

# Cre8 in 8



AN EIGHT-STEP METHOD TO HELP YOUTH ORGANISATIONS REALISE  
INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY SOCIOCULTURAL ARTISTIC PROJECTS

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The Cre8 in 8 method was developed by Sami Gathii, Janneke Tigchelaar and Ben Hekkema

**Text** Sami Gathii, Janneke Tigchelaar, Ben Hekkema, [www.cre8eastafrika.org](http://www.cre8eastafrika.org)

**Design** Gerrit Alink, [www.gerritalink.nl](http://www.gerritalink.nl)

**Editing** Thom Johnston, [www.johnston.nl](http://www.johnston.nl)

**Illustrations** the Hard Life Artists, *Facebook: Hard Life Artists Group*

**Photographs** Cre8 East Africa

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# FOREWORD

Cre8 East Africa – ‘Cre8’ for short – is a Dutch organisation that uses a creative theatrical process to stimulate vulnerable young people in East Africa to analyse the challenges they face and to find ways of addressing those. Cre8’s strength is in connecting people who can facilitate the development of skills with vulnerable communities at the grassroots level. It taps into the existing talent and potential of the local youth to facilitate an inclusive and participatory experience of learning, sharing and collective problem solving.

Cre8 empowers young people through local organisations and groups, giving them the capacity to play the active and leading role in creative arts and community development while also addressing societal challenges through the arts. Cre8 also assists young people in building cohesion amongst themselves. Most fundamentally, it offers young people the space and a platform on which to play and explore their potential in what Cre8 calls sociocultural artistic projects.

Cre8 works together structurally with YADEN (Youth, Arts, Development & Entrepreneurship Network), an organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya that works throughout the East African region to assist young people in identifying their potential

and developing that potential into skills that can earn them a decent living. In that way, YADEN

empowers them to become active participants in their community’s socio-economic and socio-political development. Like Cre8, YADEN uses an inclusive and participatory creative-arts approach to engage and empower young people and to create opportunities for them.

The partnership between Cre8 and YADEN has also involved other stakeholders over the years, including:

- **Dunga Kenya Development Organisation** in Kisumu, Kenya
- **Marenyo Friends of the Poor Community Support Group** in Yala, Kenya
- **Mkombozi** in Moshi and Arusha, Tanzania
- **Gulu Theatre Artists**, the **Amuru Youth Association (AYA)**, the **War Affected Youth Association (WAYA)**, **Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU)**, and the **Laroo Boarding Primary School for War-affected Children and SOS Children’s Village** in Gulu, Uganda.

In each project that Cre8 and YADEN have undertaken together, they have used a creative, innovative, highly inclusive and participatory

approach that has become known as the ‘Cre8 in 8’ Method. Between 2006 and 2012, this method was used in six projects for vulnerable young people in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda:

1. **Okang Machielo** (‘The Next Step’) in Dunga Beach Kisumu, Kenya (2006). This project included 150 children from the Dunga informal primary school and tackled the topics of hygiene and health.
2. **Ngimana Mabiyo** (‘My Life, My Future’) based in Yala, Kenya (2007). This project involved 60 young people and addressed livelihood opportunities.
3. **Jukwa la Vipaji** (‘House of Talent’) in Moshi, Tanzania (2009). It included 40 homeless young people from the Mkombozi rehabilitation centre and 15 other young people from the community. Its focus was to tackle the difficulties they face in their lives and to empower them to use their talents to make a change.
4. **AMKA** (‘Rise Up’) in Moshi, Tanzania involving also a tour through Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam and Arusha in Tanzania and Nairobi, Kisumu and Nakuru in Kenya (2010). This project involved 40 young people from Mkombozi and 15 others from the community. It was about their lives on the

street, the prejudices and the violence they face, and their desire to have a better future.

5. **Kati Atyer** (‘Break the Silence’) in Gulu, northern Uganda (2011). This project included 55 young people and six group leaders. The first objective was to explore the individual consequences of the war, and then to share and to resolve these. The second objective was to train group leaders in using the ‘Cre8 in 8’ Method.
6. **Gulu Youth Festival**, northern Uganda (2012). This project included participants from the six Kati Atyer groups plus 200 additional young people. The objective was to engage all of them in the performances and to stimulate open discussions on the consequences of war and possible solutions for the problems they face.

The monitoring and evaluation of each of these projects indicated that they had all been very successful. This success has motivated the Cre8 East Africa team to compile its experiences in this simple yet detailed manual: ‘Cre8 in 8’. It’s a practical handbook to help and empower those who work with young people in the areas of creative arts and community development.

# INTRODUCING THE 'CRE8 IN 8' METHOD

The 'Cre8 in 8' Method is based on five principles:

1. Fostering inclusivity and participation
2. Identifying and developing talent
3. Promoting sharing and exchange
4. Showing appreciation and respect for children and young people
5. Encouraging individual and collective voices to speak out.

Art, in all its forms, is a magnification of life: an extension and representation of how we live that mirrors our hopes, anxieties and dreams. It was with this in mind that the eight interlocking steps of 'Cre8 in 8' Method were developed. The effective realisation of one step will ensure the success of the next one. The method's success is highly dependent on a variety of factors, including:

- a clear understanding by partners and participants of the method and the approach
- the commitment, passion and interest of everyone involved
- a serious investment in terms of time and availability
- openness and the encouragement of freedom of expression
- respect for everyone involved

- the ability and willingness of everyone to work within his or her means and at his or her level.

The eight steps in the 'Cre8 in 8' Method are:

- 1. Preparing and set up**
- 2. Mobilising participants**
- 3. Building a group**
- 4. Exploring and discovering artistic expression**
- 5. Developing awareness of issues**
- 6. Developing a statement and a performance**
- 7. Giving the performance**
- 8. Planning a follow-up to ensure lasting results.**



This method aims to assist youth groups, community organisations or individuals to set up their own projects. It focuses on:

- identifying talent and developing creativity and artistic skills
- providing training in life skills, including building self-esteem and confidence and facilitating self-expression
- identifying challenges to development and possible solutions to those
- providing issue-based skills training with an eye to the prevailing developmental challenges
- fostering community engagement
- facilitating short-term and long-term outcome-and-impact monitoring as well as evaluation and documentation.

