

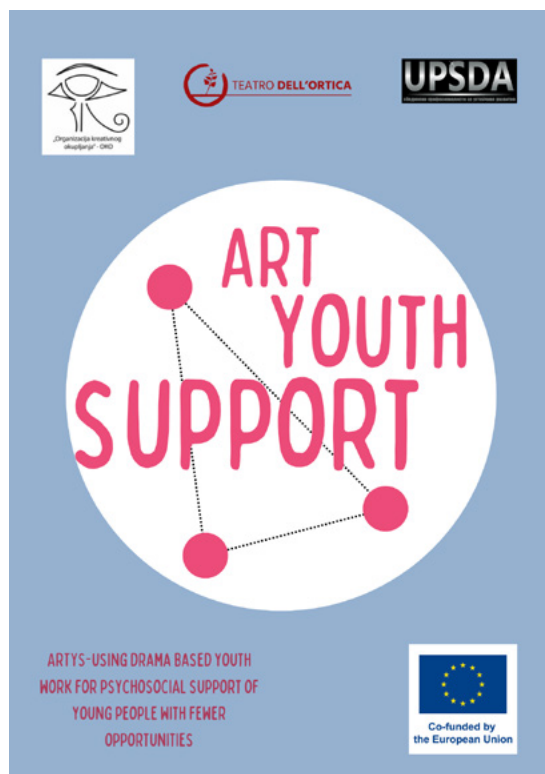


ART, YOUTH, SUPPORT!

EToolKIT FOR USING DRAMA BASED YOUTH WORK
FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES



Co-funded by
the European Union



ARTYS- Using drama based youth work for psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities

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Introduction

Instead of just an introduction for this eToolkit and an outline of the various texts that were important for the research of drama-based youth work and its interconnection with psychosocial support in general from different viewpoints, the aim of this booklet (and to some extent criticism) is to get a concrete idea for the further study of the very broad areas that both touch on. Considering that we are entering into various aspects of the interdisciplinary nature of applied theater and psychology, examples that have been chosen are personal learning points that, with their uniqueness, have their own weaknesses in relation to the current context and may not apply to someone else, as well as strengths too.

If we want to come to the drama process, ``processed drama`` (or drama in education) as a special form of applied theater, by deductive reasoning, we can define it as a process of facilitation and/or devising different drama elements into a pedagogical meaningful sum for those who are playing it and facilitating it. The aim is to provide learning about a certain topic that is not covered much by the formal education curricula and that was also detected by the consortium before applying for this project. And despite that, youth work as a profession, which uses non-formal education as a tool for the personal and social development of young people transferring into adulthood, is, in some countries, the only “home” to drama in education. Shortly, drama-based youth workers have competencies based on applied theater, but mostly they are working with young people and use interventions and approaches based on the principles and values of youth work. We still need comprehensive research about the role of drama in education in both formal and non-formal learning environments, but we know that it is still not available to a lot of young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities.

Young people with fewer opportunities are defined by Salto Youth¹ as young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the situations and obstacles. We cannot forget that there are multiple situations or obstacles that young people are facing, and even more, the context is different from country to country. In this toolkit, we will analyze which groups of young people with fewer opportunities are facing the above-mentioned obstacles and how drama-based youth work is providing psychosocial support to them in three countries: Serbia, Italy, and Bulgaria, all different in their cultural, societal, and economic development.

¹<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/archive/archive-resources/inclusiongroups/inclusionof-fenders/InclusionOffendersWho/>



Regarding psychosocial support, it can be defined as the process of facilitating and strengthening resilience within individuals, families, and communities to recover from and adapt to critical adversities with potentially damaging long-term impacts. The term 'psychosocial' refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person. The psychological dimension includes the internal, emotional, and thought processes, feelings, and reactions, and the social dimension includes relationships, family and community networks, social values, and cultural practices. 'Psychosocial support' refers to the actions that address both the psychological and social needs of individuals, families, and communities (Psychosocial Interventions: A Handbook, page 25).

The Psychosocial Framework of 2005–2007 of the International Federation defines psychosocial support as “a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families, and communities by respecting the independence, dignity, and coping mechanisms of individuals and communities. Psychosocial support promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure.”

Psychosocial support also refers to the “processes and actions that promote the holistic wellbeing of people in their social world. It includes support provided by family and friends” (INEE, 2010a, p. 121). Psychosocial support aims to help individuals recover after a crisis has disrupted their lives and to enhance their ability to return to normality after experiencing adverse events.

Psychosocial support thus promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure- at the Center for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre) under the framework of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). In our context, psychosocial support is more of an approach to drama-based youth work, which is a tool for strengthening young individuals who are facing the above-mentioned obstacles. Of course, youth work's curriculum-based influence makes holistic modus operandi where all aspects are covered: movement, non-formal education, safety for young people, their development for inclusion in society, and fulfilment as human beings to their full potential.

Let's see what some young people are saying about participation in such programs. All three partners made a youth-friendly questionnaire with lexicon-based questions that were used for self-reflection and feedback at the same time.

WHEN I WAS IN
DRAMA ACTIVITIES,
I FOUND OUT...

...`that I have found a family with whom to share something unique and special since my esteemed colleagues can give you something unique and rare because it is rarity that makes the world variegated (Italy)`.

...`that, under certain circumstances, it's good to throw yourself into experiences that may seem strange or embarrassing at first sight, because you can discover things about yourself that you didn't think you possessed (Italy).`

...`through the prism of theater everything is possible (Bulgaria).`

...`theater is fun and gives you the opportunity to grow (Bulgaria).`

...`a new opportunity to get to know myself through acting, through movement and gesticulation, we can tell a lot about ourselves (Serbia).`

...`drama activities freed me from nervousness, shame, enabled me to fulfil my needs in a productive way, to learn how to express every emotion and connect with it. They taught me how to communicate with my body, relax myself and learn things about myself. They helped me a lot when making contact with people. It was always nice for me and after the rehearsal I feel like today when I come back from the psychotherapist, filled with positive energy. I learned to love my body and to dance and paint with it during performances (Serbia).`



IN DRAMA
ACTIVITIES, I HAD
FUN WITH...

...`attending the theater and storytelling course. The experiences, in general, of the two courses have been extremely useful from my personal point of view. Of course I enjoyed certain activities more than others, and I'm not a super fan of improv, but overall I'd give the course a 10! (Italy).`

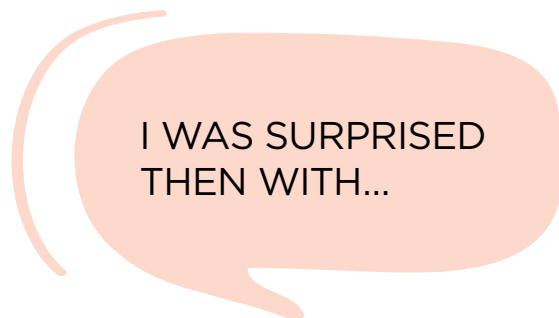
...`making the video: wearing costumes, running like crazy marbles and seeing things you never dreamed of (Italy).`

...`different people I had not interacted with in my everyday life (Bulgaria).`

...`with the team and the other kids, and the exercises we did (Bulgaria).`

...`with new movements and the possibility to present the play in a different way (Serbia).`

...`I liked the exercises in which we express our emotions the most, that was the most interesting for me. When we come up with a part of the performance ourselves and at the rehearsals we create mini-performances, each with a story that he/she came up with, with his/hers partner(s). I enjoyed the game of movement every time, I was always surprised how we can make a movement with the body that fits into the story without much effort, no matter what size we are, we can always come up with a picture of the story with the body (Serbia).`



...`myself. I took this course with the idea of being as open and receptive as possible, knowing full well that, in my day-to-day life, I am certainly not a super-extrovert. However, by attending the activities, I have noticed that, at least in the context of theater and storytelling, I am becoming less introverted than usual (Italy).`

...`the ability to welcome, the sensitivity, the styles in comparison (Italy).`

...`when the most coiled participants came out of their shell and showed unprecedented - voice, posture, opinion, attitude on the issues (Bulgaria).`

...`with the energy I get when I go on stage (Bulgaria).`

...`new participants on theater play (Serbia).`

...`I was surprised how many things I can actually do and how socializing and playing can positively affect all aspects of life (Serbia).`

NOW I WANT TO...

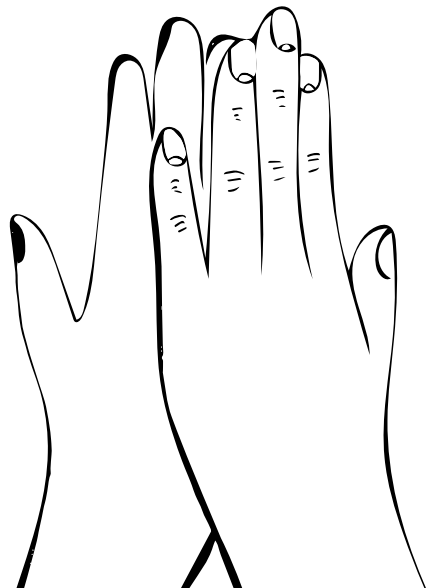
...`indeed I would like to see the completed project (Italy).`

...`or at the very least I would like, as much as possible, to learn more, both in the sense of the theatrical art or learning to write well, but also to learn knowledge and skills in the social sphere, because I have been extremely impressed by the idea that Ortica represents or tries best to represent (Italy).`

...`to continue doing theater (Bulgaria).`

...`more activities in OOCG, more drama activities, fun workshops (Serbia).`

...`I want to never forget the things I learned in OOCG, and I enjoy all the memories. It would also be very nice if we could all get together! (Serbia).`



As you can see from the answers, drama-based youth work is proving its purpose: in psychosocial support, safety, and the development of young people. From feeling supported to fun and learning, drama education is one of those activities that will gain the adjective holistic any time, but we must consider all the aspects of competence so it could meet minimum quality standards. The general aim of this eToolkit is to provide different perspectives and competences in facilitating drama-based youth work for the psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities. We are inviting all organizations to use it in their practice and to upgrade it with more viewpoints so all young people and practitioners benefit from it.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project ARTYS - using drama-based youth work for psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities, is aimed at increasing the quality of youth work through using drama methodologies for psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities.

The main reason for making the project is that at this moment there are no actual recommendations for future field work for psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities through drama-based youth work. The European Training Strategy does not envisage certain competences in areas for psychosocial support and drama-based youth work specifically.

Actually, this project is the first of its kind that will envisage a framework for the implementation of drama methodology for the psychosocial support of young people with fewer opportunities.

THE PROJECT IS DIVIDED INTO A FEW STAGES:

- Partners online meetings for management, promotion, and logistics.
- Training seminar in Serbia in February 2023 for practitioners to share existing drama-based methodologies and to discuss in depth the impact of psychosocial support in the context of youth work.
- Working on the DIOKNO mapping of stakeholders and specific subgroups of young people with fewer opportunities for future advocacy.
- Partners offline meeting in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in May 2023 to facilitate mapping of ideas towards an exact competency-based approach to the topic.
- Making an eToolkit for gathering the data, experience, and conclusions from the activities in the project.
- Final conference in Italy in November 2023 for presenting eToolkit and conclusions from the project.

Organization of Creative Grouping – OKO, as a Lead partner together with Sdrufenie obedineni profesionalisti za ustoichivo razvitie – UPSDA from Bulgaria and Teatro dell’Ortica Associazione di Promozione Sociale - ONLUS from Italy will implement project ARTYS, that is supported by Erasmus+ programme of European Union.

ABOUT ORGANIZATION OF CREATIVE GROUPING - OOCG

Organizacija kreativnog okupljanja OKO (in Serbian) is a civil association, meaning a non-partisan, non-governmental, and non-profit association, created with the idea of promoting institutional and non-institutional cooperation in the fields of education, culture, and art. We were founded in November 2005.

