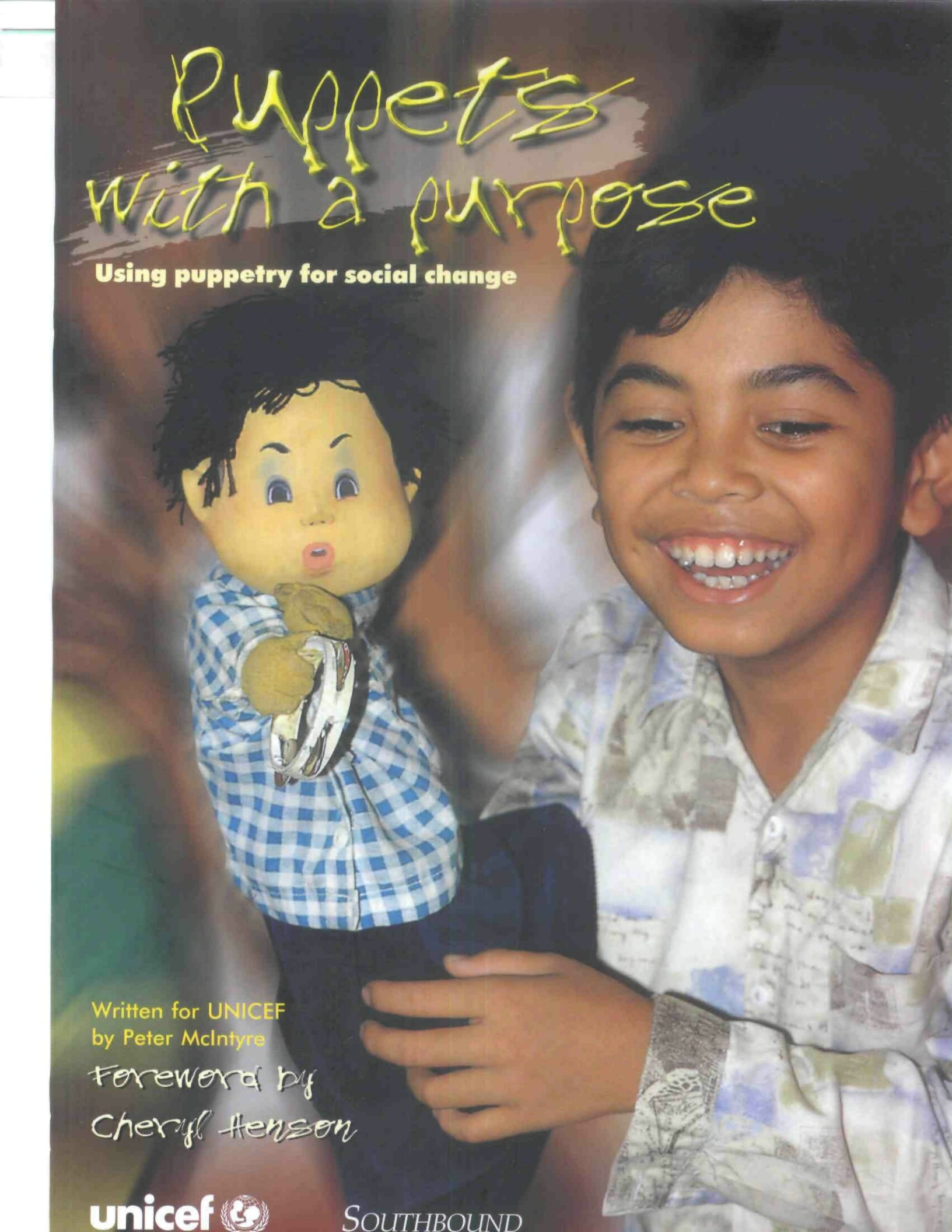
Puppets
with a purpose
Using puppetry for social change
Written for UNICEF
by Peter McIntyre
Foreword by
Cheryl Henson
unicef
SOUTHBOUND

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United Nations Children's Fund

SOUTHBOUND
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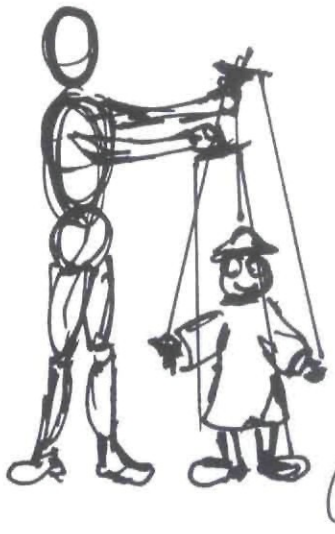

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Jim Henson, a pioneer of puppetry for television, established the world-renowned Muppet style (puppets with mobile mouths) through his success with *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*.

Foreword

Cheryl Henson, President
The Jim Henson Foundation

Puppets with a purpose: Using puppetry for social change comes out of an extraordinary meeting of international puppeteers, television producers and development specialists held in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1996. The workshop was organized by UNICEF to explore the use of puppetry as a tool of communication for development. In many developing countries, where 40 per cent of the population is under 18 years old, the proportion of broadcast time devoted to children's programming is often minimal. It remains difficult for many countries to meet the cultural and educational needs of their children. Puppets can be used to help fulfil these needs.

I have been around puppetry all of my life, and I have seen first-hand its powerful and unique ability to communicate. A puppet can be many different things. It can be a simple foam and fabric glove (like Kermit the Frog), a complicated high-tech creation or an inexpensive compilation of available materials. As long as it conveys character and personality, it is a puppet. And as long as the audience is willing to accept it as a representation of a living creature, a version of themselves, it has the power to communicate. Because a puppet is not a person, it can do things the audience would not accept from a human performer. It can become an animal or a well-known personality. It can cross barriers of social and political taboos. It can be a mirror, teaching us about ourselves.

Puppetry is an ancient art with roots in almost every culture. The forms of puppetry are as varied as the people who create them. From the images cast by shadow puppets performing the *Ramayana* to the Nativity plays enacted by string-puppet marionettes to the outrageous social parodies of the hand puppets Punch and Judy, throughout history puppetry has been used to teach the stories that were important for a culture and its time. As the executive producer of the International Festival of Puppet Theatre in New York, I have travelled the world looking for innovative puppet theatre. I have seen the great wealth of creativity blossoming in the visual language of puppetry as it is used to tell the stories that are important for us today.

Puppets can educate as well as entertain. Their simplicity allows the audience to hear difficult messages. In a language of symbol and gesture, humour and character, the puppet can convey concepts with clarity. On *Sesame Street*, Oscar the Grouch is always grumpy and Cookie Monster always wants to eat you know what. Their characters are condensed versions of universal aspects of all of us. Sometimes we are like Oscar and sometimes we are like Cookie Monster, but we are not like either of them all the time. We relate to the simplicity of their characters and so we are willing to listen to their messages. In working with *Sesame Street* in the United States and around the world, I have seen how effectively puppets can teach simple concepts to children. By entertaining while educating, puppets can reach audiences that might not otherwise be willing to listen and learn.

Puppets do not have to be complicated or expensive. But they do have to be creative, intelligent and approached with a professional focus. Their creative potential is just waiting to be used to educate and encourage positive change. It is my pleasure to be associated with ***Puppets with a purpose: Using puppetry for social change***. I hope it will inspire a new generation of puppeteers to express their own national culture and teach important lessons in new and innovative ways.

I wish all those involved with puppetry and with education great success in their collaborations.

. . . in the hands of the first puppeteers,
puppets began to speak, and the stories they told
about gods, kings
and adventure held
their audiences
spellbound . . .

CHAPTER 1

Puppets with power

The Minister of Health sits forward on his chair to emphasize his support for the polio immunization drive. The interviewer asks whether he was immunized. No, the Minister regrets. The vaccine was not available when he was young, and one of his friends developed polio as a result. He is grateful that today the vaccine will save many children from the debilitating effects of polio.

A current affairs programme? In a way, yes. However, the scene in the television studio in Iran is unusual. The Minister is real-life flesh and blood, but the interviewer is a well-known puppet character on children's television, who will later travel to a clinic to encourage the children who are being immunized.

Children watching the interview on television at home identify with a puppet who asks the questions they would like to ask. Their parents are paying attention too, perhaps slightly surprised at the respect the Minister accords to his small cloth questioner. Together, the puppet and the Minister make the issue come to life.

In Namibia, 2,000 people crowd into the village square, craning for a better view of the travelling puppet show. On stage a charlatan healer, Gomsa, is poisoning one of his unlucky victims by rubbing an expensive 'healing paste' into cuts on his forehead. The drama takes several twists before the 'patient', Shivute, finally listens to what his children are telling him and goes to a clinic for tuberculosis treatment. The puppets take a bow as the people applaud. Some stay behind for a question-and-answer session with the puppets and their presenter about TB and AIDS. The audience has a new perspective on whom they can trust for effective treatment. The puppeteers pack up their theatre and head for another village.

In Belize, parents watch a puppet show put on by school children. A puppet named Susan asks her parents for extra tuition to prepare for her high school exams. Her parents, also portrayed by puppets, react with anger, slapping Susan and sending her from the room. There is a ripple of disapproval in the audience but also an uncomfortable recognition of a common family conflict about girls' education. The puppets have brought into the open an issue the parents might be reluctant to confront in other ways.

In Viet Nam, a group of teenage puppeteers slip into the cool water behind a bamboo screen as an open-air theatre near Hanoi fills with people. Standing waist-deep, the teenagers giggle softly as they prepare to manipulate underwater rods and wires that bring water puppets to life. The young performers used to live on the street, without homes or futures. Now, with help from a national film director, they have formed a puppet troupe that offers them a future.

Four different countries, four troupes of puppeteers who were unaware of each other's existence but who have become part of a worldwide movement that is bringing an art form as old as history and as natural as song back to the centre stage.

Indonesian puppeteer Suyadi delights children with a puppet from his popular television show *Si Unyil*.

UNICEF/96-0635/Krisna Satmoko

Our ancestors created puppet shows out of shadows on cave walls. Early crafts-people learned to carve puppet figures that symbolized religious figures. In the hands of the first puppeteers, puppets began to speak, and the stories they told about gods, kings and adventure held their audiences spellbound. For the last 2,000 years, puppets have been a sophisticated means of artistic expression, communication and instruction.

In modern times, it has been harder for traditional entertainment to maintain its place in society. Many forms of entertainment were pushed aside by urbanization, by the dislocation of traditional communities and the rise of the mass media. As television brought soap opera and animation to urban and rural areas, puppet shows became 'shadows' of their former selves. Even remote communities that missed out on the new entertainment saw traditional culture weakened.

But the puppets refused to climb back into their boxes and be forgotten. They continue to delight children and touch the hearts of adults. Increasingly, it is recognized that puppetry is a unique and innovative way to reach out to people of all ages. Puppets can entertain, inform, persuade and appeal. They are part of the world's ancient history, and at the same time, they are also part of the world's modern imagination.

UNICEF/96-0637/George McBean

Producer Sonia Rosario (right) and puppeteer Carmen Osbahr, holding a life-size puppet from the US television programme *The Puzzle Place*, at the UNICEF-sponsored international puppetry workshop in Bandung (Indonesia).

And when they grip our imagination, puppets can work in support of positive change in a community. With the help of talented and creative puppeteers, puppets are working 'hand in glove' with development. They have special qualities that allow them to reach remote communities, and in the right hands they have learned how to pull our strings and help us to become more alive.

So what are these special qualities?

Puppets are moving

Puppets strike a deal with their creators. You move them, and they move you. Whatever their materials, whatever their size, however cheaply they have been put together, all puppets come to life as characters. The puppet maker provides a face, eyes, perhaps some hair and a mouth. The puppeteer provides movement and gives the puppet a voice. We see the puppet move, we hear it speak and we are caught up in its world. Instead of wood, *papier mâché* or plastic, we see a character, a hero to cheer or a villain to boo, a tragic figure who can move us to tears or a comic figure who will make us laugh out loud.

Puppets entertain and educate

Puppets can work the edge between entertainment and information. They line up alongside drama, storytelling, drumming and dance as art forms that can also teach and persuade. The entertainment comes first. It draws us in, and once we have lost ourselves in the world the puppets create, we accept the message without even realizing that we are learning. Lessons learned in this way are more likely to be remembered and to become part of our solid stock of knowledge.

Puppets are safe

Because they are characters, not people, puppets are the ideal medium for discussing sensitive issues. Puppets create a world in which we recognize ourselves and identify with the characters as the drama unfolds. At the same time, a puppet show seems to hold a piece of 'safety glass' between the action and the audience – although we are drawn into the drama, we are not threatened by it. It is an extraordinary phenomenon that an audience will accept from a puppet what would cause offence or embarrassment if it came from a live actor. That is why puppets are now widely used in teaching about AIDS and other sensitive matters.

The Puzzle Place

The cast from the US television series *The Puzzle Place*. The programme, which premiered in 1995, celebrates diversity with characters representing a variety of ethnic groups.

Uncle Sargam

Pakistani master puppeteer Farooq Qaisar performs with his beloved character, Uncle Sargam.

UNICEF/96-0638/Krisna Satmoko

Puppets can portray 'bad' characters in a community without pointing the finger at a real individual. They can be used to draw out disagreements within a community or a family without fanning the flames of conflict in the audience. They can be used to talk to black and white children about race and conflict. They can be used to promote the rights of girls to adults who will not listen to a lecture. They can perform to a mixed audience in areas where men and women must sit apart to watch live actors.

A puppet may look terrifying, but its sense of menace is contained. Partly, this is because most puppets are small (even large puppets are often no more than child-sized). But it is not just a question of size. Puppets function more completely within their own 'theatre' than human actors do. We are often aware of actors as people who put on a part for a performance and put it aside when they leave the stage. Puppets have no existence independent of their characters. They come without the baggage that accompanies a human actor, and they can get away with things that humans cannot.

Puppeteer Mabel Chau and two friends from *The Kids on the Block* puppet troupe (Hong Kong).

Peter McIntyre

Puppets are for children

Children relate to puppets from their earliest years because they are used to making inanimate characters come to life. Children are puppeteers themselves from the first time they pick up a shoe, a squeezed-out half orange or a hairbrush and make it move and talk. Toys and dolls take an active role in children's play. They laugh and talk and argue. They try on personalities and take them off again. The child plays the roles of puppeteer, actor and audience. A child makes her doll move – she is the puppeteer. She scolds her doll in the stern but loving voice of a mother – she is an actor. She makes her doll stamp its foot and then laughs at the effect – she is the audience. After this early experience a child recognizes puppets as legitimate and natural.

The puppet can be whatever the puppeteer and the child make it. It can be the child's friend without demanding something in return. It can be a clown. It can be naughty and get into trouble without hurting anyone. It can say what the child thinks, feel what the child feels and share a child's sadness. It can show a child who knows poverty, hunger, war and loss that there can also be joy and love and a happy ending. A puppet can tell a child who rarely hears it that he is loved. A puppet can show a child that her father or mother can also be sad, and it can demonstrate the value of love, the futility of quarrel and the benefit of cooperation and support.

Puppets are for adults

Despite the special relationship between puppets and children, puppets also speak to adults. The roots of puppetry are deeply connected with mystery, symbolism and religion. The earliest adventure stories were instructional, advising people on the right way to live. Traditional puppet stories from India, Indonesia, Japan and Eastern Europe have been devised for and watched by adults. In Africa, masks and puppet figures have been used in initiation or funeral rites, and they play a complex role in community culture, ensuring good crops or a successful transition to adulthood. A long tradition recognizes puppet figures as serious, adult characters.

In a number of Asian countries, traditional puppet theatre is based on the epic Sanskrit stories of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, which are at the same time religious affirmations and adventure stories. The *Mahabharata*, compiled between the fifth century BC and the fourth century AD, tells of five princes who were cheated out of their kingdom but fought a righteous war to regain it. The *Ramayana*, third century BC, tells the story of Rama's exile in the forest and struggle to rescue his wife, Sita, who has been abducted by the demon-king Ravana.

In 861 AD, King Jayabaya of Manenang created the first *wayang* drawings, part of the traditional Indonesian theatre, which includes puppetry, dance and song. This led to the vibrant shadow-puppet tradition that spread through Java and modern Indonesia. In the fifteenth century, the *wayang* was used to spread Islamic teachings in the region. Five hundred years ago, people already knew how to combine entertainment with instruction and to make this combination work powerfully.

The Karagoz and Hacivat puppets of Turkey, the Russian Petrouschka, the German Hanswurst and the English Punch and Judy were all larger-than-life puppet clowns

Romanian puppeteer Gabriella Stamatiade with one of her puppet creations.

. . . a puppet can show a child that her father or mother can also be sad, and it can demonstrate the value of love, the futility of quarrel and the benefit of cooperation and support . . .

Tinah, the girl with a positive attitude, from the Indonesian *Si Unyil* television programme.

who made satirical commentaries on their times and represented a thread of popular culture with an anti-establishment undercurrent and an edge of danger. Their audience was an adult one.

But it is not only traditional puppets that are suitable for adult audiences. Puppeteers today find that when they take a puppet show on tour they attract an audience of adults as well as children.

While developing a theatre project for adults in Botswana, the organizers were concerned because the children had no entertainment. So, when a theatre performance was planned for adults in the evening, a puppet show was put on for children during the morning so they would not feel excluded. The puppet shows attracted as many adults as children, and eventually the stories were adapted to appeal to both audiences.

Farooq Qaisar, whose television puppet character Uncle Sargam has been a household personality in Pakistan for many years, took his puppets on the road because he wanted to reach rural communities that lacked access to television – and his primary audience was adults. His puppet shows taught them about oral rehydration and hygiene, and he found that puppets were acceptable to an adult audience where live actors would have met with disapproval. Farooq would receive letters from distant villages asking his troupe to come, and some of the shows were even hosted by a *mullah*, a Muslim cleric.

Puppets are versatile

Puppets share with actors the ability to perform in any setting and on any budget. (Puppets eat less than actors, but they do need humans for support and a voice.) Puppets are equally at home in cities and villages. They can perform in the street or in local theatres and convey messages on immunization, sanitation or nutrition with humour and style.

Puppets can tour. With a van, a portable stage, some battery-powered amplifiers and a few humans along for the ride, they can travel even to those areas unreached by the mass media. In rugged rural places, puppets can journey strapped to the back of a donkey. This flexibility makes puppets ideal for working in the least developed countries, where innovative ways of reaching communities are desperately needed. Not only can they reach the communities, but they can also dress in the local style, adopt the local customs and be accepted as friends and neighbours rather than being viewed as outsiders.

Puppets are also natural television stars. *Sesame Street*, produced by the Children's Television Workshop in the United States since 1968, established

Peter McIntyre

Ardeshir Keshavarzi is a director of puppetry shows in Iran. His live and televised productions promote social development.

puppet figures as some of the all-time greats of the small screen. The Muppet characters devised by Jim Henson continue to this day to be international stars, combining their role of making people laugh with teaching letters and numbers to children as well as adults. The Muppets have been copied around the world, their eyes and large mobile mouths making them instantly recognizable.

Other puppets work well on television too. Hand and rod puppets are used in the Philippines as part of *Batibot* (meaning 'small but strong'), ranked consistently in the top three national television shows. Even in Indonesia, where *wayang* puppets rule, master puppeteer Suyadi developed a simpler hand puppet for a Sunday morning educational television programme called *Si Unyil* ('Here's Unyil'), which won over an audience of millions.

The versatility of puppets seems almost limitless. What other art form can boast of a version created specially for floods? Vietnamese water-puppets – devised to entertain people in the flooded Red River delta – are a testimony to the fact that popular culture will find a way of expressing itself no matter how difficult the circumstances. Puppets carved from local trees are attached to long bamboo poles. The puppeteers stand in the water, hidden by foliage, and work the puppets through strings that run inside the poles. Today the water puppets tell tales from ancient and modern times, delight local people and tourists, and provide jobs – while keeping alive a national treasure.

Puppetry helps develop skills and teamwork

Creating a puppet show requires a wide range of people and skills. Opportunities abound for individuals to make and manipulate puppets, write

Ardeshir Kesharvarzi

To create shows that will appeal to children, it's important to involve them in the production. This elephant is from an Iranian show in which children participate.

scripts and stage shows. Puppets create teamwork even as they entertain and inform the audience. This gives a golden opportunity for forming alliances between creative artists and those involved in development work. Puppetry can provide an entry point for contact with talented entertainers, who then learn how their art can spread information.

Just as the puppet show can help the audience understand things in a different way, so can a workshop on making puppets and performing become a focal point for young people who want to bring positive change to their communities.

Puppets are effective

When officials of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the United States wanted to create a new television programme to tackle difficult issues for children and their caregivers, research convinced them that the show should use puppet characters. They came up with *The Puzzle Place*, whose stories celebrate diversity and advocate tolerance and understanding. The success of *The Puzzle Place*, which was launched in 1995 and has since completed two seasons, has confirmed that puppets are winners in television entertainment, particularly when a producer is looking for something that teaches as it entertains.

Puppet research in India confirms that puppet shows are also among the most effective means of communicating health messages. Perhaps the most persuasive argument is that puppets are becoming more successful in country after country as puppeteers discover new messages and new audiences. Those who join hands with puppets today are signing up with a successful and fast-growing worldwide movement.

Puppets promote child rights

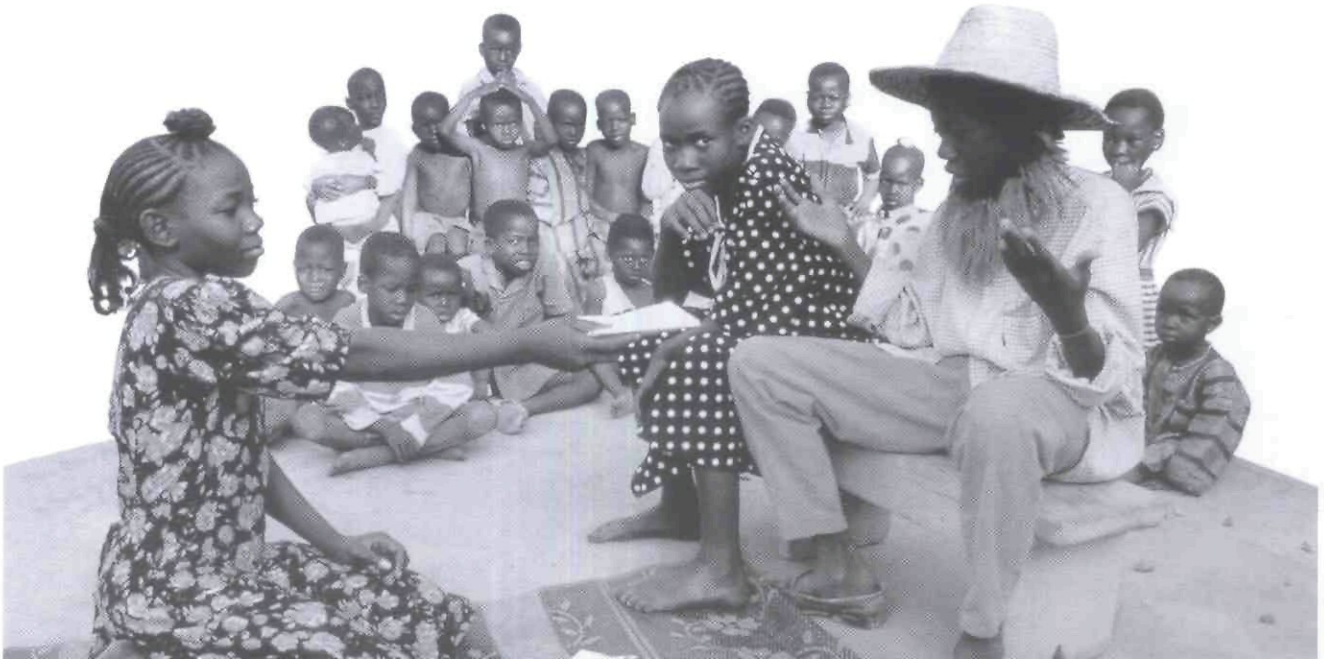
Puppets are already campaigning for the right of girls to go to school and for boys and girls not to be sent to war. They campaign for strategies to improve sanitation and health and to reduce illness and child deaths. They encourage parents to play with their children and lawmakers to respect child rights. Moreover, article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child could have been written with puppets in mind. It says:

> 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
> 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Puppets are appropriate. They treat everyone with equality. They are artistic and recreational, and they love leisure. Children clearly have a right to puppetry!

This book tells the story of some of the puppets and the puppeteers who bring them to life. It also outlines the basic steps for making and using puppets to build a better world for children everywhere.

Facilitators in all of Burkina Faso's 8,000 villages mobilize their communities in support of sustainable development and child rights. Puppets can strengthen those efforts.



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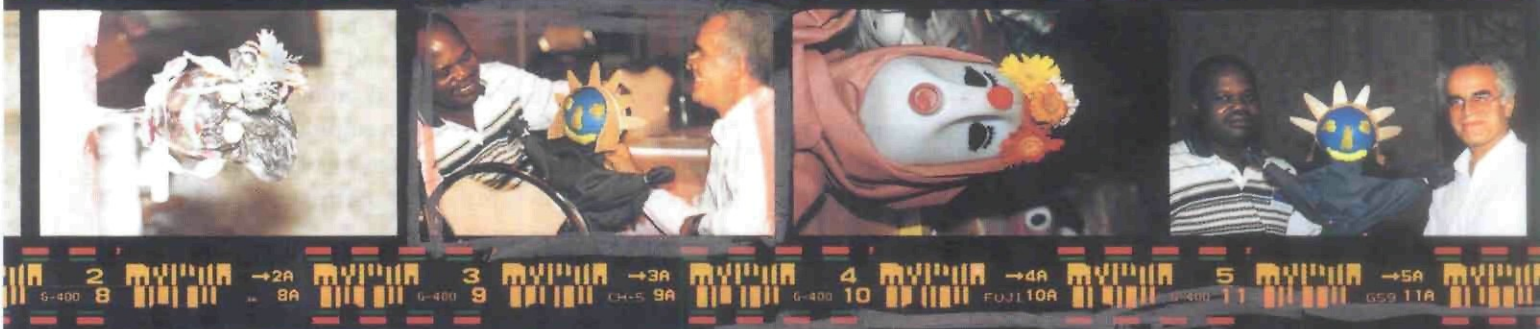


CHAPTER 2

Getting started:

Putting puppets to work for development

So, you now know that puppets are entertaining, but are they a productive use of time and money? Artists and entertainers may add glitter to a campaign, but can entertainment help communities define their problems and work out appropriate solutions? What do producers of a television puppet series beamed into a million homes know about the hopes of the people who are watching?

These may be the unspoken thoughts of a development worker who is unfamiliar with puppetry and who feels that puppets could divert energy from serious community-based work. The concern is understandable, and this chapter will try to allay it.

The information gap

It is said that half the people in the world have too much information and the other half have too little. The half in danger of information overload live in or near large cities within range of dozens of television channels. Their daily lives take place against a kaleidoscope of advertising, within earshot of competing voices offering politics, religion, a better brand of cooking oil or the lucky lottery numbers that open the door to eternal wealth. In some places, children spend as much time watching television as they spend in school.

The half who are deprived of information live in remote areas not yet reached by technological innovation, but where old certainties are being shaken by the pressure of population growth, the loss of traditional resources, the effects of a nearby conflict or other changes. The cultural knowledge that people absorbed in childhood has been replaced by uncertainty. Materially, little has changed in people's daily lives, but there is a sense that the world is somehow leaving them behind. Their children are losing confidence in their own futures.

In either case, people and communities require support if they are to have access to the information they need to make choices. In urban areas, people have to filter out the 'white noise' of modern society to tune in to useful information. In rural areas, people need access to information that allows them to make sense of the new and changing world.

Overcoming the information gap

Enlisting the help of artists and entertainers to achieve these aims is not a diversion from programme communication and delivery but an aid to these activities. People want information; what is crucial is how that information is presented. And because artists and entertainers are expert in reaching people and engaging their interest, they are potentially powerful allies. In enlisting their help we are not inventing something new but reaching back to proven methods of using stories to deliver a message in a manner that is more likely to be remembered.

Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, UNICEF Communication Officer in Haiti, has written a book on using theatre for social mobilization. He says: "The old and vertical style of education, which accumulates knowledge without reflecting on it, doesn't offer any possibility of change. Authoritarian and patronizing approaches are obstacles to the process of building free spirits, which are necessary for democracy.... Popular theatre or education theatre supports the new ethic of education, which aims to make of each individual a protagonist

034/Sean Sprague

in his or her own education and cultural development. Theatre is popular not only because it happens in the street or in the community market place, or because it refuses to follow the cultural roles of traditional theatre. It is popular because the content is different, the expression aims to communicate human values, and ultimately because it builds on existing community-based democratic organizations."[1]

Using traditional songs, drama and puppets to convey educational messages, especially on life skills, is part of what is sometimes called the 'Third Channel', the medium of everyday life. This informal way of learning helps us learn to speak our own language and to understand our own culture. Some examples:

• In Nigeria, local drama groups were formed to take health education messages to rural areas that have little access to the mass media. Actors were taught to conduct a discussion with the audience after the show and to relate the issues to particular experiences within that community. These training sessions ran side by side with participatory development workshops for local government officials, so that the officials could see the potential of drama to support their own work.

When UNICEF Communication Officer Lynn Geldof reported on the use of drama in Nigeria, she concluded: "The potential to communicate, inform and educate using drama is far greater than with any other form of communication because it is at once intimate, immediate, accessible and full of cultural resonances in which the seeds of new knowledge can take deep root."[2] Dr. Ziky Kofoworola, of the Department of Nigerian Cultural Studies, believes that this potential is realized when artistic performance is combined with audience participation. "The theatre does not end with that single performance," he says. "It is stored in the memory and recalled by extracting some element of it, like the songs or the dance."

Showing parents that learning counts

Art that educates need not be expensive. In Nepal, short films promoting the rights of girls were recently made in the communities where the films would be shown, using villagers as actors.

One film shows a young girl going to the village store with her mother. Together they buy groceries for the week, but the mother finds that she has overspent and will have to put some of the groceries back. Her daughter, who has started school, swiftly does her own check and discovers that the shopkeeper has charged for a kilogram of onions, instead of a half-kilo. The shopkeeper apologies graciously and complains that as he gets older his memory seems to be failing him. At the same time, from behind his well-stocked counter, he shoots a surprised glance at this little girl who has shown such spirit and knowledge. Her mother smiles, realizing that sending her daughter to school has been the right choice.

In another short film, the girl accompanies her father to the moneylender, who flatters the father with talk about honour and trust. The father is about to sign a repayment agreement when his daughter notices that what is written down is not what has been agreed. The moneylender hastily changes the figures, explaining that without his glasses he finds it very difficult to see the small writing. The father, who cannot read himself, looks at his daughter with new respect.

These films incorporate wry humour, and the villagers bring authenticity and conviction to their roles. The films are powerful advocates for girls to be allowed to attend school.

Rena Gill, UNICEF Nepal, was the producer of these 1991 films.

• In the Philippines, a puppet theatre workshop developed street shows to support urban basic services. The organizer, Bing, says the shows encourage behavioural change as they entertain. "The response is not limited to clapping after the show. We see the change in their behaviour, when they start cleaning their hands before eating or after going to the toilet. When a parent says 'my son or daughter is doing this', that is beautiful."[3]

• Television cannot embrace communities in such an intimate way as live theatre, but it can respect their culture and needs. *Sesame Street*, an enduring and popular children's television series in the United States since its launch in 1968, uses puppetry as a central device and can be considered a pioneer of the 'edu-tainment' movement – the marriage of education and entertainment. The show has been repeated as *Plaza Sésamo* in Latin America and as *Susam Sogaki* in Turkey. Versions are now being produced in China, Poland and the Russian Federation, as well as in the Middle East.

• In South Asia, the *Meena* animated films have proved a phenomenal success in promoting the interests of girls. The series tells the story of Meena and her family through the eyes of the child. Each episode faces up to the uncertainties felt by her parents and to the older generation's discomfort with newfangled ideas. *Meena*, with drama and humour, shows the benefits of education for girls and argues the case for equal opportunity for herself and her brother, Raju.

