



the humour alliance

Humour Festival

Celebrating the value, importance, relevance, benefits, and power of humour to Youth Work Practitioners and Non-Formal Educators

Line Up

&

Festival Events

Ekaterini Prokopio, Greece



Ekaterini Prokopio, Greece, wears many hats - Counselling Psychologist, Systemic Psychotherapist, Family Therapist, Solution Focused BRIEF & PROKOP Practitioner, Body Centred Psychotherapist, Trainer and Youth Worker.

She works with children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly on an individual basis but also in small and large group settings and in a variety of areas including Humanitarian Education, Coaching, Mentoring, Well-being, non-formal learning, life-long learning, resilience, AAD (Adversity Activated Development), Human Rights and Family Services.

Crossing the Lines: There are no innocent Jokes! Monday 21st June, 12pm (CET)

What is a joke? What is an innocent joke? Are there any innocent jokes? What is humour? What is having fun, or enjoying ourselves? What makes us laugh? Why doesn't everybody laugh at 'the joke?' What makes it difficult for you to understand another person's joke? What is a joke for some but not for others? What is the impact of humour on areas such as Racism, Xenophobia, Sexuality and Culture? These questions and more will be explored in this workshop. Why not join Ekaterini and find out if there really are any innocent jokes.

Building Stories through Humour and Laughter, Tuesday 22nd June, 4pm (CET)

Stories are part of our everyday life and in this workshop, you will find out how you can change the way you view life and its many realities. Using humour, you'll begin to discover tips to build your own stories or 'that story' with other people. You can develop alternative and empowering stories through humour by developing greater awareness, and new perspectives and competences. Want to find out how you can face difficult situations with a smile or use humour to change your reality or challenges you face in everyday life, then come along and join Ekaterini and she will demonstrate how. Building Stories through Humour and laughter is an experiential workshop using a number of Non-Formal Learning and Life Long Learning Methodologies, along with Solution Focused BRIEF & PROKOP Practice, Systemic Psychotherapy, Body Centred Psychotherapy and Coaching.

Humour and Laughter: Building on Resilience and AAD (Adversity Activated Development) during Grief, Trauma and Illness, Thursday 24th June, 10am (CET)

How can we use humour to make an ill person feel better or to make a difficult time in their life easier, or more colourful? How can you get out of a deep black depression and see hope, both inside you and around you? Is it possible to develop alternative empowering stories to deal with Grief, Trauma, or Illness? If you were 'separated' from your problem, what kind of story would you tell?

In this workshop you will have the opportunity to explore themes such as 'I am not my illness / I am not my trauma.' You will have the opportunity to consider ways of opening your lenses on life and allow smiles and laughing in by reframing what is happening to you, through humour.

Finding your inner strength and developing new possibilities in life through humour, you will consider what your body or life is telling you and explore how humour can help you heal. Join Ekaterini on a gentle and inspiring process of how humour can lift you out of the darker moments.

Ruby Rain, USA



Ruby Rain, US, shares a wide range of practical information garnered from academia, extensive travel and multicultural ceremony / theatre for the past three decades. Comments on her presentations include: "You were spell-binding!" "We laughed so hard, we almost wet our pants!" "It was clear the Feminine Divine was shining through."

Humour through The Art of Storytelling, Monday 21st June, 2pm (CET)

According to Ruby, the art of storytelling is 'what you choose to tell & how you tell it.' Humour is what makes it pop and linger in the mind and heart. In this workshop participants will choose a story they all know, build it up, break it down, pair off to make it their own, and then come back together to share their special story. Join Ruby and discover how it pops and linger!

Humour as Healing, Thursday 24th June, 2pm (CET)

This combination leads us straight (or zigzag!) into sacred clowning terrain. We all know that jokes & humour release tension thereby reducing pain. While this can be done alone or with friend(s), it's so much more powerful within a community of witnesses. I will show you how to use various physical techniques to identify "shadow knowing" for powerful release and joy. All you have to do is trust yourself! I'm just a midwife to what your soul is already reaching for.

Rianne C ten Veen, The Netherlands



Rianne ten Veen is a trainer, facilitator, assessor, researcher and project manager with preferred focus on environment/ sustainability related matters. She has an interdisciplinary background both in terms of education (e.g. LLM, MA, MSc) as well as work sector (commercial, NGO, academic). Growing up she spent years living in a number of countries and has also as an adult lived, worked and/or visited a significant number of countries.

