



Women Leading Theatre for Change



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Executive Summary

The “Women Leading Theatre for Change” booklet serves as a roadmap for practitioners and organisations seeking to use participatory theatre to equip women with the skills to become leaders and peacebuilders in their communities. It is based on insights from Seenaryo’s nine-year journey implementing participatory theatre with women in Lebanon, with particular emphasis on insights and learnings from Seenaryo’s latest project with Lebanese and Syrian women in the Bekaa Valley. We hope it will spark conversations, ignite creativity and pave new, inclusive and playful pathways for social change.

The booklet is a blend of desk research, interviews and insights from women participants, Seenaryo staff, theatre facilitators and partner organisations including [Women Now for Development](#) and [House of Peace](#). It complements the Seenaryo Cookbook, a resource for theatre facilitators that provides comprehensive tips and devising techniques for a participatory theatre process. The booklet explores the connection between participatory theatre and women’s leadership, as well as setting guidelines for creating gender-sensitive and safe spaces for women from vulnerable communities.

While our recommendations and tips are drawn from our experience in Lebanon, they could also be used in other contexts whilst bearing in mind local specificities and sensitivities.

Here is a summary of key takeaways, which are explored further in the booklet:



Create safe and inclusive spaces where women feel secure to express themselves freely and unleash their talents without fear of judgement.



Foster an atmosphere of collaboration where women can openly share their experiences and stories – building connections, solidarity, and resilience through their shared narratives.



Enable women to take charge of the creative process, incorporating their diverse perspectives into the telling of the story.



Be mindful of cultural, religious and gender sensitivities, particularly regarding body movement, to ensure inclusivity and respect.



Value each participant equally, prioritising emotional support for them and encouraging open dialogue and debate to challenge stereotypes.

INTRODUCTION

“Theatre was my way of breaking free from isolation in a country where I’m a refugee. It was my way of releasing the burden of displacement and adapting to a new community.”

Mayada, participant

Who are Seenaryo and what is their approach?

Seenaryo has been co-creating theatre with under-served communities in Lebanon since 2015 (and more recently in Jordan and Palestine). Through theatre and play, Seenaryo supports children, youth, and women to be active collaborators, creators and catalysts for social change.

“

I strongly believe that to live in dignity is to be able to tell your story and have it heard. Storytelling has the genuine power to humanise, alter narratives and influence how people perceive one another. I see it as a political and ethical belief in human dignity, and I recognise the value of participatory arts, theatre and culture in upholding this idea.”

Victoria Lupton, CEO & Founder, Seenaryo

In many humanitarian contexts, organisations primarily focus on addressing basic needs — such as food, shelter and medication. However, they often overlook vitally important emotional, personal and social needs. Seenaryo’s participatory approach to theatre breaks apart the typical hierarchy between actors and directors – transforming the role of the individual by putting them at the centre of the creative process. Standing on stage, participants can freely share their stories in front of an audience. It is a creative, collective and often joyful form of expression, allowing the ensemble to explore both shared and personal experiences.



Partnering for Change

The sustainability of Seenaryo's work owes much to their close and fruitful partnerships with organisations deeply-rooted in the communities they serve. This locally-led approach is key to creating safe, sensitive and accessible spaces, as well as long-lasting and sustainable impact for communities. Central to this is Seenaryo's partnership with Women Now for Development – a feminist organisation aimed at fostering a society characterised by democracy, freedom and justice in Syria, where women play a significant and meaningful role in everyday Syrian life.

“

Our partnership with Women Now for Development helped us introduce participatory theatre as a tool for social and political transformation, rather than a purely creative project.”

Victoria Lupton, CEO & Founder, Seenaryo

“

This space for leadership, expression and resistance is crucial. I think theatre creates a space where you can imagine a different social and political space. The women are refugee women who have been seen - especially in Lebanon, but also elsewhere - as people in need. They're seen as poor women, sad women, veiled women and they face a huge amount of prejudice. When you see them on stage, your whole perspective changes.”

Dr. Maria Al Abdeh, CEO, Women Now

“

“What could I possibly achieve through theatre?” I kept asking myself. I recognised participatory theatre's potential to help me tell my story, enjoy my time and benefit from other women's experiences. I saw it as a means to break internal and external barriers.”

