

RESOURCES FOR GETTING STARTED

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Acting Together I: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence

Acting Together II: **Building Just and Inclusive Communities**



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RESOURCES FROM THE ACTING TOGETHER PROJECT In Addition to the Toolkit

PROJECT WEBSITE: www.actingtogether.org

ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

The Acting Together project website includes upto-date information about the project, including screenings of the documentary, facilitated on-line conversations, and training opportunities. Revised versions of the documents in this toolkit will be posted. All fourteen of the case studies in the Acting Together collection are summarized on the website, with links to images, videos, biographies of the curators, and websites related to the case studies.

In addition to the stories of peacebuilding performance in the documentary, on the website and in the anthology you can read about examples from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Israel, India, Ghana, South Africa, The Netherlands, and a New York/Kenya collaboration.

DOCUMENTARY

The 54-minute feature length documentary, *Acting Together on the World Stage*, highlights exemplary peacebuilding performances from Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Peru, Serbia, Uganda and the United States. It includes candid reflections from practitioners, and footage of several different types of performance. Nine stories are divided into three different acts: Resistance, Rehumanization, and Reconciliation. The film was co-created by Allison Lund and Cynthia Cohen. The distinguished Iranian theatre director Mahmood Karimi-Hakak performs the narration. Information about purchase and rental, as well as upcoming screenings, can be found on the project website.

ANTHOLOGY

Two volumes of *Acting Together: Performance* and the Creative Transformation of Conflict

(New Village Press: 2011) document exemplary peacebuilding performances and offer theoretical frameworks that draw on knowledge from both the peacebuilding and performance fields. The table of contents of each volume appears at the end of this document.

The first volume, *Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence* is introduced by the peacebuilding scholar/practitioner Dr. John Paul Lederach. Roberta Levitow, one of the cofounders of Theatre Without Borders, documents the history of the project in her preface. And the afterword was written by conflict specialist Devanand Ramiah, based on his experience working in a large international peace and development NGO.

The foreword to the second volume, *Building Just and Inclusive Communities*, is by Dr. Salomón Lerner-Febres, the former president of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The preface is a reflection on the collection from within a conflict zone, by Pauline Ross, artistic director of the Derry Playhouse in Northern Ireland. The afterword is written by the peacebuilding scholar/ practitioner Tatsushi Arai, who teaches at the School for International Training in Vermont.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND GATHERINGS

Information about Weekend Intensives on Peacebuilding and the Arts, as well as institutes, conferences and other training opportunities can be found on the website of the Brandeis University program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at <u>www.</u> <u>brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/index</u>.

THEATRE WITHOUT BORDERS WEBSITE:

www.theatrewithoutborders.com

To link with others in the peacebuilding performance field, please visit the website of Theatre Without Borders, a partner in the **Acting Together** project.



GUIDELINES FOR STORY CIRCLES

By John O'Neal, founder of New Orleans-based Junebug Productions

In the *Acting Together* documentary, John O'Neal describes a particular Story Circle process with young people in a high school in New Orleans. The Story Circle process can be as powerful as it is simple; it engages groups of people sharing stories that matter to them – to be adapted for performances, to explore issues in their communities, to build relationships across difference, or for reflecting on transformative experiences with performances. The following guidelines were written by John.

y grandfather had a bunch of good advice, not necessarily about story circles but I don't think he'd be offended if I appropriate some of his ideas that can apply to the story circle process. One thing he told me that comes to mind here is, "Better to have a few easy rules that you can follow than to have a bunch of hard rules that you get lost in." Don't make too many rules. Rules only work if people agree to them. That's why it's better to keep them simple. Some groups take more rules than others, it depends on who you're working with and why. I mean, you might need a few more rules when you're working with a group of schoolteachers trying to develop a secondary school curriculum than you might need if you're trying to teach fractions to a group of third graders. But as a general rule you might say that less is more. Make as few rules as possible and no laws.

Well, maybe there is one law, the law of listening. In storytelling, listening is always more important that talking. If you're thinking about your story while someone else is telling theirs, you won't hear what they say. If you trust the circle, when it comes your turn to tell, a story will be there. Sometimes you may be tempted to think of it as magic. If you don't have a story when your turn comes or you're not ready to share the story that comes to you, (which is more likely), it's all right, you don't have to tell. You can pass. After the first round there's usually enough time for those who passed to tell if they wish to. Another rule about listening is that you don't have to like the story that someone else tells but you do have to respect their right to tell it.

