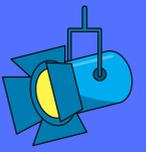
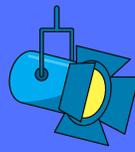




THE BACKWAY
THEATRE PLAY

GUIDE FOR IOM OFFICIALS





PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Backway Theatre is an innovative pedagogical tool designed for raising awareness around irregular migration among young potential migrants. It is aimed at students aged 13 to 18 years old, primarily for those on the way to completing their secondary studies. This activity should be implemented by IOM in collaboration with migrant returnees, who will serve as the facilitators who carry out the activity in schools around the country. The Backway Theatre will not only promote safe and orderly migration but could also be a source of income and capacity building for returnees in their reintegration process. This guide will take you through the three steps of the activity and offer basic guidance for the intervention and for training local facilitators to implement it.

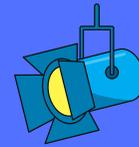


Students performing in Basse, The Gambia. "Grandfather explaining to kids how Gambians migrated in the past."

This activity has been designed by João Pedro Martins for the IOM Gambia under the supervision of Miko Alazas with special thanks to the Communications Team and the Migrants from the Backway association.



EXPECTATIONS



IOM

- Expand awareness raising portfolio to include an innovatively designed initiative;
- Sensitize students on the risks of and alternatives to irregular migration through a fun and interactive medium, aimed at garnering maximum interest and attention;
- Act locally in several regions at the same time, since there will be facilitators who can implement the activity simultaneously in different schools;
- Offer another range of activities to returnees;

Schools

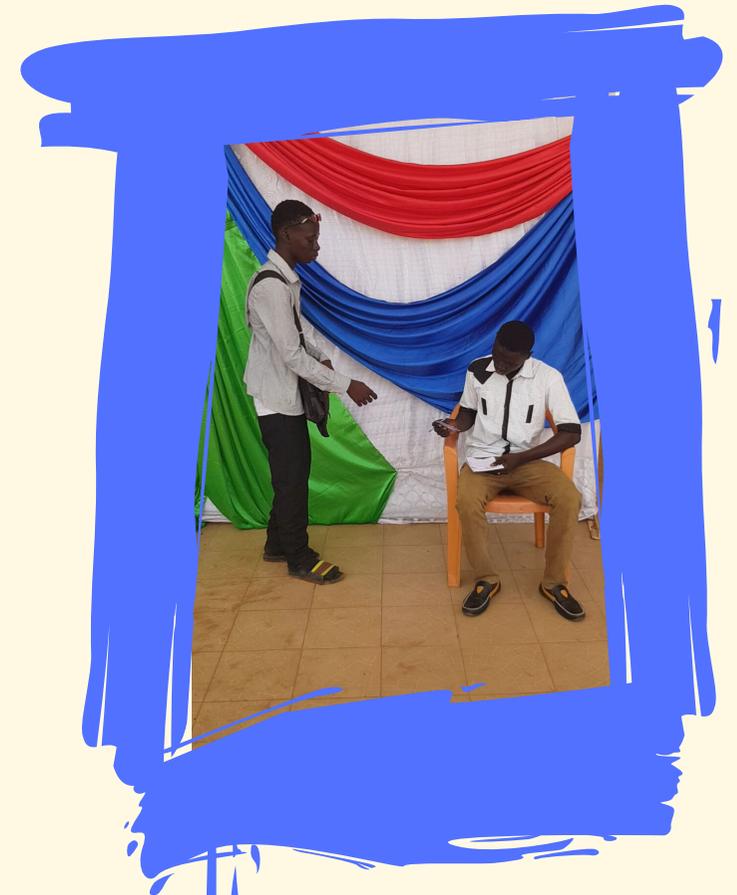
- Innovative methodology for students to discuss and learn about migration;
- Space of discussion for behaviour, ethics, and professional guidance for students;
- Activity that helps teenagers enhance their artistic expression and social skills.

Students

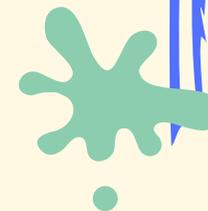
- Opportunity to speak about their future plans and receive guidance on life after school;
- Access to accurate information on the risks of and alternatives to irregular migration;
- Enhance and practice artistic skills;
- Learn more about social skills, behaviour, ethics and public speaking;
- Contact with influential figures in the community (i.e. returnees).