Wafaa, participant

“

“Standing on a stage was a childhood dream. The world of theatre is unique. My reality, dreams and imagination blend into one space.”

Fatima, participant



About the Project

The findings and recommendations in this guide are in large part based on a theatre project led by Seenaryo in partnership with Women Now for Development and UN Women. Over 18 months, 80 Lebanese and Syrian women living in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley devised, rehearsed and performed an original play with Seenaryo. They also took social peace, civic leadership and theatre leadership training with Women Now for Development. The project was made up of five key sections.

● Civic Leadership Training

Women Now for Development led civic leadership training. Women explored topics including gender, women's rights, feminism, and public speaking. Beginning the project with civic leadership training gave the women a better understanding of their own experiences in society and the language to identify the issues they want to explore through theatre.

Watch our film: [Womanhood](#)



● Devising and performing an original play

Professional Seenaryo facilitators led a participatory theatre process with groups of 20 women each. These sessions provided a safe and inclusive space for women to express themselves creatively. Through words and movement, the women explored their stories, experiences and emotions, culminating in a public performance.

Watch our film: [The Creative Journey](#)



● Theatre Leadership Training

The women then took Seenaryo's Theatre Leadership Training, equipping them with the skills to become theatre facilitators and lead theatre sessions with children in their communities.

Watch our film: [Learning to Lead](#)



● Social Peace Training

Some women received social peace training focusing on inner peace, community harmony and conflict resolution. This training complemented previous sessions by encouraging women to advocate for peace within themselves and eventually within their communities. The social peace training incorporates diverse perspectives on peacebuilding, including personal, interpersonal, and community levels. It also facilitates open discussions to address sensitive topics and promote understanding among participants.

● Women become Theatre Facilitators

Upon completion of Seenaryo's programmes, women participants move to implement their own participatory initiatives within their local communities, usually leading their own "Satellite" performances with children. They become theatre facilitators themselves, and many find long-term employment by joining Seenaryo's network of professional freelance facilitators.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

“Maha, a woman participant, spoke directly to the depths of my heart. In her scene in the Tilka performance, she began to call out to her homeland beyond the mountains, vividly expressing her longing for her hometown. Her words live in my memory to this day. She said, “O home, I call upon you from behind mountains shaken by tears.” Living in Bekaa, with just one mountain separating me from Syria [my homeland], her words resonated deeply. Though the idea of the scene was not mine, it spoke to me.”

Khawla, participant

How to Lead a Participatory Theatre Session with Women

Key Recommendations

Drawing on Seenaryo's journey in leading participatory theatre with women from under-served communities, the tips and recommendations below are based on the experiences of the facilitators and women participants. Seenaryo's approach aims to balance a constant assurance of safety, protection and nurture, while challenging participants to push themselves out of their comfort zones and work hard to create a collective performance that each individual can be proud of.

Tip #1: Foster inclusive and safe spaces that respond to women's needs

- ① Create safe, communal spaces and non-judgmental spaces where women feel free to express themselves without fear of criticism, fostering an environment that encourages self-discovery and exploration.
- ① Implement regular check-ins and check-outs at the start and end of sessions to provide opportunities for voicing concerns and feedback.
- ① Be sensitive to the needs of women from diverse backgrounds. As one example, do not impose a dress code.
- ① Encourage participants through motivating words. Positive feedback is very rare for many women from under-served communities, who can live with shame and fear about the response of others. Particularly at the start of the process, find positive words and encouragement to say about their performance in every activity; this is key in building their sense of pride.
- ① Schedule theatre sessions in collaboration with participants and try to allow maximum flexibility. Women participants - especially in refugee communities - can have a tight schedule between paid work (many women are the sole breadwinners in their household due to death, detention or displacement of the men of household), housework and caring responsibilities. And ensure participants are always aware that it is their choice to be there and do not feel pressured to take part. However, make clear at the start of the process that all participants are expected to attend every session, and be prepared to ask participants to leave the group in case of repeated and unjustified non-attendance. Setting a culture of professionalism and commitment is key to ensuring rewarding sessions and a high-quality performance that the women feel proud of.

