

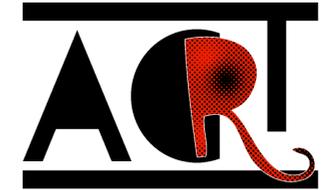
theater of the oppressed

AS A TOOL IN YOUTH EXCHANGES



why how what?

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ActArt is an informal group of young people based in Thessaloniki, Greece. We decided to create ActArt because we wanted to share our creativity between us and other people in Europe. We generally share our interests and creations on graphic design, photography, film, theater and handcraft projects trying to inspire and motivate each other.

We decided to take part in the Erasmus+ Program because we believe our talks and ideas will be more valuable if they become a part of the intercultural dialogue that takes place within the program. Since then, we have expanded our learning activities to involve others in the learning mobility structure and try to promote and establish, at the same time, social inclusion and solidarity.

A big thank you to Sean McDermott

The training course "Theater of the Oppressed as a tool in Youth Exchanges" was inspired by our previous participation in several youth exchanges and training courses that were using the methodology. We then decided it was time to learn more about it, collect different approaches and ways to use it and finally practise and improve our skills. During the training course we had the chance to deepen our knowledge of the methodology itself by watching 5 different experts in the field, discussing their different techniques and ways to apply them on youth work. Throughout the workshops, we shared our different backgrounds and used our different experiences.

We learned *from* each other
and *for* each other.

**While some people make theatre,
we all are theatre**

Augusto Boal



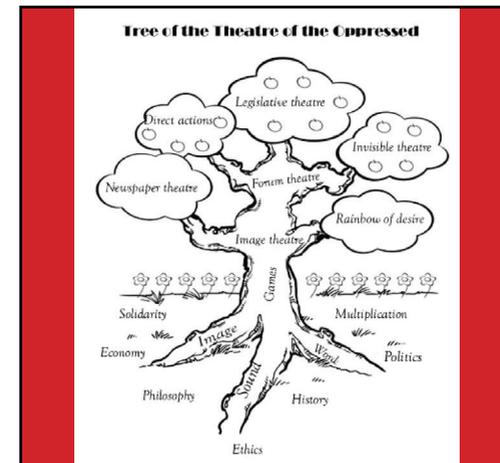
WHY?

The general aim of the training course was to increase the skillful use of the methodology of Theater of The Oppressed in youth exchanges.

Theater of the Oppressed is a theoretical framework and set of techniques developed by Brazilian director, artist and activist Augusto Boal. Boal experimented with many kinds of interactive theater. His explorations were based on the assumption that dialogue is the common, healthy dynamic between all humans, that all human beings desire and are capable of dialogue, and that when a dialogue becomes a monologue, oppression ensues. Theatre then becomes an amazing tool for transforming monologue into dialogue.

The **specific objectives** of the Training Course were:

- * to explain and inform how the methodology of Theater of The Oppressed can be used as a tool in youth exchanges
- * to provide the participants the space and time to practise the different methods
- * to familiarize and empower the participants to use these methods in their youth work
- * to create a space for exchange of experiences and best practices
- * to create a network for future development of the participants and their organisations.



Theater of the Oppressed engages people in discovery, critical reflection and dialogue and the process of liberation. Through Theater of the Oppressed we can better understand ourselves, our communities and our world.

HOW?

The Training Course *Theater of the Oppressed as a tool in Youth Exchanges* took place in Thessaloniki, Greece, 24-29 May 2017. The Training course was a cooperation between 15 organisations from different European countries. A total of 34 participants from Spain, Germany, Latvia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Italy, Cyprus, Romania, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia and Greece had the chance to work and experiment together using the methodology of the Theater of the Oppressed.

The team of trainers

Koldo Vlo

graduated from the department of Education in Universidad del País Vasco. He teaches in the Master curriculum in the Social Theater departments in Ramon Llull University in Barcelona and Porto University. While promoting Social Theater and Theater of the Oppressed he has worked in different social groups in various countries such as: Palestine, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Brazil and South Africa. He is a director in the National Theater of Northern Greece and teaches Theater of the Oppressed and Puppet Theater.

Peter Aurin

is a sports teacher, therapist, artistic and pedagogical head of arco e.V.

