

BOOKLET FOR CITIZEN EXPRESSION

From the European Training Course: **ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION**



From the 28th
September
to 9th October 2015

BEDEILLE - France



Statement of intent

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

The main goal of this training course was to allow participants to discover different ways of acting and being involved as European citizens. We wanted to raise awareness that the informal education is one of the keys to improve our involvement in the society. They were initiated to participative and playful methods. In creating debates and discussion spaces, we increased the collective decision making. Another aim was to promote the European citizenship. This training course was a place where the participants were able to express themselves, their opinion, be listened and also discover other points of view.

The week went on as the following:

- 2-days workshop on clown activism, later followed by an interactive presentation on the local market
- role game about the society and inter-cultural situation, followed by a debate and workshop on the notions of culture and identity
- 2-days workshop on hijack advertising, creation of an advertising campaign against advertising
- 3-days workshop of theatre of the oppressed

GAINING INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

The international aspect was extremely important in this training, as it is important for all exchanges like this, the mere fact of having people from different countries is a workshop itself. As part of our programme we organized intercultural evenings, where the participants had the chance to share their traditions and their countries' notions on alternative forms of citizen communication with the others, thus providing the group with a large international background on the topic.

All of those workshops allowed creating group dynamics and developed cooperation between the participants.



THE BOOKLET

The booklet that you have in your hand is entirely written and built by the participants of this TC, with some help of Solafrika team. Every workshop is described in this booklet. The creation of the workshop is organized as the following: two or three supervisors are chosen for each activity, and are responsible for the writing and the pictures for the booklet. This booklet is then sent to every participant to be used as a tool to reproduce and improve the workshops and the knowledge acquired in the development of their projects in the youth field.

THE PARTNERS

Alternative Communication has been implemented by seven European organizations through the Erasmus+ program :

Youth and Civil Initiative in the Rose Valley - Bulgaria

GEYC - Romania

Continuous Action - Estonia

TheatrEtc - Cyprus

Solafrika - France

L'africa Chiama
- Italy



EYCB - Czech Rep



CLOWNING

The Solaf word:

We decided to put clown activism into the 'curriculum', because we consider it a powerful means towards self-development, in group-work and as form of activism. Clowning is based on theatre, as it requires the capacity of dealing with emotions and cooperation with others. But the aim of clowning is not acting as a clown, but finding the inner clown, a child-like, innocent creature. This work of oneself, especially working with emotions is an opportunity for self-development. Clown activists function as a group, so training and doing it is a teamwork experience. Put on our clown noses and enjoy!



INTRODUCTION

The aim of this clown activism training was to teach us (the participants) the basics of clowning, introduce us to social clowning and clown activism. As a summary of what we have learnt and celebration, we did clowning on the local market after the training, interfering with the locals.

The trainers built up how to put people into the mindset of clowning by activity: the first few workshops were about getting comfortable with theatre; later we discovered the clown inside by doing clowning activities alone. We went on clowning together and turning it into clown activism by putting ourselves into situations where clown activism applies. The clowning spectacle on the market was a mix of all the skills acquired. Bellow, the description of all the activities, step by step, that were implement during those two and a half days.



THEATRE WARM-UP

Walking in space...

...refers to a workshop to warm up and greet the other participants. The whole group walks around in the open space, if people's eyes connect, they greet each other. How do they do that? The group puts on a different emotion each time which each person has to express in the greeting. After a while, the emotion changes, than the new one is to be expressed by everyone in the group.

Line-up...

... is the way the group should take position in the beginning of these activities, in two lines facing each other. The aim of these activities is to express an emotion on different levels. The people in one line approach the other line with a growing emotion, reaching its peak in the moment of getting close to the person opposite, than coming back still facing the person lowering the emotion.

A variety of this activity is to play angels and devils as two extremities of the emotion.



Bulgarian house...