Timing is Everything: The RIGHT Joke in the WRONG Moment! Tuesday 22nd June, 10am (CET)

Are jokes universally funny? Who decides what is, or is not funny? If you find a joke funny, can you assume others - especially with different cultural experiences upbringing - ought to find the joke funny too? If someone shares a joke you don't find funny, should you assume malintent? Can jokes help or hinder relationship building? This workshop will focus on a number of aspects to consider when and how to incorporate humour in your intercultural work. It will use a number of practical case studies to help attendees gain insight into the opportunities and pitfalls of humour in an intercultural setting. Do also bring your own experiences or queries/ scenarios!

Gil Nunes, Portugal



Gil Nunes, Portugal, is a youth worker from the Municipality of Gaia. He was part of #Gaia2024 – European Youth Capital Candidacy Team and is actively in various projects including Participatory Budgeting for Youth and Ricardo Quaresma scholarships, among others. He is also the Ambassador of the European Platform on Learning Mobility for Portugal and five-times novelist. For several years he also worked as a football scout and as a sports journalist for a number of national and international publications. He is also a football commentator and sports expert for the Russian press.

A Very Novel Story: Tricks of the trade – Tom Sharpe Style! Tuesday 22nd June, 12pm

Storytelling is for all! In fact, you don't need to be "Messi of the words" to write a good tale and a good novel. In this workshop participants will find out more about characters, vocabulary, structure, conflicts and a surprise effect on your story! Using Tom Sharpe's novels as an example, participants will get in touch with much more! Rock music, films and great books can be the first step to build your 'secret sauce.' Think outside of the box with Gil and discover the magic ingredients that make up the secret sauce!

Jo Wilkie, UK



Jo is a British intercultural psychologist specialised in the promotion of resilience and mental health and migration. She has lived and worked all over the world and is presently living in Barcelona with her Guatemalan husband and 3 teenage children. She has worked in diverse organisations and many sectors over the years and recently has worked as an online dialogue facilitator for Erasmus Virtual exchange and also as a tutor for Unicaf online Pan African university. She is interested in promoting resilience with different groups and over the last few years has worked mainly with young people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Before becoming a psychologist, she worked in music. She has lived in 7 countries and speaks 3 languages.

Humour as Resilience, Thursday 24th June, 3.30pm (CET)

This workshop will present sense of humour as it is represented in many theories and models of resilience. In general, sense of humour has been neglected in many studies, methods and interventions in psychology, but in resilience work it is part of the mandala and considered a very important element in personal, family and community resilience. This workshop will share some of these ideas and invite you to think about your own humour and resilience. Want to know more about how humour can be used to support resilience then this is the place for you.

Mara Rodrigues, Poland



Mara Rodrigues, Poland, is a trainer, youth worker, and youth leader at the local level, in Leszno, Poland and at the regional level in the Wielkopolska region, as well as at an international level around Europe. Mara is the author of educational programme content designed with and for young people that are willing to promote active citizenship and the Erasmus+ Programme at the local, regional and European levels.

She is passionate about education, in particular non-formal education and learning-centred approaches for personal and professional development, as well as lifelong learning. Mara studied Social Communication, with an emphasis on international communication and communication across cultures and finished her master's degree in international Relations, with a paperwork on creative thinking in IR. She loves sharing learning experiences and knowledge with people to develop ideas together.

Humour as a Tool for Stress Management, Wednesday 23rd June, 10am (CET)

Have you ever had an issue in your life, one where you were unable to manage, you got stressed but humour helped you get over it? In stressful times, when we are sort of lost and unsure what to do, humour can be a significant tool at our disposal and can help lead you into a 'stress-release' stage. Humour helps you to get real and brings you closer to others. Let's find out how :)

During this workshop participants will bring their own life experiences of using humour as a stress management tool and analyse how they reached the stress release stage. Bring material from your life experience so as to maximise learning together and join Mara as she helps bring you to the stress-release stage!