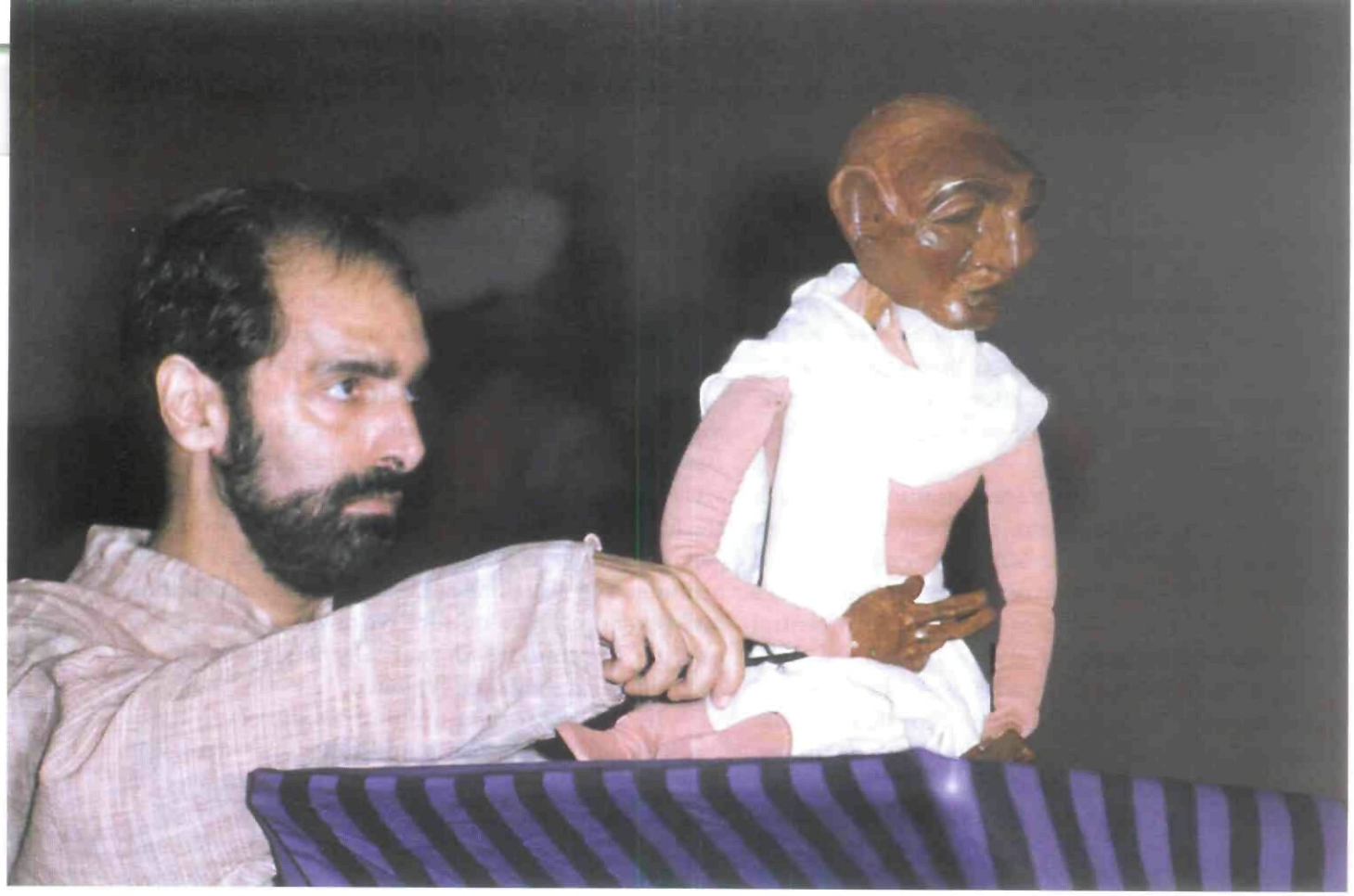
The process of developing the *Meena* series brought together Hanna-Barbera Productions with artists from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Characters were carefully researched to ensure that they reflected the lifestyles of communities where the films would be seen. Extensive research was also conducted on the attitudes and reactions of men, women and children, and several characters were redrawn as a result. An evaluation concluded that *Meena's* potential is unlimited and should be exploited.

• In South Africa, a multimedia project to reach black families with health and other messages was built around a prime-time television drama series, *Soul City*, and a radio serial, *Healing Hearts*.

The television show reached 4.3 million people, and the radio drama reached 3 million. An evaluation conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry said: "Drama captures people's imaginations

Krisna Satmoko

Even a puppet simply made from available materials can enthral youngsters, as shown here in the hands of Dadi Pudumjee.



Images of Truth, created at the Ishora Puppet Theatre and performed here by Dadi Pudumjee, is based on the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi.

like no other television genre. The series used the power of drama to impart health education messages. *Soul City* has attracted a large and loyal audience."[4]

Almost 90 per cent of the audience felt they had learned something from *Soul City* and its human storylines. As one respondent said, "You feel it, and it sort of shakes you inside." In this single reaction we have sufficient justification for the commitment and effort involved in putting together a drama that provides information. Entertainers have the power to 'shake people inside', and with the right support they will use that power to bring about positive change. Puppets can be part of what makes schooling better; they can persuade mothers to breastfeed; they can be used to teach people about oral rehydration.

When we consider using puppets to strengthen communication within communities, we should see this not as a new fad but as enlisting the aid of a range of experts in the field of entertainment, thus opening up fresh possibilities not available through conventional means. Indeed, many of the most successful mass media programmes aimed at children and parents combine a variety of formats–puppetry, animation and live action. In live performance, many producers mix puppets with human actors. This unity tells us that puppets are not only special and powerful persuaders in their own right, but also part of an approach that regards all forms of communication, especially those that entertain, as valid and useful.

Getting started

If you are now convinced that you want to recruit puppets to work with you in development, how do you get started? A number of elements need to be pulled together. First, you can either recruit skilled puppeteers who earn their living through their art, or you can develop new puppeteers.

★ Finding experienced puppeteers

In many countries, puppeteers pass their skills on from one generation to another, creating traditions of expertise. The best puppeteers, those who are most in demand, may also be the most open to introducing new ideas into their shows. If traditional material is very structured, the puppeteer may still be able to insert new segments into existing stories. However, if the puppeteer is adaptable and open to new ways of working, he or she may be willing to produce new stories that are more flexible.

The Indonesian master Asep Sunandar Sunarya comes from several generations of male puppeteers, and he has helped to reverse the decline in *wayang* puppetry by radically changing his approach. He introduced puppets whose mouths move when they speak, dramatic special effects (like blood spurting from characters who are killed in battle), more humour in speech and movement, and 30-minute performances that can better hold their audience to the end of the show.

The art of puppetry

> God dwells in the hearts of all beings, Arjuna; thy God dwells in thy heart. And the power of wonder moves all things puppets in a play of shadow whirling them in the stream of time.
>
> ***Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII.61**

At the end of this momentous century of destruction and creation, we still retain our fascination with the sublime and simple. Today, in the age of sophisticated technology, it is the simple puppeteer who survives as a commentator on the essence of creation, casting figures in his own image.

There are few countries that do not have a puppet tradition. What puppeteers do ranges from high art to kitsch, and we can only distinguish between the two through experience or through the inner sense of the artist. If we are conscious of the pressures that push the puppeteer towards the banal, there is little chance of falling into that trap.

Countries like India, with a living tradition of puppetry, have recently felt a shock wave from the surfeit of media. A few years ago, there were two television channels; now there are 30, and most small villages tune in with a satellite dish. In this milieu, it is difficult for the traditional puppeteer to survive. It is also easy to criticize television without questioning why it has surpassed puppetry and other traditional entertainments in popularity. The transformation seems more dramatic because it happened within one generation, and many traditionalists believe the old ways are dying out.

I believe that our history is a living tradition that must evolve or find itself in a museum. What we see as tradition has survived through assimilation and change.

The challenge is to create an effective new repertoire while holding on to the essence of traditional art. Puppeteers who are open to new ideas are successfully introducing new themes into the old format, but some blindly follow new trends without creating anything.

Serving as a bridge between the worlds of reality and fantasy, the puppet can say or do things the human actor cannot. At its best, puppetry succeeds in transferring an idea through the puppet to the audience.

So what does this mean in terms of using puppets to promote change? In a typical scenario, a funding agency gives the puppeteer a development story and asks him or her to produce it. The puppeteer is rarely given the scope to create a new story that works. Long planning meetings concentrate on the messages, as experts insist on the show carrying every detail of their knowledge without giving any thought to how much the puppets can handle. Because it brings in work, the puppeteer agrees to illustrate what is, to him or her, an alien idea. Afterwards, experts blame the puppeteer for not producing results!

This sad outcome is less likely if a contemporary artist is in tune with development themes or if a traditional puppeteer is experienced enough to judge how to incorporate the new ideas, and assertive enough to win over the experts.

My puppet troupe was once asked to perform at an exhibition using large puppets to promote oral rehydration therapy (ORT). Our show had to catch the attention of people moving through the exhibition, encourage them to stay through a 10 to 15-minute performance and leave them with some knowledge about the dangers of dehydration and the benefits of ORT. It was difficult to persuade the experts that we needed humour and popular music to make the audience stop and watch. The hardest thing was to avoid overloading the audience with information. It was only after the show started that the experts accepted the idea that our puppet play worked in its modest way.

During production of a video about nutrition, the experts wanted us to reduce the time the puppets were on screen so they could include more graphs and technical explanation! Clearly, we need to spend some time both exposing puppeteers to new themes and exposing sponsors and experts to the possibilities of puppetry, so they all see the task in a different light. To gain the confidence of traditional puppeteers, development workers must show some awareness of the potential of puppetry. Modern puppeteers may be more accustomed to challenging traditional scripts and more ready to introduce new themes.

Dadi Pudumjee

★ Training new puppeteers

As well as enlisting experienced puppeteers to work for development themselves, it is possible to gain their support in training new puppeteers, or better still to train people to train others. This approach increases the rate at which puppeteers interested in development issues become available.

Expert puppeteers in a country may be prepared to share their skills with others. If there are no indigenous puppeteers who can help, experts with training experience can be recruited from elsewhere. In several countries, including Bulgaria, Canada, France, Poland and the United States, there are training centres and universities where puppeteers are trained.[5] Some centres concentrate on one or more of the traditional art forms, such as marionettes or shadow puppets. As the use of puppets for development expands, new sources of training emerge, such as the African Research Education Puppetry Programme of South Africa.

The ideal trainer is someone who is fired up by this art and who believes in sharing it with others. The puppeteer must be willing to adapt settings and techniques to the local situation. If a modestly equipped show is going on the road, the expert must be experienced in doing similar shows, not only in elaborate stage or television productions.

Performers are often good trainers because they communicate a sense of excitement. Carmen Osbahr is

Child rights and the media: A duty to entertain and educate

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, which took place in Manila in July 1996, passed a declaration recognizing the role of all forms of media to inform, entertain and educate and also recognizing their potential for supporting social change.

Regional references would be different if this Summit were repeated in other areas, but the principles stated in Manila are universal.

The resolution sets an agenda for what has been called education for development, entertainment for social change, 'edu-tainment' or 'enter-education'. This strategy sees education and entertainment as having complementary social roles that provide more than just a moment of escapism.

The approach affirms the interdependence within society and encourages people to believe that they can make a difference in the future for themselves, their families and their societies. It promotes action on the basis of inclusion and cooperation, discourages prejudice and advocates peaceful solutions to conflict.

The Summit resolved that media for or about children should:

- protect and respect the diverse cultural heritage of Asian societies;
- be accessible to all children;
- provide for girls and counter widespread discrimination;
- provide for children with special needs, children in especially difficult circumstances, children of indigenous communities and children in situations of armed conflict.

The Summit called for media about children to:

- adopt policies consistent with the principles of non-discrimination;
- raise awareness and mobilize all sectors of society to ensure the survival, development, protection and participation of children;
- address economic, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse of children and ensure that such efforts do not violate their rights, particularly their right to privacy;
- protect children from material that glorifies violence, sexism, horror and conflict;
- promote positive values and not perpetuate stereotypes.

The Summit also declared that media for children should:

- be of high quality, be made especially for children and not exploit them;
- support their physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development;
- enable children to hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their language and their life experiences through media that affirm their sense of self and community while promoting an awareness and appreciation of other cultures;
- be wide-ranging in genre and content but not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex;
- be accessible when children need and can use them.

Dadi Pudumjee

Entertainment can be used to address sensitive topics that are hard to discuss. The Ishora Puppet Theatre (New Delhi) stages a performance of *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

one of the leading puppeteers in the United States and has worked on *Sesame Street*, where she gives life to Rosita, and *The Puzzle Place*, where she is Kiki (see chapter eight). She has trained television puppeteers working with Muppet-type puppets through workshops set up by Jim Henson Productions, Inc.

Carmen teaches technique, but she believes the main messages are about simplicity and fun. "We work with puppeteers for about two weeks; one week if they already know their technique. They need a lot of work, especially with the television monitor, and they have to practise every day. I have been in puppetry for 15 years and I am still learning. You have to do more than learn your lines; you have to put your heart into it."

Although some institutions offer training at low cost for the sake of goodwill, one should expect to pay a reasonable rate when hiring expert puppeteers. This conveys the message that you respect their professionalism, and it encourages the trainers to give their best.

Puppet training should cover making and manipulating puppets, creating scripts, staging shows and selecting material to be included in messages. Puppeteers destined to be part of a travelling group also need to know how to engage in a discussion with the audience and should be very well informed about topics likely to be raised in questions.

★ Finding good puppeteer candidates

The single most important qualification is enthusiasm. Look for people who are ready to learn and to pass their skills on to others and who demonstrate a creative instinct and a desire to communicate. They may have shown these qualities in theatre, through storytelling or in some other artistic form of communication.

They should also be enthusiastic about development work and may have already demonstrated an interest in creating positive change in their own communities. They need to be collaborative and able to work successfully in a group. The best candidates often are young people with an easy style and a sense of humour, looking for something personally fulfilling and socially useful. In Mozambique, the *Circo da Paz* project trained young people as artist educators to promote peace education and to travel the country training others. A review of the project says: "They had to be willing to leave their families for extended periods of time and be open to learning, taking risks, making mistakes, adapting and being part of an historic project."[6] That sounds like a job description for trainee puppeteers.

Batibot: An educational blueprint in the Philippines

Meaning small but strong, *Batibot* is the Philippines' main educational television series for pre-school children. This one-hour show has a magazine format and is recognized as a significant contribution to early childhood care and development around the country.

The target audience is children aged four to six in low-income families in urban communities. *Batibot*, broadcast in Tagalog, the national language, is designed to help pre-school children develop skills and values through entertainment. Each segment lasts one to three minutes and is designed to emphasize a goal from one of five areas addressing the child's growth and development.

The five areas are physical and biological self (covering health and hygiene, nutrition, body awareness and movement); moral and emotional self (focusing on positive attitudes and values such as friendship, sharing, patience, helping, fair play and coping with difficult feelings); social and cultural self (developing social identity through understanding the concepts of family and community and learning to participate as a member of a group); intellectual self (focusing on skills such as problem solving and learning letters, numbers and geometric shapes); and the physical environment (emphasizing the characteristics of the natural and man-made environment and the importance of protecting them). A different area is highlighted each season.

To encourage self-expression, creativity and social change, South African puppeteer Nyanga Tshabalala, shown here with friends, shares his puppetry skills in workshops for young people.

Like puppets, puppeteers come in all shapes and sizes. In particular, it is crucial to recruit both genders. Doing so not only makes it easier to portray a range of characters but also demonstrates equality and makes it possible to present gender-specific issues, such as family planning and education for girls. Research from the Children's Television Workshop suggests that female voices command more attention than male voices, perhaps because women readily tap into the emotional self. Ardeshir Kesharvazi, a puppeteer for 25 years in Iran, now helps to train the next generation of puppeteers, both for live shows and for television. He says that 90 per cent of the students in the courses are women, and finds them more sensitive to women's issues and more sincere. Traditionally, puppetry has been a male preserve in many countries, and it is important to encourage the participation of girls and women.

"My hands want to tell my people some stories"

I was 15 when I met Father Isaac Begi Mutuwawira, a young Roman Catholic priest from Malawi who was assuming his first assignment in Namibia in a parish that served Otjiwarongo. This town of 8,000 people is a transit point for trucks going to the north, where over half of Namibia's 1.5 million people live, and is a commercial hub for many large commercial beef farms.

Father Isaac was beginning to realize that strong AIDS-prevention messages were urgently needed, given the high rate of AIDS mortality in the region. AIDS education had increased people's level of knowledge but had not yet made a significant impact on behaviour. The challenge was to find innovative ways to encourage behavioural change.

In South Africa, puppets had been used successfully to take practical messages to communities. Namibia shares a similar history of apartheid, accompanied by the destruction of families and communities, and Father Isaac thought a similar approach would work here. He asked if I would be interested in attending a puppetry workshop. I had been involved in activities to prevent teenage pregnancies and the idea of using puppets to reach young people interested me.

Through puppetry training workshops in 1994 and 1995, facilitated by Nyanga Tshabalala from the African Research Education Puppetry Programme of South Africa, we developed a puppet show. We decided to take the performance to the public.

During Safe Sex Week, we performed the show at schools and workplaces, as well as for UN agencies, so they could see its potential. The performances were so successful that the group decided to travel to other regions, but there was no money.

Apparently God was eavesdropping. Three months later, ICCO, a non-denominational group from the Netherlands, donated a 15-seat minibus, a trailer and start-up funds. Soon afterwards, UNICEF donated tents, sponsored the promotional posters and put us in contact with the singer Jackson Kaujeua, who had released an AIDS single that topped the charts. Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia (PAAN) was born, and we were on our way.

We now travel to three villages a week, paid through funds donated by the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), ICCO and CARITAS. I am stage manager, responsible for puppets, props, curtains, the booth and positioning the speaker. We have a vehicle manager, a sound manager, an administrative manager, a tour coordinator and a team manager. Father Isaac took on promotion and fund-raising.

Puppetry is a wonderful art. It is very effective in conveying a message in a non-threatening way – very much like animation but with more life. It's now a part of me, and I would like to do more. My hands want to tell my people some stories.

Martha Aebes

Finding source material for messages

The aim is to produce a show in which it is impossible to tell where the entertainment stops and the message begins. The message must be based on accurate information and must advocate a course of action that is relevant, desirable and possible. An excellent source for messages related to health is *Facts for Life*, a publication produced jointly by several United Nations agencies.

Belize: Building a partnership to reach children

In the Central American country of Belize, UNICEF began supporting puppetry as a tool for reaching children with health and child rights messages in early 1994. Some support was given to a small arts foundation in the west of the country that was working with refugees and immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala, where puppetry is a traditional art form. The project involved unemployed youngsters in puppet making, set design and puppet theatre production.

A partnership evolved between UNICEF and the National Arts Council, the National Library Services and the National Committee for Families and Children to bring a master puppeteer from Canada to run a series of workshops in early 1996. This resulted in the formation of a small puppet troupe. It has workshop space and its members have received training in business administration, group dynamics and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The troupe works with NGOs and the Government to develop scripts to promote the Convention and to bring health education to children.

Puppets played a key role in the summer children's libraries' programme, developed in 1996 by the National Library Service. Now, a series of Saturday morning workshops are being held to develop skills in puppet making and set design.

Involving children in making and using puppets to communicate on issues of importance to them is also being developed through primary schools. The Ministry of Education and Public Service released teachers to attend a workshop on developing puppetry, and for the first time the art form was included in the Children's Festival of Arts in May 1996.

The lengthy preparation time required for a television series may not be available when training puppeteers for live performance, but the same principles should be applied: Bring together experts and creative artists to decide what to include, and balance the need for infor-mation and entertainment.

Learning about the target audience

There is little point in planning an excellent puppet show without first considering who is going to watch it. Part of the process of planning a show is understanding what the target audience will enjoy as entertainment and what it wants in the way of information. Many books and videos have been produced by someone who was inspired about a subject but only afterwards considered who would read the book or watch the video. The result is marketing the product from a position of weakness –'you ought to want this', rather than a position of strength – we know you want this'.

Unyil, the hero of an Indonesian puppet television show, is the son of a village farmer. Unyil is intelligent, friendly and lively ... but he is also a bit naughty.

Farooq Qaisar, whose puppet shows have been backed by UNICEF and several government ministries in Pakistan, studies the communities before starting a village puppet tour. He says: "Build up a good rapport with the community and identify their problems in the related fields of health, education, sanitation, etc. Find out as much as you can about their language, culture, folk tales and heroes. The characters of the script should be crafted according to the aspirations of the community."

Farooq learned this lesson the painful way. "I did the reverse of what usually happens with modern technology," he says. "I started in television and eventually went to the field with a live show. When I went out into the country, I thought I was already an outstanding writer. I found out that many people could not understand the level of the language I used. It came as a shock to me."

For instance, Farooq says he prepared scripts about oral rehydration, repeating several times the main message on how to make a solution with six glasses of water and one packet of oral rehydration salts. He asked some members of the audience afterwards whether they were now confident that they could make

UNICEF/95-0411/Barbour

The first step in planning a puppet show is considering who will watch it. Children in Cuba enjoy a performance.

it themselves, and they said no. Surprised, Farooq asked them why not. They replied that they did not have six glasses! So you have to understand how your message might be misinterpreted before you can communicate it in the right way.

Understanding children

Knowing your target audience is especially important when that audience is made up of children. To understand what children like and dislike and how they play, you have to spend time with them. Watching them at play or while they are being entertained is an opportunity to learn what games they play, what words they use and what fantasies they explore. It is also a chance to discover what entertains them – and what does not.

• Children's Television Workshop (CTW) carries out initial research to determine the demographics of the intended audience and what media that audience uses. In the case of children, however, preparation must go beyond making a demographic survey. First, those who are carrying out the work must have a way of relating to children and must remember what it is like to be a child. Second, children themselves must be actively involved.

CTW develops programmes through a collaborative process in which researchers, producers and content

The Indian experience

Dadi Pudumjee, Indian puppeteer and designer, has extensive experience using puppets in development work and in training others to use them. In the 1980s, he toured the New Delhi area with a mobile van, his puppets advocating peace and a healthy environment for children. In 1996, he participated in a workshop in New Delhi that brought together traditional puppeteers and AIDS Cell, a non-governmental organization. The idea was to encourage puppeteers to promote AIDS awareness in their own languages, through puppet shows travelling throughout rural areas. Dadi Pudumjee makes the point that if the puppeteer is to convey a message persuasively, he or she must be convinced of the real need to take action and of the relevance of the message. "It is difficult for a puppeteer to put across a message about family planning if he has nine children," he adds.

Dadi says that puppeteers have always adapted to changing times. They need accurate educational material to put into their stories, but the experts who provide this material must trust that puppeteers know what works as entertainment and not try to bully them into inserting dry facts in place of drama.

specialists all work together. Gregory J. Gettas, Vice President and Executive Producer of International Production at CTW, says: "Before commencement of production, an educational advisory group is formed. Made up of leading academics, child specialists, researchers, educators and creative personnel, the [group's] responsibility is to formulate, and eventually codify, a detailed statement of curriculum goals that will ultimately guide every segment produced during the course of a series."[7] The Philippine Children's Television Foundation adopted a similar process (see page 18).

- In Nepal, the UNICEF office drew up a set of principles to underlie all communications from the office. It called for children to participate in the development of material designed for them.
- In Mozambique, stories written by children were published by UNICEF in support of child rights and children in especially difficult circumstances.

Blending the old and new in Indonesia

In Indonesia, traditional and innovative puppetry have both proved successful. The best *dalangs* (puppeteers) make the traditional stories seem fresh every time. Their hands move like lightning as the puppet characters stir about the stage. They are alive and vibrant figures teetering on the edge of caricature. The *dalang* keeps up a rapid patter as the story unfolds, but the magic lies mainly in the movement, the grace and the pace of the puppets. The show starts late in the evening and lasts long into the night, accompanied by the hypnotic percussion music of the *gamelan*.

Although every show is different, the basic structure of the stories is fixed. In some sections, the puppeteer has a free hand to bring in irreverent humour and topical allusion. Here a skilful puppeteer can integrate messages on child rights, hygiene, disability awareness, peace education, family planning, health – whatever is desired.

With assistance from UNICEF, the Indonesian Centre for Health Education and the *Dalang* Association developed a manual that provides accurate material on health and other topics for puppeteers and suggests ways of introducing these messages into performances. The manual is being distributed to 3,000 *dalangs*, many of whom see this as a way of making their shows more relevant and so strengthening their art.

Adjum Djunaedy, head of the *Dalang* Association of West Java, says that *dalangs* are part of the community and feel it is in their interest to keep the community healthy.

The extent to which traditional puppeteers will adapt their art varies according to circumstances. An Indonesian television show, *Ria Jenaka* (Happy Clown), was criticized for adapting the *wayang* tradition by giving one of the main characters a wife so that stories could include family planning messages. Dr. Willy Karamoy, social communication researcher at the Ministry of Information, says: "They criticized it, saying that this character did not have a wife in the *wayang*. But how can I make a show about family planning without a wife?" Despite criticism, many *dalangs* are prepared to adapt *wayang* stories. For example, half-hour shows have been produced for audiences unaccustomed to six-hour performances.

Dr. Astuti Hendrato-Darmosugito, of the Indonesian Puppet Association, believes that the *wayang* traditionalists must be prepared to make the plays shorter and to translate them into everyday language. But she also feels there should be a commitment to teach young people about their culture and to tell them the customary stories.

Each approach is valid in different circumstances and for different audiences. There will always be people who want traditional stories told in a conventional way. However, skilled puppeteers can blend old and new into an exciting form of entertainment that will attract new audiences.

When it came to developing a television show for children in the early 1980s, master puppeteer Suyadi devised *Si Unyil* (Here's Unyil), an entirely new show with a different kind of puppet and an approach that was designed for television from the ground up. Indonesian traditions were one important element of the programme, but the puppets, style and stories were designed to communicate with modern Indonesian children.

Lao People's Democratic Republic: Ancient tradition put to new use

Until the revolution in 1975, a puppet theatre existed in Laos as part of the king's court, and puppet shows with themes from the *Ramayana* legends were put on for special guests and on ceremonial occasions. The revolution closed the puppet theatres, but four years later the Ministry of Information and Culture decided to reopen them. They sent 20 would-be puppeteers to Bulgaria for six months of training.

New shows were designed to convey social development messages. Performances, which had once lasted for three days, were now designed to last 20 minutes. In the early 1990s, UNICEF became involved with the new puppet theatres and provided information from the publication *Facts for Life* for use in developing scripts, which were designed to support malaria control.

Puppets in the Lao Republic still present traditional stories about *Lammaken* and *Nag Keo*, but they also promote health education among children and adults. Live performances and video-taped shows can be seen at the 20 or so video parlours in each small district. Sivat Savay, Director of the National Puppet Theatre in the Lao Republic, says that people often did not know why they became sick, and the puppet films blended together the ancient traditions with the new information to help them understand. In one show a puppet asked a 'ghost' why it was dead. The ghost puppet explained about malaria and how the use of treated bednets could have prevented its death.

An evaluation showed that the audience responded well to the puppet shows.

Footnotes

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2. Geldof, Lynn, *Social Mobilization in Nigeria*, UNICEF, Lagos, 1994.

3. Interview in *The Philippine Experience* (a UNICEF film), quoted in *Facts for Life: Lessons from experience*, by Peter McIntyre, UNICEF, New York, 1996.

4. Community Agency for Social Enquiry, *Let the Sky to be the Limit: Soul City evaluation report*, Jacana Education, Braamfontein, South Africa, 1996.

5. For further information, contact UNIMA, Union Internationale de la Marionnette, by fax: (404) 873-9907 or e-mail: unima@mindspring.com.

6. Kolucki, Barbara, *Different and Equal: A review of peace education projects from Mozambique, Liberia, Sri Lanka and Lebanon*, UNICEF, Nepal, 1996.

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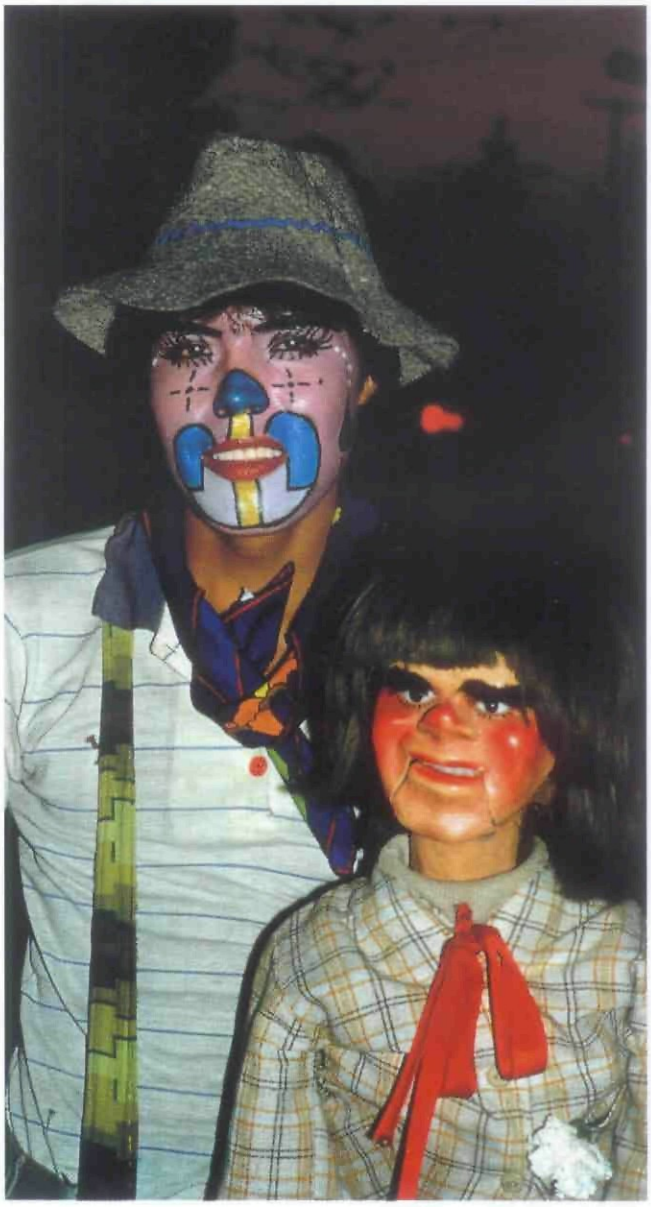


UNICEF/86-099/Tom Weber

A ventriloquist and his friend in Mexico.


Rally
ANDY LA

CHAPTER 3

Puppets and children

Puppet shows are the stage of children's fantasies, the free-floating ship that carries fairy tales, dreams and miracles, taking its passengers to the realm of beauty and imagination.

