



# Confidence, Connection & Creativity

By Seenaryo

Theatre always finds its way into people's lives, hearts and minds. In celebration of International Women's Day, we focus this month on a women's theatre production filmed in Jordan.

The production is the creative work of some 22 Sudanese, Somali, Yemeni and Jordanian women brought together by *Sawiyan*, a community-based organisation supporting and advocating for marginalised refugees in Jordan. The women met in October and told stories, built their artistic skills and ultimately created an original theatre piece as part of Seenaryo's Women's Theatre Project.

The script they developed, rehearsed, filmed and produced has screened online with audiences from Jordan, Lebanon and the United Kingdom. The film reflects some of the messages that these women wish to share with the world.

## The power of expression – Zeineddine's approach

The need for connection and expression is what motivates director and creative producer Jana



Meet Jana Zeineddine, the facilitator, director and all round creative director for this Women's Theatre Project

Zeineddine: "Coming out of COVID-19 and the lockdowns last year, I was drawn to connect with women who needed a healthy outlet and a space for self-expression," she tells us.

Zeineddine, who's also a facilitator in delivering theatre programmes in Jordan for Seenaryo, echoes the organisation's belief; everyone has something to express and can find creative ways of doing just that when given the right platform and tools. "I believe everyone has the ability to act," she explains. "There is this idea that acting is difficult, but the reality is that great acting is being honest, open, vulnerable and relaxed. As humans and social creatures, we already have these skills."

The creative producer walks into a workshop knowing the women have chosen to attend because of their desire to grow and "that's enough," she says. She thus approaches them as actresses. "I want them to



Sara, a Women's Theatre participant, engages with the script she helped to create

“Great acting is being honest, open, vulnerable and relaxed”  
Jana Zeineddine

## Communicate with Confidence!

Using your breath and a series of exercises meant to prepare one's voice for singing, acting or other use (vocal warmups) can also help in your everyday life to relax and feel confident when you speak. Try taking a deep breath, holding it for a few seconds and then releasing it slowly. Try again, but this time, make different sounds with your voice as you breathe out, like 'mmmm' 'haaaa' 'ooooo'. Yawning or sighing loudly can also help wake up the voice; give it a go!



Jana Zeineddine (director) leading a theatre exercise with participants

“Women can explore facets of themselves that they do not usually get to indulge and take on roles outside of their positions as wives, mothers or caretakers”



Participants from the Women's Theatre group reflecting and supporting each other during rehearsals





Seenaryo's Women Theatre participants reflecting and supporting each other during rehearsals

“ Theatre helps bring out things in us that we wouldn't normally be able to express ”  
 Namarig Yagoob Jadeen

understand that they already have that ability and it's just a matter of context.” As a facilitator, she sets out to contextualise the skills and emotions they already have.

Through rehearsal exercises that connect emotions with movement, facial expression, and dialogue, Zeineddine has created a space where women can explore facets of themselves that they do not usually get to indulge and take on roles outside of their positions as wives, mothers or caregivers.

**The power of connection – Jadeen's story**  
 Sudanese-born Namarig Yagoob Jadeen was a participant, both as an actress and an assistant producer. “I wasn't seeing many people before joining the group,” she admits, but “meeting with other women, realising I can do something and that I have something to offer, made me feel good...and loved.”



Trainee facilitator Namarig Yagoob Jadeen leads exercises during rehearsals

The actress and assistant producer took on extra responsibility among the group, coordinating logistics at the training sessions, transcribing scenes and managing costume and set elements. “I realised that I really could take on all of these tasks. I do have it in me. I can act. I can persevere!”

After this project ends, Jadeen hopes to go back to writing. She has already written many short stories and, with a reignited passion, she tells us that she is set to write more and maybe even create a theatre production herself one day. She believes theatre benefits communities as it sheds light on certain issues, positively influences people and relays important messages faster. She adds that “theatre helps bring out things in us that we wouldn't normally be able to express.”

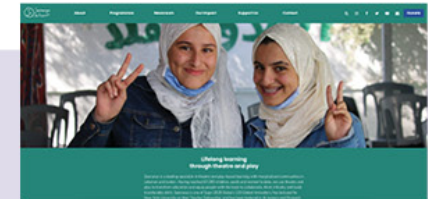
Jadeen hopes that similar participatory theatre projects would reach countries such as Sudan and Somalia, where they might have an even stronger impact on women and communities there.

Seenaryo is a theatre and play-based learning organisation. To learn more about Seenaryo's work and where you can view this film, visit [Seenaryo.org](http://Seenaryo.org) and connect with us through our social media platforms.

**Did you know?**

Dr Laurel Borisenko spent over a decade in conflict-stricken communities, examining how theatre moves people toward healing and reconciliation. She states that theatre contributes to “an increase in confidence, self-esteem, positive identity, hope, and healing, leading to increased resilience [and] strong relationships”.

“ Drama provides a uniquely engaging and therapeutic way to reflect on, express and explore experiences ”  
 Dr Fidelma Hannahan,  
 University of Sussex



Women's Theatre participants are encouraged to share their ideas during a workshop