Returnees

- Basic income opportunity as facilitators;
- Opportunity for skill training as facilitators/educators for awareness raising;
- Empowerment and respect in communities as educators;
- Possibility to invite other returnees to join the program.



Kids performing in Basse, The Gambia.
"Migrant applies for a visa but is rejected"





ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

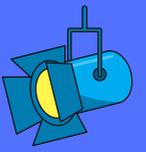
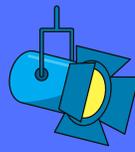
The activity has three parts and should not take longer than two hours. The amount of time offered by schools will depend on the local arrangement for interactive activities and the relationship between IOM and the school management, but a safe timeline would be a maximum of two hours to implement all activities. Interaction and trust-building between facilitators and students are the keys to the success of this activity. It is very important to have facilitators understand that students should feel free to express their ideas and that this activity is a safe space where no judgement takes place, especially when responding to students' plans about their future.

Interaction and trust-building between facilitators and students are the key to success of this activity. It is very important to have facilitators understand that students should feel free to express their ideas and that this activity is a safe space without judgement, especially when responding to students' plans about their future. The expected outcome for students is to let them express their social skills and share with their peers their understanding of migration. This will allow facilitators to expose them to accurate information and appropriate guidance at the end of the activity.



Students performing in Basse, The Gambia. "Mother cries because her son expresses plans to migrate to Europe irregularly."





INTRODUCTION

Improv activities are an important pedagogical resource that help students develop their creativity. The Backway Theatre integrates their knowledge of subjects (such as Social Sciences, Geography, Arts and History) with their social skills through the interpretation of reality and stories that they hear. This allows students to create their own story and perform it at the same time, as they simultaneously learn how to face challenges and find quick solutions.

Using improvisational theatre as pedagogical resource can be very fruitful *because participants, especially when they are kids, need to work as a team. This requires paying a lot of attention to the details and characters around and being quick to come up with a story and solutions. "Overall improvising means working as a team! It is necessary for every player to stay focused on what is happening around them. Essential for the fun of everybody is a positive atmosphere.*

"Everyone on stage is a genius" which means that there are no wrong answers during a game. Actors should always make sure to cooperate with each other and try to make everybody look good."

-Sina Laura Rautmann (2014)

References: S. L. Rautmann (2014). Benefits of Using Improv Games for Teaching. In: Term Paper [Advanced seminar]. Leuphana Universität Lüneburg.



TIMELINE



PREPARING THE CLASSROOM

5 MINUTES

5 FACILITATORS PER CLASSROOM

1 - FOCAL GROUPS

30 MINUTES

10 STUDENTS

1 FACILITATOR

2 - THE THEATRE

60 MINUTES TOTAL ACTIVITY

10 OR 11 STUDENTS PER GROUP

4 GROUPS IN TOTAL

1 FACILITATOR

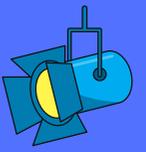
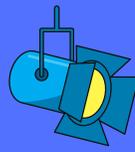
PERFORMANCE AND AWARDING

5 MINUTES

3 - DEBRIEFING

10 MINUTES

2 FACILITATORS PER CLASSROOM



INTRODUCTION

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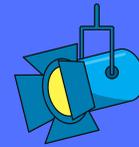
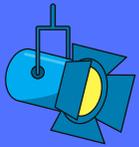
Using improvisational theatre as pedagogical resource can be very fruitful *because participants, especially when they are kids, need to work as a team. This requires paying a lot of attention to the details and characters around and being quick to come up with a story and solutions. "Overall improvising means working as a team! It is necessary for every player to stay focused on what is happening around them. Essential for the fun of everybody is a positive atmosphere.*

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PREPARING THE CLASSROOM

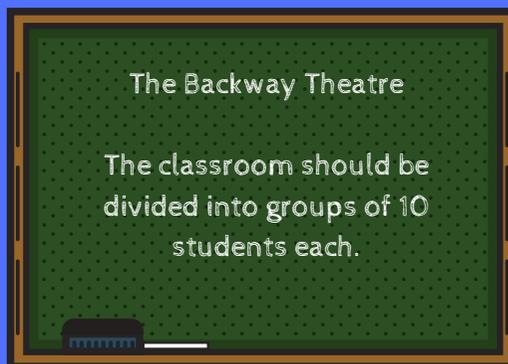
The classrooms can be very full and students might not be as organized as desired. Organizing the classroom appropriately is very important, so that the facilitator is ready for any potential issues and understands how to prepare the students for the activity.

