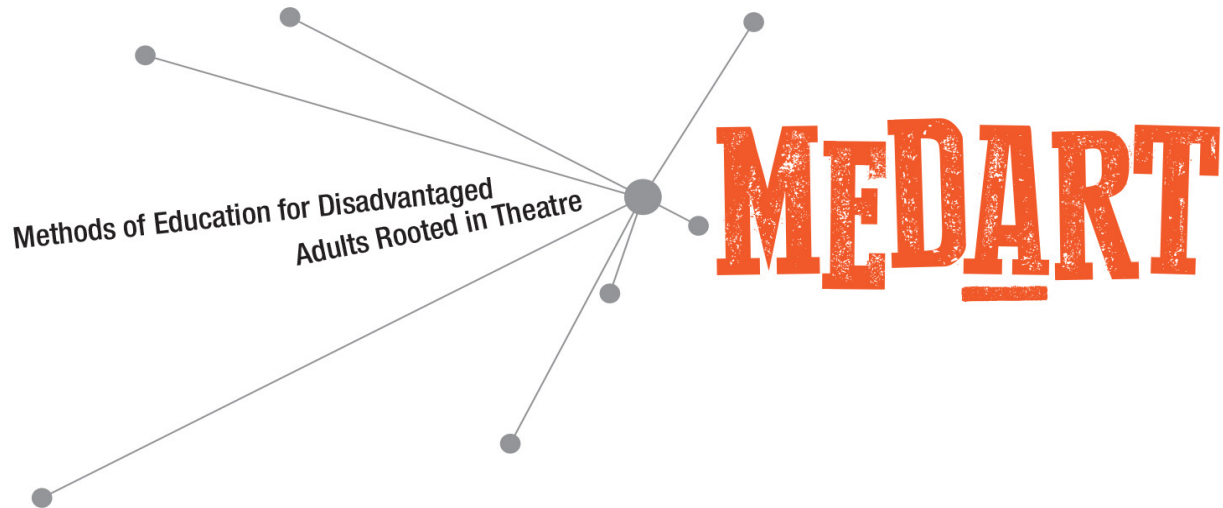


A woman with blonde hair is shown in profile, holding a seashell to her ear. The background is a beach with waves. A network diagram with nodes and lines is overlaid on the image. The text 'Methods of Education for Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre' is written in a small font, connected to a central node in the network.

Methods of Education for Disadvantaged  
Adults Rooted in Theatre

**MEDART**

**Methods of Education for  
Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre**  
**A Methodological Guide**



**Methods of Education for  
Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre**  
**A Methodological Guide**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

Year of publication: 2017

Written by MEDART project partners:

Maria Schejbal and Jolanta Kajmowicz-Sopicka from Bielskie Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne Teatr Grodzki (Association Grodzki Theatre), Poland  
Uršula Kovalyk and Patrik Krebs from Divadlo bez domova (Theatre With No Home), Slovakia  
Dario Ferrante from Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci (CSC), Italy  
Salvo Pitruzzella, Aurelio Ciaperoni, Italy  
Ingrid Jones, Rosalie Pordes and Neil Beddow from acta community theatre, United Kingdom  
Magdaléna Komárová, Sonsoles Alterachs Capote and Alessandra Gatti from Asociación cultural, social, de salud y bienestar ACUNAGUA (Association Acunagua), Spain  
Domen Rakovec from Društvo ProSoc (Association ProSoc), Slovenia  
Luca Molnár and Sándor Füsti-Molnár from Magyar Vöröskereszt Budapest Fővárosi Szervezet/AHA Színpad (Hungarian Red Cross, Metropolitan Organisation Budapest/AHA Theatre), Hungary  
Marianne Lindhout from STICHTING HOGESCHOOL ROTTERDAM (Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences), Netherlands

Editing & coordination: CSC Danilo Dolci, Divadlo bez domova

This guide was originally written in English. Some parts of the guide were also published in six languages:

Translation from English to Polish: Małgorzata Starzyńska-Majsak  
Translation from English to Slovak: Tomáš Kubiš  
Translation from English to Italian: Dario Ferrante  
Translation from English to Slovenian: Domen Rakovec  
Translation from English to Hungarian: Luca Molnár  
Translation from English to Spanish: Magdaléna Komárová, Joan Casas

Proof reading: Ingrid Jones

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ISBN: 978-80-971354-2-3

EAN: 9788097135423

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The project "MEDART – Methods of Education for Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre" with reference number 2015-1-SK01-KA204-008982 has been funded with support from the European Commission (Erasmus Plus programme - Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership in the field of Adult Education). This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission and National Agencies cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Printing of this publication has been supported by Nadačný fond Slovenských elektrární v Nadácii Pontis.

Pictures: MEDART workshops and meetings, works created by workshops' participants.

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# INTRODUCTION


MEDART was conceived by Divadlo bez Domova in 2015, and grew out of the company's desire to examine their practice, to look back at their work and describe it. It felt to the company that it was easier to do the work than explain it, but wanted very much to share their practice, and at the same time learn from others who were working in the same field, and with the same aims – to use theatre as a way of engaging socially disadvantaged adults, with the view of increasing personal and social skills and improving their chances of getting employment.

DBD contacted a range of partners from across Europe, all of which shared this aim, and were using theatre as a tool to achieve positive change for vulnerable people, but through a wide range of different methodologies and approaches. The MEDART project was formulated to create a place where the different companies could develop projects within their own national context and then interact, in order to share practice and learn from each other.

The MEDART process consisted of a series of meetings in partner countries, and a week-long exchange of practice with staff from all organisations to share their 'methodologies' – their practice; games, exercises, approaches – based on the current work of each organisation and groups they were working with. The meetings took place in Poland, Lanzarote, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sicily.

These exchanges and ongoing dialogue were the basis for the creation of the online 'methodological guide' which has gathered these different approaches and practices, with the view to disseminate our joint learning across Europe – to community theatre companies, teachers, educators, trainers, drama therapists, social workers, students, schools, universities, institutions, NGOs.

The main objective of the guide is to help to develop and extend these adult educators' competences in the field of work with disadvantaged and vulnerable



groups of adults. By developing these skills and competences, the aim is that adult educators will be able to bring some new and effective ideas, strategies and practices into their own work, and will be encouraged to develop their own practice as a result.

Seven of the MEDART partners create community theatre in different countries, in different contexts, targeting our work at people with a wide range of vulnerabilities:

acta community theatre, UK – working with vulnerable young people and adults.  
Asociación Acunagua, Canary Islands, Spain – working with women prisoners, young people.

CSC, Sicily, Italy – offering a range of opportunities and education to refugees, young people and adults.

Divadlo bez domova, Slovakia - working with homeless people, disabled people, people with mental health condition, ex-prisoners and others in need.

Društvo ProSoc, Slovenia – theatre of different excluded and vulnerable groups.

Magyar Vöröskereszt Budapest Fővárosi Szervezet AHA Színpada, Budapest, Hungary – theatre with homeless, former homeless and vulnerable adults.

Teatr Grodzki – theatre with disabled, deaf and disadvantaged people in Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

The eighth partner - Hogeschool Rotterdam, Netherlands – has been responsible for project evaluation, and creating a framework for the methodological guide.

The partners have gained much from working together; not just about each other's work, but about their own practice through the feedback from others. As the project developed, partners began to use elements of each other's practice; exercises, games, techniques. The partners also worked through the challenge of finding a shared terminology – were our workers 'artists', 'facilitators', 'artist facilitators', 'trainers', 'theatre practitioners'? And how exactly did we define 'methodology'?


The process of working through this ideological and semantic labyrinth was often difficult, but in the end carried great rewards in terms of our shared learning.

The two-year process of sharing work has highlighted that the partners share many common aims; primarily the basic desire to make positive change in the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people, and also a passionate belief in the power of theatre as an effective tool to enable these positive changes to take place.

Theatre is, after all, the telling of stories, and through the community theatre practice of the partners, vulnerable people are encouraged and enabled to tell their stories, to express their hopes and dreams, to connect and communicate with the wider community, and to demonstrate their own individuality and value as a person in their own right.

In addition, the process of making theatre in this way also has benefits in the development of social and interpersonal skills; self-confidence, cooperation, communication, how to present ideas, how to listen and discuss, how to unleash your creativity, how to work with others towards a common aim, how to succeed, and how to celebrate that success. These are the essential skills that people need in life, to develop and maintain their social networks, and the skills which employers look for in employees.

Finally, all the partners share a belief in the importance of life-long learning. Learning should not be confined to just a few short years of childhood, but is something which everyone should pursue throughout their lives. However, it is often the case that disadvantaged people, those on the margins of society, find it hard to engage with education later in life. For many, their experience of education as a child is an experience of failure; all they have 'learned' is that within the formal education systems, it is hard for them to succeed. For all of us engaged in MEDART, we believe that offering informal education, through theatre and related



arts, is a way to engage those people who have dis-engaged from education; and a way to stimulate and grow their un-used energy, creativity and potential, and put it to good use within the community.