Gabi Stamatiade, Romanian puppeteer

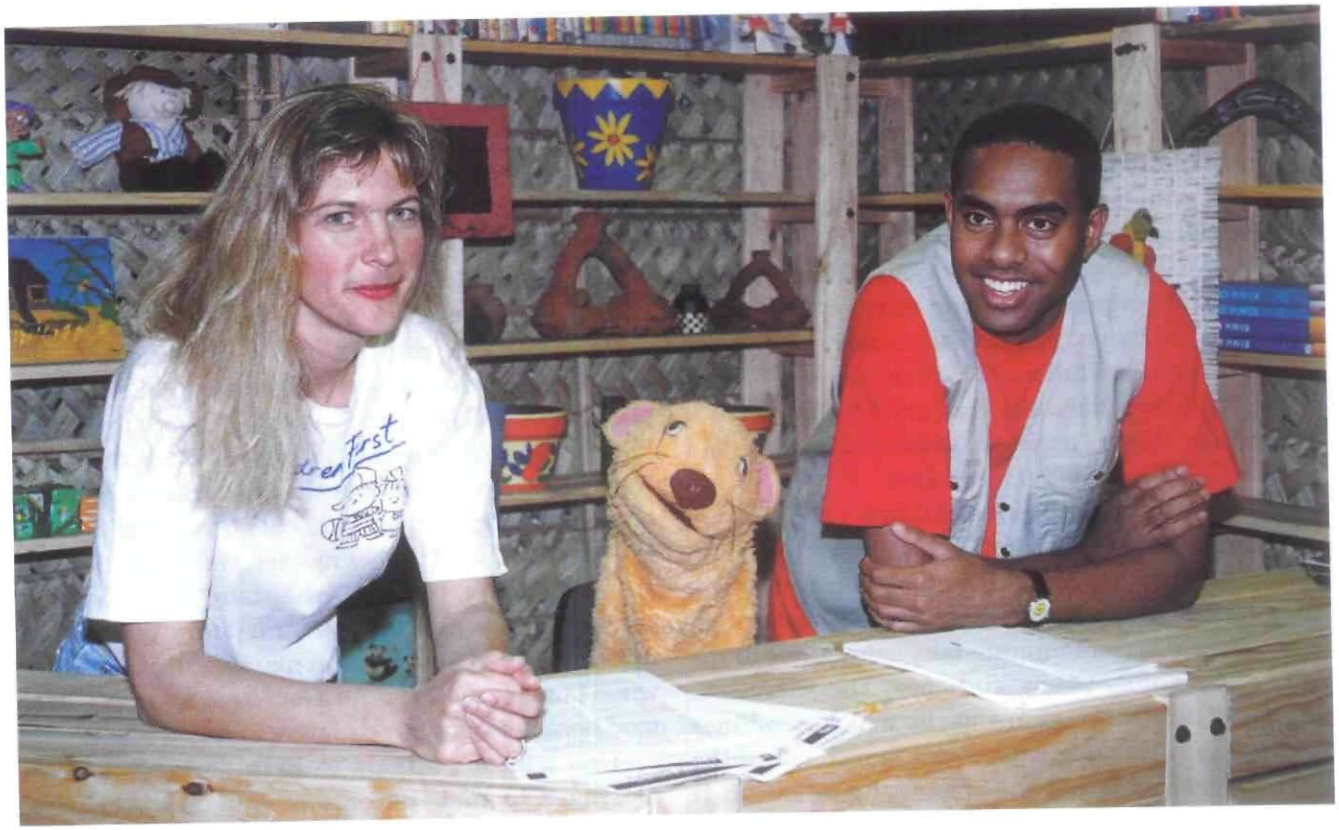
Children relate to puppets both as performers and as observers. We have already seen how they switch between these roles unconsciously at play, working the puppets, interacting with them and watching them. In this chapter we will look more closely at how children can work with puppets and what they respond to when they are in the audience.

Children as performers

Gabi Stamatiade, who was a librarian until she discovered puppetry, turned the Public Library for Children in Bucharest (Romania) into a place where children can act out their fantasies in puppetry. Her experience confirms the special relationship between children and puppets and shows that this medium can be used for communication with and among children.

For 20 years, children have brought stories to life through puppet shows hosted by the Library. A typical show involves 30 young people, mostly teenagers. They plan a production from beginning to end, creating and using high-quality glove puppets, puppets on wires, marionettes and Muppets. The young people create the characters, weave the stories, build the puppets, learn to manipulate their creations, write the scripts, rehearse and perform.

The group, known as the Friends of Stafiduta (who is the mascot), puts on shows at the Library, in the park and in orphanages, kindergartens, schools and residences for children with disabilities. In 1993, the group was awarded first prize at the National Festival



Heidi Larson, of UNICEF Fiji, and Inoke Bainimaram, host of the weekly television programme *Children First*, chat with Mr. M.G. Mongoos, the programme's star.

UNICEF/92-784/Roger Lemoyne

Television can encourage appreciation of local culture by making it more widely available, such as in schools. Pictured here is a classroom in China.

of Amateur Puppeteers. The process of putting on a puppet show releases a creative torrent from the children, Gabi says, and teaches them to work together in teams and to complete a long-term project.

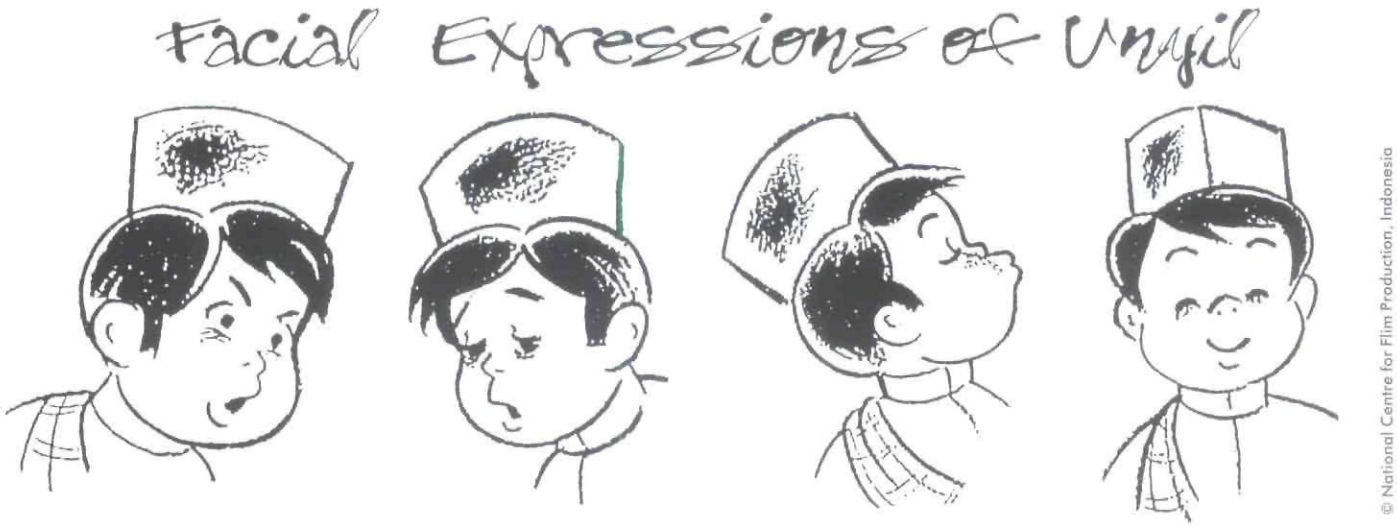
"The creative fantasy and rich imagination that are typical of our childhood years represent an inexhaustible source for a puppet theatre," she says. "Playing with puppets is a collective activity. It develops team spirit in children and teaches cooperation. In contrast with episodic entertainment, working with puppets is a long-term occupation. A play managed by young puppeteers cannot be staged without everyone's full participation." In productions by the Friends of Stafiduta, each child finds a role for which he or she has aptitude, skills and interest, and this is key to the success of the troupe.

The process stimulates the children's imagination and trains new puppeteers. "They do everything with passion because they are creating the puppets they will bring to life on the stage," Gabi says, "and through which they will communicate fairy-tale stories to the young and not-so-young audience. The success of puppetry lies in the genre itself, which combines speech, the expressive nature and movement of the puppets, the lights and the accompanying music. It also holds a huge educational potential, and that is important for a public library."

Puppetry has different goals in different places. In Romania, the emphasis is on the benefits to young people of learning how to work puppets and develop a show. In South Africa, the focus is on how puppets can help children 'get back' their childhood. In some countries the main aim is for the young people themselves to express a social message. In Belize, for example, teachers were trained to introduce health and child rights messages in schools through puppets. The pupils have now learned how to perform their own puppet shows for other children and for their parents.

In May 1996, puppetry was introduced in the Children's Festival of Arts in Belize with the winning play *Parents: Give Your Children a Chance*, by Grace Primary School. The play (see page 58 for an extract from the script) confronts the low priority given to education for girls. Lupita cannot go to school because she has to sell food for her mother. Her friend Susan is abused by her parents when she asks to go to secondary school. However, the story ends on an upbeat note as Susan's parents accept counselling, while Lupita's mother buys a bicycle so she can sell the food herself, freeing her daughter to attend school.

This use of puppets to help children convey messages to their parents is valuable. At school children learn about diet, hygiene and prevention of common diseases, information that would be useful to



their parents. However, it may be difficult for a child to communicate this knowledge at home because doing so may imply criticism of the child's home and family life. Parents who did not themselves attend school or only did so for a short time may be unwilling to accept lessons from a child on such matters as nutrition or hygiene. They may even consider the teacher to be an outsider who does not understand their customs.

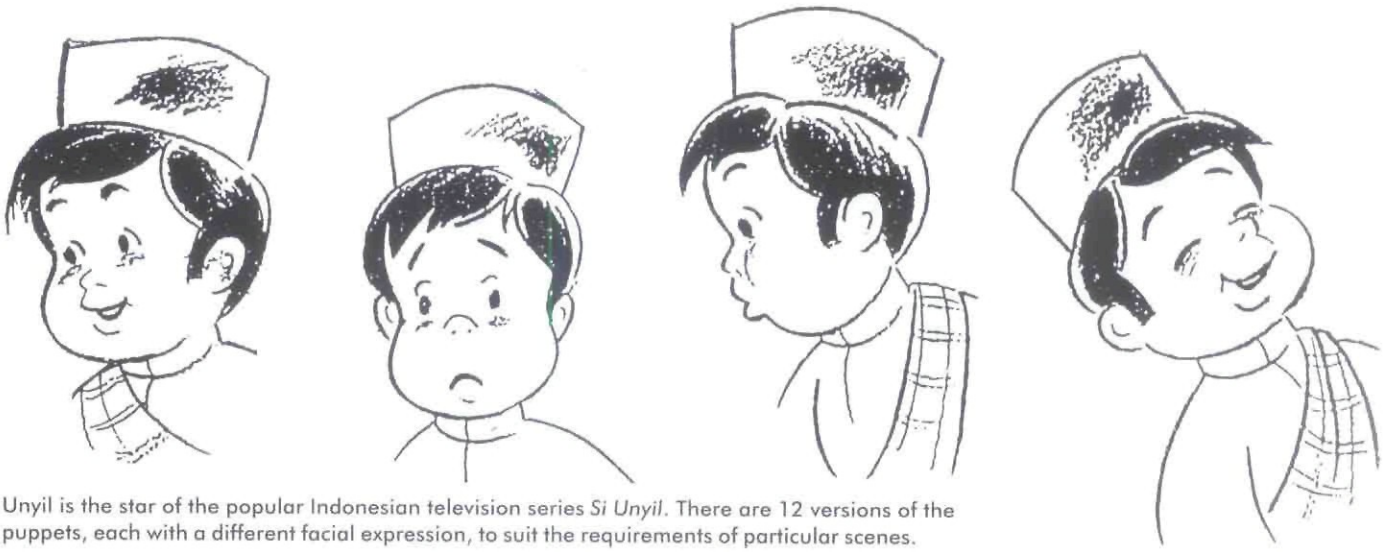
However, when children perform puppet shows for their parents, the information seems to come from a puppet character, who can adopt the style and approach of someone who is respected locally. The ability of puppets to educate without giving offence can overcome any resistance the parents may feel to receiving information from a child.

Children as audience

Most commonly, children's experience with puppetry is as part of an audience to a live or broadcast show. Popular and effective programmes have been produced for television on very small budgets.

• In 1971, Farooq Qaisar, in Islamabad (Pakistan), was one of the first to see the potential for instructing children through puppetry with a programme based on *Sesame Street* and a puppet called Big Bertha, modelled on Big Bird. The show ran for two years. Farooq then went to Romania to learn more about puppets and returned to Pakistan in 1976 to create a new kind of puppet and show. He has since made six television puppet shows, many of them live, broadcast in prime time. His characters, most notably Uncle Sargam, have become household personalities seen in 40 countries around the world. In 1993, he received the President's Award for Pride of Performance. For many years, Farooq was working virtually alone in puppetry in Pakistan; now it is accepted as an art form with a future. Several groups are training young puppeteers on how to introduce social messages in puppet shows

Romanian children are both the performers and the audience in a puppet show by the Friends of Stafiduta.



Unyil is the star of the popular Indonesian television series *Si Unyil*. There are 12 versions of the puppets, each with a different facial expression, to suit the requirements of particular scenes.

and how to prepare both television and live performances.

• Suyadi is art director and master puppeteer of the *Si Unyil* puppet series in Indonesia. While working for the National Centre of Film Production, he created more than 500 episodes of a show that has become one of the most popular in Indonesia. With experience as an author and illustrator of children's books, he knows that children respond to strong stories and reject anything that seems to preach. He also believes that children connect more strongly with characters who have some human defects than with those who are too good to be true (see box below).

Unyil: The puppet that won the hearts of Indonesian children

In April 1981, an Indonesian puppet film called *Si Unyil* appeared for the first time on a television screen. Within a very short time, Unyil, the hero, became a close friend to Indonesian children, appearing regularly on Sunday mornings to entertain millions of viewers.

In fact, *Si Unyil* is not merely entertainment. The programme, while entertaining, talks about patriotism, nationalism, health, the environment, the armed forces, family planning, art and culture, and all the other things an Indonesian child should know. There is, of course, still room for fantasy. Some Unyil stories are intended merely to entertain and amuse children. There are also fairy tales, fables and folk tales.

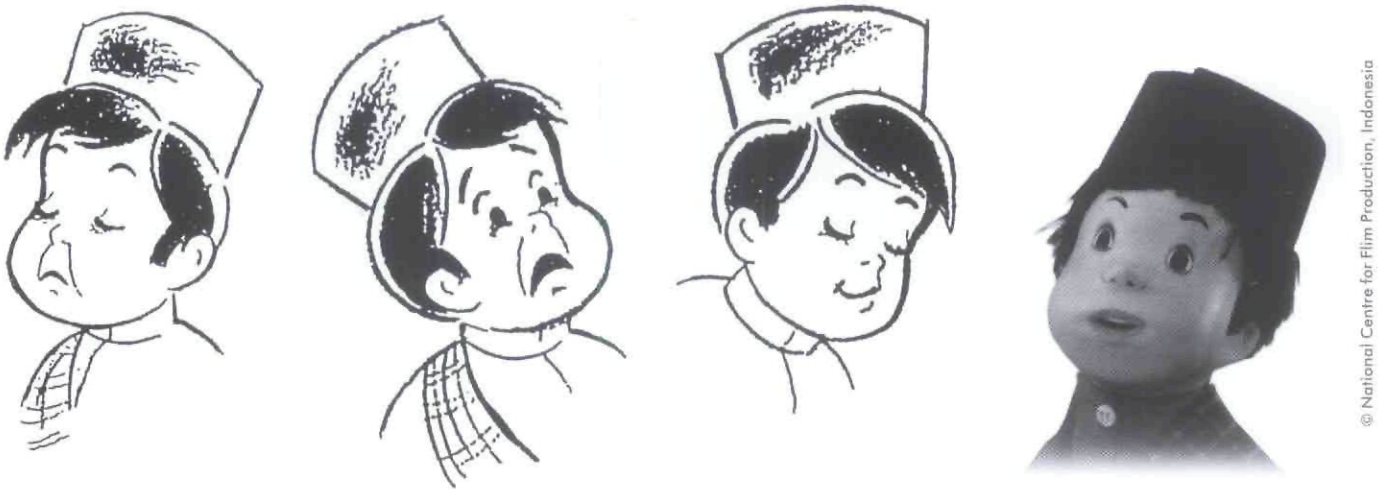
In creating *Si Unyil* stories, we keep in mind the same ideas any writer of a children's show uses: Children like action, humour and suspense, although the occasional touching scene is also welcomed. In the case of puppet films, though, more attention is paid to action. Things are meant to be acted, not merely spoken.

The choice of characters is important – some are 'good' and some are 'bad'. A story that has only angelic characters would be very dull. In *Si Unyil* we include antagonistic types, represented by the short-tempered Pak Raden and the lazy Pak Ogah, to enhance the story and enchant the viewers. In fact, these 'unsympathetic' characters are the most popular. This can present a challenge for the puppet designer. While puppets can say and do more than people can without fear of offending, the designer needs to treat each character differently – a school teacher and a villain must look distinct from each other, for example.

Whether characters are good or bad, they all have to possess a certain charm. We have found that the most naturalistic puppets are the fastest forgotten, while the caricatures are long remembered. Keep in mind, though, that a highly distorted or nearly abstract figure is only suitable for portraying villains, witches, giants, demons and other frightening creatures.

Indonesia has a long history of puppetry, and most puppets have been presented in a stylized and decorative way. *Si Unyil* is different. Unyil is designed to communicate with modern Indonesian children, and consequently he must appear more or less modern. The traditional touch is retained in the treatment of stories dealing with everyday life and in the presentation of artistic and cultural events.

Suyadi



• The Philippines is another country where puppets made an early and spectacular appearance on television. Rene Villanueva, creative director of the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, included puppets in *Batibot*, a one-hour magazine programme that also contains live action and cartoons. The programmes were designed to address childhood development issues and to teach skills and values to children 4 to 6 years old.

Rene says the aim of the programme is simple: "We show children that learning is fun." In its fourth year, *Batibot* reached number three in the national television ratings, behind a variety show and a soap opera. Two of the main characters, Pong Pagong and Kiko Matsing, received a higher recognition rating than any other figure on television.

Today, regular puppet characters on *Batibot* include Koko Kwik-kwak (a fun-loving, inquisitive bird), Kapitan Basa (a superhero who likes to read), the fortune-teller Manang Bola, grandfather Sultan Parachibum and a struggling actress called Irma Daldal. During development, each character is tested on children for appeal and effectiveness. Audience reaction is tested both through research and through direct observation during an occasional live show.

Research has found that children respond best to animation and short live-action segments, but storytelling and puppet sections also work well. In fact, a puppet segment, *Ang Bata Sa Kabila Ng Bakod* ('Kids on the Block') was one of the five most popular segments in the show.

What appeals to children

Children want stories, not lectures. When puppets are being used to teach, children take in lessons if, and only if, they first care about the characters and stories. Children quickly become bored by propaganda, however well meant, even if they were initially attracted by the idea that a puppet is communicating.

Suyadi was very conscious of this when planning stories for *Si Unyil* in Indonesia. He says: "Children became very fond of this serial because of its adventurous stories. The developers worked hard to make sure that entertainment played the largest role in the mix of action and education. Above all, children must not be aware that we are teaching them something. The persuasion remains more or less hidden."

Cultural differences are important in understanding why children like some stories and dislike others. Children become accustomed to the stories they hear from their parents and to the story books available in their homes and schools. Adults choose these stories because they enjoyed them when they were young, and this reinforces a continuity spanning the generations.

A concern in both industrialized and developing countries is parents' inability to select what comes into the home through television, especially in regard to violence and sexually explicit material. In developing countries there is also concern about overexposure to television shows made in the West, which weaken children's appreciation of their own culture.

Barbara Kolucki, a media consultant who works on issues involving children, peace education and people with disabilities, argues that we need to build a culture of media for children that counteracts the violent images to which they are often exposed. She points out that many programmes spend 75 per cent of a story outlining a problem and only 25 per cent or less on the solution and resolution. She advocates for reversing the proportions so that the story concentrates on creating harmony out of conflict. "First of all, most children and adults already know exactly what the problems are," she says. "Second, by changing the ratio to emphasize the solution, children learn the process as well as the outcome."

Krisna Satmoko

Cuplis (holding guitar), a character in *Si Unyil*, comes from a big family and helps to promote family planning messages in Indonesia. At the workshop on puppetry for development in Bandung (Indonesia), children delight in playing with the beloved puppet.

Nyanga Tshabalala

Young puppeteers in South Africa.

Giving back childhood to the children of Soweto

Puppets need not belong to a particular race, culture or tradition, so they are an excellent means of breaking down the prejudice caused by apartheid. We have used them for this purpose in Soweto (South Africa). Puppets can be different colours or speak different languages, enabling children to focus on their similarities rather than their differences.

Under apartheid, children in South Africa rarely enjoyed their youth, and they knew little about their human rights. Today, puppetry con play an important role in dealing with these issues.

I grew up in the township of Soweto, outside Johannesburg, where puppetry was unknown. However, as kids we played with bricks and pretended they were cars. It is only now I see that we were 'playing puppets', and I realize how powerful a tool puppetry is. I would like to share puppetry with my community and pass on my puppetry skills to break down racial stereotypes and to both educate and entertain people.

My approach is to show children how enjoyable childhood can be, concentrating on things that young people can do. When I started making puppets with children, I had to consider the age group, the types of puppets to be made, the available materials and – most important – what language they would speak. (Growing up in Soweto had one advantage: At the age of four, I could communicate in three languages.)

I do not have age restrictions on my workshops because children sometimes have to bring their younger siblings. I like to have paper or clay on hand for the young children so they do not disturb the older ones. I also like to engage girls and boys in working together, which helps them realize their similarities and encourages them to work towards a common goal. This kind of participation serves them well as they grow up.

My project is fairly new and it will take time for the children to become familiar with puppetry. I focus on encouraging creativity and group work. As we work together, other issues emerge, such as name-calling, put-downs and lack of self-esteem and confidence. Especially in the townships, children do not have psychologists to help them deal with individual problems, and they are not taught that it is okay to make mistakes. I feel that one cannot look at other issues before dealing with attitude problems that may arise in the workshops.

Once a sense of trust has been created, one can start to develop stories that young people can perform. If you discuss each step and allow suggestions, they will feel that they are part of the production. Explore movement and work with the children to see what the puppet can do best, rather than what it cannot do. Young people ask many questions, and you should be prepared to do a lot of demonstrating.

Praise is of utmost importance, as this helps to build self-esteem. Ask the children how they feel about what they have achieved. You don't need fancy materials – we made our first puppets from socks. It was so much fun for the children to see the potential of creating something from nothing, and giving life to a puppet boosted their confidence.

Nyanga Tshabalala

Children with disabilities

Puppets have the gift of making friends with children, and this is especially valuable for children who may be subject to discrimination. For children with disabilities, puppets posses added attractions. Puppets can focus on the child rather than on the disability. Or the puppet character itself can have a disability, leading the children to identify with the puppet. Showing a puppet with a disability interacting successfully with other puppets or with children can be very encouraging for a disabled child in the audience who feels left out or isolated. By integrating puppets that have a disability with those that do not, the show performs the valuable task of promoting integration in real life, without stressing the disability itself. Such an approach presents a positive role model for people with disabilities and increases awareness among the population.

The Kids on the Block

One example of such an initiative is *The Kids on the Block* (KOB), a troupe of large-sized puppets, some with disabilities. The puppets were devised in the United States in 1977 in response to a law requiring children with disabilities to be educated in regular schools. Following the Japanese *Bunraku* tradition, KOB puppeteers dress in black and operate large puppets in full view of the audience. They have performed throughout the United States and in 25 other countries.

KOB puppets reflect almost every possible human condition. Renaldo and Brenda are blind, Valerie and Joanne have *spina bifida*, Jennifer and Melody have learning disabilities, Mandy and Brenda are deaf, Scott and Jason have asthma and Jimmy and Ellen Jane are emotionally disturbed.

Mabel Chau, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, has overseen the introduction of *The Kids on the Block* into Hong Kong, where she says discrimination against children with disabilities is widespread. "We feel that public education at a very young age is very important, because as children become adults it is much harder to get rid of fears and prejudices." Mabel made a documentary about KOB that she showed to head teachers, who then agreed to the performance of the puppet shows in their schools.

The Kids on the Block is a 'package deal' that comes complete with puppets and scripts. Although these can be adapted to local conditions, they cannot be changed in any substantial way without the permission of the US copyright owners, and they cannot be televised. The shows, live and interactive, are followed by question-and-answer sessions. Their structure is designed to

Tackling discrimination with The Kids on the Block

Discrimination stems from misunderstanding, fear, ignorance, miscommunication and lack of opportunity to associate with those who are different.

I believe that the earlier children are educated about accepting others who are different, the more accepting they will be as adults. In particular, when disabled and non-disabled children are exposed to one another, the disabled children can be better integrated, while non-disabled children benefit by becoming more open-minded and accepting of others.

Being different is a universal condition. The aim of *The Kids on the Block* is not merely to heighten understanding and awareness but also to help everyone accept differences in others and in themselves. This message is consistent in all the scripts and is emphasized in the question-and-answer period when the puppets interact with the audience and answer their questions. This interaction includes catchy songs.

The main advantage of *The Kids on the Block* is that it is a proven product: The puppets work; the scripts are validated and are based on information from years of experience that would be difficult to gain locally. The material is aimed at the appropriate age group and the structure takes account of children's limited attention span. There is material to help with questions and answers and with follow-up activities, and training is available.

There are also some limitations. The topics and scripts are predetermined, and direct translation can be difficult. Programme costs can be expensive. Puppets and scripts have to be purchased from the United States, and *The Kids on the Block* is patented. There are usually three or four scripts to a theme, but all of them may not be useful in a local context. Language problems may occur between trainers and volunteers. And the show is not suitable for open-air settings where the audience can come and go.

Anything new takes time to catch on. People tend to be hesitant at the beginning, but the benefits of the programme make a trial performance worthwhile.

Mabel Chau

provide a safe environment in which children can develop sensitivity and understanding towards others.

Translating scripts for the programme into various languages can be challenging. For example, scripts have been translated into Chinese, which is difficult since they incorporate puns and some concepts that do not translate well culturally. The Chinese scripts have now been upgraded five times, as the puppeteers gain more experience about what works.

So far, 35 volunteers have been trained to work the puppets and answer questions from children after the shows. There are 37 segments, each lasting 10 minutes and dealing with one aspect of disability. (There are also short pieces for pre-school children; these can be performed between two of the main segments.) The team holds question-and-answer sessions after the shows and helps with follow-up exercises in the classroom.

Peter McIntyre

The child who refused to wake up

This *Batibot* script was performed by live actors but works with puppets too. It is a good example of how sexual abuse can be portrayed sensitively and dramatically.

Narrator:

We all love to listen to happy stories. But there are sad stories, too. Today, I will tell you a sad story.

As the story is told the action is shown.

Every day, Tina woke up early, especially when her parents were rushing to work. One day when Tina's uncle was on vacation in the country, a strange thing happened.

Tina woke up and prepared for school.

But she would not open her eyes.

Her parents tried to wake her up.
But she seemed to be sleepwalking.

In school, Tina took part in every activity.
But she just wouldn't open her eyes.

Tina's parents thought of a question-and-answer game. They asked Tina about the things she liked. Her favourite flower, colour and food. Tina answered each question.

Then they asked Tina about the things she did not like.
Tina did not like the dark.
She did not like to be alone.
She did not like her uncle's room.
She did not like to be with her uncle.

Slowly, Tina revealed the bad things her uncle had been doing. He had been abusing her while her parents were out.

Tina's uncle was punished. He was put in jail for many years.

Tina felt safe. She finally opened her eyes.
If you have experiences like Tina's, don't be afraid to tell your mother, father or another older person you trust.

The image of Tina refusing to open her eyes is suggestive of the withdrawal some children exhibit when they have been abused. Notice that the sentences are short and the words are simple. The story ends with a clear message encouraging children to tell an adult they trust.

CHAPTER 4

Using puppets to address sensitive issues

> The puppets captivated them, and, although the AIDS message was hard-hitting, the puppets allowed us to treat the subject with humour and purpose.
>
> **Martha Aebes**
> Puppetry Against AIDS in Namibia

In this chapter, we look at how puppets can be used to spread information and messages about sensitive issues and difficult situations, including areas where there may be disagreement about the content and style of puppet shows. Indeed, as Barbara Kolucki explains (see box on page 40), the process of making stories and puppet shows can itself be healing and can help resolve conflicts. Puppetry can also address sexual issues, child labour, discrimination and racism. The purpose of this chapter is to show what some people have achieved in drawing people together and winning agreement on controversial issues.

Children in need of special support

Children's stories are often traditional, passed down from generation to generation. Stories from different cultures have common features, many carrying warnings about human behaviour. Stories for adults often portray heroic human figures and powerful gods, presenting a view of humanity struggling to gain control over life that is at the mercy of larger forces. They tell of struggles against the elements and arbitrary fate, and also of human conflict, usually battles between good and evil.

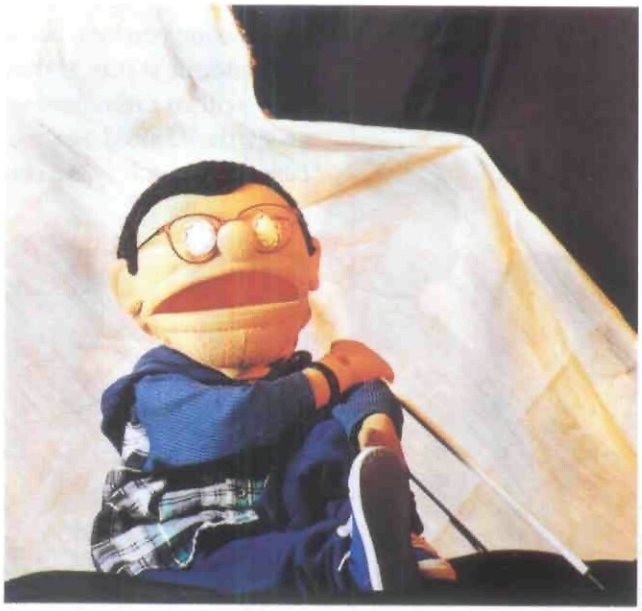
These stories may be adapted for children or may find their echoes in stories developed especially for children. In traditional stories for young people, the child is sometimes under threat because of having disregarded the parents' warnings. A story for younger children may show a child who strays and cannot find its mother for a few moments. As the child grows older the threat becomes more serious. In folk tales, a child is often lost in a forest or snatched from his or her parents. The threat is often death: A wild animal or sinister adult is going to eat the child, kill him or turn him to stone or ice.

These stories spin out a period of suspense during which the child seems doomed, but they usually conclude with the child being saved, often by a heroic act of his own. The wicked person or animal is slain and there is a tearful reunion with the parents. Such stories teach that good overcomes evil, the brave are rewarded and the vain and greedy are punished, although they may also be forgiven.

Such stories have satisfied generations. Is there anything wrong with puppet shows that similarly project our childhood fears?

The answer depends on the emotional and psychological state of the children in the audience and the circumstances under which they see the story unfold. Traditional stories are usually told in a setting where the child is safe and close to the parent. In these circumstances a child feels secure and can cope with the fictional threat.

But what if the child feels threatened? What if her parents have been killed in a conflict, or his community has been forced to flee as refugees? What if the scary monsters of story books have turned into a hideous reality? Or what if the child grows up in a harsh world, where he is never told he is loved, where she is never



Krisna Satmoko

A puppet that is handicapped conveys a positive message about acceptance of disabilities.

Using puppets and live actors to protect children from abuse

In the following script, *Batibot* used a mixture of puppets and live actors to tackle the subject of sexual abuse of children in the Philippines. Isko, the street child, is a puppet. Mr. Pido is played by a human actor.

Isko: Newspapers! Buy your newspapers!
Mr. Pido: Good morning, fragrant boy.
Isko: Who are you?
Mr. Pido: I'm Mr. Pido. Can I take your picture?
Isko: Oh, yes please.
Mr. Pido: Wait : Not here.
Isko: Where, then?
Mr. Pido: How about the beach?
Isko: Why there?
Mr. Pido: So I can take your picture while you're swimming.
Isko: No! No!
Mr. Pido: I'll pay you to pose for me.
Isko: No.

Salve enters.

Salve: Hey, mister! Get away from my brother.
Mr. Pido: All right. I'll look for someone else.
Isko: Thanks, Salve.
Salve: Next time, stay away from strangers. And don't be afraid to say no if they ask you to do something that you don't want to do.
Isko: Thanks again.
Salve: Let's go to the child centre.

told she has talents? What if he has been abused by adults and is frightened most of the day? What if she sits and watches television alone because the adults in her world are too busy to spend time with her and discuss her fears? In these circumstances stories may need to provide the child with reassurance.

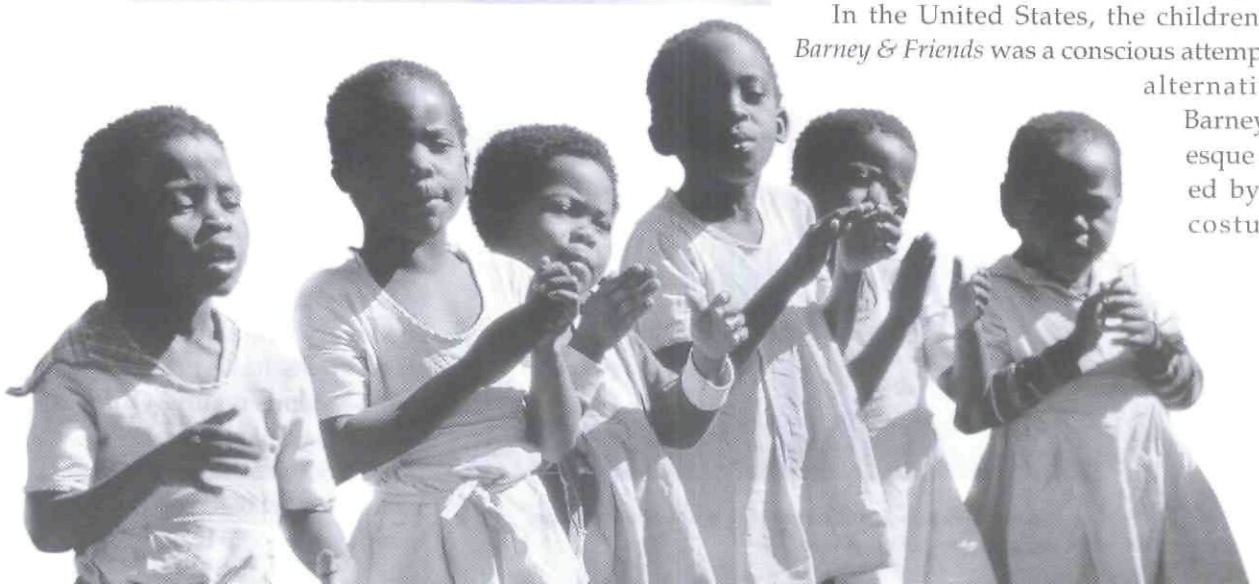
Sonia Rosario, former producer for children's and family programming with Children's Television Workshop in the United States, helped to devise and launch *The Puzzle Place*. She believes that children who have missed out on love and protection and who believe they are worthless need a different kind of story.