- ☉ Where budget allows, provide childcare in the same space for the children of women participants. In the past, Seenaryo has even scheduled simultaneous Children’s Theatre workshops in the Women Now for Development centre alongside Women’s Theatre. If budget doesn’t allow for childcare, allow flexibility so that if absolutely needed, participants know their children are welcome to observe or even participate in the workshop room. Where children are girls over 16, encourage them to participate with their mothers: this has been transformative for family relationships in Seenaryo’s experience (e.g. Mayada and her daughter Aya in 2022, and Faten and her daughter Sara in 2018).



Tip #2: Embrace shared storytelling and a collective experience

- ☉ Demonstrate the power of shared narratives to foster solidarity among women participants. This can take many forms: if participants are sharing a true story from their lives, encourage them to turn it into a scene and perform it in a small group in front of the bigger group as audience. This is a more collaborative approach than asking women to read monologues, encouraging a sense of shared ownership of their stories. The goal is to create a shared story that is greater than the sum of its parts.
- ☉ You can protect participants’ privacy by representing stories anonymously in the play - encouraging participants to perform each others’ stories, whether true or imaginative. This also increases the sense of shared rather than personal ownership of the story.
- ☉ Lead activities that allow women to move as an ensemble. For example, Seenaryo’s Cookbook has an activity called “Looped Movements” that asks participants to create three of their own small, gestural movements, then set them to music and follow each other’s movements so that they are all moving as an ensemble. Do not be afraid to encourage abstract and daring physical movement, even with a group of women who have little experience in movement. Moving and dancing together as a group can stimulate a radical, collective joy.



Tip #3: Build up women's strength to tell their own stories and advocate for their rights

- ④ Prepare the women's bodies at the start of the process to build up their physical strength. In an environment where many women do not feel accepted by society, physical theatre can help them to accept themselves and their own bodies. Some women will feel tired, weak, afraid of or unfamiliar with sport. Remind them of the physical labour they already do and the strength they already have: many of these same women work long hours of childcare, manual labour or physical housework. Spend a long time on physical warmup especially in early sessions to encourage healthy posture and movement, avoid injuries and build strength; even simple yoga set to music can feel empowering.
- ④ Step aside and allow space for women participants to lead the creative process, from devising the play to performing it on stage. For example, try to start the devising process with an open brief or stimulus - e.g ask participants to propose a short stanza of poetry and create a scene using that as a starting points; or collectively brainstorm emotional states, encourage participants to remember a time when they have felt that emotion and then perform that moment as a group scene. Provide continuous creative guidance from a distance without forcing themes and scripts upon the participants.
- ④ Ensure that every participant feels a sense of agency and control over her representation and has contributed stories and experiences to the performance. No idea is too minor or foolish.
- ④ Facilitators should see the women as powerful agents of change, and not as victims. This will pave the way for participants to behave as powerful agents of change. So while protecting participants, do not be afraid to challenge them and ask them questions.

Tip #4: Encourage humour, imagination and surprise

- ⑥ Use humour as a pivotal tool in creating a collaborative, joyful and creative atmosphere. Facilitators should set a tone of openness and encourage “laughing with” over “laughing at” participants’ performances.
- ⑥ While women should have space to tell their own stories, pushing them into unfamiliar narrative directions can promote a joyful, empowering experience. Visualisation activities can be helpful here. For example, Seenaryo Head of Arts Lama Amine uses a “Letter Box” exercise that begins with participants “writing their names” with different body parts, then adding the five elements (water, fire, air etc) into those movements, and eventually visualising an imagined journey through them (e.g. “you’re on a cloud and you feel the wind behind you - where will you go?”). Such activities push the participants out of their everyday mindset and into a more instinctual place that prioritises the subconscious. Participants share their individual journeys with the group at the end of the activity and their ideas can be written down and used as ideas for future scenes.
- ⑥ Push women to think outside of their typical gender roles. Encourage women to try playing male characters or to occupy traditional male roles (doctor, politician, jailer...). As well as exploring traditionally “female” spaces (home, launderette), try setting plays in neutral or traditionally masculine spaces (a distant planet, a sports club). This can make for an exciting play and a more empowering experience for the women.
- ⑥ Also, encourage participants to move as non-human creatures or objects in their story. Five people moving as fire or as an aeroplane can be a powerful collective experience.