Considering that the classrooms can have between 30 to 45 students, we should divide all the students into smaller groups of 10 students each. For each group, there should be at least one facilitator guiding the activities and providing information to students.

Each group should be implementing the activity with a certain distance from each other. If the classroom is small, ask students to remain with their group and not to pay attention to other groups, because in the end everyone will present their final output.



5 MINUTES
5 FACILITATORS
PER CLASSROOM

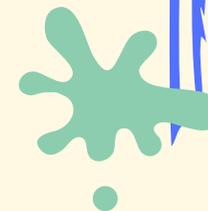


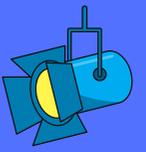
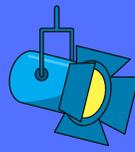
The Backway Theatre

The classroom should be
divided into groups of 10
students each.



Students sitting in groups of 10 in Basse, The Gambia. It is important to explain to them that they need to pay attention to their group and collaborate, even if the space is small or improvised.





1- FOCAL GROUPS

A) Facilitator sits with the Kids

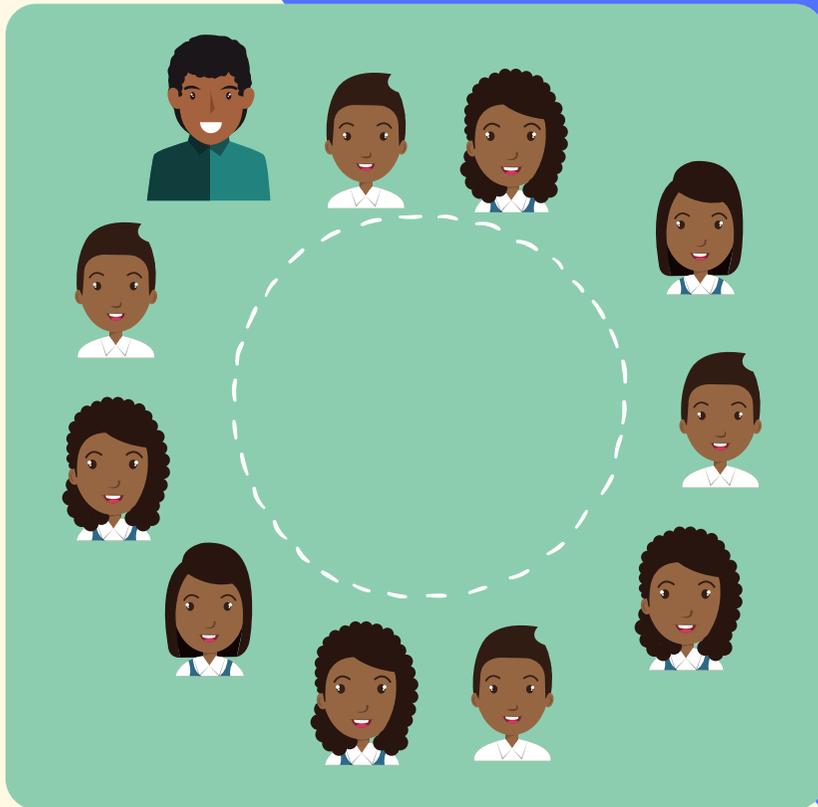
The facilitator should be with the students in the groups of 10 and should be sitting at the same level, such that they can look at each kid in the eyes. Facilitators should not be standing because it can make students view them as authority figures and thus feel constrained to speak.

B) Explain the purpose of the activity

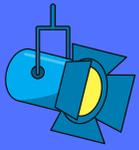
Explaining the reason for sitting in a circle is important, so students can understand they are not in a regular classroom and they can be free to express their ideas and feelings. This activity is an ice-breaking moment for everyone to say what they feel and talk about their dreams and plans for the future.

C) Facilitator gives an example

The facilitator should say how he/she felt when he/she was the age of the teenagers (in real stories!), and what his/her plans were for the future. It should not take long! This should take only 3-5 minutes. After this, students should be invited to express what they like doing in school, during their free time, and what they want to be when they grow up.. Each student should have 2-3 minutes to speak. The total time for this activity should not exceed 30 minutes.