Some people are surprised with the suggestion that stories can be used to teach math or science. My old friend Bob



Moses, who organized The Algebra Project, (which specializes in teaching algebra to disprivileged youth), points out that people learn better if you find the lessons you're trying to teach in stories that people in the group tell. Anybody can learn anything better when the subject matter is based on stories that come from or affirm your own experience and purposes. In fact the story circle is just a way of focusing communication. It can be used for any purpose that a group of people wish to pursue.

Make sure everyone is comfortable, has some time to greet and meet informally; get a feel for the particular mood of the group that day. I think it's always good to have refreshments on hand. At the appropriate time, convene the circle. The convener needs to make a clear concise statement of the reason for calling the circle. Everyone needs to know what you're trying to do and have the chance to buy in.

If they already know each other, then each person should simply take a moment to describe how they feel about the purpose and what they'd like to accomplish. If the people in the group aren't

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ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

already familiar with each other, they should introduce themselves. Now this is where I usually introduce a procedure that helps things to move along smoothly, especially if it's a new group. Without making a big thing of it, I usually start the circle by introducing myself and then begin the process by looking to the person on my left to go next. This gets the group to thinking in terms of taking turns moving around the circle. Setting it up this way saves time – none of that business about who's going to talk next. It also helps the less aggressive people in the group to have a fair chance to speak.

I think it's important to talk about the circle itself. I usually say something about how democratic the circle is. Everybody on the circle is equal. Everyone on the circle should always be able to see everyone else. If you can't see everybody else on the circle you need to make an adjustment. If others join the circle then the group has to adjust.

It's also important to point out that being democratic does not mean being without leadership. The leader or convener of the circle has to get things started and monitor the progress of the story circle to make sure that everyone stays aware of what the rules are, but remember that discipline is always voluntary. You can't make anyone do anything they really don't want to do. Try it and you're likely to have an insurrection. The leader's job in the face of insurrection is to try to make it clear what the choices are and get out of the way. Sometimes the insurrectionists will be right and you'll learn something from them. If, in due course, you still think they're wrong, say so and why, re-state the options as you see them and do what you have to do. You can request discipline in a group but you cannot effectively force them to do anything they really don't want to do and I for one don't think you should. I can hear my grandfather now, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink!"

Most people already know most of what they need to know to do what they have to do already. What they don't know they have to create out of reflection and the critical evaluation of their own experience. As my grandfather used to say, "Anything I can give you, I can take away."

Time. It's really important to be conscious of time. It usually works pretty well if everyone in the group shares the responsibility for keeping track of time. The way I do this is by getting the group to help make the agenda. I ask how much time we want to take for the session. I think that about three hours is the max a group ought to plan on and about an hour is the minimum.

Large groups should be divided into groups of 5-6 persons each. Allow about 3-5 minutes for each person to tell a story and then about 3 minutes per person to sum-up at the end of the session. This summing up I think is really important. It provides people time to digest what they've learned or thought about as a result of the stories that have been told. There also needs to be another period of time, roughly about equal to the summary, for people to have cross conversation about the issues that come up and to plan what they want to do about it. There should always be some kind of follow-up activity.

For Junebug Productions, the story circle has emerged as a key instrument for doing our work. We recommend storytelling and the story circle process as tools for a wide range of purposes that rely on deep communication and exchange. Frequently we are asked for written material about the process. This discussion paper is for people who want a written reminder of the process and how it can work. After you've run three or four story circles on your own I'd appreciate it if you'd send stories or suggestions of things that help you understand or think about the process better. Others will certainly benefit from the lessons of your experience.

ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

NOW TO REVIEW

- 1. Like the stories it aims to collect, the Story Circle process is essentially oral in nature so it's not easy to communicate in writing.
- 2. Everyone needs to know the purpose of the Story Circle and have the chance to buy in . . . or out. Maybe they can do this as they introduce themselves and describe what they'd like to accomplish in this particular story circle.
- 3. Don't make too many rules. Less is more.
- 4. Listening is more important than talking. You mustn't be thinking about what you will say while someone else is talking. Trust the circle to bring your story to you. You don't have to like other people's stories but you must respect their right to tell it.
- 5. You don't have to tell a story. If you have no story to tell when your turn comes, just pass,

you'll get another chance before a second round.