Paula Nieto

is a youth worker with wide experience in The Youth in Action Program and the Theatre of the Oppressed in the youth field. She has coordinated an educative and participative program in the Youth Service of Avilés since 2011, in which she's been leading a Social Theatre Group. She uses techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed and helps the young people to reflect about the global or local issues that affect them, in order to work with them in street

Robin Riedel

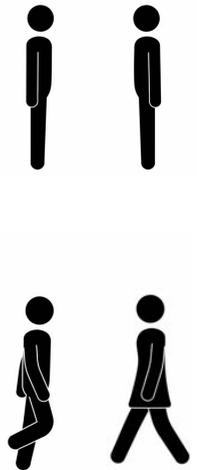
achieved a diploma in Social Pedagogics at the University of Applied Science, and still studies teaching at the Goethe University FFM. He has worked in several international youth programs and for the last 4 years has been a BST at Arco e.V. in Wiesbaden.

Ioanna-Mirto Chatzigeorgiou

is an engineer and loves new tech tools and applications. She has been working with young people for several years in the local sports and cultural club, schools and museums in different areas. She is the project coordinator of ActArt and has a long experience in Youth in Action and Erasmus+ projects.

Jason Pereira

is leading a Theater of the Oppressed amateur group for the organisation Ye too ponese. He has been participating in Theater of the Oppressed teams for more than 3 years and he is now attending a professional training on Image, Community, Forum, Transformation, Invisible Theater.



Our week

The team of trainers used a wide set of exercises during the training course, based on their long experience and worked together in order to find and develop the best approach that combines all their different ideas and methods.



DAY 1

Introduction to the project
Ice-breaking activities
Group dynamics exercises

*get to know each other
come closer*

DAY 2

Setting the Expectations
Introduction to Image Theater

*from the individual to the group
and common conflicts*

DAY 3

Simultaneous Dramaturgy
Forum Theater

*different approaches
theory and application*

DAY 4

World Cafe
Outdoor activities

*clarifying ideas
refreshing our minds*

DAY 5

Learning by doing
Final shows

*Theater of the Oppressed
in action*

DAY 6

Final reflection
Evaluation
Netourking

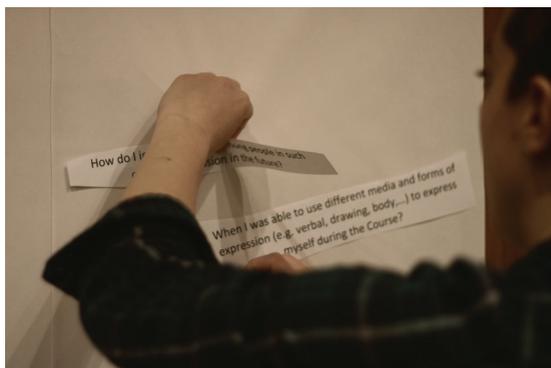
*future plans
and cooperations*

WHAT?

In the following pages you can find the list of the main activities we did throughout the week in order to fulfil the objectives of the training course according to the aforementioned schedule. In the following pages you will not find the energizers and warm-ups we did, the activities organized during the international nights and any other spontaneous group activity we had during the week. All of the activities included a reflection round and an extended reference on our reflection methods will be made at the end of this chapter.

The Youthpass Pathway

by Ioanna



Goal:

Introduce Youthpass and Youthpass Competences

Description:

Collective discussion and step by step introduction and explanation of every Youthpass competence. Creating a visual pathway on the wall of the main room in order to promote and support daily self-reflection on Youthpass competences.

The Clock

by Paula

Goal:

Get to know each other
Create a positive atmosphere

Description:

Participants were asked to find someone to have a date with in every hour of the clock. In the second round, the whole clock was completed and the team suggested topics for each hour. The "day started" and so did the meetings! The participants had to find their dates on that hour and speak about the respective topics until the trainer said "Change".



The Map

by Paula

Goal:

Get to know each other
Enhance group cohesion

Description:

Participants were asked to locate themselves on an imaginary map on the floor depending on where they come from. After that they discussed and improved the map collectively. They then followed the same steps and located themselves depending on where they live now and then where they would like to live or travel in the future.