Kelinha Brandao, Portugal



Kelinha Brandão is a Social and Educational Animator currently working with kids in afterschool activities. In her free time, she likes to volunteer (at local and European level) and performs with a theatre group near her hometown. She loves to bake, to knit and to write and read children's stories. Since restrictions and lockdown began, Kelinha has been reading books online for her friends and their kids in a bid to keep smiles on the faces of the young ones and the sanity of the older ones!

Storytelling with Raquel! Friday 25th June, 12pm (CET)

The importance of storytelling can never be underestimated. Who doesn't love to hear a story, especially a funny one! In some ways we are all Story Tellers. In this workshop, you will benefit from a short intro on the subject, listen to a funny Portuguese traditional story and discuss with other participants what makes a funny story. Working in smaller groups, you will then have the opportunity to use a story and transform into a funny one and share it with other participants. Fancy finding out how to transform a regular story into a funny one? Then this is the place for you.

Gemma Aragones, Spain



Gemma Aragonés, Spain, is a social worker, trainer, and clown with experience in working with young people, people with disabilities and within the prison system. She works with groups at risk of social exclusion using non-formal education and performing arts to foster self-learning, reflection, and empowerment. She has created Alter Network, an association that works to promote opportunities for young people in Bulgaria, with future headquarters in Italy and Spain. She is currently teaching circus and clowning to children, youth and people with disabilities and facilitating workshops on Comedy Theatre and Improv Theatre for youth workers.

Comedy Theatre – Stand Up Comedy, Tuesday 22nd June, 2pm (CET)

Have you always wanted to explain a story, an experience, a moment in a humorous way, and you have never been able to do so? Do you want to use humour to get people's attention or to help your target group raise awareness about a specific topic? If you want to know how, come along and join Gemma as she takes you on a journey where you'll pick up some tips on how to do so.

Comedy Theatre – Clowning, Wednesday 23rd June, 2pm (CET)

According to Gemma there's a clown in all of us and she's inviting you to know it and play with it! You are going to be curious and surprised by everything that is happening to you. Every opportunity will be a great chance to try new things, fail all the times possible, and try again. You clown!

The 'Holy Trinity' – Alexa, Siri & Google Assistant: Artificial Humour in the modern era, Wednesday 23rd June, 7pm (CET)

Do you love me Siri? Do you want to be my friend Alexa? What can they do? What can't they do? Can they substitute a human friend? Completely or only at some level? Can they be better than an assistant? We are going to talk and experiment with our phones, tablets and computers and see how far we can go with them.

Humour & Theatre of the Oppressed – Lightness in the dark moments, Thursday 24th June, 12pm (CET)

Can we use humour and theatre of the oppressed together? Are we able to combine these two disciplines of theatre? YES, is the answer. You are going to dive into a debate and discuss what is right or wrong, if there is right or wrong, and what should be permitted or not. Intrigued? Join Gemma as she explores how humour can respond to some of life's darker moments.

Dr George Simons, USA



Dr. George Simons created the award-winning *diversophy*[®] intercultural competence games for training programmes and online learning (www.diversophy.com). He authored and edited *EuroDiversity: A Business Guide to Managing Difference*, and is co-author of *Putting Diversity to Work*, *Seven ways to Lighten your Life before you Kick the Bucket*, as well as eight Cultural Detective[®] intercultural guides. Currently he focuses on developing tools and expertise for addressing pressing social issues of masculinity and mental health.

DiversiSMILES, Wednesday 23rd June, 12pm (CET)

Humour provides us with a large variety of cultural challenges. What humours us, causes us to smile and laugh, may create confusion and even pain in other places and contexts. The diversiSMILES game has been created to generate discussion and understanding about these delicate subjects as well as inform players of dimensions and practices of humour in a variety of different cultures including some do's and taboos.

You will be introduced to and play in small groups a game which provides a safe space to connect with each other and discuss the experiences, thoughts and feelings about what makes us smile, laugh, giggle, chuckle and hoot. Join George Simons, who will be supported by his beautiful assistant, Mr Stephan van de Ven, as they help bring smiles to your day!

Eleni Plevra, Greece



Eleni, lives in Thessaloniki and is President of EnoGreece and works at Hellenic Ministry of Education. A teacher by profession, she organises e-twinning seminars and is a trainer in digital tools for teachers. She studied at Ekda and is an authorized trainer in human trafficking. She has MSDs in Gender Equality and Water Management.

