

# **THEATRE WORKSHOP REPORT**

## **NAATAK TOLI**

### **SERIES I**

**A ten day Residential theatre making and training workshop  
organized by UNICEF Rajasthan and RIHR**

**Venue**

**Adhar Shodh Sansthan, Chaksu Radoli**

**Date**

**June 17-26, 2022**



## **ABOUT THE WORKSHOP**

A ten day THEATRE MAKING and TRAINING WORKSHOP for adolescents - first time learners -from a rural background in their environment.

## **ORGANISER**

UNICEF Rajasthan and RIHR, held at Aadhar Shodh Sansthan, Chaksu (60 kms from Jaipur).

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Forty Seven students of age group 10-16 years from five villages (Kotkhawada, Badodiya, Nainupura, Radoli and Patol ki Dhani ) of Chaksu Municipality about 50 KM from Jaipur.

## **OBJECTIVE**

To hone observation skills and inculcate an ability in participants to witness a situation and express it in theatrical form so that they can create a self-sustaining NATAK TOLI of 10-15 children that can make plays about their own issues, on their own after this training.

## **PEDAGOGY**

As the children were first time learners from a rural background and never exposed to any art form or its training in school or outside, the workshop could proceed only with an initial plan of the sessions. The usual theatre training structure had to be improvised upon, rejigged, and often completely reversed throughout the ten days. The most important part of the workshop was in the beginning and that was to quickly identify activities that could make the children respond to the resource persons and ensure the participation of every single participant despite their contrasting speeds of doing any activity.

It was observed that the usual practice of working with a single big group would not work here so the original design had to be improvised upon and smaller groups with individual resource persons were constructed. That helped in creating personal contact with children and identifying their creative skills. The resource persons decided to repeat any imaginative expression done by children to the whole group and praise them profusely which helped immensely in holding their attention. One effective tool of this whole process was to remember and utter the names of children while talking.

The resource persons often had to keep aside their plan of activities for the day and listen to what children wanted to say, do or play with them and eat with them. This creates trust in children towards the resource persons and deepens the bond and instead of a popular

unidirectional classroom mode of teaching creates a sense of mutuality among children and the trainers. A subtle part of the pedagogy was to dress in a way that does not make resource persons stand in contrast with the rural milieu.

As the notion of gender was noticeable from the very first day in the group the female resource persons decided to sit amid boys and interact more with them which as an example created confidence among the young girls. A special activity called 'MERE 24 GHANTE' was designed in response to gender inhibitions so that the children can recall, articulate, and discuss their daily routine which exhibited a deep gender bias.

Children were never scolded or forced to abandon any activity and instead, every instruction was followed with conversational reasoning. At the end of every day, resource persons sat down to recall the tiniest bit of experience/incident that can shed some light on how the participants were responding to the learning. Their inputs were used to formulate the next day's session and activities.

The fundamental division of the day's session was into two parts - an initial **PLAYFUL** half followed by a **THOUGHTFUL** half. And it was observed that to remove the feeling of dullness from the thoughtful activities they had to be presented to children in the form of a rural event or some big happening.

One important approach was to leave the idea of extracting some story or issue from the children through some activities or triggers and instead create space and trust for them to express, as if preparing a ground. The children were involved in decision making about the plays they were making and given leadership roles according to their nature and were given freedom to decide on props and costumes balancing the local cultural ethos with creative requirements.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

### Day 1

The day started with representatives from UNICEF and RIHR briefing about the concept workshop which was followed by 'Coin Game' and 'Name Remembering Game.' Talk about 'What is theatre?' Pair activities like 'Naav Chali' and Children are given questions to ask each other in pairs and present them to an audience.



An exercise to open up their voices.



## Day 2



Started with Group Prayer 'Tumhi ho Mata Pita tumhi ho'. An activity of character walk of Sarpanch, Cow, Teacher, cat etc. The next activity was the SPEED WALK which involved participants walking at varying speeds. Children presented dance, bhajan and gymnastics. In consultation with children, some ground rules for the workshop were penned down. A 'Bus activity' centering around expression by children. Division of participants into four smaller teams

namely - VARSHA, PRAKASH, BAHUBALI and KHATTA MEETHA who wrote, composed, and performed their own group song. Copies and pencils were distributed to children and homework was given for the first time.

## Day 3

"Ek ungali " energizer was sung followed by the daily prayer. A group activity called 'ABCD game' which involved kids making alphabets using their bodies creatively. Daily report written by kids were read in their groups by resource persons and kids made their own sketches.