The 'Cre8 in 8' Method also encourages the sourcing of materials and volunteer work from within the community, rather than relying solely on external funding.

**In the next chapters you can follow the 'Cre8 in 8' Method: Step by step**





## STEP 1: PREPARATION AND SET-UP

Cre8  
in 8

*Failing to prepare  
things well means  
preparing to fail.*

## INTRODUCTION

Step 1 is the base of the project and provides an opportunity for the project initiator to discuss ideas with all stakeholders. This step is like filling an idea box: everyone should welcome all ideas with an open mind. Indeed, it is important to avoid drawing conclusions on issues and ideas at this stage at the risk of becoming too strict and stifling inspiration.

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

During Step 1, the **PROJECT IDEA** is developed. This is the responsibility of the project initiator or initiators. Ideas mostly emanate from individuals. Even when brainstormed within a group, an idea can always be traced back to an individual.

If you have an idea, you can look for a quiet place to brainstorm about it within yourself. Then you can design a proposal – whether in words or otherwise (e.g. a drawing) – to present your ideas to others. On the basis of that proposal, you can approach others and share your ideas.

You can get inspiration from reading books or newspaper articles, watching videos or listening to music related to your idea. You could also visit museums, historic sites or even go on an observational tour around your village or town – anything that can help you crystallise your idea

for a project and make it viable in your specific context.

### ‘MY IDEA BECOMES OUR IDEA’

The development of an idea for a project starts with individuals suggesting their ideas and other participants being invited to give their opinions on those ideas, thus transforming those from an individual’s idea to a group idea. In the process, an idea first suggested by one participant may change into something different. Encourage all participants to share their ideas with each other, as this will help them to expand and enrich the project idea. Also when working with different partners, it is important to make sure they are also involved in the development of the idea.

It is advisable to record and store all relevant information that has been collected, for instance in a **project box**. In connection with the



**monitoring and evaluation**, it is also advisable to document any information received either from or about each of the participants, including their specific expectations.

Once the project idea has been finalised, you as an initiator will be required to develop a **project setup plan**. This includes a list of things to be considered and decisions to be made in order to set up the project:



To prepare for the Dunga 'Okang Machielo' project, a group of children was assigned to go around the village with paper and pencils to draw things. At the end of the day they all came together and shared their ideas. One boy had drawn three pictures: one showing people cutting down trees, another portraying children begging for food and crying, and a third showing police arresting people who were cutting the trees. On the basis of these pictures, the dance group later developed a dance.

In Yala, the Cre8 team visited the village of Marenyo and sat down with some of the local young people who suggested ideas for a possible project. All the ideas were discussed at a round table and the strongest ones were adopted to form the basis for a project idea, which was later developed into a project setup plan.



Cre8 encourages the initiators to rely on local supporters such as local churches or mosques, community centres, family and friends. If you are already a well-established organisation, you can ask for material and financial contributions from members and maybe also from their relatives, etc. Cre8 also forms the project group, involving members from different partner organisations (use Internet search engines to explore different fundraising options and choose the one that is most appropriate for you. Use search phrases such as 'fundraising plan for grassroots youth groups' or 'fundraising plan for community arts project', etc.)

At the end of this first step, the initiating team will put together a PROJECT PLAN. This will serve as a guide for the team and can be used in writing a proposal that can be sent to potential donors. This is also when the MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN is developed and agreed (see page 10 & 11).

### CONCLUSION

Step 1 is when you develop an idea into a viable project plan. Involve as many stakeholders in that process from the start and remain open to their ideas and suggestions. Involve them in the practicalities of the project from the very start as well. This way, your idea for a project will be more likely to have the support of a larger group or community.

## CHECK-OUT BOX

### A Project Plan containing:

- the goals of the project
- the expected results and impacts
- the target group
- the potential partners
- the location of the project
- the duration of the project
- the period of the project
- information about the budget and the available resources
- the target artistic skills / disciplines
- names of potential project team members
- a basic plan for how the project will be monitored, evaluated and reported
- a sustainability plan



## STEP 2: MOBILISING PARTICIPANTS

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in 8

*Together WE CAN!*

## INTRODUCTION

**Mobilisation involves identifying and bringing together project participants based on the decisions you made in Step 1. If you are planning to work with partner organisations, make sure to involve them in the process as soon as possible. For instance if you require a large group of participants, you could partner with several educational institutions, developmental organisations or religious institutions who can assist you in identifying the most eligible participants.**

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

The main resources of any project are the people involved. These include:

1. The project initiator(s)
2. The project team
3. The participating group (members).

Criteria to consider when choosing partners:

- Do they have a grassroots presence?
- Do they have goodwill among the youth/ children and the community?
- Do they have access to resources such as space, skills facilitators and/or volunteers (for cooking, transportation, etc.)?
- Do they have experience in project implementation at any level?

Choose project-team members based on:

- their interest and passion
- their ability to use their artistic skills / discipline for social change (or their willingness to learn how to do that)
- their capacity to instruct/ lead/ make decisions
- their availability
- their flexibility
- their demonstrated talents and skills in their particular area of interest
- recommendations of them from partners and other associates
- their CV (written, verbal, video, etc.).

You can ask your partner organisations to present



a shortlist of potential team members, preferably derived through a democratic process.

#### 1. The project initiator(s)

The project initiator(s) can be one or more individuals or organisations (in case of partnerships).

#### 2. The project team

The project team consists of individuals drawn from partner organisations and is in charge of the implementation of the project. Depending on the specific requirements of your project, the team members could have roles such as artistic leader, administrator or coordinator, finance manager, PR or communications manager, and skills facilitators. The actual size and composition of the project team will depend on the needs of the specific project, the size

of the project (including the number of participants) and the availability of team members. As most of the project team members will only become involved during Step 2 and will therefore need to be briefed on the what, where, when, why and how of the project, a clear Project Plan is of vital importance.

Choose participants based on their:

- availability(in terms of time)
- artistic skill / discipline
- demonstrated interest, talent and passion
- membership and/ or affinity with and understanding of the target group
- understanding of the project and its goals
- expectations
- age
- nomination by a local entity or partner.



