



RADIO DRAMA

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By producing a **radio drama**, you switch from journalism to fiction: from telling stories as they happened, to rewriting stories or even creating your own. You can tell stories about everyday life, show other sides of history, give space for alternative voices, and confront stereotypes. You can address relevant social issues through the genres of fiction and fantasy. For activists or people working for NGOs, radio drama can also be a tool to raise awareness about certain topics. They can adapt short stories by female screen players or reinterpret famous novels with feminist and gender-sensitive elements. Another way to create stories for change is to use the experiences of real women, making them anonymous and creating fictional characters to portray their stories and integrate their perspectives. **What can we achieve?** With radio drama, you can provoke discussions, generate empathy, promote good principles, mobilize support, and offer hope.

Exercise #1– What elements of radio drama do you recognize?

Listen to a short radio drama. Then, ask members of your group what they noticed.

What do you need? Elements of radio drama

Each radio play consists of a few basic elements: a story-line, characters, and different scenes; as well as an acoustic dimension with noises and music.

1. Get an idea/develop and collect information

Think of a certain genre (mystery story, family drama), a person or character, or a certain topic (migration, peace building, conflict resolution, women's rights, sexual violence, etc.) You can also get ideas from magazines, newspapers, books, movies, and much more.

After collecting information about the topic, try to answer some questions: Which characters can you imagine? What makes your topic vivid? What fascinates you? Which conflicts/oppositions can you develop? What do you need in order to depict the conflict?

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2. Characters

Each member of the group should play a character.

Only develop characters which a member of the group wants to play. If it is hard to write dialogues, you can make more than one character with a certain role, e.g. two doctors or two pupils, so they can talk to each other.

Try to make the roles as specific and detailed as possible. Give your characters names and a background story. Think about their outfits and how they speak. Try to find some props for your characters. Even if the listeners cannot see them, working with props will make a difference.

Tip: To avoid limiting women's roles to stereotypes, try to answer three simple questions from the Bechdel-Test: 1. Are there two or more women in your play, who have names? 2. Do they talk to each other? 3. Do they talk about something other than a man? (Find out more on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLF6sAAMb4s>)

3. A central story-line

A classic story-line is the Hero's journey from Greek mythology. A simple version of this approach is to introduce the **conflict** (scene 1), to explain and play out the conflict, allowing it to reach its **climax** (scenes 2, 3, ...) and then to let the characters find a **solution** to the conflict at the end of the radio drama (last scene).

Tip: To avoid writing overly-simplistic answers or endings, here is a tip from Seidy Salas Viquez, a radio trainer from Costa Rica:

*"In the workshops, we have the time to review the stories. It is collective work, we do it together. Everyone is allowed to voice criticism. At the media workshop in Vienna, for example, there was a group that produced a story about maquila workers in the Dominican Republic. In the story, there was a magical bracelet and in the end, it seemed like that bracelet was the solution to the problem. So I asked the participants: "Imagine a maquila worker who has the same problems as your protagonist listening to this radio drama. But she does not have a magical bracelet. What will she think? How would she solve the problem?" The participants realised what the problem was and changed the ending of the story, so that the solution of the problem was no longer the bracelet but the maquila workers organising themselves." (Frauen*solidarität 2014: 43)*

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4. Scenes, character dialogues, and a narrator

To **develop scenes** and situations it is helpful to answer a few questions. What is happening? What do the characters experience with regard to the conflict? How do they deal with it? Where are they? Who is also there? What happens next? What can you hear in the scene? Fill in the scene play and put it somewhere everyone in the group can see it.

Scene No.	Who is talking?	What?	Where?	What sounds do you need? (music, noises, ...)

Most of the story is told through the characters' **dialogues**. To make them sound authentic, avoid writing down complete sentences. Agree on the essential content and then let the participants improvise.

A **narrator** can provide additional information (e.g. leap in time, change of location). Record the narrator at the end of each dialogue so that you know what she or he needs to add.

5. Sound effects and music

>>> **Create your own:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6g5AzVDNRQ>,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg_daxoXMaQ,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Jznye0iqYE

>>> **Find them online:** <http://www.soundarchive.online/>, <https://www.freesound.org/>,
<http://soundbible.com/>

>>> **Music** can be a good element to structure your radio drama or to create emotion. However try to use it in moderation. If you want to publish your radio drama, be aware of the music and sound

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Exercise #2: Produce your own radio drama

STEP 1: FIND A TOPIC OR STORY-LINE

Try to summarize it in two sentences. Write it down and put it somewhere everyone in the group can see it.

STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN

Fill in your ideas for in the script. Practice the dialogues, the sounds, etc. before you begin to record a scene.

STEPS 3 & 4: RECORD IT AND MIX IT

Option 1 = Live-Recording: You can try to record it live – similar to a theatre performance. You can record scene-by-scene and repeat it if someone makes a mistake. You need to think about everything before recording (the volume of the music, the sound effects, etc.). A live recording allows you to produce very quickly. But, keep in mind: you will not be able to change the various elements afterwards.

Option 2 = You can also record the dialogues, the sound effects, and the narrator separately. Afterwards you can mix it and add additional effects. It is very helpful if you create separate tracks for dialogues, for music, and for narration in your editing programme (e.g. <https://www.audacityteam.org/>).

STEP 5: PRESENT IT 😊

Present your radio drama to the other participants in your group. Ask them to listen carefully, and request feedback. Start a conversation: What did they hear? What did you want them to take away from the story? What did they/you like and why? What didn't they/you like and why?

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Sources:

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Find out more about the project: <http://frauensolidaritaet.org/erasmusplus>

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