

Analysis of the Survey by India Theatre Forum

Capacity Building for Theatre Groups

Respondents: 68

Skipped: 2

Question 1: Essential Core Values

- An overwhelming 90% + respondents feel that all three topics: philosophy - why we do what we do; means and ends - how we choose to reach our goals and nurturing and imbibing core values are important/ very important
- There are few who additionally say that articulation and communication of the core values are important
- There is emphasis on understanding 'why we do theatre'

Question 2: Group Sustainability

- Over 80% respondents feel that all the topics: keeping abreast through refresher courses; upgrading skills through training modules; getting technical expertise / advice; getting creative expertise / advice; finding performance opportunities at festivals; inviting more people into theatre; encouraging and nurturing new leadership; enabling long term financial security; exposure to theatre of other groups; except the one on legal advice/ expertise are important/ very important
- Many question the specifics of refresher courses. The needs may be particular to different groups and their diverse contexts. There is also the question of time and resources to avail these refreshers
- Encouraging / nurturing new leadership gets a standing ovation of over 96% votes for important/ very important
- Some believe that the process of audience building should happen 'organically'
- There is an emphasis on connecting with 'local audiences'
- Values by which groups are run – democracy, non hierarchical structures, transparency and openness among members need to be addressed

Question 3: Audience Building

- Media attention is the only topic that seems to have fared slightly lower in importance than all the others (garnering community support; creating new performance opportunities ; engaging in dialogue with society; building critical appreciation; engaging in outreach programmes; getting publicity and public relations) where all the others have scored over 80% for important/ very important
- There is perhaps a sense of 'selling out' in 'actively seeking' media attention
- Connecting with 'young audiences' and children come up strongly

Question 4: Communications

- Very interestingly all the four topics that relate straight to 'marketing' issues – creating leaflets/ brochures, websites and blogs, media publicity and presentation skills gets less than 90% on important/ very important. It's pretty obvious that there is a strong resistance to these.

Question 5: Fundraising

- All the topics (understanding and planning for short term and long term financial sustainability; learning how to raise funds from individuals, corporates, foundations and trusts; communicating specifically for fundraising; creating revenue generation modules for the group; managing donor expectations and reporting) score above 90% here
- There is an urge to look beyond external funding and create revenue generation models within groups. This gets an overwhelming 97%

Question 6: Financial Management

- Except for the topic on learning how to invest, all others (planning and maintaining financial sustainability – short term and long term; learning simple skills of accounting; learning to create budgets and spending plans (understanding cash flows); learning to forecast) score over 90% for important/ very important
- Statutory compliances need to be added

Question 7: Administration

- Except for the topic on software/ IT skills everything else (developing basic administrative modules appropriate to your organization; understanding and honing people management skills - Motivating and inspiring teams; securing human resources critical for your work) gets above 90% for important/ very important

Question 8: Building Shared Spaces

- All topics except shared resource bank of ideas and content and shared administrative hub everything else (developing community support and interest; rehearsal space with technical infrastructure , show space and storage; local production and tech resources in all cities; new performance opportunities including festivals; connecting with each other; developing software / IT/ online resources that enables theatre practice & outreach; training & refresher courses, residencies; journals, periodicals, publications on theatre) gets a score of over 90% for important/ very important.

Question 9: Other areas that need to be included?

- It is important to note that most people felt that all the important areas were covered. They offered suggestions on what they feel should be key focus areas and those include:
- Ensuring / advocating the need and urgency of this kind of discourse
- Ensuring connections between ideology and practice (both creative and supportive)
- Documentation and archiving work
- Learning from other practices
- Use of unused community spaces and found spaces
- Information portals for performance information
- Emphasis on theatre for and by young people
- Connections with theatre teaching institutions to break the theory practice boundaries
- Use of social media
- Not letting work become donor or media driven but keep its core integrity intact

The one area that has come up here that we had decided not to look at in this programme is the

area of nurturing and strengthening the 'Creative' aspect of theatre, be it script writing, acting, design, technicals or direction.

Question 10: How will this programme be useful?

It is important to note that 80% of the respondents feel that this will be useful to their groups and for theatre professionals in general. About 10% feel it will not be useful to them and another 10% have doubts as to whether it will be useful given that their contexts are very different from other groups (rural/ community theatre etc). Some feel that these skills are important for groups at a certain time in their life span - if they are too new and are just beginning out or too old and are incarcerated in their own ways of working then it will not work for them. They have to be a few years old, have some experience of the challenges having faced those themselves and be eager and curious to learn new ways and explore new possibilities.

The key reasons that came up as to why it will be useful can be summarised as below:

- Build awareness about these issues
- Learn new skills that are useful for sustenance
- Create networking opportunities with like-minded people
- Learn about new technologies like social media and web/ online platforms that can help with communications
- Be exposed to new ideas in theatre
- Post production skill building
- Complement blind passion for theatre with sensible modes for making it happen
- Enable co-habitation of the pain of management with the exhilaration of creative process
- Understand the value of these skills
- Enable the birth of new theatre groups
- Enable self criticality
- Push theatre outside local boundaries
- Make possible new collaborations
- Make theatre professionally run
- Strengthen the skills that groups have currently in these areas
- Help fine tune existing systems
- Mould arts managers in every group
- Enable growth of individual groups and individuals in the groups

Question 11: How much do you think you will be willing to pay?

- Since 65% say Rs 7,500/- to RS 10,000/- and 28% say Rs 10,000/- to Rs 15,000/- we should perhaps keep it at Rs 10,000/-