### 3. The participating group members

Young people or children are the primary beneficiaries of the project. How many of them can be involved depends mainly on the available resources, the interests and the identified needs as described in the project plan. Various factors should influence the mobilisation of the participating group, including the following:

- The participants must be drawn from the local community.
- The participants must be selected through an inclusive procedure that takes into consideration a gender balance, social status, talent discipline, community interest, etc.
- There must be an identified need for participation.
- School holidays and other community schedules must be taken into account to ensure the availability of the participants.

It is important to collect primary data on each of the project team members. You can use a template such as the one below to document the project team members.

PROJECT TEAM PRIMARY DATA								
NO.	NAME	GENDER	AGE	CONTACT telephone & e-mail	ORGANISATION	ROLE/POSITION	ARTISTIC DISCIPLINE(S)	OTHER INFO.
1								
2								

PARTICIPANTS PRIMARY DATA								
NO.	NAME	GENDER	AGE	CONTACT INFO.	GROUP/ ORGANISATION	ARTISTIC DISCIPLINE / SKILLS INTEREST	IN SCHOOL (YES, which form?/ NO)	OTHER INFO.
1								
2								

It is important to carry out an audit of participants during registration. This should include gathering primary data on things like age, gender, interests, contacts (for the individual participant as well as for his or her parents, guardians or youth groups), education level, whether he or she is in or out of school, and his or her language of communication.

Document the project participants using a template such as the one shown at the top of this page.

Remember that it is important to ensure that the participants you mobilise and select will have highly similar backgrounds. That will make it easier to build cohesion within the group (which should also lead to better results). With such short-term projects there will be little time to spend on reconciling major differences within a group.



On the other hand, it is also important that the group of participants contains a variety of characters in terms of their energy, artistic capacities, interests, etc. to guarantee a rich, diverse and well-balanced team.

When it comes to selecting participants, you can have your partners delegate them on the basis of the guidelines provided or you can hold auditions.

### EXAMPLE

In Gulu, Cre8 first engaged YADEN, which prepared a short survey on the feasibility of the project. Based on this survey, and with the help of Quinto Okello, a local YADEN network coordinator, two members of the Cre8 team visited Gulu and spoke with possible partner organisations. That visit enabled them to identify five local partners who were willing to take part. Those were the AYA



youth group, Gulu Theatre Artists, the WAYA youth group and Breakdance Project Uganda, as well as the Laroo Boarding Primary School for War-affected Children, which was willing to provide training space and accommodation for all the participants. Each of the five partners was tasked with mobilising an average of 12 participants from among their members, as well as a group leader / skills facilitator. WarChild Uganda also sent a trainee and Gulu University sent two interns/ trainees. With a total of 70 names, including those of Cre8's team of 10 trainers, the list of project participants was complete.

### CONCLUSION

Unless you work with a pre-existing group, Step 2 (selecting a project team and mobilising a group of participants) will be an essential but time-consuming process. It is important to invest in this step, since the success of your project will depend on it. Although Cre8 stresses the importance of inclusiveness with regard to its projects, it also recognises that there needs to be some degree of selection, since there is very little time to bridge potentially huge differences between individuals or sub-groups (unless those differences are clear from the start and reconciling them is part of the process). For that reason, Cre8 always chooses to work with local partners who are able to identify suitable candidates. Cre8 normally works with groups of 50 to 60 children or young people as participants.

## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **A list of your partners, including their respective roles and responsibilities.**
- **A list of the skills of facilitators / project team members along with their contact information and the roles, responsibilities and tasks of each person.**
- **A list of the participants along with their primary data (name, age, gender, etc.) and contact information.**



## STEP 3: BUILDING A GROUP

Cre8  
in 8

*Are we all  
heading in the  
same direction?*

## INTRODUCTION

**Team building is a dynamic and ongoing process without which the quality of the final result could be compromised. Even if you are trying to realise a project with a group of participants who already know each other, it is very important to go through a group-building process, since every project has its own dynamics. You might focus on some aspects of team building such as getting to know each other's skills, backgrounds and talents, among others.**

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

The process of building a group entails several different steps:

#### 1. Becoming comfortable with each other and making introductions

Introducing the project and the project team  
Arrange a meeting for all project participants (including the project team). Some people may already know each other, while others may be meeting for the first time. Introduce everyone in the project team and their respective roles. Such a meeting will also serve as an important opportunity to re-introduce the project aims, goals, schedule and global plan. Though most people will have already heard all that before, it will be different and somehow more 'real' when done for the first time with everyone present.

At this stage, it is important to keep the focus of the project on the primary beneficiaries and to make sure they understand that the project is their own responsibility and not something that will be done for them. Please avoid long speeches but focus rather on short, inspiring details. When possible, avoid lengthy discussions on everything that could go wrong. Such discussions can often kill a group before it even has a chance to begin. At the same time, avoid highlighting any differences between the participants (e.g. their geographic origins, artistic skills, age, etc.) during this first meeting, but focus instead on their similarities and common goals.

It is important to observe the chemistry between the initiators, the project team and the

participants. With a social project, the interactions, relations and trust developed among the participants will play a major role in terms of its success.

#### *Introducing the participants*

Once the project team members have introduced themselves and given the group some information about the project, make sure that every participant also has a chance to introduce him or herself properly, whether by simply sharing his or her name and any additional information he or she wish to share (e.g. the group that he or she represents, his or her age, his or her particular talent, etc.), or by giving a presentation. If the sense of 'security' present within the group is still too low, the latter might be too much to ask of the participants. You could also simply choose to have the participants introduce themselves along with the project group members. Whatever you do, always take the local customs and traditions into account!

#### 2. Getting to know each other. How to do it

There are many ways to have the project participants get to know each other. You can gather everyone in a circle, for instance, and then start with simple warm-up exercises like the 'physical-isolation' exercise, or a name game. Gradually you can introduce more introductory games and exercises. Be sure to keep those short and fun. The facilitators can lead them at

the beginning, but as the atmosphere within the group becomes more relaxed and informal, encourage participants to take the lead in such exercises. Including physical exercises will help get the participants to relax and open up. Including theatre games will encourage participants to express themselves (and to reveal more about themselves to others in the process).

The phase of getting to know each other can take between a few days to a few weeks, but the participants should normally start to feel comfortable with each other after just a few working days. In the process, the facilitators will also gain information about (and an understanding of) each participant's character and background.

