

**An Evaluation of “Cracked Mirrors”,  
a theater production for advocacy against child sexual  
abuse and exploitation.**

A Research Thesis  
Presented to the Research Panel of  
Justice for Children International

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Diploma Training Program in Aftercare

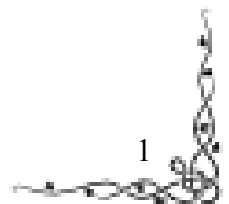
By

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*Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.*

*-Proverbs 3:27*



## **Abstract**

This study evaluated the Cracked Mirrors theater production for advocacy against child sexual abuse and exploitation. Through the literature review, the need for creative advocacy projects and the reasons to evaluate those projects are clearly presented. Also presented in the literature is the importance of changing the way society views and ignores the victims of sexual abuse.

The Cracked Mirrors performance incorporates rap and song into a series of four monologues to express the painful realities of child sexual abuse and exploitation. This evaluation study utilized a survey questionnaire to randomly poll 446 audience members from nine showings in 5 separate venues within Manila, Philippines. Respondents represented various ages and countries but were not asked for any personal information.

Through anonymous audience survey, it was found that the Cracked Mirrors performance is effective in raising awareness and breaking the silence around child sexual abuse and exploitation. The audience stated that the real life experiences of the actors added credibility to the information presented. It should be noted that the actors were a major factor in the effective delivery of the information, and the audience clearly felt that the actor's own histories of abuse combined with acting talents made the performers the strength of the play. The audience did not believe that changes should be made to the performance and confirmed that this drama is, indeed, an effective method of advocacy.

The performance reached people because of its realistic nature and emotional portrayal of the damage inflicted on children through sexual abuse. Due to the emotional nature of the play, it is recommended that counselors be made available after the performances. Further research into audience background is also recommended to determine what audiences knew about CSA/CSE pre and post show and to discover how the play affects certain groups in comparison with others. It is also recommended that the play be performed in Filipino language, especially in the provinces where English is less prevalent.

## **Chapter One: The Problem and a Review of Related Literature**

### **Rationale:**

There is an urgent need to break the taboo around child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Traditionally, prostitution, trafficking, pornography, incest, pedophilia and all other forms sexual violations to children have been met with embarrassment and shocked outrage. In many instances, child sexual abuse is ignored by society, families, friends and often by the victims themselves. Having mixed emotions of guilt, shame, confusion and pain, those concerned tend to think that it is best not to discuss the issue at all.

The very nature of the problem is that it can only exist under a cover of silence, which is only to the benefit of the offenders. This silence, which dominates many cultures, protects the offenders and their actions while shaming and marginalizing the victims. In order to counter a culture of silence, there is a need for awareness at the level of the family, the school, and society at large. Prevention, as well as healing the wounds inflicted on children by sexual abuse and exploitation, first of all requires awareness and acknowledgement of the issue.

The “Break the Silence” tour is a creative attempt to raise awareness and address the culture of silence through the use of creative expressions like theater and animations. There is a need to evaluate the Cracked Mirrors performance to measure audience illumination and education so it can be as effective as possible in reaching the goals of advocacy and “breaking the silence” of the culture. This evaluation will also determine if anything about the play should be improved in order to increase effectiveness.

Since the Cracked Mirrors production is one in a family of plays and animations, evaluation will take place to help in determining whether the time and funds that go into this performance are producing a worthy output or to see if efforts could be redirected.

In addition, this evaluation of audience response could serve as a comparison for the effectiveness of the “Daughter” and “Good Boy” animations, also created for advocacy by the Stairway Foundation, Inc.

It is important to measure whether the audience has become aware of CSE and CSA because a culture or society is made up of people who will talk and share ideas with each other. With an increase in awareness and education about child sexual abuse and exploitation, children who have been victimized can come forward more freely.

The theater piece “Cracked Mirrors” is performed by four actors, who themselves used to live and work on the streets. They are now in their twenties and able to use their experiences to try to help other victims.

Cracked Mirrors specifically targets some of the dominant types of child sexual abuse and exploitation: trafficking; prostitution; pedophilia; familial abuse; sex tourism; and abuse while in detention.

In the facilitated open forum discussion after the performance, the audience is encouraged to take that first step in moving from simply being viewers to becoming active participants in changing that culture of silence.