OKO is recognized widely as a serious organization for professionalization of youth work. As a part of education of future youth leaders and youth workers, OKO is a licensed organization for providing mentorship and supervision in the National association of youth worker's education course (Module 6) for the period of 2022-2026 which established OKO as one of the strongest organizations in Serbia in terms of professional development of youth workers. Also, OKO was a part of Bonn's process meeting in 2023 where we presented the role of accreditation of youth work accreditation from the field perspective and how those would be approached in the future. OKO had its representatives in the Council of ethical issues in the National association of youth workers.

Theatre Programme OKO devised and released more than 50 different performances with and for young people and children. Regarding youth work and volunteer programmes it developed more than 70 projects on local, national and international level which gained recognition in terms of high quality and personal development of all involved, not just young people, but parents, peers, schools, universities, media and other stakeholders.

The mission of our organization is to create a society of equal and diverse citizens ruled by trust, support, and respect for human rights. Our three main programs for youth are: Theatre OKO, Youth Work Program, and Volunteering Program.



We have implemented and participated in numerous local, national, and international projects through the Youth in Action EU program and recently through the Erasmus+ program of the EU. Also, we are active members of almost all relevant national and international organizations: European Off Network (EON), People to People International, Y-PEER Serbia, the National Association of Practitioners in Youth Work (NAPOR), and the Children's Network of Serbia.

We are accredited for quality standards in youth work by the National Association of Practitioners of Youth Work (NAPOR).

ABOUT UPSDA

UPSDA is a regionally operating NGO, an alliance of professionals with different backgrounds, aiming to achieve sustainable development through the transfer of knowledge, skills, and creative ideas. Established in 2011 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, UPSDA initiates, develops, and delivers educational, cultural, sport, and psychosocial programs with relevant activities for functional social inclusion, mental health promotion, and employment advocacy for disadvantaged groups. We emphasize a multidisciplinary approach and investment in people. We provide case management, support, skills training, and mentorship to persons at risk and their families, as well as **support for specialists, practitioners, and their organizations**. We believe **training in knowledge and skills is an obligatory condition for social change**.

OUR MISSION IS
TO ASSIST
ORGANIZATIONS
AND
INDIVIDUALS
IN ACHIEVING
PROFESSIONAL
AND PERSONAL
EXCELLENCE.

WE ACHIEVE THESE THROUGH:

- Projects. Research, problem analysis and evaluation.
- Methodologies: UPSDA's team develops methodologies for improvement of current issues. We supervise implementation and evaluate their effectiveness whilst enabling pilot testing procedures.
- Training, support of staff and capacity building: UPSDA's team develops and delivers training to various groups and organizations, based on their need assessment.
- Advocacy and Policy recommendations
- Organizing seminars, conferences and other events for awareness and dissemination of outcomes to various stakeholders.

· Network building.

· Promotion of SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) in various settings and contexts.

· Publishing and dissemination activities



Our association contributes to reaching groups and audiences that are normally excluded from cultural and social life due to marginalization, and we try to improve their access to cultural and creative work by engaging them in creative ways on a local and regional level. Our particular focus is on young people from various groups and backgrounds, as well as people with mental health issues and/or addictions, people with behavioral problems, such as prisoners, and other underrepresented groups.

Through our project's history, we contributed to the delivery of innovative approaches in the field of skills development and creative expression for disadvantaged people in the Plovdiv region. We also validate their **cultural competences** as a tool for subsequent job seeking, education, and training. We are encouraging those groups, as well as the professionals who are working with them, to engage in **cultural entrepreneurship** that contributes to enriching cultural life and its diversity with new events and content.

WE ARE
ACTIVE IN THE
CULTURAL
AND CREATIVE
SECTOR

In addition to this, we engage in activities to establish **sustainable links and relationships** between the disadvantaged people (including their families), specialists working



with them, and the general public to lay the foundations for **motivation for change, integration, dialogue, and inclusion in social, cultural, and active citizenship life.**

Our projects and activities give **visibility and publicity** to the work of artistic organizations and professionals working with disadvantaged people using theater and art. We strive to recognize their efforts as serious work and a powerful tool for influencing public attitudes and to build a network through which activities can be more sustainable in the future. We provide support and training to **develop the capacity** of artistic and social organizations, professionals, and volunteer youths through the methods of **education through social inclusion** and the use of **artistic skills development activities**, as well as ways to **validate their cultural competences.**

We administrate the FB group "**Connected with creativity and sport**" for the cultural engagement of its members and audience development activities. The group is a space to share best practices, projects, and ideas for using art, theater, and sport as a tool for social change.

ABOUT TEATRO DELL'ORTICA

Teatro dell'Ortica was born in Genova in 1996 to develop a Community theater project based in the suburban neighborhood of Molassana, organizing a theater season for children and adults, which has become, over the years, a cultural point of reference in the area.

Since 1997, in collaboration with the Local Health Authority of Genova, the "Stranità" workshop has been active, a permanent theater group made up today of thirty psychiatric patients and a dozen operators and actors, which has brought its productions to the major theaters in the region.

The "Oltre il Cortile" project has been active since 2006, a workshop activity carried out with inmates at the Marassi prison until 2009 and since 2010 at the Pontedecimo prison, with the peculiarity of creating a shared journey with children, parents, and teachers of a primary school and a secondary school.

In 2015, a group of young female doctors were asked to participate in a theater workshop that would allow them to approach the profession with a different focus on relational aspects with the patient. Following that experience, a path is developed, which leads the group to meet with operators from the "Per non subire violenza ONLUS" anti-violence center. The project "Il rumore del silenzio" is born, involving a group of women victims of violence.

At the end of 2021, the "Versi di cura" workshop was born, welcoming cancer patients, their families, and healthcare personnel with the ultimate aim of contributing to improving the quality of life of cancer patients, equipping themselves with the tools to increase one's awareness and acceptance of therapies, and finding a terrain in which to cultivate one's self-narrative.

In the field of training, theater workshops have been organized for children, adolescents, and adults since 2006, trying to create a climate of sharing, with educational and relational aspects having a prominent role.

Since 2005, in collaboration with the Faculty of Educational Sciences of Genova and since 2009, also with the Faculty of Letters, a two-year course for the Theatrical Pedagogical Operator has been held, a specialized training with the aim of providing pedagogical and acting tools.



Teatro dell'Ortica also organizes the Acquedotto Theatre Festival, which in 2023 reaches its fifteenth edition and is increasingly characterized as an opportunity to develop a profound interpenetration between theater and territory, proposing shows within non-theatrical situations, moments of meeting, and routes that represent historical-urban itineraries between the city and the countryside around the remains of the old aqueduct of Genova.

Since 2008, Teatro dell'Ortica has participated in European partnership projects on the use of Social theater. The first was BAROS in 2009, on the theme of social theater as a means of promoting the individual and therefore as an educational tool. In 2014, the POST project "Prisoners on Stage: Theatre as a Link Between Inside and Outside" was concluded, with excellent results and feedback. It was a European theater-prison project started in 2012 whose objective was to create a link between "outside" and "inside", with partners from Germany (Aufbruch Kunst Gefängnis Stadt-Berlin), France (Centre du Théâtre de l'Opprimé-Paris), and Romania (Fundatia Cultural-Artistica Sigma Art - Bucharest, Penitenciarul Vaslui-Vaslui). Another European project focusing on theater in prisons was the Erasmus+ project "Skills for Freedom" led by Arci Liguria with partners from Spain, Bulgaria, Poland, Turkey, Germany, Cyprus, Belgium, and Italy.

From August 2023 Teatro dell'Ortica takes the name of Fondazione Anna Solaro - Teatro dell'Ortica ETS Impresa Sociale.



**Competence
based approach in
drama youth work
and psychosocial
support**

Competences needed for implementing drama youth work and psychosocial support for working with young people are at the core of the project. By analyzing the existing European Training Strategy for youth workers who work internationally, the consortium came to the conclusion that we need to add detailed competencies, especially for a wider European context and for the youth workers who want to specialize in the above-mentioned topic. The sensitivity and ethics of direct drama-based youth work and psychosocial support gave the consortium from Bulgaria, Italy, and Serbia the main responsibility to propose such an approach to competences. This toolkit will provide a possibility for reflective practice for anyone who wants to specialize in this particular topic. This is not a final list, but it is a proposition that could be developed more in the future.

The training seminar in Serbia, held from February 2nd until February 6th, 2023, had the aim of gathering practitioners from partnership organizations to strengthen their sharing of experiences from direct work with young people with fewer opportunities. The training seminar also consists of sessions in introduction to ETS and the DIOKNO mapping method for better advocacy of the stakeholders, which are important for drama youth work and psychosocial support and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. One of the conclusions was that we are not just working with young people with fewer opportunities; we also need to take into consideration a wider community and the impact of drama-based youth work in general. That is why all three partners have different experiences with different target groups with the same workframe, but the next step is thinking about minimum quality standards in terms of competences for implementing such activities.





In these photos, you can see the moments from the sessions of the training seminar held in February 2023 in the Eco Centre, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia. Participants were sharing their exercises as part of the drama-based workshops in their practice and programs. Also, they found out what DIOKNO mapping is.

The partner meeting took place on the premises of the UPSDA partner organization in Plovdiv from June 23 to 27, 2023. The aim of the meeting was to work on possible content regarding eToolkit and recommendations for future drama-based youth work and psychosocial support for young people with fewer opportunities.

The methodology of the meeting was based on **mind mapping** in thought-shower sessions. Mind mapping is the methodology based on Buzan's approach to an associative, non-linear way of learning.

The thought-shower as a methodology approach is used mostly in social science and helps a group of experts find solutions or new definitions for explorative research. In the case of this project, to find exactly which competencies (in this exclusive case for providing psychosocial support and drama competencies) are important for youth workers to develop in terms of using drama-based youth work and psychosocial support, We tried to avoid the already-mentioned competencies in ETS, but probably some will be repeated. The meeting group consisted of experienced drama practitioners, psychologists, youth workers, trainers who work internationally, and young people who used and implemented drama activities on a local level.