- 6. It saves time in the beginning if you take turns moving clockwise around the circle.
- 7. Don't get in power struggles with people on the circle, discipline is always voluntary. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink!
- 8. Let everyone in the group share responsibility for keeping track of time.
- 9. Provide time for sum-up at the end of each session.
- 10. Leave time for people to digest and have cross conversation.
- 11. Make some kind of follow-up activity that's viable for the particular group.

O'Neal, John. "Story Circle Process Discussion Paper." RaceMatters.org. Accessed December 13, 2010. http://www.racematters.org/storycircleprocess.htm

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SPECIAL NOTE TO TEENS, LEADERS OF YOUTH THEATRES, AND HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS

hile the Acting Together resources have been designed primarily for practitioners working in the field and in university classrooms, we have discovered that high school students find the stories of peacebuilding performance both inspiring and thought-provoking.

We hope to create discussion guides and other resources directed specifically toward teens, and post them on the project website at www.actingtogether.org. We welcome your requests, suggestions, and reflections on experiences with the existing documentary, short videos, and pdfs.

Meanwhile, the following might be helpful:

- Consider viewing the documentary in three sessions, one for each act. This will leave time for orientation and discussion before and after the screening, about the act's theme (i.e. resistance, rehumanization, and reconciliation) and also the particular regions and conflicts that provide the context for the stories. Even just one or two stories from the toolkit might be sufficient to stimulate discussion for a single session.
- The stories in Act 2 are about and by young people. These might make good starting points.
- Background on each of the stories in the documentary and toolkit, and on the conflicts that they address, can be found in the case study summaries on the website, and also in the anthology Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict.
- The second volume of the Acting Together anthology includes the chapter "Stories in the Moment: Playback Theatre for building community and justice," by Jo Salas. It includes examples of theatre being used to address school bullying.

- While the Acting Together stories emphasize creativity and courage, they also introduce brutal and disturbing episodes in human history, including stories of sexual violence.
 Take care to leave sufficient time for young viewers to ask questions and to express their thoughts and feelings in response to the stories they will hear and the images they will see.
- The short toolkit video "A Powerful Fire" could be an effective and uplifting ending for a session.

For additional resources, please explore the following websites – and please send us links to others that you recommend!

- Cyberschoolbus: United Nations teaching and learning project: <u>cyberschoolbus.un.org</u> (resources in multiple languages)
- Educators for Social Responsibility: <u>www.esrnational.org</u>
- Teaching Tolerance: <u>www.tolerance.org</u>
- Facing History and Ourselves: <u>www.facinghistory.org/resources</u>
- Making Peace Where I Live: A project designed for young people to meet peacemakers and peacebuilders in their own communities: <u>www.brandeis.</u> <u>edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/pdfs/</u> <u>MakingpeacewhereIlive.pdf</u>

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BOOKS, ARTICLES, WEBSITES, FILMS, AND CDs

f you are a newcomer to peacebuilding performance, this listing of books, articles, films, websites, and CDs will likely be useful to you. If you would like to add anything to updated versions of this list, please visit the project website: <u>http://www.actingtogether.org</u>.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Anderson, Mary and Olson, Lara, with assistance from Kristin Doughty. *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners.* Cambridge, MA: The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc., 2003. Accessible at: www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/ confrontingwar_Pdf1.pef

Arai, Tatsushi. *Creativity and Conflict Resolution: Alternative Pathways to Peace.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2009.

Cleveland, William. Art and Upheaval: Artists on the World's Frontlines. Oakland: New Village Press, 2008.

Cohen, Cynthia; Varea, Roberto Gutiérrez; and Polly Walker (eds.) *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict. Volume I: Resistance and Reconciliation* and *Volume II: Building Just and Inclusive Communities.* Oakland: New Village Press, 2011.

Cohen, Cynthia. "Creative Approaches to Reconciliation." In *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace*. Edited by M. Fitzduff and C. E. Stout. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc., 2005. Accessible at <u>www.</u> <u>brandeis.edu/ethics/pdfs/publications/Creative</u> <u>Approaches.pdf</u>

Cohen, Cynthia. Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions. Waltham, MA: International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, Brandeis University, 2001. Accessible at www.brandeis.edu/ ethics/peacebuildingarts/library/authors/index. html Cohen, Cynthia (Ed.) *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts.* Waltham, MA: International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, Brandeis University, 2005. Accessible at <u>www.brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/</u> recasting/index.html

Driver, Tom F. Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites That Transform Our Lives and Our Communities. New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991.