"The story before the technological age, before the written word, was a way of accentuating the dangers of the world," she says. "Stories were an opportunity to make children aware that the world was bigger than they were and that they could not contain it. That is a very different environment from what we have now, which is not 'man against nature' but 'man against man'. In a world of abuse and guns and fear, we steal away a child's ability to have a child's point of view about the world.

"That is why now, instead of stories being about the big monster in the bush who is going to eat you, we are trying to create something else that will teach children coping skills. It is no use telling them about scary monsters if we want them to be safe even when there are guns and when children are alone for hours at a time and exposed to a variety of threats."

Sonia says this approach allows *The Puzzle Place* to tackle serious issues such as racism and violence, and to entertain children at the same time. "It is relatively easy to do a goofy entertaining show. It is harder to tell stories that touch people in their hearts," she says. "This means telling others of an injustice done to you or someone you love because of colour, gender, religion or economic status. If this process does not occur, then there will be a remoteness in your programme."

In the United States, the children's programme *Barney & Friends* was a conscious attempt to develop an alternative approach. Barney, the Muppet-esque dinosaur played by an actor in a costume, tells the



074/John Isaac

children that they are special and that he loves them, and they tell him that they love him back. Then they sing about it in the theme song: "I love you, you love me." Sometimes a child might be sad and need cheering up, but it is unthinkable that any child would be eaten by a wolf or any other animal when Barney is around. Barney won huge audiences in the United States and has been exported to many other countries. But some adults feel that indiscriminate expressions of love are inappropriate in an age when we try to teach children to be discriminating in their responses to adults. Whatever the merits of a particular programme, the issue of what material to include needs to be decided based on the target audience.

Even puppeteers who promote vigorous storylines for children agree that boundaries have to be drawn against violence, racism and sexism. Suyadi, who advocates action-based stories for *Si Unyil*, broadcast in Indonesia, changed some storylines after recurring objections. "For instance, when a fight between

The Puzzle Place characters look at a family photo album. The programme seeks to encourage friendship and acceptance among people of different ethnic backgrounds.

From the United States: *The Puzzle Place*

A pre-school puppet series, *The Puzzle Place* teaches young children decision-making, social skills, tolerance and cooperation. The programme is produced in the United States by Lancit Media Productions for non-commercial television channels as part of children's and family programming. Aimed at children aged 3 to 5, it is designed to reaffirm ethnic and religious diversity and to provide real lessons that children can understand.

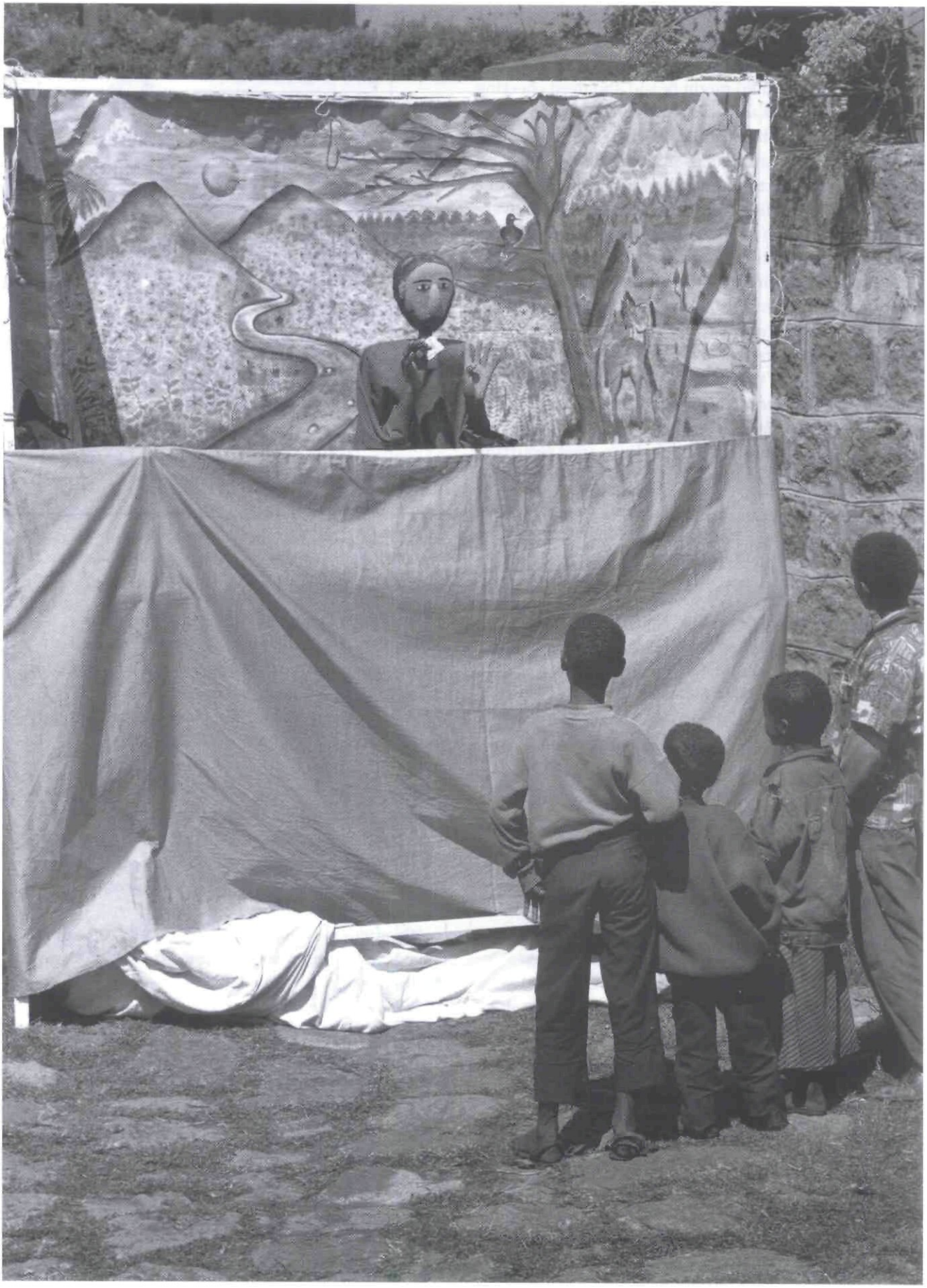
Sonia Rosario produced the first 65 half-hour episodes of *The Puzzle Place*. She says: "Issues of colour and religion in the US are really big. We have a population of children who do not feel part of the whole. We wanted to do a show that helped all children to feel part of the country. It encourages five-year-olds to come into a room and know that they have a basic human right to be there. We also wanted to show that it is okay to ask for help, to admit that you don't know something, which is very difficult if you are the tough kid on the block.

"We had to work out how to present these subjects in a show for young children. How do you bring up racism? How do you bring up sexism? How do you talk to children about being a boy or girl without teaching that your gender makes you somehow better or smarter? How do you talk to pre-schoolers about these issues and still be entertaining and friendly?"

The Puzzle Place was a year in preparation. During that time the characters were developed thoroughly so that each puppeteer not only was sure of the voice and accent, but also knew the character's family history. The story is based around six US children, each from a different ethnic background. Leon is African-American, Sky is Apache (Native American), Ben is of Norwegian and German descent, Julie is third generation Chinese-American, Jody is Jewish of Lithuanian descent and Kiki is Mexican-American, bilingual in Spanish and English. Nuzzle and Sizzle, a dog and a cat, comment on the children's activities.

When the show was launched in 1995, it became one of the top-rated public broadcast shows for children. It has now completed two seasons.

Stephen Kulczycki, senior executive producer, says: "*The Puzzle Place* deals with important and sometimes challenging issues. In a new episode, a confrontation between two children quickly escalates to hitting. Using the conventions of the series, the children explore alternative actions that might have resulted in a solution without physical violence. This is a difficult approach for entertainment television, but it is an opportunity to present alternative scenarios with more positive outcomes."



UNICEF/96-0560/Giacomo Pirozzi

Children in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) watch a puppet show on AIDS prevention.

schoolboys was shown on the screen, there were protests from mothers who thought that it might incite children to imitate them," he said. "Other people objected to someone being hit on the head and to characters smoking."

Rene Villanueva, creative director of the Philippine children's television programme *Batibot*, prohibits guns on the show and is careful to avoid sexually stereotyped characters or activities. *Batibot* is designed to nurture child development and promote values such as fairness and non-violence. Rene says: "Our message was 'Don't hurt anyone even if you are angry'."

But during the fall of the Marcos regime the country's news media were full of scenes of angry adults fighting or using guns. Rene continues, "We had to concede that it is sometimes appropriate, in extreme situations, to express anger against injustice. We had difficulty acknowledging this, but we needed to do so to preserve the children's trust, while at the same time avoiding negativity and cynicism. We tried to show that working together to deal with problems is the best solution."

Caz Frost, a British puppeteer who teaches teachers how to engage more effectively with young children, feels that adults sometimes project their own assessment of what is acceptable onto children, instead of observing children to see what works.* In determining the tone of a story, consider an analogy with diet. To be well nourished, a child needs a balanced diet with plenty of roughage. But a child who has been badly nourished may need a special diet emphasizing foods that build up the body's reserves. In the same way, an emotionally well-nourished child generally can cope with conflict in stories. A child who has suffered abuse or neglect or has seen family and friends flee or die may have few reserves of tolerance for fictional conflict; he or she needs stories that are more reassuring.

This area is complex, and the puppet-story writer must know a lot about the emotional needs of the audience. Moreover, those needs may change over time. Children who have been through trauma may need repeated reassurance at the beginning. Later, as part of the healing process, they may need to explore their experiences through fantasy, play and drama.

This is not a decision that should be taken lightly, says South African puppeteer Nyanga Tshabalala: "A specialist in conflict resolution, abuse and other issues should be brought in for technical advice when writing scripts, to assist the puppeteer in putting the messages across in a creative way."

* From 'Effective Puppet Theatre and Who is it For?' In *Animations*, Aug./Sept. 1995.

Susan Fountain, a UNICEF consultant for Education for Development, says: "Conflict is an inevitable part of human life, but this does not mean that violence is also inevitable. Violence is a learned response to conflict, and if violence can be learned, other more peaceful and constructive responses can be learned as well. The skills of peaceful conflict resolution cannot be learned in a didactic way. Exhorting or lecturing an audience to act non-violently or to treat others with respect is unlikely to bring lasting behavioural change."

Puppets and sex education

Sex education is widely recognized as a major communication challenge. Young people today face so many challenges and conflicting messages that exhortations to conform to a behavioural code are less effective. They have the much more difficult task of making decisions in the context of pressures that surround them. For this reason, effective sex education cannot be based on 'just say no.' Instead, it must address the real pressures that young people face and equip them with the skills to make decisions. That is why effective sex education so often includes storytelling and why puppets can be such an important element in that approach.

In Namibia, puppets were chosen to reach young people, and puppeteers are being trained to take shows to rural villages. Father Isaac Begi Mutuwawira, a Roman Catholic priest, founded Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia (PAAN) in 1994 because he felt that AIDS education programmes were increasing people's knowledge but failing to bring about change. Over 10 per cent of Namibian schoolchildren are HIV infected, and AIDS is poised to become the leading cause of death among Namibians aged 25 to 45.

The PAAN performances are based around puppet characters Charlie and John, who tell stories about how they could become infected with or avoid HIV. They also answer questions from the audience. The puppet show sets up in a village with a live presenter standing alongside the booth where the puppets appear. The presenter introduces the stories, points out the lessons and invites the audience to ask questions afterwards.

So far, the PAAN team has toured 8 of the 13 regions of Namibia. Father Isaac believes that the puppet show is making a difference. "It teaches them things about daily issues that they can identify with," he says. "It's done with entertainment. They can laugh, but they know deep down it is a true message. I feel this is very, very effective."

PAAN performs at schools, markets, community centres and barracks around the country. "For many

people, this is the first time they have seen a puppet show," says Martha Aebes, stage manager. "The younger children love the characters and the story. The puppets captivate them, and, although the AIDS message is hard-hitting, the puppets allow us to treat the subject with humour and purpose."

This is all the more remarkable given that AIDS and sex are taboo subjects in Namibia. As a result, whenever PAAN performed in front of adults, the audience dispersed almost immediately. The adults who remained would congratulate the troupe on the performance but rarely asked questions about AIDS. "Yet you could see the questions in their faces begging to come out in the open. For the younger audiences, we spoke their language, sang their songs and portrayed their reality – maybe even reminded them of a friend. They laughed and giggled, the puppets became their friends. Afterwards, their first questions were all about the puppets and how we got them to move. And then they would begin to ask questions on AIDS. The discussions were frank, although accompanied by a great deal of laughter."

The stories were originally adapted from a South African project, African Research Education Puppetry Programme, but PAAN is now carrying out research aimed at making the scripts more Namibian. PAAN is also working on scripts that will address TB as well as HIV/AIDS. The major obstacle is lack of funding.

Puppets with mental handicaps

Image in Action is a UK-based organization promoting the role of drama and the arts in health and sex education. Since 1988, the group has been using puppets to teach sex education and HIV prevention to young people who are mentally handicapped. Although the young people are sexually mature, their attitudes are immature for their age. They also have many special needs, including a need for sex education presented in a sensitive way.

Movement, music and improvisation had already proved successful in encouraging imaginative work among group members, and a long-term drama project was introduced covering such issues as 'myself', feelings, relationships and sex education. Lesley Kerr-Edwards, Coordinator of Image in Action, says: "We thought about using puppets because we realized that there were limits to what we could do using drama."

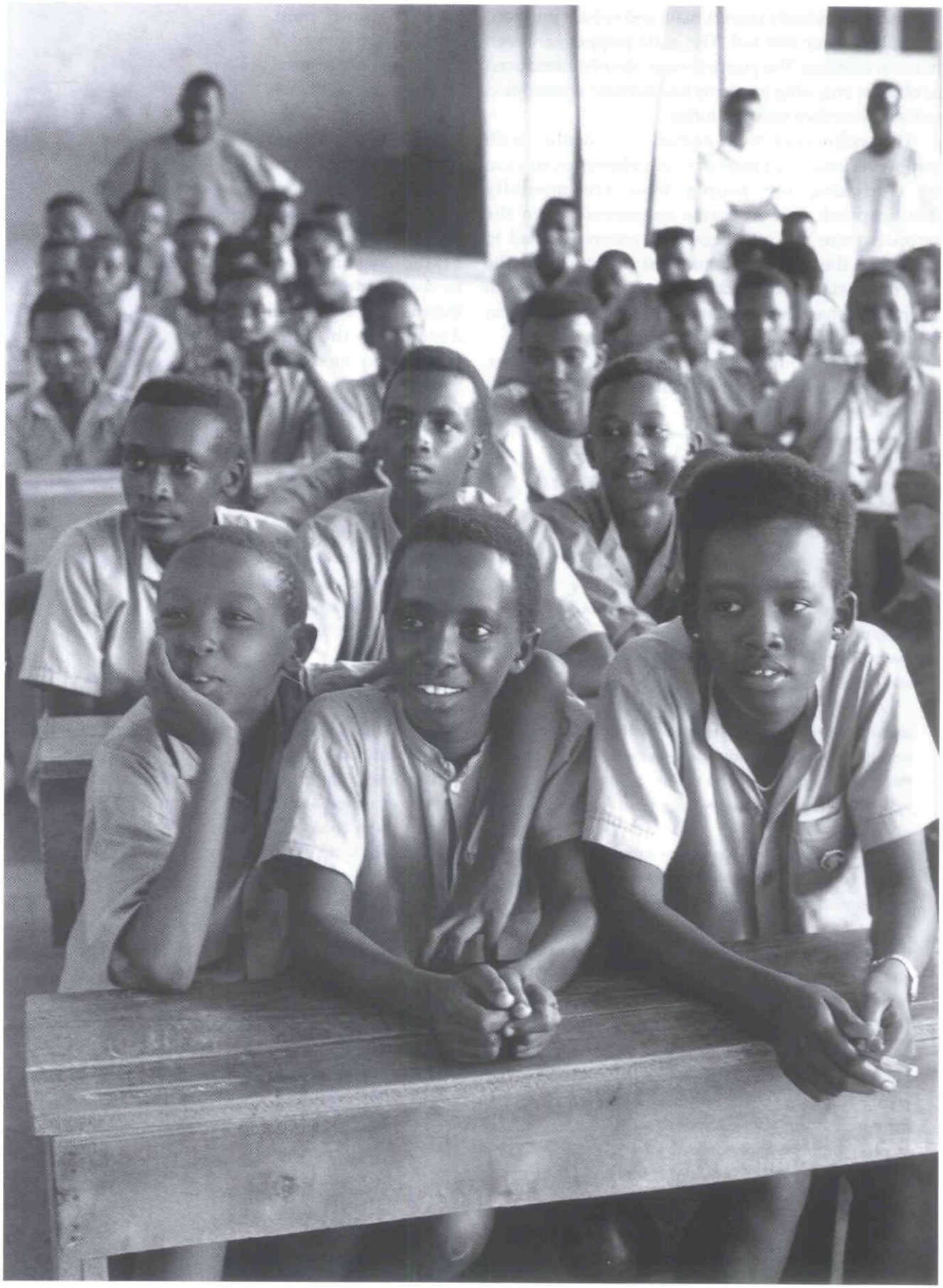
The group had no direct experience with puppetry but knew people who had links with puppeteers. In the late 1980s, nobody was using puppets for sex education in the United Kingdom, so the puppets had to be specially commissioned. Puppet maker Chris Leith

Teaching children about peace

Artists, traditional and modern, are wonderful resource people, particularly where there is no strong educational infrastructure. Traditional artists have a history of using their culture to express emotions and tell stories. Bringing them together with more modern media can be a means of preserving the old ways while reaching many more people with the new.

- Start with children as early as infancy. Expose them to pictures, music, different cultures and people. Never stop teaching about peace and tolerance to older children, adults and the community.
- Whenever you can, create media for, about and by children and encourage others to do so. The media need not be sophisticated or expensive but should be real, in the first person where possible, and inclusive.
- Become part of a movement to create programmes for children that counteract those containing violence and negative stereotypes. Drama and songs can be adapted from traditional stories about peacemakers or problem solvers.
- When teaching problem-solving and conflict resolution to children, spend less than 25 per cent of the time presenting problems and more than 75 per cent of the time presenting solutions. That way, children will learn the process as well as the outcome.
- For children who are living with war or conflict, present real examples of people who are helping to stop the conflict and end the suffering. Show 'good gangs', rescue workers, children helping children, teachers walking miles to teach, a disabled woman learning to make prosthetics for others, and so on. Create stories about people taking positive action amidst their pain and about regaining some control over their lives. Depict children themselves taking part in this effort.

Barbara Kolucki



UNICEF/95-0247/Howard Davies

School children in Bujumbura (Burundi) watch a peace education puppet show.
Drama and song can be adapted from traditional stories about peacemakers or problem solvers.

created anatomically correct male and female puppets, each about four feet tall. The male puppet can even have an erection. The puppets were simply introduced as objects; only after students had become accustomed to them were they used in stories.

The willingness of an audience to identify with puppets is usually a major strength. However, this can be confusing for people who are mentally handicapped. Some became concerned when the puppets were put into bags, and others claimed to have seen the puppets standing at the bus stop. The staff realized that students were over-identifying with the puppet characters, so steps were taken to help them understand that the puppets were not real.

Now, when puppets are introduced to a group, project workers demonstrate that the puppets cannot move without help. Students are invited to notice the difference between the feel of their own skin and that of the puppets' fabric. Puppets are deliberately placed in unlifelike positions to emphasize that they are not people. Wooden handles were attached to the puppet's arms, increasing the physical distance to the puppeteer, who can clearly be seen to be working the puppet. In addition, the stories are told through recorded narration rather than by giving voices to the puppets. Resource materials are also provided so that schools can continue to work with puppets after a project is over.

Jackson's Lane Community Centre in London uses puppets for educational work with people who are mentally handicapped.

Iran: A child's view of quarrels in the family

Puppetry is extremely popular in Iran. Major television stations frequently broadcast puppet programmes, and the cinema industry is increasingly producing box office hits for children and adults.

Ardeshir Keshavarzi devised a puppet film about children being ill-treated by their parents, and about adults' tendency to sometimes say one thing but do another. The action-oriented script was a moving and effective segment for his show in Iran.

In the script, the parents are quarrelling. Their young son tries to intervene, as he wants his mother and father to stop shouting at each other. Finally, he uses some of the words he has heard them use. The parents then unite to shout at the child, scolding him for his language and telling him to respect his parents. The parents talk down to him, literally, given that he is small. Their gestures are angry and his are desperate. At the end, he has given up. He is slumped in the corner of a cellar crying, while in the background his parents continue to shout at each other.

Although this spot concentrates on the problem (the parents arguing) rather than the solution, it is very effective because it shows clearly the effect the parents' behaviour has on the child. It therefore encourages adults to look at their own actions through the eyes of a child.

Ardeshir Keshavarzi

Sexual and physical abuse of children

Puppetry has also been used successfully to talk about the sexual and physical abuse of children. In the Philippines, *Batibot* addressed sexual abuse. One message, aimed at children, said that if someone was asking them to do things they felt were wrong, they should talk to an adult they trusted. Another message reminded parents to pay attention if their children become withdrawn and uncommunicative.

The producers and scriptwriters were aware that these messages would generate a good deal of reaction, and that if handled insensitively, they would fail to protect children. The topic was carefully researched, and scripts and segments were tested on adults and children before screening. As predicted, the show resulted in many phone calls, but most were supportive because the scriptwriters had done their homework.

Using puppets in prison

As many as 30 per cent of prisoners in South Africa are estimated to be HIV-positive, partly as a result of non-consensual sex between inmates. This figure is more than 10 times higher than in the general community.

South African puppeteer Nyanga Tshabalala is working to educate prisoners about AIDS. His

involvement in puppetry started in 1987 when he met Gary Friedman, who had just initiated an innovative educational programme entitled 'Puppets against AIDS'. Since then, Nyanga has used puppetry to promote ideas around issues ranging from racism to AIDS to elections. Although puppetry is not a traditional art form in South Africa, he has found resounding response from youth wherever he has held workshops.

Nyanga and Gary then decided to move their project into prisons. The first step was convincing authorities that AIDS education was appropriate. Gary recalls their proposal: "The risk of infection via sexual intercourse is as real in prison as outside, and the way to reduce this risk is by education and explanation, not denial and punishment. Proper HIV/AIDS education is vital because many prisoners are young and unaware of the dangers of transmission."

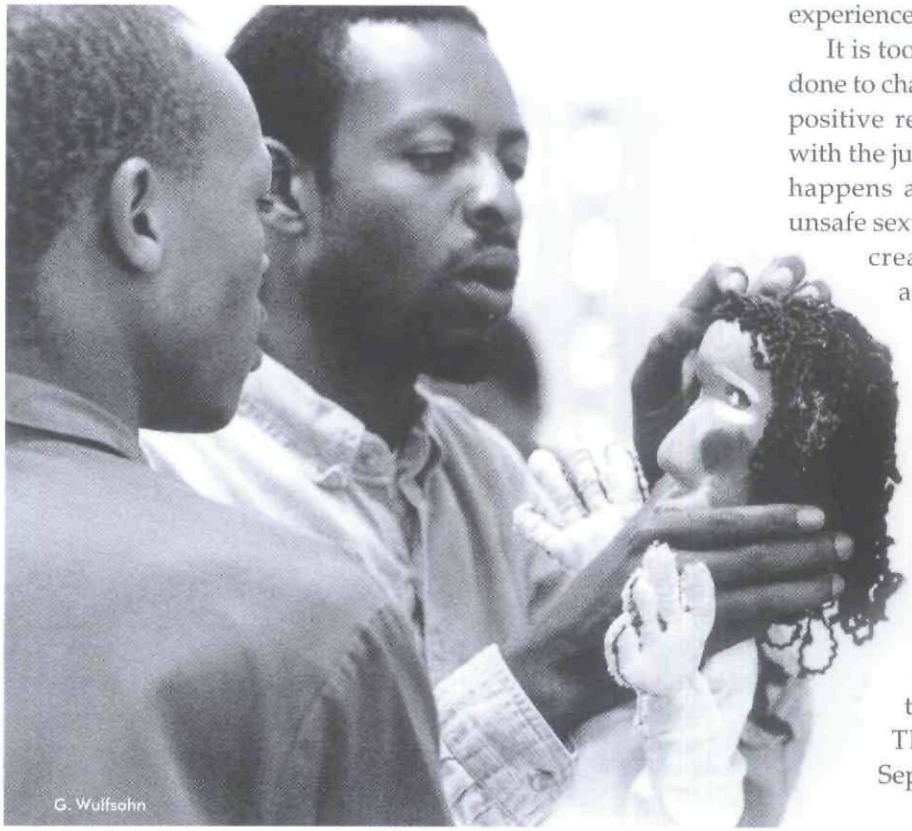
The next step was to outline the advantages of puppetry and explain how puppetry could hold up a mirror to society and give people a chance to look at their situation, how a puppet is less threatening than a live performer and how a puppet can deliver strong messages without offending or frightening the audience.

Finally, the proposal was accepted. Nyanga and Gary introduced the Puppets in Prison pilot programme in Diepkloof Prison in Johannesburg (South Africa) in early 1996. The two men worked with juvenile offenders to encourage them to create their own puppets, script plays about AIDS in prison and stage performances with the puppets. But the prisoners were wary of this unfamiliar approach, and Nyanga had to win their trust: "I started the prison project with 15 suspicious young men. They desperately wanted some diversion, since there was little for them to look forward to except a long prison term. We started making puppets and they became involved, it made them happy to find they could do creative things – painting the faces, making the costumes." Then the young prisoners were encouraged to prepare scripts about prison life, and next they practised staging performances with the puppets.

The plays were presented to other prisoners and authorities. One play included a scene in which a gang leader raped another prisoner, a common situation. Humour was used to defuse the tension of the scene. "Puppets are a way of mediating and distancing the pain and humiliation of certain sexual acts," Gary explains. Adds Nyanga, "They provide catharsis through humour and allow victims to act out their experiences without fear of personal embarrassment."

It is too soon to tell how much the programme has done to change behaviour, but there are definitely some positive results. A social worker who works closely with the juvenile offenders says: "We don't know what happens afterwards, whether or not they continue unsafe sexual practices. But puppetry is a wonderfully creative outlet and a means of channelling aggression and pain in a constructive way. The prisoners seem able to discuss their vulnerability and even their need for sexual power with much greater openness than before."

The Puppets in Prison project has since expanded to other prisons across the country. Based on its success, Gary and Nyanga were invited to convene an international conference to explore the educational, developmental and therapeutic use of puppetry in prisons around the world at the Festival Mondiale des Théâtres des Marionnettes, in France in September 1997.



Nyanga Tshabalala uses puppets to teach prisoners about AIDS. An estimated 30 per cent of South African prisoners are HIV-positive.

0630/Krisna Satmoko

CHAPTER 5

Making puppets

UNICEF/96-0639/Krisna Satmoko

A lesson in creativity: a plastic gerry-can becomes a puppet. Participants at the puppets for development workshop attend a session on making puppets.

> A good puppet is not necessarily a pretty puppet but one that performs well for the puppeteer.
>
> **Carmen Osbahr and John E. Kennedy**, puppeteers for *The Puzzle Place*

This chapter looks at how to produce effective puppets when money and elaborate materials are in short supply. The finer points of puppet making can be found in other more technical publications.

To produce a marionette or *wayang* puppet good enough for an exhibition takes years, possibly generations, of training. However, to produce a puppet to catch the eye of a child or entertain an adult requires a minimum of skills and the materials at hand.

When working with children, make sure that creating the puppets is part of the fun. If you are preparing a show with social messages, you should make the puppet only after you have determined your target audience and chosen the type of story. The puppet characters need to be acceptable to your audience and should reflect their customs and dress, unless the story is historical or fantastical.

The simplest glove puppet, patented by children all over the world, is made from a sock, perhaps with buttons sewn onto the toe to make eyes and a piece of wool darned into the heel to make the mouth. The sock puppet can be manipulated by hand from inside, or it can be stuffed with paper and worked with a stick thrust through the paper.

Outside traditional puppetry, Muppets (the endearing creatures originated by Jim Henson) have emerged as a clear favourite. Part of their appeal is that they can be made so easily. A Muppet is a form of glove puppet with a large mouth that opens and closes and prominent eyes that appear to focus on the audience (but which in fact don't budge a centimetre). It can be made from soft cloth and foam rubber or an upside-down plastic cup or milk carton, with the body

suggested by a loose cloth. The cloth has to be wide enough to allow the puppeteer's hand and arm inside and long enough to hide the upper arm. It is a good idea to make an undercloth to cover the puppeteer's arm so the puppet's clothes can be changed easily and the overgarment can be removed and washed. Puppet heads can be made with available materials. Try painting a face on a coconut shell or a small gourd.

With rod puppets, the head can be detachable, so that different faces can be used on the same base. The Indonesian television series *Si Unyil* had up to 12 different heads for each main character to ensure a different expression for every mood. However, take care with the fitting. In live performance, detachable heads have been known to fly off, leaving the audience to wonder why a character had been suddenly decapitated!

One very simple form of puppet is a wooden spatula or spoon with hair and a painted face. A clever way of increasing the versatility of these simple puppets is to paint a face on both sides, one smiling and one

Every puppet has its strength

Hand puppets are excellent as comedians and satirists. Let them carry, embrace, pull and push, fight, dance together, go in and out of doors. Leave to rod puppets serious drama; they can be very dignified, and even create a religious atmosphere.

Hand and rod puppets lend themselves to many different plays; they do satire well, but they can also reach the heights of tragedy.

String puppets are excellent for climbing, swinging, rocking and most forms of aerial movement. Tricks, dances and acrobatic stunts are traditional string-puppet material.

Shadow puppets are somewhat unreal in quality and are good for fantasy, dreams and processions; they can dance and do tricks so long as these are kept within the two-dimensional limitation of the screen.

Marjorie Batchelder, from *The Puppet Theatre Handbook*, Harper & Row, 1947.

Peter McIntyre

Inoke Baimimarama, from Fiji, shows off his skill at making puppets from available materials.

Peter McIntyre

frowning. In performance, the spatula can then be quickly spun, changing the expression on the face of the puppet or changing the character completely.

Papier mâché can be used to create more complex face or body shapes and has the advantages of being cheap, easy to use and mouldable. It dries to a very firm base that can be covered and painted, but it is not very durable and can fall apart if it gets wet. Clay puppets are more robust and can either be shaped by hand or made in a simple mould and then fired. If no kiln is available, the clay can be dried in the sun for several days until hard. Faces copied from story books can be painted on. In the case of clay or *papier mâché* puppets, faces can have three-dimensional features.

All these constructions are aimed at producing a hand-held puppet, which is the easiest for a beginner (although practice is needed to become an expert). String puppets are rather difficult for beginners. Rod puppets need arms that can be worked by thin sticks attached to the hands. The kind of puppet you make should be determined by what you want it to do as well as by the skills and materials available.

Puppets really do come in all shapes and sizes. The smallest are finger puppets used in small intimate settings or on television. Amongst the largest are the *Bunraku* puppets in Japan, each of which is manipulated by three people.