... the Bulgarian house is a closed space which people can enter and leave when they want with certain rules. The house is empty, and people arrive one by one, leaving a few minutes between each other. Each person arrives with a distinctive emotion or attitude. The point of the Bulgarian house is that the people inside first try to resist against the new influence, later end up by taking it over and expressing it strongly. When there are already many people in the Bulgarian house, those being there already for long time can leave the house one by one.

BECOMING A CLOWN

Well, the only crucial point of becoming a clown is wearing a red nose. Becoming a clown starts by putting on this nose, and clearly distinguishing the two states. A person with a red nose immediately becomes a clown, and losing the red nose takes off the clown alter-ego straight away, so it is important to never let people touch your red nose. The metamorphosis is better done somewhere hidden, so the 'young' clown can enter the public with a new mindset.

Activities to train clowning were usually done in groups of 10 people.

In all cases the clown entered the area and got in touch with the environment in different ways...



Firstly, the clown entered the area, and without getting in touch with anyone in particular made a tour in front of the audience, got in touch with certain, if wanted; then left the area. The purpose of this activity is to experience the difference between the clown and real self, and experiencing the difference in the attitude of the audience.

Another activity aims to train the clown for the possible resistance of the audience – the clown enters the area and tries to communicate with the audience, but they are not willing to do so. Without achieving the aim, the clown leaves the area. Even if it is difficult for the audience not to answer the funny attempts of the clown, they should resist to train the clown.

CLOWNING THE STREET



This activity prepares the clown to handle the human environment around: in this exercise the clown enters an area representing the 'street'. The street is first empty, then passer bys arrive: one by one they spend some time in the area, behaving with a special emotion, attitude. The clown is about to mime their attitude while on the scene, and at the end he/she should perform a summary of the whole scene, showing

all of the attitudes he/she saw on the 'street'.

We did this activity with 4, max. 5 people passing by the 'street', this number can be any, but keep in mind that the more the harder to recall at the end...

CLOWNING IN PAIRS

In this activity the clowns experience working together. Two clowns enter the space at the same time from two different directions, eventually meeting up. They improvise together for a few minutes, anything they would like to, then leave the space.

This is an activity training team working and improvising skills of the participants.



CLOWN ACTIVISM

Clown activism was born as an answer to military and political conflicts, in consequence makes parody out of typical military acts. Clown activism refers to people using clowning and non-violent tactics to act against corporate globalization, war, and on other issues. Self-official clown activists work at the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (or CIRCA).

Onion rank: the clowns line up behind each other, like soldiers do in the military. They even lift their hands up to their heads to salute the commandor.

The first clown in the onion rank proposes a movement, slogan, anything, and the others all do it after him. Once the movement is getting boring, the first clown stops, goes to the back, and the second in row become the leader.

Sock: the clowns make one big crowd, one next to the other, than they slowly move in a special way: the lasts come to the front, keeping physical contact with the others. This is how they approach, expressing a special emotion.

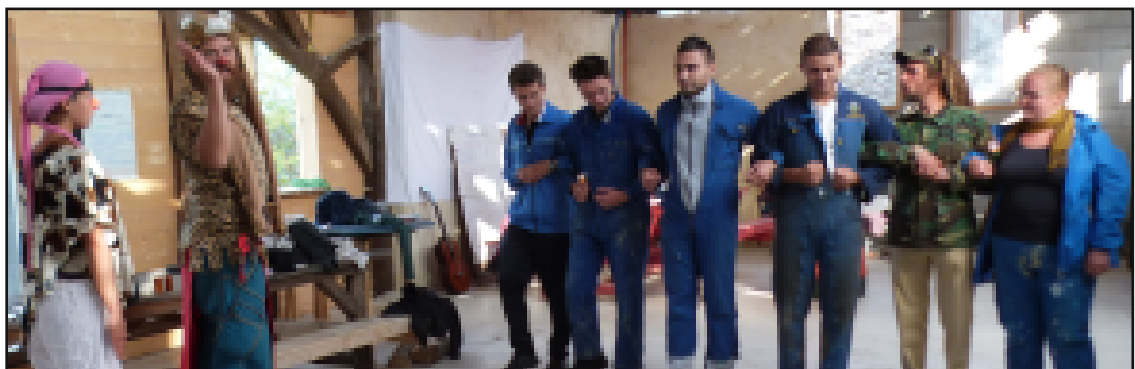
CLOWNS VS COPS

Tool: simulation of a strike, where clown activists find themselves opposite the police.