Speed Portraits

by Ioanna

Goal:

Get to know each other
Group creativity

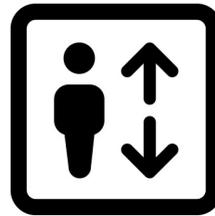
Description:

Everybody sat on two lines of chairs that were facing each other. On one side the participants were called painters and on the other side models. The trainer said "Go" and gave a drawing instruction for example "Eyes". Each painter had to paint the eyes of the model sitting in front of him or her in 5 seconds then the trainer said "Switch" and the painters had to move one seat to the right. The steps were repeated until the whole portraits were completed. Then we presented them to the whole group.



**Empathy is the
most powerful
weapon**

Augusto Boal



Elevator Pitch

by Ioanna

Goal:

Get to know each other
Networking

Description:

The participants presented their organisations and their own role as members or workers of their organization in less than a minute using any means of performance they prefer, trying to do it simply, quickly and impressively.



Body Creations

by Koldo

Goal:

think about the inside and outside of the image, image sequences, image analysis and image grammar

Description:

Based on the images created in the exercise "The scarfs", the group was divided in smaller groups and recreated the images with their bodies. Each group presented their work and the whole group discussed the different attributes of the images (form, status, point of view, etc).

The scarfs

by Koldo

Goal:

Transition from the individual to the group
Understanding the process of expression and creativity

Description:

The participants were given one scarf and were asked to create a sculpture with their scarf. Then they moved around and noticed and commented on all creations. After that, they made couples, with two scarfs and worked together with the same objective and in silence until they both felt their creation was finished. Then they became, 3, 4 etc until the whole group worked together, always in silence. When everybody stopped moving the scarfs, there was a group discussion on what we see in our collective work.



Conflict Images

by Koldo

Goal:

Application of Image Theater
Work on conflict resolution approaches

Description:

Working on three conflict cases for youth leaders: learning to receive criticism, confronting hostility and interpersonal conflicts. The group firstly brainstormed and then developed more elaborate ideas on different cases. In three groups they developed these cases using Image Theater. They used the aforementioned techniques to create a deep analysis and debate about each case. Finally, they aesthetically presented the results to the whole group.



Blind Run

by Peter and Robin

Goal:

Gain self-awareness and confidence
Feel the room and stage
Move and activate

Description:

The participants were asked to walk and run with closed eyes towards a line on the ground in a fair distance away, and try to stop as close to the line as possible. The trainers were close enough to react to an imminent danger, while the participants were quiet to ensure a concentrated atmosphere and also not to give away the position of the line through their voices.



Complete the Image

by Peter and Robin

Goal:

Expression
Learning to accept situations and opinions constructively
Understand the inner and outer view of the image

Description:

Starting with a handshake between two volunteers who freeze in place. After hearing the outer and the inner points of views one of the two was asked to leave the image, while another person entered the image to change it strongly by adding themselves in a different pose, changing the context of the image. After some repetitions a third person came into the image while giving it a "title". A fourth, fifth and maybe sixth person (depending on the group's size) further added to the image. The first person left the image, followed by the second, third etc. until only the last person that added to it remained, and a new cycle began. After an introduction of the pattern for the whole group, the exercise was repeated in small groups.



Moving Images

by Peter and Robin

Goal:

Gain self-awareness and confidence
Feel the room and stage
Move and activate

Description:

The trainer gave the group different topics that they had to present as in exercise "Complete the Image", also using humor, aiming for interesting images. After introducing different options for the joker, the people in the image were asked to do a movement or gesture, to say a sentence or make a sound or to play the next few seconds of the image. In the final step of the exercise the groups created a title for the group next to them (f.e. clockwise). When a group finished its own image, the group members chose a name for the next group's image and then the focus passed to the new group.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy

by Peter and Robin

Goal:

Experiment with limited time workshops in Theater of the Oppressed
Discover ways to initialize a play
Learn and analyse the role of the Joker
Practice

Description:

A spontaneous ensemble from the team of trainers created an "intro", accompanied with music, where different archetypal images were shown, emphasizing small movements more than big gestures. Afterwards the Joker asked the opinions and interpretations of the spectators, and then let the actors play the suggestion of the viewers. Finally, intros were created in smaller groups and presented while demonstrating potential actions and questions of the Joker.