## **Literature Review**

This review of related literature uses books, research studies, reports, journals, websites and articles to show the need for advocacy against the different types of child sexual exploitation and the silence that surrounds it. It also proves the need for evaluation of those advocacy projects in terms of outcome and effectiveness.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation:**

The dimensions of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse have no borders. Children are exploited worldwide and many are not safe within their own homes. Within all of the literature, it is recognized that there is a high demand for the sexual services of women and children. Most sources will cite the eleven root causes for child sexual exploitation as poverty, inequality, discrimination, persecution, violence, armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS, dysfunctional families, the demand factor, criminality, and violations of the rights of the child (Yokohama Global Commitment, 2001). Denise Ritchie, of the Stop Demand Foundation, in the 2004 mid-term review of the Yokohama Commitment stated that the child sex trade mainly exists not because of poverty but because there is supply and demand (Ritchie, 2004).

According to a recent global estimate by the International Labor Organization, of the 12.3 million people who are victims of forced labor, 1.39 million are involved in forced commercial sexual exploitation and 40-50% are children (UNICEF, 2006).

In South Asia, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the form of child prostitution, trafficking in girls and boys for sexual purposes, sex tourism, and child pornography are some of the prevalent forms of child abuse. Various forms of child

sexual abuse of a non-commercial nature, also exist. Data on the magnitude and extent of these abuses is inadequate (ECPAT,2001).

The following is directly taken from a 2001 report carried out by the UN and the DSWD in the Philippines called Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth in the Philippines:

Poverty, urbanization and family disintegration were the most common factors cited for the prevalence of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth. The majority of the victims came from large, poor and single-parent homes (UP- CIDS, 1998). Similar findings were also gleaned from a study on domestic violence. Factors associated with violence in the home include marital problems, ineffective parenting skills, social vices, poverty and the absence of parents. In cases of incest in particular, an absentee-wife was a frequent reason cited for making it easier for fathers to molest their children (Guerrero and Sobritchea, 1996). The impact of family and home milieu are further emphasized in the PARTCO study. Most prostituted children entered the sex trade to escape extreme poverty. In many instances, parents sold them to agents who ostensibly recruited the children as domestic helpers but frequently used them as sex slaves instead (Dionela and Di Giovanni, 1996; PARTCO, 1997).

Most human rights advocates believe rape is increasing in Cambodia, and that victims are getting younger. Reasons for this belief include the growth in and easy access to violent and explicit pornography, the availability of drugs to intoxicate a victim, and belief among many Asian men that sex with a young virgin has health benefits (O'Connell, 2001).

### **Street Children:**

In the Philippines, a government report in 1998 put the figure at 1.2 million street children—about 70,000 of them in Metro Manila alone. Another report estimates that there are approximately 1.5 million children on the streets working as beggars, pickpockets, drug abusers and child prostitutes (ECPAT website). Today, the number of children and youth living part of their lives on the streets in the Philippines could reach two million out of a total population of 84 million (Cullen, 2005).

Street children are at extremely high risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. They are physically and emotionally vulnerable and are often already “broken” from abuse and poverty even before they reach the streets. Their self-esteem tends to be very low and their main focus is daily survival (ECPAT, 2003).

Poverty and abuse are key issues in creating street children. Some children are sent out to work by their families. Others have run away to the streets to escape from abuse at home. Street children may or may not have a shelter, a family, or adult supervision. Many are working in dangerous or exploitative situations and may be in conflict with the law (West, 2003).

Street children are always hungry. They leave home hungry and beg on the street where they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, disease, malnutrition, illiteracy, abuse and trafficking for sexual exploitation. Most male street children in the Philippines are in conflict with the law at some time and as many as 20,000 see the inside of a prison cell, where they are mixed with pedophiles, drug addicts, murderers and rapists. The street children are exposed to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the prisons (Ragragio,2005).



Since the circumstances and problems of most street children tend to overlap into many categories, it is difficult to define street children or to generate any accurate numbers concerning them (West, 2003). Street children tend to be overlooked and forgotten by mainstream society or thought of as criminals, if thought of at all.

### **Changing the views of Society:**

UNICEF (2006) reports that attitudes, customs and practices often enable, normalize and condone the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Communities are often reluctant to intervene in cases of sexual exploitation due to lack of knowledge, lack of understanding about the harm to children, fear and intimidation, or for economic reasons.