Other puppets are worked by foot. Possibly the most complex are the Vietnamese water-puppets, which are made of a combination of rod and string. They require elaborate construction to ensure that the working parts are kept out of sight.

Each type of puppet has its strengths and weaknesses and each requires a different kind of manipulation. Iranian puppeteer Ardeshir Keshavarzi says: "A hand puppet can pick up a cup of coffee or a ball and throw it away, but for a marionette this action is not easy. Some stories can be adapted for shadow puppets, some are better suited to hand puppets and still others require a mixture of techniques."

The size of the puppet will depend on where it is to be used. Puppets designed for outdoor use need to be bigger so they can be seen from a distance. Foam or a hard polystyrene material can be used to build the larger puppets. Cloth should be stretchy and washable. The lighter the materials, the easier it will be to manipulate the finished puppet.

If your puppet is being made for television, you need to pay attention to detail so that the puppet can withstand the scrutiny of a close-up camera. Avoid using glossy paint on made-for-TV puppets as it will reflect studio lights.

Because most puppets are small, it is relatively cheap and easy to adorn them with fine clothes, made from rich materials and decorated with coloured glass or plastic for jewels. Eyes can be made from half ping-pong balls, cloth, buttons, coloured paper, candies or flowers, such as daisies, or can simply be painted on.

An Indonesian craftsman at work on a puppet masterpiece.

Peter McIntyre

UNICEF/96-0631/Krisna Satmoko

A dazzling assortment of wooden character puppets used in traditional Indonesian performances of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics.

George McBean

String puppet

UNICEF/96-0635/Krisna Satmoko

Glove puppet

George McBean

Shadow puppet

UNICEF/96-0629/Krisna Satmoko

Rod puppet

Puppets in four movements

There are four broad types of puppets, with many variations and combinations:

- String puppets
- Glove puppets
- Shadow puppets
- Rod puppets

String puppets (marionettes) are usually suspended from a wooden grid to which their strings are attached. The puppet has jointed limbs and hangs so that it stands in a natural position when suspended. Movement is by inclining the wooden grid or by manipulating individual strings.

Glove puppets have a soft body that fits over the hand. The head may be soft or hard. In the most common form, the puppeteer uses two fingers to move the arms while one or two fingers support the head. Legs can be added, either hanging free or manipulated by the other hand, but glove puppets are rarely called on to walk in full view of the audience. One simple variation is the *finger puppet*, which can make an enchanting show.

Shadow puppets are flat silhouettes made of cardboard, wood or metal, usually seen in profile. Supported by rods, the puppet is held against a translucent screen while a bright light is shined on it, projecting a sharp shadow. The puppeteer needs many different puppets to display the characters in various moods and actions.

Rod puppets are usually jointed, with the rod passing through the body into the head. The puppet is generally operated from below. The puppeteer works the arms via thin wire attachments. The classic rod puppet can gesture convincingly, but rarely walks.

Many puppeteers either use more than one kind of puppet or use a hybrid puppet, which may owe something to each of these different types. The *wayang dalang* uses either flat shadow puppets or three-dimensional rod puppets and works in full view of the audience.

The new techniques of animatronics, or computer-controlled puppetry, are unlikely to be used outside high-tech film studios. Most puppeteers agree that it takes personality rather than technology to create a successful puppet.

Peter McIntyre

Workshop participants display the puppets they have made.

The most elaborate puppets have eyes that open and close, but a skilful performer will leave people believing that they saw the eyes open and close even if they were simply painted on. Hair can be made from wool, coconut fibre, sisal or even real hair (ask the local barber for sweepings).

The age and character of the puppet can be suggested by the shape, facial features and clothing, but you can also add props to make the puppets more convincing. An old man can have a walking stick attached to one arm. A woman might carry a bundle of washing on her head (although if you are trying to shake up your audience, you could get a laugh and at the same time make a serious point about stereotyping by giving the bundle to a male puppet). A sporty puppet could have a football attached under the arm. A trendy puppet could have sunglasses and a baseball cap worn backwards. But remember that it requires finesse to present recognizable characters without creating stereotypes.

While you are considering the physical characteristics of the puppets, you should also think about whether you are properly reflecting the composition of local communities. For example, it is good practice to include some characters that have disabilities, and present them not only in shows about

Puppets on a shoestring

Starting a puppetry project in the townships in South Africa did not require lots of money or expensive materials. We made our first puppets from socks, which the children brought from home. The puppet stage was built from boxes that we picked up from the grocery shop. Recycling can play a very important role!

Although puppets are not expensive to make, money is needed for paint, brushes, glue and clay. Paper is also needed to draw sketches to give to young people as hand-outs. Puppetry is a new medium in South Africa, and it is still too early to start working with very complicated puppets. I allow the children to work with whatever material they like. This encourages them to use their imagination and creative talent and to discover their capabilities. I encourage young people to look at an object and re-create it in another material. This boosts their self-confidence and enhances their concentration and focus.

Nyanga Tshabalala

disability, so that you promote the visibility and positive image of disabled people.

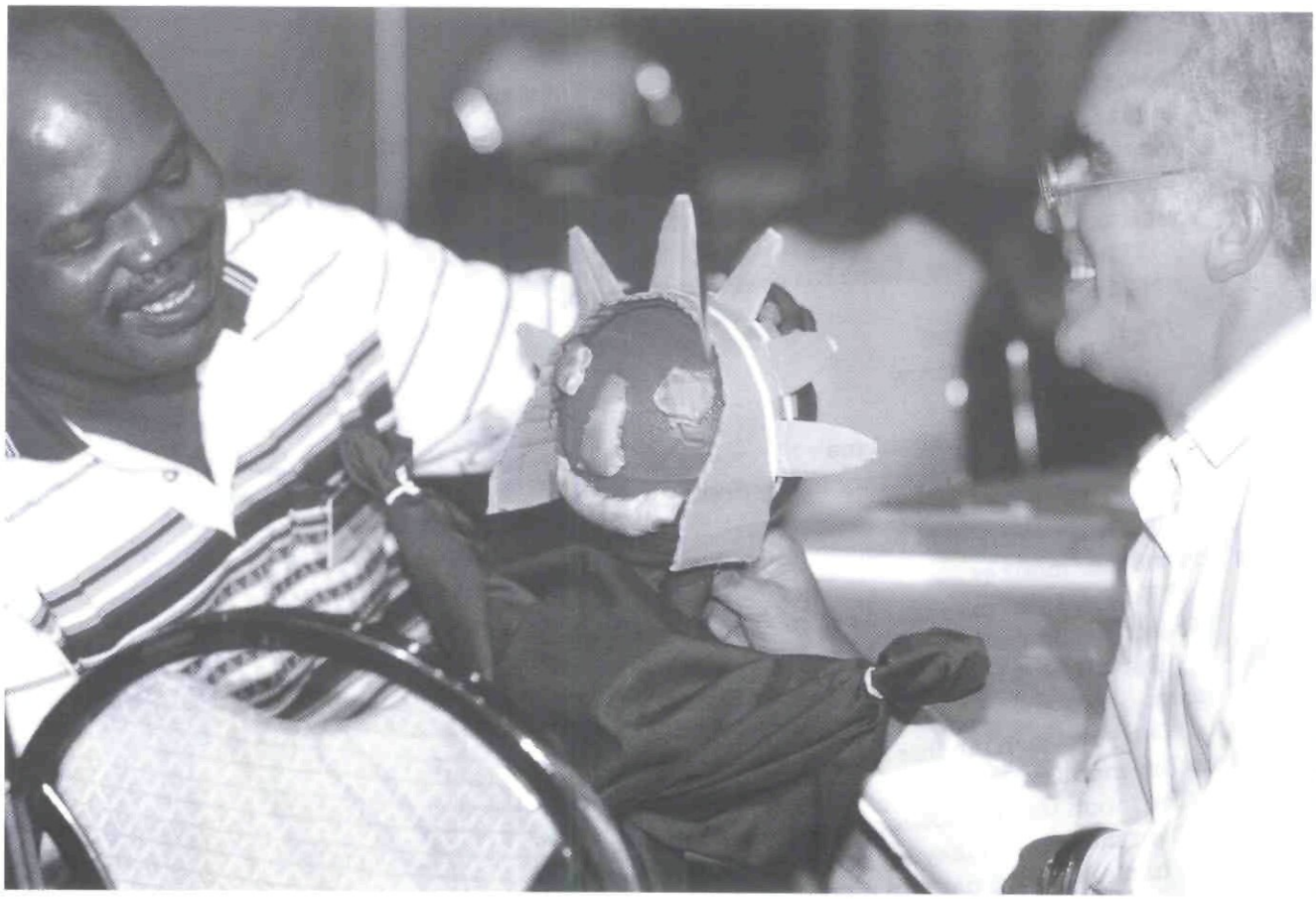
Once puppet makers have gained some experience and confidence, they can create sophisticated, high-quality puppets that need not be expensive. Indeed, if puppetry is part of a community effort, the production of puppets can be a rewarding sideline that can generate income for crafts people.

The most complex puppets should be left to experts, as these puppets require more expensive materials and precise carving, painting and clothing. Marionettes need to be jointed and strung in just the right way to create the best effect, and sophisticated rod puppets are also complex in their construction. However, unless the puppets are so difficult to construct that they need to be contracted out, puppet making should become part of the overall project. This will develop teamwork and ensure that the puppets are appropriate for the audience, the style of performance and the scripts. A workshop on making puppets is a good way to drum up support for a project and recruit future puppeteers.

The traditional puppet stage or booth consists of a raised area at the front where the puppets appear and a backcloth that can be painted for scenery. These two must be situated far enough apart for a puppeteer to sit or stand below the level of the stage, thus able to see the puppets without being seen by the audience. Ideally, a glove puppet stage should be at a height that allows puppeteers to stand, holding the puppets above their heads. A simple stage can be made from cardboard boxes, and a single box with the bottom pushed out makes an admirable mock television screen.

Simple shots for filming can be created indoors with a painted background or outdoors with creative use of the local geography. Indoors, the puppets can appear on a table top, while a tablecloth hides the puppeteer. A pot of flowers on the table may be used to screen the puppeteer's arm. Outdoors, the puppets could emerge from a bush, which will shield the puppeteer from the camera.

Finally, be sure to look after your puppets and props. Wipe them down after each performance, attend to any maintenance and mending, and store them where they will not be crushed, become damp or mouldy or be eaten by moths or termites.



UNICEF/96-0640/Krisna Satmoko

Arthur Tweneboa (left) of UNICEF Ghana and Masood Mostofee of UNICEF Tehran rise to the challenge of making puppets on the spot out of scraps of materials.

Good Night

"Close your eyes my little monkey," said mother monkey. "It's time to go to sleep and I'm very tired. Come on, sleep now."

But the little monkey just wanted to play. Mother monkey was very, very tired and she became angry. She decided to sleep in another tree.

The little monkey was left alone and kept his eyes wide open, without falling asleep.

The moon, who was just passing by, asked him, "Why aren't you sleeping, my little one?"

"I'm afraid of the dark," said the monkey, close to tears.

"Afraid of the dark? I don't believe you," said the moon and explained: "Darkness does not hurt you. Night-time is beautiful, full of bright stars in the sky. It is quiet, just right for resting. At night everyone sleeps, big or small, elephants or birds. Nobody should be afraid of the dark. Close your eyes, little monkey, and I'll sing you a song so you can sleep well."

The little monkey closed his eyes and the moon's song went like this:

"Good night
until tomorrow
sleep tight
and dream about me
a lovely, lovely, very lovely dream.
Until tomorrow..."

The little monkey fell asleep and the moon went to call on mother monkey.

"How did you manage to put my son to sleep, Miss Moon?" asked mother monkey.

"I sang him a lullaby. All children like it," said the moon.

"Can you teach me this lullaby, Miss Moon?" asked mother monkey.

The moon taught mother monkey her lullaby.

Then mother monkey lay down next to her son and gave him an affectionate hug. The moon felt happy and quietly continued on her way. She knew everything was all right.

Scripts for peace education

Angelina Neves and Barbara Kolucki helped to run a peace education project in Mozambique called *Circo da Paz*, which promoted storytelling and reading and encouraged children to write stories. 'Good Night' is a story that can be adapted for puppets. It has some unusual characters – the moon and two monkeys – and includes movement as well as dialogue. It contains a problem that is resolved on stage, and it has lyrics that could be put to a local tune.

CHAPTER 6

Writing scripts for puppets

A few golden rules will help you write puppet scripts that will entertain and educate your audience. The rules are based on the experiences of those who have made puppet drama work, and they are designed to liberate your imagination, not constrain it. They aim to make communication more effective by focusing on what helps to draw in an audience. Indeed, with these rules you should be able to tackle any topic and address any audience. The golden rules are:

- Actions speak louder than words.
- Blend messages into the story, don't coat them on afterwards.
- Tell a story – don't preach.
- Keep the language simple.
- Develop one main idea per show.
- Prepare the script with a particular audience in mind.
- Tell your audience 'how' and 'why' as well as 'what'.
- Use music to heighten the experience.
- Promote actions that are possible – rather than services that are unavailable.

The golden rules, one by one:

Actions speak louder than words. An interesting puppet show has puppets that do things. Puppets that talk a lot and move a little are likely to bore their audience. The script should therefore be based on action rather than words. Some scripts are very detailed – they describe every action and every word. Others describe the basic action and encourage the puppeteer to improvise. In either case, what matters is the performance. Avoid long speeches and a complex narrative, as they reduce the puppets' scope for action. In writing the script, build in actions that make the puppets look the most amazing.

Blend messages into the story, don't coat them on afterwards. If messages are truly integrated into the story, the audience will be drawn in and will absorb the information. If the story stops for a puppet character to deliver the message, the audience will do what any audience does during a commercial break: stretch its legs and chatter.

These first two rules are the most essential. You start with a message – which you formulate in words. You then use the action of the puppets to smuggle the message in under their coats. You will see that in practice this approach makes good sense, once you grasp the idea that the show is meant to entertain. The purpose of using puppets is not to put a coat of sugar on a bitter pill of information but to adopt a different approach to communicating information.

What is the best kind of puppet play?

In general, it should be the kind of play that puppets can do better than human beings. Plays requiring actions that can be performed more convincingly by puppets are good. Dragons flying through the air, skeletons dancing and coming apart, transformations and tricks of various kinds. The whole world of fantasy in which anything may happen, and superhuman accomplishments are everyday occurrences, is ideal for the puppet stage.

Plays based upon caricature, satire or broad humour are excellent, for puppets by their very nature are ironical.

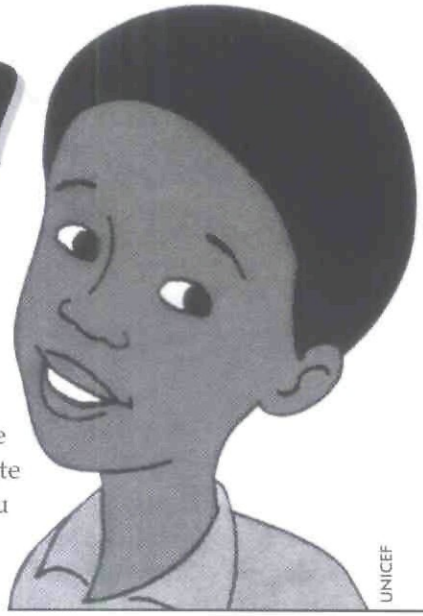
The puppet stage is a good place to present plays that for various reasons would be impractical for human actors because of elaborate staging, costuming or mechanical effect.

Plays with animals are fun to do because such characters have a plausibility difficult to achieve on the large stage and they provide endless amusement.

Don't put the puppet at a disadvantage by requiring it to imitate human beings or animals too closely... One of the joys of the puppet theatre is the degree to which you can use your imagination.

Marjorie Batchelder, from *The Puppet Theatre Handbook*, Harper & Row.

Sara



UNICEF's first Pan-African animated character.

UNICEF

Before you write the script, you need to verify the technical information and ensure that you are promoting actions that are appropriate and possible for your audience. You will need to decide what information to provide through the puppet show and what to provide by other means.

For example, let's say you want to promote oral rehydration. In your story a young child becomes ill with diarrhoea. Her great-aunt advocates withholding food and drink from the child. An older sibling says she learned in school that a child with diarrhoea should drink plenty of fluids and be given a mixture of salt, sugar and water. As the drama unfolds, the young child nears death. In desperation the mother follows her older daughter's advice and the young child recovers. The mother is converted. (This is one of the storylines in the *Meena* animation series in South Asia.)

Action-based script ideas from The Puzzle Place

The gentle style of *The Puzzle Place* can convey serious messages using scripts based on action and on children's own experience. The lesson or message is fully integrated into the story.

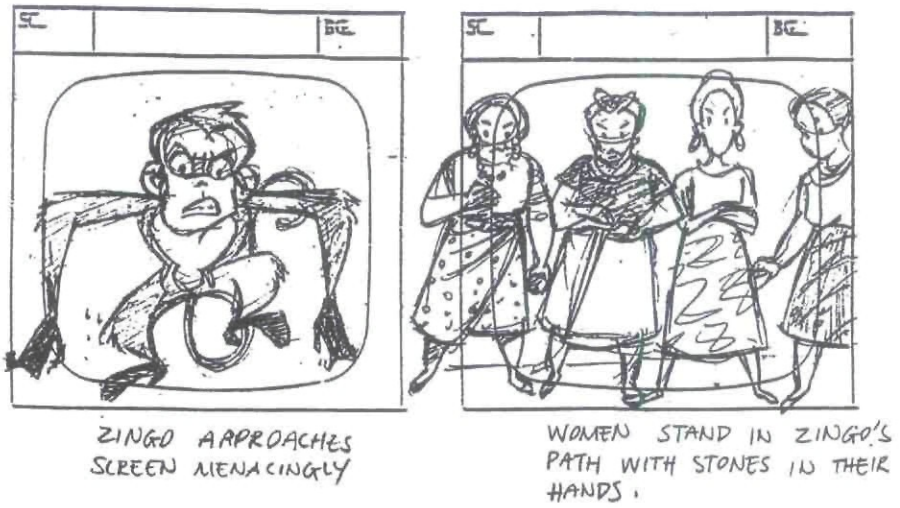
- In 'The Ballad of Davey Cricket', Jody discovers that her pet cricket is dead. Despite support from her father and her friends, she is not completely consoled. But she learns that death is a natural part of the life cycle and should not be feared, and that family and friends can give support when we feel sad.
- In 'Off the Track', Leon and Ben argue over assembling a model train set. The argument escalates into a shoving match and the train gets broken. They each blame the other and end up fighting. After seeing a replay of their argument, they learn to compromise and take turns playing with the train.

You might decide that it would be more realistic if the great-aunt still refuses to accept the new way and produces some fanciful reason for the child's recovery, perhaps a local superstition about good luck that few people would take seriously. Her stubbornness is very human, and the audience will laugh, but they will not side with her.

You need to think about how much detail to include. Can you explain exactly how to make the mixture for oral rehydration therapy? If you decide that you must include the right proportions of water, sugar and salt, can you work them into a song the characters can sing and people can learn? To reinforce this message you might introduce a scene in which one character is trying to teach someone who is slow to learn, so they have to keep repeating it, until at last the slow character gets it right and repeats it. If this scene has some humour, the audience might even start joining in on the repeated lines. One of the characters might ask the audience for help, and let people call out answers until they have it fixed in their minds. Discuss the possibilities with the puppeteers.

You might decide that the formula for making oral rehydration solution is too complex for people to remember from a puppet show. If the proportions are displayed for all to see in the local health centre or shop, the characters can say so. You could have a puppet character who breaks down in tears because he cannot remember how to make the solution, and another character who tells him where the poster is displayed. They could even go to the shop to check, and the shopkeeper could reinforce the message. If literacy levels are high enough, you can hand out written material to remind people about the messages in the show after they go home.

Another *Meena* story that could be adapted for puppetry promotes the rights of girls. The grandmother



Story boards can be drawn out to help construct a drama. Here is a section of a story board for UNICEF's animated series *Sara*. This episode deals with female genital mutilation. Puppet story boards can also be made into comic books for literacy and education.

is giving fruit to a grandson and granddaughter and she gives a larger piece of fruit to the boy. The girl says she needs the same amount of energy as her brother. Then she and her brother swap roles for a day, including their regular chores. (There is scope for very amusing, action-based scenes of the children in their new roles.) At the end of the day the brother complains that his sister's chores are too much work. The grandmother sees that her grandchildren should be treated equally. They all learn a lesson.

Tell a story – don't preach. The subject may be a matter of life and death, and your team may feel that they have a truth to reveal. But your audience will respond better if they feel the puppets are engaging them in conversation rather than speaking at them.

Keep the language simple. You should not only limit the amount of information but also pay attention to the style in which it is delivered. Accuracy is important, but you have to find simple ways of giving technical information. There is no point in telling people how many millilitres of liquid or how many grams of food a child needs. Relate it to teaspoonfuls or bowlfuls, or something else the audience members have in their homes.

Develop one main idea per show. You have the puppets. You have organized the show. You have the puppeteers and the audience. Why not give them a course in hygiene, nutrition and sanitation and tell them about the benefits of education? Because your puppets would sink under all that weight and so would your play. There are plenty of experts who want to add just one more message, just one more vital bit of information. But a syringe can only deliver one shot at a time, and a puppet play can only hit one target.

Sonia Rosario, former supervising producer of *The Puzzle Place*, says that when her staff reviewed their first series, the major fault they found was that they had tried to include too much information. In the second series they made fewer points, concentrating on one main idea in each segment. "It took us 40 shows to realize this," she says. "In our exuberance to inspire our audience towards greater self-esteem and deeper respect for others, our messages were too crowded."

Adapting scripts to different cultures and languages

Scripts for *The Kids on the Block* address daily life in school, at home and in interactions with other children. The scripts have many cultural references, which can pose a challenge in adapting them to other languages.

For example, one script contained several references to the word 'embarrassing'. When translated into Chinese, this became a word that was probably too formal and difficult for a young child to understand.

When adapting *The Kids on the Block* to a different culture, we have to maintain a number of principles to see that:

- the content is culturally relevant;
- the meaning is not distorted in translation;
- the words are still appropriate for an audience of children;
- changes do not undermine the message;
- the show, when adapted, provides the same lively, warm, safe atmosphere in which children can interact with the puppets.

Mabel Chau

What was true for television in the United States was also true for live shows in India. Dadi Pudumjee says: "You cannot give a whole bag of messages. You must get the most important one across. We repeat messages again and again and we simplify."

Rene Villanueva drew up guidelines for *Batibot* scriptwriters in the Philippines. Again the rule was used: one clear goal for each segment of the show.

Prepare the script with a particular audience in mind. People quickly notice if characters in a story get something wrong. If the story is set in a far-off land they may be ready to suspend belief – who knows what people are up to in New York? But if the story is supposed to be relevant to your community, you notice if people wear the wrong clothes, say the wrong things or behave inappropriately. If the characters don't dress right or know how to speak to each other respectfully, why should anyone take their advice on the really important things in life?

Farooq Qaisar advocates what he calls 'espionage' to study the community, not only to find out about problems but also to learn about local customs. "Field visits should be aimed at building up a close rapport with the community while simultaneously identifying its problems. Group discussions should reveal key elements of the language and culture. In particular, elements of entertainment, humour and emotional arousal should be identified. These are the building blocks of the script, which should be crafted according to the mores and aspirations of the community. Every attempt should be made to weave in aspects of local atmosphere and flavour." (See chapter eight for further details on adapting scripts for television.)

Tell your audience 'how' and 'why' as well as 'what'. Explaining the how and why is especially important if you want to promote new or different attitudes or behaviours. You need to do more than sell the idea of change; you also need to present practical ways of translating the new attitude into action.

For example, if you are developing a story that promotes parenting skills, father and mother puppets could decide they are going to give their baby lots of things to touch because they heard this was important for child development. (This is the 'what'.) But also show the puppets making good on this promise. The father can be fixing things around the baby's play area, saying: "I am tying a string above her head and safely attaching some brightly coloured material, a bell that rings, a picture of a smiley face. Now she can reach up and touch and look at these when we are busy." (This is the 'how'.) The mother can then say:
"Do you know why we do this?

Children captivated by a puppet performance in Bandung (Indonesia).

Television stars created by Iranian puppet maker Sadeghian.

Puppet scripts for television spots

Puppet plays work even when you have limited time and need to deliver specific information.

In Iran, Ardeshir Keshavarzi was asked to produce some one-minute television spots using real people and puppets to back up the 1996 national polio campaign.

The spots were designed to encourage parents to ensure that their children were vaccinated.

Even though Ardeshir had only one minute, he began not with facts but with the love between a parent and child. This was designed to get the attention of the target audience quickly and to link the actions promoted by the spot to the audience's emotions.

The spot has three separate scenes. The first mobilizes the parents. The second deals with a child's major objection to polio immunization (the taste of the drops). The puppet monologue at the end is used to deliver the factual information directly, and this is kept to a minimum: merely the dates and places where the children can be immunized.

Each scene is active and has visual variety. In the first, the father and child are walking in the park. In the second, the child puppet takes the vaccine in a real clinic with a real nurse and children, thus using the persuasive charm of the puppet and allowing children to see what the clinic is really like. In the third scene, real children add visual interest. The final line is the mobilizing slogan of the campaign.

The National Polio Campaign of 1996

Father and child puppets are walking in the park.

Child puppet: Dad, do you love me?

Father puppet: Of course. All dads love their children.

Child puppet: Then why don't you take me to receive polio vaccine drops?

Father puppet: Polio and vaccines are for children, not for puppets.

Child puppet: It doesn't matter, I want to know what it tastes like anyway.

Father puppet: There are centres in every area where children can have this vaccination.

In a vaccination centre, a nurse is giving polio drops to a child. The puppet walks up to the nurse.

Child puppet: Does the drop taste awful?

Nurse: No, you can try it. Open your mouth *(there goes one drop)*.

Child puppet: It doesn't taste like anything.

Nurse: Go and tell the other children, then.

The next scene takes place in a park, where all the children are gathered around the child puppet, with polio posters mounted on tree trunks in the background.

Child puppet *(to the children)*: My dear friends, if children are paralysed, they can't easily walk, play or run. If you get your two drops of vaccine on your tongue, you can prevent all these unfortunate things from happening. On 10 May and 14 June, all children under five years of age should go to vaccination posts and get two drops of polio vaccine, even if they have fully received all their other necessary vaccinations.

Child puppet and children *(sing)*: Let's eradicate polio in Iran!

Because it helps my baby learn to look with her lovely eyes and to touch with her hands what her eyes can see. Look, she is playing, but she is learning too. When she is grown up she will be good with her hands like me." (This is the 'why'.)

Use music to heighten the experience. Music is very important to the success of a puppet show and should be an integral part of preparing the script. Music is an ideal opportunity to repeat or introduce some of the key themes and messages. Repetition of a song unifies separate stories. Music should be suited to its audience, catchy and easily remembered and repeated. Use songs that encourage the audience to join in on the chorus or copy the actions of the puppet singers.

Music works with both traditional and modern puppets. Dr. Willy Karamoy, Director of the Research and Development Agency at the Indonesian Ministry of Information, estimates that in traditional *wayang* performances almost half of the educational content is delivered during songs.

Nyanga Tshabalala, working in South Africa, where puppetry is relatively new, says that music and drumming are ways to connect puppetry with the ancient traditional storytelling methods of southern Africa. In Romania, the Friends of Stafiduta puppet troupe regards music as so important that the troupe has its own composer.

Folk tunes and popular songs are a valuable resource. Farooq Qaisar says that the music works best when it is chosen for a specific audience: "The strongest impact and message dissemination are possible only for specific communities, in which popular local tunes and songs are used with simple lyrics and liberal use of local talent. A visit to local music shops to learn about popular tunes and songs can be helpful. If there is a popular singer in the community, he or she should be integrated into the recording to increase the impact of the production."

The closing song in each performance of *The Kids on the Block* in Hong Kong provides a theme that unifies all the show's messages about disability. It supports the point of the whole project, which is that everyone is different and everyone is special. Children can join in or learn this song and sing it long after the puppets have left the scene. The song is called 'Kids are Different'.

Kids are different,
We don't even look the same.
Some kids speak different languages,
We all have a different name.
Kids are different,
But if you look inside you'll see
That tall kid, that small kid
Is just like you and me.
Some folks are surprised that
Kids in wheelchairs play.
Blind kids read, deaf kids talk
Except in a different way.
Able kids, disabled kids
There's nothing we can't do
Just take a look inside yourself
You'll be so proud of you!
Because,
Kids are different,
But if you look inside you'll see
That tall kid, that small kid
Is just like you and me.

Keeping puppets active

Parents: Give Your Children a Chance, prepared and performed by Grace Primary School, won a prize at the Children's Festival of Arts in Belize. As teacher Brenda Lee Hyde points out, the play confronts the low priority given to education for girls by portraying a family dispute. One shocking scene even shows the father hitting his daughter, Susan.

However uncomfortable this may make people feel, the action transforms the subject in a way that sticks in the memory. The father talks about the young being disrespectful of their parents – but then he shows no respect for his child. This story ends with Susan winning the right to attend school.

You need to think carefully about introducing violence into a script, as it could be counter-productive. This storyline, however, demonstrates two of the golden rules for puppet scripts: It shows actions that flow from the storyline, and its puppet characters speak in the local dialect, making them acceptable as a local family and therefore relevant to their audience.

Promote actions that are possible – rather than services that are unavailable. This is a common-sense way of working. In a show about nutrition, make sure that puppet characters eat food that can be grown or bought locally. Promote mosquito nets made according to local, affordable technology. Pair a show promoting children staying in school with a local campaign or national initiative. Coordinate a puppet project with

local community development work so the stories promote relevant services. If the puppet play tells parents they should do something they cannot do, they will conclude either that they are bad parents or that your puppets have heads made of wood!

Silver-plated tips

Here are some other valuable bits of advice suggested by expert puppeteers:

- The show should have changes of pace and a variety of characters. Try to vary the mood. If you are dealing with anger or grief, have one character who is more light-hearted.
- Humour is a useful tool, even when the subject is serious. People like to laugh, but not everything has to be frivolous. Show that your comedy characters have a serious side as well. This will demonstrate that your characters care about the audience and their lives.
- Show the resolution of the problem on stage – rather than just having a character tell the audience the problem has been resolved. Sometimes all the attention is devoted to showing the problem, leaving the solution to be crammed into one final scene where everything comes right by magic. As a result, the audience may be more convinced by the problem than by the solution. If characters have a change of heart, show what has affected them and how they changed their minds.
- Remember what is possible in puppetry. Four puppets on stage at one time is probably the maximum unless you have a large stage and many puppeteers working at once.
- Make the show interactive – especially if it is for a young audience. At the beginning let the puppets say hello, and encourage the audience to answer. Periodically stop and let the puppets ask the opinion of the audience or for a suggestion as to what a character should do. Encourage audience members to join in songs and to repeat the key messages they hear in the story. Encourage them afterwards to share what they have learned with others.
- Have a punchy opening and a sharp ending. These should be two of the most dramatic parts of the show.
- Respect the intelligence of the audience. They may lack information, but they are not stupid.

There are also some obligatory general rules that should apply to all entertainments supporting community and social development:

- Don't insult people. If you have a silly character who is presented as being from a place or group that local humour ridicules, change the character to ensure that you are not perpetuating this stereotype. Avoid gender stereotypes, especially those suggesting that looking after children is only women's work or that earning money is only men's work.
- Don't make fun of disabilities. If you have a cantankerous older character and you make her deaf to get a laugh, how will this affect deaf people in the community who already feel isolated? Instead, give the deafness to a strong positive character and make it part of the plot.
- When writing for children, avoid creating desires and expectations that cannot be met.
- Be inventive, creative, fanciful, funny and serious all in the same play.

Adapting traditional stories

Puppets can support indigenous culture and help to ensure that traditional stories are kept alive. Traditional stories are strong because the characters are well known and the storylines familiar. For instance, the *Anansi* tales from West Africa about a cunning spider who solves problems have often been converted into stories with a message.

Transforming traditional stories does have its pitfalls. Rene Villanueva says: "Some folk puppeteers don't want us to touch the old stories or to change things to deal with gender issues, for example. Traditional culture responds to certain things in the past that may not really work for the present. The problem is how to bridge both the time gap and the culture gap."

Putting ancient tradition to modern use

A Vietnamese water-puppet troupe devised a play to help heal the wounds of the Viet Nam war. The play was based on the legend of a fifteenth century Vietnamese king who was given a magic sword by a turtle. The sword helped him defeat an occupying army. When the invaders had been vanquished, the king returned the sword to the turtle.

