

Resource Document for European Youth In Action Training Course ' Making a scene for Change'

An initiative of Eolas Soileir, Ireland & funded through the European Youth in Action Programme



EUROPEAN UNION

Youth
in Action
Programme

 **léargas**

*(Many thanks to Leargas for providing the funding for this project, Merco for the fabulous Italian Vegetarian food and the 18 wonderful participants from around Europe who made this a memorable week - & not forgetting Charley our dog)!
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This resource document outlines the activities/exercises/games that participants experienced on the European Youth in Action training ‘Making a scene for Change’. This training course for youth workers, peer educators and all those working with young people ran in Wexford Ireland in August of 2013. This training course explored social inclusion through **Theatre of the Oppressed, Forum theatre and Legislative theatre** and planned achievable local and international projects that supports the participation of young people throughout Europe. There were 18 participants (9 male and 9 female) from Ireland, Spain, Estonia, Romania and France. It was held in Wexford, a rural part of Ireland, in a converted farm house on the coast.

Section one outlines the activities that we ran initially with the participants upon their arrival. At the end of the resource you will find the programme of the week.

Section two outlines the drama based exercises and games that we ran with the participants for the remainder of the training. It was a seven day training and each day was built upon the previous day culminating in the showing of the forum pieces. The participants experienced through workshop format, Theatre of the Oppressed arsenal of games and how they can be used with groups around issue based work. Participants started to look at issues of power and status in society. They examined the power structures in which we live and the role they play and how they can empower the people they work with. The themes chosen by the pax and explored in the forum pieces were gay rights, discrimination and prejudice, gender violence & equality, bullying and abuse of power. The participants got the opportunity to facilitate some games / activities themselves and also got the opportunity to practice their joker (Theatre of the Oppressed facilitator) skills! All participants received a Youthpass and we allowed time for personal reflection, in pairs and in the large group. On the last day we looked at the further potential of the YiA programme (& Erasmus +) and started to build partnerships for further projects.

Section three outlines Legislative theatre. Legislative Theatre is an extension of Boal’s Forum Theatre techniques and functions to determine the need for, create, and enact laws. Beyond community building and issue awareness, Legislative Theatre uses theatrical techniques to create concrete and specific socio-political impact. It is a step in citizenship mobilization. Included in this section are steps to create a campaign.

The general steps we followed in planning these workshops are as follows:

- Introduction to the training week and Theatre of the Oppressed.
- Getting to know each other's projects and motivations for this training and at the same time Introduction to surroundings
- Expectations (hopes and fears)
- Introduction to NFL & Youthpass
- Name games etc
- Group Dynamics -Start to build the group
- Trust exercises
- Break physical barriers - Focus on movement
- Build voice work - Focus on sound/voice
- Work on rhythm
- Learn some improvisation skills - group *Stress that actors accept all offers (on stage in improvisation) -Building on what people offer.* Co-operation and negotiation
- Image theatre – alone, in pairs, small group, large group - Using the Image technique to embody the issues as a preparation to stage a Forum Play.
- Explore issues of oppression, power in society
- Explore the mechanics of 'how to devise and run' a forum piece
- Preparation for forum
- Devise a forum piece
- Rehearsal techniques - the rehearsal process with Theatre of the Oppressed specific rehearsal techniques.
- Watch the Forum theatre pieces!
- Learn (& practice) about the joker (facilitator in Theatre of the Oppressed)
- Explore legislative theatre
- Look at the potential of the the YiA programme
- Legislative theatre template for developing projects.
- Youthpass
- Debrief and review



Building a workshop. In section 2 you are given a long list of games /exercises that you can include in your drama workshops. There is a multitude of headings to help you plan your workshop. In general each workshop should be built upon the previous workshop. But as a rule of thumb each workshop should include a warm-up, some energisers, the main body of the workshop (for example improvisation work or voice work) a debrief and closing exercise.

These are the Steps we used towards building a group to prepare a Forum piece:

- Group Dynamics -Start to build the group (if needed Name games)
- Trust exercises
- Break physical barriers - Focus on movement
- Build voice work - Focus on sound/voice
- Work on rhythm
- Co- operation and negotiation - Learn some improvisation skills - group *Stress that actors accept all offers (on stage in improvisation) -Building on what people offer*
- Image theatre – alone, in pairs, small group, large
- Explore issues of oppression, power in society
- Explore the mechanics of ‘how to devise and run’ a forum piece
- Preparation for forum
- Devise a forum piece
- Rehearsal techniques
- Show the piece to an audience
- Debrief and review



Section 1:

Walk and Talk

Facilitator led a 'walk and talk' where we orientated the group to the surrounding area. During this hour-long walk each pax shared with each other their motivations for coming to this training, their youth work practice and organisation. Finally they shared what they would like to get out of this training. The group walked in pairs and shared information. We had several stops where they fed back to the main group a summary of their partners answers. In this exercise the pax were able to get to know each other's projects and motivations for this training and at the same time

Introduction to surroundings

Group Contract:

The pax formed groups of 3 where each group were given a task of forming a new country/state where they had to design a banner, song, charter of how they would work together. Everyone shared back to the whole group and from this we extrapolated a group contract that included all relevant points from each group.

Expectations (hopes and fears)

The pax went into small groups where they were given 2 different post-its. They then had to write down their hopes and fears for the training. They then came back into the large group and shared these with the larger group.

What is Non-formal Education?