A Greek Tragedy: Humour Style, Friday 25th June, 4pm (CET)

In this session, Eleni will provide a description of ancient Greek theatre and how it is constructed. She will explain ancient Greek theatrical masks and in doing so look at playing with emotions. In addition, she will outline the Aristotle's definition and characteristics of tragedy and comedy, i.e., why tragedy is the mirror image or negative of comedy along with the responsibility of the main hero. Eleni will also introduce participant to Aristophanes – the most important dramatist of the Old Comedy and his works, and how these define the legacy of Old Comedy, with their pungent political satire and abundance of sexual and scatological innuendo - he lampooned the most important personalities and institutions of his day. Finally, and without a hint or irony, Eleni will demonstrate how critical thinking helps us look at how tragedy becomes comedy.

Carmine Rodi Falanga, Italy



Carmine Rodi Falanga (1977, M) does a lot of things. He is a trainer, facilitator, lecturer, storyteller, author, blogger, stand-up comedian, psychotherapist-in-training. Active since 2001, he operates as a freelance professional in the field of communication and training for individuals, public entities, NGOs and businesses. He uses the power of stories and world-building, activities based on experience, and educational games to create fun and effective tailor-made learning opportunities with a very personal touch.

Some of his specialties are communication skills, public speaking, personal and organizational development, story crafting and storytelling, comedy and humor, game-based learning, intercultural communication and understanding. Born near Napoli (Italy) he currently lives in Prague (Czech Republic) with 1 wife, 2 children, 1 cat and 1 domestic robot. That's way more than he can manage.

Let's see how funny YOU are: A Quick Intro, Friday 25th June, 11am (CET)

Some people are just funny. They may have a natural sense of timing, exceptional insights, or simply come across as very very likable. But as every performer knows very well, the main part of a professional comedian or humourist's work is trial and error, and hours and hours of practice. In our session, we will try a few exercises from stand-up and improv classes to boost our creativity, get self-doubt under control, and try our hand at being relaxed when speaking in public. In one word, we will try to get funnier. We can't guarantee success, but the first step is getting involved. Then everything can happen.

Stand Up with Carmine, Friday 25th June, 7.30pm (CET)

Carmine will help bring proceedings to a close with thirty minutes of stand up followed by an opportunity to put questions to him and find out secrets of stand up! Want to have fun, laugh but learn from someone who has worked on his craft down the years then come along and join us.

Maria Molentale, Italy



Marta Moientale stepped onto the stage for the first time in 2014. Since then, she hasn't found the exit...yet! She is also an authoress of stories and comedy. She loves to explore the world and likes to be inspired by nature and humanity. She uses humor to survive the daily jungle. In 2018 she started her adventure in the field of clown therapy.

Based in Trentino, Italy, Marta frequently flies all around Europe for Erasmus+ projects. In 2020, with other education-through-art's enthusiasts, she founded ALTER Network, a European NGO. Her goal is to help people to boost their creativity and self-confidence. With this mission she designs training and consultations in the artistic field.

Clown Therapy, Wednesday 23rd June, 4pm (CET)

Clown therapy? How does it work? You don't know? Want to find out? Marta will answer your 'FAQs' (Frequently Asked Questions) before taking you 'behind the scenes.' How is the training of a clown therapist? 'Well, yes, it's not "just to be funny".' But it is fun, she promises!

Marta started her 'life' as a clown therapist in 2018 and currently she is writing her master's thesis about clown therapy as a tool in business management. So, yes...there will be some theory in her 'speech' (yuck!), but very little, she also promises! There will also be an open space to share and meet new people, I'm looking forward to meet you!

Who is afraid of humour? Thursday 24th June, 7pm (CET)

'The first day of June I wake up and I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror. One nose. One mouth. Green eyes, two green eyes, to be precise. Two ears, too. That's me! And in that moment, I've asked myself "why we need a humor festival"?' 'There are settings where the humor is not welcome. Again, there are settings where people fear humor.' (Flush...)

'Second thing I realize is that eating too much in the evening is not good for my brain.' In this stand-up show Marta will try to tie up all her thoughts of that morning. And she needs your help! Can you help Marta? If so, bring a digestive biscuit, a cup of tea; it could be heavy as a Christmas lunch!