The message of the story is that people can put war and conflict behind them, even if they cannot forget the experience. This puppet show toured in the United States as well as in Viet Nam.

A health message on the benefits of oral rehydration therapy was woven into a traditional Indonesian story by Enus Sunarya, a *dalang* or puppet master/storyteller. Ceremonial gatherings and celebrations, such as this wedding in West Java, typically feature a puppet performance.

CHAPTER 7

Puppets in action:

Performing live

Somewhere in the world, at any moment of the day or night, a crowd is gathering around an impromptu puppet stage – in a village, a *barrio*, a market place, on the seashore, or even in a proper theatre with curtains that slide and lights that dim. Live performance is how puppets began and how the excitement is best felt.

The advantages of live performance are many:

- It is a real-life experience for the audience – and we tend to remember things better when we are there. Do you remember the last programme you watched on television? Probably not. But the chances are you do remember the last live performance you attended.
- The puppeteer can see the audience and adapt the performance to their reactions. In a live show, the performer knows when the viewers laugh and can sense when they are 'with' the story and when they are not. A good puppeteer can adapt the pace of the show or make a puppet call out to someone in the crowd to lighten the atmosphere, clear up a point or involve the audience more closely.
- Live shows can use local knowledge. The script can be adapted to make it more appropriate and entertaining for a particular community. When touring, the troupe can incorporate local place names and the name of a local celebrity into the script in each location. The puppets can refer to a local event or crack a local joke. This gives the audience a sense of recognition and makes the puppets seem like familiar, knowledgeable characters rather than outsiders.
- Live shows can tactfully deal with local issues. For example, you might want to tackle the issue of fake healers in your show. You learn that the village herbalist is a respected community figure who works harmoniously with health officials, and it would be unwise to portray the only herbalist character in the puppet play as someone who harms people. You could adapt the script to show two traditional healers, one good and one bad. That would leave the audience with a positive message about how to select a well-trained and responsible healer.
- Live shows can be followed by conversation. The puppets can open up a topic for debate or discussion and then answer the questions themselves. And it may

be easier for people to question puppets than live actors.

• The audience has a collective experience. Those delivering services can then follow up with groups of people knowing that they all shared in watching the show and have heard the play's message.

• Live shows can be inexpensive. With puppets crafted from local materials and an impromptu stage, a puppet show can be prepared and performed at a fraction of the cost of most other forms of communication.

• Live shows can be targeted at particular audiences of various sizes. The audience does not have to be large to justify a performance. A puppet show can be performed for one class of children in a school, a group of mothers at a health centre or a small group of farmers. In one day, several performances can be given to different audiences.

• Live puppets are more acceptable in some cultures than live actors. In some communities where there may be objections to male and female actors appearing together on stage, puppets may offer a viable alternative.

Puppet and masks from *Making Dreams*, Ishora Puppet Theatre, New Delhi (India).

Dadi Pudumjee

Performing for a live audience

When you take away direct interaction, you take the audience further away from the subject matter. Live performance involves the audience more easily and especially captures children. A live performance is very different than a video performance.

A number of practical matters require consideration when *The Kids on the Block* is performed for a live audience.

• The children need to feel comfortable with the puppet characters so they can interact with them during the question-and-answer session. Because the audience has little time to get acquainted with the characters, the puppets have to be appealing from the start.

• Scripts are short, which suits children's attention spans, but getting the message across becomes a challenge. The question-and-answer session can help.

• In some cultures, children need to be encouraged to ask questions. Teachers can be briefed beforehand to encourage questions, and issues can be clarified further in follow-up sessions.

• The show must be lively, and as puppeteers become more experienced they should add gestures and variations in their tone of voice to make the show come alive.

• Different age groups ask different questions, and puppeteers have to be ready to answer in a manner appropriate to the child's age.

The question-and-answer session is a unique and essential part of *The Kids on the Block* performances. It reinforces the message and provides feedback on the interest and understanding of the audience.

Because the puppets themselves answer the questions, *The Kids on the Block* has prepared answers to commonly asked questions, and fact sheets are available to help train puppeteers. You can add to the list of questions and answers by recording those asked at performances. Puppeteers can review each other's responses and check them with rehabilitation centres or parents' groups.

Follow-up classroom exercises are available to supplement the performance. During these exercises, students can ask further questions, create stories or review the background information.

Mabel Chau

Where can a live show be staged?

The answer is anywhere: in the penthouse of a New York skyscraper or under a tree in Ghana. A puppet pulled from the pocket of James P. Grant, the late Executive Director of UNICEF, once welcomed participants to a meeting in UNICEF headquarters and in five minutes had the group focused on the task at hand.

Gill Gordon, who worked with puppets in West Africa, saw community workers simply sit under a tree and hold a conversation between two puppets, one on each hand. The villagers paid more attention to the puppets than they would have paid to a lecture.

Of course, there are proper puppet theatres, where the audience can sit in comfortable seats to watch a performance. However, these theatres are not mobile, and shows performed only in theatres are not likely to reach as many people as travelling shows that go to various locations.

In urban areas, the puppets can perform inside a community centre or outside in a square. A portable puppet stage can be erected, or an open ground-floor window of a building can become a stage, with the audience gathered outside while the puppeteers perform inside. Passers-by can stop for a few minutes to watch the show.

Gill Gordon found that a door will do as well as a window, with a sheet or blanket hanging from a bamboo pole to conceal the puppeteer and create an impromptu stage.* This set-up may also allow the puppeteer to work at a convenient height. In rural areas, Gill has hung a cloth between two trees to make a puppet stage. She has seen puppeteers perform in the open air where there was no stage available, hiding themselves under blankets and pushing the puppets up through holes cut in the blankets.

Gill estimates that 15 to 20 people can comfortably watch a puppet show when the stage is put up in a doorway, but over 100 can watch a show presented on a portable stage as part of a travelling theatre. In villages where travelling entertainments are popular, a crowd of many hundreds may gather. This is flattering for the performers, who naturally want to reach large numbers of people, but a big crowd is problematic because the people at the back will not be able to see the details of the action. If possible, repeated performances should be staged and the audience limited at each show.

Mabel Chau was invited to put on a performance of *The Kids on the Block* in a stadium. The audience was so large that the puppeteers were swamped. She vowed that future audiences would be limited so that every member of the audience could experience the puppet show in the intended way.

* Gordon, Gill, *Puppets for Better Health – A manual for community workers and teachers*, Macmillan, London, 1986.

Travelling shows, like this one in New Delhi, can reach a wider audience.

What size puppets?

The size of the puppets should relate to the size of the audience. The larger the puppets, the more people will be able to see them. Some puppet troupes have two different sizes of puppets to accommodate large and small audiences.

Live puppets have charm

The live show has charm, but there can be a problem with the distance from the audience and the size of the puppets. You should make every puppet large, since not everyone will be close to the stage, although smaller puppets will suffice for indoor performances.

With live voices you can improvise to improve the show. However, a pre-recorded text avoids the problem of the actors losing their freshness after many repetitions of the same show.

One must understand the different puppets and techniques that are available. In rural areas, traditional puppets may be preferable if the audience is familiar with certain themes and characters. For a new show with a modern puppet group, use hand-held puppets, which are more direct in their movements and easier for beginners to handle.

Dadi Pudumjee

How many puppeteers?

A live show needs more puppeteers than a filmed television show because the action must be continuous. Three or four puppeteers are needed to ensure that the show is smooth and professional and that several characters can appear on stage at one time. Large rod puppets require more puppeteers.

Traditional string and rod puppets from the Czech Republic.

What else is needed?

Amplification of sound is important. These days it can be battery powered or adapted to run off a car battery.

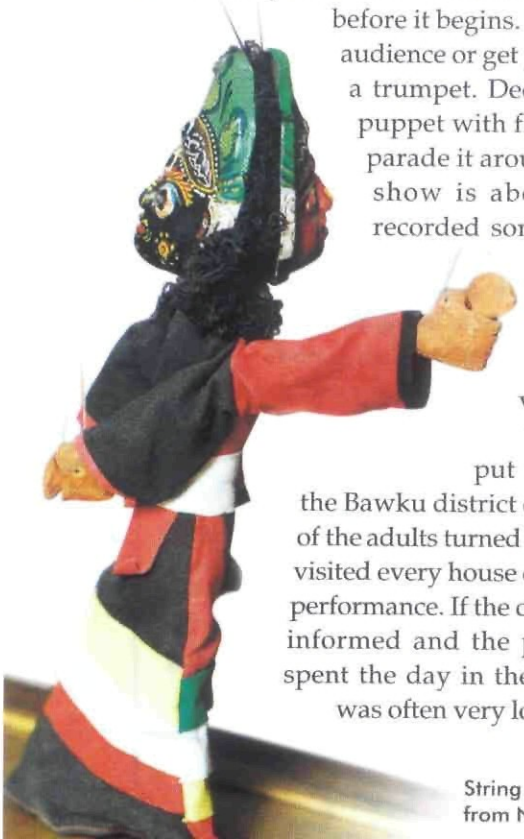
A vehicle to carry puppeteers, stage and props is clearly desirable. The ideal is some kind of van in which one side can open up into a stage, says Dadi Pudumjee. Nevertheless, some touring puppet shows carry all the staging and props on a donkey. People can even carry them in a pinch.

Touring puppeteers need somewhere to sleep and they need to be fed. They need to be well taken care of if they are to give their best every day.

Before the performance

Announce your show in advance, and make a fuss before it begins. Literally drum up an audience or get your puppets to blow a trumpet. Decorate an extra-large puppet with flags and ribbons and parade it around to signal that the show is about to start. Use a recorded song from the show to draw a crowd. When travelling to villages, make sure that word has gone out in advance.

When Gill Gordon put on puppet shows in the Bawku district of Ghana, 90 per cent of the adults turned out if puppeteers had visited every house on the morning of the performance. If the chief was the only one informed and the puppeteers had not spent the day in the village, attendance was often very low.



String puppets with two faces, from Nepal.

Schedule the show for a convenient time. Children can be reached at school during the day, but it will be harder to find a time that suits all adults. Try to avoid times when adults are cooking meals or caring for children, or are away working. Evening may be the best time for a performance, but then you will need to have lighting.

A couple of light bulbs strung through the square might be fine for daily use but at night will leave your puppets in the dark literally and your audience in the dark metaphorically. Of course, night-time (or indoors) is obligatory for shadow puppets. One way of reaching many people is to make your show part of a religious festival or wedding celebration or any other community event that brings together large numbers of people.

The performance

Pace your show so that it starts with a bang and ends with a flourish, and, of course, is brilliant in between! Practise entrances, exits and movements until you are very smooth and there are no long gaps when the stage is empty and the audience becomes restless. Practise scene changes so the story is not disrupted.

Don't make the show too long. It is much better to leave the audience asking for more. Leave time afterwards for questions or a discussion.

In Namibia, for example, a narrator introduces the PAAN show. He or she can then interact with the puppets and underline the lessons. Banter develops between the narrator and the puppets, and the narrator also serves to help draw the audience into the discussion.

The soundtrack

You need to decide whether to have live voices or a recorded soundtrack. As live voices are more flexible, they are the preferred method of presenting puppets. A recorded soundtrack allows the puppeteers to concentrate on the movement and may require fewer people to travel on tour. But it is difficult even for professionals to ensure that action and sound are properly synchronized, and if this goes wrong it confuses the audience. Moreover, a recorded soundtrack precludes adapting the performance to allow for audience reactions, which is one of the main benefits of a live performance.

When using live voices, make sure they all have access to the amplification. If the puppeteers find it difficult to speak and to manipulate the puppets simultaneously, the words could be spoken by other members of the troupe.

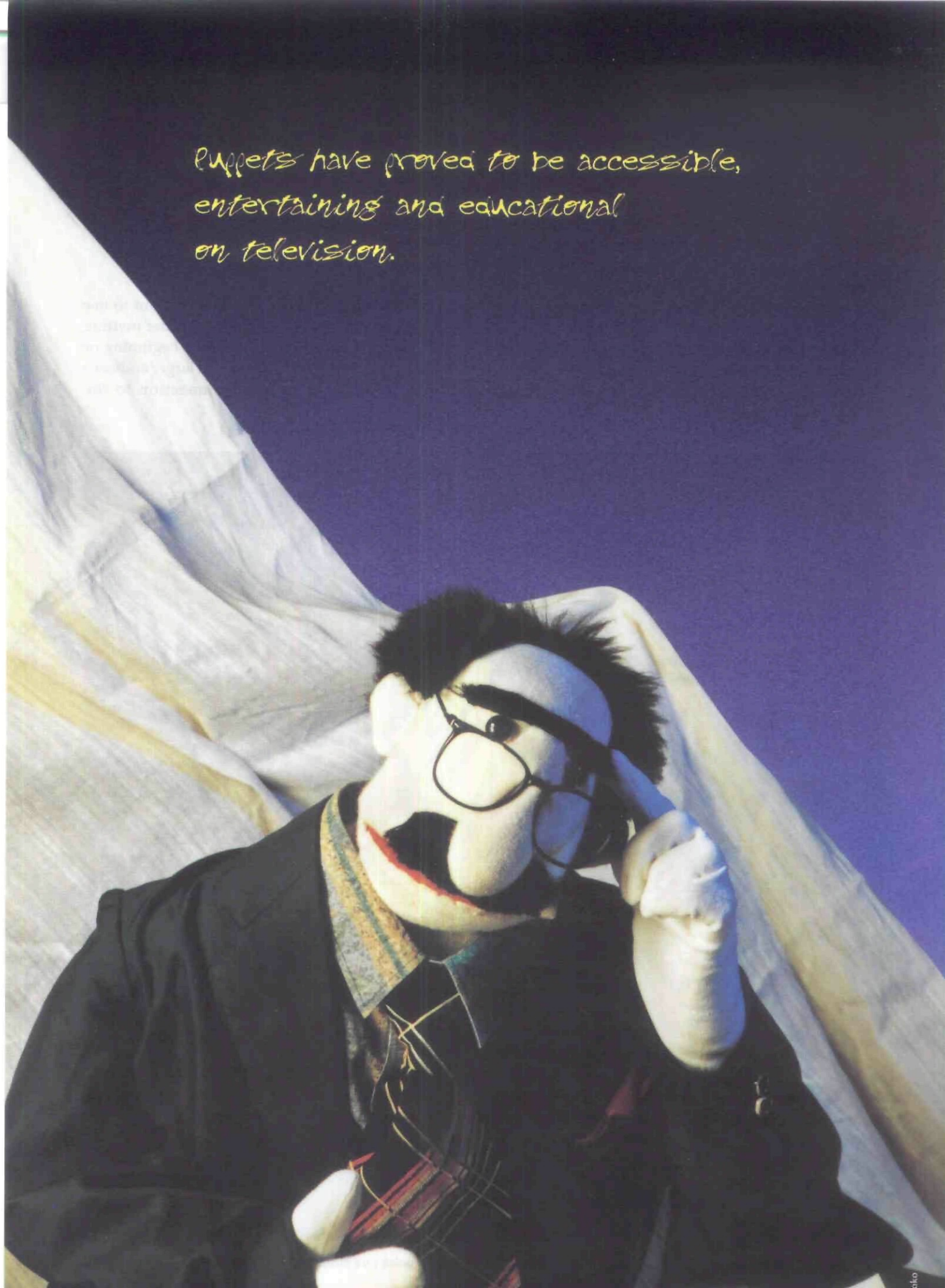
Music and sound effects

In live performance, it is especially important to use music appropriate to the local area. Consider inviting a local singer to join the puppets at the beginning or end of the show. This will help attract a larger audience and give it a deeper sense of connection to the performance.

UNICEF/96-0629/Krisna Satmoko

Asep Sunarya, an Indonesian puppet master, demonstrating the art of *wayang golek* (rod puppets).

Puppets have proved to be accessible, entertaining and educational on television.



CHAPTER 8

Puppets in action:

Performing on television

Television is the most powerful medium on earth, and its reach and power continue to grow. Audiences are increasing in developing countries with the expansion of electricity and as television sets become more affordable. Television may not yet reach as many people worldwide as radio, but it is already a stronger medium in terms of shaping people's understanding of and attitudes towards life.

For a visual art form like puppetry, television is a natural medium. It is essential to reach mass populations.

Puppetry is already well established in global television. *Sesame Street* characters are some of the best known, and their success has been copied worldwide. Puppets have proved to be accessible, entertaining and educational on television. Puppet shows launched in the 1970s and 1980s stood out for their entertainment value on national stations, which were often talk based, studio bound and rather dull. In Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines, puppet-based programmes mixed entertainment, education and health promotion and were among the most popular shows on television. Some shows are still running successfully, although they have lost their leading positions, largely as a result of increased competition for audience attention, particularly from television animation beamed in via satellite.

At the same time, budgets for programme makers on national television have been cut, making it harder to achieve the production quality people now expect.

The models for television expansion in developing countries in the late 1970s and 1980s were the national stations. Programming took place within the cultural boundaries set by the national television authorities. Today, national stations are still increasing their reach, but in most parts of the world it is also possible to tune into satellite channels, whose programming schedules are controlled from outside the country. Increasingly, national television has to compete with production standards and, to some extent, with cultural values beamed in from elsewhere.

Programmes that blend practical information and entertainment captivate youthful audiences.

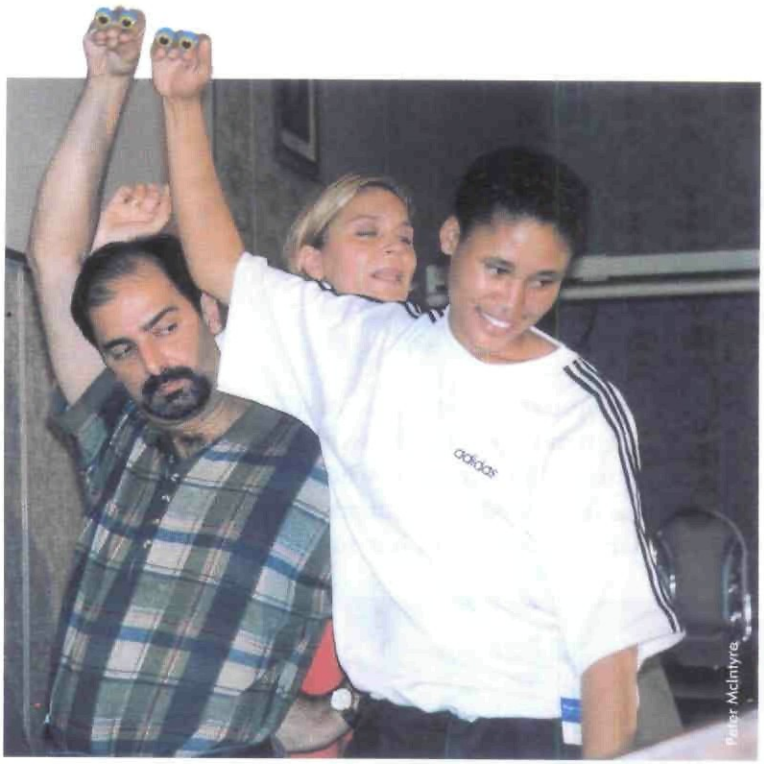
Video recorders give people further choices of what they watch. Even in places where most homes lack electricity, community video parlours often provide nightly entertainment.

The number of people viewing any one channel is rising, as more families gain access to sets. But the proportion of the viewing public watching any one channel will diminish as the number of channels

Film technique

The most sophisticated and flexible way to create a puppet film is through animation. However, we are not yet ready to apply this frame-by-frame technique to our puppets. *Si Unyil* is filmed in live-action format. The hand puppets are manipulated manually, but the lips and eyes are kept immobile. To prevent the show from becoming dull, several models with different facial expressions are made for each puppet. We therefore have several Unyil puppets, with a laughing face, a sad expression, a frightened look and so on. There are 12 different versions of some puppets.

Suyadi



Participants in the puppetry workshop learn to use the television frame to full advantage while watching a television monitor.

grows. Moreover, people who have access to satellite television become accustomed to its sophisticated production values. Even if they prefer entertainment that more closely reflects their lifestyle and culture, they may be reluctant to accept poor production standards. Young people in particular may reject 'old fashioned' programming.

This is not to discourage educators and artists from working in television. Far from it, because this medium has so much to offer in terms of creative potential and educative power. It does mean, however, that those who use entertainment to carry social messages face growing competition for an audience. Even programmes made on low budgets must pack a powerful punch and be of the highest possible quality. The novelty of the medium is no longer enough to deliver the audience into your hands. You must persuade that audience to tune in by targeting programmes to particular audiences.

Adapting traditional stories for puppets on television

Traditional stories are fertile ground for the modern puppeteer; they simply must be adapted into a dramatic play by a talented puppetry scriptwriter. Those who work with puppets know their various limitations and are familiar with the techniques, stages and sets used in the puppet theatre.

To change a traditional story requires the cooperation of a director and writer who know the difference between a puppet programme for television, theatre and cinema. In Iran, we do not have scriptwriters for puppet plays; they are usually written by children's writers. However, it is the director, with knowledge of the specifications needed to produce puppet shows for live theatre or television performances, who makes it possible for these plays to be performed by puppets.

Some of our traditional stories are full of good ideas appropriate for a puppet play, but they cannot be adapted without significant changes. Sometimes we use a traditional story as the basis for a new play; sometimes we add new characters and sometimes we remove old ones.

Through puppets, we can show our traditional culture to new generations and to people in different countries, making use of satellite television. In Iran, a Japanese traditional heroic series (*Three Kingdoms*) performed by puppets was broadcast on television. This series was of great interest to Iranians. Other successful adaptations include *Bunraku*, the Japanese traditional puppet theatre; the Vietnamese water-puppets; and the *Punch and Judy* shows from the United Kingdom.

Some traditional stories cannot be adapted for puppetry. To find the right stories and adapt them requires a team of researchers supported by advisory committees made up of creative people such as directors, writers, children's television producers, child psychologists and sociologists.

The responsibility of these teams is to draw up in advance detailed statements of aims that will ultimately guide every puppet play or television series.

In addition, research should be conducted before the series is produced to study the target audience, including its age and social profile and its viewing or reading habits. Scripts and plans should be evaluated by research and advisory staff to ensure that the educational content of each programme has been successfully incorporated into the shows. It is better to change a script at the beginning of the process than to spend time and money on a programme that ends up not working.

Ardeshir Keshavarzi

Producers at national channels are seeking ways of making a variety of entertaining, socially aware programmes on a low budget. Now is a good time to be developing puppetry for this medium because:

- Shows can be low budget while still being high quality.
- Producers can target shows to children, women and men.
- Awareness of the need to protect indigenous culture has been raised, giving further incentive to the adaptation of traditional puppetry.
- New technology makes some effects cheaper and easier: Backgrounds can be separately filmed and editing is quicker and cheaper.

The days of locally made puppet shows are far from over. On the contrary, the amazing ability of programme makers to produce cheap and popular puppet shows should be an inspiration to spread this work to many more countries. And while the Muppets internationally have a wide entertainment appeal, indigenous puppets have closer ties to the viewing public. Moreover, it costs only a little more for local producers to upgrade production standards – but it requires a large effort to take a show made for a US audience and make it relevant to people in 20 different countries.

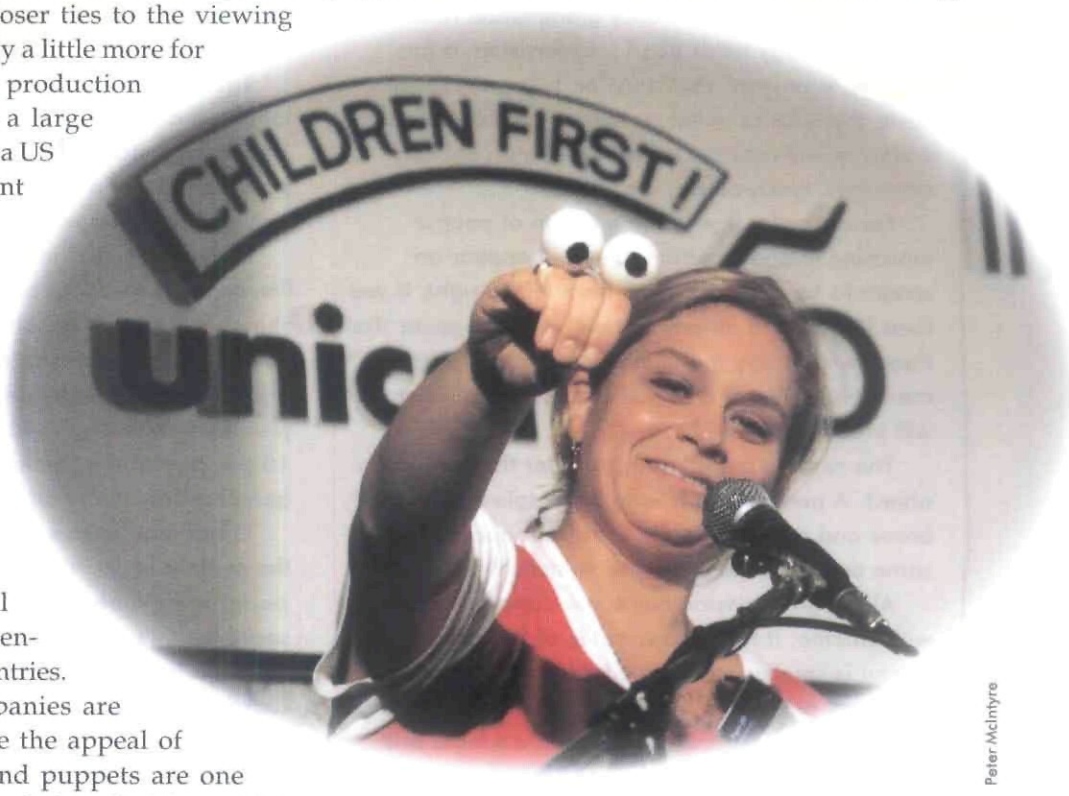
Some producers may want to consider the possibility of dubbing shows like *Sesame Street* and *The Puzzle Place* in local languages, but proper legal procedures need to be followed. Linking some of these characters to progressive educational movements would be a tremendous boost to developing countries.

National television companies are looking for ways to upgrade the appeal of home-made programmes, and puppets are one way to do this successfully and cheaply. The result is a huge potential for puppeteers and development agencies to pool resources and talents and to increase their reach to millions of people. Puppeteers could encourage television companies in the same region to join forces, sharing costs and talent to make puppet shows that are relevant to a number of countries, in the same way that the *Meena* animation series is relevant to many countries in Asia.

Bringing puppets to the screen requires even greater collaboration than for live shows. Along with puppeteers and development specialists, experts in television production are needed. A filmed version of a live show does not make a successful television show, any more than filming live actors on a stage makes an effective television drama. There are different views on how to transfer a puppet show to the screen. In the Philippines, a committee of experts collaborated to prepare the *Batibot* shows.

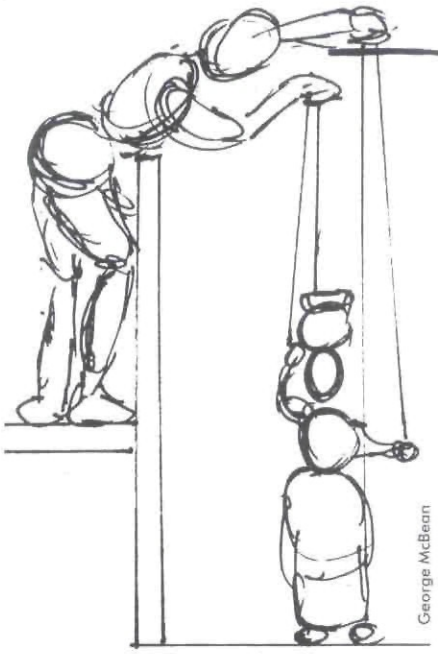
Based on experience in Pakistan, Farooq Qaisar believes that one person on the team should be an expert in both puppetry and television production. Ardeshir Keshavarzi, from Iran, emphasizes the central role played by the director in translating stories for the screen. He also advocates convening a panel of researchers and experts to draw up a statement of aims to guide directors and performers.

Bringing traditional puppet shows to the screen is tricky. These shows have developed over centuries on the assumption that the audience is live. Television puppeteers need additional skills. What works on stage will not necessarily work on television. Carmen Osbahr, who has worked on *Sesame Street*, *Plaza Sésamo* and *The Puzzle Place*, and her colleague John E. Kennedy describe how television puppet shows were transformed after the inventor of the Muppets realized that the puppeteers could at long last see exactly what was happening on 'stage' by watching themselves on a monitor.



Peter McIntyre

Carmen Osbahr shows off a simple puppet character made from ping pong balls.


George McBean

The grammar of television and traditional puppetry

When I speak in English, even though it is not my native language, I have to follow the rules of English grammar so you can understand what I mean. Grammar is a set of rules. When you use a language you also have to consider expression. The same words may have a different meaning depending on how they are stressed. Syntax is also important. If you want people to understand, you have to obey grammatical rules.

The analogy holds good for television: It has rules of 'grammar' that must be followed. These cover the work of writer, camera operator, director, editor, sound recorder, music illustrator, lighting organizer, synchronizer, etc.

For example, if you film a group of people marching in one direction, they will appear on screen to be marching, say, from left to right. If you then film from a different angle, it may appear that they are suddenly marching from right to left. The marchers have not changed direction, but viewers will probably be confused.

The camera angle itself can alter the look of an object. A person shot from a low angle appears tall, brave and perhaps fierce. Shot from above, the same person looks small and vulnerable.

Although television has some things in common with cinema, it has its own rules of 'grammar'. The screen is smaller and shaped differently. If you take too many pictures in long shot, the audience has trouble seeing expressions on people's faces and knowing what emotions they are feeling.

The traditional *wayang* puppets of Indonesia have their own rules, some of which they share with other traditional performing arts and some of which are their own. (Nowadays, all forms of traditional Indonesian puppetry are known as *wayang*. *Wayang golek* are the rod puppets and *wayang kulit* the shadow puppets.) Some problems arise in matching the rules of puppetry and the grammar of television production.

How many cameras are needed to shoot a three-dimensional puppet show? One could argue three cameras, one for each dimension. There was a joke among producers that only one camera was needed, which was locked into position while the camera operator and crew went to sleep for the duration of the *wayang kulit,* in which the shadows have length and breadth but no depth.

But of course this logic does not work either for the grammar of television production or for the grammar of the *wayang,* because the camera usually focuses on the most dynamic aspect of a scene. The dynamic part of the *wayang kulit* is the shadow itself, the movement of the puppeteer's hands and the face of the puppeteer. It is difficult to install a camera that can focus on each of these.

The story in traditional performing arts also follows a different grammar than that of television. The *wayang* story is linear, ending in a climax. A story on television is usually not linear, although it may end in a climax.

A study of topics in one form of the traditional *wayang* revealed that one third of an eight-hour show was devoted to culture, 20 per cent was about politics, 12 per cent was about ideology and God, and 12 per cent addressed national defence. Social problems, including child rights, made up less than 10 per cent of the content, while education garnered less than half of 1 per cent.

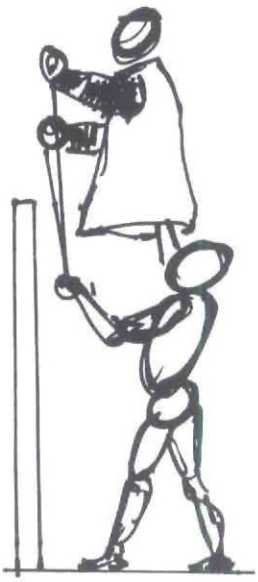
Other productions devoted about 16 per cent of the content to social problems. It is clear that in the stories more time needs to be spent addressing social issues such as child rights. However, care must be taken in adapting stories to avoid criticism that characters have been changed.

Should the *wayang* grammar change to meet the needs of television? Should the grammatical rules of television change to accommodate the *wayang*? Or do we need a new grammar to meet the needs of both? Attention needs to be paid to matching the two grammars so the traditional *wayang* performing arts can produce stories that contribute to solving social problems, especially those affecting children.

Dr. Willy Karamoy

The budget has an overwhelming influence on the number of shows and the level of production (although production standards can still be high on a low budget). *The Puzzle Place* was a year in preparation. Each episode takes 30 hours of production time, two thirds of which is spent erecting sets and preparing camera angles and puppet positions.