However, although we all share those common beliefs and aims, the way we approach achieving those aims are broad; a set of practices that are diverse, innovative, often surprising, approaches given a new twist; sometimes familiar; sometimes completely new ideas grown from necessity. It is this richness of practice that we have discovered in each other; as a result we have all begun to use ideas from each other to enrich our own practice, learning that exercises created to work in one context are very easily translatable to another. The language of theatre- and particularly community theatre – is universal. It is the richness and adaptability of the methods which we wish to share through this guide.

The guide is constructed in sections, with each partner describing their own company and context, before detailing some of the approaches they use in their work; giving just a taste of the different methodology each company uses. It is not definitive, and we are not trying to say that these are the only, or the best, ways of working. It may be useful to view it as a 'sampler'; a range of approaches and case studies. However you view it, we do believe that it is possible to use these exercises, games and methods in a wide variety of settings, and so we encourage you to use them as you see fit - copy, adapt, invent, create, mix and match with your own approaches.

Our sincere hope is that this guide will help you to develop your own rich and effective methodologies that work in your context. Good Luck with your journey.

**The MEDART partners**







acta  
Community  
Theatre



“acta

www.acta-bristol.com

## acta Community Theatre

acta community theatre is a Bristol-based educational arts organisation, founded in 1985, which engages the most vulnerable members of society in the creation and performance of original and relevant theatre. We create a space for them to have a voice, increase their self-worth, confidence and self-esteem and improve their opportunities for employment, education and integration into society. For the past 30 years acta have worked with and created strong partnerships with a variety of statutory and non-statutory organisations and engaged people without privilege, who are not connected to the cultural life of Bristol. acta operates at a local, national and international level, and is interested in sharing the work of community theatre with a range of partners in educational, social, academic and artistic areas of practice. acta creates around a minimum of ten new plays in every year, using a devising method which enables participants to use their own experiences and imaginations to create theatre which reflects and celebrates their lives, and is relevant to the wider community. acta believes that this not only benefits the participants, but enriches and energises theatre with new ideas and cultural influences.

acta has a range of funders; Arts Council England, Bristol City Council, EU, Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, and many charitable trusts, including The Wellcome Trust, Singer Foundation.

**Targets:** acta’s policy is to engage with the most vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged people in society, including: isolated older people; migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; vulnerable young people; young carers; disabled people.

**Key words:** Participation; quality; ownership; theatre; sharing learning; partnership; community; friendship; caring; fun.



# Ownership of Creative Work

## Why?

- To develop self-esteem, problem solving, creativity and self-confidence in the participants.
- To increase self-worth and to increase a participants belief in their own ability.
- To create theatre that is new, original and relevant to the participants and their audiences.
- To develop group and social skills including: co-operative working, communication skills, encourage creative thinking and problem solving, building initiative and improving group dynamics.

## What and how?

The creation of a group story that can be used to develop into a theatre piece. This method values all the participants say, all their ideas and creative thoughts.

## For whom?

For anyone who wants to create an original story.

## Exercise: Julie Story

<b>Goal</b>	To create a group story, that can be used to develop a theatre piece.
<b>Space</b>	Safe space large enough for the group size.
<b>Equipment</b>	Flip chart and pens.
<b>Number of participants</b>	5+
<b>Time</b>	Allow 2 hours, although this exercise can be continued over a number of workshops and work towards the creation of a performance.
<b>Professional involvement</b>	The facilitator needs to have good people skills, an understanding of the group and their dynamics so that they can encourage quieter members to have some input and lead the story in an appropriate way.

## Explanation of the exercise

Whole group sits in semicircle, facing a flip chart, or wall with large sheet of paper attached. Facilitator draws a stick person in the middle of the sheet of paper, and asks the group:

*'Who is this?'*

The group names the character, with the Facilitator taking the first suggestion they hear.

The Facilitator continues to ask questions, and notes/draws/writes the answers on the paper around the stick figure. Sample questions:

- *'Where do they live?'*
- *'Who do they live with? Who are their friends?'*
- *'What do they do every day?'*
- *'What do they love most in the world, what do they fear most in the world?'*
- *'What is their heart's desire?'*

The Facilitator can ask whatever question they like, and these can be about the main character, or subsidiary characters. The aim is to build a background to the story.

The Facilitator continues to the next level, by introducing a problem to be solved: 'One day there is a real crisis, which creates a big problem. What has happened, is going to happen? How does it affect the life of the character, or their life?'

The Facilitator continues to write down group answers, building the story, and beginning to ask the group more definite questions, eg:

- *'How would you dramatise that incident? –*
- *'Who would be in that scene?'*
- *'Would the character talk to their best friend about this?'*

From this stage of the process, the Facilitator starts to write a scenario – eg:

**Scene one** – the main character and their family at home. A letter arrives with bad news. The main character pretends there is no problem

**Scene two** – the main characters partner confides in a friend that the main character is behaving strangely etc

By this stage, the whole group should be engaged in discussing the story, making suggestions, contributing ideas. When the scenario is developed (although it doesn't need to be finished), the Facilitator suggests that the scenes are improvised by group members, to see how the story could be turned into performance. The scenes are then discussed, more scenes are created, the scenario is developed, completed, and can be performed.

This process is a good way of building a performance with a group. The story can be broken into scenes which group members can create in smaller teams away from the main group, then sharing with each other.

**Variations:**

A theme or issue or moral can be decided on before the beginning of the story to lead it in a desired direction.

It can be used to develop a single characters background, rather than a whole story.

**Risks:**

Group members using known people or stories.

The story being led by overpowering members of the group.







# Making connections

Developing a sense of belonging for participants within their group.

## Why?

- To break down barriers.
- To encourage participants to get to know each other
- To create a safe environment.
- To encourage sharing.
- To promote mutual understanding and acceptance between participants.
- To encourage friendship, and a sense of belonging.

## What and how?

- Working with people from different backgrounds and cultures, this method can bring the group together, create cohesion.

## Whom?

All ages and abilities as long as they are able to communicate with each other.

## Three Things In Common

<b>Goal</b>	To get to know each other, break barriers, find things in common and develop friendships.
<b>Space</b>	A space big enough for the group size and one the participants feel safe to share in.
<b>Group Size</b>	2 – 20.
<b>Time</b>	10 – 20 minutes depending on the size of the group.
<b>Professional involvement</b>	Facilitator to introduce and monitor the exercise and set a time limit.

## Explanation of the exercise

The facilitator asks the group to turn to the person next to them in the circle, ideally someone they don't know well; breaking up friendship groups if necessary. Once in pairs they are asked to find three things that they have in common with each other.

Once this has been achieved, the couples then share these three things with the whole group.

**Variations:** Finding five things in common. If the group know each other well, encourage the pairs to find things that no one else knows about them. Rather than just telling the rest of the group the three things, they can present them physically, in stills or short scenes.



## Exercise: Impro wheel

<b>Goal</b>	Generate ideas and characters for devising. To develop verbal improvisation skills in a non-threatening environment.
<b>Space</b>	A safe environment where no one is watching which is big enough to create a circle for the group's size.
<b>Number of participants</b>	10 – 30.
<b>Time</b>	15 – 30 minutes for whole exercise, 15 - 30 seconds per first line.
<b>Professional Involvement</b>	Facilitator to give instructions, set time limits and give first lines.

## Explanation of the exercise

Ask the group to stand in a circle, then go round labelling each person A then B. Then ask all the A's to take two steps forward and then turn around and reposition themselves so they are facing a B, thus forming two circles, inner and outer. A first line is then given to those in the inner circle – the A's eg. "I've got some good news and some bad news." The facilitator cues everyone in the inner circle, the A's, to say this line at the same time, and the B's respond instantly, improvising with the person facing them. Everyone continues to improvise at the same time until the facilitator says to stop. This will be after approximately 20 seconds.

The outside circle, the B's, are asked to move one person to their left while the A's stand still, so that everyone is now facing a new partner. A new first line is then

given to the B's, and a new improvisation begins.

The process repeats and continues, until all the A's have worked with all the B's, or for as many times as the facilitator feels is appropriate.

### **Variations**

Pairs can then be asked to share some of the improvised conversations to the rest of the group.

Instead of standing in a circle pairs of chairs can be set around the space and A's can move around to a new chair and B's stay still, again enabling the participants to work with each other.

Props or items of costume or settings can be used instead of first lines.

### **Risks**

If participants get very involved in their improvisation they may not hear the facilitator asking them to stop.