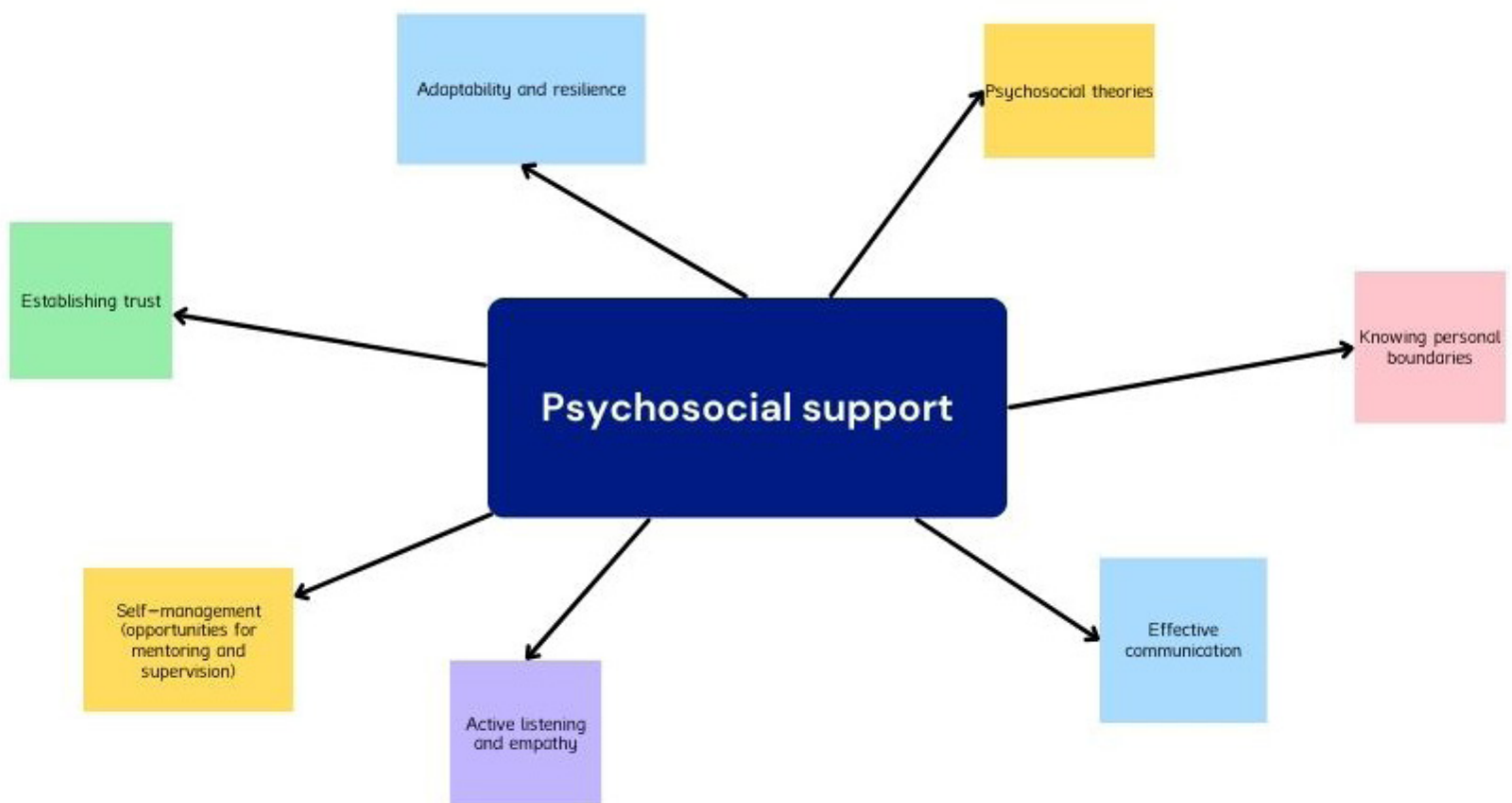
Partner meeting photos

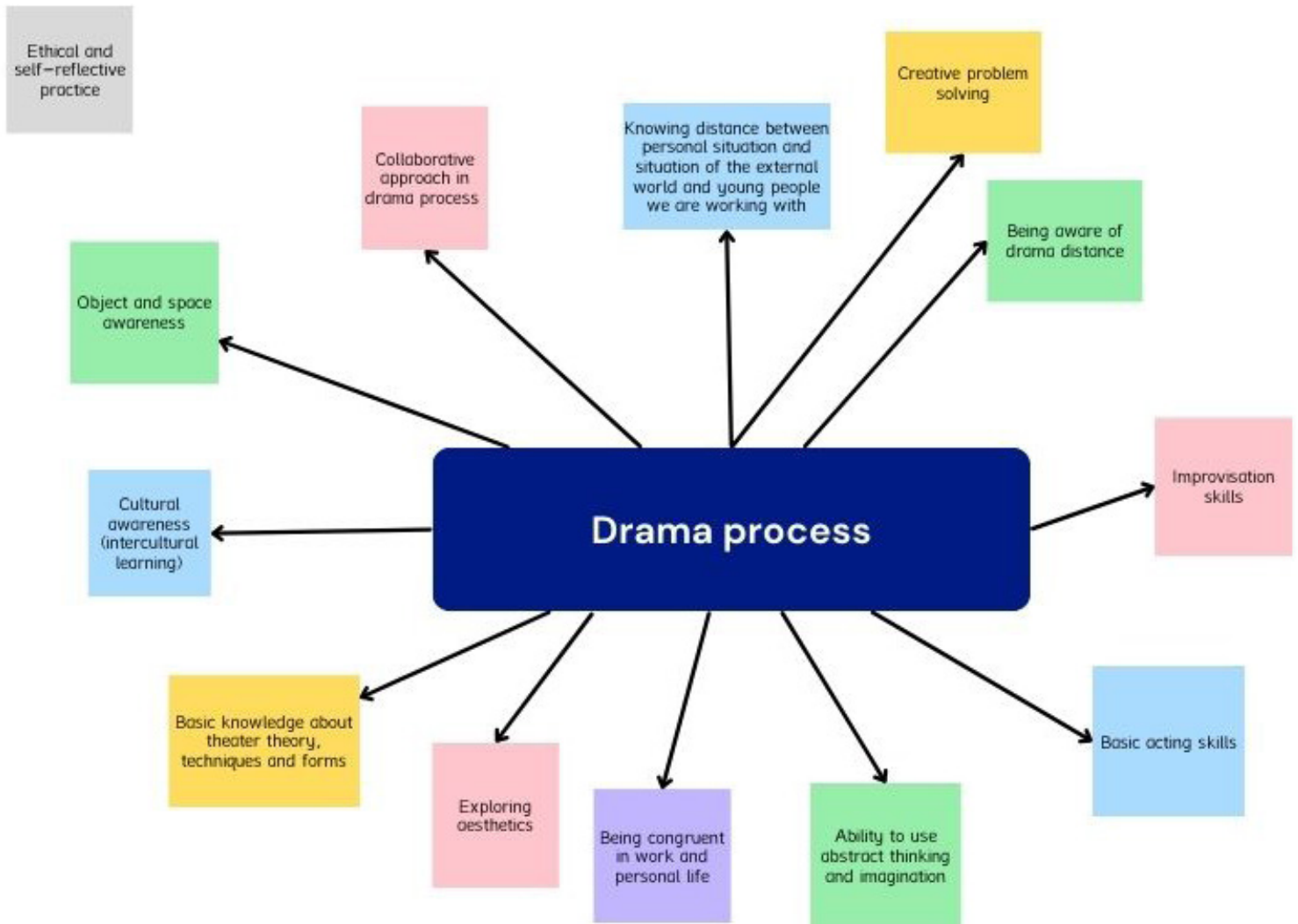


We encourage each other in the creative and important process of developing a toolkit that is in front of us. The whole team has a serious aim to provide a new perspective on the ETS competence model and shared experience in terms of psychosocial support and drama-based youth work in working with young people with fewer opportunities.

All team members are experienced practitioners in the fields of psychosocial support and drama-based youth work.

THESE ARE GRAPHICAL FINDINGS FROM THE MEETING:





Primarily, we want to emphasize again that it is a framework for self-reflective practice, and this is just the beginning of contemplating the suggested competence framework. Of course, based on the local specifications, the nature of the program, and the target group, this could be modified as a matter of contextualization of the practice itself. We do not expect drama-based youth workers to be professional actors (but we know there are some); we had the intention to motivate practitioners to consider continuous learning based on life-long learning principles.

Recommendations from the practice: examples of activities

- **Name of the session:** First introductory session
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Organization:** Teatro dell`Ortica (Italy)
- **Aim(s) of the session:**
 - Definition of the group contract (what will be done, how it will be done, with what rules, with what objectives, what path is being followed, what part of the road must be covered to reach the pre-established goal).
 - To guide the group towards the project objectives.
 - To foster knowledge among the participants.
 - To regain the dimension of the game, i.e. a playful and cooperative atmosphere.
 - To lay the foundations for the creation of a solid and supportive group that can bring out the resources of each participant within a protected playful-expressive space, in order to give birth to a new awareness of himself and of his own abilities in the individual.
 - To put the participants in contact with their own physicality and emotionality, to rediscover the expressive potential characteristics of each one.





NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Informal welcome

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The construction of the laboratory setting begins with welcoming the participants into the work space. The first welcome is informal: we greet each other, we exchange a chat, we get to know each other, we try to put people at ease. The setting is co-constructed with care and caution.

DURATION

about 5 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Throughout the session: room large enough to allow the group to form a circle and move around the space; sound system

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Ritual welcome with the ritual of contact, greeting and contract with the group

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The group stands in a circle. The workshop leader welcomes the participants and explains the objectives of the session and the project, also leaving room for doubts and questions. Subsequently, he explains three fundamental rules: everyone does as they feel, as they can and without being judged. The formal welcome of the group is ritualized in this way: each participant takes a few steps inside the circle, says their name and the group responds with applause.

DURATION

about 10 minutes

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Acquaintance games

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

An initial acquaintance within a group of people who don't know each other can be helped by a game: the participants "throw" their name to another partner or say the name of the partner to whom the throw is addressed. The game can be played with a ball or even with the voice alone.

DURATION

about 10 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Ball or tennis ball (optional)



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Psychophysical training

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

In a circle, with music, the group dedicates itself to an exploration of the body through work on the segments of the body, with attention to quality, intensity and organicity of movement, starting with breathing. The technique used is modeling, a learning method that is based on the observation of a model and the reproduction of his own behavior (learning as imitation). The conductor, therefore, proposes movements and the group follows him by repeating the same simple movements.

DURATION

about 20 minutes



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Space exploration

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The group is dedicated to the exploration of movement in space. The creative movement re-defines the workspace as a setting in which theatrical creation and discovery of self and other is possible. We work on the use of space, on proxemics and on the composition of sequences of movements (singly, in pairs or in groups). Another very interesting dimension to explore is that of the stop, or the absence of movement. It's good to create a dimension of concentration (music can help a lot), but at the same time relaxed and playful, transforming the space with the imagination or creating narratives with the body.

DURATION

about 40 minutes

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

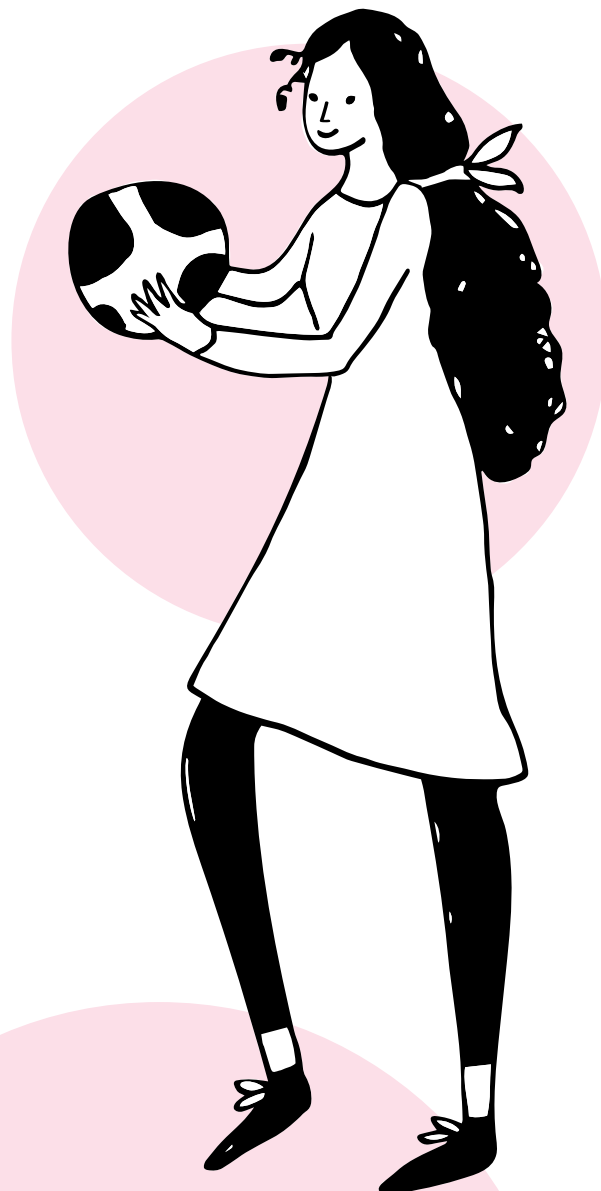
reintegration phase

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Short feedback about what was performed during the working session. The reintegration phase has the aim of accompanying the group to regain contact with reality and with daily communication; we greet each other and take our leave ritually.

DURATION

about 5 minutes



Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented: The one described is a typical introductory session of a social theater project dedicated to young people. In general, the codified scheme of the social theater laboratory is similar to that of the rites of passage and foresees a first phase of separation (which has as its objective the abandonment of everyday life in order to enter the extra-daily theatrical space), a second phase of margin dedicated to creative work, and a third phase of reintegration to accompany the participants to their return to everyday life.