Material: apart from the red noses, costume for the policemen and the clowns as well.

A real strike situation is to be replayed here, with policemen who are eager to keep the clowns away from a certain area; and group of clowns, who try to enter this area, and make chaos in general.

The goal of this activity is to use all of the moves and techniques acquired during the whole workshop. Thus this is normally the last activity during the clown activism training.



CLOWNING ON THE MARKET

Tool: clowning in public

Material: red noses, costumes

Timing: appr. 1 hour, depending on how motivated the group is



Well, live presentation is the cherry on the cake for the clown activism workshop. It was an optional choice for us, if we want to, we can try out the competences acquired right away!

This Training Course was organized in an area where people are quite involved in activist actions, so it was a good place to start with.

In the little town near us (St Girons), there is a big market on each Saturday, we chose to use this moment to test our clowning skills. We chose a special thematic to guide our interaction with the public: we chose to be clown tourists, who are surprised by everything they see and experience around them. Our aim was to do as many selfies as possible with almost everything!

On the market we used clown activism techniques, mixed with normal clowning and theatre techniques, which allowed us to test everything we learnt.

Evaluation: getting in touch with the local people was a big experience. We were lucky to have a market as a place to perform, with people who are used to alternative activism forms. This first step will help us to use clowning in different situations and where the conditions are not that favorable.



EVALUATION OF CLOWN ACTIVITY

The clown activism is a not so well known form of alternative activism, and requires many different skills, such as theatrical skills, pantomime, team-working skills; so we think it was a good choice to put into the program of the week. Putting this workshop as the first one in the row also seems beneficial, as clowning works a lot with emotions and getting to know yourself, it is an important for group dynamics.

TIP FOR TRAINERS!

Clowning is a perfect way of conflict resolution - as it turned out during the training course. Following the clowning sessions, the people of the training course chose to use clowning in difficult or tense situations. When someone was down, clowning was also a good way to cheer the person up.

We found out a way how to deal with the stress of being a trainer and time-keeper at the same time - one morning, when the group was late, we had the dilemma: against our principle of handling the participants as adults we would like to keep the timing of the training course, otherwise the whole day would be late... so we decided to wake up people as clowns! This helped to keep up to both of our principles, put the activity into practice and to keep the time. We recommend it to all of the trainers!

OUR CLOWN TRAINERS:

Thanks to Jean-Philippe and Gael for this wonderful training!



The Island Game

Topic:

Multiculturalism

Name of the tool:

The Island Game

Number of participants:

20

Materials:

- balloons of different colours
- two boxes of fruit juice
- two halves of a map
- two sheets of paper with instructions



Proceeding:

The participants were split in two "tribes" of 9-10 people each, and given instructions about how to organize their social life and to invent a language for themselves. One tribe had four red balloons and needed to get a special balloon from the others; the second tribe had multi-coloured balloons, considered to be sacred, and their aim was to find new balloons. For the first tribe, balloons were considered medicine, while in the second only the shaman could touch them.

After the initial discussions about organization, language and the tribe names (30 minutes), the two tribes decided on a representative to carry on negotiations. The two negotiators met (5 minutes), and then, the game started: in 45 minutes, the tribes were supposed to meet their goals.