In addition to the immense physical and psychological effects of sexual abuse, many victims are also stigmatized and marginalized within their families and communities. LICHADO (O'Connell, 2001) reports that in Cambodia, survivors of rape often face discriminatory attitudes from a society that considers them to be "fallen women". Social scorn and family shame resulting from a loss of virginity when raped are powerful factors that result in some victims feeling that the only profession they are now fit for is prostitution. Some parents even encourage their daughters into prostitution if they are no longer virgins. In other cases the victim is forced to marry the man who raped her. LICHADO also states that the myths about rape and indecent assault must be addressed and abolished through education and dissemination of information throughout Cambodia.

The Philippines is notorious for sex tourism and most of the information available on CSEC in the country concerns sex tourism and trafficking. The Philippines is an international sex tourist destination with 300,000 Japanese sex tourists alone visiting the country each year. Some well-known sex tourism destinations are Pagsanjan, Laguna, Boracay, Aklan and the cities of Baguio, Olongapo, Angeles, Metro Manila, Bacolod, Cebu, Davao and Zamboanga. There is also evidence that child pornography magazines sold abroad promote the Philippines as an easy destination for those looking for sex with children. Magazines have carried pictures of naked Filipino children in sexually explicit and suggestive poses (ECPAT website).

**The need for advocacy:**

Public understanding is an important support to implementation of laws, since it leads to better reporting of crime, more pressure on authorities to follow through with police action (important in instances where local-level authorities might be corruptible and ready to intervene to interrupt legal process), and better awareness of the need to protect children. (IPEC, 2001)

**Advocacy through drama:**

Muhammad and Zafar (2006) state that in 2006, the government of Pakistan approved The National Policy and Plan of Action to combat CSE/CSA. Prevention and advocacy composed one third of the plan's structure. Some of the stated objectives include:

- Develop multi-media presentations to raise awareness in the general public

- Develop culturally appropriate information, education and communication materials on child sex abuse and the commercial sexual exploitation of children
- Use traditional and performing arts, including drama and street theater, to raise general awareness of the issues.

IPEC (2001) conducted an evaluation of programs currently being carried out in Asia and Latin America to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation. Recommendations included ...communication projects that look beyond traditional formats and use innovative, entertaining and participatory techniques known to have an impact on specific groups. For young people, non-printed formats are crucial to education efforts.

Drama, in general, is an effective advocacy method because it can bring a theoretical issue to life, making it emotionally powerful, more interesting, easy to understand and relevant to people's lives. Drama can address sensitive issues that are difficult to talk about. It can also be used as evidence to support an issue. There are many advantages in using drama for advocacy. There is no need for literacy and it is good at involving people at a community level. It captures emotions, personal experiences and other people's points of view, which are difficult to convey using other advocacy methods, and it creates an environment where controversial issues can be discussed. The impact of drama can be increased by adding activities that involve the audience. For example, discussions held after the performance can be used to further explore and clarify an issue (International...2002)

Specifically, the persuasive monologue has an aim – to alter the beliefs of an audience (most usually to convince, but also to shed doubt, confound, impress, etc), and to this end makes careful use of assumed hearer beliefs (Reed & Long, 1997). It can

address stereotypes and misconceptions by creating a feeling of empathy and understanding between the character and the audience on a personal level. A monologue can create the opportunity for the audience to gain deep insight into the people and situations that they might normally not come in contact with, or avoid, and can lead to a change of societal norms.

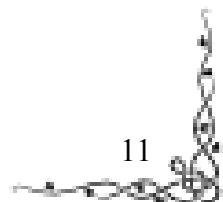
### **Evaluating Advocacy:**

Tearfund (Gordon, 2002; Blackman 2003) explains that an evaluation assesses the impact of a project, finds out whether objectives are realistic and worth aiming for, gives credit for success to various factors or people and helps with accountability. Evaluation seeks to find how well objectives are being met, determining what contributed to success or failure, and what needs to be changed or done differently next time. They list the reasons for monitoring and evaluation of Advocacy projects as follows:

- Checking whether advocacy work is on track and determining whether any changes need to be made to the strategy
- Checking whether objectives have been achieved
- Learning for future advocacy initiatives
- Accountability to donors for use of funds.

### **Similar Issue-Focused Drama Projects:**

There is ample evidence that theater can have a hand in changing the way society views an issue or a marginalized group of people.



