



MINIMIZING RISKS OF DOING HARM

1 Minimize the risk of engaging in ‘epistemic violence’ (injury to local ways of knowing, cultural practices, forms of expression, etc.):

- Involve cultural leaders from relevant communities in plan and design of initiatives
- Include in criteria for artists “knowledge of and sensitivity to local cultural practices”
- Take precautions to avoid short-term infusions of funding that undermine local sources of sustainability
- Honor the wishes of culture-bearers about whether, and under what circumstances, to engage in or ‘borrow’ cultural practices
- Take the time to deeply understand sacred traditions, especially those disrespected during colonization and other forms of violence

2 Minimize the risk of worsening divisions between conflicting groups:

- Lift up the cultural forms and traditions of all groups
- Avoid repeating conflict-habituated discourse within and surrounding the production
- Avoid negative labels of people and groups
- Ensure adequate facilitation skills are present when heated issues come up for discussion

3 Minimize the risk of re-traumatizing communities and individuals that have suffered from violence:

- Learn and respect local processes for healing
- Avoid imposing external conceptions of healing (such as the idea that all people need to share their stories) when such ideas are not culturally resonant
- Engage with the resources of performance to balance painful memories with building cross-community relationships and jointly imagining a new future
- Support justice-seeking (in its myriad forms) as a source of healing
- When performances are likely to restimulate painful memories, ensure that people with capacities to facilitate discussions and respond to needs are available

4 Minimize the risk of undermining artistic integrity:

- Involve artists in crafting requests for proposals and calls for productions
- Engage the full transformative potential of peacebuilding performances
- Seek alternatives to didactic, goal-driven, message-centered productions
- Plan visits to creative projects with sensitivity to potential disruptions by guests and observers
- Seek spaces for creative projects that allow flexibility for movement and for messiness



ACTING TOGETHER ON THE WORLD STAGE

TOOLS FOR CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

5 Minimize the risk of creating or perpetuating injurious power dynamics:

- Select facilitators who are attuned multiple dynamics of power
- Design projects to be relevant and accessible to all groups and sub-groups
- Compose leadership/advisory team with awareness of all affected communities, including those that are marginalized
- Acknowledge factors that differentially affect participants outside as well as inside the performance space (such as dangers traveling through particular neighborhoods or regions, access to travel permits and visas, etc.)
- Alert agency staff to the need for awareness of and sensitivity to class and cultural dynamics in their interactions with artists and in particular with project participants

6 Minimize the risks to artists and cultural workers, in particular those working in contexts of government repression or polarized paramilitary formations:

- Strengthen ties between national and international arts advocacy and human rights groups so they can mount effective advocacy campaigns
- Encourage artist to make informed choices about the risks they choose to take when speaking truth to power
- Avoid engendering among project participants an unwarranted sense of their own power, given the repression and violence they might face when exercising it outside of the protected space of the workshop or performance hall

NOTES