#### 3. Building positive interpersonal relationships

After every exercise it is important to encourage the group to ask each other questions and give each other positive feedback. Encourage them to share their thoughts on the exercises and games. This will help them gain each other's trust. The facilitator can choose to assign three participants the responsibility for leading the warm-up games on the following days and ask them to plan their lessons together.

## EXAMPLE

During the Jukwa la Vipaji and AMKA projects with Mkombozi in Moshi, Tanzania, the entire group of participating young people, the organisational staff, the Cre8 team and the local skills facilitators all gathered in the main hall. After a brief word of welcome from Simon (the youth recreation officer), Cre8's project coordinator, Ben, described the project goals and briefly told the group about what Cre8 is, what they had done until then and why they had chosen to work with Mkombozi.

Different skills facilitators were then given an opportunity to introduce themselves, but instead of the usual 'my name is....' approach, they introduced themselves through their art. Diana, the dance facilitator, performed a short traditional African dance, while the acrobatics facilitator, Eddy, showed a few of his moves. Harrison, the music facilitator, led the whole group in singing as a chorus. This inspired the participants to

come forth and share some of their own skills as well, which effectively made the introduction session into one big party. Sami, the theatre and development facilitator, led the participants in sharing their expectations and giving their input about the project plan. The participants clearly felt more open and free to express themselves after such an introduction than they would have if we had done a conventional introductory session.

## CONCLUSION

The first meeting is an important moment in terms of building a cohesive group, although the group-building process is something that runs through the entire project period and even beyond. At this stage, the goal is to make a good start, in which everyone feels included and valued. It is important to ensure that both formal and informal group-building activities are integrated into each stage of the project.



## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **All the participants understand the project, its goals and expected results. This can be verified on the basis of how they answer questions or participate in the discussions.**
- **All participants feel free, open and comfortable. This can be verified on the basis of their level of interaction with each other, their participation in the games and their cross-gender interaction.**
- **The group functions as a team. This can be verified by the fact that participants take responsibility for tasks, manage their time effectively and take initiatives by proposing ideas, etc.**



## **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'.

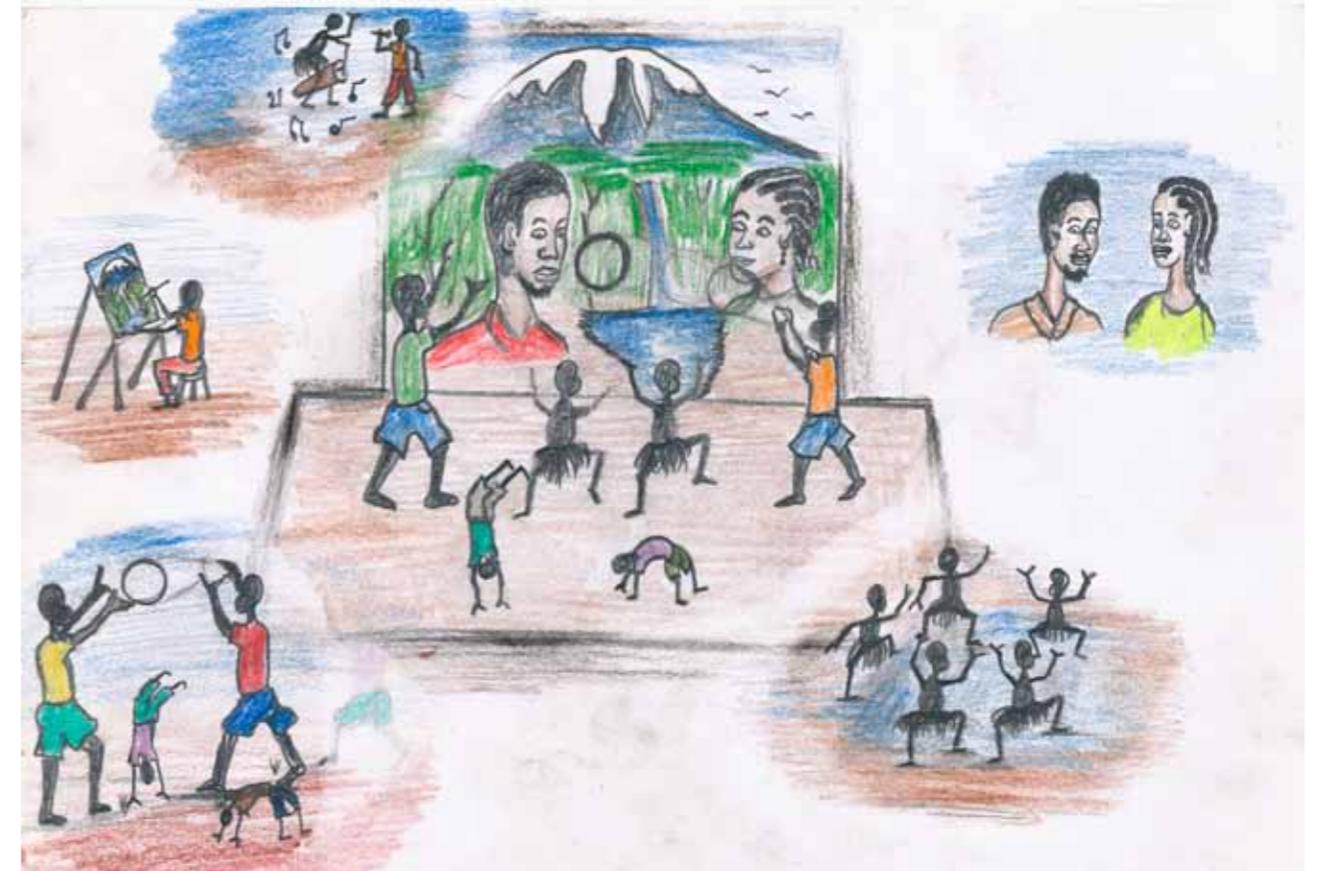
## CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

### 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.**



**STEP 5: DEVELOPMENTAL  
(ISSUE RELATED) AWARENESS**

**Cre8  
in 8**

*Understanding your challenges is the first step in terms of addressing them.*

## INTRODUCTION

**‘Art is development. Art, in all its forms: music, dance, drama, painting, etc., is a magnification of life: an extension and representation of how we live that mirrors our hopes, anxieties and dreams. Art helps us express our feelings and thoughts. Art is a process that empowers us and helps us to discover who we are, besides helping us map out where we want to go and what we want to be. Art is not a process, it is development.’ (Sami Gathii)**

**The ‘Cre8 in 8’ Method is a capacity-building process that includes artistic skills training and personal development. It is often said that an artist holds a mirror up to society. If that is so, then the artist must be aware of the issues that affect his or her society: social, political, economical and cultural.**

**Step 5 of the ‘Cre8 in 8’ Method provides a guideline for organising that capacity-building process by engaging the target group and the larger community through so-called focus group discussions (FGDs).**

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

- Develop a focus-group questionnaire (also known as an FGD flow; see the example below).
- Appoint a moderator (usually someone from the project team) and a note taker (usually one of the participants; make sure they are well briefed).
- Gather the focus group together and make sure everyone is comfortable. It is recommended to have everyone sit in a circle.
- Conduct a focus-group discussion.