One example is taken from the early 1950's. Americans were terrified that Communists within the United States were planning to destroy the country. U.S. senator McCarthy began a campaign to identify and punish anyone suspected of Communist activities. He falsely accused hundreds of Americans and ruined many livelihoods before he was revealed as a fraud in 1954. Playwright Arthur Miller created "The Crucible" to depict the story of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials and audiences were able to recognize the connection to the hysterical "witch hunt" that was going on around them (Fitzgerald, 2007).

More recently, NGO's and other institutions promoting advocacy have also been utilizing drama as an effective means to educate and raise awareness about a variety of social issues.

In the UK, a performance called *Wings To Fly* is being used as an emotional trigger to allow young people to see the truth about falling into drug abuse. Wynne states that it is the factual nature of the project that makes it so powerful, young people see a group of young people not dissimilar to people they know. Through the characters they are transported into a world which could be their own (Wynne, 2006).

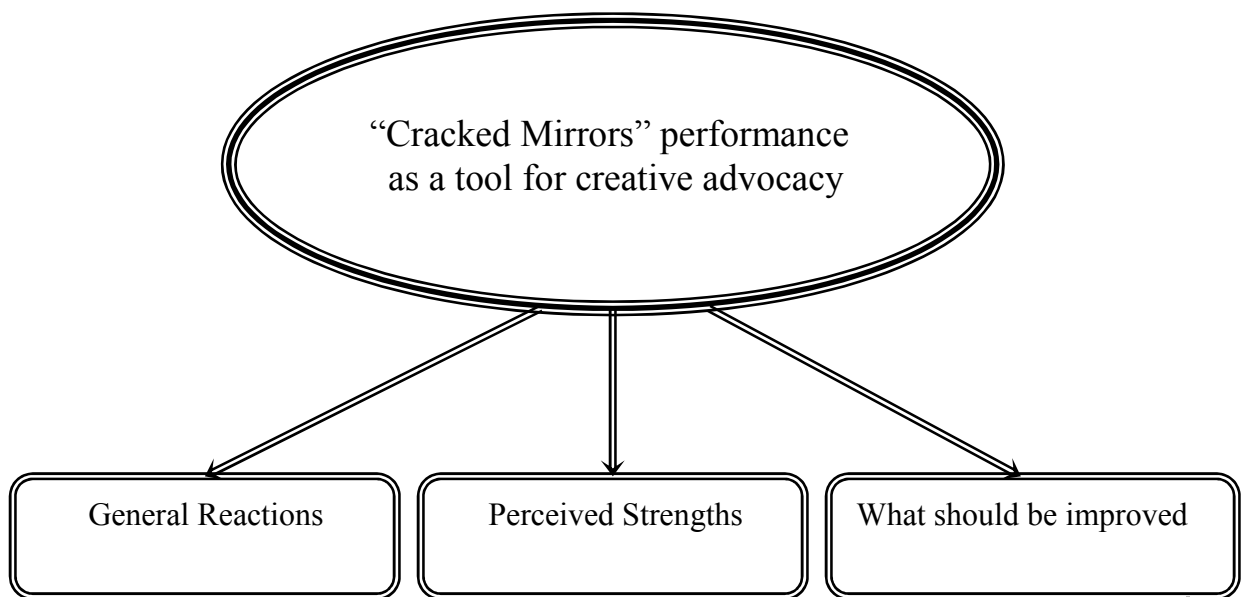
Eve Ensler is using *The Vagina Monologues* to evoke social change and end violence towards women. The monologues have are a powerful tool to advocate for women's rights and to open up dialogue about rape and other issues that have been considered taboo. Since it's premiere in 1998 it has been translated into 24 languages and is being performed for audiences all over the world.

## Summary of Literature Review:

The literature provides a clear overview of the situation of child sexual abuse and exploitation. It describes the need for creative advocacy such as drama, and explains why it is important to evaluate those advocacy projects.

## Conceptual Framework:

In order to evaluate the Cracked Mirrors performance, random audience members were surveyed immediately following the performance. First, audience members were asked about their general reaction in order to determine what kinds of impact the play may have had on viewers and to determine if awareness is being raised. Second, they were asked what they perceived to be the strengths of the play. If the play is effective in raising awareness, the answers to this question show why it is effective. Finally, the question of what should be improved substantiates why the play might not be effective or what could make the play more effective.