Tip #5: Promote collaboration, teamwork, dialogue and debate

- ⑤ Value and respect every participant's contribution equally. Participation in devising workshops should not be optional: ask every participant to have a speaking role and a defined character in all improvised scenes or activities.
- ⑤ Support women to overcome a fear of self-expression and public performance, first in the safe and private context of the workshop room, and eventually in the public performance space.
- ⑤ Provide opportunities for women to develop social, collaborative and team-building skills, and encourage women from diverse backgrounds and nationalities to engage with each other in order to enhance social cohesion. This can be achieved through collaborative games and activities, and by placing women into smaller working groups with new people, rather than always allowing them to choose to work with their friends.
- ⑤ Always ensure that facilitators in any theatre workshop are working in pairs - for safeguarding and conflict handling. Making theatre is an intense, emotional process and conflict can occur within workshop sessions (e.g. between participants or between facilitator and participant). Facilitators should use nonviolent communication and mediation, and one facilitator should be prepared to leave the workshop space with a participant if required.
- ⑤ Foster a culture of open dialogue and debate before, during and after performances, encouraging participants to express themselves, challenge stereotypes and control the overall message and direction of the performance.
- ⑤ Where possible, schedule a dialogue session between actors and audience directly after the show. This will further build the participants' confidence and can provide a vital forum for honest discussion with the local community about issues affecting them. Ensure that the dialogue is moderated by a trained facilitator able to interpret challenging questions and transform conflict into opportunities for discourse and learning.
- ⑤ Actively engage with any comments and feedback from participants, demonstrating that their voices are heard and valued.

"Engaging with the audience after performances fills me with energy and confidence. It's incredible when they greet me warmly, applaud my performance, and even imitate my movements and words. This interaction reveals my creative and social side and fosters stronger community connections. It also dispels misunderstandings and sparks curiosity about women's issues in Lebanon."

Wafaa, participant

Tip #6: Localise: Mobilise local partners and sustain engagement with participants

- ⑤ Build deep and sustainable relationships with like-minded practitioners and local organisations working towards similar goals.
- ⑤ Establish relationships with local authorities and leaders to ensure smooth implementation of initiatives.

- ② Design sustainable programmes that have a life beyond the initial play. For example, Seenaryo often trains participants to become the theatre leaders themselves, and then seed funds initiatives led by them or hires them as facilitators on other local theatre projects.
- ② Where possible, hire facilitators from within or close to the community - ideally, graduates of Seenaryo's training programmes who are former participants. This can make it easier to build trust and avoid hierarchies between facilitators and participants.
- ② Stay focused on your expertise and explore how other local partners can add to it instead of duplicating efforts or stepping over other people's roles. Being specialised helps you do the work at a very high level and develop extensive resources from which others can benefit.

Tip #7: Safeguarding

- ② Provide safeguarding and behaviour management training for facilitators to equip them with the skills to identify and address sensitive issues.
- ② Collaborate with local organisations and community partners to understand participants' contextual cultural, social and gender-specific needs and ensure appropriate and safe workshop content.
- ② Refer women participants to local partners specialising in mental health and psychosocial support with their approval, if necessary.
- ② Be aware of possible trauma points for women, in the stories they tell and scenes they perform. Be prepared to give them time and space to work through these points and to stop the scene if required.
- ② Make women aware of who the whistleblowing contact is in case of safeguarding concerns, and take their signed consent before taking photos. If women prefer not to be photographed, be sure to avoid photographing them or blur them out of photos if necessary.



Games and Activities

Interactive games are vital in Seenaryo's theatre sessions and training, acting as catalysts to spark creativity, foster collaboration and build rapport among participants. Carefully selected to break the ice and engage participants, these games create a lively, inclusive atmosphere that encourages expression.

Each game from Seenaryo's Cookbook serves a specific purpose: from promoting physical movement, to enhancing teamwork and stimulating creativity. Below are some games that are featured in the Seenaryo Cookbook. You can email info@seenaryo.org to request a copy.