Evaluation:

Feedback organized in 3-4 groups of mixed "tribe members"

Ways of adaptation:

- add/change elements according to the target group
- participants can also make decisions and influence this way the game
- adjust settings according to the needs

Comments / reactions of the participants

The general reaction was of enthusiasm and interest for the game, and the extensive feedback helped the participants to understand what they did, the difficulties of the situation, and the relation to the real world.

*You can find this tool on the educational pack: **all equal all different** of the concil of Europe: [here](#)*

all

different

all

equal

Culture & Identity

MOVING DEBATE

The point of the moving debate is to collect all of the possible opinions, arguments and point of views on one topic.

How does it go?

The space is divided into two area, one stands for "I agree", the other for "I disagree". The trainers give statements and the participants are asked to take position in the space. The goal of the debate is that the starting position is based on one's opinion, but later the positions go with the arguments. From this starting position, we collect some of the arguments for both sides, possibly different ones. After each argument the participants are free to change sides, if they agree with the argument, regardless of their opinion on the topic as a whole. People who change sides are asked to explain what made them change their mind. The debate goes on until there are no new arguments on the topic.



In our case the topic was culture and identity, the trainers chose the following statements:

- There is a European identity.
- Globalization destroys identities.

Evaluation:

The topics of culture and identity are so vast, and there is not one almighty definition, that this method was really useful to talk about them. At the end of the debate everyone got to know new point of views, and in general the strong opinions seemed to be smoothed a bit.

Ways of adaptation:

The moving debate can only go on well if the participants are ready to think of arguments instead of holding on to their opinion. In order to facilitate this procedure, the trainers should pay attention to outline this feature before starting the activity, and remind the participants during the training as well.

ONIONS OF IDENTITY

This workshop aimed to work on identity by defining different layers of it, trying to approach how these layers are related to each other, going from the surface towards the core.

Material: paper with empty onions for each

Timing: 1 hour

Proceeding:

The participants were divided into groups of 4, and they received a paper with three “onions”.

The task was to fill in these onions with components of their identity, going from visible towards invisible according to the following questions:

- How I see my own identity?
- How others see my identity?
- How the group sees my identity?

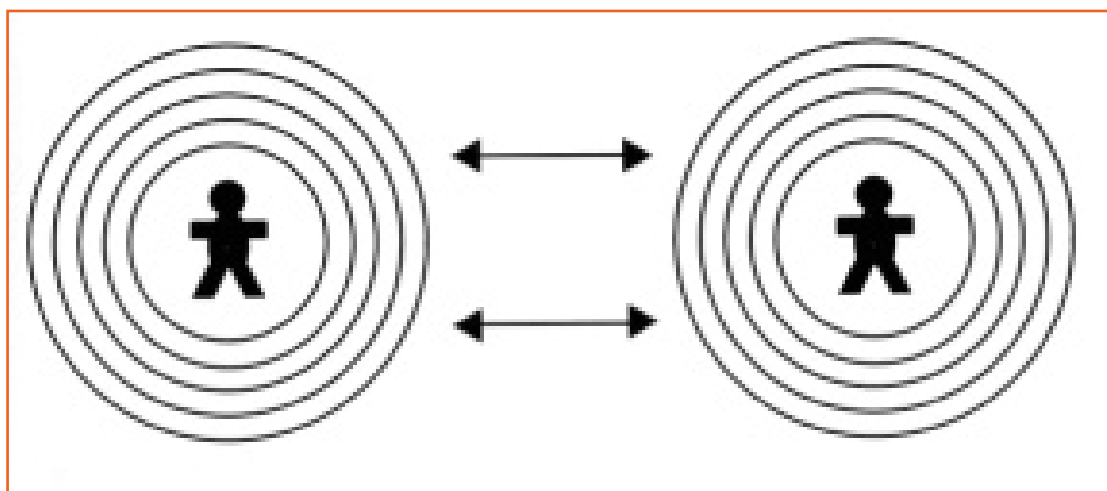
The 1st onion was to be filled in individually, the group members were free to share their work among each other or keep it for themselves.