## **Statement of the Problem:**

This study is an evaluation of the “Cracked Mirrors” advocacy theater piece, created and performed by Stairway Foundation, Inc., and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Has creative advocacy in the form of the Cracked Mirrors theater production been effective in raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse within it’s targeted audience?
2. What was the audience’s general response to the play after the viewing?
3. What does the audience perceive to be the play’s strengths?
4. What does the audience say could be improved in the play?

## **Definition of Terms:**

**SFI**- Stairway Foundation Incorporated.

**Child** – Any person under the physical or mental age of 18.

**CSE**- Child Sexual Exploitation. Involves a child, used for the monetary or sexual purposes of one holding more power than the child. Including but not limited to pornography, trafficking for sexual purposes, prostitution, sex-tourism.

**CSA** – Child Sexual Abuse. Including but not limited to CSE, incest and rape.

## **Scope and Limitations:**

This study is an evaluation of the Cracked Mirrors theater piece for advocacy created and performed by the Stairway Foundation, Inc. It seeks to measure the effects of this specific production by utilizing audience response through written survey. It

addresses the audience response in terms of initial reaction to the play, strengths of the play and what could be improved in the play. It examines whether SFI is able to create or raise awareness and education of the issue of child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse through the Cracked Mirrors performances. It utilized approximately 19.7% of the total audience from nine performances to gain this information.

It does not examine the other methods currently being employed by SFI for advocacy purposes and does not make comparisons against any of these other methods. It does not obtain what the audience may have known regarding the issue before viewing of the performance. It does not record questions or topics that were raised during the open forums immediately following each performance, but the open forum will be included as a part of the play itself. It also does not require information from the audience responders as to their history, background, age, culture or gender.



## **Chapter Two: Method**

### **Design:**

This is an evaluation study using the survey method. It examined the responses of 446 students, faculty, NGO workers, and delegates from the First South East Asian Children's Conference through a written questionnaire administered at random after the theater performance. Out of nine performances with a total audience of 2,265, ten percent is valid for the sample size. Extra surveys were distributed to be sure to fill the minimum requirement, bringing the total of audience responders to 19.7%.

### **Setting of the Study:**

Stairway Foundation, Inc. is based on the island of Mindoro, Philippines, but does not limit advocacy work to that area alone.

Increasing numbers of children are falling victim to CSEC in the Philippines. The Philippine National Plan of Action estimates that there are between 60,000 and 75,000 children involved in CSEC in the country. NGOs have estimated that the number is closer to 100,000. A particular concern in the nation is sex tourism, however, CSEC perpetrators are both locals and foreigners (ECPAT website).

The Philippines is notorious for sex tourism and most of the information available on CSEC in the country concerns sex tourism and trafficking. The Philippines is an international sex tourist destination with 300,000 Japanese sex tourists alone visiting the county each year. The most well-known sex tourism destinations are Pagsanjan, Laguna,

Boracay, Aklan and the cities of Baguio, Olongapo, Angeles, Metro Manila, Bacolod, Cebu, Davao and Zamboanga. There is also evidence that child pornography magazines sold abroad promote the Philippines as an easy destination for those looking for sex with children. Magazines have carried pictures of naked Filipino children in sexually explicit and suggestive poses (ECPAT website).

Manila is the capital of the Philippines and the area's prime metropolis, reported in 2000 to house over 9.4 million people. Slums located next to mansions in affluent residential areas are not uncommon (Ragragio, 2005).

The Cracked Mirrors performance was evaluated on its tour through Manila from November 20, 2006 – December 12, 2006. Venues for the performance were as follows: Fine Arts Theater at the International School of Manila; The Little Theater at the International School of Manila; The Culture and Arts Theater at De La Salle College of Saint Benilde; The Auditorium at De La Salle College of Saint Benilde; Meralco Management & Learning Center in Antipolo City (where the First South East Asian Conference was held).

**Cracked Mirrors Performances**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Crowd Estimate</b>
November 20	Fine Arts Theater, International School Manila	230
November 21	Fine Arts Theater, International School Manila	60
November 24	Culture and Arts Theater, De La Salle College of Saint Benilde	700
November 25	Auditorium, De La Salle College of Saint Benilde	200

December 5	Little Theater, International School Manila	25
December 6	Little Theater, International School Manila	250
December 7	Little Theater, International School Manila	380
December 9	Little Theater, International School Manila	340
December 12	Meralco Management & Learning Center, Antipolo City (First South East Asian Conference)	80

**Total Number of Estimated Audience** **2265**

### **Subjects of the Study:**

Out of a total audience size of 2,265, 19.7% were chosen at random to complete the survey. Four hundred and forty six people of different nationalities, ages, gender and religions completed the questionnaires.