Facilitator asks: What is NFL:

Split into groups and each group writes up their definitions of NFL.

Share in larger group and then written on one big flip chart paper.

Some input given by facilitator.

Give an overview of youthpass.

Then give the participants questions for their learning journal:

What were important moments today?

What surprised me?

What do I feel good about today?

What blocked me?

What could I do to unblock?

Introduce learning buddies –

using questions form journal – have a chat for ½ an hour!



Personal learning plan:

What do I want to learn, how will I learn it, with whom & when.

Mid-Way evaluation / review

Make sure the room is warm and there are some cushions and blankets.

Ask the pax to have their pens and notebooks close by.

Ask the participants to lie down and close their eyes.

Play nice reflective music.

Ask some questions :

Think of your journey here

When did you first hear of this course?

Was it from an email?

What were your motivations for coming here?

What were your expectations?

How did you feel coming here?

How do you feel now?

What have you learnt so far?

What are your comfort zones while you are here in Ireland?

Can you see yourself stepping outside these comfort zones?

What would help you to do this?

What have been the challenges so far?

What are the key moments or experiences I've had so far?

What opportunities do you see?

How can I make the experiences better for myself and others?

Give the pax time to reflect after each question and add other you see as relevant.

When you are finished speaking tell the pax that they can write their reflections into their note books. Leave sheets of paper on the floor and ask them to write down their mid-way reviews of the TC for the trainers to read. They may now have a chat with their learning buddy.

Evaluations : We carried out both an informal and formal evaluation. See below the informal evaluation. We also had a written evaluation for each participant.

Informal evaluation: Spider web

The group sits in a circle. Facilitator has a ball of string or wool. Facilitator asks the group to give some feedback about the training. They are thrown the ball of string across the circle. Each person has a chance to speak, the ball of wool is thrown across the circle to create a spider web.



Section 2

Warm Ups

Warm-up of body – facilitator goes through each part of the body and warms up

Shake out by 8 – facilitator starts to count loudly to 8 whilst at the same time, shaking the right hand, moves onto the left hand, right foot and left foot. We then move down to 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1.

Name Games

Action name: In circle each person say their name and put an action word in front of it and act out the word, for example ‘dangerous Deirdre’. Each person does this in the circle once and then we go around the circle a 2nd time and each person does the exercise again but this time the whole group repeats the name and action.

Introductions: Each person introduces the person either side of them and themselves. This is, I am, this is
After this is done, move the group so that they are beside different people and repeat exercise.

Your name in circle: Person says another persons name and starts to walk towards them. The persons says another persons name and walks towards them. Continue and keep up the energy.



Energisers

Walk the Space

Instruct the group to walk the space. They must not walk in circles, but walk with purpose as if they are walking purposely to a meeting! As they are walking tell them that at the moment they are at speed 5 out of a speed of 10. Now instruct the group to walk according to the number that you call out, with 10 been the fastest and 1 the slowest, do not run!

Variations:

Walk the space shake hands, can't let go of hand till find another.

Walk the space and make eye contact with another.

Walk the space and shake hands with people you meet and greet them!

Greet them in your own language.

House/earthquake

House / tempest. Facilitator shows a 'house'. Two people raise their hands in an arch shape, that is the house, a third person takes rescue in the house. There is 3 instructions, the first is **house**, 2nd is **person** and 3rd is **earthquake**. Form groups of 3, with one person without a group. participant shouts house, the 2 people with raised hands are required to move and form another house with someone else, the person in middle does not move. One person is always left without a house. When 'person' is called all the residents must find a new house and when earthquake is called all 3 people must find new houses and residents. So there must be one person 'on' at all times.

Culture shock

Walk around space, greet each other firstly in your own language/culture. Now try different cultural greetings. Now make up your own greetings in pairs, the greeting must incorporate three elements, for example, sound, movement etc.. Group looks at the greetings.



Bomb and Shield:

Ask the participants to walk around the space. While they are walking, ask each participant to select 2 other people. They should keep these choices to themselves and not indicate who they have chosen. One person is the bomb and the other person is the shield. Explain that the aim of the exercise is to keep your shield between yourself and your bomb.

After a few minutes, you can call, “Freeze”, and check in with the group to see how they are doing. You can also give a countdown to the stop.

James bond, elephant ears & toaster: Group in circle, one person in the middle. They shout one of three instructions to a person. If it is James bond then the person must act like James Bond with a gun and the two people either side act like two sexy women! Elephant ears, the person pointed at must make a trunk and the people either side make the huge ears, lastly toaster, the person in middle jumps up and down like toast popping out of a toaster and the people either side extend their arms across like a toaster! The person in the middle shouts the instructions loudly and quickly, if anyone makes a mistake they are out (or in the middle)!

Sequence ball: throw ball to someone, they fold their arms to indicate that they have been chosen till all the group have been thrown the ball. Now move into sequence with the ball – start introducing extra balls.

Space Jump: One person goes into the centre and makes a shape. Another person joins and adds to the shape. The first person then leaves and another person joins to change the shape. Now you may pair people up and they work together.

Zip, zap, bong: facilitator passes the zip quickly around the circle. Then introduces the zap in the opposite direction. Bong is when the movement crosses the circle.

Human knots – there is a number of ways to get the group into a human knot. They could walk the space, shaking hands with each other. Shout stop and people reach for other people till everyone is holding hands. Or group is in circle and you ask everyone to extend their hands into the circle and grab two other hands. The group must now unknot themselves. They can do it with talking or silently.