# Joint Vision

## Why?

- To develop co-operation, stimulate imagination and creativity.
- To stimulate ideas as part of a devising process.
- To create a sense of acceptance and ownership of the creative work.
- To develop cooperation and team building skills.

## What and how?

Working together using imagination and creativity, to create a group stimulus for the devising process.

## Whom?

Most ages, abilities and backgrounds.

## Exercise: I am a tree

<b>Goal</b>	To work together using imagination to physically create a group picture.
<b>Space</b>	A safe environment big enough for the size of the group.
<b>Number of participants</b>	7 – 30.
<b>Time</b>	5 – 20 minutes, each picture approximately a minute.
<b>Professional Involvement</b>	Facilitator needs to lead and explain the exercise and steer it to keep it moving and appropriate.

## Explanation of the exercise

All the participants sit in a circle. The facilitator then explains the method of playing, often using an example to help explain.

The facilitator stands in the circle and says “I am a tree,” and creates the shape physically of a tree. The facilitator then asks for a participant to join their tree creating something physically that could be part of a picture with a tree in it, eg. A man sleeping in the shade of the tree. The facilitator again asks for a third person to join this picture creating something physically, eg. An apple about to fall on the man’s head.

The facilitator then asks one of the other’s to stay in position and for one person to come up and join that person to create a new picture, eg. the man is asked to stay and another person comes up and is the sun shining down on the man. A third person is asked to come up and join the picture. Then the first person from

the picture, in this example the man, then chooses who stays and another picture is then created, with two new participants stepping in in turn.

The facilitator can restart with a new theme if the group get stuck on a theme and it doesn't move forward or is getting too far removed from useful material.

The facilitator can encourage more hesitant participants to have a go or help them think of ideas.

The process can be repeated until all participants have had a go or numerous goes.

**Variations:** The facilitator can ask a participant to give the frozen picture a name. More than three participants can make the picture, 5 or 6 at a time.

The facilitator can ask one participant to tell a story that the frozen picture evokes.

**Risks:** Participants struggling with ideas or proposing inappropriate images.









# Acunagua





ARS ARE  
THERE  
SWEAT  
ETHEL

ISLAS CANARIAS

ISLAS CANARIAS

Islas Canarias

Live Life to  
the  
ONE LOVE  
ONE LIFE  
ONE DREAM

THE KING  
KB  
THE QUEEN

TENERIFE

Home  
Tami

ISLAS CANARIAS

Yellow t-shirt



ACUNAGUA

# Acunagua

Asociación Acunagua was created in 2009 in the Canary Island, Lanzarote thanks to a group of volunteers with a need to activate the island population and to help them connect with their own needs, roots and culture. The main goal is to promote intercultural understanding on the island, sustain intergenerational dialogue and raise public awareness of their own environment of the Canary Island.

The focus in the activities is pointed on following aims- Non formal education, contributing to the personal development of local people, the use of sound, theatre, dance, storytelling and other artistic and therapeutic methods, specially drama therapy, art therapy, work with senses, promoting the intercultural understanding throughout the activities of Acunagua organization, connect the local population of the island with continental Europe and combat the cultural isolation.

Acunagua association, (which means: cradle in the middle of the sea), serves as a platform for organizing various activities depending on the interests of each member. Young people and senior citizens are welcome to join our community and to develop projects in line with the aims of Acunagua.

Since 2015 we are involved in international projects Erasmus+.

**Target group:** Common native population of the island, physically and mentally disabled adults, women prisoners from local penitentiary centre.

**Key words:** Social inclusion, theatre, ritual, play, freedom of expression, movement, dance, body language, trust.



# Ritual


The 1st method we would like to share with you is the RITUAL. The ritual has an important place in our sessions with imprisoned women and we are using it frequently during each theatrical session.

## **Our story**

*...Why did we start to use ritual in the prison?* The prison is a place of too many obligatory unpleasant rituals, day after day, all day long. For our creative process we were looking for a private space where to appreciate and celebrate the presence of each participant and where to jump out of prison routine, iron rules and strict orders. To see and to be seen, to hear and to be heard, were our basic requirements and keystones in the relationship with the group. Our aim was to offer the participants the ritual, with the intention of providing a safe space with well-defined boundaries to support their concentration and bring them to be present, here and now, be sensitive, to see and hear themselves and others.

## **What is the ritual?**

The ritual is a specific action, a celebration held in the group ("specific" as opposed to an "everyday common" action). It is a kind of activity celebrated strictly in a well- defined space, exempt from everyday life. The ritual impacts on deep



consciousness levels in order to create changes hardly accomplishable by rational dealing.

Usually we use it at the beginning and end of the session. It is a short action generally conducted in a circle with all present participants. The ritual is guided by a facilitator who explains beforehand the course of the action. The structure of a ritual can be fixed; it helps participants to feel more comfortable and safe inside the structure.

### **Why use ritual?**

If you are looking for action which helps you to create cohesion in the group, to “seduce” a group for the next working process, to lead the group to a state of reflection, to bring participants to be more present and aware, or if you need to get more information about participants state of mind, we highly recommend you to start and/or to end the session with ritual. The ritual can help you to bring the group to a sense of unity and to a common understanding. It is a smart tool for mood-tuning.

### **Who is ritual for?**

The ritual has its use in groups which meet in order to create, learn, share, etc. We found it useful with groups created by the homeless, prisoners, people with mental health issues, adults with addictions, abused women, etc. We choose the specific ritual according to the group we will be working with. The facilitator of the session can mark with the ritual several objectives to be met with the group.


## Welcoming Ritual

<b>Goal of the exercise</b>	Create unity, be “here and now”, expression of feelings, balancing energy, developing empathy
<b>Space</b>	Inside/outside but privacy is necessary
<b>Number of participants</b>	No limits
<b>Time</b>	Around 10-15 minutes
<b>Professional’s involvement necessary</b>	General knowledge about group leading required.
<b>Props</b>	Candle and matches

## Explanation of the exercise

The guide invites all participants to sit/stand in a circle. The shape of circle or oval is very important for the ritual because of space borders. The borders are creating a sacred space.

- ◆ We can take some time for the group to calm down and to be aware. The guide welcomes the group, they invite the participants to engage in eye-to-eye contact with others, to just observe each other’s faces, the different moods and energy levels present in others. This is the phase of mutual connection in the group. Then the guide lights a candle in the center of the circle, leaves it there and goes back to their place. We invite the group to take three deep breaths together while we look at the candle’s flame. After that they say: “Today I feel...” and with a word or simple sentence they describes their emotional state. With a clear gesture they passes the turn to the participant sitting next to them who in turn



also repeats: "Today I feel..." adding their own feeling. The turn is passed again until all participants have shared. At the end the guide thanks all participants for their ability to share and they bring awareness to the fact that within a group we don't necessarily share emotional states. The guide then wishes that the group will have a good session and invites someone from the group to keep the lit candle in a safe place until the end of the session where we may have some time and space for an ending ritual.

**Variations:** Instead of using the phrase "I feel ..." you can use a nonverbal way, a movement to express themselves, in order that everyone gets up and "speaks" for a few seconds with their body. Instead of "passing the turn" with a gesture you can use another natural element as a special stone bowl with water, pens or anything that inspires us. The objects can be passed from hand to hand. The presence of the ritual object is not mandatory. Instead of using a sentence you can use a non-verbal form as the means to convey the emotion.

**Note:** There may be participants that the first few times resist the ritual structure of not wanting to share, talk, express or be seen, it's not a problem. I recommend seeing this participant as a person whose silence or rejection also belongs amongst the forms of expression. I also recommend not highlighting their different way to communicate but to give them time. I advise that the ritual has a rigid structure and is not recommended to convert the phrase "I feel ..." in a long monologue or space to tell the order of the day. I definitely want to support creativity and fantasy of the guide of the group, the ritual can take many forms while respecting its rigid structure. This is one of many examples that can serve as inspiration.





# Symbol Work

The 2nd method we would like to share with you is SYMBOL WORK. Symbol work is key in our sessions with imprisoned women and we are using it frequently during each theatrical session. It is one of the most favourite methods among our participants. Attractive pictures and rich rainbow of images offer a wide range of safely manifestation and expression.

## **Our story**

...Why did we start to use symbol work in the prison? The work with women in prison is very demanding. The prison environment creates many tensions between them. The prisoners can neither release nor get relief from their emotional burdens. They inevitably develop a level of emotional defense; they wear armour protecting themselves from all sorts of possible fears connected to their precarious situation. Fear of being vulnerable and therefore of being hurt does not allow them neither to be in touch with, to see, or understand the nature of that inner conflict, the true causes of their situation. Change is possible only when looking into, accepting and integrating their deep emotions but the prison does not offer them a safe space where you can start the process mentioned. The symbol work slowly helps us come in touch with them, but the biggest value is the fact that they slowly come in touch with their own hidden needs and desires through the process of making them conscious.