The 2nd onion is related to the opinion of others, so the group already functioned as an input source, but the participants still did individual work, able to accept or drop the ideas of others.

The 3rd onion required teamwork, here the paper was given to others, and the group decided what to engrave into paper for each person.

Evaluation:

This task required a lot of reflection on self, so the participants felt the hard work of it. The fact of doing it in groups made it more enjoyable – we advise others to do this task in groups as well!



Hijack Advertising

INTRODUCTION

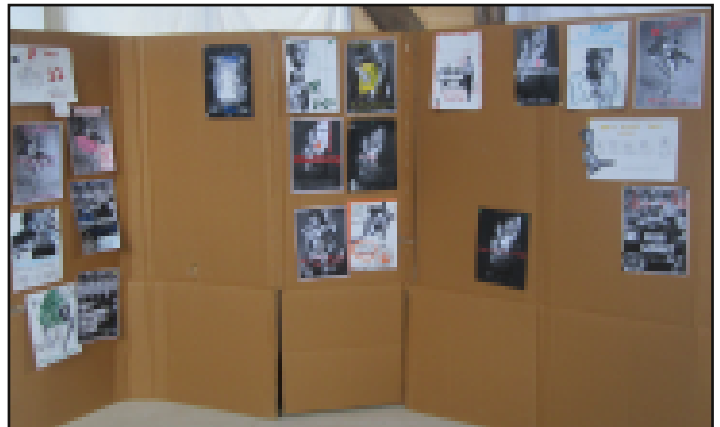
Hijack advertising refers to the act of changing an advertisement so that its initial message turns into something else. It is considered as an alternative form of citizen expression & communication.

There are two ways of changing an ad:

- Keeping the original topic and change the message
- Use the visual of an ad to transmit an own message

The goal of this action is to reach big amount of people, so the advertisements hijacked are mostly posters in public spaces. Mostly commercial advertisements are the subjects of this action.

Our hijack advertising workshop went on for two days with several activities preparing us to create a hijacked poster by the end.



COMMERCE, EVENT, ACTIVISM

Material:

3 different A4 size advertisements from magazines.
Paint, markers, scissors, glue

Timing:

3 hours for the creation, 2 hours for the evaluation discussion

Proceeding

The trainers divided us into groups of 3 people. We got 3 different A4 size advertisements, which were the subjects of hijacking. Our goal was to create alternative advertisements out of these ones.

The alternatives advertisements had to communicate the following:

- Sell an object, upon the choice of the group
- Advertisement on an event, also chosen by the group
- Create a poster with an own message

The posters were displayed all together according to the 3 topics, than we started to discuss them. The discussion later went general, and we talked about the world of advertising. The method used for the discussion was public debate.





Evaluation:

This exercise gave freedom to creativity, so it was in general a nice way to start a topic based on creation. The participants worked in teams, so it was also a good way to build group dynamics.

Ways of adaptation:

The trainers chose an “in medias res” (into the middle of things) start to the topic, they didn’t give any theoretical background on advertising. It was confusing for most of the participants as they didn’t know what they expect from them. On the other hand, some participants enjoyed the freedom of free interpretation, and the trainers were available during the whole time.

A small introduction on the topic could be a good way to avoid the participants’ feeling of being lost and left without guidance.

Comments, reactions of participants:

In general the participants enjoyed to be involved in a creative and practical exercise.

DISCOVERING HIJACK ADVERTISING

Material: video presentation

Timing: 2 hours

Among the program of this 3-days workshop, we had a screening session, where we got the theory of hijack advertising. The trainers provided us with information on the movement, and we got the chance to see some hijacked advertisements all around Europe & the globe.

CREATION OF THE POSTERS

Material: billboard size posters, paints, brushes, airbrushes, etc.

Timing: min. 1 day! We had one afternoon + a whole day

Proceeding:

After the warm-up exercises the time has come to create our actual billboard size posters.