Sword fight: Divide into pairs, put one hand behind your back, with flat palm against your back, your other hand is like a sword. The objective is to touch your partners flat palm without letting them touch yours

French telephone: Everyone stand still (not in circle). Choose another person without them knowing. Now stand still and do nothing just copy any movements or sounds that your person does. Facilitator calls out a scale between 1 to 10. Whatever number is called out, you must exaggerate the movement on this scale.



Mosquito hunter: Mosquito above person's head next to facilitator. I instruct that I must kill the mosquito. We do this by the person ducking down, person each side of them claps above their heads. Carry on around the circle.

Wink murder: Everyone closes their eyes. Facilitator taps one person on shoulder and then she/he is the murderer. Everyone opens their eyes and walks the space. If the murderer winks at you, you wait 5 seconds and you must die a horrible death. The objective of the game is to guess the murderer, but if you guess wrong you are out of the game!

Huggy bear : A warm up exercise

Walk the space, facilitator calls group numbers, ie Get into groups of 5 and then each pax finds themselves in group. Continue until group warmed up. You can finish on the total number of pax, in this way they feel like a group.

Pass the clap: pass a clap around the circle. The clap can go either direction or across the circle.

Splat: Group in circle, one person in middle. They hold their hand out with palm outstretch and say SPLAT quickly and loudly to one person. That person must duck and person either side must say Splat and hold their arm outstretched above the person's head. If anyone makes any mistake they are out, till there are only 2 people left and they have a splat off. Where they are back to back and take steps away from each other. Facilitator shouts out similar words to Splat (ie splash) but only when the facilitator shouts SPLAT must they turn and shout splat! The winner is the one who shouts first!

Hand squeezing: Everybody hold hands. Starting with facilitator pass the squeeze. Can change direction.

Energy circle: start with facilitator pass an energetic movement and pass the energy. Go around circle a few times, now can change direction.

Cat and mouse: Everyone is in a pair. Game of chasing, one person is cat and the other the mouse. Cat chases the mouse. The mouse may stand beside a pair and the person on the outside is now the mouse, so they run! If cat catches the mouse, then the mouse becomes the cat and chases the mouse.

Four corners: Group stand in circle and one person in middle. They change places with each other by eye movement and sound. Person in middle tries to get to their place.



Improvisation / movement games

Walk the space – facilitator then call out different situations i.e.:

An elderly person
 5 year old boy
 person holding their baby
 stressed mum with two fighting kids
 etc.

Walk the space with action:, now in quick sand, warm water, in glass, on the moon
 – etc

Mirroring

In pairs – label yourself A & B.
 A leads and B mirrors – can move about space
 Now B leads
 Now neither leads – need to work together
 Build a relationship with each other. See what theme arises from this exercise, you may start an improvisation.

Giving objects meaning: Put an object in the middle of the circle. For example a bottle, people go into the middle and do an improvisation pretending that the object is something else (for example a bottle become a hair dryer).

Bottle or any other object exercise

Make circle and each pax takes a turn to come up and make something new from bottle or any object that you use.

Everybody in the group gets the opportunity to make a 'new object' from the object in the middle of the circle.

Now move on, second person enters and object must pass from the first to the second person but without being 'asked' for. First person sits down and 2nd person transforms the object allowing a third to step in etc.

**Trust**

I want to go up/ go down: Give the instructions before the group start to move. Instruct the group that they 'walk the space', they are constantly aware and monitoring each other. Then someone walks to the centre of the group and shouts 'I want to go up' or 'I want to go down'. The group quickly walks to the person and either lifts them up and walks a few steps with them or gently brings them to the ground.

Blind run: Group gather at one end of a room or outdoor space. They form a line to catch the volunteer. One volunteer goes to the other end of the space. This volunteer runs as fast as they can towards the group with their eyes closed.

Circle fall: Whole group gathers in a tight circle. One volunteer goes in centre and crosses their arms over their chest. They can close their eyes. They keep their legs & knees rigid. They fall gently from side to side and are guided by the rest of the group.

Closing a workshop

Rain forest: Whole group is in circle.

Facilitator tells the group to copy the person at their left side and only change what they are doing when that person changes it.

The facilitator starts to;

Rub hands and indicates that the person left of them now does the same and so on.

Click fingers

Slap thighs

Stamp feet

Slap thighs
 Click fingers
 Rub hands
 End



Voice work:

Line up: Group lines up and then one by one they walk across the room and ‘do something’ that incorporates voice and body to the ‘audience’.

Pass the sound: Group is in a circle, starting with one person they make a sound and pass it around. Then change it and pass that round. Each person gets a chance to make a sound. Need to keep it moving quickly to keep energy up.

Gangs – Dialogue: Split the group into two groups.

They stand in two lines with a ‘leader’ in front.

The leader makes a sound and movement and the rest of the group copies. The other group responds. Make sure that the group that responds, gets to go first now! Change leaders!

Sound and Rhythm: Group is in a circle. One volunteer goes in the middle. They made a rhythm and sound and the rest of the group copies them. They then move to face someone, who takes on the sound & rhythm and changes it into their own. They move into centre, whole group copies and then the person moves onto some else.