Expected competences for the implementation of the session: The theater operator needs knowledge and skills regarding representation and its dynamics, theater as a means of communication, and psychological guidelines for the educational use of theater in the social and cultural sphere. An understanding of group dynamics is required. In general, the operator is required, in addition to methodological and technical insights, to do intense work on self-awareness.

Risks: Groups are mysterious entities; each one has its own story. It is possible that in a first encounter, a great shyness can be perceived on the part of some participants, as well as a disruptive and destructive energy on the part of others. It is possible that some may not like to take part in the proposals. It is possible that not everyone is captivated by the activity and decides not to participate in subsequent meetings. Social theater is also this: a place inhabited by possibility, where one can decide whether to do or not to do, whether to stay or not to stay. It is important to intercept the will to participate and the real interest on the part of the young people, and it is important for the operator to be as clear and credible as possible in facilitating the creation of a non-judgmental atmosphere and not to take as a failure the possibility that not everyone enjoyed the activity.

Recommendations: We recall that the objective of such a path is to use theater as an expressive and communicative means, facilitating the relationship between different subjects. Theatre then becomes a factor of integration: it is not a matter of "copying" the classical professional theater but of providing opportunities for a full and harmonious development of everyone's faculties and possibilities, while also accepting the limit where trying to overcome it becomes problematic. In other words, the goal is not the product but the process, i.e., the experience itself. This is one of the most glaring differences between social theater and the so-called art theater, the one in which artistic research pertains exclusively to the theatrical form. As already written above, a very strong recommendation is to work on creating an environment in which non-judgment is practiced. Maybe it's one of the most difficult things; it certainly takes more time than a single meeting, but it's also the only way to make all the participants feel really at ease.



- **Name of the session:** The mediating object
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Organization:** Teatro dell`Ortica (Italy)
- **Aim(s) of the session:**

A mediating object is an object that is placed between two or more people and allows indirect contact and a relationship. Working with it has the aim of exploring the encounter with the other, the mediated relationship, and the contact through improvisation techniques (which contact spontaneity and allow the unconscious material to emerge, poorly organized, and then subsequently and eventually organized in the dramaturgy of the actor and director) and elements of dance-theater. Other objectives deal with the improvement of socialization skills, integration, stimulation of creative processes, and social cognition.



▲
NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Welcome

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

informal welcome, ritual welcome with the ritual of contact, greeting and contract with the group

DURATION

about 5 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Throughout the session: room large enough to allow the group to form a circle and move around the space; sound system

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE
Psychophysical training and space exploration

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

as described in “First introductory session”

DURATION

about 25 minutes

▲
NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Working with the mediating object

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

An object is introduced into the workshop. The object, from daily life, will become extra-daily and in this passage it has its own transformation through practice. The approach always starts from an exploratory phase, in which a relationship with the object is activated, we get involved from a sensory point of view, all the senses are involved. The theatre operator distributes the mediating objects to the participants and asks everybody to dedicate to this relationship, to touch the object, feeling its weight, its consistency, identifying the material, observing it, touching it with closed eyes, moving it through the space to understand if it has a sound. An exploration develops. Subsequently, using the object, a phase of action/interaction with the others or with the external space begins. The object can put in relation with a companion or with several companions, or with the surrounding space. The function of the object is varied, it can develop a different proprioception, a different exploration of oneself. It can have a mnemonic function, thus arousing a memory.

DURATION

about 50 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

The following can be used as mediating objects: wool threads, elastic bands, feathers, bamboo canes, plastic sheeting, bandages, glasses of water, mirrors, sheets of paper or pages of newspapers, balloons, tennis balls, etc. All everyday objects are potential mediating objects in some way.



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Reintegration phase

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Short feedback about what was performed during the session.

DURATION

about 10 minutes



Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented:

This type of practice is a very important cornerstone of the Teatro dell'Ortica social theater experience and can be carried out in all contexts, with children, adolescents, adults, and fragile people, adjusting it to suit the needs of the participants.

Expected competences for the implementation of the session: As described in "First introductory session".

Risks: It is more appropriate to introduce the mediating object in a non-initial phase of the project to avoid embarrassment since one of its functions is precisely to create the possibility of entering into intimate contact with others. It is the theater operator's task to accompany the workshop participants in an extra-daily dimension in which concentration and attention towards each other are possible. This type of work can stimulate enjoyment, profound reflections on the relationship with oneself and with others, and also states of strong emotion. A possible risk is that the music becomes conditioning; some songs favor emotion; it must be calibrated with weighted choices. Care must be taken when using mirrors, as some participants may experience nausea or dizziness.

Recommendations: Also, in this case, as always, it is important to create an environment in which the fundamental rule is non-judgment. It is important to remember that it is not a matter of seeking beautiful movement or aesthetic performance, but rather a spontaneous movement that can free the blocks of the body. Beauty usually comes by itself.



● **Name of the session:** Autobiographical narrative

● **Duration:** 90 minutes

● **Organization:** Teatro dell`Ortica (Italy)

● **Aim(s) of the session:**

- In general, foster self-expression.
- Promote socialization processes and the social sharing of emotional experiences, encourage an active elaboration of one's emotional experiences.
- To develop an ability to observe oneself and to express one's emotions in a space of flexible communication with the environment.
- Stimulate the desire to identify oneself through self-knowledge.
- Process memories and experiences.

Telling your story to an audience has a creative value and stimulates the acquisition of autonomy. It means exposing yourself and becoming a protagonist, taking responsibility for making yourself understood, living the words with full awareness, giving body to words. Storytelling can then become a healing tool. Assuming this responsibility can mean building a process of autonomy and awareness.



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Welcome

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

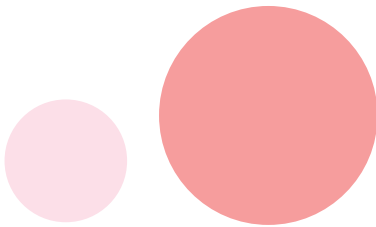
informal welcome, ritual welcome with the ritual of contact, greeting and contract with the group

DURATION

about 5 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Throughout the session: room large enough to allow the group to form a circle and move around the space; sound system



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Psychophysical training and space exploration

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

as described in "First introductory session"

DURATION

about 25 minutes





NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Autobiographical narrative

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Self-story can be stimulated in so many ways. A simple proposal can be to introduce yourself to the group following a schedule with a few things to say: one's own strengths and weaknesses, a favorite food, or dress, or book, or presenting yourself as if you were an object and had an instruction manual with useful and harmful behaviors. A mediation that can be very useful for stimulating self-narration is the use of images (they can be clippings from magazines or newspapers) that everyone can choose to tell their own story. Of course one's story can be also written, using different narrative styles (for example poetry or letter), but here we enter the field of autobiographical writing, which would need further investigation.

DURATION

about 45 minutes (with particular attention to allocating enough time so that all participants who want to speak can do so)

NEEDED RESOURCES

Materials that may be useful: clippings from magazines or newspapers, readings to provide incipits or examples in case of writing practices.

If you ask for a theatrical presentation, it may be useful, if you don't have a stage, to delimit a precise area for the narration.



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Reintegration phase

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Feedback about what was performed during the session.

DURATION

about 15 minutes

Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented:

This type of practice can be introduced into theatrical work with groups of adolescents if an adequate degree of trust has developed within the group and a climate of non-judgment has been created. In particular, it can be very useful and productive for people belonging to an age in which it is not easy to open up to the story of oneself to use the mediation of a metaphor. Recently, in one of our projects with adolescents and young adults with psychosocial issues, a session was surprisingly fruitful in which the proposal was to tell the group your instruction manual, as if you were a home appliance. The participants thus shared their strengths and their most fragile sides with the protection of a metaphor.



Expected competences for the implementation of the session: As described in “First introductory session”.

Risks: Stimulating self-narration leads to fertile but also risky terrains: the recollection of painful and tragic memories can often cause more damage than cure.

Recommendations: Considering that dealing with one’s experiences and telling one’s story is something extremely delicate, the operator must question oneself and be very careful to monitor and be attentive to the path and to the slightest reactions in order to catch any discomfort that may arise. If you work as a team with other specialists, it is very useful to discuss with them. Let us not forget that the principle of reciprocity is the basis of care. The operator must be the first to work on himself, constantly monitoring himself and having the courage to unmask himself.



- **Name of the session:** Introduction session
- **Organization:** UPSDA (Bulgaria)
- **Aim(s) of the session:**

To get started on a new program

This session should be both light and fun, but also imperative and guiding enough for the content of the program. In it, the facilitators should break the ice in the group, help the participants get to know each other better so that they can work together, and establish the rules for the group to work. Dedicated to exploration games and building an active learning environment. Remember that each session objective should be clearly worded and conveyed to participants so that they make a connection to the content and exercises covered, i.e., they are clear about what they are doing and why.

- **Objectives:**

To get acquainted

To agree on the schedules and rules of the group

To start working together.

A sample outline for such a session is:

1. A brief introduction of the presenters, the program, and the methods.
 2. Warm-up activity.
 3. Introductory (name) games.
 4. Team building and bonding games.
 5. Rules/group contract setting. Everyone participates and we seek agreement.
 6. Other introductory acting games or those from Impromptu Theatre.
 7. A game to get familiar with space. Depending on the goals, these can be supplemented by discussion of personal space concepts.
 8. Feedback on session. Recap – What we did today?
 9. Final exercise - something short for closing the session. In some cases, we assign homework here as well, e.g. For next time, think about your favorite film.
-



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Physical and vocal warm-up

PROGRAM

Fairytale box

TARGET GROUP

Children 9-12 years old

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The warm-up section of each workshop should include physical and vocal exercises to empower participants to:

- get to know each other
- familiarize themselves with the setting, space and environment
- prepare their bodies for the physical and vocal exercises
- focus
- create a sense of comfort and security

The short physical warm-up gets the muscles and joints moving correctly, improving the body self-awareness and self-control.

The exercises are part of classical physical warm-up: It starts from the head, continues along the whole body, up to the ankles and toes.

These physical body movements could be done under musical accompaniment or by using popular children nurseries, such as “Head and shoulders, knees and toes”. It good to also research on what’s “hot” at the moment, e.g. some famous

video trend they like to copy the movements. More dynamic exercises could also be included, as mild running in circle, whilst emphasizing on different human parts. This is followed by a warm-up of the oral apparatus through exercises for the correct pronunciation of sounds and words.

Example Exercises:

- bre-bre-bri-bro-bru..., adding other sonar sounds; imitation of sounds: motor, train, boat, horse, etc. to move lips and tongue; facial gymnastics by mimicking different emotions – extreme joy, extreme fear, disgust, sadness and so on.

- Tongue-twisters

(every nation has some, but could use no-sense phrase)

DURATION

15 minutes (up to 30)

NEEDED RESOURCES

Spacious enough room for the number of participants

Expected competences for the implementation of the session:

Knowledge of group dynamics and team-building; group management and facilitation skills, such as session design and planning competences; dealing with resistance and reinforcing rules; a wide arsenal of getting-to-know and trust-building exercises and interventions, including other introductory exercises and icebreakers; flexibility and inclusion.

Risks and challenges: Very low numbers of participants to start with; mistrust due to poor pre-information, past experience, or language barrier; unmotivated participants with high resistance to participate; the presence of certain people with whom the children don't feel comfortable and many more. The management of the school may not be as communicative and does not support the workers and the activity. Parents don't approve of the activity, are not informed, or have unrealistic expectations for the outcome.

Recommendations: Always seek for parents' permission and agreement. Prepare documents in advance that would certify this and make them sign before you start or as soon as possible. Do not publish or expose on social media children whose parents did not submit the necessary documents.