The trainers divided us into groups of 4, these groups were to choose which poster they would like to hijack out of the many provided. The first afternoon of this workshop mainly passed with the selection. Once the poster was selected, we decided upon the message we would like to pass on.

The next day we spent with the realization of our ideas & the final discussion on the posters.

Evaluation:

Everybody enjoyed this creative moment of the Training Course, the outcome was a wide range of topics, messages and technics used for the posters - well done!



OUR HIJACK ADS TRAINERS:

Thanks to Sam and Suzanne for this really creative training!



Theatre of the Oppressed

INTRODUCTION

This theatre activity is a particular one, being considered as an educational tool, with the power of social transformation. The purpose of this activity is social, which means that it has to touch contemporary social issues, being transformed into a tool of social opinions.

Paolo Freire has created the theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed, where the learning relationship between a teacher and the students has to be an equal exchange of knowledge. Augusto Boal combined elements from Paolo Freire's theory to enhance his theory in his book 'Theatre of the Oppressed'.

The 3-day training approached 2 of 4 main tools of the methodology:

- **Forum theatre**
- **Image theatre**
- Legislative theater
- Invisible theatre



The two most important elements that appear in the Theatre of the Oppressed are:

- **The oppressed:** the person who is treated differently than the others, in a negative way (discriminated)
- **The oppressor:** the person who influences the situation in order for the oppressed to be put in a bad light. Usually, he has the power to influence the other characters to behave in the same way.

The relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor is based on the concept of power. The oppressor is always above the oppressed and he is the one who controlled the situation.

FORUM THEATRE

The three days workshop was focused on the Forum Theatre, with the following characteristics:

1. Dialogue between performers, spectators and wider community
2. Creating a performance
3. Using a joker, in order to create a connection between the audience and the actors
4. Approaching a social issue integrated into the theme of the scenario

The main character of Forum Theatre is that the audience can participate into the scenario, in order to change the situation.



CREATING OUR SCENE

Number of participants:

25 participants of the training course, divided in 2 teams that performed 2 acting scenarios based on the theme of Social Exclusion (one team performed in front of a group of 15 kids aged between 3 and 5 and the other group to the same number of kids, but between the ages of 6 and 11).

Material:

For the workshop: flipchart with the information about the concepts, flyers with information about the organization.

For the acting: props (books, candies, chairs, accessories, hats, tables).



Proceeding:

The workshop began with some games and a little bit of theory about these new concepts, in order for the participants to have the same starting point.

After that, the group of 25 was divided in 2 and each team has to create a scenario composed by 3 small scenes, based on a theme focused on a social issue (we have chosen the theme of social exclusion among the children).

The scenarios had approximately 4 minutes each and after the first play, the audience could interfere and change the situation or to play one of the character in the scene. It is important that every time there was only the possibility to change one character. The others had to stick with their own personality.

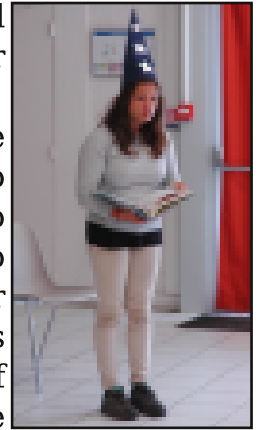
During the play, the joker had an important role to connect the audience with the actors. After the play, he analyses the situation and points out some important details that could help the oppressed.



Evaluation:

After the play, we analyzed together how the audience reacted and how the scenario changed into a better one. Also, we shared our personal experience and how did we felled with our characters.

The aim is not for the audience to find magic solutions in real life situations but to explore the motives of the oppressor and to respond to the decisions taken by the oppressed attempting to reverse the power imbalance between the two protagonists and to raise awareness of a problematic situation and give stimuli for further discussion (this last part is important since the performances helped the school environment by giving a basis for discussion of these issues between teachers and students during classroom time after the intervention ended).