Audiences included:

*-Students and faculty from:* International School Manila, University of the Philippines Diliman, University of Asia and the Pacific, Trinity College and Philippine Women's University.

*-Children and staff from different NGO's* such as Childhope Asia Philippines, Open Heart Foundation, Virlanie Foundation, Tulay ng Kabataan Foundation and Payatas Dumpsite.

*-First South East Asian Children's Conference*

The invited audiences were from a variety of organizations and schools, forming an ethnically and economically diverse population. The International School of Manila is

a westernized high school attended by teenagers from countries all over the world. The NGO's in attendance cater to street children from the Philippines. The First South East Asian Children's Conference held delegates from member countries such as Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. There were four child delegates aged 14 – 17 from each of the participating countries of the South East Asian region. The selected children are leaders and members of children's associations in communities, schools and other organized groups.

### **Instruments:**

The instrument selected for this evaluation was a survey questionnaire with three general questions. The questions were worded in English and in Tagalog (see appendix). Surveys did not request a name or any personal information or history from the respondent.

### **Data Gathering Procedure:**

The Cracked Mirrors audiences were surveyed anonymously from nine separate performances in five different venues. Each performance was held on a different day but included the same format and cast. Immediately following the Cracked Mirrors performance, an open forum discussion is held. The surveys were distributed by Stairway Foundation staff members at random either during the open forum or immediately afterwards. The valid sample size is 10%, but extra surveys were distributed at each of the nine performances so as not to fall short of the minimum percentage

requirement. At the request of the facilitator, the audience members who had received the surveys would complete them either during the open forum or immediately after. The completed surveys were then collected by the SFI staff members.

### **Data Analysis:**

The questionnaires were completed by the audience members and collected by the Stairway Staff. Some of the responses were written in English by the respondents and some was translated from Tagalog into English. Information was translated and typed into a table format (see appendix) by Rhea Buela, Program Officer of the Stairway Foundation Inc. Ms. Buela is a native of the Philippines, fluent in Tagalog and English and holds a Master's degree in Management Technology from De La Salle Graduate School in Manila.

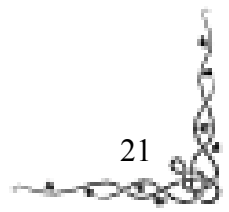
Numbers were assigned to each survey in the order in which they were entered simply for organizational purposes. The table displays from left to right as: survey number; response to question 1; response to question 2, response to question 3.

It was found that the data from each question could be grouped into general categories and could then be further grouped into sub-categories and tallied for frequencies and trends.

Many responses contained more than one answer to each question. Those responses were counted as separate and placed into the category in which they fit best. For example, if one response stated that the strength of the play was the acting and the lessons that were learned, acting was placed into "Performance" subcategory

“Actors/Acting”, and the lessons learned would fall under “Education” subcategory “Lessons”.