## Day 4

Prayer followed by 'Baajra' energizer sung by everyone. Making shapes and forms of everyday objects like Cot, River, Tree, and Handpump. Followed by an Image improvisation of a scene of a village well. This introduced the idea of performer and audience. Resource persons presented a scene depicting Himanshu's home. Homework to write their home scene

### Day 5

Prayer along with the meaning of one of its lines. An energizer recap followed with 'Kanak supari' energizer sung by all. Participants were divided into teams of 5 each and asked to improvise their home scene. Discussion on the scenes they made followed by an academic session around the theater and its elements like visuals, characters, actors, actresses, dialogue, props, and costumes. They were given homework to write these elements in the scene they made.



### Day 6

Prayer with the meaning of another line. Energizer recap was done. Identifying a subtle discomfort around gender, a creative and academic conversation about human evolution that progressed towards the origin of man and woman and society was held. Kids were divided into five different groups with different leaders and they enacted a classroom scene.

### Day 7

Prayer with meaning. Energizer 'Moti si billayian' was sung. 'Mere 24 ghante' (my 24 hours) activity was conducted which involved children drawing clocks and penning down their daily routine. Their pages are exhibited and the kids read each other's routine. Later they were introduced to the idea of 'what is a discussion' and divided into



two teams and a discussion was held about the difference in the 24 hours of the boys and girls.



### Day 8

Prayer followed by an awareness game of numerical and action. An academic session about the process of making plays. Two groups were made and the children decided that they wanted to



make a play of 'VILLAGE SCENE' and ' WORKSHOP SCENE.' Later they performed these plays at outdoor and indoor locations with costumes, props and sets.

### Day 9

Prayer and its meaning. A conversation with kids on their plays where they were told about time limit, stage management and team making. A detailed Planning with participants for their final day performances.



### Day 10

Prayer. Energizer called 'Clap and smile.' A confidence building conversation with kids regarding the choice of costumes, props and freedom to present their play.

Teams did a dress Rehearsal. Final performances. A talk with a complete group where they related their experiences of a workshop moderated by UNICEF representative Dr Tabeenah

Anjum. Mr Goel of RIHR also presented his views.

Finally, Resource Persons had a conversation with a smaller group identified earlier as members who will go on to form the NATAK TOLI. The members were - Dilkhush, Rahul Rana, Rahul, Pushpendra, Sejal Sharma, Ganesh, Aryan, Priya, Arti, Puja, Arti and Anjali.

### Learning Outcome:

1. Playfulness and opening up.
2. Sharing And Friendship
3. Teamwork and Cooperation
4. Listening and Speaking.
5. Expression
6. Ways of storytelling
7. Leadership/ directional skills

8. Awareness about the existing issues and their impact.
9. Story building around the issue
10. How to make a play from scratch.

## Final theatre performance by participants

On the final day, two plays were made by the children, one was performed outdoors to depict the visual of the village and the other indoors for the depiction of this workshop's scene.

### Play 1 - 'Gannv ka drishya' (Village scene)



**Description:** The play depicted the village scene having two families each with father, mother and two children. One teacher, one shopkeeper, one Sarpanch and an NGO lady being other characters. The play was about portraying the activities of the village bringing their major issues of caste discrimination, behavior of teachers towards children affecting their learning. The play concluded with Sarpanch Ji deciding on doing the workshop for children as they will be the future of the village. Villagers came together to solve their problems and celebrate the festival of Holi keeping apart their differences.

#### Characters:

Kalpiti- Sarpanch, Pushpendra-Teacher, Lekhraj- Son 1, Aarti- Mother 2, Anjali- Daughter 1, Minakshi- Mother 1, Pooja- Father 1, Minakshi- Mother 1, Kailash- Shopkeeper, Hemraj- Father 2, Mohit- Son 2, Kalpna- NGO lady, Sanjana- Daughter 2

## Play 2 - 'Karyashala ka drishya' ( Workshop scene)



**Description:** The play was about a session from the 10 day workshop organized by UNICEF and RIHR and conducted by four resource persons. The children performed the roles of all the Resource persons and also of themselves. They presented the session that revolved around gender conversation and also depicted actions, behaviours and activities performed during other sessions. The play ended with an image of a girl brooming the house while her brother returning from the workshop watches it thoughtfully and hands her a book before taking the broom from



her hands.