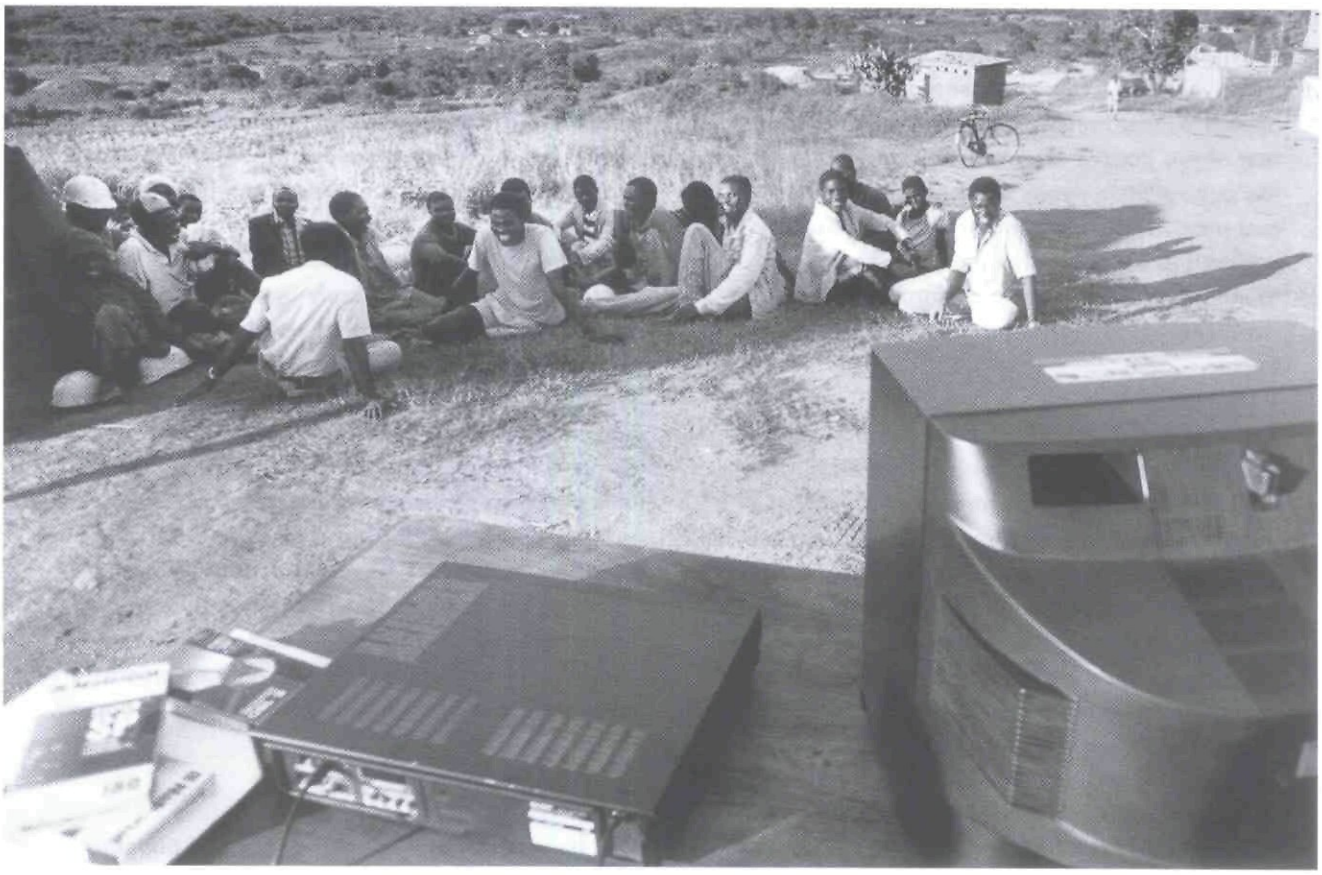
In the Philippines, $240 must cover all costs of each episode of *Batibot* except for regular staff salaries. Each episode has to be completed in eight hours of production time, including puppetry and the live-action segments. Rene Villanueva, creative director of the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, believes that with more resources, the show could regain some of the audience lost to dubbed imported animation.



In Iran, puppetry is so popular that major national television companies produce and broadcast puppet programmes for children. These contain many social messages, such as encouraging people to look after the environment and conserve resources, as well as safety messages about the use of household natural gas or electricity. Surveys conducted by Iran National Television confirm the positive impact of puppets in public messages.

Iran's film industry has also produced puppet feature films, some of which have been box-office hits, popular with children and adults alike. These films often include traditional folk music and rhymes. One reason why puppetry is so successful in Iran is that many people disapprove of young men and women appearing on stage or in film together. Puppetry is much more acceptable.

Another reason for puppetry's success in Iran is the low production cost. One recent polished and professional series used 15 puppet characters over 52 episodes, each lasting 20 minutes. The whole series cost a total of $120,000 and was produced in four months. This sum included fees for technical directors, writers, art directors and puppeteers; the cost of making the puppets and props and hiring equipment; and the studio time, dubbing and editing. This works out to $2,300 per episode or about $7,000 per hour of viewing time.



UNICEF/93-1224/Cindy Andrew

The 'grammar of television' also needs to take into account the needs and viewpoints of different audiences, such as these quarry workers, watching an AIDS prevention programme in Malawi.

Techniques of puppetry

Television permitted a revolution in puppetry: By watching his or her performance using a monitor, the puppeteer could see exactly what the audience would see. This technique, introduced by Jim Henson, had never before been possible for the performer. It was soon clear that the techniques developed to adapt puppetry to television would change the art form forever.

The following guide to technique is not designed to be followed slavishly. The real key to becoming a great television puppeteer is to have fun from the moment you step into the studio. Acting and improvisation skills are helpful. Remember that you are creating a character on the screen while performing in the studio. If you believe in your character with all your heart and soul, your audience will too.

Puppet movement

The first way that television changed puppetry was in puppet movement. The focus of the eyes became paramount because all expression comes from their position. A hand/mouth puppet is generally best for television because of its ability to fill the monitor's frame with even the smallest movement and to appear almost human with its lip-sync. The legs and feet of the puppet are not visible to the viewer, so the puppet body needs to appear as if it has weight and mass. Three elements – focus, lip-sync and puppet movement – give the puppeteer a foundation for developing performance skills.

Focus

It is said that the best puppets have no expression while at rest but possess every expression while under the puppeteer's control. How the focus of a puppet's eyes brings a character to life can best be seen by watching the range of expressions achieved by a master puppeteer performing with a monitor. The camera picks up the slightest shift of the eyes, allowing a subtle movement to produce a dramatic change in the puppet's emotions and allowing fine degrees of timing. Knowing how long to keep the focus on any one object or character takes much skill and practice. This technique distinguishes good manipulation from bad and makes the puppet character believable. To practise, equip yourself with the essentials: a video camera, a monitor and a puppet.

Lip-sync

Moving the puppet's mouth while keeping its eyes focused on something is a trick in itself and is approached delicately by even the best puppeteers. Every performer develops his or her own style, but all agree on some simple rules:

- The mouth always opens on a vowel sound and closes on a consonant.
- The puppeteer's hand stays relaxed so the mouth moves smoothly.
- Subtle but fluid mouth movements read better on the screen.

Some of the more successful television puppet characters create expressions not with the eyes alone but with the eyes and mouth in combination.

Body movement

Puppetry is all about movement. The more apparent it is that someone is controlling a puppet, the less real it seems to the audience. On television this is even more true, because every movement is magnified to caricature level. The puppet on the screen can therefore have even more of an impact than a human actor. The puppet can be exaggerated, superhuman, outrageous, abstract or simply realistic in its emotions and actions.

Moving the puppet's body on television should be like adjusting a system of weights and balances. Every movement the character makes should create symmetrical motion in the frame of the shot. Precisely how the puppet moves is a matter of choice for the performer and his or her interpretation of the character.

In general, though, *less is always more*. This is especially true when moving a puppet within the frame of the monitor. Use small, precise movements when close to the camera. When the character is far from the lens, larger movements are sometimes needed and can have rich comic appeal.

Coordination

The second way that television changed puppetry was in how the performers relate to each other.

New professional techniques were needed so the puppeteers could watch their performance on a monitor. The sets and the camera were raised so the performer could move easily in and around the set. Monitors were placed at ground level to allow visibility anywhere on the studio floor and to encourage puppeteers to keep looking down, thus keeping their heads out of the shot. Low, rolling dollies were developed for situations in which the set could not be raised but the puppeteers needed to move during a scene.

With all this new equipment, someone was needed to coordinate the puppeteers as well as the puppets. The position of 'puppeteer coordinator' was developed to harness these elements and to make decisions about the choreography that takes place above and below the frame. The coordinator is concerned with three factors: performer placement, choreography and using the television frame to full advantage.

Performer placement

How a group of performers is arranged on the studio floor is defined as performer placement. Usually the puppeteer coordinator maps out where holes need to be cut or props stacked to hide performers and monitors. Sometimes producers forget that for every small puppet on screen, below it is an entire human body. Careful performer placement allows the puppeteers to achieve the best possible framing of the characters on screen.

Choreography

In a television puppet show, choreography is typically kept simple, but even a little puts bounce into a performance. The puppet's feet are rarely visible and a lot can be left to the imagination of the audience. However simple the routine, the action belongs to the puppet character. The puppeteer must be careful to focus on the puppet's movements, not his or her own. The puppeteer must develop fluid movements from the shoulder up.

Using the television frame

The frame of the monitor can be divided into thirds from top to bottom. While it is easiest to place all the characters in the bottom third of the screen, this should be avoided because it makes a show static and ineffective. Using two thirds or more of the frame is ideal. To enhance the framing, the puppeteer can centre the puppet in the frame when it is alone on screen. Another technique is countering (moving to the opposite end or side of the frame to balance the shot) to another character moving on screen. Both make a performance more visually pleasing.

Puppet construction

Television has also changed how puppets are built. Finding a good puppet for television was not easy in the early days. Many styles were experimented with. The most effective uses simple, flexible and light materials for the body, with a foam rubber understructure and an emphasis on the positioning of the eyes. A simple puppet is easier to build and its character is easier for the audience to grasp. A good puppet is not necessarily a pretty puppet, but one that performs well for the puppeteer.

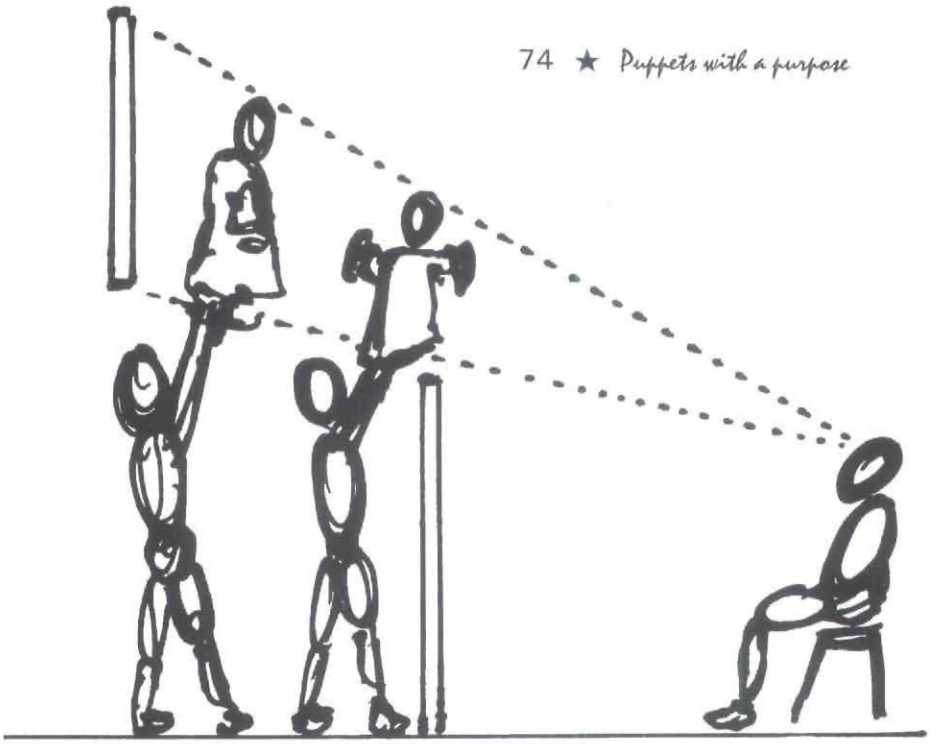
The eyes should be positioned so the puppet has the appearance of looking forward, but without becoming cross-eyed or wall-eyed. Well-positioned eyes make a perfect triangle with the nose.

A television puppet should have rod arms or live glove hands (which can hold things like a human hand). For smaller characters, rods work best. If the character needs to pick things up, use live glove hands.

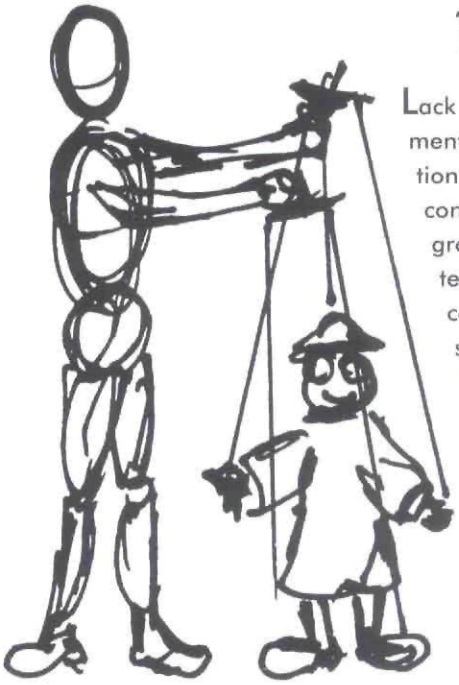
Carmen Osbahr and John Kennedy

Peter McIntyre

Puppets should fill at least two thirds of the television frame.



Transferring puppetry to television



Lack of public entertainment and lack of education are significant factors contributing to the growing impact of television in developing countries, where viewership continues to rise. But television does not have to be a malevolent influence. Television is an extremely versatile medium, and it can be harnessed for good purposes. When carefully conceived and rigorously monitored, puppetry on television is an effective mode of communication in developing nations.

People have used puppetry to teach throughout the ages. The pure art of puppetry, when transferred to television, presents a host of educational opportunities.

Puppetry creates a magical world for the viewer, the single-stage backdrop being transformed into a three-dimensional experience. Moving images, music and sound imbue a story with dynamism, transporting viewers to a world of entertainment and learning.

While a live show may need many puppeteers, on television two puppeteers can create a cast of hundreds. Television also allows a single programme to be broadcast in many languages and to reach areas not accessible to live shows. Televised puppet shows can be presented in schools.

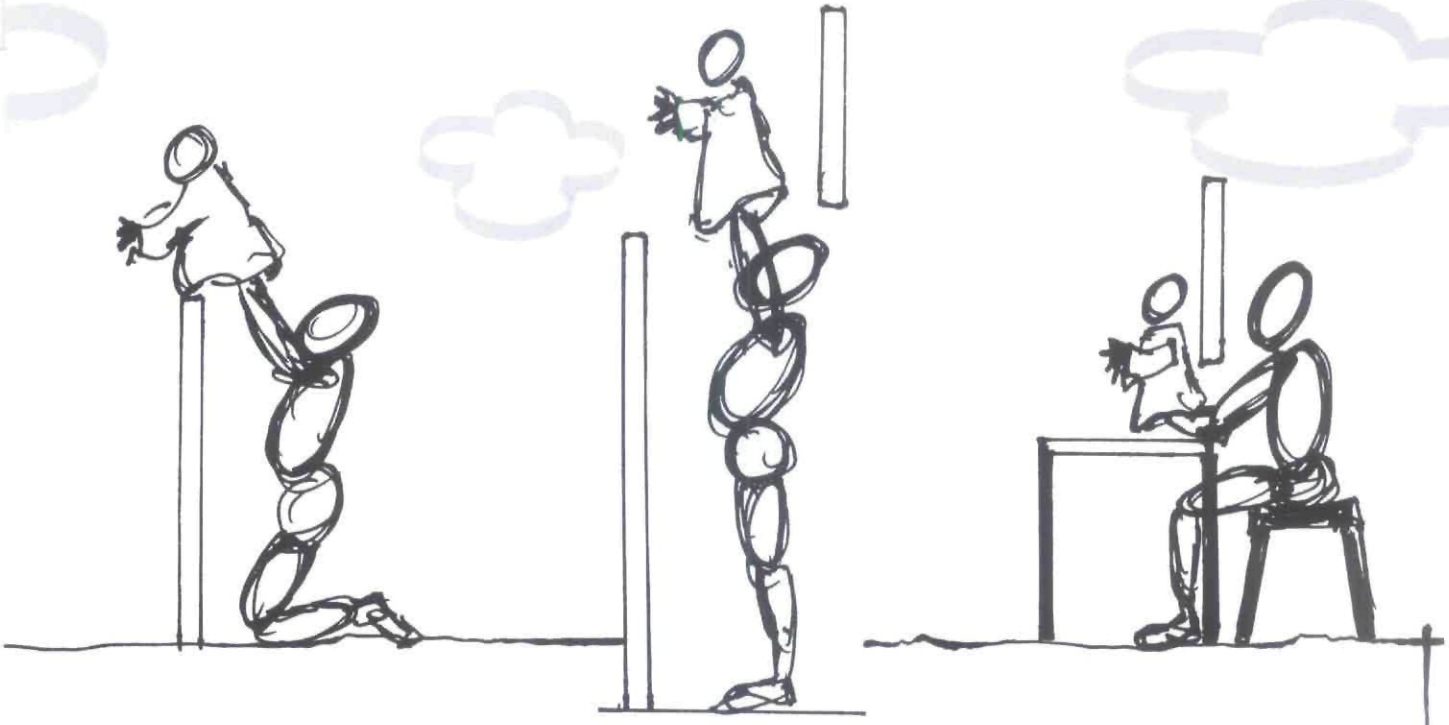
Script, puppet and music are the three ingredients that create the magic, and scriptwriter, puppet maker and director should work closely at all stages of production. I have found that one person can serve all three functions well, saving money at the same time.

Developing the script

The script can make or break a puppet-based television production. A flawed script can lead to a pretentious or immature production. There is no easy formula for writing scripts, but the goal should be to create a broad and flexible framework and then to apply it to specific communities by adding local detail and colour. This flexible framework can be modified to target specific topics such as health or education. A script that addresses a specific audience in a specific context will produce a stronger impact.

Scripts for television can be original stories or folk tales, or adaptations of both. A sensitive producer-director chooses based on the objectives of the production. The writer must have in mind a clear vision of the final product, because on television there is none of the flexibility or ad libbing of a live show.

This clear focus is all the more important if the production is intended for a wide audience. Clarity



and simplicity of setting and language will help to reach beyond the local area.

Choosing puppets

For television, rod puppets are problematic because their height necessitates moving the camera at a very high level, which either requires expensive equipment or digging a pit for the manipulators. For this reason, I prefer hand puppets. Puppets made of wood, plastic and *papier mâché* are strong but difficult to work with on television because the camera lights reflect off the paint and the puppets are difficult to manipulate.

I prefer puppets of light and resilient polyfoam sheathed in skin-coloured fabric, which safely absorbs studio lighting. Another advantage is that these puppets are lightweight, so they do not tire the puppeteer. This is important given that producing for television generally requires several takes of each scene.

A disadvantage of hand puppets is that the wrist and arm are sometimes exposed to the camera if filmed from above or below. So the puppeteer must ensure that the fabric extends below the wrist.

My experience is that simple materials used with ingenuity produce the best results. I use polyfoam sheeting for the body and arms, plastic balls or buttons for eyes, plastic mugs or containers for the head, fake fur or yarn for hair and cotton fabric for skin. I assemble the puppet using glue and finish it off with non-reflecting paint.

Remember that television mercilessly exposes even the smallest flaw. When the lens zooms in for a close-up, every minor blemish is amplified. Attention to detail and immaculate craftsmanship are indispensable. The credibility of a character increases if the puppet has a mobile mouth with precise lip synchronization.

Selecting music

Intelligent use of music is crucial. Music breaks the monotony of dialogue, and a catchy simple song with a familiar tune increases the show's impact. If a show will be aired over a large geographic area, the emphasis should be on the tune, permitting words in different languages to be overlaid. The strongest impact comes when popular local tunes and songs are combined with simple lyrics for specific communities – with liberal use of local talent.

Using special effects and technology

Technology enables the producer-director to create effects that would be forbiddingly expensive in a live show. Computer programmes, for example, allow any kind of backdrop to be projected behind the puppets. However, these tools should be used judiciously: Gimmickry is no substitute for creativity. Every producer-director must keep abreast of developments, particularly with a view to cutting costs without compromising the integrity of the production.

Farooq Qaisar

CHAPTER 9

Collaborating, reviewing, evaluating

> Change cannot happen without the participation of the people for whom it is important and relevant. It cannot come by just watching the performance of passing plays.
>
> **Shankar Singh**, Language of Change[1]

Used effectively, puppets have the power to help bring about social change. However, they can do so only if they are part of a mosaic of efforts including service delivery and follow-up. From the beginning, puppet shows should be planned within a broader framework of communication and provision of services.

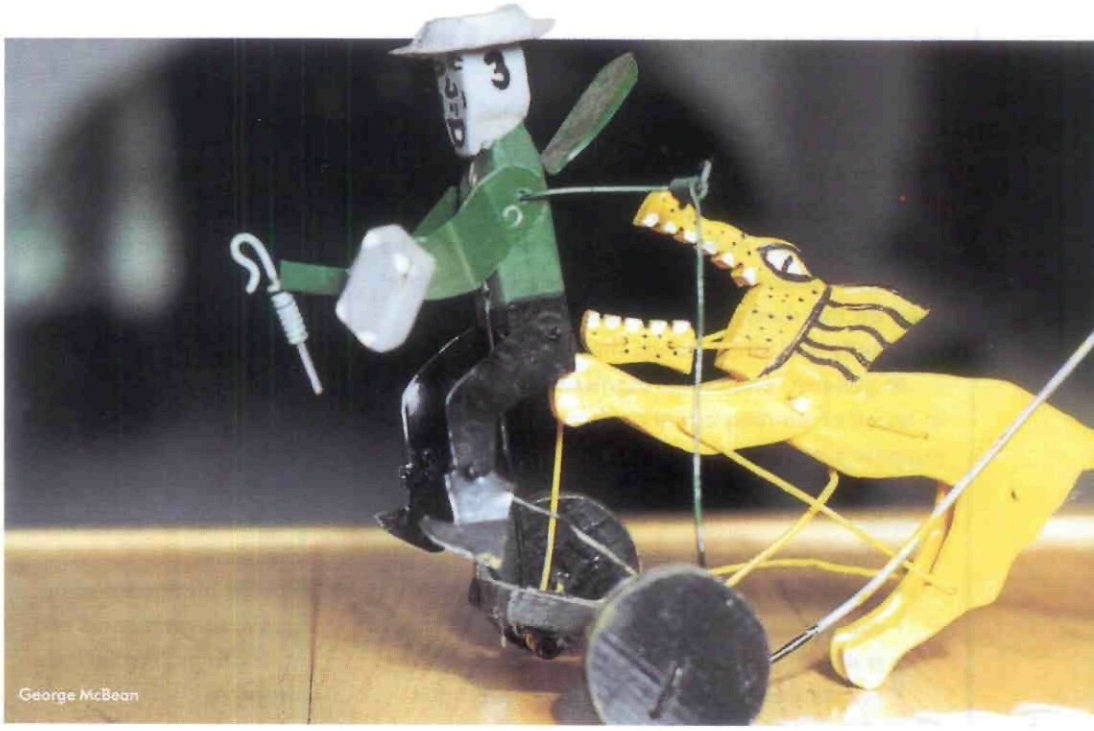
Ideally, a team of technical experts and people familiar with the target audience will be established to determine what information is to be included in the puppet series, whether on television or live. This team will also make sure the story content is appropriate and oversee the production of scripts that effectively integrate the messages into the story. However, even this process will be ineffective unless the team collaborates with the people involved in delivering services.

In Nigeria, workshops for drama groups promoting *Facts for Life* messages are run in tandem with participatory development workshops for local government officials. That approach encourages collaboration.[2]

In *Puppets for Better Health*, Gill Gordon recalls being present at the opening of a health centre in Ghana. The official ceremony had just begun, dignitaries were on the rostrum and a sizeable crowd of villagers had gathered around, when a puppeteer arrived and began to perform nearby. The crowd deserted the opening ceremony in moments, leaving health officials talking to themselves, while the puppets, who had only entertainment in mind, talked to everyone else.

It is important to integrate a puppet project with programme planning and delivery to address the people's real problems. Puppets should be used to support services that are available, particularly new or improved services. Scripts that get to the heart of the matter give people information at the right time and in the right way. And when performances are integrated with local development efforts, the information the puppets give can be backed up with posters, radio messages or in other ways.

Puppets should be used to advise people to do things they can actually achieve. The script should not advise people to boil water unless it also addresses the issue of fuel. It should not advise all pregnant mothers to visit a health centre if the midwife has just left and not yet been replaced. The play should not encourage parents to buy toys for their children if they do not have enough money to buy essentials. It should not



Wire toys from Zimbabwe. Any toy becomes a puppet in the hands of an imaginative child.

stress the importance of children with disabilities going to school where there are no schools.

However, puppets should encourage the community to address some of these difficulties. For example, puppets can promote the use of a new, locally available stove that needs less fuel, or encourage older children to play with younger children who have disabilities, or ask older people to make simple, safe toys for the children to play with.

If the puppets are part of a national television series, a producer may plan a number of segments on the same issue, tackling it from different angles to ensure that messages are repeated. Follow-up activities can be publicized as part of the show. This follow-up can be done in cooperation with an NGO working in the same field that would welcome the puppets' support and endorsement.

Rene Villanueva of the Philippine Children's Television Foundation says: "Ratings are not all that matters. There are other ways of reaching out to communities. We have an exhibition and we publish books that link with the programme. They are very popular." *The Puzzle Place* in the United States also has an outreach programme that offers training to people caring for their own and other people's children and uses the puppets as core material.

For live shows targeted at particular communities, puppeteers must plan a coherent programme that includes return visits to reinforce messages and answer questions or objections that may have arisen. Puppeteers must get to know communities and build a relationship with them that lasts beyond the excitement of one show. Otherwise, people will remember only the spectacle, or perhaps the topic. But they are unlikely to

Evaluating televised puppet plays

The *Batibot* research team of the Philippine Children's Television Foundation examines every stage of programme development, pre-production and post-production with the aim of continuous improvement. Wherever possible they evaluate audience reaction to programmes. New formats or segments are tried out on groups of children and revised (or even shelved) based on the results.

The Foundation also performs live shows with masks and rod puppets, putting together a programme of popular songs and stories from the performances.

These live shows, put on at least once a year, give programme makers the opportunity to observe children watching the shows. They can see what holds the children's attention, what makes them laugh and when they start to get bored. From the children's response to songs and games regularly used on the show, they can tell who watches frequently and which songs they remember.

In general, animation segments rank at the top in terms of winning attention from the children, but puppets also do well.

Elements that contribute to successful segments include:

- close-up shots;
- songs with action;
- characters directly addressing the audience;
- children in major active roles;
- scenes that invite viewer participation (for example, guessing games);
- concise punchlines with amusing words or funny props;
- action-filled segments, such as dancing, animal noises and sound effects;
- humorous actions by adults; and
- the entrance of a new character (for the first few seconds).

Elements that diminish audience attention include:

- talk-dominated segments with lengthy dialogue or monologue;
- lengthy songs with no action, especially those lasting more than three minutes;
- too many repetitious actions; and
- lengthy introductions or endings;

The following elements enhance understanding of the issues:

- The topic is clearly established at the beginning, and the aims are repeated in the middle and end for emphasis and to give a clear focus.
- Dialogue or action that communicates the goals is repeated.
- Children see a successful outcome in the show rather than just hear about it.

Elements that cloud comprehension include:

- endings and punchlines that distract from the message;
- prolonged endings that do not reflect the goals, especially ad libbed endings; and
- songs that last more than a minute, especially those with minimal action.


Krisna Satmoko

take to heart information or advice they receive once from a source that is unrelated to their daily lives in any other way.

Shankar Singh, a folk artist who worked with a puppet drama group in Rajasthan (India), realized that his troupe could not bring about social change all by itself. The group put on a puppet play showing how elaborate funerals push low-income families into poverty and bondage. But even after 300 performances, they were unable to point to a single family that had changed the customs of centuries simply because of watching the puppet play.

Shankar Singh writes:

> Slowly I realized the limitations of theatre, however effective. We could only create energy for a short while. We were unable to create the confidence required for making a leap forward, a confidence that can only come from sustained work and commitment to face the reactions together. It has become 'in' to have songs and plays and street theatre. The team that is involved has fun, learns some lessons and feels a glow of achievement. But what of the people for whom the plays are evolved? Change cannot happen without the participation of the people for whom it is important and relevant. It cannot come by just watching the performance of passing plays.[3]

Shankar Singh's experience is not a criticism of using theatre or puppetry. It is a criticism of using either of them in isolation, and it reflects the difficulty in tackling entrenched behavioural practices head on. Puppets are best at providing small gems of information and education, particularly when they are working within the structure of an existing trend or campaign. They can also be used to raise awareness and highlight issues – but not alone and not overnight. We should not be pessimistic about the possibilities of puppetry; rather, we should work to make it more relevant to the challenges and changes that people face.

One way to do this is to ask the community to suggest story ideas and issues they would like to see tackled. Stories can be built around real events, local heroes and success stories. Building strong links with communities requires return visits with live shows at regular and fairly frequent intervals. There may be pressure to cover a large area, and it may seem more impressive in a report to say that the troupe has reached 300 villages than to say it visited 100 villages three times each. However, the latter is likely to be effective, while the former could spread scarce resources too thinly.

In Dakar (Senegal), UNICEF has supported a 'cinema bus' that travels to isolated populations and shows films on a variety of useful subjects. An evaluation in 32 communities showed that people who attended screenings were more likely to vaccinate their children, use ORS to treat diarrhoea and filter water to prevent guinea worm disease. Visits to health facilities also increased following the screenings.

However, the involvement of target audiences in many of these activities remained weak, and those questioned were unanimous that a single visit from the cinema bus was not enough.[4]

A visiting puppet show (or cinema bus) is often not enough. People need to have someone living in the community whom they can turn to for advice and further information about the topics covered in the show. On a return visit to the community, the puppeteers could tackle a new topic, but at least one segment of the show should reiterate the messages from their first visit. The new play should overlap with the old one and carry the story forward. It can then reinforce the first message and add to it.

Given the example of a puppet play promoting ORT, puppeteers returning for a second visit will hope to find that some parents are now using ORT when their young children have diarrhoea. In the new play, the puppet mother confronted with a sick child might appeal to the audience directly. "I know that some people here know how to save my child. Tell me how or my child may die." The narrator can encourage responses and, if the drama is effectively performed, parents will shout out the best advice they can give. By encouraging those members of the audience who offer accurate information, the puppeteers can effectively persuade the audience to teach the puppets how to make ORS. And if the audience can teach the puppets, the puppets no longer have to teach the audience. Job done.

This question-and-answer technique can be used effectively with any audience. Other follow-up depends on being able to reach the target audience after the performance.

The Kids on the Block in Hong Kong performs mainly in schools, which gives scope for other activities. Teachers have access to supporting material they can

use to encourage young people to write stories focusing on the central message of the puppets: that everyone is different and diversity should be celebrated.

How to evaluate

Return visits with new puppet shows can also be used to evaluate previous shows by determining how much people actually remember. The object of such an evaluation is to improve the show's planning, presentation, timing or subject matter. When interviewing people, ask questions that address understanding of issues and behavioural change; the purpose is not a memory test of the plot of the last show.

The respondents may also draw on other knowledge they have acquired and other ways they have learned the same information. That does not matter. If the goal is behavioural change, it is sensible to accept that your puppet play is one among a number of influences. You cannot expect to answer the question, 'How many lives have your puppets saved?' You can expect to answer questions about whether people liked the show, whether they sympathized with the characters bearing the key messages, whether they understood what the puppets were trying to say, whether they approve of what they heard and whether at a later point they were doing differently. The world is not a laboratory, and it is unlikely that you can isolate the effect of puppets alone. But you should be able to tell whether your efforts are supporting beneficial change.