Group dynamics should be taken into account (if you are not aware of this term, it could be discussed with the psychologist in preparation and during



Pictures: Fairytale box Project, 2021-2022, funded by the Bulgarian National Culture Fund via Socially engaged arts program Feel free to modify the exercises in a way that works for you, or add your own. The idea is to get the group excited and get the workshop off to a clear start.

debriefing time). Anticipate the fact that in the first few sessions, due to the voluntary nature of the activity, it is normal for new children to join as well as drop out. While the core group of participants is being formed, each time it is necessary to emphasize activities or games to "incorporate" the new members into the group and integrate them into the objectives and content of the program.

Once again, we note that it does NOT matter if the children know each other in general. They do not know you, and they are not yet formed as a TEAM to function effectively in the program. They may know each other outside the session, but they have different dynamics and relationships.

Many presenters underestimate the basics of group dynamics, but we assure you that if we don't take the necessary time in the beginning to build an active learning environment with functioning members, our efforts will be in vain later on.



● **Name of the session:** Casting

● **Organization:** UPSDA (Bulgaria)

● **Aim(s) of the session:**

Introduction to acting/ taking up roles (playing someone else)

● **Objectives:**

The first few sessions serve as a kind of "casting" for the children. At this point, some may drop out because they have decided that these activities are not for them or because they do not want to make a serious commitment to regular attendance and participation. This is a very normal and natural course of things, which should not concern you.

It is not the most talented who succeed in life, but the persistent and hard-working.

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Hot chair occupations/ Persona

PROGRAM

Fairytale box

TARGET GROUP

Children 9-12 years old

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The children are given pre-prepared paper cards with occupations/professions (or celebrities) according to the interest of the group. It is desirable that they contain something easy for the children's experience: hairdresser, cook, teacher, salesperson, etc. Cards are distributed randomly to the participants.

Actors (kids) are instructed to bring the characters to life. Their task is to embody what they think is the personality from the given card role and build up an image for it.

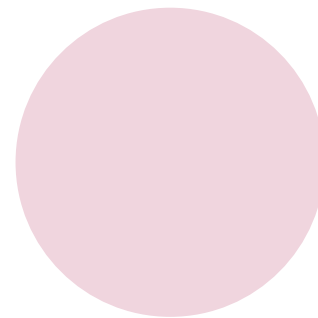
One by one they stand up in front of the group and introduce themselves. For example: "Hello, I am Elena and I am a hairdresser".

The rest are encouraged to ask the actor questions, e.g. How old are you, where do you work, do you have children?... and the child needs to answer on behalf of the person they represent.

Options:

Alternatively, different types of masks can be used and leave the child's imagination run free about who they represent. A mask would also help them switch into a different personality. It could also become a good warm-up for introducing the mask as a device for Theater and the art of playing with masks.

Alternatively, there are OH cards with 77



different Persona's. The kids could select the image randomly (by chance as described above) or select the one they could relate most to. Facilitators need to prepare the instructions and settings for the variations in advance.

A discussion with a learning purpose follows:

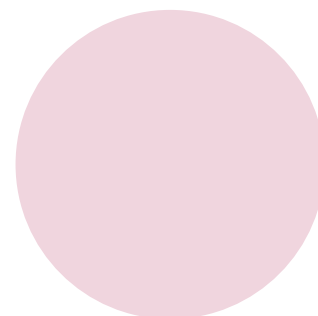
What does it mean to have a role, to play someone, what should we pay attention to. Basic things and questions that actors answer.

DURATION

Facilitators need to gauge the time according to the group numbers, but need to foresee enough time to give every kid to take turns. For equal opportunities and to encourage expression, it could be used hour clock and given 3 minutes each.

NEEDED RESOURCES

Pre-prepared paper cards with occupations/professions/celebrities, enough for the number of participants, OH cards, Different masks





Pictures: Fairytale box Project, 2021-2022, funded by the Bulgarian National Culture Fund via Socially engaged arts program

Expected competences for the implementation of the session:

Group management and facilitation skills

Acting skills and knowledge of image/role building.

Knowledge of Mask Theater, if using the masks

Knowledge and training in using the OH cards, If using the Persona pack.

Working in a team of psychologists, trained in facilitation and actors is a good practice.

Recommendations: Preparation is 2/3 implementation. All options described above need thorough preparation and knowing your group of participants as well as their level of understanding.

Children have lots of ideas, and when we start working with them, they usually suggest we do games together or things they have experience with. It's good to respect and acknowledge their willingness and participation; however, explain to them that anything can be done "freestyle" AFTER our main work is done and WHEN they have worked concentratedly and tightly to fit in the time. This usually serves as an incentive to stay focused and reduce distractions.



● **Name of the session:** On forgiveness and the path of growth

This session is part of Workshops on scenario development inside the Freeway Project. Freeway - Free man walking – theater as a tool for detainees’ integration is an European Project that has Teatro dei Venti as leader and aufBruch (Germany), Fundacja Jubilo (Poland) and UPSDA (Bulgaria) as partners. The four organizations share the problems and needs related to the art of practicing theater in prison with prisoners and aim to improve the effectiveness, feasibility, and sustainability of theater work in prisons, as a means of social and personal rehabilitation for detainees.

The project is co-founded by Creative Europe.

Our approach to script preparation and development could be described as free flight.

Free flight is not just reserved for expert artists, creatives, and playwrights. It will involve every participant in the process: the prisoners, the theater operators, even the wardens and social workers, to produce a multi-dimensional story.

The 22 thematic sessions constructed the true stories of the productions.

● **Organization:**UPSDA (Bulgaria)

● **Aim(s) of the session:**

Gathering stories for scenarios, whilst working on an important topic - Forgiveness and path of growth

To support personal journeys and to encourage the sharing of real events and stories to be used in our Forum Theatre, we used a variety of quick exercises, summarized from a common theme, and some guides.



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Evoking stories of the path to forgiveness

PROGRAM

Preparing The Drafts Of The Performance Scenarios with a common theme: Fathers and Sons

TARGET GROUP

Prisoners

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Session progress:

Literature texts (see below) have been read and researched for homework. Some are suggested by the facilitators, some need to be proposed by the inmates.

Participants who feel comfortable in storytelling are given the opportunity to tell or read the stories, selected by them or us.

If the story of Pinocchio is selected:

Information is given for general knowledge, if needed: e.g.

Pinocchio is a lazy and naive puppet (burattino in Italian means just that, a puppet on a string, hence the analogous character Buratino in *The Golden Key* or the *Adventures of Buratino*, an adaptation of Pinocchio's story published in Russia in 1936 by Alexei Tolstoy). When he lies, his nose grows. After many vicissitudes, as he grows wiser and learns to care for others, Pinocchio becomes a real boy.

Discussions are initiated:

What was the behavior of the father of Pinocchio? Could he do anything different? What would it be like if there was a mother? How do your family/fathers react when you get off track? And before that? Did they try to direct you or steer you away? What did you need to see more of?

How do you imagine the ideal father/mother would react?

How do you react as parents? Is there a dif-



ference between what they did in your family and what you do? What is common and what is different? Is there anything that is passed down from generation to generation? Which one? Is there something you used to get angry at your parents for that you now repeat with your children? Is there something you know doesn't work, but you do it anyway?

Logging stories – all stories are recorded for future references, when the participants will need to write the script.

We have selected a few titles that could make great stories with lots of insights.

Acting out task is made if times allowed.

DURATION

90 up to 120 minutes with a break in the middle

NEEDED RESOURCES

- Text of the all-forgiving Gepetto by Pinocchio.
- Text based on the Parable of the Prodigal Son.
"Son, you have always been with me, and all that I have is yours; but we ought to rejoice and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and came back to life, was lost and was found"
(Luke 15:31, 32).
- Manual for operators with instructions, session by session plan and Appendix 1
- Bibliography.



ПРОЕКТЪТ ВКЛЮЧВА:

Обменни и обучителни дейности, приложение на сътвореното, създаване, продуциране и разпространение на театрални спектакли на обща тема в България, Германия, Италия и Полша.

Обучение за театрални оператори
Състои се от обучителна част, както с операторите и така и с актьорите от затвора (уъркшопи, насочени към подготовката на спектакъла).

Транснационална мобилност
С цел развитие на проекта в европейска перспектива, ще се осъществят мобилности на всички фигури, позволяващи споделянето на опит:

- 4 мобилности за художествени ръководители;
- 4 за театрални оператори;
- 4 за 5-ма зрители

ЦЕЛИ НА ПРОЕКТА

- засилване на театралните дейности в затвора;
- обучение на артистични и социални оператори;
- развитие на публика;
- създаване и споделяне на добри практики на европейско ниво;

FREEWAY
We lift people UP
*FREE MAN WALKING
THEATER AS A TOOL
FOR DETAINEES
INTEGRATION*

Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
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Expected competences for the implementation of the session:

Sound facilitation and group management skills. Feedback and reflection gathering. Empathy and handling difficult emotions. Dealing with resistance. Dealing with conflicts. Workshop monitoring and evaluation.

Risks and challenges: Going too deep into feelings you cannot handle in a group. Resistance from participants and/or from prison management. Lack of feedback, stories, and participation. Prison settings and internal order can offer many challenges, e.g. lack of staff, late starts, etc..

Recommendations: Working in a team of psychologists and actors together is our good practice.

1. Preparation and trust must be built before you enter this stage.
2. Reflection - After each exercise in the session and before the next, it is important to use reflection questions to stimulate debate about the participants' learning/experiential experience. For the most part, ask open-ended questions that allow participants to go through their own experiences and make their own discoveries. Let participants come up with their own questions and topics. Basically, the facilitator is there to help participants in their reflection process and make decisions about their own discoveries.
3. When discussing the sessions, anyone on the team can add suggestions.



- **Name of the session:** Exploring discrimination through theater- first step
- **Organization:** OOCG (Serbia)
- **Aim(s) of the session:**
Help participants to more easily recognize and investigate situations of discrimination in their environment
- **Duration:** 90 minutes

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Woosh

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Invite the participants to stand in a circle. After everyone has stopped, one by one the participant jumps in the air, raising their hands towards the center of the circle and saying the word Whoosh. Explain to the participants that the word Woosh represents their energy that they transmit to the group. When everyone does their WOOSH at the end they all do it together at once.

DURATION

Maximum 10 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Open space, indoor or outdoor



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Sculpt conflicts using chairs

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Invite the participants to sit in a circle and place two chairs in the middle of the circle. Explain to them that this is an activity that is carried out in silence and that by one by one the participant gets up and sculpts a conflict from the two offered chairs by placing the chairs as they inspire him in relation to the conflict they want to portray. When all participants have finished sculpting their conflicts, ask them what they saw and write down all those words on flip chart paper. Participants will have various associations that will describe states, relationships, emotions, positions of power and situations that they associate with experiences or some they have heard and seen. Allow everyone to express themselves during this activity and now verbalize their associations by brainstorming what first comes to mind.

DURATION

30 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Chairs and safe space (indoor or outdoor)



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Reality check through theater

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Divide the participants by making 4 groups by inviting them to divide themselves into groups named after the 4 seasons - spring, summer, autumn, winter. Then give them the task to discuss in their groups about situations of discrimination in their environment - thinking about discrimination in the educational system, public space, family or workplace. The task is that after the exchange, they choose one story to present to everyone, but as a frozen picture. Each of the actors in the frozen picture should know which character it is, which emotion overwhelms him and which body position and facial expression he takes. Give the groups an additional 30 minutes for this process. This is followed by presentations of frozen images of each group, so that when one group presents its image, you ask the others if they recognize what the scene is about. The audience will describe what they see. Give the actors on stage the opportunity to confirm whether the audience is right or not.