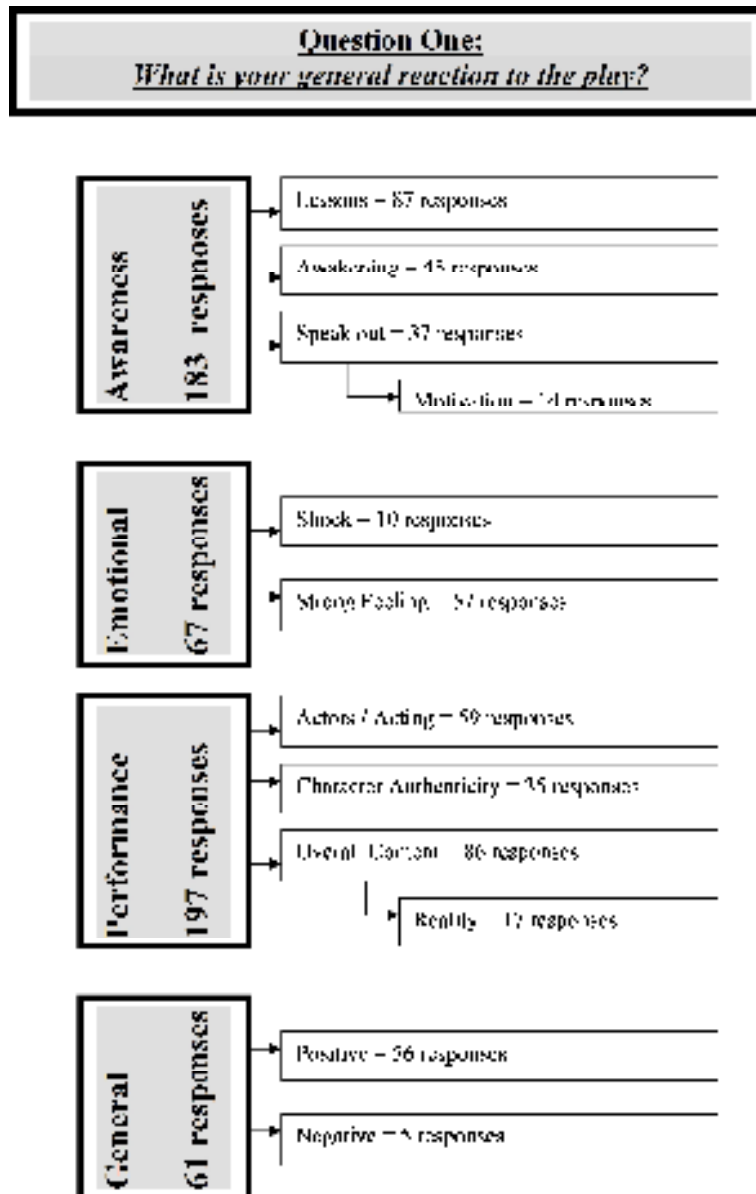
Some of the responses were unclear or slightly vague. Those were evaluated upon what seemed to be the main theme of the response.



## Chapter Three: Results and Discussion

### What is your general reaction to the play?

In response to the question, “What is your general reaction to the play?” four main categories emerged. Those categories are Increased Awareness, Emotional, Performance, and General responses. From those main categories common or similar answers were grouped to form subcategories. Chart One represents the categories and their subdivisions, including the frequencies of each type of response. There are 508 total responses that have been categorized for this question.



### **Increased Awareness:**

The category of Increased Awareness contains 183 responses. Some common themes from respondents included thankfulness that this had not happened to them personally, a desire for others to see the play so they could become more open minded, and enjoyment of the play.

This grouping consists of audience member's remarks on gaining practical knowledge such as the reasons children are abused, different types of abuse, and emotional lessons about the children who are abused. The category is exclusive of the Emotion category because the emotions of the character are being understood by the audience member, rather than felt by the audience member.

The information received was reported by the audience respondents to help them understand the victims, effects, frequency, locations and severity of the problem. Some respondents in this category stated that the information they received from the performance would be helpful in their future jobs as criminologists, law enforcement or social workers and that they felt they had gained greater understanding of a sexually abused child.

The category of Awareness has been subcategorized into Lessons, Awakening, and Speak out. Speak out was found to contain responses which were indicative of an individual's motivation toward action so those responses were further categorized under Motivation.

**Lessons:** While lessons may have been learned by the entire audience, it is the main theme of the 87 responses in this category. The category of Lessons contains



the greatest number of responses in a subcategory for this first question. Some of the responses in this category state specific insights that were gained such as realization of how children suffer, how to prevent sexual abuse and how to help children after they have been abused. Some of the reported lessons learned are about abuse in general. The responses also state that the play will be educational for anyone who sees it. Respondents say that they are grateful to have this information about child sexual abuse.

Respondent #385 – *“Its good because it gave information regarding the different forms of abuses.”*

Respondand #347 – *“The play is beautiful. I learned a lot of good lessons from the play.”*

Respondant #199 – *“The play is beautiful. I learned a lot. I also learned how to handle an abused child.”*

Respondant # 147 – *“The play was able to show what the victims have been through. I understood what the victims more.”*

Respondant # 301 – *“ We got a lot of lessons.”*

Much of the Education/Lessons category is comprised of responses of people who said they had learned lessons and that the play had taught them many things about CSE. It must be inferred that some of these lessons were practical and some were emotional, while some were both. The impact of the monologues created a heightened connection between the audience and the characters, thus enabling the audience to more effectively imagine themselves in the shoes of the character. This is proven by statements such as, “...I’m lucky that I didn’t experience those things”. Therefore, the lessons so frequently