



## STEP 4: ARTISTIC EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

Cre8  
in 8

*Unlocking potential*

## INTRODUCTION

During the introduction, the skills facilitators introduce their particular skills (acrobatics, drama, dance, etc.) in a creative way that the participants will perceive as stimulating and inspiring and that is never threatening or intimidating. Some young people are afraid of or may shy away from new things such as acrobatics, juggling or contemporary dance. They believe it will be difficult or even dangerous. An introduction by the professional teacher in a creative, inviting and inspiring way will assist in raising their interest and helping them overcome their shyness or fear. The skills facilitator's task is to introduce the participants to new skills which they can learn within a reasonable period of time. There's nothing more motivating than a successful result. Having gone through Step 3, in which where they were encouraged to open-up and gain confidence with each other, the participants will have been prepared to 'dare'.

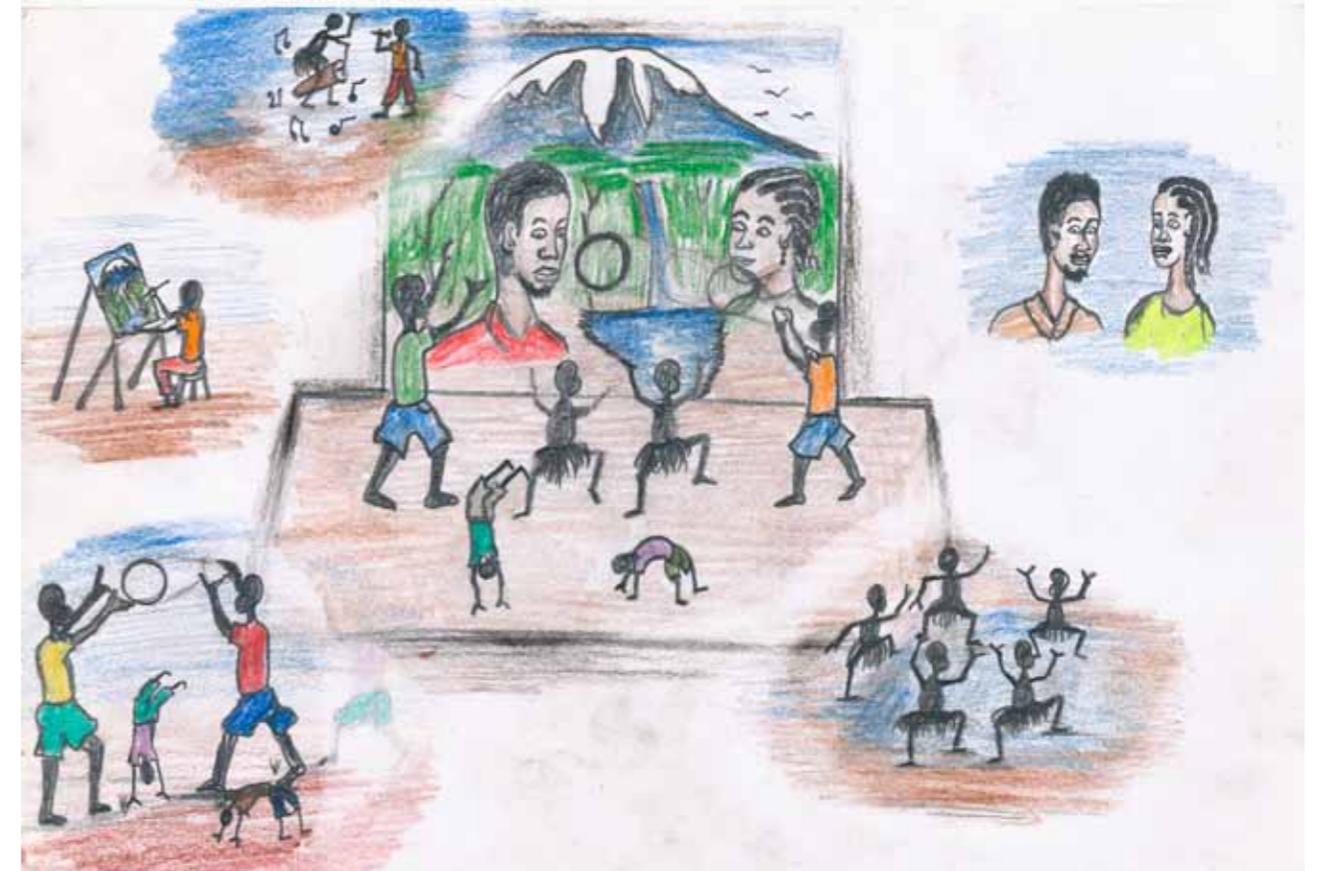
## CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