Image theatre:

Split the group into smaller groups. Give them a word and ask them to make a still image of that word. Each group looks at the other group and tries to guess the word. When doing this the facilitator first asks the group

1. 'say what you see' the physical, no interpretation.
2. Then ask the group for some interpretation.
3. The facilitator can then say that the image can make one movement. (each person can make one movement).
4. Dynamisation: facilitator puts their hand on the shoulder of one person and they say their inner dialogue.

Objects: In small groups of around 6, they make objects with their bodies, for example, clock, table, pair of jeans, apple tree, mouse, plate of spaghetti, fruit bowl etc. You can ask the group not to talk whilst doing this. Build on each other's offers. Now in large group make objects such as Eiffel tower, pirate ship, vehicle that moves.

Image theatre in couple – strike a pose, your partner adds to it, 1st person walks out and continue until you pick up speed.

Well know story: In small groups tell us a well know story in three images – can be a film, fairy story etc. Give group time to do this, then show to others.

Present self with Action: Group lines up and one at a time one person walks across the space (stage) doing a sound and a movement. Then the group can split and someone come from both ends and meet in the middle and improvise a sound and movement.



Handshake

(a) Everybody sits down, 2 volunteers go to top and are asked to shake hands and feeze in that position. The audience are asked 'what do you see', 'what situation they may be in' etc.

(b) Now facilitator tips one of the 'actors' on the shoulder, they leave the frozen image and facilitator asks an audience member to add to the image (but in a different

position). Again the audience is asked to interpret the image. This can go on for as long as you want.

(c) The large group pair up, they start a movement piece at the handshake. One person moves from the image and changes their physical shape, but at the same time they are adding to a new image that is somehow connected to the other person. They hold the shape for a couple of seconds and the other person leaves the image and comes up with another physical shape and so on.

d) Stop half the group to watch the other half and vice versa.

Make an image: Two groups. They stand in a line and without consulting they one by one step forward to make an image (shape). Each person holds the image till the whole group have their own images (shapes). They hold this image and the facilitators ask the other group (audience) what they see, then interpret it.

Make an image with theme: Depending on the theme of your workshop now ask the group to do the same but in response to a word you have given them, for example, young people today, minorities, etc. Audience comment on what they see.

Images of oppression: Each group were asked to come up with an image of oppression in society. Show and discuss.



Explore oppression and power in society

Power exercise

Arrange three chairs in front of a table. A bottle of water may be on the table. Facilitator asks which is most powerful and why. The pax may move the chairs, the table and the bottle of water. Now ask people to position themselves in most powerful position. The group interprets it and different people keep trying to become the most powerful, feedback. Now in your groups discuss what groups have power in society.

Questions you may ask:

Who is excluded from society?

Who does not have a voice?

How are these people excluded?

Forum theatre will help to give them a voice.
Legislative theatre takes it a step further to bring about societal change.

Preparation for Forum theatre:

Prep for Forum theatre

Bus Scenario

Objectives:

- To further explore the mechanics of Forum Theatre;
 - To practice interventions;
 - To encourage audience discussion;
- To further explore the role of the Joker;
- To explore in detail the roles of the protagonist, antagonist and other actors in the Forum piece;
 - To explore the objectives of the actor in the piece in relation to interventions and how ‘difficult’ they make it for the people intervening;
 - To explore the concept of ‘Magic’.

Explain to the group that you will set up an improvised Forum piece. Set out a few rows of empty chairs that recreate the lay-out of a bus. Ask for 2 volunteers to take on the roles of the antagonist (male) and the protagonist (female). Explain that you will be the Joker and the rest of the group will be the audience.

Inform the group that the scene is the top floor of a late night bus. Brief the 2 volunteers as follows, and then ask them to improvise the scene:

- The bus is empty except for the protagonist.
- The protagonist has no mobile phone.
- The antagonist enters and despite all the empty seats, chooses to sit beside the protagonist.

Once the volunteers have established this scene, as Joker, ask the audience to assess the situation.

Brief the volunteers that as the scene develops, the antagonist will display inappropriate behavior to the protagonist (e.g. invasion of personal space, various forms of intimidation and acting in a ‘creepy’ or offensive way) and ask them to improvise the scene. To deepen the exploration of issues of equality and discrimination the intimidation/offensiveness can also be based around gender, race, sexuality, social background etc. If the protagonist chooses to go downstairs, the Joker can set out the lower deck of the bus and ask a member of the audience to play the driver. If neutral characters, such as the driver, are introduced, it is important to discuss how ‘difficult’ these actors can be in relation to audience interventions. It is key for the group to understand that there are no easy solutions to oppression, and that neutral characters should make it difficult but not impossible for an audience member to make a positive intervention.

Continue to assess the developing situation with the audience. Depending on how the scene plays out, decide (as the Joker) when the time is right to ask the audience to intervene and replace the protagonist. Invite a member of the audience up to replace the protagonist and ask them to continue

improvising within the brief to improve the situation.

Continue to invite interventions from the audience, discussing the impact of each intervention with the group, until the audience consensus is that the situation has improved. If any of the interventions are beyond the boundaries of reality (e.g., a person magically produces a phone or something quite unrealistic happens), the Joker, or a member of the audience, can call, “Magic”. If the rest of the audience agree that the intervention was ‘Magic’, the person intervening must find an alternative approach.

Yes but’ game.