### **What is symbol work?**

Individual or group processes where symbols help get the information from the participants subconscious and trapped emotions and thoughts. It can be performed with more or less recognized symbols (objects, Dixit cards, tarot cards, Goddesses cards, pictures etc). Working with symbols allows the verbalization of the subconscious thoughts and emotions, to see them and accept them, and to transform them into conscious ones. Once accepted, you can begin the process of change.

### **Why use symbol work?**

This method offers us the following benefits:

- Help raise awareness of subconscious processes
- Offers a safe space to see and be seen
- Invites you to express one's self verbally but can also offer space for non-verbal communication
- Develops fantasy and imagination
- Creates unity and intimacy within the group
- Provides space and dynamics for sharing
- Trains the ability to formulate and argue
- Trains the ability to focus

### **Who is symbol work for?**

For groups that meet regularly in order to create, learn, share, etc. We find it useful with different groups, the homeless, prisoners, adults with addictions, abused women, etc. It's use is not recommended for people with learning difficulties.

## Play with cards

<b>Goal of the exercise</b>	The expression of feelings/desires & needs, empathy development, furthering acquaintances, creating unity, be "here and now", promoting mindfulness
<b>Space</b>	Inside / outside but privacy necessary
<b>Number of participants</b>	No limits
<b>Time</b>	Around 15 minutes
<b>Professionals' Involvement necessary</b>	General knowledge about group leading required.
<b>Props</b>	Tarot cards or DIXIT cards, rich variety of different pictures (you can simply cut it from newspapers), cards of Goddesses (you can produce them by yourself)

### Explanation of the exercise

The guide invites all participants to sit in the circle. Inside the circle is a small circle created by the cards placed with the image up. The symbols are clearly visible.

The guide invites participants to choose one of the cards for example using the question:

"How are you today?" - "Find the corresponding card." or "What it is the most important experience for you since we met last time?" - "Find the corresponding card."



The guide invites participants to share their cards one by one in the circle.

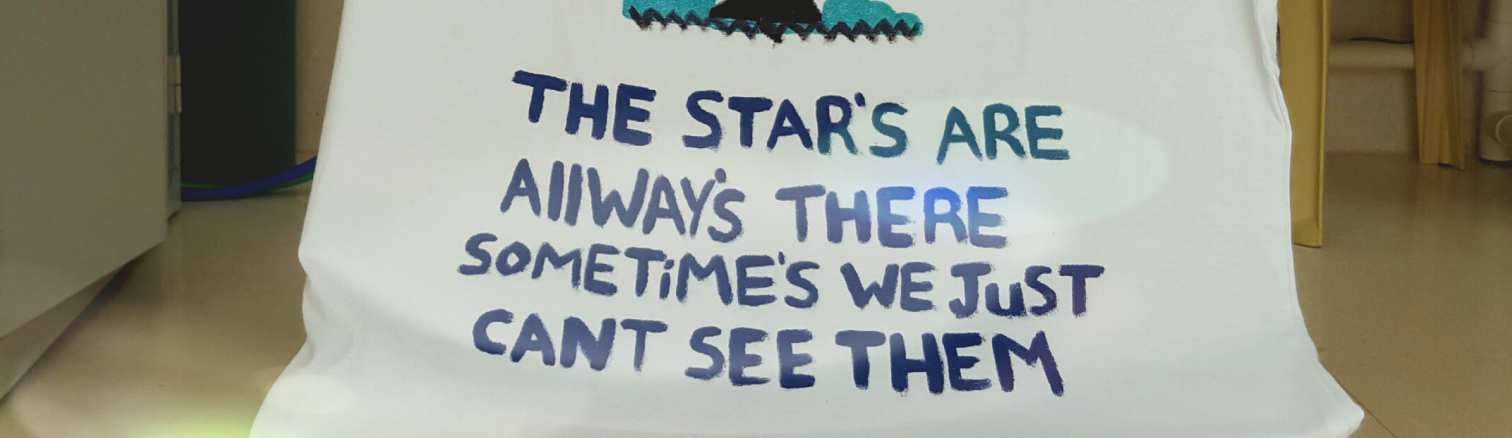
**Variations:** The procedure is the same with an important difference. The cards are placed randomly, the symbol is not seen. Each participant is invited to choose a card without seeing the image intuitively. In this case it is not necessary to put any questions. The guide can simply say: "Choose a message for you." The difference in this way of working is that participants are opening up to the new and unknown.

Also in this case the symbol is the key to the door of their unconscious. (I would suggest before doing or choosing to do this exercise, it is important to do some kind of short centering exercise that works with the group). It is very important to note that for this variation the design of cards is appropriately chosen. Depending on the group you are working with, we strongly recommend you to use cards with exclusively positive messages, such as 'Goddesses' cards for example. Using for example tarot cards or any other images with more complicated or negative images may have harming effects for some participants in specific situations and life conditions.

**Note:** In our experience the symbols are beloved and requested by participants. With the cards they can also play, investigate their peers, tell stories, and create small theatrical scenes. The important thing is that the guide needs not remain confined within the description of this example. It may happen that some participants resist the sharing process. If nothing happens, give them time. The symbol speaks for them. When you are working with random cards where the symbol is not seen, sometimes it happens that some participants want to return a chosen card or change it. It is advisable to invite them to look properly at the rejected card or invite them to take a second card as a help to better understand the first one. The participants often ask the guide about the interpretation of the meaning of the card. It is recommended that the guide does not interfere with their interpretation as that could not only cause confusion but also block the expression

of the subconscious mind. Instead we may try strengthening the capacity of the participants for interpreting the symbol.





THE STAR'S ARE  
ALLWAYS THERE  
SOMETIME'S WE JUST  
CANT SEE THEM

## Manual Art Work – T-Shirt Making

Born during our theatrical sessions, we have created a slightly different approach, using manual action. It has a very important place in our contact with women prisoners - **Manual Art Work-T-Shirt Making**. Continue reading our story.

### Our story

... Why it is important for us to share this method? Starting with theatrical sessions with women in the prison, our first idea was to prepare a theatre show inside the prison for people from the outside, community members, students, and families of the prisoners. For legal reasons it was not possible. Our second idea was to perform to other prisoners inside of the jail, mostly for male prisoners because the women section is too small. But as we went deeper into the process of creation we were confronted by barriers. Our actresses didn't feel comfortable to follow the proposed goal, to act in front of other prisoners or prison guardians, they were feeling vulnerable and exposed. It is important to mention that prisoners very strictly protect their privacy. There are many prejudices towards revealing your inner most thoughts. By other words, "less you know about me, better for both of us". The prisoners consider one of the most important facts is to protect themselves by wearing a "thick coat". As a "thick coat" represents their silence, unwillingness of sharing, shallowness of communication. Especially for this reason, we designed some safe and encouraging ways of communication and interaction

between prisoner and the rest of society, as we were not able to create a theatre show at the moment.

How to connect imprisoned people and society while serving a sentence? Here are some of the most important and urgent reasons of "prison reality" calling for change. The prisoners are aware of their guilt nevertheless they mention the following facts.

- *"The way of serving the sentence is a pure waste of time. No activities, no work, just counting long hours of every day".*
- *"I am aware of my misconduct, but doing nothing I feel like I'm wasting the time."*
- *"There is no effectiveness in serving the sentence. Here you can learn just plenty of bad habits."*
- *"I need to study, to work or to interact. Doing nothing makes me crazy."*
- *"The worst punishment is when they exclude me from all activities. Thinking and reflecting about my past makes me feel desperate and depressed."*

For this reason we established activities with the following main goals:

- meaningful use of time
- practice of free expression
- creation of communication with the exterior world
- practice of self-sustainability
- learning by doing
- be profitable and conducive
- raising self-esteem
- learn new printing methods (T-Shirts printing)

### How does it work?

In order to reach our goals we created the activity T-SHIRT MAKING inside the prison.

<b>Secondary Goals</b>	Independent thinking and creating, co-working, developing sense of responsibility, creativity training
<b>Space</b>	Bright room, privacy necessary
<b>Number of participants</b>	No limit, but we recommend a small group max. 10 participants in order to attend to all of them
<b>Time</b>	Around 120 minutes
<b>Professional's involvement necessary</b>	General knowledge about group leading and previous experience with painting technique.
<b>Props</b>	Plain T-Shirts, colours for textile and brushes, different stamps, old newspapers and swabs, graver and lino (optional if you want to make linocut and create your own stamps), iron to fix the colours

### Explanation of the exercise

The trainer invites participants to think about what would be the message they would like to share on the T-Shirt. As a whole group you can create small discussions about the topic and share their opinions. Each participant can express by words or painting. After that, each participant chooses one T-Shirt and starts to decorate it by using colours, words, stamps, printings. Usually all colours must be fixed by ironing at the end. To each t-shirt you can tag the name of the author.

