to acknowledge and prepare participants and audience members for the risks they may face when they return to their homes

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

EXPLORING POTENTIAL TENSIONS

In addition to the tensions that often permeate the atmosphere in regions of violent conflict, there are several questions that can emerge, specifically in the context of cultural productions themselves. Would it be useful for members of the planning team to explore any of the following potential tensions? Make notes of those points that seem most salient.

- The need for personal, professional and artistic development and the needs for development of the group and the community
- The need to nurture relationships and honor emerging possibilities and the need to attend to the requirements of and commitments made to funders and sponsoring agencies
- The benefits and possibilities of working with mixed groups and the benefits and possibilities of working with homogeneous groups
- The value of artistic refinement and the value of inclusion
- The value of responding to emerging crises and opportunities and the value of maintaining work in ways that are sustainable over the long haul

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

planning peacebuilding performance

EXTENDING THE PROJECT'S REACH

The transformations accomplished during peacebuilding performances inevitably will filter out to the surrounding community through the conversations and actions of those directly involved as participants and witnesses. There also are ways to plan to enhance the reach and effectiveness of performances. Which of these approaches – or others -- make sense for the context in which you are working?

- Inviting people you wish to bring into relationship to serve as advisors
- Partnering with other groups and agencies addressing issues related to the production, for credibility, outreach, lobby displays, post-performance conversations and related events
- Inviting particular communities to attend
- Composing audiences to include people from opposite sides of a conflict, and sponsoring facilitated conversations or workshops following performances
- Using social media and websites to reach large and diverse constituencies
- Inviting key decision-makers
- Including brief essays or provocative questions in print programs
- Considering ways to bridge linguistic divides, through the use of projected surtitles, distributing written summaries in different languages, selecting non-linguistic performance modalities, through bilingual productions, etc.
- Bringing productions to communities
- Choosing performance venues that people encounter in their everyday lives
- Attending to the particular needs of disabled people, especially in contexts where people have been disabled by violence

NOTES



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, starting below the 'ADDITIONAL NOTES' header and extending to the bottom of the page.

planning peacebuilding performance



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A series of horizontal lines for writing notes.

planning peacebuilding performance