30 MINUTES
10 STUDENTS
1 FACILITATOR



1 - FOCAL GROUP

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

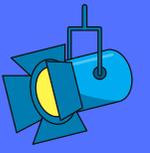
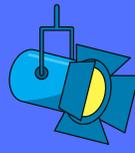
Interruptions during the focus group should only happen if a student's discussion is stuck, Facilitators may intervene with general questions about music, daily routine, school subjects and general ideas of the world. Facilitators should respect the student's understanding of the world, because this will be the centre of the activity. At this point, facilitators are mostly just expected to listen to the students and let them bring their world into the discussion.

Facilitators should be paying a lot of attention to each of the kids to identify their personality traits—including who are more creative and have social interaction skills (e.g. the ones that like to make jokes, are comfortable speaking in public). The students will be divided into different roles for the theatre (Part 2). Some should be acting and others will be in the writing/planning creating part.



Focus groups in Basse, The Gambia. Different focus groups happen at the same time, and one facilitator should be in each of them.





2 - THE THEATRE

The second part of the intervention is the core of the activity, which will be the live-action play inspired by the improvisational form of theatre. This activity aims to display an honest and true expression of how students see their future through the lens of migration.

"Drama is the centre of existence; because, it is a valuable form of communication. Drama provides children with an opportunity to work together cooperatively on a shared life. As a result, it gives children the change to express themselves more effectively in everyday situations" - Tülay Üstündağ, 1997

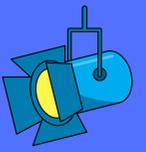
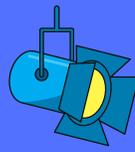
For this activity, teenagers will have the agency of producing a story of a migrant, according to their own understanding of migration. This brings their imagination (individual and collective visions of the world) to the classroom.



60 MINUTES TOTAL ACTIVITY
10 OR 11 STUDENTS PER GROUP
4 GROUPS IN TOTAL
1 FACILITATOR

References: T. Üstündağ (1997). The Advantages of Using Drama as a Method of Education in Elementary Schools. In: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi 13: 89-94





Students performing in Basse, The Gambia. "Smuggler offers an opportunity for migrating irregularly and going to Libya."

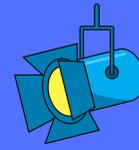
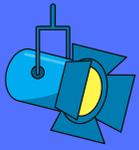


Give them 20 minutes to plan the play. They do not need to write all of it, only the main ideas. During these minutes, make sure that everyone knows their role and are working together on their ideas, while respecting the Producer of each material:

Producers -> the producers will be the team creating the basics of the story. They will be discussing together, brainstorming and designing the profile and personality of each character (name, origin, destination, desires, temper, family), the step-by-step migration route, the challenges that might happen during the trip, and will also need to explain to the actors how to perform their roles. The objective of the producers is not to give orders to others, but to coordinate and make sure that all elements will be completed at the end: direction and narration;=, map with the migration route and objects that the migrant will take in the journey.

Actors -> can give opinions and help Producers plan the trip, but their main task is to pay attention and understand the characters to be played. They need to understand what the Producers are planning because they will not have time for a writing a script. They also need to understand that they will perform it in front of the other students, so they will need to be prepared to speak in public without shame.





2 - THE THEATRE PRODUCTION

STEP A - DEFINING MIGRATION ROUTES

Each group will create a play about the story of a migrant in a pre-selected migration route. It should be decided by the facilitator, but it is important to always have routes represented in one classroom. It is important that the facilitators do not say that they were migrants themselves. This will be disclosed only at the end.