Fisher, Simon; Ibrahim, Deana; Ludin, Jawed; Smith, Richard; Williams, Steve; and Sue Williams. *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.

Goldbard, Arlene. *New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development.* Oakland: New Village Press, 2006.

Hunter, Mary Ann. *The Peace Initiative*. Brisbane, Australia: Contact Inc. Excerpts in Arabic, Spanish, and French accessible at <u>contact.org.au/read-peace-initiative-09</u>.

Kester, Grant H. *Conversation Pieces, Community* + *Communication in Modern Art.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

LeBaron, Michelle. "Culture and Conflict." In *Beyond Intractability.* Edited by Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Boulder: University of Colorado, Boulder - Conflict Research Consortium, 2003. Accessed December 1, 2010. www.beyondintractability.org/essay/culture_conflict

Lederach, John Paul. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997.

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Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Midgley, Mary. *Can't We Make Moral Judgements?* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1993.

Prentki, Tim and Preston, Sheila. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Schirch, Lisa. *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2007.

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Thiong'o, Ngugi Wa. *Decolonising the Mind*. London: James Curry/Heinemann, 1981.

Thompson, James; Hughes, Jenny and Michael Balfour. *Performance In Place of War.* London; New York; Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2009.

Thompson, James. *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect.* New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2009.

Van Erven, Eugene. *Community Theatre: Global Perspectives.* London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Van Erven, Eugene. *The Playful Revolution: Theatre and Liberation in Asia*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

WEBSITES

Acting Together on the World Stage: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict at <u>www.actingtogether.org</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Alliance for Peacebuilding at www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Arts in the One World at <u>brown.edu/</u> <u>Departments/Theatre_Speech_Dance/about/</u> <u>aowschedule.html</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Beyond Intractability: A Free Knowledge Base on More Constructive Approaches to Destructive Conflict at <u>www.beyondintractability.org/</u>, accessed on March 10, 2011.

Centre for Playback Theatre at <u>www.playbackcentre.org/</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Coexistence International at <u>heller.brandeis.edu/</u> <u>academic/ma-coex/resources/Ci/ciresources.html</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Community Art Lab at <u>www.vredevanutrecht2013.</u> <u>nl/Home/Programma/Lopende-projecten/</u> <u>Community-Art/English.aspx</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Contact Inc (Brisbane, Australia) at <u>contact.org.au/</u>, accessed on June 5, 2011.

DNA Works: Dialogue and Healing Through the Arts at <u>www.dnaworks.org/</u>, accessed June 5, 2011.

Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at <u>http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Hip Hop History: Universal Zulu Nation at <u>www.</u> <u>zulunation.com/hip hop history 2.htm</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

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International Center for Transitional Justice at <u>www.ictj.org/en/index.html</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

International Theatre Institute at <u>www.iti-worldwide.org/</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Magdalena Project: International Network of Women in Contemporary Theatre at <u>www.themagdalenaproject.org/</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

New Village Press at <u>www.newvillagepress.net/</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Peacebuilding and the Arts at <u>www.brandeis.edu/</u> <u>ethics/peacebuildingarts/index.html</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Seagull Foundation for the Arts at www.seagullindia.com/sfa/sfahome.html, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Search for Common Ground at <u>www.sfcg.org/</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Story Circles – Junebug Productions at www.junebugproductions.org/#/storycircle/4528283156, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Theatre Communications Group at <u>www.tcg.org/</u>, accessed March 28, 2011.

Theatre of the Oppressed at www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index. php?useFlash=1, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Theatre Without Borders at <u>www.theatrewithoutborders.com/</u>, accessed on March 9, 2011.

Transcend International: A Peace Development Environment Network at <u>www.transcend.org/</u> accessed on March 10, 2011. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) at <u>http://www.unesco.</u> org/new/en/unesco/, accessed on March 28, 2011.

United States Institute of Peace at <u>www.usip.org/</u>, accessed March 28, 2011.

FILMS

Acting Together on the World Stage. Information at http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/ actingtogether/documentary/index.html, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Encounter Point and *Budrus*, <u>http://www.</u> justvision.org/home, accessed March 28, 2011.