**Characters:**

Ganesh - Anshul, Rahul - Himanshu, Dilkhush - Jai Narayan ji and Pushpendra , Sejal - Mumal, Ashesh - Rahul and Pankaj ji, Aarti - Vartika, Aaryan - Ganesh, Priya - Student Piyush – Student

**FINDINGS**

1. Children were good at writing or doing as it is what they were instructed to do but in the initial days showed a noticeable hesitation towards activities involving imagination.
2. Contents of a school scene created on their own by children and a discussion with them suggests their Teachers are not performing their duties properly in the villages and they are scolding students.
3. Village has caste issues .
4. Participants have never been exposed to specialized training outside the school setup. They took time to comprehend why resource persons were here

**BARRIERS**

- Initially language looked like a small barrier but mutual affection of teachers and students rendered it insignificant.
- Childrens' unfamiliarity with art education and not accustomed to freedom of imagination meant everything had to be introduced to them from scratch.
- Their unstructured and uncontrollable energy that resulted in constant noise and comments, especially from boys

**WAY AHEAD/ SUGGESTIONS**

- In a small period of 10 days we've been able to create in them some understanding of observation, listening, seeing ... to keep it growing Continuous periodic interaction with

- Natak Toli at the same venue at least ones or twice a month is essential.
- Partner organisations must Create space and opportunity for Natak Toli to practice and perform their plays in villages as well as city.
- Organizing partners may ensure these children have some role / responsibilities with them so that the impact of workshop doesn't fade away.

## **Testimonies of students**

### **Sejal Sharma -**

*"Main sabhi teachers ke liye kuch likhna chahti hun....."*

*Mujhe sabhi teachers ke sath rehte 10 din ho chuke hain. Itne dino me maine unke sath bahut sare games khele. Aapke sath rehke maine bahut saare friends bhi banaye or bahut masti ki. Aapse maine acting karna sikha or wo sabhi hamare sath friend ki tarah rahe.*

*Or mujhe lag nahi raha ki 10 din itne jaldi khatam ho gaye or humne sirf 10 din me kitni saari chije sikh li. Mujhe unke sath or din bitaane ka man karta hai.*

*Sach me mujhe Mumal mam, Himanshu Sir, Vartika mam, Anshul bhaiya ke sath bahut bahut acha laga. Main un sabhi ko bahut yad karungi. Me unse kuch bolna chahti hun...*

*I WILL MISS YOU ALL".*

### **Ganesh Gurjar -**

*"Hamara Anubhav - Mujhe is 10 divashiye karyashala me aakar bahut acha laga or in 9-10 din me maine bahut kuch sikha jaise naye naye khel khelna, naye mitra banana, 10, 20, 50 ki speed par chalna, naatak karna, kirdar banana sikhna, acting karna sikhna, bahut kuch mai in 10 dino me sikh chuka hun, aur mujhe bahut acha laga".*

### **Rahul Rana (14 Years old) :**

*"Jo Main 10 Din mein bahut Kuchh Sikha vah Mere Gaon Mein karna chahta hun Aur aapane 10 Din Mein Mujhe Bahut Khushi kar*

*Main Gaon wale Logon Ko Hindi bulvana chahta hun*

*JIS school mein main bahut Salon se padh raha hun vah School Mujhe abhi tak Kuchh Sikha Nahin Pai*

*Jo log jaati ka bhedbhav Karte Hain use main Samjhana chahta hun Aur  
jo log Jaati Hai bhedbhav Karte Hain  
Aur Ladkiyon ko bar Dene Ki chhut Nahin Di jaati usko Main dilwana Chahta Hun  
Maine aapse 10 Din Mein Sikh kar Achcha laga ki Kaise Gaon Walon Ko samjhaya Jaaye Pahle  
Se Sochta tha lekin Koi manta tha Nahin  
Sabse Achcha yah Laga Jo log vah teacher Jaipur Se Aaye the vah teacher Bankar Nahin dost  
Bankar rahe the  
Aur नए-नए dost banae aur Sabke Naam Jaane aur yah bhi Jana Ki Kaun Kahan Se Aata Hai  
Aur yah sabse Achcha laga ki Ham natak banana 10 Din Mein Kaise Sikh gaye hain Aur  
Humne yah VC ka ki ladka ladki Mein Kya bhedbhav Hai  
Aur Humne yah bhi Sikha ki Ham aadimanav Se manushya Kaise Bane Hain  
Jo Ham Salon se school mein padh rahe hain vah abhi tak Hamare ko Kuchh Sikha Nahin Paye  
lekin aapane 10 Din Mein Hamare ko bahut Khushi Ka  
aur Humne likhkar Khud ke bare mein bahut Kuchh Achcha Laga"*

