

REPORT

Open Studio

Performance Showcase & Feedback

Under Stepping Stones: Engaging with Youth in South Asia on Sexual Violence And Impunity

Dates: 10am – 6pm, 24 May 2019 | Friday

Venue: NexUs Culture Nepal, Bakhundole, Patan, Nepal



The full day open studio event (Close-group) organized at NexUs Culture Nepal followed by discussion & critique session. Zubaan, Panos South Asia Nepal, Photocircle, NexUs Culture Nepal, Word Warriors, Katha Ghera and Educational Theatre in Nepal took part in the event (please find the list of the participants below).

The session started off with a round of introduction and a brief explanation on its agendas. Each participant was given 10 -12 minutes for the presentation and 15 - 20 minutes were spent with discussion and feedback.

Performances & Slam Poetries

1. Archana Panthi, Katha Ghera
2. Binita Gurung, Katha Ghera
3. Sunaina and her group, ETN
4. Collaborative spoken word by Pragati and Yashwaswi Karki, Word Warriors
5. Written by Shivangi Khadka, Recited by Yukta Bajracharya, Word Warriors
6. Nisha Karki, Inanimate objects as a witness, Word Warriors
7. Trailokya - Story of 'Nangeli' from Kerala, Word Warriors

*Shilpee theater was absent due to their ongoing Play @ Shilpee.

A powerful spoken word poetry, brilliantly performed by Pragati Parajuli and Yashwaswi Karki from Word Warriors addressed the issues on sexual violence from the survivor's perspective. They successfully used metaphors as a very powerful device to express complex thoughts and ideas which was appraised and well received. As they performed a single piece, Ashmina Ranjit from NexUs advised to write series of poem that covers a larger and multiple narratives on the topic. The performers told that they would like to perform at schools and colleges for their poetry is in English language.

During the discussion, Nayan Tara Gurung Kashyapati proposed the organizers to conduct a facilitators workshop in order to pipeline the discussion sessions with important and critical questions and prepare the performers with answers to the potential questions raised by the audience. This is to prevent misleading of the agenda during question and answer sessions after each performance.



Participants from Katha Ghera performed their home production, 'Private is Political' in parts. The first one performed by Archana Panthi was a fictional story based on the ongoing case of 'Nirmala Rape and Murder Case' where she performs the monologues originally written by Durga Karki, from victims' perspective. The piece is an elaborate and painful description of what could have happened to the victim and how she might have gone through that black day.

After the feedback given to Katha Ghera team, it has been decided not to include actual name of the victim and references from the actual incident so that the ongoing case doesn't get affected in any ways.

The second one performed by Binita Gurung is also a part of 'Private is Political'; based on a true story where a girl child is raped by her own brother on her birthday. Both the pieces are portrayal of the unfortunate realities of our society. The group was advised to go beyond the story itself where many other possibilities can be unfolded. Diwas K.C pointed out the sudden change in the character of the brother in the story where he is portrayed as a very caring, kind and loving character in the beginning and suddenly turn into a monster later on. He found the transition to be very interesting because of the fact that a perpetrator might not seem to be monstrous in all the situations – he might later on again console the child with the similar affection like in the beginning or might not.

Spoken word poetry performance by Nisha Karki from word warriors took a very unique approach to address sexual violence and impunity. Her poems were monologues of inanimate objects (Seat of a bus, Pen etc.) that explained sexual violence of various forms happening at different locations and circumstance. Ashmina Ranjit gave an insight to the poem that how society are silent like the inanimate objects even after having witnessed violence and abuse. After receiving a good review from the mentors and audience, she was advised to write more of them and create a collection of poems to perform in the future at schools and colleges.



Sunaina Panthy, along with her group from Educational theatre Nepal presented a play that took reference from 'Nirmala's Rape and Murder Case' where the victim's mothers' post-incident psychological state was portrayed. It was received as an emotionally charged performance whilst got critical feedback regarding its content; got questioned at the moral obligation while representing an ongoing case. The group was

suggested to incorporate the part of the performance from the earlier workshop organized by Zubaan where Sunaina Panthy integrated statistical data of sexual violence and abuse.

Yukta Bajracharya from Word Warriors recited a poem originally written by Sivangi Khadka that recalled the testimonials of sexual violence from various parts of India – got suggestions to include the story of survivors from a wider South Asian geographical context. Trailokya presented his poem as a reaction after reading and researching on about 200 years old story about a freedom-fighter woman of Kerala referred as 'Nangeli'. This provided the audience with new insight upon a story of bravery and rebellion. He was suggested that how the performance could be contextualized in the local context while facilitating the discussion after the performance done in public.

Towards the end of the day, all the participants were briefed on the agenda of the project. The project expects the selected performances to be showcased inside and outside the Kathmandu valley – at Law and medical schools and/or in presence of law and medical students. 50 thousand

rupees will be provided as a support for each groups to conduct two shows by the end of 2019. Katha Ghera's production 'Private is Political' will be showcased at Pokhara in June. Theatre Artists from Educational Theatre Nepal will be consulting Ashmina Ranijt for the development their play. The possibility to collaboratively perform the spoken word poetry and plays within a single show was also suggested to the groups.

Conclusions:

- All the groups will be considering the feedbacks provided by the mentors for the development of their performance.
- Workshop for the facilitators will be conducted where Zubaan will prepare a set of questionnaires for the Q&A sessions.
- Performance Katha Ghera and Word Warriors were finalized. They were suggested to submit a short concept note.
- Educational Theatre Nepal's performance yet to be finalized.
- Ashmina shall send a proposal for her performance.
- Ashmina will talk to Pabitra Khadka (Shilpee Theatre) for their performance.

List of Participants

No	Name	Organization	Email	Contact No.
1.	Nisha Karki	Word Warriors	nishaakaarki@gmail.com	9808179149
2.	Trailokaya Raj Bajgain	Word Warriors	trailokyarajbajgain@gmail.com	9863457428
3.	Yashashwi Karki	Word Warriors	yashashwibhawa@gmail.com	9860950226
4.	Saras Chari	Word Warriors	sarussarma13@gmail.com	9846574395
5.	Sunaina Panthy	Educational Theatre in Nepal (E T N)	sunainapanthy@gmail.com	9869192120
6.	Pari Shakya	E T N	info@educationaltheatreinnepal.org	9869382820
7.	Diwakar Thapa	E T N		9824147715
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13.	Archana Panthy	Katha Ghera	parch321@gmail.com	9808817288
14.	Binita Gurung	Katha Ghera	Gurungbini663@gmail.com	9860567717
15.	Pragati Parajuli	Word Warriors	Pragati.parajuli@gmail.com	9803210691
16.	Gunjan Dixit	Katha Ghera	Gunjandixit91@gmail.com	9849140722
17.	Yukta Bajracharya	Word Warriors	emailyukta@gmail.com	9861609654
18.	Rati Sharma	Panos South Asia	rati@panossouthasia.org	9841210206
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21.	Ashmina Ranjit	NexUs	ashmina@gmail.com	9851026155
22.	Siddhanta Pudasaini	NexUs	scorpiosiddhanta@gmail.com	9849616628

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