In pairs there is an accused and accuser. The accuser must come up with some scenario where they are accusing someone of something. For example ‘butcher selling bad meat’. The accused must reply with ‘yes but’ and continue on trying to justify their actions. A further development of this is each time a person speaks they must bring some physicality into their bodies. Break up into pairs and improvise a scenario similar to above. Facilitator stops the group and then we all watch each pair do their improvisation.



Preparation for forum

Divide the participants into groups of 5/6. Ask each person to think of a moment from their own life when they experienced oppression and in particular were the victims of inequality and/or discrimination. It is important that this moment is something they are comfortable sharing with the group. While the group is thinking about this, clarify that they may have been the oppressed person/oppressor or a witness to an oppression.

Ask each participant to sculpt their group into an image of that oppression, and then include himself/herself in the image. It is important that each participant plays himself/herself within the image they create, whether that’s the oppressed person, the oppressor or a witness.

Set up a performance and audience space in the room and ask each group to present their images to the rest of the participants. For each image:

- Ask the audience to close their eyes while the image is created without the protagonist (the person who created the image). Then ask the audience to open their eyes.
- Ask the audience to close their eyes while the image is created with the protagonist (the person who created the image). Then ask the audience to open their eyes.

Invite the participants to interpret the image. Then ask the participant who created the image to explain it. After these discussions, give this participant an opportunity to alter their image so that the oppression is stopped. Repeat this sequence with each member of the group.

Next step

After the showing of the still images and discussion the group now go onto develop one of the pieces into a forum theatre piece.

When they have prepared their forum piece, they may show the theatre piece they are working on to the rest of the group. This is to see if it is clear and for the audience to make some suggestions before the final piece is finished.

After the groups have prepared and rehearsed their pieces you can now do some techniques of rehearsal.



Techniques of rehearsal –

by analytically rehearsing the same text (but in a different way) it forces the actors to enlarge the piece, discover nuances, invent, create words or actions, prepare responses. It lets us (the audience) know all the possible colours of the characters.

These are the techniques we used in this training:

Whispering – everybody has to talk in a low voice during their piece.

Just 1 feeling – perform your piece using one emotion, in this training the group were asked to perform their piece with the feeling / emotion of love.

As animals – perform your piece as an animal of your choice.

In the style of – perform your piece in a certain style. In this training the group were asked to perform their piece in the style of a western movie and a musical.

See below for other techniques that can be used:

Stop and think – during the scene the facilitator shouts ‘stop and think’ and each person to speak their character’s thoughts out loud for 2 minutes, facilitator asks what are you thinking now and actor responds in character.

Questioning of hanover (ask each characters internal monologue)

Keep talking – group keep talking after piece is over.

Hot seat each character or just main characters. (audience ask them questions to help them develop their characters.) We ask about their life, their likes and dislikes, what they think of the other characters in the scene and what they think about what is happening.

Before and after, improvise the scenes that would have happened before and after their drama.

Changing characters – ask actors to change characters

The groups now go back to their own rehearsal time to incorporate some ideas or feelings that have shown up in the techniques of rehearsal.



The Forum

Now the pieces are shown in forum style. In the 2nd showing, action can be stopped at any time for intervention by the audience. Facilitator/joker manages the pieces.

The principal of Forum theatre is to; transform the spectator into the spect-actor, transform into the protagonist and through this transformation, transform society, and not just interpret it.

Through a rehearsed scene (the anti-model), a situation of oppression is shown and afterwards discussed with an audience. During the 2nd showing the audience intervenes in the action to try to change the outcome of the scene for the main character. The emphasis is on reflection and debate and not necessarily on finding concrete answers to concrete problems.

The aim of the Forum is NOT to win, but to learn and train.

The spect-actors by acting out their ideas, train for 'real life' action; and actors and audience alike, by playing, learn the possible consequences of their actions. They learn the arsenal of the oppressors and the possible tactics and strategies of the oppressed.

Steps in Forum theatre:

- First you need an anti-model. An anti-model is a scene that shows a central character (a protagonist) who is oppressed. The scene needs an antagonist who embodies and maintains the oppression. The antagonist has a conflict of interests with the protagonist. The scene ends without the protagonist achieving what s/he wants. There should be room for intervention from the spect-actors to change the outcome to a positive one.
- The text must clearly delineate the nature of each character, it must identify them precisely, so that the spect-actors can easily recognise each one's ideology.
- The oppression must be clearly shown. The solution shown by the protagonist must contain/or show that they try but cannot overcome the oppression. It must be clearly shown in the play. This failure must be shown in well-defined situations. This makes Forum theatre a pedagogical tool.
- The joker encourages the spect-actor to try out their intervention by taking the role of the protagonist. If they really don't want to, then the actor in the part can try out the suggestion.
- Other actors in the scene stay true to their characters. They should only modify their attitudes and actions if they feel that the intervention would make the character do so.
- The joker gives enough time for the intervention to be tried and then asks the spect-actors whether or not the intervention has been successful.
- The joker then invites more interventions either for the same part of the scene or for a new part.

Steps for the Joker:

- Explains to the audience what is going to happen
- Do a warm up exercise with the audience.
- After the scene (anti-model) is played asks the spect-actors to identify the protagonist and the oppression.
- After the first showing of the 'play' you can ask the audience to chat to their neighbour about the issues before the interventions to get people thinking.
- Reply the scene (if scene is very long, the spect-actors can decide on which part of the scene they want to work on).
- After each showing you ask the audience to interpret.