### EXAMPLE OF AN FGD FLOW

#### 1. Who are young people?

Define who you are, as individuals or as a group. The definition of youth is conventionally based on age but it less conventionally it could – also – be based on other characteristics and circumstances.

#### 2. What are their challenges?

Identify the issues affecting young people, as seen from political, social, economic and cultural contexts; What are those that affect only girls or only boys?

#### 3. What causes those challenges?

Think about the possible internal causes, external causes, circumstantial causes, preventable and non-preventable causes, who are to blame, etc.

#### 4. How do those challenges affect them?

Think about what the effects of those challenges and how do they manifest themselves in the lives of young people? For example teenage pregnancy forces girls to drop out of school, etc.

#### 5. What are suggestions to solving those challenges?

Think about possible solutions, from the perspective of the local context. Consider short-term and long-term solutions, people-driven solutions, practical vs theoretical solutions, etc.

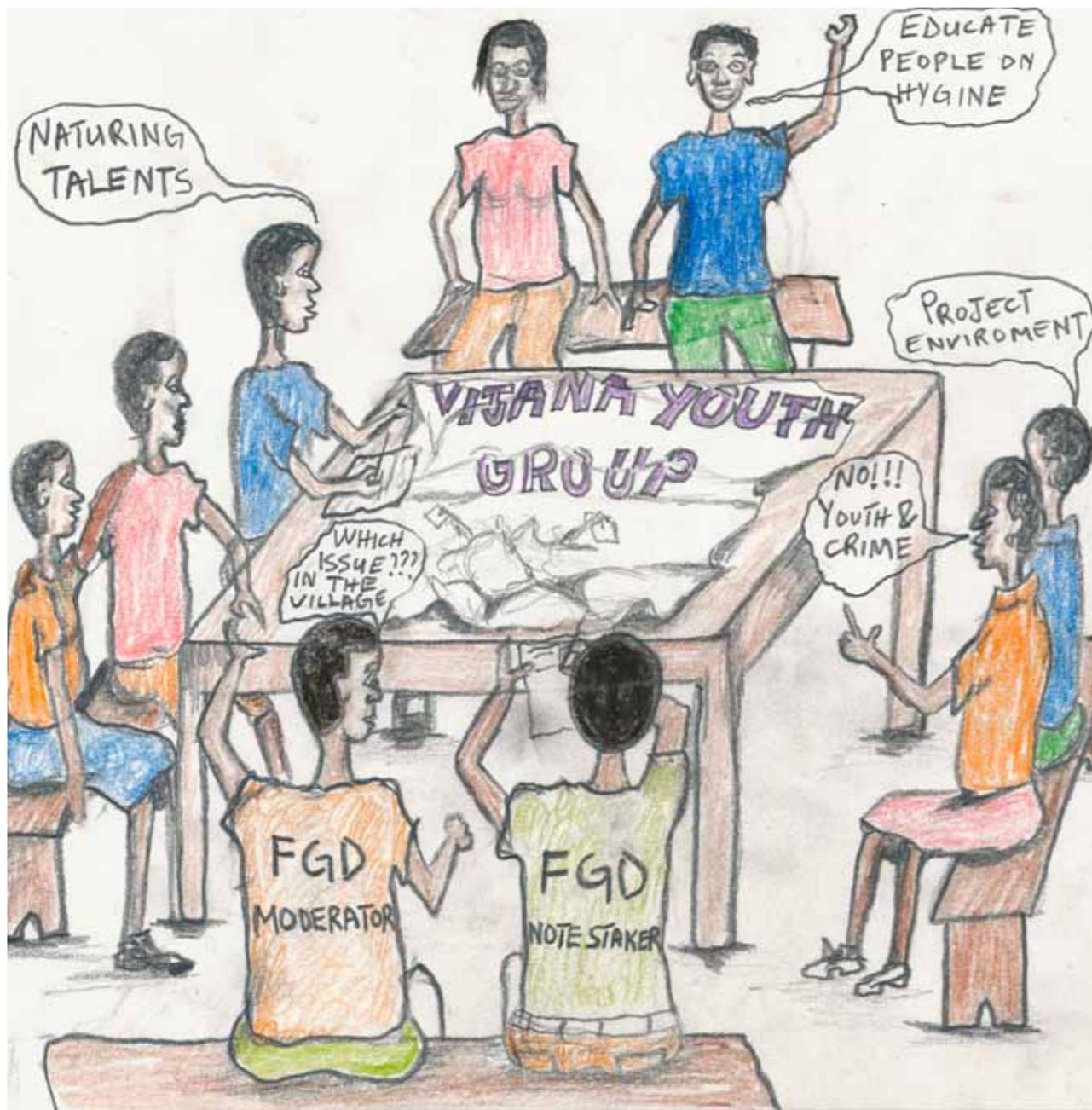
#### 6. What is the role of young people in solving those challenges?

Consider the responsibility of young people in terms of being part of the solution through active participation.

A Cre8 project uses focus-group discussions to help the participants reflect on issues that affect them, both positively and negatively. A moderator who is aware of the FGD process leads the session. Note takers are appointed from among the participants document the issues and information shared.

The FGD should follow a logical flow to ensure that the participants not only raise issues but

also analyse them critically and assist each other in putting them into context. If they come up against any challenges, they should suggest solutions to them. It is important that the participants are encouraged to share their discussion points based on their personal experience and to discuss topical issues from their local context, for instance how inefficiency at the national level of government affects their village’s water supply and how that, in turn, has affected



their schooling or other personal circumstances. This will help the participants to view 'the world' from a personal point of view. That is both liberating and empowering as they begin to see themselves as part of the bigger picture. It also encourages them to make comments on issues they would otherwise think do not immediately concern them, especially when they cannot connect such 'global issues' to their own lives.

