

# Creating Plays and Dialogue

## Strengthening the Role of Nepali Theatre in Dealing with the Past

Social Relations

Connectedness/Focus on the common good

Human-Rights-Oriented Values

### Social Cohesion in the Project Context

#### Context:

- More than 1,300 people are still missing after the 10-year-long armed conflict in Nepal
- Affected people are suffering and fighting for their rights, while other parts of the society are not aware of the lasting impact of the conflict

#### Dimensions of social cohesion:

- Social Relations
- Connectedness
- Human-rights-oriented values

### Approach to Strengthening Social Cohesion

#### Art

- Artists from diverse backgrounds, such as different casts, gender, geography, culture and experiences, are included in the projects
- Dialogue with audiences and communities is created through art
- Plays are focused on social transformation issues

#### Culture

- Stories of conflict-affected people are listened to and portrayed to themselves through artistic expressions
- Projects are implemented in collaboration with NGOs and affected people, learning from each other
- History in the form of story-telling focuses on and includes the perspectives of marginalised and conflict-affected groups, enriches the common history, empowers these groups, makes the society more inclusive and fosters social cohesion.

Implemented by	Civil Peace Service (CPS) of GIZ
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project area	Bardiya, Dang, Kailali, Kaski and Kathmandu (districts of Nepal)
Most relevant partners	Mandala Theater Nepal, National Network of Family Members of Enforced Disappearance, Nepal (NEFAD), Conflict Victim's Central Platform, Bardiya (CVCP), Freelancer Artists and Theatre Directors Local Communities, Municipalities and Administrations
Target group	Conflict-affected communities, family members and theatre artists
Overall term	07/-12/2018
Total budget	54,54,100 NRP (ca. 40.000 Euro)
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### Achievements and Impacts

- People come together and engage in dialogue
- Respect for different perspectives is brought into the minds of people
- The community of young directors and directresses/artists working for social cohesion is strengthened

*Family members and authors launching the drama book Aadha Satya, the play based on experiences of family members of enforced disappeared people.*



- Quote: “This workshop and the play woke me from my indifference. I was limited to the news, images or videos about these issues but never tried to listen to them and feel their pain and suffering. I have been writing drama reviews for the last two years. This workshop, together with discussions, performances, group games and character building showed the depth and richness of a drama made on the sensitive issue. I now look into characters connecting them with the real-life scenario. The workshop transformed me as a person who is now more emphatic, welcoming and listening to others’ pain.”

## Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Have a provision of basic income for rehearsal and staging time. It is difficult for artists to manage time for long workshops and playmaking processes because of financial reasons.
- Meeting and sharing with affected people helped in overcoming differences in the artistic levels and experiences of participants.
- Support of peace advisors is useful as they bring a multi-partial perspective in managing group dynamics.
- It is helpful to take along most of the technical equipment to be more independent during mobile theatre tours. Going to different places with the mobile theatre bus to stage the shows means dealing with different circumstances and arranging spots – a football/soccer field, a playground of a school, a bigger street or square, etc. – in a useful way.
- Staying in homestays in villages during the mobile theatre tour creates a good connection with local people and opens more opportunities to share about the issues of the play afterward.
- Including local organisations and collaborating with the CPS team “Dealing with the Past” and their partner organisations supported an ongoing exchange of the issues of the play especially with affected people from the audience.

## How we measure

### Qualitative methods

- Feedback of family members and audiences after the shows through interviews and dialogue sessions
- Observations of theatre artists
- Review of comments on video documentaries
- Messages of family members after the events
- Paintings of visual artists after dialogue sessions
- Feedbacks and critics of media, artists, activists
- Review and discussions on plays written to strengthen social cohesion

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## Quantitative methods

- Monitoring the number of audiences
- Monitoring the number of participants in panel discussions and workshops
- Monitoring the number of plays that strengthen social cohesion
- Sample indicators:
  - Networks between artists, activists and victims/survivors in Nepal are established and strengthened
  - Increased cooperation with partner organisations
  - Dialogue about socio-political issues between theatre artists, audience & communities is created
  - Increased number of participants in dialogue sessions

## Available Documents

- Program report
- Video documentary and article on Mandala Theater Homepage: <https://mandalatheatre.com/productions/khabar-harayako-chitthi/>
- Reviews in media:
  - <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-09-02/khabar-harayako-chitthi-at-mandala.html>
  - <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-09-15/life-is-elsewhere.html>
  - <https://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-10-02/in-solidarity-with-families-of-the-disappeared.html>

*Artists getting ready to perform the play Jumping Frog- Reloaded on Mandala’s mobile theatre bus- Junkiri in a community in western Nepal.*



*Nepali play directress Patrika Ghimire talking with a woman who is searching for her son who disappeared in the conflict period*