LOL Laughter Session? Friday 25th June, 2pm (CET)

Laughter is a universal language. In this session participants will learn how to "use" this language. The methodology is based on laughter as an exercise, i.e., laughing without a specific reason. Crazy, right? Hahaha! Come to this workshop and explore with other participants laughter practice through movement and exercises. You'll be introduced to breathing techniques, in order to re-learn how to laugh properly. By the end of the session, your body will benefit on a physical level, and you will be more willing to bring laughter in our everyday life!

What do you need? Comfortable clothes, willingness to stretch your comfort zone, a space where you can laugh loudly. The session is also suitable also for people with reduced movement, feel free to mail in case of doubt. Skeptical??? Believe it or not, our brains respond in the same way to induced laughter as it does to spontaneous laughter. Don't believe me? Only one way to find out! Come along and give LAUGHTER a try! Hehehehe!

Fergal Barr, Northern Ireland



Having been involved in Youth Work since 1987, parent & grandparent Fergal is a passionate devotee of humour as a means of engaging and transforming relationships with people. A firm advocate of International Youth Work, he is a lifelong (currently suffering) Liverpool supporter and excessive tea drinker. He is also an avid book reader and occasional author having published books in 2008, 2011 and 2020. He also has the distinction of single-handedly changing employment law in Northern Ireland in 2001.

His Youth Work background includes Youth Information, Education Welfare, Community Relations, Volunteering, Mentoring, and Peace & Reconciliation. In addition, he has worked in Centre Based, Street Work, Participation, Rural & Urban based Youth Work.

As well as working in Family Support and Social Justice, he has been involved in facilitation and training at local, national, and international level, particularly within YOUTH/Youth in Action/Erasmus+ for almost three decades, and now and again, does the odd bit of consultation, evaluation, and research.

The Power of Humour! Monday 21st June, 10am (CET)

Have you ever thought about humour as a power, a superpower even? Perhaps it doesn't possess that which is often portrayed in a Hollywood blockbuster but then again, the difference between the power of humour and that of a Superman or a Wonder Woman is that the latter is fake whilst the power of humour is real! Want to truly understand the value, relevance, importance and benefits of humour then come along to join Fergal as he endeavours to persuade you about The Power of Humour! Become your own Humour Superhero!

That's Just Not Funny! Monday 21st June, 7pm (CET)

'That's just not funny!' How many times have you heard that? Well here's your chance to prove everyone wrong...kind of! Part of the fun of exploring humour is learning about humour in other countries and cultures. What is funny in one country or culture might not be in the slightest bit funny in another. But that is exactly the point! And sometimes that's what's funny. Unfunny humour can be funny...or at least the reactions of others to it! Not everything has to be funny of course so as to learn about humour in another place. This session offers participants from various countries the opportunity to share a little bit about humour in their culture or country.

RudeTube: Your Kind of Humour! Tuesday 22nd June, 7pm (CET)

An exercise that is normally used in the 'Humour is Serious Business' Training Programme, participants are invited to introduce and share their favourite video clip (max 60 seconds) and explain why they find it funny. Designed to be fun and to have a laugh this session is also designed to educate and provide space for participants to better understand different types of humour 'out there.' So if you have a favourite clip that you think will raise a laugh then you're invited! Come join us as we take a roller coaster ride through the humour jungle.

Funny Friday Check In! Friday 25th June 10am (CET)

Funny Friday Check-In! is a relaxed and informal gathering allowing participants the opportunity to grab a cuppa and 'meet-up for a giggle, a smile or a hearty laugh and share lighter moments from their day, their last evening, their previous week or a life-changing moment. There is no agenda but the aim is just to chill, breathe, embrace and enjoy the moment and check in with others who seek the same solace for a short period, away from all the hustle and bustle of everyday life or working week. Come join us and find your Funny Friday moment!

Closing Ceremony: Let's Get Crazy: Friday 25th June 7pm (CET)

As you might expect with one of the main theories that underpins humour, i.e., Incongruity Theory, *Let's Get Crazy* isn't quite what you'd expect. It's more of a relaxed kind of crazy as Fergal opens the final session of the festival and invites you to join him to share some thoughts, observations, and commentary before the wonderful and beautiful fellow Custodian of Baldness, Carmine Rodi Falanga, takes centre stage.