The moderator is encouraged to replace the term 'young people' with 'you' and 'me', 'myself' or 'I' to help the participants discuss the issues in the first person. Among other things, the FGD aims to help the participants:

- define themselves
- view themselves within the context of the larger community
- contextualise issues affecting them and their community
- share and exchange ideas and experiences
- take responsibility for looking for solutions.
- become empowered, active participants and to articulate their role as leaders in their community.

*The moderator gets the participants to vote on the most significant points under each issue, which in turn forms the basis for the group's statement. The group decides on how many points to include, although five points per category is recommended.*

*Those issues are what will form the background of the participants' presentation.*

### EXAMPLE

The Jukwa la Vipaji and AMKA projects with Mkombozi in Moshi, Tanzania aimed at creating a platform where participants, mostly former street children, could share their experiences and sensitise other children and the community at large to issues affecting street children. This project approach divides the issues into four process-based categories:

1. reasons that lead children to go live on the street
2. challenges that affect children while they are living on the street
3. solutions that can help stop children from going to live on the street
4. general social, cultural, economic and political impacts.

All 50 participants gave their input for each category. Each person's input was discussed openly, with the contributors explaining their points. After all points had been listed, the group voted for the five most significant issues in each category. These form the basis for the participants' statement on the issue. The visual artists used this statement to develop three large backdrops that reflected it. These backdrops were extensively used for monitoring and evaluation

purposes, while also serving as the backdrop for performances.

### CONCLUSION

With artistic projects, there is often a lack of balance between the form (the artistic expression) and the content (the developmental issue they are supposed to address). Cre8 has been able to strike a balance in this regard by engaging experts in different fields. It is important that the project statement, which is represented

by the performance, is able to address the developmental needs of the participants. It should help them deal with issues affecting them, for instance, while at the same time helping them explore and exploit their artistic talents. The project should be able to artistically inspire and entertain its audience, while also sensitising and educating them to various developmental issues as identified by the participants.



## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **A report of the focus-group discussion**
- **A list of the most significant issues or challenges as identified by the participants**
- **A list of the causes of those challenges as identified by the participants**
- **A list of possible solutions to those challenges as identified by the participants.**



## **STEP 6: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENTATION**

**Cre8  
in 8**

*Creating together*

## INTRODUCTION

The presentation is the climax of the 'Cre8 in 8' process. The presentation takes the form of a performance or sometimes with a visual-arts exhibition (including photography and film), an open discussion and workshop. It is through the presentation that the process and statement are celebrated and shared. This provides access to the project for the community or audience. The choice of presentation concept and strategy is important. A participatory and interdisciplinary format is strongly recommended. It will help in combining as many artistic expressions and talents as possible at the same time, providing both the participants and their audience with a platform to share and exchange experiences and ideas in relation to the subject of the project.

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

To ensure a successful presentation, the participants should be equipped with regard to three capacity areas:

**1. Self-esteem and confidence.** This can be demonstrated in terms of how the participants relate to each other, as participants in the decision-making process. It is important to encourage participants to come across as positive and confident.

**2. Specific artistic skills.** The presentation should offer the participants a chance to demonstrate their artistic skills. The skills facilitators should primarily observe how the participants use them during the development of the presentation.

**3. Developmental awareness.** Through questions and observational analysis, they can gather information and come up with solutions of their own. This will help both participants and their audience think about their own



personal and/or community circumstances in relation to global issues. Someone's confidence in suggesting solutions from a personal standpoint is an important indicator during this step.

This phase in the project cycle is often a very stressful one. Concentration is important, and the artistic leader needs to be focused and in charge of managing and directing the process to ensure that everyone can provide input. Skills facilitators have a major role to play here, particularly in terms

of helping the participants assemble the artistic skills they have developed to form an outline of a presentation. In connection with their individual capacity building, the participants can assume the role of skills facilitators and artistic directors in an understudy capacity.

**4. Developing an outline for a performance**  
Ask the participants to use the artistic skills they have learnt and the issues they have identified to come up with a short performance. They can do this as a whole group or else split up into small

### ITS IMPORTANT ...

- ... that all artistic skills learnt are performed deliberately, and not merely with the 'excuse' of moving the story forward. They should contribute to a high-quality artistic presentation.
- ... to ensure that the participants' artistic skills are acknowledged and displayed.
- ... that the participants are presented in a positive and respectful way.
- ... to ensure collective ownership in the making of the presentation; this can be enhanced by giving participants different roles and responsibilities, for example by putting someone in charge of the costumes, etc.
- ... that the final presentation is fully participatory, with the participants acting as facilitators.
- ... that the performance is not longer than 30 to 45 minutes and balanced in terms of its humour, energy, engagement.
- ... that the performance is suitable for a diverse audience; sensitive to social and cultural norms without being censored in any way. Let the participants advise you.
- ... that the performance is something out of the ordinary for the local population in order to capture their attention and imagination.

groups, with each group engaging with a different issue. Take two to three days to develop this.

#### 5. Intensive rehearsals

Based on the needs of the presentation, the artistic director prepares a rehearsal schedule. The rehearsals can either be:

1. collective events involving all group members, i.e. when the group comes together to combine different elements, mostly guided by the artistic director
2. specific-item events involving selected participants, i.e. when the artistic director requests a skills facilitator to lead the development of single items.

#### 6. Costumes, sound/light equipment, décor, PR materials

The artistic director, the production team, the

visual-arts team, the technical team, the PR team and costume team get together to make final decisions on the kinds of costumes to be used, the kinds of décor, and how the presentation will be publicised to potential audiences. The sound and light equipment required will depend on the kind of presentation that the participants have developed. It is important to involve the participants in any decision making in this regard.

#### 7. The technical run-through

It is important to have at least two or three run-throughs, including a technical run-through, before giving the presentation



before an audience. After every run-through, sit down together with the project team and the participants and give each other feedback, especially in terms of areas to improve. If necessary, you can rehearse some parts separately to perfect them before the next run-through. At this point, the participants should 'own' their performance. Stage managers (preferably two: one male and one female) should be appointed from amongst the participants.