### The skills market

Divide the group into subgroups depending on the number of artistic disciplines on offer. Create a schedule together and let the participants within a subgroup appoint one of their own to become that subgroup's captain. The captain's

tasks include keeping track of time and serving as the liaison between the skills facilitator and the participants. Each facilitator has his or her own working space, and each group receives training in each of the skills.

You can have 60-minute sessions in rotation or half-day sessions (3 hours) in rotation, depending



on the project period. Keep them short enough to keep them vibrant and sustain the participants' interest but long enough to lead to tangible results. If you choose for the half-day model and you have (for instance) five artistic disciplines (dance, music, visual arts, acrobatics and drama), you will need two and half days. In that case, you could use the final afternoon for reflection, including presentations and creating permanent skill groups. This is what Cre8 calls the 'skills market'.

Once everybody has been introduced to all disciplines, the participants can indicate their preferred skill group. Based on their own observations and considering the group balance, the skills facilitators can suggest changes and move participants from one group to another, to create permanent skill groups. This should be done in a mildly persuasive manner. As some participants are multi-talented, it is important to ensure that they can join groups that will provide

them with a new challenge and/or where their expertise in a certain skill can be used to inspire others.

If the capacity building takes five days, and the skill market took three days, the participants will receive intensive training in the two remaining days. At this stage, the skills facilitator will also compile a report for each participant based on an existing template and will take time to share his or her observations with the participant.

#### EXAMPLE

Cre8's projects are as much about capacity building and training as they are about the artistic process and its final product. A Cre8 project gives participants an opportunity to explore their artistic potential and possibilities in an open and free atmosphere. Many participants who join a project probably know or feel they are talented in the arts. But it is not always clear 'which' type and 'how'. In a Cre8 project, they will have an opportunity to find out. Some participants may surprise themselves. For Cre8, this discovery process serves as the basis for empowerment.

A 17-year-old young woman, Quinter, turned up for Cre8's 'Ngimana Mabirow' project in Yala, Kenya. From the skills-market session, she realised she had a talent for singing and even for composing songs. Before this experience she had actually thought she was talented in dance, which she

liked very much. She reluctantly joined the music and singing group, but by the end of the project, her singing talent had been turned into a skill. In her evaluation she mentioned this as being her biggest discovery and that it had motivated her to join the local church and school choir.

#### CONCLUSION

Step 4, artistic exploration and discovery, is about taking the participants on a journey. You need to invest enough time for this step and provide everyone with the same opportunity. This is where the quality of the skills facilitator really shows: besides having a good understanding of their artistic discipline, they also need to be able to see beyond the obvious and spot 'hidden' talent.

At the end of this step, the various skill groups come together and present to each other. The artistic director will take a keen interest in these presentations, since it forms part of his or her 'material to engage' for the creation of the final show. The participants also use this opportunity to give feedback to each other and to offer suggestions and ideas for improvement. At this stage in the process, some exceptional participants may become additional skill facilitators and lead practice sessions with the other participants. Most of the promising future artistic skills facilitators emerge at this stage.

## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **All participants have explored the various different skills on offer.**
- **The skills facilitators have identified specific talents among the participants and let each participant know what he or she is particularly good at.**
- **Participants have chosen their most preferred skill group.**
- **Participants with exceptional training skills or an interest in skills facilitation have been identified.**