Splat

This game starts with simple body movements that progressively evolve and intertwine with one another. Splat is an excellent icebreaker, encouraging participants to let go of inhibitions and embrace spontaneity.

1, 2, 3

This game focuses on creating movement collectively and encourages participants to collaborate and synchronise their movements. It enhances focus, coordination and teamwork.

Mayli al Sobhiyyeh



This game challenges participants to adopt different characters and personas, unleashing their creativity and imagination. Mayli al Sobhiyyeh promotes self-expression and self-discovery, encouraging participants to embrace their individuality.

Penguin Chair

Designed to explore leadership dynamics within a group setting, this game reveals participants' leadership and control tendencies. Participants navigate leadership and follower roles, fostering a deeper understanding of teamwork, communication and collective decision-making. The game highlights the importance of active participation and collaboration towards a common goal.

Featured Activity: Keeping a Journal

Interactive games are vital in Seenaryo's theatre sessions and training, acting as catalysts to spark creativity, foster collaboration and build rapport among participants. Carefully selected to break the ice and engage participants, these games create a lively, inclusive atmosphere that encourages expression.

“Facilitators asked us to keep a journal, notebook, and pen throughout the training. I used to note down everything I felt, learned and experienced. To this day, I still have the notebook and revisit it whenever I seek inspiration. The journal writing process helped me connect with what I like and want.”

Wafaa, participant

Journal writing is a cornerstone of Seenaryo's theatre workshops, providing participants with a space for self-reflection, creativity and personal growth. Participants are encouraged to keep journals where they record their thoughts, feelings and experiences after sessions.

Facilitators play a crucial role in guiding participants through the journaling process. They provide prompts and exercises to stimulate their creativity and generate deeper reflections. These prompts encourage women to delve into their innermost thoughts and feelings, fostering a deeper connection with themselves and their aspirations.

What are your expectations?

What are your goals?

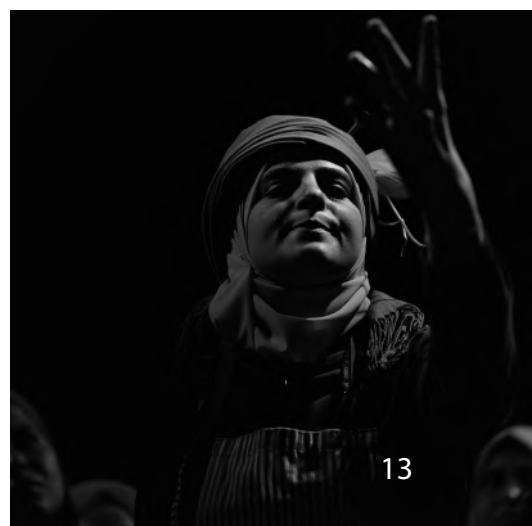
What did you learn from this journey?

How have you changed since the beginning of the workshop until the last day of the training?



“Writing anonymously helped me express myself without boundaries in ways I never thought possible. I had a bigger and safer space for reflection.”

Khawla, participant



Challenges and how to overcome them

Working with women from vulnerable communities against a backdrop of war and displacement presents a unique set of challenges, especially in regions like Lebanon grappling with multifaceted crises. In this section, we share some challenges encountered throughout Seenaryo's journey for you to keep in mind while carrying out similar work.

Navigating difficult personal circumstances

Instability is inherent in many of the participants' lives – relocation, family commitments and societal restrictions pose significant challenges. When participants inevitably drop out mid- project, Seenaryo takes an understanding and flexible approach – respecting the women's decision.

Social, religious, and cultural taboos around the body

Introducing women from conservative backgrounds to the world of theatre – where body movement and self-expression are central – can be challenging. Overcoming societal taboos surrounding performance, especially for women, requires a delicate approach that respects individual comfort levels and cultural sensitivities.

“I love dancing with my daughters. Before joining Seenaryo in 2016, I had a problem with my body; I did not like it, and I was very insecure about it. Theatre taught me how to deal with my body. Although I’m still not in love with it, I have been able to interact more with these insecurities and let go of the idea of a perfect body. When I see my body moving in recorded videos and performances, I feel so proud of myself and embrace the courage that participatory theatre instils within me.”

