

Where is My Sweet Potato? Creating Change through Forum Theatre with Street Children in Burundi

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the innovative use of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (Forum Theatre) with a group of 30 street children and young people in East Africa. Drawing upon a project in Burundi, this paper reveals how participants utilized the process of performance making through Forum Theatre as a platform to make visible problems in their lives, and a vehicle to challenge inequalities, abuse and violence. The authors demonstrate how the adoption of this methodology raised questions about interactive theatre as creative activism and a tool for opening up possibilities for dialogue with a community-based audience. This paper illuminates ways in which street children, explored, examined and problematized their lived experience, through the creative lens of Forum Theatre. It argues that this methodology generated a sense of collective consciousness, through which the children and young people created personal and social change, which extended beyond the life of the project.