## **Experiences of instructors**

### **Mumal Tanwar | Lead trainer**

*I have been associated with NGO's and theatre for past few years but it is for the first time that I'm working with a group that hasn't undergone any such training or experienced these processes before. All the activities had to be simplified for them and I myself had to simplify my sense of understanding things so that I may understand these children better.*

*I understood that only by mingling with them absolutely, by being like them, by staying with them attentively and as energetically as they are can we create a safe environment around them. Where we do not appear to them like a different set of visitors from city.*

*As no one was using the mobile phone there at all it made us feel as if we have shifted back into a quieter past. How important is an open space and trees for children...every child in the middle of conversation would hop and start climbing a tree.*

*Initially when the kids were hesitating, not listening or participating I felt if we'd be able to do anything here or not...but slowly since activities, interactions started working and I sensed that actually theatre is a beautiful tool to give expression to childhood.*

### **Himanshu Vyas | Mentor**

*Children are a language. Childhood, the script in which they are written. Working with these children at the very outset meant to leave one's 'grownup' language and 'grownup' script behind. It gave me a sense of lightness and freshness being with a room full of about forty busy, active, talking, moving, constantly undulating kids who flit from one topic to another like a free squirrel and whose gaze flies off without any notice from your whiteboard to the tree outside like a butterfly. If you wait for the gaze to return of its own, you have their trust. I experienced that nothing lasting can be 'communicated' in a rural setup without trust.*



*A usual art training in an urban setup has almost all the communicational elements well rehearsed between the teacher and participants. But here were kids who not only were knowing theatre or any artistic process for the first time, but even asked to imagine perhaps for the first time. I had to leave my learnings behind and create a learning atmosphere from what the children wanted to say or do.*

*Going through this process was somewhat like discovering how it must have been for the first human being to imagine and wonder and utter new words and recreate the reality in a theatrical form. The thick black used by Rahul in his sketch... the quietness that pervaded talkative Pushpendra as soon as he wore my khadi jacket to don the character of a teacher or the way little Rahul would participate in group discussion of our play while dangling from branch of a neem tree.*

*This made me sense a comeraderie with the participants. Just as they were expanding from their school-ish instructional way of learning into the skies of imagination, I was expanding from my academic structures of art into something more primal and fluid.*

#### **Anshul Bandhiwal | Workshop Assistant**

*It was a wonderful experience. To work with children who have little to no idea about the theatre. To observe them daily and see them come out of their shell and interact with each other. And to interact with kids as if you are a kid yourself. To work creatively in such a way kids interact and found nothing unusual. Working with the kids as a friend made me think about my way of working, to work in the simplest way possible. Being with the kids listening to their stories and poems. Playing games with them. Their way of finding solutions to issues. Listening to issues they face in rural areas. One can't turn away from such a fruitful experience to understand the urban city's origin. On the last day, it was beautiful to see a group of children sitting together enjoying as on the first day they all sat as if strangers to one another.*

#### **Vartika Balani | Workshop Assistant**

*"This 10 day workshop was a very insightful experience for me. It taught me how to deal with children who are at a very raw level of learning. It helped me understand how to work with children aged 10-16 years and put the learned theatrical and psychological concepts in a way that encouraged active participation according to their environment. It not only helped me to take and correspond to the given responsibilities of assisting and documenting but also benefited me to learn to create an inclusive atmosphere for the children. It enabled me to diversify my attention to all of them and amalgamate their varying energies into a single play performance. It refined me to different styles of teaching and in restructuring understanding levels towards students with differing mental cognitions and expressions."*

#### **Shashwat Bose | Volunteer**

*A selfish lesson I learnt that applies to my own life, which I knew but not to this extent, was that giving back to the community and helping other people feels amazing. If you spend time with someone who is inspirational for long enough, then the effect will rub off on you. Just like the village experience, the same goes in the opposite direction too. Imagine if we could get a village student away from their environment for a few days – do you think it would help them to change their situation?*

*Sometimes it's not what you say but what you do that can change people. One act that shows you care can change the way you are perceived and have a positive impact on other people. The Children show us that we will stumble, we may rage, we'll have our feelings hurt at times, but if we allow ourselves to experience all these things, we may truly soar. If we fall down, mess up or make a mistake, we feel what we feel and we get right back up.*