In the case of prison workshops, the prisoners are completely excluded from the



next steps because they are not able to create direct contact with the exterior world. That's why we, the trainers, are looking for opportunities (events, festivals, markets) to present our workshops and sell the T-Shirts for a voluntary contribution. Once the t-shirts are sold, we propose to our customers to shoot a short video addressed to a concrete prisoner. No customer is forced to do it, it is a completely voluntary action. In this is the way, we bring the feedback back to the prison. The prisoner can watch the video made by the customer, giving them feedback or just simply information about why they bought the T-Shirt. We are creating a double benefit: economical (money for t-shirts) and feedback (personal support). One part of the money is used to buy new materials and the other part to buy creative tools for the women prison section.

**Note:** We experienced that the biggest impact of this method for the prisoners is to receive video feedback and support of unknown people. This feedback creates a huge emotional reaction and support for people serving sentences.





# Storytelling

## **Our story**

„There is as many narrators in this world, as there are human beings“. This was our starting point in order to discover how many women narrators are among us in our theatrical sessions in the prison. Our aim was to wake up the “inner narrator” inside of all present women and to hear more about their feelings, stories they’ve heard, anecdotes, stories full of fantasy from the childhood, memories... We wanted to hear the voice of free women, women who stand on the other side of the bars. The prison is a place with a lack of intimacy and with untrustworthy relationships. Over the period of a few months we decided to create an intimate circle built on trust and respect; a space where to share individual experience through storytelling. Telling the stories was the path of liberation, catharsis and of connection with positive emotions inside of their stories.

## **What is storytelling?**

Storytelling is a powerful strategy which acts on emotional and cognitive levels. On the emotional level, the stories become a tool for life because they express situations, feelings, behaviours and conflicts of our existence. It leads us to new forms of knowledge and to realize that our own feelings are reflected in the characters of the narrated/read stories. This statement is valid from the point of view of the narrator and from the one who is receiving the story.

### **Why use storytelling?**

Telling our own stories, our memories, stories which are reconnecting us with archetypes and experiences, with ourselves, with the fact of who we really are and where we are coming from, all this guides us to the connection with our five senses. To remember and tell a story that we were told in childhood, a story that has been told to a child, an anecdote told to a beloved person, brings with it a torrent of emotions and feelings. This action makes it possible to travel in the magic world and space of fantasy where we are able to see, hear, taste, feel, and smell in the present time. We listen and we are heard. Narrating a story allows us to be noticed, and at the same time allows us to hide behind it.

### **Who is storytelling for?**

For groups that meet regularly or casually in order to create, learn, share, etc. We find it useful with different groups, the homeless, prisoners, adults with addictions, abused women, children, youth etc. It's use is recommended also for people with learning difficulties.

## **Let your nose speak**

<b>Goal of the exercise</b>	To encourage the ability to narrate a story, to create links between users through the sharing of a story, anecdotes or memories, links that generate trust between them. To build a capacity of self-presentation, teambuilding, activation of the senses.
<b>Space</b>	Inside / outside but privacy necessary, the space can be lightly perfumed, preferable cozy place.

<b>Number of participants</b>	Max. 10 persons.
<b>Time</b>	1.30h
<b>Props</b>	different fragrances (spices, essential oils, perfumes, plants, detergent, etc.)
<b>Professional involvement</b>	It is recommended to have basic knowledge about storytelling and theatre.

## Explanation of the exercise

The trainer starts the session telling any prepared story in order to involve participants in active listening. It can be his own story which has to do with the sense of smell. It can be a heard or invented story. After that he offers to the group different odour samples. It could be spices like cinnamon or curry, plants like rose or jasmine, or detergent which we use daily at home.

It is interesting to have between 5 and 10 samples in order to make the offer more exciting. By testing different samples the smell detonates memories and emotions of the participants, bringing with them stories and fantasies. After the round of testing, the participants are invited to share their experience evoked by the smell. The trainer invites participants to narrate their own experience. "What has this smell reminded you of?" "Is there some concrete situation or story to share?" "What is your most powerful memory for you evoked by smelling for example cinnamon?"

After sharing, the trainer can propose to choose one story which could be represented by participants in a theatrical way.

The functions of the facilitator during the workshop process:

- To detect where the difficulties are in expressing a story by the participants: their obstacles, their blockades.
- To detect the potential of the storytellers, encourage them to use records that are inherent in them.
- To create conditions and situation for narration.
- To offer resources and techniques of storytelling, theatrical stage techniques according to each story that allow to perfect it.
- The exercises of disinhibition, techniques for speaking in front of public through playful tools, laughter therapy.

**Variations:** As stimulators you can use food (sense of taste), pictures (sense of sight) etc.







**AHA**

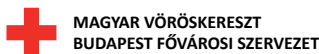
**Homeless**

**Theatre**

**Company**







MAGYAR VÖRÖSKERESZT  
BUDAPEST FŐVÁROSI SZERVEZET



## Red Cross, AHA Homeless Theatre Company, Hungary

The AHA Homeless Theatre Company was founded in the autumn of 2001, in the Homeless Shelter of Madridi Road, in Budapest, when one of the inhabitants of the shelter volunteered to play a part in the Christmas play of that year. Funded by the Hungarian Red Cross (Magyar Vöröskereszt Budapest Fővárosi Szervezete), the Company is based in the homeless shelter, which immediately provides space for the theatrical work and a community in an institutional frame, as the active presence of social workers and that of many other professional helpers is indispensable for the work. Since that autumn, the Company has grown. It focuses mainly on homeless people, but wishes to involve different groups of society as well.

The Company has already worked with both children and adults coming from normal family circumstances, with children who live under state care and also with professional actors. Today, the Company is renowned both nationally and internationally. It has appeared at several festivals, fundraisers, and has taken part in a number of Hungarian and European projects. It offers a quality leisure time for homeless people, but in addition to that, the AHA Theatre Company aims to enable an interactive artistic communication between homeless people and the society using theatre as a method. Over the past 15 years, more than 40 percent of its actors managed to reintegrate into society, with the help of a world where art and help intertwine. The aim of the Company is to be an independent organisation and to make this sort of theatrical technique acknowledged in Hungary.

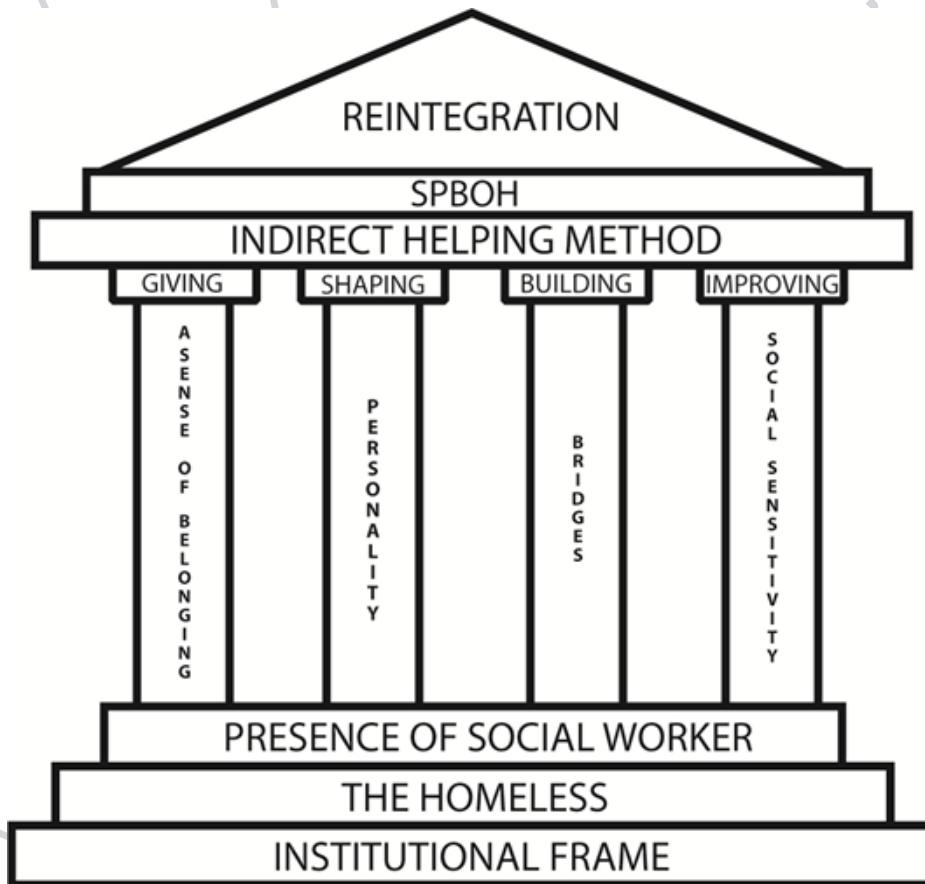
**Keywords:** homeless people, indirect helping method, SPBOH, reintegration.