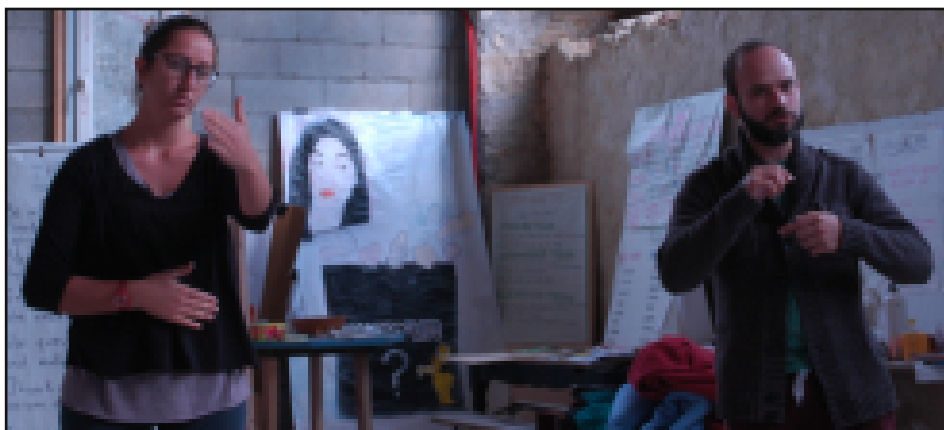
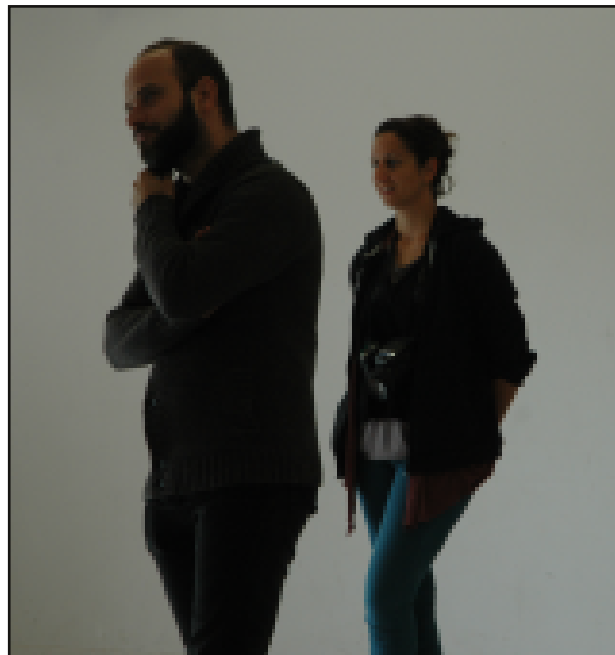