- When a spect-actor stops the action the joker asks them their name and to describe their interventions.
- Important question you can ask is ‘what COULD’ the protagonist have done differently?
- Joker needs to judge when to stop a scene (intervention). Stop it once the main point has been made.
- After the intervention you can ask the oppressed person how they think it went.
- Joker keeps bringing the discussion back to the key questions.
- They should withhold any personal opinion or prejudice.

The Joker rules:

- The Jokers are the “midwives assisting the birth of all ideas and actions”, they do not take part in the action and they do not manipulate or influence the ideas and opinions of the audience.
- The joker never presents their personal opinions
- The joker watches out for magic solutions, they may interrupt the spect-actors actions if they consider the action to be magic. However, the decision about whether the action is magic or not, is up to the audience.
- A good debate is more important than a good solution.

Joker questions:

- What is the desire / will of the protagonist?
- ‘what COULD’ the protagonist have done differently?
- What can be done to change the situation?
- After the intervention – ask the audience ‘how did the interventions work / what did that person do differently’?
- Joker asks the spec-actors to think about the protagonist and the ways they identify with them/share their issues?
- The joker asks the audience to show any thoughts, any solutions – we are not trying to find only one answer!

You can decide with the performers during the rehearsal period if there are “missing characters” that could be introduced, alternatively you can let the spect-actors decide this.

In true forum pieces only the protagonist can be replaced by an audience member but with all things in life, rules are made to be broken.

In this training we initially let the audience take the place of other characters.

Sometimes this worked and at other times it changed the essence of the piece. The group must decide the best course of action in this regard. Also during the showing of the forum pieces, the audience wanted new characters to be introduced, if this is what the audience decides then you the ‘joker’ must respect this.

The Final Dialogue

The final dialogue is an opportunity for the audience to discuss the outcome of the play and how the situation faced by the main character personally relates to them.

To stimulate discussion, the joker can ask the following questions:

- What have been the learning points in this session?
- If you could choose one word to describe this session, what would it be?
- What can you do in your own life to help ensure you will not be in the same situation as the main character in this performance?
- What strategies do you think were the most effective?
- Did you recognize anything in this story?
- Can this happen in real-life?
- What advice would you give your own friends or family faced with a similar situation?

Tip When discussing strategies, do not ask if the interventions were realistic because this type of questioning reinforces a feeling that change is impossible. Instead, ask if the interventions are *possible*.

The discussion that takes place in this final stage is designed to help spectators relate to the main actor on stage and connect his/her struggle to their own personal lives. This helps to avoid a situation where members of the audience detach themselves from the situation and passively give advice as if the problem does not apply to them. During the final discussion, local specialists or partners also have the opportunity to address the crowd and share resources that may be of great benefit to the community.

To conclude the performance, the joker sums up the main ideas presented and reviews the strategies developed during the forum. It is important that this summary reflect the ideas actually presented and not over-simplify and provide a fake consensus.

Tip After the performance, carry out an evaluation. This way the activity can be improved for next time.

(Augusto Boal 1931 – 2009)



Section 3



Legislative Theatre

Legislative Theatre is an extension of Boal's Forum Theatre techniques and functions to determine the need for, create, and enact laws. Beyond community building and issue awareness, Legislative Theatre uses theatrical techniques to create concrete and specific socio-political impact. It is a step in citizenship mobilization. It is politics – it makes politics accessible to people. It engages and encourages citizenship, social change and activism. It helps set the public agenda & helps people organize around change / awareness.

Legislative Theatre begins like most Forum performances: a scene or series of scenes is presented to an audience, which, in their transformation into spect-actors, propose solutions in the form of interventions.

At the conclusion of the scenes, everyone in attendance is asked to review the scene of oppression and all the solutions they proposed and recommend laws that will fix the presented problem.

Attendees often write their laws on strips of paper, which are collected and sorted into groupings of similar laws, and then synthesized into headings to present to the community. The bills are then discussed in a truncated mock legislative procedure, and bills are argued by spect-actors who take positions for or against a bill. After the debate the community votes on the bill.

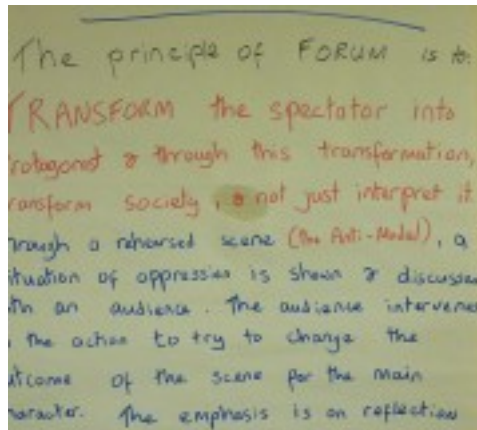
Important aspect of legislative theatre is:

- It zooms out from the personal story to the whole system.
- Examines collective structures that sustain the problem (institutions, law, state and rules of society).

The forum piece becomes a legislative piece through the questions that the joker asks. We zoom out from the interaction, going from the story to the whole (political) system.– for example:

- What is the social problem?
- What is at the root of the problem/oppression?
- What part of the system is supporting the problem/oppression?
- How can we/you make these (societal) changes?
- What concrete actions can we/you make?

- What is the desire / will of the protagonist?
- What do other people in the scene think?
- Where does your story interconnect with the law or public policy?
- What actions / ideas do we have?
- What changes in law/social policy can help to solve the problem?
- Do we need collective action?
- What are the collective structures that sustain the problem?
- Are they the state, law, institutions or rules of society?
- Is it visible?
- Who is at the root of the power?
- How can we make things happen (change)?
- Who can dismantle the power?