## Our theory

Our methodology is based on what we call indirect help through theatre. This means that by doing theatre, certain patterns (such as problem-solving, conflict-management, ethical, or empathetic skills, etc.) become integrated implicitly into the participants' everyday life. Furthermore, theatre gives the opportunity to give something to the audience. This is especially important to us, because we work mainly with homeless people – those members of the society who usually receive what other people give them. As it is important to follow up the actors' development outside the rehearsal room (which is in the shelter), we call our method situated process-based and -oriented help (SPBOH). We use original plays and their written scripts for our work (never longer than 40 minutes), therefore, as opposed to other drama-therapies (sociodrama and psychodrama), the effects of this kind of theatrical work need more time – sometimes even years – to become visible.

The figure below shows how our methodology is constructed. In this present guide, we are going to share our four main methods (the four columns of our Greek temple / modern theatre / arrow that points upwards) that help us achieve our main goal, which is the reintegration of homeless people. Our aim is – instead of offering a list of various activities and exercises – to present possible approaches to theatre for the homeless.





# Giving a Sense of Belonging

<b>Goal</b>	thinking together in terms of group
<b>Subgoals</b>	cooperation (opening up – acceptance), tolerance, empathy within the community
<b>Target Groups</b>	homeless people, orphan children
<b>How</b>	in order to make the members create one group and think together keeping the group's interests and goals in mind, we have to work on the actors' self-expression, discussion-dynamics and ways of interpretation

## The Read-Through

It is usually the first rehearsal (or the first two or three rehearsals) that offers space and time to use this method.

<b>Space</b>	Any room suitable for working with the community; the friendly atmosphere is what's most important.
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<b>Time</b>	1-3 times. 2 hours approximately/rehearsal
<b>Number of participants</b>	It depends on the play. The optimal number is 6-10 participants. If the number is higher, the group has to be divided into subgroups (according to the scenes).
<b>Materials</b>	script (for everyone), paper-pen for taking notes
<b>Description</b>	It starts with the introduction of the new play – it is read out loud by the director. After the presentation, the roles are distributed and the discussion begins. The actors form a circle and they talk about the scenario, their emotions that the play has evoked in them, the different personalities that they will embody, and also how they imagine the implementation of the play. During the discussion, they listen and react to each other.

*The performance is based on the director's conception, as directing is not team-work. It is the nature of the play and the imagination of the director which determines it. Any diversion from the original conception is the result of a consensus between the director and the actor(s). The same should be applied for the future phases of the creation of the play. This is where our method is different from psycho- and sociodrama: it provides space for discussion and changes, but it is basically following a clear-cut line, accepted, followed and supported by the actor. According to our experience, in this situation the director should be an example, a pattern to follow, a strong and determined personality with artistic experience, and not an autocratic leader (even if it may seem so). This is very important, otherwise the play will be incoherent.*

### **What are the results of this method?**

The tension is eased, the actors' questions are answered. The actors discover their inner conditions and their capability to learn, rehearse, act out, perform the play. These are the first, almost invisible steps towards self-confidence and self-esteem. With the introduction of actors from other groups, the actors make new friends and see new patterns for behaviour.



# Shaping personality

<b>Goal</b>	To find one's place in the community (in the society eventually)
<b>Subgoals</b>	To experience new emotions, the feeling of integration, and different behaviour-patterns
<b>Target Groups</b>	Homeless people
<b>How</b>	By experimenting different ways of presenting one's character (role)

## The Polishing Rehearsal

<b>Space</b>	rehearsal room
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<b>Time</b>	2 hours/rehearsal  <i>We do not have rehearsals regularly (that means at the same time each week), because we have to adapt to the actors' daily schedule. This is relatively easy, because most of our actors live in the shelter. We also have to keep in mind that the actor cannot lose their job because of the rehearsal, so we do our best to find hours that are suitable for every member of the group. We need to have priorities: job – income – community – acting.</i>
<b>Number of participants</b>	10-12



**Materials**

The written script is not needed anymore. As for other materials (sets), as the play develops, they are more and more needed. The use of materials is part of a learning process, which helps focus the actor's attention and enables them to become more expressive. With the use of materials, the actors' concentrating and expressive skills develop. In case of people who use a small set of behaviour patterns, the appropriate use of materials is extremely useful. The actor can "hide" behind them, or can express feelings with their help (for example, the ocarina can symbolise death, while a doll may stand for birth).

**Description**

With the constant assistance of the director, the actor slowly starts to create the (fictional, stage-) character both mentally and physically. During this work, both the director and the actor speak, reflect upon their own and each other's performance and ask questions (What is such a person like? How does he behave? How does he move?). The other actors also pay attention to the other's performance, comment, reflect upon their work, make suggestions (actors take turns). The discussion and the constant reflection help the actor polish the role and pay attention to the subtleties.

When more actors participate in a certain scene, their performance may change according to what response is given by another actor.

*It is very important for the director to contain the play, keep it within a strict frame and not let it flow.*

### **What are the results of this method?**


In this phase, the actors' problem-solving skills develop mostly. The characters which are embodied by the actors may change their attitude to different ways of behaviour implicitly. Features of a positive character may integrate into the actor's own personality, while a negative character may raise their attention to patterns that should be avoided. Also, an interaction based on trust develops between the actors, which slowly appears in their everyday lives. Finally, as their interest in theatre increases, they become more active in other type of community work within the theatre group (helping the others learn the script, helping in the creation and repairing of the sets), and they start taking responsibility for each other (taking care of an ill fellow-actor, etc.).

### **What are the possible risks of this method?**

1. The actor might have bad experiences from before, they might give up, get angry or emotional.

**Possible solution:** The social worker may interfere, but it is best to let the person process their emotions and help them (with discussion and emotional assistance) after the rehearsal.

2. According to our experiences over the past years, the actors' mental capabilities and learning abilities and techniques vary greatly. Actors with better abilities learn the play (even the roles of other actors) much faster, while slower actors might have more problems with learning it. This might cause tension within the group.



**Possible solution:** With the constant presence of a social worker, the director must make it clear that theatre is teamwork where every actor has a role and it is not the individual achievements, but the common production which is most important – and where everybody is equally important.



# Building Bridges

<b>Goal</b>	bringing different social groups together – on stage and in reality
<b>Subgoals</b>	(re)integration, acceptance, tolerance
<b>Target Groups</b>	different social groups, e. g.: homeless people-professional actors; homeless people-orphan children; homeless people-people living in normal circumstances
<b>How</b>	by creating one common production

## The Final Rehearsal

<b>Space</b>	the stage and backstage where the performance will take place
<b>Time</b>	2-4 hours

**Number of participants**

Everyone involved in the play. This time, the theatre group becomes temporarily larger, as a special volunteer group gets involved in the production (people preparing materials, controlling light and sound, organising transportation).

*It is interesting to observe the relationship between actor and "helper": it is a cooperative work, where there is no hierarchy.*

**Materials**

All materials needed for the performance (costumes, props, lights, sound) have to be present, this is the moment when they all find their final places, and the actors are already using them skilfully.

## Description

Whether there is a possibility for the group to rehearse on the stage right before the performance or not, the director must inform the actors about everything that awaits them, in order to avoid surprises. It is equally important to provide space for everyone to share their ideas, and discuss and agree upon problems as a team. Also, the director is in charge of the whole performance, therefore, the actors become more and more aware of one another, and they need to rely on, help and look after each other.

This is a very important part of the rehearsing process, because this is the first time that the actor meets the audience - even if only a small number of people (other homeless people living in the shelter, friends, family). These meetings help to fight anxiety. Also, at the end of the final rehearsal, quite often the spectators may express their own opinion on the play, and a special dialogue between actor and audience takes place.

This is the phase when everything learned during the polishing rehearsal becomes visible.

## What are the results of this method?

The actor starts to respect the work that they have done, and starts to take responsibility for their own creation.

Homeless people often experience that their work or production is underestimated. As a result of the repeated deception, they consider their own work to be worthless. However, as the theatre group have common interests, during the common work, a common set of values will appear. This means that the production they create together becomes precious, and it will be theirs: they will take care of it. Protecting the production of the entire group means that the actors can feel both protective and protected.

During the final rehearsal, the actor is no longer a “written part” or an experimenting amateur, but a mature personality. The characteristics of the figure he or she embodies percolates imperceptibly in to the actor’s own personality.