Fida Al Waer, former participant and current theatre facilitator

Sharing emotional experiences

A lot of women that Seenaryo works with have had trauma-triggering experiences, and Seenaryo does not want to wake things up without being able to address them. Navigating trauma- triggering experiences requires sensitivity and support. Seenaryo trains facilitators to guide participants through difficult emotions, but ensures the participants also have access to professional support when it is needed.



How To Create a Gender-Sensitive Space

Navigating these challenges comes hand-in-hand with creating a gender-sensitive space. Drawing from our experiences, we offer the following tips for creating a gender-sensitive space. Through implementing these recommendations, participatory theatre workshops can create an environment where women feel respected, valued and empowered to express themselves freely.

Establishing women-only spaces:

- Sometimes it is important to provide women-only spaces, so that the participants feel comfortable and safe, free from external influences that may inhibit their participation. This allows women to express themselves freely and build trust with fellow participants.
- Be mindful of male facilitators and ensure their presence does not hinder women's comfort or participation in the workshop. Male facilitators should be supportive and sensitive to women participants' needs and boundaries.



As a male theatre facilitator, sometimes women participants refrain from certain body movements in front of me. Since vulnerable communities often feel judged and categorised, it is crucial to create a comfortable environment where they feel safe and free from judgement. Although certain body movements remain reserved when men are present, they become more at ease in your presence with time. As facilitators, we must be patient and accepting, and the transformation becomes organic.”

Jad Hakawati, theatre facilitator

Fostering a non-judgmental atmosphere through active listening and constructive feedback:

- Structure activities for step-by-step engagement, respecting each participant's journey and pace.
- Prioritise active listening and value every idea participants contribute, whether related to performance ideas or feedback on workshop sessions.
- Where possible, host psychosocial support sessions in the form of group therapy to provide more support to the participants. Women should have the choice to attend the sessions but they will be informed that protection and psychosocial support is available to them should they need it.



During workshops, we allow a space for participants to give feedback to each other. We do not start by asking what they did not like in a certain woman's performance; we are not here to destroy each other. We always ask about things they like and things that we can improve.”

Rana El Jalkh, former Senior Arts Manager, Seenaryo



IMPACT

“As women, we give and take, respecting each other’s perspectives and seeing value in each other’s insights. We have empathy and can feel what the other person is going through. We see things from a broader perspective beyond our own opinion. We are often perceived as weak because of our tenderness and emotions; however, conflict usually needs some human feelings. By explicitly addressing issues on stage, we take the first step towards resolving them.”

Khawla, participant

Many women who have participated in Seenaryo theatre productions have trained to become theatre facilitators themselves by taking Seenaryo’s Theatre Leadership Training. As part of the project with Women Now and UN Women, the participants received a small fund to plan and implement their own advocacy initiatives - transferring their new skills to their communities and addressing social issues through theatre. Regardless of where they are now, many of them have become leaders in their own lives. From our conversations with participants, we have identified the following impact on their lives from participating in a theatre production.

Increased confidence:

Participating in theatre makes a significant impact on women’s perception of themselves and their agency over their own decisions. They become more confident, better at speaking up and handling challenges.

“I now believe in myself and I believe that my experience made me the unique person I am. This is the first time I fully see the achievements I have done throughout my life”.

participant

More active in their communities:

Through participatory theatre, women transform their role in their communities. Fueled by their determination and effort, women catalyse positive changes in families and communities, stepping up as leaders and advocates for justice and equality. Their participation in community decisions fosters inclusivity and democracy in governance. On a personal level, their relationships with family members also evolve.

“I remember standing confidently on stage and sharing my most intimate thoughts with an audience of 100, including my father. I have never seen such pride in his eyes. The smile on his face during the dialogue session with the audience was everything I needed. The same father who once resisted my participation in theatre is now applauding my performance in front of everyone.”

Khawla, participant

Increased professional opportunities:

Participatory theatre empowers women economically by equipping them with a diverse skill set for various jobs, opening doors to sustainable work opportunities and financial independence. They also become active theatre facilitators who can deliver training with Seenaryo on a freelance basis.

In December 2023, Khawla Kisaina was given a small fund to lead a Seenaryo Satellite with 11 children from her community in the Bekaa Valley. At the end of the series of workshops, the children performed their play 'Nothing Is Impossible' in front of an audience of friends and family.