One way you could at least try to isolate the effects of the puppets is to compare communities that have been exposed to the puppet shows with those that have not, although it is difficult to find exactly parallel communities. A community that welcomes puppet shows and turns up to watch may already be open to ideas and ready for change.

Evaluating puppetry's success

Image in Action, a non-governmental organization in the UK, developed *On the Agenda*, a guide to using drama, puppetry and active learning methods to teach sex education to young people with mental handicaps. The guide includes suggestions for evaluation.

Staff review the structure and pace of each lesson, asking whether activities worked for the students and whether the resources, including puppets, contributed to the aims. Staff are encouraged to explain what they themselves enjoyed and learned. The guide also advocates a more formal review to assess whether any part of the course needs strengthening or changing.

Staff observe students to determine what knowledge they have acquired and retained, what skills they possess, whether they work together and whether they are ready for new, more sensitive material.

The students' own feelings are also recorded. The teacher asks individual students what they like and don't like and reads a list of preferences back to the group. Students are asked to put a mark by a smiley face or an unhappy face to record their preferences. They are also encouraged to draw something that happened. They might also be asked to put their hands in the air if they like something and on the floor if they don't.

These assessment techniques were developed for use with children with mental handicaps, but some are appropriate for any audience that cannot easily express itself in writing because of disability, illiteracy or lack of materials.

Project worker Janet Bliss used detailed one-on-one questionnaires with students at the end of a course to see what knowledge they retained. She says that even when students had already taken part in other health education courses, they had learned more at the end of a programme using drama and puppets.

Footnotes

1. Singh, Shankar, *Language of Change, in Culture, Communication and Change*, August 1993.

2. *Facts for Life*, a booklet of essential child health information, has found its way into communities and villages all over the globe in 215 languages. *Facts for Life* contains, in plain language, essential facts that parents need to know on the major child health topics: the timing of births, safe motherhood, breast-feeding, child growth, immunization, diarrhoea, coughs and colds, hygiene, malaria, HIV/AIDS and child development. Another publication that has spun off from *Facts for Life* is *Children for Health*, which outlines how children can become involved in community development and describes many activities for children. *Facts for Life* and *Children for Health* are excellent resource materials. To obtain copies, contact your nearest UNICEF office or UNICEF Division of Communication, New York, NY 10017, USA.

3. Singh, *op.cit.*

4. Sobhy, Samir, report in *Feedback* (a UNICEF newsletter),

APPENDICES

Tips from the experts

Dadi Pudumjee (India)

1. Make sure that the theme and ideas fit the medium of puppetry. Puppets can handle sensitive themes that would be difficult for a live actor to cover.

2. Keep the text simple, catchy and short. Work on movement and colour and build up your characters. Ask yourself 'Why puppets and not actors?' and discover the limits of these figures in portraying ideas.

3. Avoid being judgemental and preachy, or at least do so with plenty of humour and pathos. Don't say, 'This is the only way', but 'This is a better way to try'.

4. Be sure of your facts.

5. People have imagination, and your job is to help them to tap it. Don't treat adults or children as if they have limited intelligence – do not underestimate your audience.

6. Use fantasy, and include both good and bad characters. Mix characters and objects that come to life.

7. Try to make full use of local idioms.

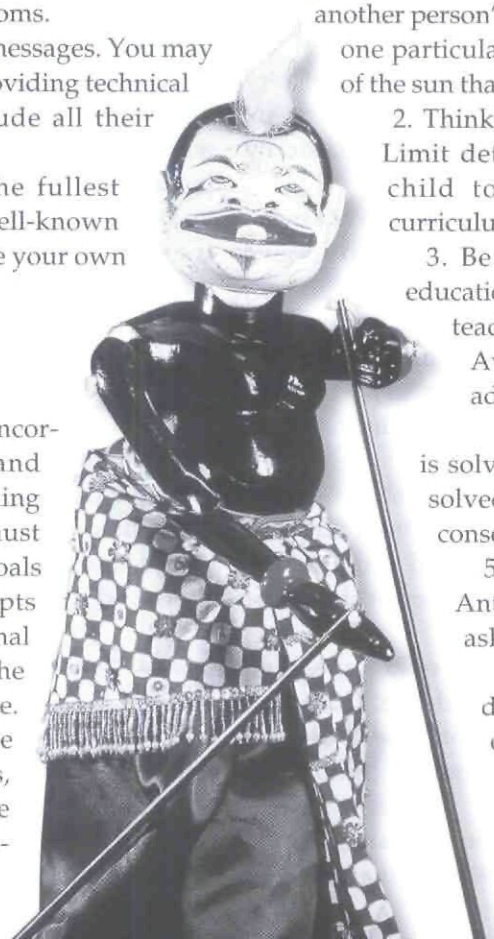
8. Focus on just a few important messages. You may need to convince experts who are providing technical information that you cannot include all their material in one show.

9. Use music and sound to the fullest possible means at hand. Explore well-known tunes or folk melodies and substitute your own words.

Rene Villanueva (Philippines)

These guidelines apply to shows incorporating animation, live action and puppetry. Scripting starts with defining the goals of the show. A writer must understand thoroughly what the goals mean to the target audience. Scripts must be developed in an educational and entertaining manner, within the resource limitations of the programme.

Every segment must have one clear goal. During the review process, the segment's content and focus are evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in achieving the segment goal.



In general, there are two ways of developing a goal: through a narrative (representational) or expositional (presentational) approach. A narrative approach can be through storytelling or comic or dramatic situations. An expositional approach may be through songs, poetry and how-to segments.

The narrative approach must have a strong conflict or problem that can be resolved within the two to three-minute segment. The expositional approach must have strong production values. In both approaches, a strong sense of humour is highly desirable. In particular, writers must observe the following guidelines:

1. Limit storylines to concepts within the experience of a 4- to 6-year-old child. Remember that young children do not think as adults; they interpret things literally. As their thinking is largely based on the concrete, they need visual images to comprehend, touch, see, smell and feel. They see things from their own perspective and have difficulty in perceiving another person's point of view. They reason from one particular to another (e.g. it is the setting of the sun that makes the father come home).

2. Think of the script in terms of action. Limit details to what is necessary for a child to understand. Focus on one curriculum point at a time.

3. Be subtle in the presentation of educational materials. No direct sermons, teaching or moralizing from adults. Avoid classroom situations with an adult in front lecturing children.

4. Show visually how a problem is solved (don't just tell about it being solved). Show alternative actions and consequences.

5. Encourage children to question. Anticipate what a pre-schooler will ask in a given situation.

6. Show that learning is fun, doing things is fun, moving with one another (like dancing) is fun, and doing things with one's hands is fun.

7. Include songs – preferably with action. They should be reusable and, when possible, universal. Simple songs with repeated lines can be easily sung by children.

8. Show children solving problems on their own. Adults should play a supporting role.

9. Give explanations and information where necessary but in a language a child can understand. Do not talk above their heads. Respect a child's intellectual development. Adults take some things for granted that a child may not yet understand. ('Why does the moon follow me everywhere I go?')

10. Think in terms of what can be done technically. Avoid props that are costly or difficult to find or handle. Remember that most puppets have no real 'hands'.

11. Limit the number of characters; characters are not an alternative to a solid plot. Don't introduce irrelevant characters as a way of resolving a situation.

12. Do not show activities, occupations or character traits as being limited to either sex. In particular, avoid suggesting that only males are strong, able and assertive; can do mechanical or carpentry jobs; and are interested in sports and vigorous games. Alternatively, avoid suggesting that only females can sing, dance, cook, sew, take care of children, clean the house and be affectionate.

13. Adults should not be portrayed as 'goody-goodies'. Adults can be sad, hurt or angry, but they can also cope.

14. Do not make fun of disabilities. Do not pity children with disabilities or show them as Superman. Show them in situations where they interact naturally with other children.

15. Humour should be based on plot. Do not make fun of language or accent. Avoid reference to specific religions.

16. Don't let characters get too angry or hysterical.

17. Do not emphasize competition in academic and creative tasks. When praising, don't say, 'You are marvellous', but describe the specific achievements. Don't use gifts as expressions of love.

18. Some things are banned from the shows – guns and children using electrical sockets are two of these.

19. Don't use abstract language, and avoid trendy language. Shows are repeated, so the script should be long-lasting.

20. Situations and lifestyles that could appear too 'Western' should be used with prudence. Costumes and details that imitate those from the West can perpetuate a colonial mentality and an 'inferiority complex'.

21. The majority of *Batibot* viewers are Filipino children from lower-income families. Situations and details should be relevant to their lives. Avoid scripts that create desires or fears.

22. The punchline should show a positive reinforcement of the goal.

Farooq Qaisar (Pakistan)

1. Espionage

A rapid study of the community is essential before writing the script. The script should begin to take shape during your study, in which you should:

- Build up a rapport with the community and identify its problems in health, education, sanitation, etc.
- Find out as much as you can about the language, culture, folk tales and heroes. The characters of the script should be crafted according to the aspirations of the community.

2. Writing the script

The language of the script should be very simple and appropriate for the community. It should contain entertaining and comic elements, while touching on the community's problems and possible solutions.

3. Character development

To help the community identify with the puppet show, the faces and dresses of the puppets should be likenesses of prominent local residents. Every attempt should be made to weave any aspects of local atmosphere and flavour into the story. The script must include members of the community, farm animals, pets and folk or traditional characters. Residents can be trained to interact and hold conversations with the puppets as part of the production.

4. Music

A visit to the local music shops can be very helpful to learn about popular tunes and songs. If there is a well-known local singer, he or she should be integrated into the music recording to increase the impact of the production. When choosing music, emphasize popular tunes and songs, simple lyrics and local talent.

Sonia Rosario (United States)

1. It is possible and crucial to both educate and entertain your audience. No child or adult will listen if you are boring or preachy. Be inventive.

2. Be honest. It is easier to talk about injustice that happens to others. It is more difficult to speak from your

It's important for puppets to act, not just stand around talking. *The Puzzle Place* characters share a pizza.

own point of view. This means admitting and sharing with colleagues your experiences of an injustice done to you or someone you love because of race, gender, religion or economic status. But without this process, the programme will seem remote and dishonest.

3. It is relatively easy to do an entertaining show. It is harder to tell stories that touch people's hearts.

4. You can only communicate one message, idea or feeling at a time. When we started, in our exuberance to inspire our audience towards greater self-esteem and deeper respect for others, our messages were too crowded.

5. Do not assume that the whole audience has the same background knowledge. In your first act, give them information as building blocks that will help them explore issues from the same base.

6. Do not reinforce negative stereotypes.

7. Incorporate (and budget for) an outreach component into your programme or series from the beginning. Follow-up activities will make your show more effective in changing people's behaviour.

8. Make sure that your puppets act, don't just talk.

9. Songs and music are very important, especially for a young audience. Try to have original music and songs that reinforce your message.

10. Design and manage your team with the same values (respect, self-esteem) as those you are attempting to communicate.

11. Enjoy the process – every step of the way is a new beginning.

Gabi Stamatiade (Romania)

1. Developing the scripts

All the children can take part in developing the scripts, because you need to know what they can and want to play. A script must be dynamic, easy to understand and capable of being transposed into images and movements that are accessible to children. The language should be simple and beautiful at the same time. The play must be technically uncomplicated. It must be lively and include parts that children enjoy playing. If these conditions are met, they will learn to present the play with pleasure and ease.

When developing a script, take account of the stories that children already prefer, as well as their games, hobbies and projects. Very often the children themselves write scripts that include topics from their daily lives.

The play must be read several times by the puppeteers so they become familiar with the sense, the main action and the storyline.

2. Casting the voice parts

The next step is casting the voices, based on voice tests (although these decisions can be changed later). Words should be clearly pronounced and the players should open their mouths properly and learn to breathe correctly. The children must have a precise understanding of their lines and do their best to interpret the meaning of the play. Once the play has

been cast, set a date for the first performance and put the finishing touches to puppets, sets and props.

3. First rehearsals

Each child receives a copy of the script with staging directions, and rehearsals begin. The focus is on conveying the exact meaning of each word and on the rhythm of the speech, stressing key messages. It is not enough for puppets to look as if they are speaking; rather they should be so convincing that they transmit states of mind, feelings, attitudes and character.

The text needs to be synchronized with the puppets' movements. They should be very expressive, matching the dramatic content of the script and the character of the part. The children need to give life to the puppets, expressing personality through movement, text and voice.

4. More rehearsals – polishing the performance

The fourth stage consists of detailed rehearsals during which everything is recorded on tape. This allows the director and the cast to:

- listen to taped voices and evaluate how the roles are being played;
- establish entrances and exits;
- follow the movements of the puppets on stage; and
- synchronize the voices with the movements.

The child who provides the voice for a part does not always handle the puppet. Sometimes the child with the right voice does not have enough experience or is not old enough or big enough to work the puppet, or cannot handle the complexity of both voice and puppet. The children must understand this and know that there is a role for every child who wants one, as there are many non-speaking parts, such as birds, mushrooms, etc. During rehearsals, the children also make many suggestions on the direction of the play.

Once rehearsals are under way, the children know their parts and the puppet movements have been sketched out, it is time to start polishing the show, making each movement more expressive. The director should pay attention to detail, bringing the play together and creating a sense of ensemble.

5. Making the puppets

During rehearsals, the young people can use puppets from previous shows as substitutes for their characters – perhaps a snail instead of a tortoise, or a hedgehog instead of a mouse – while the real puppets are being made. We use illustrations from children's books as inspiration, and we use our imaginations. Each puppet should represent a character as accurately as possible, so it is convincing on stage. The look and quality of the puppet are important to the success of the character, so that it stays alive in the memory of both the puppeteer and the young audience.

When I began, I knew nothing about puppet shows and had to learn everything from scratch. I took puppeteering courses at the Popular University in Bucharest and sought (and still seek) the support of specialists from the well-known Tandarica Puppet Theatre in Bucharest.

In our puppet workshop, the environment suggests storytelling and playing at the same time. The children learn new skills, and at the same time new puppeteers are trained. Many of the children have become 'specialists'. Some children cut up tissues, others use needles and thread with marvellous ability. Some cut out shapes in wood and plastic, and some mix colours and paint visible parts of the puppets. Other children make props. Finally, the puppet characters are born. Everything is done with passion because children are creating the puppets they will bring to life on the stage, and through which they will communicate fairy tales to the young and not-so-young audience.

6. Music

The music usually comes from national television or from other puppet theatres or is composed for us. For the past three years, we have been proud to have our own composer, a former member of our team who is now a student at the Popular School of Arts in Bucharest.

The puppets sing in many of our shows. This is an important but difficult role that raises special technical problems. Singing puppets should be joyful, harmonious and rhythmical.

7. Taping the show

At this point, the tape, including the music, is made, and rehearsals begin again in earnest. Even once the puppeteers know their parts thoroughly, there will be changes in puppet movements, and these have to be synchronized.

Technical rehearsals are very important for resolving last-minute glitches and for practising stage and prop changes. Changes must be very precise, because any error will result in serious problems for the puppeteer.

Stage lighting (also handled by trained 'specialists') is checked. Relatives and friends of the puppeteers attend the rehearsals, and their suggestions are also addressed. The troupe is now ready to take the show to the world.

Contributors

Special thanks to the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF for its sponsorship of the 'Puppets with a purpose' workshop. Thanks also to UNICEF Jakarta and the Centre for Health Education of the Indonesian Ministry of Health.

The following individuals participated in the workshop on the use of puppets for development, which took place in Bandung (Indonesia), 23-27 September 1996, and have continued to promote this work in their respective countries. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

★ **Ms. Martha Aebes**
Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia
Windhoek, Namibia

Ms. Aebes is stage manager for Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia (PAAN). Based on her experience in community activities to prevent teenage pregnancy, she joined the puppet troupe when it was being formed.

★ **Mrs. Astuti Hendrato-Darmosugito**
Pepadi Indonesian Puppetry Association
Jakarta, Indonesia

Mrs. Astuti is an authority on Indonesian language, literature and culture and has taught at the University of Indonesia.

★ **Ms. Mabel Chau**
Executive Director, Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China

Ms. Chau is a puppeteer with *The Kids on the Block* and a member of several organizations that work with the physically and mentally disabled. She has published a number of papers on related topics and holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from York University in Toronto (Canada) and a Master of Social Work from the University of Hong Kong.

★ **Ms. Brenda Lee Hyde**
Primary School Teacher/Puppeteer
Belize City, Belize

Ms. Hyde is a teacher and a puppeteer at the Grace Primary School in Belize City. Her puppetry work began in 1996, after a master puppeteer was brought from Canada to run puppetry workshops sponsored by UNICEF, the National Arts Council, the National Library Services and the National Committee for Families and Children. The workshops resulted in the establishment of a small puppet troupe, which became involved in a programme, with the National Library Service, that holds puppetry workshops for children.

★ **Dr. Irwanto**
Director, Research and Development
University of Atma Jaya
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dr. Irwanto has had training and counselling experience with the Drug Abuse Hotline Service and Drug Education for Children from the Life Education Centre of Sydney (Australia). He has a bachelor's degree and a doctorate in psychology from Gajah Mada University (Indonesia) and master's and doctoral degrees from the Department of Child Development and Family Studies at Purdue University (United States).

★ **Dr. Willy Arnold Karamoy**
Director, Research and Development Agency
Ministry of Information
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dr. Karamoy has extensive experience in television and as an economics journalist. He has been a member of the Indonesian delegation to international conferences on social, economic and information issues and has received a number of awards, among them the International Man of the Year award from the Biographical Centre (United Kingdom).

★ **Mr. John E. Kennedy**
Muppeteer, Jim Henson Productions
New York, United States

Mr. Kennedy has been performing with the Muppets since 1990, portraying characters such as Horton the Elephant, Mr. Knox and Norval the Fish for the *Wubbulous World of Dr. Seuss*, a Jim Henson production.

★ **Mr. Ardeshir Keshavarzi**
Director, Puppet Theatre, Iran TV
Tehran, Iran

Mr. Keshavarzi has been a puppeteer for more than 20 years. He helped to establish the puppet department at the Institute for the Intellectural Development of Children and Young Adults in Iran and taught puppet making and puppetry there and at the Art School of TV and Radio. He has directed numerous puppet plays for Iran Television.

★ **Ms. Barbara Kolucki**
Media Consultant on Peace Education
and People with Disabilities
Olyphant, Pennsylvania, United States

Ms. Kolucki worked for Children's Television Workshop in the late 1970s, where she was responsible for ensuring the inclusion of children and adults with disabilities on *Sesame Street*. Based in Hong Kong for 10 years, she worked with Asian governments, media groups, NGOs and the UN system. While employed by UNICEF from 1992 to 1994, Ms. Kolucki created the first peace education project for Mozambican children affected by war. She then worked with South African NGOs on peace education and conflict resolution programmes.

★ **Father Isaac Begi Mutuwawira**
Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia
Windhoek, Namibia

Father Isaac is the founder of Puppets Against AIDS in Namibia (PAAN). Because of his concern that AIDS education was not making a significant impact on people's behaviour, and based on his familiarity with puppet shows in South Africa that effectively reached audiences, he invited puppeteers to Namibia for experimental puppetry workshops. Their success led to the development of the PAAN puppet troupe, which reaches out to local communities with AIDS information.

★ **Ms. Carmen Osbahr**
Puppeteer, Children's Television Workshop
New York, United States

Ms. Osbahr has been a puppeteer for more than 15 years. She has worked on various children's shows at Televisa, the largest television company in Latin America, and on *Plaza Sésamo*, the Spanish-language version of *Sesame Street*. Since 1989, she has been a 'Muppeteer' with Jim Henson Productions, playing various female characters. She also performs as Kiki in *The Puzzle Place*.

★ **Mr. Dadi Pudumjee**
Puppeteer
Union Internationale de la Marionette
New Delhi, India

As a puppeteer performing for both children and adults, Mr. Pudumjee's shows include topical satire, social awareness, messages of peace and allegories on power. He specializes in creative workshops for children.

★ **Mr. Farooq Qaisar**
Master Puppeteer
Islamabad, Pakistan

Mr. Qaisar is Pakistan's premier puppeteer, scriptwriter and entertainment executive. He developed a series of six prime-time television puppet programmes, two of which received international honours. His puppet character Uncle Sargam, a household personality to two generations of Pakistanis, is now seen in more than 40 countries around the world. Mr. Qaisar has used his puppets in work with UNICEF and a number of government ministries, and his team of puppeteers has staged more than 200 puppet shows in the villages of Pakistan. He is the recipient of Pakistan's coveted President's Award for Pride of Performance.

★ **Ms. Sonia Rosario**
BrightLight Communication
Santa Monica, California, United States

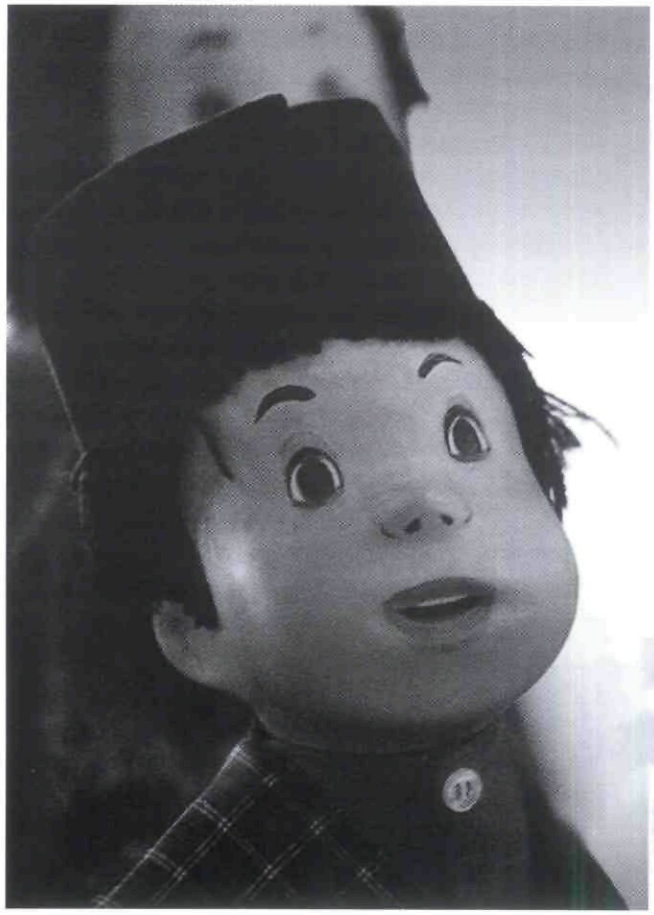
Ms. Rosario began her career as a documentary film-maker, with traditional cultures as her subject. She produced a number of shows for Children's Television Workshop and a drama series for network television. Until recently, Ms. Rosario was the producer of *The Puzzle Place*. She has participated in a number of conferences and workshops, focusing on the link between educating children and creating a better world.

★ **Ms. Gabriella Stamatiade**
Librarian/Puppeteer
Bucharest, Romania

A librarian until she discovered puppetry, Ms. Stamatiade has organized the children's puppetry programme at the M. Sadoveanu Library in Bucharest for the past 20 years. The puppet troupe, known as the Friends of Stafiduta, trains children to put on puppet plays and performs in the library, parks, orphanages and schools and at residential homes for children with disabilities. The group was recently awarded first prize at the National Festival of Amateur Puppeteers.

★ **Mr. Suyadi**
Master Puppeteer, Director, Writer, Illustrator
Jakarta, Indonesia

Mr. Suyadi was the art director and scriptwriter of the popular Indonesian puppet television series *Si Unyil*, of which there are more than 500 episodes. He is an art director for feature films and a director and animator for animated cartoons. His animation work includes *Menantang Adam* (Challenging Nature), a cartoon about the environment, and *Jangan Banyak Anak* ('Not Too Many Children, Please') on family planning, both produced by the Indonesian Ministry of Information. He is also a writer and illustrator of children's books.



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★ **Mr. Asep Sunarya**
Master Puppeteer and Puppet Maker
Jakarta, Indonesia

Coming from a family of professional puppeteers, Mr. Sunarya has been deeply involved in the world of *wayang* (traditional Indonesian puppetry) since childhood. As a youth he was trained in all aspects of puppetry at the Wayang Golek (wooden puppetry) Giriharja Pusaka Centre, managed by his father. He set up the Giriharja III Wooden Puppetry Art Centre in 1972 to revive the art of *wayang golek*. Mr. Sunarya has performed as a puppeteer in Indonesia and throughout Europe and the United States.

★ **Mr. Nyanga Tshabalala**
Puppeteer
Johannesburg, South Africa

Mr. Tshabalala first became involved with puppetry in 1984. Four years later, he was a performer with Puppets Against AIDS, as well as an AIDS educator. He has also been affliated with African Research Education Puppetry Programme and worked on puppet and costume design with *Sesame Street*. Most recently, Mr. Tshabalala has been working on a Puppets in Prison project, using puppets for rehabilitation and AIDS education for incarcerated young people. He is also involved in introducing puppetry to children in rural areas of Soweto and other South African townships.

★ **Mr. Rene Villanueva**
Creative Director
Philippine Children's Television Foundation
Manila, Philippines

Mr. Villanueva has written more than 20 plays, 40 books and 50 songs for children. As head writer for the television programme *Batibot*, he helped shape the programme to become what has been acknowledged as the best television show for children in the Philippines. He teaches literature and creative writing at the University of the Philippines. In 1989, Mr. Villanueva was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines for Literature, and in 1993, he won an Outstanding Young Persons of the World Award for Cultural Achievement.

Other participants

Burkina Faso

★ **Mr. Seydou Diallo**
Puppeteer
Ouagadougou

Cambodia

★ **Mr. Chan Thy**
Television Producer
National Television
Phnom Penh

Fiji

★ **Mr. Inoke Bainimarama**
Presenter/Producer
Children's Programming
Fiji TV Ltd.
Suva

Ghana

★ **Mr. Swanzy Ahaligah**
Programme Officer
National Commission on Culture
Accra

India

★ **Ms. Ranjana Rajanam**
Producer, Children's Programmes
Doordarshan TV
New Delhi

Indonesia

★ **Mr. Saifuddin Ali Anwar**
Head
Provincial Centre for Health Education
Semarang

★ **Mr. Marghono As**
TPI – Educational Television of Indonesia
Jakarta

★ **Dr. Sri Baghardini**
Head
Provincial Centre for Health Education
East Java

★ **Mr. Apio Broto**
TPI – Educational Television of Indonesia
Jakarta

★ **Mr. Darryl Kuhnle**
IEC Adviser/Media Development
PATH
Jakarta

★ **Mr. Sugeng Rahanto**
Health Services Research and Development Center
Surabaya

★ **Mr. Ruswandi**
Secretary General
Pepadi – Indonesian Puppet Association
Jakarta

★ **Mr. Subarno**
Master Puppeteer
Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta

★ **Mr. Blesius Subono**
Master Puppeteer
Solo, Central Java

★ **Ms. N. Surahni**
West Java Health Services
Bandung

★ **Mr. Suratno**
Lecturer/Puppeteer
Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia
(National Performing Arts
University)
Solo

★ **Mr. Joko Susilo**
Lecturer/Puppeteer
Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia
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Solo

★ **Mr. R.M. Triharyanto**
Head, Provincial Centre
for Health Education
Yogyakarta

★ **Mr. Wahana**
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★ **Mr. Stanley Similo**
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Katutura

Nepal

★ **Mr. Shyam Kumar Thapa**
Nepal Television
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Nicaragua

★ **Ms. Rosella Morelli**
Programme Officer
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★ **Mr. C. Sta. Maria**
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Philippine Children's Television
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★ **Mr. E. Munyemanzi**
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A video, ***Puppets with a purpose****, highlighting important issues from the workshop, is available from Division of Communication, UNICEF New York. For its production, we wish to acknowledge the work of:*

★ **Ms. Raman Mann**
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Viewfinders
New Delhi, India

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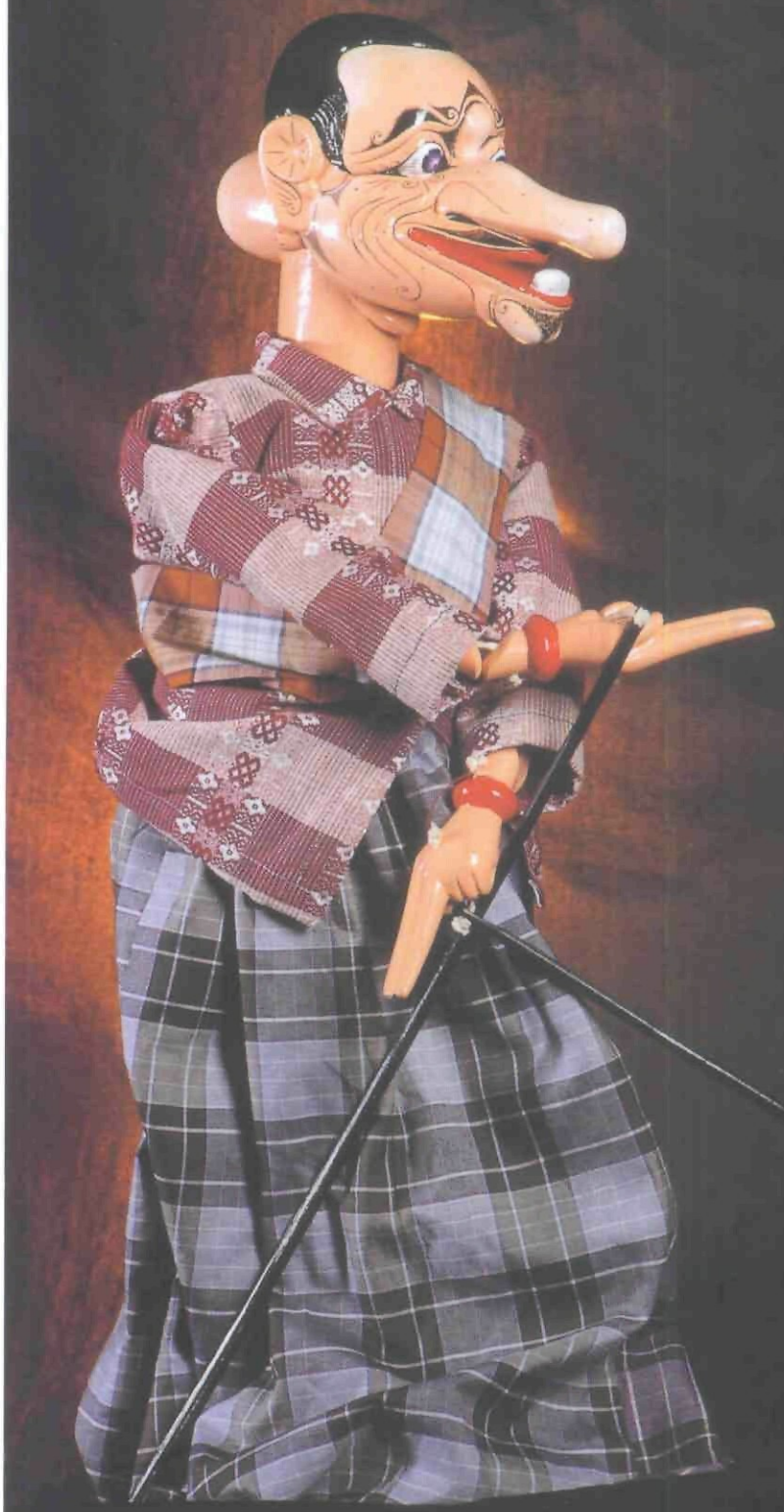
Viewfinders
New Delhi, India

Puppets with a purpose

Using puppetry for social change



Puppets have been a sophisticated means of artistic expression, communication and instruction for 2,000 years. Working the edge between entertainment and education, puppets line up alongside drama, story telling, drumming and dance as art forms that can both teach and persuade. Their creative potential is just waiting to be used to help communities grow and change.

This book tells the story of some of the puppets and the puppeteers who bring them to life. It also outlines the basic steps for making and using puppets to build a better world for children everywhere.

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SOUTHBOUND

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Notes

90 pp (Scanned in two parts. Part I of II)
The book demonstrates how puppets can communicate the messages of development, especially to children, as the are able to get away with saying things that people cannot, thus able to address sensitive issues; puppet shows tha involve the children can be a great classroom asset. The book includes instructions for making puppets, writing scripts; and suggestions for performing live and on television. Commissioned by UNICEF, with a foreword by Chery Henson; published by Southbound Sdn Bhd, Penang, Malaysia.

For part II, see CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000392.

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