Campaign/Project steps–

(When considering working on an issue or with a group)

Issue / theme (what is the issue)

How to constitute the group (interested people)

Aim – what do you want to achieve

To whom do you present the forum to? (who will be your audience)

Where will you present the forum? (streets, schools, etc)

How to contact these venues (contacts you have, etc)

How long will your project last?

Do you want to collect stories / suggestions & what do you do with them?

What connections do you have to these movements/issues/organisations. Can you cooperate with others on the issue, who is already working on the issue?

How to get public attention? Media, etc

How will you fund the project?

How will you collect suggestions during/after the forum piece? Paper / video

Matabolizing cell: Help you formulate all the ideas / transform the suggestions into proposals for new laws if you want to approach legislators - include lawyers, students, those in the social movement in this group

How to get to the power: Petitions, lobbying, meeting with politicians



Programme for the training week:

	Morning	Afternoon	evening	
Sat 10th			Welcome. Name games Getting to know each other on a personal level. Learning Buddy	
Sun 11th	Introduction to training and theatre of the oppressed. Getting to know each other's projects and motivations for	The pax will experience through workshop format, Theatre of the Oppressed arsenal of games and how they can be used with groups around	Reflection time before dinner (individual and then share with your learning buddy) Two countries workshop!	

	<p>this training and at the same time</p> <p>Introduction to surroundings</p> <p>Expectations (hopes and fears)</p>	<p>issue based work.</p> <p>Introduction to NFL & Youthpass – give out journals</p> <p>Group building/start exploring issues of inclusion and participation in civic society.</p>		
Mon 12th	<p>Participants start looking at issues of power and status in society. Examining the power structures in which they live and the role they play. How they can empower the people they work with.</p>	<p>Workshop using Image theatre, firstly as an aesthetic tool and then as a tool for finding a story, issue or theme to work on towards a forum theatre piece</p>	<p>Reflection time before dinner this time in groups with mentor.</p> <p>After dinner two country evening.</p>	
Tue 13th	<p>Using the Image technique to embody the issues as a preparation to stage a Forum Play.</p> <p>The Forum Play structure and devising an issue based forum play.</p>	<p>Mid-way evaluation & continue with drama workshops.</p>	<p>Reflection time before dinner with learning buddy.</p> <p>After dinner 2 country evening.</p>	
Wed 14th	<p>Work on the Forum theatre pieces with your group.</p> <p>We start the rehearsal process with Theatre of</p>	<p>Free afternoon</p> <p>Possibilities to visit some local heritage facilities incl. Tintern Abbey, Hook Lighthouse, Loftus Hall. Also Wexford town</p>	<p>Evening in local restaurant – transport is organized!</p>	

	the Oppressed specific rehearsal techniques.		
Thur 15th	<i>Let's watch the Forum theatre pieces! Learn (& practice) about the joker (facilitator in Theatre of the Oppressed)</i>	Continue to watch the forum pieces. Participants have the opportunity to become the joker and practice their facilitation skills. Legislative theatre is introduced.	reflection time with mentor) In group and alone. (before Dinner) 2 country evening.
Fri 16th	Workshop on the potential of the the YiA programme Legislative theatre template for developing projects. Start to work on project ideas.	Partnership building activities for future projects. Present your project ideas. Youthpass & evaluation	Last evening Party hosted by all the participants!
Sat	17 th Departure day		

Further resource & comment on role of Joker:

Jokering Forum Theatre

The Role of the Joker

- The joker (the facilitator of proceedings) begins by explaining the format of the show, and might warm the audience up with a game.
- Joker asks the audience how the interventions worked - what that person did differently.
- The joker is there to break the fourth wall from the outset. Talk to the audience from the start, ask them to think about the protagonist and the ways they identify with them/ share their issues. (It's best not to use the word oppression with an audience - it's too grand and off putting a term.)
- The joker can ask the audience to show any thoughts, any solutions regardless of whether they think they will work. Emphasise that we are not trying to find one answer, we are just brainstorming solutions.
- A position of genuine naivety is useful for the joker, it can be very useful to be able to ask questions which are genuine and honest.
- It can sometimes be a good idea to ask the audience to brainstorm and chat to their neighbour about the issue they've just seen played out, before the interventions happen, to get people thinking and start the seeds of ideas.