ECOWAS Route



Nigeria



Regular



Safe Road Route



Work Permit



Cultural Adaptation

Atlantic Route



Spain



Irregular



Dangerous ocean route



Cultural Adaptation

Mediterranean Route



Italy



Irregular



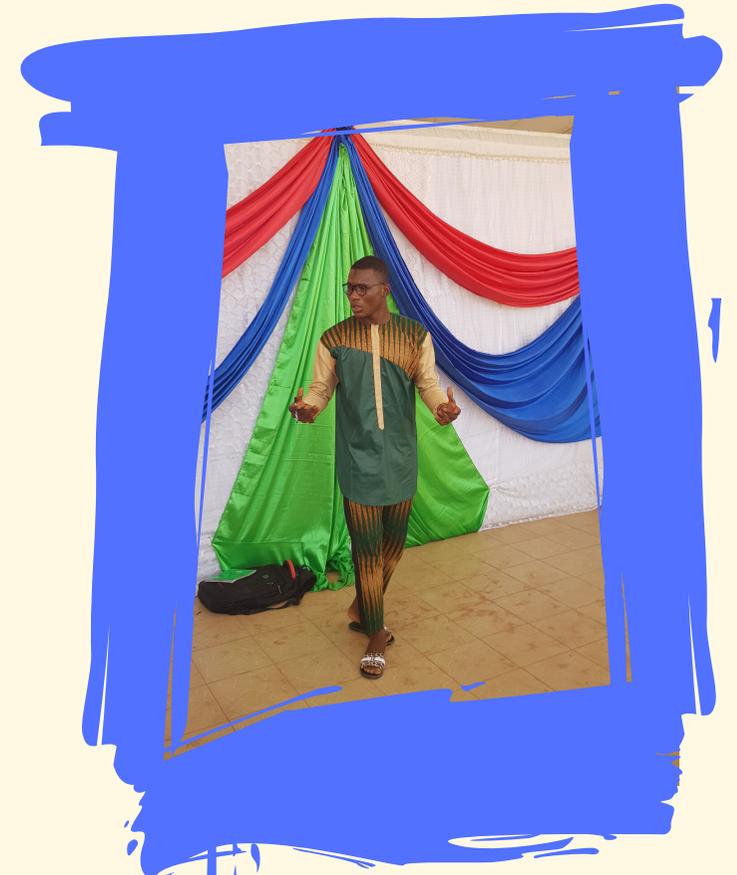
Dangerous sea route



Conflict zone

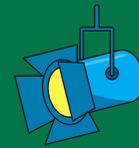
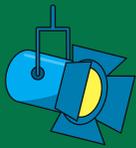


Cultural Adaptation



Director explains the story and what will happen in the next scene.





WHAT IS THE ECOWAS FREE MOVEMENT PROTOCOL?

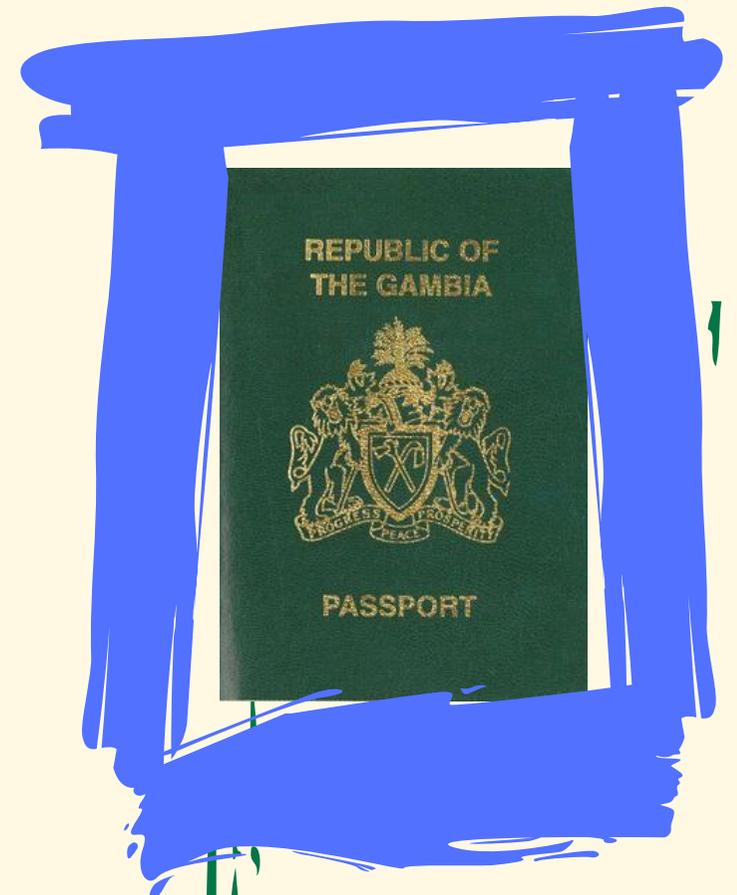
- ECOWAS is the Economic Community of West African States.
- Free intra-regional movement of persons is at the heart of the ECOWAS regional integration and development process.
- The Free Movement of Persons, Right of Entry, Residence and Establishment was signed in 1979 and subsequent supplementary protocols of the same protocol followed, including on:

Right to Entry
Right to Residence
Right to Establishment

To facilitate free movement for the 320 million citizens of the ECOWAS sub-region, member-states established a common passport, formally known as the ECOWAS travel certificate, in the following forms:

ECOWAS Passport (traveling by plane)
ECOWAS Biometric ID card (traveling by land)
ECOWAS Brown Card (traveling by vehicle)

Facilitators should explain that traveling to any ECOWAS member-state is legal, and all Gambian citizens have the right to enter using either their ECOWAS passport, ID Card or Brown Card. To live, work or study in another ECOWAS member-state, one simply needs to apply for a residence permit.





Narrator explains what happened in the previous scene.

2 - THE THEATRE PRODUCTION

B) EXPLAINING RULES

Each group will be divided into 5 actors and 5 producers. They will have 20 minutes to write a play and should have only very basic information on the route chosen). During this part, the producers will be having more agency and voice, since they will be preparing the material and writing the play, but actors should be actively listening, sharing their opinions and preparing themselves.

An improvisation theatre works without explicit rules or a script. For this activity, the preparation revolves around defining the characters' personalities, the migration route and a group discussion to understand how they will perform the scenes.

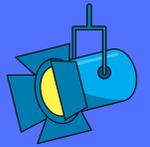
The group needs to be in constant discussion and interaction, so they can work organically and collaborate with each other. The main objective is not to have a perfect play or an accurate migration route, but to express what they understand about migration, have their knowledge and life experience expressed into a play and enhance their problem-solving capacity, since they do not have a lot of time to prepare or perform the activity.

5



5





2 - THE THEATRE PRODUCTION

C) PRODUCERS ROLE

Director(s)

It is obligatory that one of the students takes up the role of main director coordinating the whole team. Explain to this person that he/she can write ideas for the story on a paper, but what happens and how it is performed will depend on the actors' improvisation. Directors should concentrate on making sure that it is decided: where the migrant comes from, why they are migrating, the personality of each character, etc. and organize the ideas of the colleagues. It is essential that the director(s) has/have a leader personality and is/are respected by his/her peers.



Geographer

Like any other journey, the migrant will need to identify his/her route. The students will be responsible for designing a map of where the migrant will go. This can be done in a group, but will need someone responsible to present the map at the end of the story. Let them express their knowledge of Geography to situate the entire route.

Please see the *Annex Material*.



Narrator

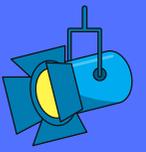
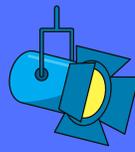
The narrator should welcome the public, explain the story, characters and what is happening, and help make transitions between scenes. It is useful to have a narrator so the play can be divided into different parts (scenes) of the same story. This person should be someone who likes to speak in public and knows how to control the tone of the voice.



Logistics/Material

Students will need to decide together on the 10 objects the migrant will take on the journey—these are the objects that the migrant will bring in the Bag. Like the other activities, it will be done in group, but someone will be responsible for coordinating the discussions and presenting which objects are going to be used. The material will inspire them, help them understand what can happen during the trip and should be shown during the play. For example: if the migrant is carrying a Bottle of Water and the Migrant is going through a desert, he/she can be using this object to save his/her life from thirst. Some cards are useful in the migration journey, while others are not useful but can be added for fun. Please see *Annex Material*.





2 - THE THEATRE PRODUCTION

D) ACTORS ROLE

They will act based on the previous preparation with the Producers, but they will be responsible for the tone of voice, speeches, feedbacks and emotional reactions to what is happening. While the Producers are coordinating the story, they are welcome to give inputs and should be actively listening to understand which one of the characters they will perform and how to “incorporate” the personality for the play, where are the places that they will go, which are the materials that they will carry during the trip. Help them get into the mood of drama. If they are stuck, give them some ideas and examples of what they could use with from the material given (the map, cards and passport are a good source of inspiration, because they will help them understand the concept of where a migrant goes and what a migrant carries in the bag).

During the play: Acting!

It is obligatory that one of the characters is a migrant and will carry the passport. This is the only rule. The other characters can be migrants, family members, immigration officers or any other person that matters in a migrant’s journey. What matters is that actors are sociable, fun and quick in performing the play without a script. What happens in each scene must be connected with the entire story and the other characters.