#### Designing the final performance

The most difficult part in this step is coming up with the storyline for the performance. Cre8 has used two different approaches, as described in the following two examples:

#### EXAMPLE

##### 1. The story-building method

In the 'Ngimana Mabirow' project in Yala, Kisumu, Kenya the group members were invited to stand in a circle. One of them started the story with just one sentence:

*A boy named Okoth was walking aimlessly on the market...*

The next participant picked it up from there, adding a second sentence after the first one:

*He was hungry and bored, and he saw fruits being sold...*

This continued for about three minutes, with each subsequent participant adding one more sentence to the story. In each case, the participants were guided by the project statement concerning youth unemployment that they had developed collectively before this exercise. The artistic director then asked someone to recount the whole story as it had been collectively 'built up' by the group.

*In this approach, the artistic director then helps the group streamline the story into a dramatic piece and works creatively through the storyline, pasting in artistic material developed during rehearsalsto form the content of the performance. For instance, a story might start with a situation in which there is no rain and people are hungry. The participants could perform a dance they had developed to enact the situation, using sorrowful music created by the music group to magnify the situation... This process continues until the whole performance has been created.*

## **2. The mini-theatre-group approach**

This approach was used during 'Kati' project in Gulu, northern Uganda. The artistic director divided the 60 participants into five theatre groups, since five current issues / challenges had been selected. Each group was given the task to develop a short performance using one or more artistic skills in only 15 minutes to ensure that they

would stick to the storyline and avoid trying to achieve perfection.

The groups were invited back to share their presentations of no more than five minutes each. Using all five pieces, and with the assistance of the artistic director, the whole group then weaved together one 'logical' story.

*As with the 'story-building method', the artistic director helps the group develop the final presentation by integrate the various items they have created using their artistic skills.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The three capacity areas – self-esteem/ confidence, specific artistic skills and developmental awareness – are combined to further develop a clear project statement – a specific message to raise consciousness about an issue – through the making of a creative performance. There are various ways to reach the final performance, but it is important to ensure that the decision-making process is collective. The outcome should not be determined in advance but should be the result of this collective process.

## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **A presentation/performance**
- **A script**
- **Stage manager or managers**
- **A list of costumes, props, sound and lighting equipment and décor**
- **A technical script**
- **Participants who are in charge of the presentation**



## STEP 7: PRESENTATION

Cre8  
in 8

*Achievement calls  
for a party*

## INTRODUCTION

Tg venues, securing necessary permits, and hiring a stage and/or sound/lighting equipment) and not to leave anything to the last minute. It is important for the project team to develop a checklist to guide the participants in preparing and carrying out the presentation.

## CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

The number of performances to be given will be dictated by the project plan and design. The most important thing is not the number but rather the type of performance, as dictated by the audience and the situations in which the performances will be given.

In each project, Cre8 organises the following types of performances:

### Peer performance.

This type of performance is aimed at audiences who are of the same age group as the participants. They are important performances and it is recommended to make your first performance a peer performance and to hold it at the rehearsal venue. You could even make your final technical run-through a peer performance.

### Community-outreach performance

This type of performance is given within the local community, preferably at a marketplace, beside a busy village road or in a village square.