DURATION

30 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Safe space with defined position of "stage for presentation"

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Presentations

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Presentations of frozen images of each group, so that when one group presents its image, you ask the others if they recognize what the scene is about. The audience will describe what they see. Give the actors on stage the opportunity to confirm whether the audience is right or not.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Same working space



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Take off the clothes - leave the role

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

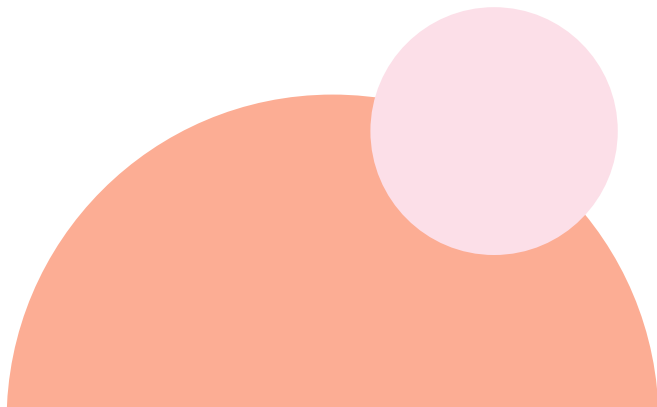
Invite the participants to stand in a circle again and, with a symbolic movement, all together take off the clothes of their roles that they had during the workshop and throw them behind them. By doing so, you help them to come back to themselves and distance themselves from the emotions and energy accumulated during the activity. After that, close the workshop.

DURATION

5 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Same working space





Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented:

The session represents a part of the drama program activities of the OKO organization, which have been implemented in various modalities since 2005 until today.

Expected competences for the implementation of the session:

- Designing educational program
- Communicating meaningfully with others
- Understanding and facilitating individual and group learning processes based on drama

Risks:

- the reluctance of some participants to open up in the group and share personal content, especially if they themselves have experienced violence or discrimination;
- insufficient understanding of discrimination and its forms in different cultures, especially if you work in an international context;
- fear of public speaking/ exposing

Recommendations: Be sure that you have previously had a session with the group on basic knowledge of discrimination and that the group is at that level to be able to freely share content and individual opinions. When presenting the situation, even when it is frozen images, do not put a person who suffered discrimination in real life in the same role on stage. Give it as a clear instruction and explain that this is so as not to traumatize the person again but to give them an opportunity to see the situation from a different perspective.



- **Name of the session:** TT- Theater Team building
- **Organization:** OOCG (Serbia)
- **Aim(s) of the session:**
Connecting group members into a team that will work together in the future on a drama project
- **Duration:** 90 minutes

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Name game activity- Show me your movement and sound

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Invite the participants into a circle, after which the introduction of each person begins. Everyone says their name and makes a simple movement and sound, after which everyone repeats and then the next participant is introduced and so on until the end.

DURATION

10 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space indoor or outdoor (safe)

and walk slowly and finish the activity returning to the circle again.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Walking and sharing

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

At the facilitator's signal, the participants walk around the space in different directions and at different speeds, listening to the facilitator's instructions. When the facilitator says stop, the participants freeze, when he says go go, when he says jump they jump, when he says fall they fall, and that's how a dynamic is created that the facilitator continues by introducing new rules. When the facilitator says during the walk, greet the person you meet with a bow, that's what the participants do, then he adds instructions when you meet someone, say hello with a handshake, say hello with a scream of excitement, say hello shyly, angrily turn your back, say hello



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Atoms- sharing into groups activity

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Tell the participants to walk around the space, when you tell them some of the numbers from 3 to 9 they should as soon as possible form a group that consists of that many members and connect their bodies in any way. So you continue with the instructions until the participants are mixed enough, after which you say the number that refers to how many groups you want. In our case we need 4 groups, and we have 20 participants and we will say number 5.

DURATION

5 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space indoor or outdoor (safe)



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Earth, fire, water, air

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

After they are divided into groups, give each group the task of being one of these elements - earth, water, fire, air. The task is to create a small performance in which everyone participates and uses only the body and voice making sounds, not words. The form can be dance or play as the participants choose. After they finish their work, each group's presentations follow. In the second round, give them the task of improvising encounters by making fire meet air, earth meet water. We watch the presentations of these improvisations as well. A discussion of impressions follows at the end. Ask the participants how they felt during the ac-

tivity, who participated in creating the scenario, who decided who would be which role, whether everything was the same during the first round when they had time to design the performance and the second when they had to improvise for a short time.

DURATION

45 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Perfect machine

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Present to the participants the idea of a perfect machine, a machine that works on the principle of the perpetual mobile mechanism. A machine that works forever and does not wear out. Tell them that everyone should be a part of that machine and that one by one they should go on stage making sound and movement. Each subsequent participant, as they enter the stage one after the other, should build on the previous participant, i.e. adapt their movement and sound to the machine that is being created on the stage. What is very important is that the machine does not stop working and follows the instructions of the facilitator who can slow down or speed up the machine. The facilitator gives the stop sign when the activity ends, which you can crown with a joint photo. Finally, debrief the participants about the overall workshop by having each of them say one sentence that describes today's session.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space



Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented: The session represents a part of the drama program activities of the OKO organization, which have been implemented in various modalities since 2005 until today.

Expected competences for the implementation of the session:

- Designing educational program
- Communicating meaningfully with others
- Understanding and facilitating individual and group learning processes based on drama/ movement/ dance

Risks:

- taking the initiative by the participants to start the activity is often one of the risks of the practice. In such cases, you do what is asked first, say make a movement and a sound.
- stepping out of the comfort zone, to dance or to be something we have never been (fire, for example), always reward with applause and indicate the importance of such activities in terms of creativity and cooperation.

Recommendations:

You can do this activity both outdoors and indoors. It is good to work if the participants have already gotten to know each other a little, so they know each other's names and are at the beginning of forming a group. Of course, you can do the activity with groups that know each other well.



- **Name of the session:** Warming up for Forum Theater

- **Organization:** OOCG (Serbia)

- **Aim(s) of the session:**

The aim is to warm up participants to the concept of Forum theater and its benefits for personal and social development in context of discrimination and vulnerability status.

- **Duration:** 90 minutes



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

A bomb and a shield

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Instruct the participants to walk around the space and look at who is around them. Each participant, without saying it out loud, should choose for himself who the BOMB is and who is the SHIELD. When everyone imagines in themselves who the bomb is and who is the shield, the participants should walk around the room so that they are as far as possible from the bomb and as close to or behind the shield that protects them. After the dynamics that will naturally occur, talk to the participants about who was the shield and who was the bomb, how they felt during the game and conclude that the game is in some way a simulation of life, that is, that relationships are intertwined and we never know who is a shield to whom, and who is a bomb.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Safe working space



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Hypnosis

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

The pairs from the previous game stand opposite each other and first decide who will be the hypnotist and who will be hypnotized. The hypnotist first leads the game by placing his palm in front of the eyes of the person following him (hypnotized) at about 20 cm, and the hypnotist's task is to lead by the hand by walking around the space hypnotized person at the pace and directions determined by the hypnotist. After 5 minutes, the roles are switched. In the second round, triplets are created when the hypnotist now leads two people at the same time, and then after five minutes the roles are reversed. At the end, the feelings and roles that the participants had during the activity are discussed, followed by reflection on real life and life experiences.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Balance of power- contact game

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Participants stand in two lines so that each person has a person in front of them as a pair. The task is for the couples to measure their strength by having contact only with their palms, palm to palm, then their backs, back to back, finding a balance or a position when they can fully rely on each other.

DURATION

10 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Working space

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Mirroring

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Now new pairs are formed and also one person leads and the other follows and vice versa. The task is for the person who follows to do everything that the person who leads does, so to be his reflection in the mirror. We start with slow movements of individual body parts, and end with more complicated movements and actions. There is no verbal communication during the activity. After the activity, we talk about whether we prefer to lead or to be led, as well as about personal responsibility in those relationships.

DURATION

15 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Safe working space

swarm of bees, a tropical storm begins, etc. In the second round, two groups each meet on stage and try to speak in non-human language by having the leader of the group speak, his group repeats, and then the leader of the other group answers and his group repeats what he said. Finally, we summarize the impressions of the activity.

DURATION

30 minutes

NEEDED RESOURCES

Safe working space



NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Walk through the jungle

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Divide the participants into 4 groups of 5 participants each. Let each group choose a leader. When you give the signal, the groups walk individually through the space following the leader, what the leader does is imitated by the other members of the group. The facilitator gives them the task of walking through the jungle, clearing it, then they meet and fight with animals, they pass through water, hot sand, they are attacked by a

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Matsunga

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

Participants stand in a circle. At the facilitator's signal, one participant extends his hands towards the center of the circle saying the syllable MA, the next person next to him starts the same, and then the next until we reach the last participant in the circle, when practically everyone together has their hands pointed towards the center of the circle and pronounce MA loudly. When the last one does this, the first participant turns his hands towards himself and pulls them together as if breaking a stick while saying TSUNGA. This is done aloud by all the participants together, as opposed to the beginning when they pronounced MA one by one. At the end of the activity, reward the group with collective applause.



Name and time of the project/programme where the session is implemented: The session represents a part of the drama program activities of the OKO organization, which have been implemented in various modalities since 2005 until today.

Expected competences for the implementation of the session:


- Designing educational program
- Communicating meaningfully with others
- Understanding and facilitating individual and group learning processes based on drama

Risks:

Some participants may find this activity too "gamey". That is why it is important that summarizing and talking after the activity be in the direction of learning so that they understand that such activities have a strong experiential educational component.

Recommendations:

This activity is good for all ages. It is quite non-verbal, so you can complete it with sentences from real life, for example, sentences that young people receive from their parents and teachers or vice versa. This will make the activity fun but also serious at the same time, because sometimes the messages we receive, although they seem naive, can sound terrible to the person to whom they are sent.



DIOKNO: Which stakeholders are important for advocacy for drama based youth work?

DIOKNO mapping²

The aim is to map young people with fewer opportunities, state institutions, and Forces@Work (media, clubs, NGO`s, churches, etc.), which are important for psychosocial support and/or drama-based youth work advocacy in local and national contexts. The period of mapping was from March to July 2023, so the mapping could be broadened, and it's not a definite list but current.

COUNTRY: ITALY

STATE INSTITUTIONS (RESPONSIBLE FOR FULFILLING THE RIGHTS):

NAME OF THE INSTITUTION:	LINK:
Ministry of Labour and Social Policies	https://www.lavoro.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx
Department of Youth Policies	https://www.politichegiovanili.gov.it/
Ministry of Education	https://www.miur.gov.it/
Ministry of Justice	https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/
Social Services	GI (general information)
ASL (Local Health Authorities, reporting to the National Health Service)	GI (general information)
ATS (Social Territorial Areas, public social services to which one turns in case of socio-economic educational difficulties)	GI (general information)
Employment Centres	GI (general information)
Schools	GI (general information)
Subsidiarity Pacts (promoted by Regions or Municipalities)	Example from our region (Liguria): https://www.sussidiarietainliguria.it/
Child Rights Authority	https://www.garanteinfanzia.org/

² See further details about the methodology on: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/UNDP4/human-rights-centered-development-theory-and-practice/index.htm>

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES (RIGHTS BEARERS):

Young people with low schooling who have not obtained a high school diploma;

Young people with economic difficulties, with ISEE indicator <€15,000;

Young people with disabilities;

Young people suffering from depression, social isolation and addiction to technology or connected to a distorted use of the web and social networks (situations in strong growth since the pandemic period);

Young people who abuse drugs;

Young people with eating disorders;

Young people belonging to the LGBT community suffering from discrimination;

Unaccompanied minors from migrant backgrounds;

Inactive young people (NEET) outside any school or work path;

Young people suffering from episodes related to bullying and cyber bullying;

Young offenders;

Young people at risk of educational poverty.