### **What are the possible risks of this method?**

1. Impatience and anxiety because of the performance. This might affect the actor’s everyday life, but it might cause problems on the stage, too. In a stressful situation caused by anxiety, the actor might experience a mental block. This may not only manifest in making word errors or bad moves, but in a rigid state, where the actor is unable to communicate.

**Possible solution:** During the rehearsals, many techniques, exercises should be practised (games of trust, prompts, etc), which can be used in such a situation: every actor must know that they can rely on their fellow actors. This is another way to form trust between the actors.

2. As the performance gets closer, the actors get more and more nervous and impatient. On the one hand, this is because of the performance, on the other hand, it is because they have the desire to please. This might cause conflicts within the group.

**Possible solution:** Individual and group discussions help to solve these conflicts. We have to assure the actor that they are indeed creating something precious, and



that the performance is not a competition, as all actors have the same goal.

*We have to avoid the forming of smaller groups within the group, because these can mean the end of the whole performance.*





# Improving Social Sensitivity

<b>Goal</b>	To change the society's attitude towards and perception of homeless people
<b>Subgoals</b>	To change stereotypes formed by the majority of the society via performances
<b>Target Groups</b>	The wider community
<b>How</b>	By showing the audience an unexpected but true picture (in a form of a performance) of homeless people

## The Performance and its Afterlife: The Applause

<b>Space</b>	it could be anywhere (classroom, hall, theatre, open-air stage, etc.)
<b>Time</b>	2,5 hours
<b>Number of participants</b>	6-30
<b>Materials</b>	the sets needed for the performance

## Description

*We have arrived at the most complex part of our methodology. The performance is, in every single case, a CHALLENGE: making individual achievements public. The biggest challenge of all, however, is forming the connection between audience and actor – for both a professional and a homeless actor.*

*It is the audience that gives feedback on whether the acting is good or bad. If the feedback is positive, the actor has achieved their goal: success. The actor's fee is the applause. The effects of successful acting may vary: it may satisfy artistic desires, it may turn into need, or it can simply be "love".*

It is very important to inform the audience about who and what they are going to see. This may happen before, during or after the performance (the advantage of the latter is that the audience watches the play without any stereotype in mind). There are also several ways to involve the audience, depending on their placement.

They can be:

- sitting and watching
- on the stage, very close to the actors
- taking part interactively (question-answer)
- involved in the play

Therefore, there are different options for the audience to give feedback. If they are sitting and watching, the applause can be their tool to express their opinion, which is also a source of force and energy for the actor. If the spectator is involved

actively, they can improvise, change the story (Forum Theatre), be part of the play. In these cases, there is a special relationship that forms between actor and spectator, based on trust, vice versa.

As for the afterlife of the performance, it does not end with the applause. A series of positive experiences await the actor: new friendships are to be made and they may receive personal appreciation, which all affect the actor's personality in a positive way.

If possible, we should let them enjoy this moment, and not bother them with things such as packing.

### **What are the results of this method?**

What changes in the audience is their point of view on:

- stereotypes of homeless people
- the achievements of homeless people
- how to interpret homelessness to the society (this may ease the tension between social groups)
- prejudice towards homelessness

What improves in the actor:

- the feeling of importance
- the value of the production they created
- the image of a person who is able to give to the society (whereas it is usually the other way round)
- self-confidence

Under the weight of the performance, the actors' concentration is more intense. During the show, they are able to pay attention to themselves and the environment. They become reliable people for the fellow actors, while they become a giving party in the society, where the "donation" is the performed play. The success of

this huge personal achievement is even measurable:

Immediately: by the applause


Later on: by the changing characteristics:

- positive thinking
- development of problem-solving skills
- expansion of social relations
- development of conflict-management
- efficient use of free-time
- enthusiasm in teamwork
- stronger sense of responsibility
- respect of own work
- humbleness towards art

All in all, in an ideal case, the actor has achieved several goals that – if not immediately then even years later – they will be able to benefit from.

### **What are the possible risks of this method?**

1. Indifference of the audience: it may have bad effects on the actor. The fixed structure of the play does not allow the actor to solve the conflict straightaway.  
**Possible solution:** If we have the opportunity, it is useful to introduce the theatre group in a few sentences. The audience will appreciate every detail.
2. Processing success is a hard job. Sometimes the actors might not deal with their success in an appropriate way: they may become isolated because of feeling superior to the others. This can be very dangerous, as it can affect the quality of the acting.  
**Possible solution:** In every case, we should start solving the problem with individual discussions, as it may affect other people in the group. We must



Speak about the importance of personal success, but we must insist on the fact that the performance is a common production, and each member of the group is just as important as the rest, regardless of the amount and the quality of the part. After such a discussion, the rest of the group can be involved. A well-functioning group can handle these situations well, but the leader of the group always has to be present.



A person with dark curly hair, seen from behind, is wearing a yellow t-shirt and holding several sheets of paper. They are in a bright room with large windows and other people in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Centro per lo  
Sviluppo Creativo  
Danilo Dolci**





# Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci (CSC)

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci was established in 1958 and it is based on the experience of social and educational work carried out by Danilo Dolci and his collaborators in Eastern Sicily.

It is a non-profit organization that involves young people and adults and has successfully operated for more than ten years mainly on the educational sector in collaboration with schools, universities, theatre companies, associations and social groups both at local and international level.

## **Our goals:**

- To promote the territory development through grass root activities;
- To support youth + adult education using Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) and other innovative educational methods;
- To work towards a culture of peace and non-violence;
- To encourage intercultural dialogue;
- To inform about Danilo Dolci's life and work.

## **Our activities:**

- Initiatives with EU and local organisations focusing on active citizenship, social inclusion and innovation in education;
- Maieutic laboratories in schools, universities etc.;
- Cultural and educative activities promoting Danilo Dolci's life and work.

CSC has also developed innovative educational approach for adult learners in different fields, always adapting its methods according to the addressed target in a

flexible and innovative way. CSC has a long-lasting experience in the field of social inclusion and non-formal education thanks to performing arts. On the topic of social inclusion and the arts, a good example of its activity is CAREM – Collaborative Art-Making for Reducing Marginalization [LLP COMENIUS Multilateral]: this project aimed at developing and disseminating good practices of teaching based on the Collaborative art-making method in order to foster intercultural education, reduce social marginalization and promote European Citizenship in school contexts.

Danilo Dolci also used his Maieutic Theatre method to empower people with less opportunities and stated the importance of creativity and the arts in the process of helping disadvantaged people. This is one of the reasons why Dolci called his centre “Centre for Creative Development”. At local level, CSC Danilo Dolci works with theatre companies and cultural institutions to use theatre and the arts as a tool for social inclusion.

**Targets:** Several target of the community, especially disadvantaged people in society, including: migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; vulnerable young people; people with disability.

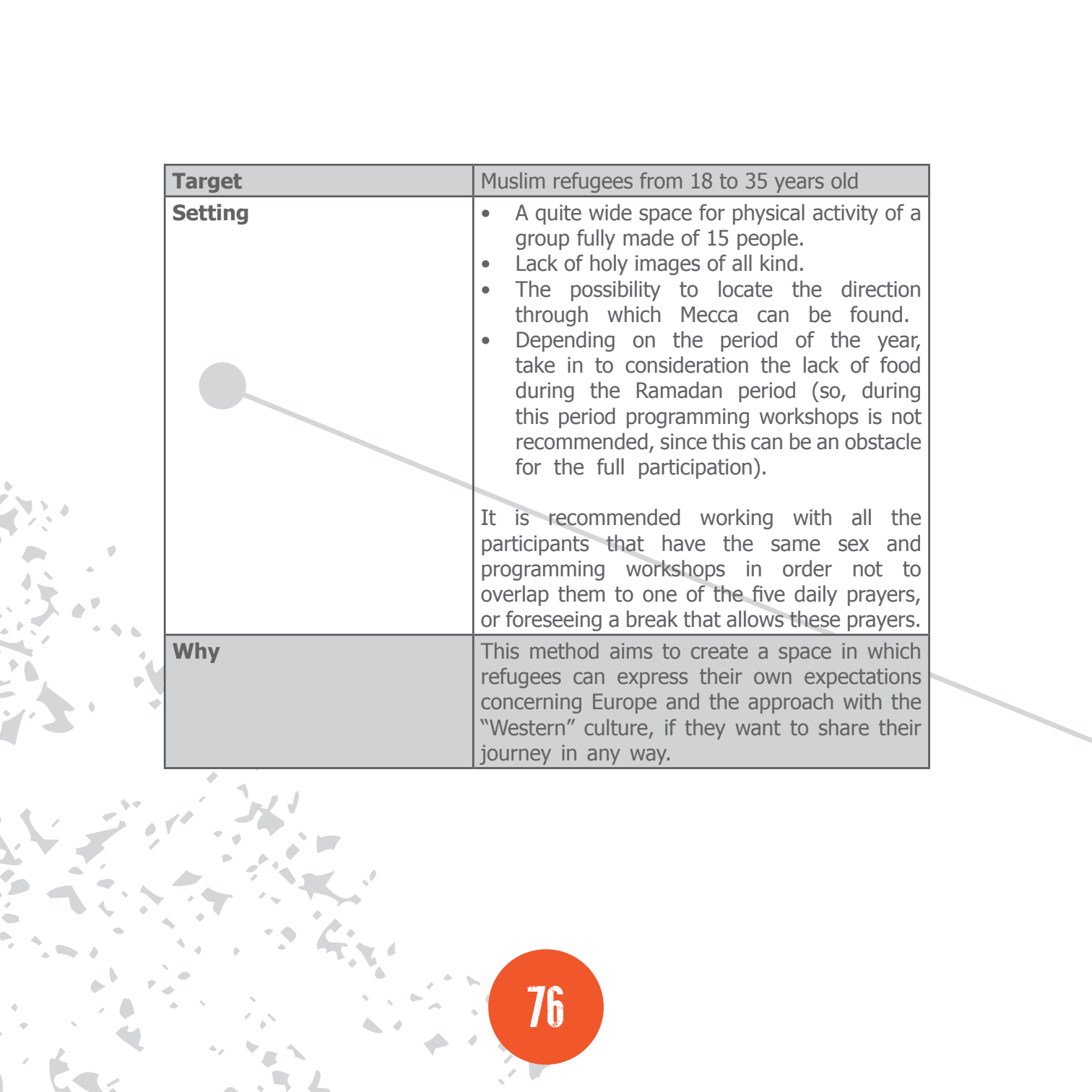
**Key words:** Reciprocal Maieutic Approach; grass root democracy; creative development; art as empowering tool; community involvement; Maieutic Theatre.