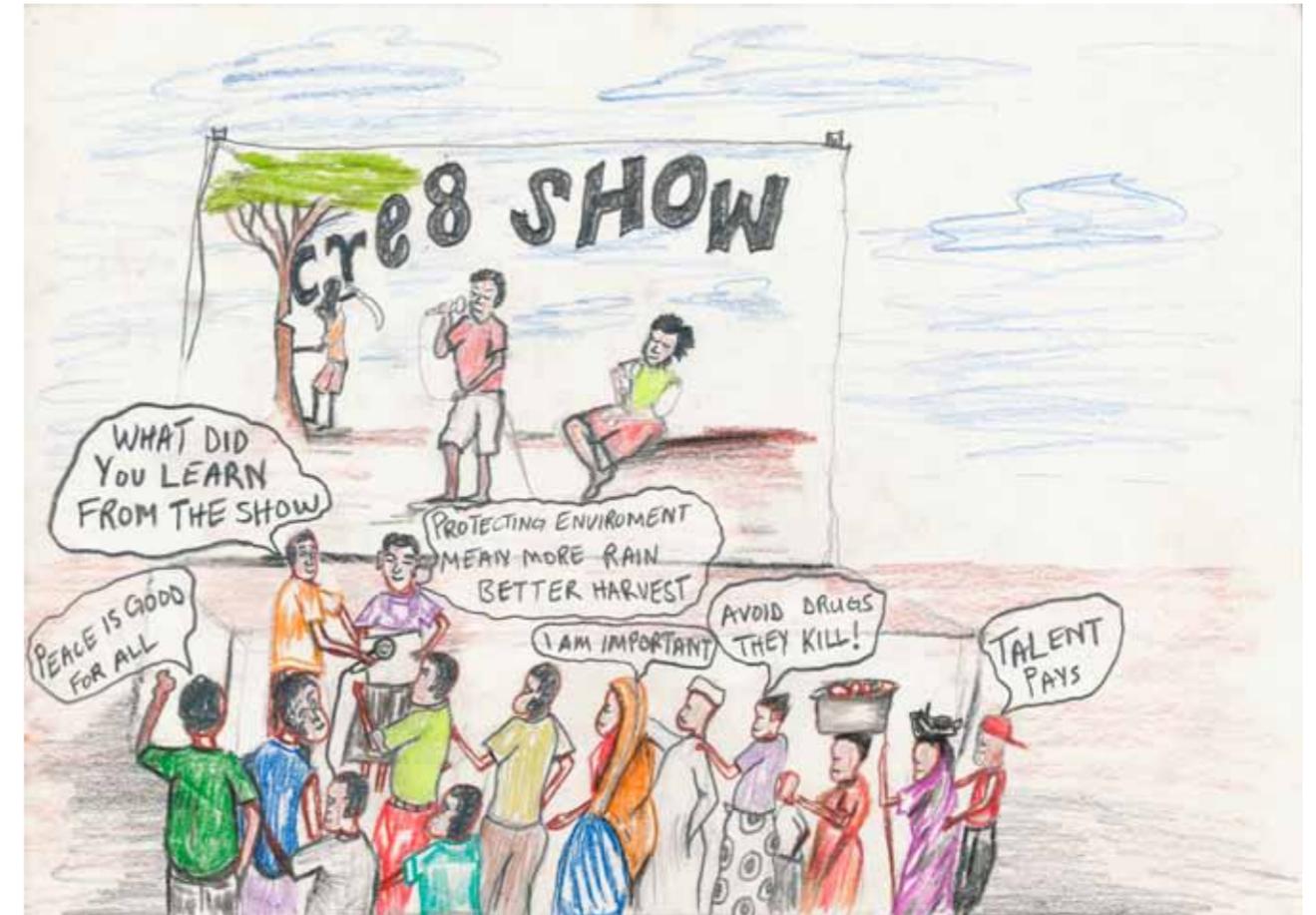
### Stakeholder performance

This type is also known as performance for (local) opinion leaders, development practitioners and other decision-makers. This type of performance can be held at the local town hall or hosted by one of the stakeholders within the community.

### Public performance

These are large-scale performances attracting diverse audiences, held in the town centre, at a local stadium or in a park.

Directly after the presentation, an audience survey



or evaluation must be held. It is important to gather reactions from the audience not only with regard to their impression of the performance as a whole, but also to the issues it addressed. Important evaluative questions may include:

- Did you like/enjoy the performance and If YES, what did you like most about it?
- What is your opinion on the participants

talents, which talents did you identify.

- Did you learn anything from the performance? If YES, mention three things you learnt?
- Do you have any suggestion of ways to improve the performance?

Make sure that the participants after every performance evaluate during the performance.

This will help you monitor whether the performance is serving its intended purpose.

### EXAMPLE

During the AMKA project, the group toured through Tanzania and Kenya to perform in seven different cities. Each performance was different for two reasons. For one thing, the audiences were very different. Sometimes we organised a performance for an audience of peers, sometimes we did that for stakeholders and/or the local community, and sometimes a public performance was organised. The group interacted differently with each audience, so each performance had a different accent and dynamic. The second reason why each time was different was that the performers asked some members of the audience a list of questions after each performance. The results of each survey influenced the next performance. Whenever our performers thought that the audience didn't get the intended

message, for example, they would adjust some of the scenes to get that message across more clearly.

### CONCLUSION

Besides being a medium of empowerment, the presentation (and the project) is also an avenue for advocacy. It aims to influence audiences and stimulate them to take actions to improve the lives of the community.

So for community members, having an opportunity to view the performance within their own circles and to interact with the 'makers' (i.e. the participants) means that the impact is immediate and thus motivates them to take action. The project also advocates accessibility for all. This is the main reason the performances held for people within their comfort zones, in places where they feel free to share and express openly.



## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **A list (schedule) of performances**
- **A logistics plan**
- **A checklist**
- **Any relevant permits**
- **Audience evaluation forms**
- **Photos and a video of the presentation**
- **A summary of feedback from the participants**



## STEP 8: FOLLOW-UP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Cre8  
in 8

*'A long journey starts with just one step; the same long journey ends with one step... The memory lives on forever.'*

## INTRODUCTION

**It is important to have a plan for a follow-up, to ensure a lasting effect. Many well-intentioned project initiators end up confusing, if not even reversing, the gains they made, due to their lack of a proper ‘sustainability’ plan. In this context, sustainability does not mean that you will continue being involved with the participants on a daily basis after the project, but rather that the initial gains and impacts realised by the project on different levels will be sustained.**

### CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

In terms of sustainability it is important that:

- the skills learnt and the capacity to transfer them will remain within the community through the training of trainers (ToT)
- the project becomes partnered with local stakeholders who have the capacity to integrate the method within their regular programming
- a sustainability plan or strategy is developed that includes the wishes and the circumstances of participants at the core of its implementation
- this sustainability plan is both realistic and within the means and capabilities of the participants, local partners and the community.

A good sustainability plan is part of the project plan, and the initiator should make sure that all partners are well briefed in that regard.

#### EXAMPLE

In Moshi, Tanzania, Cre8 worked with the Mkombozi management to ensure there would be a follow-up and that the effects would be sustained. Working according to a setup agreed upon in advance, Mkombozi mainstreamed the Cre8 project within its programmes, such that the participants were allowed to meet regularly at the institution to further develop their skills. Besides the staff member whom the organisation had appointed to be in charge of the project, local skills facilitators such as the acrobatics teacher were also regularly invited to guide the

participants. The staff member periodically wrote reports on the participants’ progress and shared those with Cre8. After one year, Cre8 organised a follow-up session with the participants in partnership with Mkombozi. No less than 60% of the original members participated in that session.

By means of a focus-group discussion, the participants shared about the progress they had made over the previous year since the end of the project. They also displayed some of their work, which served as evidence of how their artistic skills had further developed but also of how their awareness of development issues had advanced. For example, the young people who

had been working as visual-artist trainees during the project had established a visual-arts studio in their community, where they produced paintings and other products for sale. They also established a community visual-arts training-and-mentorship centre.

### CONCLUSION

Thinking about the sustainability of the results of a project is something that needs to be embedded in every step of the project cycle. Every decision made should be made with an eye to ensuring lasting results. The responsibility for sustainability lies with the beneficiaries, including both the host organisation and the participants.

## CHECK-OUT BOX

- **A well-considered sustainability plan.**
- **A sustainability agreement with the local partner(s).**
- **A monitoring-and-evaluation plan aimed at measuring results and impacts.**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cre8 East Africa wishes to thank all those who have made it possible to carry out our projects over the past ten years: those who have helped us raise funds or write applications or volunteered during our many fundraising campaigns as well as those who have helped to professionalise our organisation, build our website, write our newsletters and design our projects. We would also like to thank the many people who have participated in our projects in East Africa, for example as skills facilitators, as cooks, or as assistants. We are also grateful towards our partner organisations in projects in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. We thank the hundreds of young people who have participated in our projects but also their relatives who have trusted us to work with their children. Finally, we give special thanks to the organisations and private funds that, through their generous financial support and advice, have made it possible to work with so many people over the course of some truly unforgettable projects.

Cre8 East Africa would like to thank you for reading this manual and we wish you all the best in your work in the future.

Nairobi / Amsterdam, January 2016