Pray the Devil Back to Hell, <u>http://www.</u> <u>praythedevilbacktohell.com/</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

Two Rivers, <u>http://www.tworiversfilm.com/2riv_film_02.htm</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

War Dance, <u>http://www.wardancethemovie.com/</u>, accessed on March 8, 2011.

The Common Ground Film Series at the United Nations, <u>http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/</u><u>filmfestival/united_nations.html</u>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

CDs

"I Arise Facing East" (concluding song in the documentary) can be found on:

• *Take Wing in Song*, by Deborah Langstaff, <u>http://deborahlangstaffmusic.com/music</u>. and

• Turning: Songs of Earth Reverence and Peace, by Libana, 2009, <u>http://www.libana.com/</u> <u>Libanamerchandise.htm</u>

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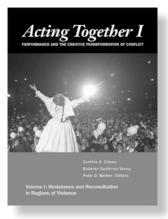


ANTHOLOGY TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict A Two-Volume Anthology

Edited by Cynthia E. Cohen, Roberto Gutiérrez Varea, and Polly O. Walker Published by New Village Press, 2011

[Note: Short videos are available in this toolkit for some, but not all, of the case studies in the anthology. In the table of contents below, the symbol (T) indicates that the toolkit includes a video clip related to this chapter. Written summaries of all the anthology case studies are also available on the project's website: www.actingtogether.org.]



Acting Together I: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict

Volume I: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence

- Foreword: Acting Together on the World Stage; John Paul Lederach
- Preface: Light in the Darkness; Roberta Levitow
- Introduction: Setting the Stage; Cohen, Varea, and Walker

Section I:

Singing in the Dark Times: Peacebuilding Performance in the Midst of Direct Violence; Section Introduction by Cohen, Varea, and Walker

- Theatre as a Way of Creating Sense: Performance and Peacebuilding in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia; Dijana Milošević (T)
- Theatre, War, and Peace in Uganda; Charles Mulekwa (T)
- The Created Space: Peacebuilding and Performance in Sri Lanka; Madhawa Palihapitiya
- Theatre, Resistance and Peacebuilding in Palestine; Abeer Musleh (T)
- Weaving Dialogues and Confronting Harsh Realities: Engendering Social Change in Israel through Performance; Aida Nasrallah and Lee Perlman (T)

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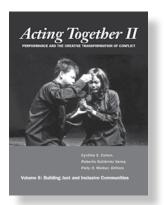
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Section II:

Holding Fast to the Feet of the Rising Condor: Peacebuilding Performance in the Aftermath of Mass Violence; Section Introduction by Cohen, Varea and Walker

- Fire in the Memory: Theatre, Truth and Justice in Argentina and Peru; Roberto Gutiérrez Varea (T)
- Hidden Fires: PeaceWorks' Invocations as Žižekian Response to the Gujarat Massacres of 2002; Ruth Margraff
- Alive on Stage in Cambodia: Time Histories and Bodies; Catherine Filloux (T)
- Creating a New Story: Ritual, Ceremony, and Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and Settler Peoples; Polly Walker (T)
- Afterword: Devanand Ramiah



Acting Together II: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict

Volume II: Building Just and Inclusive Communities

- Foreword: "Acting Together": The Rebellion of the Masks; Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres
- Preface: Speak to the Past and It Will Heal Thee; Pauline Ross

Section I:

Changing the World as We Know It: Performance in Contexts of Structural Violence, Social Exclusion and Dislocation; Section Introduction by Cohen, Varea and Walker

• Performing Cross Cultural Conversations: Creating New Kinships Through Community Theatre; Eugene van Erven and Kate Gardner (T)

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• Youth Leading Youth: Hip-Hop and HipLife Theatre in Ghana and South Africa; Daniel Banks

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- Change the World as We Know It: Peace, Youth, and Performance; Mary Ann Hunter (T)
- Stories in the Moment: Playback Theatre for Building Community and Justice; Jo Salas
- "Do You Smell Something Stinky?" Notes from Conversations about Making Art While Working for Peace in Racist, Imperial America in the 21st Century; John O'Neal (T)

Section II: Reflections and Recommendations

- The Permeable Membrane and the Moral Imagination: A Framework for Conceptualizing Peacebuiling Performance; Cohen, with Varea and Walker
- Lessons and Recommendations; Cohen, with Varea and Walker

Section III: Resources: Tools for Education, Training, and Advocacy anthology table of contents

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