### **Vipin Jangir | Volunteer**

*“When this workshop started, I was not directly the part of it, but after the end of the first day Himanshu sir, Mumal, Vartika and Anshul were discussing about the first day of the workshop and I was also there. Himanshu sir told me that we also have to make a documentary of this workshop, so he gave me the videos and asked me to go through them so that I can know about the workshop and start to visualise how we can make the documentary. So I joined this discussion daily and was listening to what was going on in the workshop as they discuss about all the activities and the changes these activities were bringing in the children. Anshul had an exam on the 7th and 9th day, so I went to the workshop instead. When I reached there, It was not difficult for me to recognise them because I was hearing their names everyday and was known about their nature. What I learnt from this workshop was firstly this thing that if there are people who can understand and listen to the voices of children and if they know how to communicate with these raw and pure souls, then this world could be a beautiful place. Because*

*I joined the discussion of this workshop everyday, I came to know a lot of things, like the way to communicate with them, what kind of activities should be done with them, to talk and listen to them, so that they can express themselves openly and trust us. Also, how important it is to discuss daily about the individual observations of the resource persons and also the plans and activities for the next day and the changes these activities were bringing in the children”*

### **Participants list**

#### **GIRLS:**

Kavita  
Sanjana Saini  
Aarti Saini Anju  
Saini Hansa

Saini Manisha  
Gujjar Komal  
Bairwa  
Chanda  
Sanjana Saini  
Ria Saini  
Anjali Sharma  
Ritika Gujjar  
Seema Gujjar  
Khushi  
Dilbhar Gujjar  
Tamanna  
Khushi  
Laxmi Rana  
Arti Saini  
Arti Saini  
Pooja Saini  
Kalpana Saini  
Anjali Saini  
Sejal Sharma  
Minakshi  
Pooja Gujjar

**BOYS:**

Rahul  
Kamlesh Gujjar  
Virendra Meena  
Ganesh  
Amit Gujjar  
Pushpendra  
Rahul Rana  
Vikas Meena  
Choturam Meena  
Kailash Singh  
Hemraj Saini  
Dilkhush Saini  
Dilkhush Saini  
Aaryan Saini  
Ashish Sharma  
Kalpit Saini  
Piyush Saini  
Lekhraj Saini  
Praveen Sharma



**Team members & Roles :-**

**Ms. Mumal Tanwar** - Resource person, theatre direction, production, curriculum design (Lead trainer)

**Mr. Himanshu Vyas** - Resource person, visual documentation, conceptual pedagogical insights (Mentor)

**Ms. Vartika Balani** - Assisting in theatre direction, costume, production and daily report (Assistant)

**Mr. Anshul Bandhiwal** - Assisting in documentation, daily report (Assistant)

**Mr. Vipin Jangir** - Assistance in Video and Editing (Volunteer) **Mr.**

**Shashwat Bose** - Assistance in plays and props (Volunteer) **Mr.**

**Vijay Goyal (RIHR)** - Workshop coordination/ Co-organiser

**Mr. Ankush Singh** (UNICEF Rajasthan) - Organising, Facilitation & Guidance **Dr.**

**Tabeenah Anjum** - Conceptualisation planning and supervision of workshop. **Mr.**

**Jainarayan** (Aadhar Sanstha) - Logistic support

**Ms. Namita and Mr. Pankaj** (Aadhar Sanstha) - Logistic support and refreshments

Copy of attendance sheet :-

**बच्चों के साथ नाटक व शिक्षा पर दस दिवसीय कार्यशाला**

दिनांक- 17/06/2022 से 26/06/2022

स्थान- आधार शोध केन्द्र रानीली चाकसू जयपुर

क्र.सं.	बच्चों का नाम	पिता का नाम	गाँव	पहला दिन	दूसरा दिन	तीसरा दिन	चौथा दिन	पांचवा दिन	छटा दिन
1.	अंजना	सुखदेव	पटोर	✓		✓	✓	✓	
2.	अंजना	सुखदेव	बडोदिया	✓		✓	✓	✓	
3.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
13.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
15.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
17.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

क्र.सं.	बच्चों का नाम	पिता का नाम	गाँव	1st+2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th+7th
1.	अंजना	सुखदेव	बडोदिया	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

35.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
37.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
38.	अंजना	सुखदेव	"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**More visuals from the workshop sessions:-**