Have the platform and tools to tell their stories:

Women are able to tell their stories authentically, challenging stereotypes and advocating for under-represented voices. They foster understanding and solidarity among different communities by taking control of their narratives.

“Participatory theatre springs from us—our stories and experiences. All our performances are crafted around women's experiences. We do not memorise and perform scripts; we write and own them. Everything originates from our words, feelings and experiences. We are not just performers but the creators and owners of our own play.”

Wafaa, participant

Increased sense of belonging to a community:

Upon completing Seenaryo's programmes, participants become integral members of its network, continuing their learning and growth journey. They are offered ongoing opportunities to utilise their skills and talents within their communities, ensuring a lasting impact.



We want these women to become an extension of our presence in society. We want them to use these skills and talents to find a purpose within their communities. Whenever I need a theatre facilitator, I look back to the women who participated in our projects and ask them to support us and others. We want them to continue the journey."

Lama Amine, Head of Arts, Seenaryo



A better understanding of their rights as women and mothers:

Grassroots feminism flourishes through participatory theatre, led by women who form supportive networks and advocate for gender equality and rights. Through community development efforts, they lead toward fairer societies, drawing solace, courage, strength, and inspiration from shared stories.



When women go through a series of programmes with Seenaryo and Women Now, they become incredible feminist champions. Their potential is unlimited. They are so empathetic, fun, and strong. Many women and their families, like Nahida, experienced a profound shift after her son watched her perform on stage. Her relationship with her son completely changed. He realised she had her own life and strength; she wasn't solely there to serve her children and husband. She has her own life."

Victoria Lupton, CEO & Founder, Seenaryo

"In my initiative, I want to engage with youth aged 12 to 17, a critical age for passion and career exploration. I aim to introduce them to the world of participatory theatre, demonstrating its potential for a fulfilling career while prioritising self-care. It's a chance to follow your passion, grow as a person, and earn a living at the same time. All it requires is passion."

Khawla, participant

Fida's Story

Fida is an inspiring woman who has overcome many hurdles in her life to become the successful artist, performer, theatre facilitator, and loving mother she is today. She is a combination of beautiful things at once. At Seenaryo, you will hear Fida's name spoken frequently and see her face a lot.

Born in Syria, she was forced to flee her home due to the ongoing war and arrived in Lebanon with a heavy heart. Despite the emotional turmoil, being displaced and far away from her family and loved ones, she found refuge in art and began working with civil society organisations on women's empowerment.

Fida's journey to becoming a theatre facilitator was not without its challenges. When she first joined Seenaryo, she felt intimidated by the other participants, many of whom were studying theatre, radio, TV, and directing. However, she persevered and discovered rare talents that others could not live up to. Fida found a home in participatory theatre, where she could release stress, speak up about her issues, and learn how to deal with her body.

“My first project with Seenaryo was mixed from both men and women. There were only two women in the project, me and another colleague. I could not but notice the weakness of my body compared to the men in the room, especially during movement exercises. They were experienced in the field and we were newbies. Despite this, we achieved more than the men, and today, I am in a much better place and much more accomplished. Most obstacles are not real and are just based on what we are conditioned to think.”



Fida's approach to things has always been unconventional, and right from the start, she moved closer to cross with Seenaryo's path. She has worked on women's empowerment several times, and she learned to crochet and taught many women how to do it and make a business out of it. Fida is involved in handmade things and arts and doesn't want women to learn only to crochet, cook, and do women-related stuff without profiting from it. Although she is not a professional, she had a lot of ideas and transformed them into a business when she worked with Seenaryo. Fida introduced women to the world of business and showed them how they could make a livelihood out of their talents and skills.

“I wanted trained women to be role models for others. When women saw that other women, who also came from a difficult background, were able to make a living out of her skills, they would believe that they could do it too.”

Today, Fida exemplifies Seenaryo's commitment to the communities it serves. She is actively involved in theatre and is dedicated to empowering other women, guiding them towards a stage where they can support themselves. In line with Seenaryo's aim, Fida began as a participant and is now giving back to her community as the leader of her own theatre projects.