Intro to Forum Theater

by Paula and Jasón

Goal:

Introduction to Forum Theater

Description:

Presentation of how the Theater of the Oppressed was born and what it was used for, especially in Brazil with Augusto Boal. Connecting the exercises and Image Theater with Forum Theater. Explain the objectives and main characteristics of this kind of theatre (characters, possible relationships in between them, values). Discussion and analysis.

My life

by Paula and Jasón

Goal:

Understand and practice Forum Theater
Learn how to discover potential topics for plays

Description:

Participants were invited to lay down and reflect about their daily lives: what are their main activities, their feelings while doing them, the main people they meet on a daily basis, etc. Then, everyone wrote down different topics that made them feel bad during the last weeks. In small groups, the participants created short performances based on the topics they just wrote. Then, every group presented their performance and the whole group chose one of them in order to work deeper using Forum Theater techniques. The long discussion afterwards was based on social and gender issues and the performance included swapping characters from the public and testing different responses to the presented issue.



World Café

by Koldo, Paula, Peter, Robin

Goal:

Express doubts, ask questions, discuss further about the Theater of the Oppressed

Description:

The trainers prepared a world café dynamic where the trainers spread around the building and waited for participants to come and discussed their own questions. Many discussions were created by the participants, talking with the facilitators about different issues and completing their training in a customized way.



Final Shows

by Koldo, Paula, Peter, Robin

Goal:

Learn by doing

Description:

Participants were divided in groups based on a topic of their interest and created a forum play based on the knowledge they gained throughout the previous days. Each trainer was assigned to a group in order to support, empower and help the participants.



REFLECTION

REFLECTION

by Paula

Several methods of self-reflection and group reviewing were used throughout the days of the training. On the first day the participants were asked to create groups of four people that would work as their reflection groups for the rest of the week. The idea and objectives of the reflection groups were explained and each group was assigned with a trainer to facilitate the process. Furthermore, every day different tools were suggested by the trainers to analyze the learnings and feelings:

1. The hand

Each finger serves as an indicator: "one thing I liked, one thing I want to point out, one thing I don't like, one thing I will keep and a small thing"

2. Dixit

With a pack of Dixit cards, everyone chooses one card that represents how the day was for them and shares it with the group.

3. Free drawing

The participants draw in silence based on the question "what happened during the day? Then they discuss and complete the drawing with their feelings throughout the day

4. The ice-cream flavour

The question here was "what flavour would I take if had an ice that represents my day?"

5. Individual image-group image

The participants created a posture individually that represented their day and then they created a group image that brought all feelings together



Since the first day, the participants used a big flipchart in order to have a space to fill in/paint each day of the training. Different colours representing different feelings were used. This flipchart was also used as a base of the discussions during the reflection groups and the final evaluation session, and also a tool for the trainers –and the rest of participants - to assess and discover how other people were feeling.

Finally, in the middle of the Training Course before the World Café session was held, the trainers organised a reflection session where participants had the chance to write down questions that were still unanswered or topics that they would like to focus on more.



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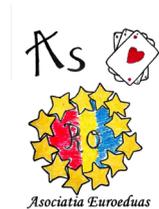
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Watch our video on Youtube

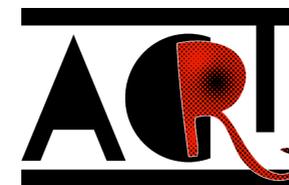
<https://youtu.be/-RVGMh5qxsq>



List of partner organisations:



ESPACIO PARA LA GESTION DE INÉDITOS VIABLES



We couldn't wish for a better way to introduce, improve or reestablish Theater of the Oppressed exercises and methodology in our youth work. We couldn't expect more from our trainers and our lovely participants. As ActArt we feel tired but satisfied, a bit empty but still so full, nostalgic but totally ready for future plans. We feel more empowered and devoted to creating fruitful projects that bring young people and youth workers together, to discuss, create and act (art) together.

Thank you all!

<https://www.facebook.com/actartyouth/>

Changing lives
Opening minds



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