

## PREFACE

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

When I was in fourth grade, an environmentally concerned teacher taught my class this song, “*Pollution, pollution, you can use the newest toothpaste, then rinse your mouth with industrial waste!*” It was funny and catchy and 43 years later, I still remember the words, the tune, and the lesson (a miracle, given that every other lesson has long since faded from memory.) As an adult, this strategy of using theatre to engage has been evident in all my work. Recently, I found myself simultaneously working on projects that either used performance as a tool to educate and engage, or for women to empower their voices, or to effectively communicate about climate change. Eventually, these disparate interests and projects naturally wove together into one project that engages youth in speaking and acting for a resilient future. This project is *Shine*.

This book shares the story of *Shine*; it was written primarily for educators of youth who seek active methods for engagement in issues related to energy, climate, and resilience. Within these pages are ideas for youth engagement, ranging from hour-long modules, to a multi-week mounting of a production. Readers of this book will be able to access the script, music, and choreography for *Shine* via its accompanying website <http://www.insidethegreenhouse.org/shine> in order to mount a production with local youth in their school or community. Additional materials include: warm up exercises; materials for creating curricula; interviews with collaborators to share multiple perspectives;

and a detailed description of how the performance was mounted at each location on its international tour—complete with lessons learned, recommendations, and feedback from participants and audience members. There are multiple levels of possible engagement with *Shine*. If time and resources are limited, educators and community organizers may want to show their students the video of the full performance of *Shine* (<http://www.insidethegreenhouse.org/shine/>), and merely engage youth in conversation about issues introduced in the show—utilizing the discussion questions provided in the Chap. 2. If more time is available, Act One of the full performance can be shown, and teachers can use the Act Two module to guide students in creating skits for their own Act Two, finding solutions to climate, energy, and resilience challenges that they identify from their own community. Alternately, any modules described in Chap. 2 can be used and contextualized by showing or assigning the video of the full production. Various parts of the performance can be used independently to address specific areas of study or concern. For example, an educator may want to engage students in staging the *Harvest* module to actively explore differences between urban and rural lifestyles and values in regard to energy. The performance materials, the lessons learned, and the recommendations within this book contribute towards a greater understanding of the use of performance as a tool for activating youth in authoring, rehearsing, and sharing a vision for the future they want. As seen in the description of Malope Primary School in South Africa in Chap. 3, the resilience focus of your community may be different from the focus of *Shine*. In that case, you may want to use *Shine* as an example for how performance can be a useful tool for exploring resilience issues vital to your community and create a new performance piece entirely.

Material in this book and its accompanying website can easily be used towards a standards-based curriculum. This project provides materials for the easy creation of a curriculum module that can be utilized in the USA to reach Common Core standards by teachers of English language arts/literacy (ELA) or for Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) or state science standards. Similar academic standards in other countries could likewise be met by creating modules from this material. The learning goals for youth participants of *Shine* include:

### Subject Area Learning Goals:

- understanding the relationship between energy and climate (Science)
- placing the earth's production of fossil fuels and the impact of human-use of fossil fuels into scale within the last 300,000,000 years of geological history (Geology)
- understanding how our energy-use is impacting climate (Science)
- placing all this within the context of human history and society (Sociology, History, Civics)
- understanding effective climate communication by critically engaging with the script for Act One, and by inviting youth to author Act Two, dramatizing local solutions towards a positive climate future (English, Media, Science, Civics)

### Participatory Performance Learning Goals:

- embodied learning
- nuanced understanding of themes through physical participation in dramatic metaphors
- youth empowerment
- civic engagement
- collaboration with others to effectively communicate youth-authored solutions to an audience
- students as authors of knowledge and partners in public display

The over-arching goal of this project is to create a performance experience for youth that guides them through an embodied exploration of the climate legacy they have inherited. *Shine* further works to inspire and equip youth to create local solutions for inclusion in their city's plan for resilience. One of the objectives for achieving this goal is to have youth immersed in artistic excellence and the pre-eminent science on climate and energy, through the process of rehearsing Act One, authoring Act Two, and performing the show before a larger audience. Having this project professionally created, field-tested, and published as a book is intended to lend validation to the use of performance as a tool for youth engagement in city planning.

Educators and community organizers may wish to use the example of *Shine* to inform and inspire the creation of their own performance

experience for community engagement. Researchers will find a useful case study of participatory culture for activating citizens in imagining and realizing a more sustainable future. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this project, this book will be of interest to undergraduate and graduate students of many disciplines, including: Theatre, Performance Studies, Environmental Studies, Environmental Design, Communication, and Geography. Educators from K-12 can approach the use of this book as a module they can use in constructing their educational plan. Given the expansive scope of the performance, it can advance students in the study of: climate, energy, civics, human development, history, composition, music, and theatre. City planners and organizations working to support inclusive city planning can also gain a valuable model through this participatory tool for community engagement.

### HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

Chapter 1 introduces *Shine*, providing the background for how and why it was created, its theoretical foundation, and a synopsis of the story it dramatizes. Chapter 2 includes the script, as well as interviews with the composer, the choreographer, and one of the primary partnering scientists. Materials for creating curriculum for facilitating youth in mounting this performance is provided for possible adaption for K-12 schools, youth organizations, faith organizations, or youth camps. There are also instructions for various performance exercises and games to do with youth participants to prepare them for being expressive. Chapter 3 shares the outcomes from the international tour of *Shine*. Detailed descriptions of each mounting within every hosting community reveal the many ways the performance can engage students. Chapter 4 culminates in a concluding summary of lessons learned and recommendations from the tour, including useful approaches, strategies, and best practices. Theories are articulated on the use of performance for youth-sparked community engagement for climate, energy, and resilience planning. Recommendations for the further use of performance for resilience planning are also provided.

## PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS

My fourth-grade schooling in the potency of performance and engagement has been affirmed in my personal and professional work ever since. I've witnessed how speaking out and physically acting embodies our ideas and makes it more possible and probable to enact change in our lives. *Shine* is the culmination of everything I've learned. I'm committed to an embodied approach, so as to draw from the ingenuity of the body and all it knows and can do. I'm committed to an art-based approach, so as to draw on the power of the dramatic metaphor to tease out a more nuanced understanding of both problems and solutions. I'm committed to collaborating with wonderful scientists (those with a sense of wonder) who value engaging the power of youth to put their good work into service for the planning of a bright tomorrow. And lastly, I'm committed to an approach that is fun, because those things that bring us joy are ultimately most sustainable. We will continually come back to something again and again if it makes us happy.

Boulder, USA

Beth Osnes

Performance for Resilience

Engaging Youth on Energy and Climate through Music,  
Movement, and Theatre

Osnes, B.

2017, XVIII, 158 p. 20 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-67288-5