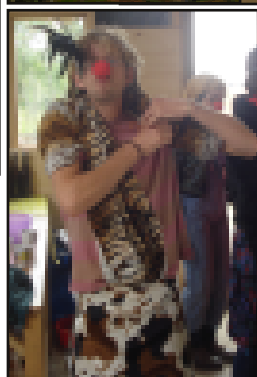
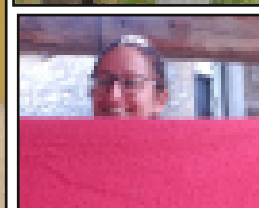
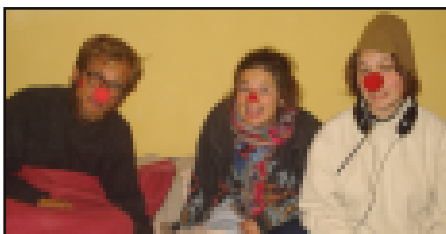
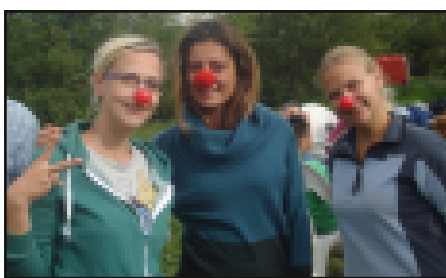
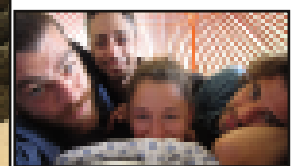
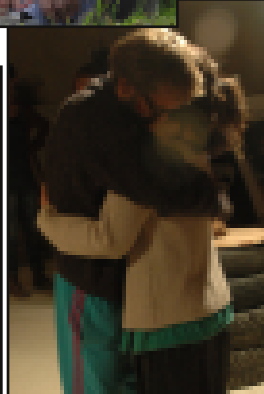
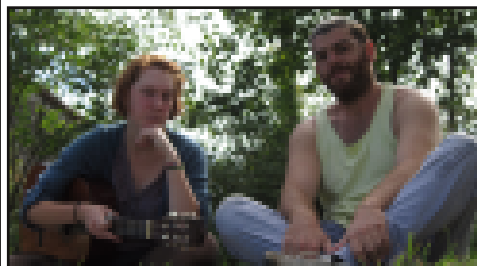
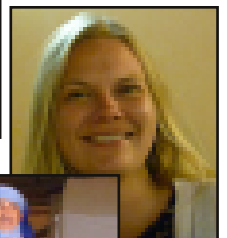
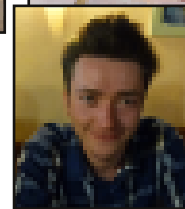
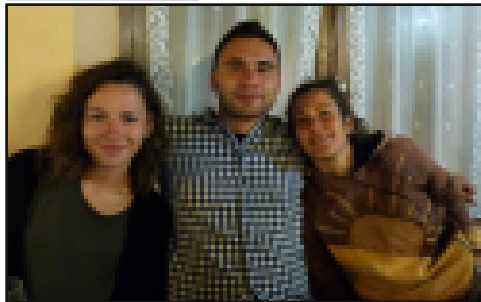
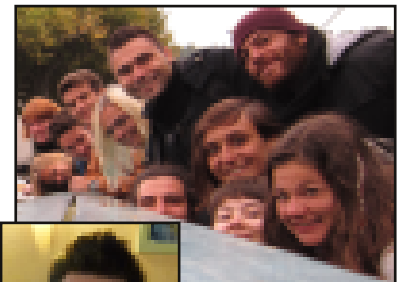
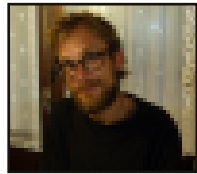
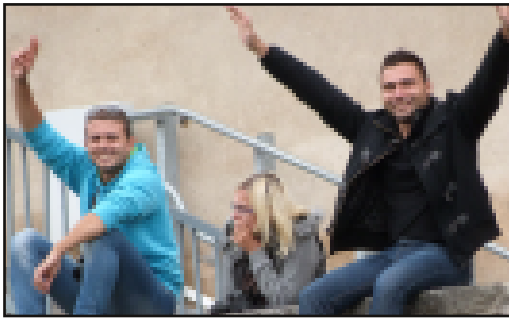
Comments, reactions of participants:

There will always be some reactions among the people that get involved into the scenario that can't be predicted, so the joker and especially the actors have to be spontaneous and flexible, without letting the situation to get out of control.

OUR THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED TRAINERS:

Thanks to Natalia and Christos for this amazing training!





Solafrika thanks to:

OUR PARTNERS:

the Erasmus + program and the French National Agency



GEYC - Romania
TheatrEtc - Cyprus
EYCB - Czech Rep
Continuous Action - Estonia
Youth and Civil Initiative in the Rose Valley - Bulgaria
L'africa chiama - Italy

Jean-Philippe and Gael for the clown training
Sam et Suzanne for the hijack ad training
Natalia and Christos from TheatrEtc for the Theatre of the Oppressed training

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