FORCES@WORK:

Foundations (ex. Con I Bambini, Fondazione Istituto Sacra Famiglia, Fondazione Francesca Rava, Azimut, Archè, etc.)	https://www.conibambini.org/ https://www.sacrafamiglia.org/ https://www.nph-italia.org/home/ https://www.fondazione-azimut.it/ https://arche.it/
Training organizations (ex. ISFORCOOP, CIF, Enfas, CDR, etc.)	https://www.isforcoop.it/ https://www.fondazionecef.it/ https://www.enfas.it/ http://cdr.mo.it/
Social Cooperatives (ex. Agorà, Il Biscione, Lanza del Vasto, Oxfam Italia, Aldia, Etnos, Meta, Itaca, L'Albero, etc.)	https://www.agoracoop.it/ https://ilbiscione.coop/ https://www.lanzadelvasto.it/ https://www.oxfamitalia.org/ https://www.aldia.it/ https://www.cooperativaetnos.net/ https://meta.coop/ https://itaca.coop/ https://www.coopalbero.it/
Associations and Volunteer Organizations (ex. Teatro dell'Ortica, Save the Children, Alpim, Cam, etc.)	https://www.teatrortica.it/ https://www.savethechildren.it/ https://www.cam-minori.org/
Church	GI (General information)
Scout (AGESCI or CNGEI)	https://www.agesci.it/ https://cngei.it/
ACR (Azione Cattolica Ragazzi - Catholic Action) and similar organizations that operate in the same vein, ex. Movimento Ragazzi	https://azionecattolica.it/ramo/acr/
Scuola della Pace	https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30076/langID/it/SCUOLE-DELLA-PACE.html
Solidarity organizations (ex. Caritas, Comunità di Sant'Egidio, etc.)	https://www.caritas.it/ https://www.santegidio.org/
Media (vita.it)	https://www.vita.it/it/
Youth for Peace	https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30080/langID/en/YOUTH-FOR-PEACE.html
Popular disseminators (for ex.: Umberto Galimberi, Alessandro D'Avenia, etc.)	///

COUNTRY: BULGARIA

STATE INSTITUTIONS:

NAME OF THE INSTITUTION:	LINK:
Council of Ministers - State Agency for Refugees	https://aref.government.bg/en
The Social Policy Directorates of the Ministries of Labor and Social Policy	https://asp.government.bg/bg/kontakti/teritorialni-strukturi/
Employment Agency and Labour Offices of the Ministries of Labor and Social Policy	https://www.az.government.bg/
Social Services of the Ministries of Labor and Social Policy	https://asp.government.bg/bg/deynosti/sotsialni-uslugi/
Central Commission to Fight Against the Anti-social Behavior of Minors and the Municipal	http://www.ckbppmn.government.bg/
Commissions Connected to it Ministry of Youth and Sport	http://mpes.government.bg/
Ministry of Education + Schools	https://web.mon.bg/
Main Directorate for the Execution of Penalties - Prisons and Probation Services	https://justice.government.bg/home/index/a29b3d80-11a0-44c7-909c-9e3328169925

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES (RIGHTS BEARERS):

Young people - ethnic minorities

Young refugees

Young people who are facing issues with addiction to alcohol, drugs, gambling

Young people who are facing issues with addiction to computer games and technology or connected to a distorted use of the web, and social networks

Inmates and young offenders

Young people and children without parents/orphans

Young LGBTIQ+

Young people with disabilities

Inactive young people (NEET) outside any school or work path;

Young people suffering from social isolation

Young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, young people with mental health problems

FORCES@WORK:

Bulgarian Red Cross	https://www.redcross.bg/
Orthodox Church	///

NGOs

UPSDA	https://upsda.org/
ANIMUS	https://animusassociation.org/
ROMA	http://www.roma-plovdiv.com/
Big Brother Big Sister	https://site.bbbsbg.org/?fbclid=IwAR123t2_zUe4vOzjCf0edlxVuMepgCmpRyU21uaM-JSwqX1aqeAw0Qu5fLck
National network for children	https://nmd.bg/
Caritas	https://caritas.bg/
National Alliance for Volunteer Work	https://navabg.com/

MEDIA

NGO portal	https://www.ngobg.info/
Media Cafe	https://www.mediacafe.bg/
Filibeliler	https://filibeliler.com/
Marginalia	https://www.marginalia.bg/
Teen Station	https://www.teenstation.net/

COUNTRY: SERBIA

STATE INSTITUTIONS

NAME OF THE INSTITUTION:	LINK:
Ministry for tourism and youth	https://mto.gov.rs/
Provincial secretary for sport and youth	https://sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/
National youth council	https://koms.rs/national-youth-council-of-serbia/
Local youth offices	GI (general information)
Ministry for sport	https://www.mos.gov.rs/
Ministry for education, technology and scientific development	https://prosveta.gov.rs/
High schoolers Union	https://www.srednjoskolci.org.rs/o-nama/
Universities	GI (general information)
Ministry for public health	https://www.zdravlje.gov.rs/
Centers for social work	GI (general information)
National councils for ethnic minorities Public ombudsman	https://mduls.gov.rs/ljudska-i-manjinska-prava/nacionalni-saveti-nacionalnih-manjina/?script=lat
Public health institutions	https://www.ombudsman.rs/
Museums	GI (general information)
Ministry of culture	GI (general information)
Theatres	https://www.kultura.gov.rs/
Art galleries	GI (general information)
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr
Regulatory authority for electronic media	http://www.rem.rs/en#gsc.tab=0

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES (RIGHTS BEARERS):

Young people with disabilities

Young people with psychiatric and psychology issues

Young LGBTIQ+

Young people in NEET situations

Young Roma people

Young asylum seekers and refugees

Young single parents

Young people from rural areas

Young independent artists

Young activists

Young people with economic obstacles

Young people who are adopted

Young people who are victims of domestic violence and/or crime

Young gamers

Young students

FORCES@WORK:

Red Cross Serbia	https://www.redcross.org.rs/
National association of youth offices	https://asocijacijakzm.org/
National association of youth workers	www.napor.net
Serbian Gaming Association	www.sga.rs
RTS	https://www.rts.rs/sr/index.html
RTV	https://www.rtv.rs/
Independent cultural scene of Serbia	https://nezavisnakultura.net/
RYCO	https://www.rycowb.org/
Orthodox church of Serbia	https://spc.rs/
OPENS (former Novi Sad European youth capital 2019)	https://opens.rs/en/
Novi Sad- European capital of culture 2022	https://novisad2022.rs/
Youth Initiative for human rights	https://www.yihr.rs/
Helsinki committee for human rights	https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/index_s.html

Conclusions

Final words are just... not final in general. With this toolkit, we wanted to open a new perspective towards, not just drama-based youth workers and psychosocial supporters, but everyone who is working to make this world a better place, especially young people with fewer opportunities.

We wanted to ask ourselves to reflect on the three most important questions: what young people with fewer opportunities are taking the most from drama-based youth work and psychosocial support? What makes drama-based youth work different from other types of youth work in terms of working with young people with fewer opportunities? What are your recommendations for better recognition of drama-based youth work?

Let see the answers from each partners organization:



Zoran Zlatković, OOCG:

1. What young people with fewer opportunities are taking the most from drama based youth work and psychosocial support?

Through activities based on drama, young people get the opportunity to communicate in a completely different way than what they are used to. In a safe space, communication takes place on multiple levels, on stage, on a fictitious level where they can try out different roles, step into the shoes of others, and also understand others and their positions. What is very important is that during the activities that develop trust and connection, young people have the opportunity

to learn about their emotions, to express them on stage, and that all emotions are welcome. In real life, "negative" emotions are not allowed in many situations. More than usual, during dramatic activities, especially public presentations and performances, young people receive support through applause from the audience, the drama facilitator, as well as other team members, thereby gaining personal self-esteem, recognition in the community, and awareness of doing something good and that they are valuable on their own. Communication on a non-verbal level, body awareness, and interaction with others bring young people experiences such as crying, laughing, personally overcoming boundaries and stepping out of the box, learning about new things, ideas, and perspectives through which they reconsider their own and social values, listening to others, and expressing their own. On stage, young people have the opportunity to review life from multiple angles, to try, to make mistakes, to improve, and most importantly, to have the feeling that they can change themselves and the world around them. They also have the opportunity to feel the world of art, the world of freedom and creation, in which they are the center of the world, whether they play one of the roles, create costumes, or make a scene and present their work in the community. And what is most important is that they get the opportunity to create and learn in a safe environment with their peers through game-based activities in which all differences are welcomed and in which the principle of inclusion is one of the basic ones.

2. What makes drama based youth work different from other types of youth work

in terms of working with young people with fewer opportunities?

What is specific about drama-based activities is the moment of playfulness and freedom for the participants to express themselves in a variety of ways: pantomime, dance, physical theater, different genres, and theatrical forms. Therefore, the products of such processes are often understandable to people regardless of gender, age, religion, race, or political orientation and represent a way for people to meet, get closer, and connect. To understand each other, take action, and change the world for the better. Theater can be performed everywhere, in a kindergarten, school, university, cafe, meadow, and shopping center. And it is not expensive, but it entertains, includes, encourages, teaches, rejoices, and changes.

3. What are your recommendations for better recognition of drama based youth work?

Drama activities should be part of the educational curriculum. Although many pedagogues, teachers, and youth workers have been creating and facilitating activities based on drama for years, it is often not sufficiently recognized or named in the right way. Drama facilitators should be given space both in the official nomenclature of occupations and through the positions that naturally belong to them in schools, faculties, youth centers, civil society organizations, and institutions that provide support in different ways, either to socially vulnerable persons or to young people or people who need creative support for further growth and development.



Emilia Crushov, UPSDA

The Transformative Power of Drama-Based Youth Work and Psychosocial Support

Youth development is a critical aspect of a society's progress, and it demands special attention for young people facing fewer opportunities due to various challenges, including economic, social, or health-related factors.

The UPSDAs project activities provided ample opportunity to explore the role of drama-based youth work and psychosocial support in enhancing the lives of young people with fewer opportunities. While working with various groups, ages, and various artists from different countries, we observed closely how drama-based youth work leverages the unique qualities of drama and creative expression to provide a platform for personal growth, empowerment, and social integration.

During our drama projects, we try to integrate various art forms, such as acting, music, and dance, as well as workshops on diverse applied arts, in order to offer a choice and create a multidimensional experience that stimulates creativity and self-expression. We called it FArt (Find your art!). This approach is particularly useful for people who have never had access to art and are totally blind to their talents. It becomes a quest for self-discovery, and it encourages young people to explore not just their abilities but their identities and values, leading to increased self-awareness. Beyond the artistic skills, drama-based youth work fosters the development of a wide range of transferable skills, including effective commu-

nication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. These are some of the reasons why UPSDA replaced our initial skills development and rehabilitation programs with theater productions and art workshops, led by a combined team of artists and psychologists, working together to provide a holistic experience and to be able to assess the effects on people and the environment. It is our trademark and unique formula for achieving social change.

In addition to this, the selected team engages in activities to establish sustainable links and relationships between the disadvantaged people (including their families), specialists working with them, and the general public to lay the foundations for motivation for change, integration, dialogue, and inclusion in social, cultural, and active citizenship life.

We also provide support and training to develop the capacity of artistic and social organizations, professionals, and volunteer youths through the methods of education through social inclusion and the use of artistic skills development activities, as well as ways to validate their cultural competences.

Drama-Based Youth Work vs. Other Youth Work for Young People with Fewer Opportunities:

Unlike traditional youth programs, drama-based approaches offer a range of unique features, and we will try to highlight some of these below.

Drama-based youth work and psychosocial support hold immense potential for young people who face various obstacles in their lives. They often confront marginalization, discrimination, or limited access to resources, making it essential to employ innovative approaches to support their development. Drama-based activities offer several advantages, such as inclusivity, self-expression, and empowerment.

One of the key strengths of the drama activities (for us) is inclusivity. Our interventions are designed to provide a safe and welcoming environment that accommodates young people from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities or from marginalized communities. For example, in one of the latest projects, we gathered children and youth from three different neighborhoods in the town of Velingrad, two of them from minority groups, plus children deprived of parental care. We often have participants with special educational needs in the group too, who also fit well in the selected team. At the same time, the drama actions offer a unique platform for self-expression, allowing young people to explore and convey their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a creative and non-threatening manner. It gives them a voice to shout out what they feel or what they would like to feel onward. Engaging

in drama provides a healthy outlet for stress and emotions, aiding in emotional regulation and well-being.