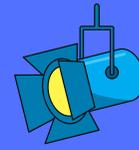
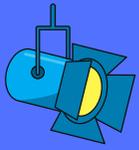
Migrant
(protagonist)

Passport



Family Members, partners, friends, migration officers,
IOM officers, rebels, police officers, etc





2 - THE THEATRE PRODUCTION

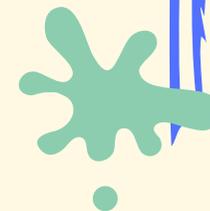
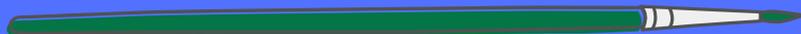
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this activity is not to have a perfect migration route explained or to have a sophisticated theatre, but to let the students express their ideas, come inside the world of migration with their own perspective and have fun. Facilitators will have the chance to share information during the final part.

This activity is based on Listening before Intervening, inspired on methodologies that focus on bringing the previous knowledge of learners to the stage, giving them voice and attention, and after this, building knowledge together with a trust-building intervention (Freire, 1976).

Do not worry! If producers are well prepared to understand their tasks and the right students are chosen to be actors (the sociable and funny ones), the students will be able to perform a nice play and show their creativity. They will have between 15 minutes to prepare the story with the resource of materials that we will provide. Both groups should be working at the same time and at the end of the planning, each group will perform their play. The next step of this activity is the "Awarding".

References: P. Freire. (1976). Education, the practice of freedom.
London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative





PERFORMANCE OF THEATRE AND AWARDING

After the preparation, Actors will be performing and Producers will be watching from aside. This is the time for the Actors to give it their best and perform an engaging and fun play. The play should take maximum 10 minutes, because the whole classroom should be able to participate and show their stories.

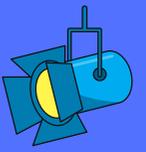
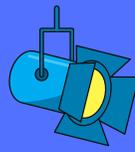
While one group performs the play, the other groups are watching and giving their grades to the performance of their colleagues. Each group should write an evaluation of the other groups and a grade from 1 to 10 and save for later. But please notice they cannot vote for their own group! Their final grade should consider:

- a) Actors' performance;
- b) Narration;
- c) Fun during the play;
- d) Explanation of the experiences of a migrant.

At the end of all the plays, ask each group to show their grades for the other groups, with constructive comments to know where they were successful and where they could have improved. We do not expect to have a winner or a loser, but to enhance a constructive competition.



5 MINUTES



3 - DEBRIEFING

During this last part, two facilitators should speak for the whole classroom and share their opinions on the plays, their own migration experiences and other pertinent information on irregular migration. They will present themselves as returnees for the first time. This will empower both returnees—who are now understood as educators and reintegrated returnees participating in an educational program—and the community—since the students can share their knowledge about migration and will understand that the returnees are adults able to manage a pedagogical activity.

Facilitators will present their own migration experiences and make connections between what was performed in the theatre and what happened to them in real life. It is not intended to judge or to point out mistakes, but to praise students' imagination and make them understand that what has been played in the theatre happens in real life.

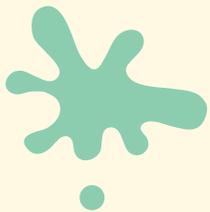
Finally, facilitators should share information on alternatives to irregular migration. They should take questions from students about adulthood, livelihood possibilities, skills development, safe migration channels and more.

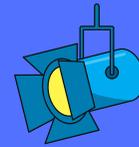


10 MINUTES
2 FACILITATORS
PER CLASSROOM



Facilitator shares his experiences in
Basse, The Gambia

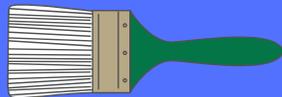




CONCLUSION

This activity is an innovative approach with a focus on students' creativity and participation. To make it work, it is crucial to select the correct facilitators with social skills and knowledge for the implementation of the theatre. It is a very simple activity that does not need sophisticated materials, but the key of its success is training facilitators who have an interest in raising awareness on migration among students.

If the selection of facilitators is well-coordinated, this activity has the potential to become a successful tool for awareness raising. The communities will be able to access guidance for their youth, to information on safe and orderly migration, and empowerment of students and facilitators through the exchange of ideas and life experiences.



Winning group celebrates at the end of activity in Basse, The Gambia.