- While the audience are discussing, it can be a good idea to send the actors out amongst them to listen in, but be careful about the actors getting involved in any discussions as they can end up influencing unfairly.
- The joker might ask the audience to interpret back what they have just seen, to ensure that everyone understood what went on and is reminded of the story. They can then ask what the protagonist (don't use this word - use the character name) could have done differently, then ask those people who respond to come onstage and show their ideas physically. It's a nice way to let the forum flow naturally, and act as though it's just struck you as a good idea for the audience to show their idea onstage rather than just talk about it. This might make it less intimidating.
- If there's lots of ideas, the joker can queue the interventionists up on the side of the stage so they're ready to go and try a new intervention when the last one has finished.
- The joker needs to judge when to stop a scene, needs to make sure that the audience isn't getting bored, that the interventionist isn't getting tired/running out of ideas. Stop it once the main point has been made. To this end, the joker should face outwards towards the audience, not looking in at the action onstage.
- Asking the actors playing the oppressors how they felt the scene went is interesting but shouldn't be dwelt on too much, better to get the audience discussing. It's more interesting to ask the oppressed person how they think it went.
- Forum is not about changing others, it's about changing yourself. Someone else changing is a bonus but it isn't the point.
- Breaking the rules of forum is entirely possible, (ie. someone taking over the role of the oppressor) and jokers must be flexible in every way. However this should happen as an exception to the rule, and it should be carefully deconstructed afterwards, asking whether that person achieved what they wanted. (Taking over the oppressor role is especially controversial, as it can just reinforce oppressive behaviour, or can be too magical - Boal says that we cannot expect to change the behaviour of an oppressor, we must just find solutions to work around them, which is why he only sanctions the replacement of the protagonist, as we can only expect to change our behaviour.)
- Another technique can be stopping the action and asking the characters for hidden thoughts. The audience or the joker can stop the action.
- Interventions are often about specifics and details, which is often useful to clarify things such as rights, points of law etc. However it is often useful for the joker to ask what the central point of the play is, bring it back to the point. It is often easy for a play and the interventions to get bogged down and not end up dealing with the issue at hand at all.
- The joker's role is to get the debate going, get down to the real issues and make sure the discussion is not skirting around them and getting bogged down in specifics. Keep bringing it back to key questions rather than forcing the debate with opinion or steamrolling.
- The crucial moment for a joker is the point when it is about to be shown a 2nd time, this is the make or break time for whether interventions will happen.
- The joker must be a diplomat, there may be occasions where an audience member disagrees with an intervention by someone else, and this needs to be handled swiftly and sensitively.

Characteristics a Joker needs

- The joker needs to be sensitive to how the audience are feeling - the intimidation of coming onstage.

- The joker should make it easy for people to exchange information and debate between themselves.
- The joker is there to listen, provoke, pose questions, be devil's advocate and run the theatrical game that is forum theatre.
- Jokers are not teachers or judges, they are independent and must withhold any personal opinion or prejudice.
- The joker must keep a neutral moral position, letting the audience put their opinions across and do the judging. This position is obviously tricky with interventions which might be racist, controversial or directly at odds with the purpose of the forum. However, as a joker you lose a lot of credibility if you pass judgement, and it is always best to reflect any such interventions back at the audience, asking them if it is ok (in the hope that the majority will say no, and won't be racist!!)
- The joker can be many different types of characters depending on who is taking that role. They can even be a provoker - oppressive in themselves, and challenging people to come up and take them on. This has to be played very carefully however, and I have my doubts about this method as it is directly contravening Boal's instruction that the joker should be neutral and not display their own opinions. This method would have to be conducted by a very experienced joker.

Advice for Jokers

- Adrian Jackson says as a joker you shouldn't concern yourself too much with the terms 'should' and 'would', ie. 'what should this character have done'. 'Could' is a much better term - it opens up possibilities, questions what's possible, doesn't pass judgement. Encourages the exploration of consequences of an action.
- If an intervention is posed which the actors can't respond to because of a lack of knowledge the joker has the power to ask the audience what the 'law' is etc. Or maybe it will raise the possibility that no one actually knows the law, and it needs to be researched.
- In small companies where there aren't enough people to have a dedicated joker it could be possible for the protagonist of the piece to be a 'joker in character', coming to the front and explaining that this is something that happened to them and that in the second showing they will be able to intervene. Then stepping in and out of character to deconstruct the interventions.
- The form of forum can be changed, there is a chapter in '**Playing Boal**' (Chrissie Poulter) about how Age Exchange have played forums where both the oppressed and oppressors are replaced (as in this instance it isn't too clear which is which). This can be done, and is still forum theatre, but a variation on Boal's pure form, and not necessarily Theatre of the Oppressed.
- It is better for the joker not to ask yes or no questions as these close down debate (unless going for a vote.) The language used is tricky, jokers need to be careful with words such as 'better', 'worse', 'success'.
- It is a nice idea when someone comes onstage to do an intervention to introduce the actor and remind the audience who they will be playing - it gives the participant a chance to gather their thoughts.
- At the end of the first showing, ask the audience if the play was clear. Ask what the 'problem' was in the scene. (Avoid words like oppression and protagonist as they are off putting and don't always make sense to people.)
- Try and 'cook up the audience', as then what the main character could have done differently. Some jokers are quite provocative, and play devils advocate.

- Remind the audience of the rules.
- Ask them to talk among themselves about moments when the main character could have acted differently. Ask them to tell you about this, and then invite one of these people up onstage to play it out.
- Let them know that they don't have to start from the beginning of the play. They can start from anywhere they like. Also remind them that they can and should shout 'Stop' as the play is running for a second time.
- When someone comes onstage, ask them where they would like to take the action from. Remind the spectator that they can change the scene and take it into any location they want to.
- You must monitor what it is that the spectator wanted to try out, and ensure that they are given a fair chance - you need to make sure the actors aren't imposing their own opinions.

Questions for Jokers to consider

- A question is whether the joker announces that the play is tackling a particular theme beforehand or whether you let the audience decide for themselves what the pertinent issues are.
- Also, should you explain the whole forum concept first? If you do this it runs the risk of confusing people with too much information at the start, may be better to introduce them slowly. However, if you don't, then people might not watch the first showing of the play with their minds in gear, and won't be looking out for moments where they can intervene or change the action.