During our work, we meet many young people with fewer opportunities who struggle with self-confidence and self-esteem. Drama activities often act as catalysts, boosting their self-assurance and belief in their talents and abilities. The enhanced communication and skills development through active role play can be particularly valuable for young people who face difficulties in social interactions. The activities are highly interactive and experiential, engaging young people physically, emotionally, and mentally. Some of our participants discover solutions to their problems even before recognizing that they have them. This empowerment grants young people a sense of agency and mastery over their narratives and performances, often resulting in heightened resilience and self-determination.

Drama activities often revolve around storytelling, allowing young people to share their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations through creative narratives. This narrative approach can be therapeutic and cathartic, especially with the Forum Theater work we do. Active engagement fosters a deeper connection with the material and encourages self-reflection. By revisiting scenarios and seeking alternative solutions, it stimulates lateral thinking, fosters innovation, and cultivates creative approaches. This process enables young individuals to delve into their (and their peers) distinct talents and capabilities, ultimately empowering and affirming their potential. Moreover, using Forum Theater as a tool for community engagement, we dare to say it is a chance for changing lives, not just stories.

In short, drama-based youth work distinguishes itself from traditional approaches when working with young people, which is why we prefer it to other methodologies. It engages participants actively, encourages self-reflection through storytelling, nurtures creativity and alternative thinking, and emphasizes personal growth and self-discovery. These distinctive qualities make it a valuable and empowering tool in youth development.

Recommendations for better recognition of drama based youth work:



To elevate the recognition and impact of drama-based youth work we offer six key recommendations to be considered:

Research and Evaluation:

Invest in research and evaluation studies to gather empirical evidence of the positive outcomes of drama-based youth work for young people with fewer opportunities. Data-driven findings can strengthen the case for the importance of these programs.

Advocacy and Awareness:

Advocacy efforts should be undertaken to highlight the benefits and impact of drama-based youth work. This can be achieved through publications, case studies, and partnerships with organizations that support youth development.

Collaboration:

Collaborate with educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies to integrate drama-based approaches into both formal and informal education settings. This interdisciplinary approach can expand the reach of drama-based youth work.

Professional Development:

Provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for youth workers and facilitators in drama-based approaches. This will enhance their skills and knowledge, enabling them to better serve young people.

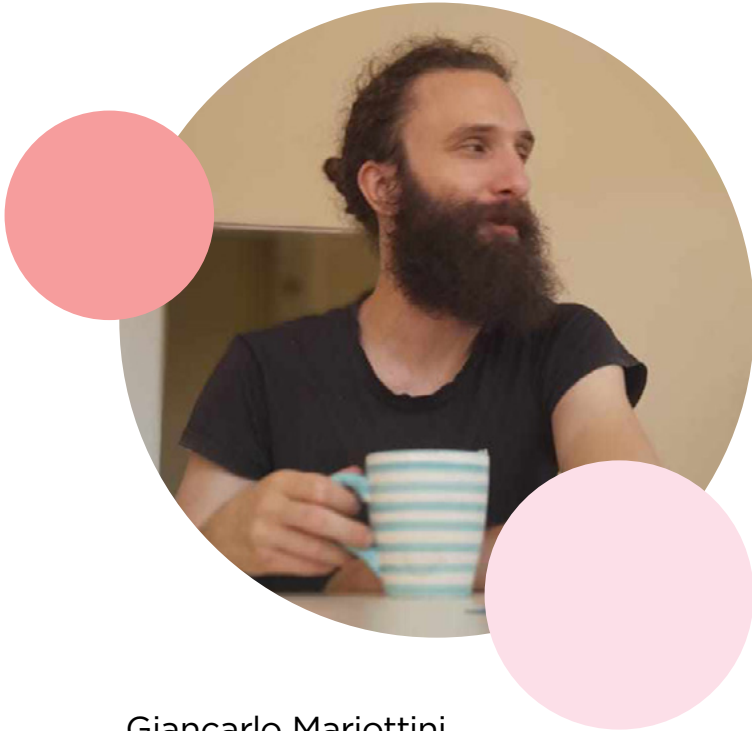
Networking:

Establish and foster a network of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and advocate for the continued growth and recognition of drama-based youth work.

Funding Support:

Seek funding from government agencies, foundations, and philanthropic organizations to sustain and expand drama-based youth programs. Adequate financial support is crucial for the long-term viability of such initiatives.

In conclusion, drama-based youth work and psychosocial support offer a transformative path for young people with fewer opportunities, enabling them to overcome challenges, build confidence, and discover their potential. These approaches stand out due to their inclusivity, emphasis on creative expression, and ability to foster personal growth. By implementing the recommended strategies for recognition and support, society can harness the full potential of drama-based youth work to empower young individuals and promote their well-being and development.



Giancarlo Mariottini,
Teatro dell'Ortica

1. What young people with fewer opportunities are taking the most from drama based youth work and psycho-social support?

Thinking about the well-being or malaise of young people with fewer opportunities, we can only start by placing them within a **broader framework**, which sees our contemporaneity characterized by strong inequalities, both social and economic, by an individualistic drift, and by a weakening of the fabric of communities, groups, and families. It is not possible here to dissect the causes of this widespread malaise, but it certainly affects all people, of any age and of any condition, causing the most evident damage in situations that we consider marginal.

Within this framework, artistic language

and forms can play an important and useful role when they are thought of as facilitating understanding of oneself, others, and the environment. It's about creating accessible devices that allow you to find simplicity and access keys without denying complexity.

The mechanism of **theatrical representation** can prove to be such a device.

Anthropology has found a great field of experimentation in the theater. Representing man and society within the micro-society created by the theatrical moment has the function of creating a prodigious magnifying glass, helping us to shed light on human behavior, on relationships, on the internal and external movements that are at work in the lives of individuals and groups.

The practices of **social and community** theater that exist today are the results of theatrical anthropology, of the avant-garde of the twentieth century, and of the thoughts of director-pedagogues who have gradually declined their artistic work in the sense of researching man and his actions.

"Social and community theater" indicates a specific way of theatrical work with groups, a methodology that can be addressed to everyone and that involves people in creative processes with the specific aim of enhancing the resources of individuals and experimenting with the potential and beauty of interpersonal relationships.

Keeping an eye on the entirety of the person, on his bio-psycho-social unity.

To create a gym where people can ex-

perience relationships, to put what they have learned at the service of their personal changes and of the community. And, given that the community is the horizon towards which theatrical work is directed, it is undoubtedly always better when the theater laboratory is already integrated. **Everyone involved** in the game of theater, children, teachers, and educators, enhancing inter-generational integration and the possibility of dialogue between different subjects without the oppression of roles and pre-established social masks, in the freedom of being able to express themselves within a protected space, experimenting with creative solutions.

Let's think about the relationship between a support teacher and a disabled student, the relationship between the young people of a community and their educators, and how much they could benefit from a creative space like this.

Finding creative solutions.

To be able to come into contact with this world of young people that we often struggle to understand as adults, and to allow young people to enter into a participatory dialogue with the world of adults and with each other.

2. What makes drama based youth work different from other types of youth work in terms of working with young people with fewer opportunities?

Some elements to take into consideration and which, combined together, make the approach unique and fruitful, are:

- The practical dimension of experience.

The intervention takes place within a theater workshop, which is defined as a space in which to experience. Move. Do. Act. Work with people, not on people. Without fear of generalizing, we can say that most of the interventions related to education and the care relationship are still based mainly on words. Using theatrical representation means putting yourself in a position to go beyond words, using the body in its entirety: voice, movements, and emotions that navigate within it. The experiences thus enter the body's memory, and the resources activated in the represented action can also be used in everyday life.

- The ritual dimension. Theater has its origins in ritual, which was born to find and strengthen the internal bonds of the community, having a very important social function, regulating the links with the sacred, and sanctioning the passages of existence. In the ritual, the man is involved as an individual and as part of a community. Social theater creates new rituals that are independent and compete with the system in search of an order that restores well-being and health through expressive and relational practices.

- The use of metaphors and symbols.

The effectiveness of rituals comes through the use of symbols. The multiplicity of meanings that are created through the manipulation of the artistic form opens up the discovery of the complexity and vastness of reality, passing through a synthesis. The metaphor and the symbol allow you to understand something little known or of which you have no experience, finding similarities

with more well-known concepts and realities. For example, the relational field that is created in the theater laboratory becomes a metaphor for the relationships (educational and otherwise) that are woven into daily life.

- **The artistic element as a mediator.** Creative thought is exercised in a space in which objects that mediate relationships are constituted. Music, stage techniques applied to the body, materials and objects, and written and spoken words encourage communication, comparison of points of view, and new ways of relating, ultimately promoting positive changes and transformations.

The key element, in any case, remains the dimension of non-judgment. Only through building a non-judgmental context can theater work and support be fruitful.

3. What are your recommendations for better recognition of drama based youth work?

Generally, theater work with young people and children is considered to be purely playful. A simple job, perhaps to be entrusted to inexperienced operators who need to gain experience before moving on to more demanding sectors. An animation job, an entertainment job, if not babysitting.

The first recommendation is to take work in this field seriously. Dealing with young people is delicate and complex and cannot be improvised, which requires a lot of training, discussion, openness, and self-analysis. And **games are serious business;** children know it, and



Donald Winnicott does too.

Furthermore, especially when it comes to theater, it is necessary not to place our own adult expectations on children and young people. We don't have to guide them to make us create the show that we have dreamed of for a long time and that we have never managed to create; we must have their harmonious growth and autonomy at heart.

It often happens that we see theatrical works made by children that are not actually suitable for children but only reflect the visions and ideas of adults. Let the children say children's words. Let's trust their imagination. They have a lot of it.

We need projects that let the voices and vision of young people come out. To do this, I believe it is necessary to take steps back from our preconceptions as adults, train our gaze on the beauty of cooperation, and think that even young people can teach us a lot.

Session outline for eToolkit



Name of the session: _____

Duration: _____

Country: _____

Organization: _____

Aim(s) of the session: _____

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
ACTIVITY/EXERCISE

DURATION

NEEDED RESOURCES

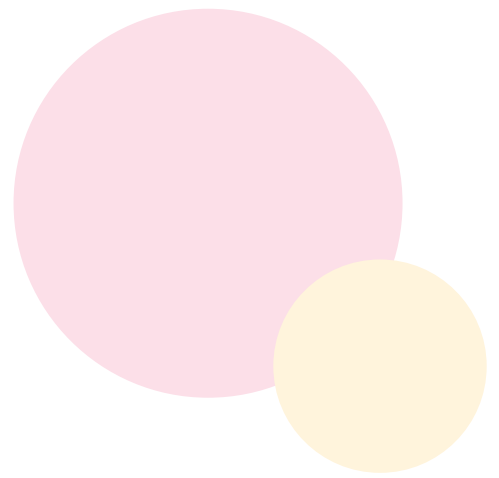
Name and time of the project/
programme where the session is
implemented:

Expected competences for the
implementation of the session:

Risks:

Recommendations:

Sources:



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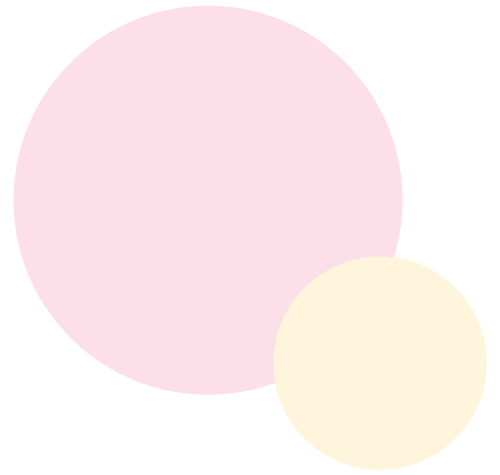
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