## The island where to meet

The methodology adopted during the workshop will be active and inclusive, mainly aimed at interaction and sharing. It can be included into the environment of holistic disciplines and focuses on the relationship between physical activities and the development of relational resources and the resolution of problems and conflicts. In the workshops, which face different topics set by the leader, the aim is to activate the creativity of the participants across non-verbal languages, such as drawing, collage and body language through theatrical games.

The distinctive feature of this methodology is not connected with new techniques, which are all adopted from other methods or disciplines, but with their adaptation to participants who are Muslim in most cases. The methodology comes from the necessity to meet and know all the expectations and wishes of those refugees who come to Sicily, in most cases Muslim people. Their religion deals with many aspects of daily life. The lack of judgment and the respect of the participants' cultural and spiritual needs are essential whenever a real dialogue is established.



<b>Target</b>	Muslim refugees from 18 to 35 years old
<b>Setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A quite wide space for physical activity of a group fully made of 15 people.</li><li>• Lack of holy images of all kind.</li><li>• The possibility to locate the direction through which Mecca can be found.</li><li>• Depending on the period of the year, take in to consideration the lack of food during the Ramadan period (so, during this period programming workshops is not recommended, since this can be an obstacle for the full participation).</li></ul> <p>It is recommended working with all the participants that have the same sex and programming workshops in order not to overlap them to one of the five daily prayers, or foreseeing a break that allows these prayers.</p>
<b>Why</b>	This method aims to create a space in which refugees can express their own expectations concerning Europe and the approach with the "Western" culture, if they want to share their journey in any way.



**How**

1. Initial rite
2. Physical warm up
3. Brain storming on a topic set by the leader
4. Work on the ideas originated from the brainstorming through illustrations, collage, body improvisation or the creation of stories which will be acted later.
5. Feedback of the completed work (through expressive techniques indicated above, or verbal technics.)
6. Closing rite and greetings



# Imaginative training

<b>Aim</b>	Experiential and physical activity which focuses on the discussed topic.
<b>Space</b>	An area big enough to easily host all the participants and allow physical activity.
<b>Number of people</b>	at least 5 - 15 maximum
<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes maximum
<b>Required professional figures</b>	If necessary a translator for those who do not speak English

## Exercise:

- Walk across the area looking at the others.
- Imagine having something precious to hide.
- You think you see a friend from afar but once arrived next to that person you realize you have made a mistake, apologize and keep walking.
- Recognize a friend from afar, not a mistake this time, say hi with affection and in case give your own hidden treasure so far.

**Variations:** variations can be several and they depend on the topics to deal with or on the emotions to be observed.

**Example:**

- Walk on the area looking for something lost.
- Ask the others for some help to find it and give your own help.
- Once found what has been sought give it to whoever.

**Notes:** Do not use images or references which are closely connected to the experience of refugees or to their journey.  
Make sure that these exercises come to a happy ending which implies sharing







# The creature and the little ball

<b>Aim</b>	<p>There are two purposes or main aims: the first one is to warm up and through physical expressivity form a bond which becomes a cue to create a series of movements.</p> <p>The second aim is the real physical contact with the mate, which later becomes game sharing and in the last part of the exercise it becomes the creation of a group to face the "challenge" of the leader. The group shares and cooperates for a common purpose.</p> <p>To sum up, we go from the individual game to the sharing of that game, and finally to the cooperation.</p>
<b>Space</b>	<p>An area big enough to easily host all the participants and allow physical activity, a sound system.</p>
<b>Number of people</b>	<p>At least 10 - 20 maximum</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>20 minutes maximum</p>

**Required professional figures**

If necessary, a translator for those who do not speak English.

**Exercise:**

Before the activity starts, the leader makes a circle on the ground with the group. In the middle of the circle there are sheets of paper and variously coloured markers. He invites participants to choose a little ball to be given to a chosen mate, when all people receive a little ball, the leader will introduce the game and all the basic rules:

- The little ball cannot detach from the ground.
- The little ball cannot be held in the hands.
- During the phases of the game the leader, freely moving, will try to take the little balls from the participants. Those who are without a little ball, should stay still until another participant tags them.

The activity will be divided into three phases:

1

## Individual game

When the music is on, the users are asked to stand up and freely move around the little ball to which only small inputs of energy are given, that is, it can be touched with a few hits as possible to successively follow it with the body.

The user will move around the little ball following its path, just using the legs or the body entirely.

# 2

## Pairs are created

During the first phase it may happen that two mates touch each other and in this phase, when the contact takes place, there are asked to grab the touched part of the mate as if glued to him/her.

Strange couples will be formed and they will play together keeping in touch through a leg, or through an ankle or simply through a shoulder.

## The creature is born

In this phase the couples are asked to repeat what happened before with other couples, so there will be an intricate unique group which plays with just one little ball as a strange creature. The so formed group will have to prevent the leader from taking the little ball which is left, always bearing in mind the basic rules.

**Variations:** variations are mainly about the instruments that are used as a bond of the movement. For example the little balls can be replaced with crushed sheets of paper, on which participants wrote some positive and negative aspects about their own culture and about the culture they are going to meet, that of the country they come from or that of the hosting country.

**Sources:**  
Stanislavskji  
Augusto Boal

# 3



# The errors school

The methodology is based on the techniques and the philosophy of the theatrical Clownery, which arises from the meeting of the circus tradition with the theatre and cinema at the beginning of 1900s. It would be very easy to say that just one type, or stereotype, of clown exists, and consequently only one type of poetry and content, but certain people are barely able to give a precise or a textbook description about what the theatrical clown is.

Some reference figures are Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton and more recently James Thiérrée and Slava Polunin as far as the theatre is concerned. Theatrical Clownery works on error and human fragility, the clown lives and works thanks to his/her mistakes and discomfort, his/her gift lies into the fantastic ability to laugh and make people laugh also with sadness and misfortune. S/he has a fundamental role within the method which is the creation of a group that, besides being a place of comfort and exchange, could also be a working group. At the end of every cycle of laboratory the staging is provided. In this sense brainstorming and improvisations give to the group the chance to work together and try a creative debate.

<b>Target</b>	The target of recipients is people who are 18+. It is important to specify for the purposes of the laboratory the presence of some users with minor physical disabilities, this is considered as a treasure and not as a limit.
<b>Setting</b>	<p>The laboratory needs a setting which could be quite big for a group composed of 15 people and which is properly enlightened, with the chance to attach to the power grid an audio access composed of a simple CD player and medium power speakers.</p> <p>As far as working tools are concerned, they will be obtained and carried out partially by the leaders and partially by the users themselves.</p>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation and foundation of a group.</li><li>• Stimulating physical activation.</li><li>• Stimulating a more conscious awareness and use of the body.</li><li>• Team working and reinforcement of relational skills.</li><li>• Reinforcement of expressive abilities.</li><li>• The clown: the use of creativity in problem solving.</li><li>• Final essay.</li></ul>

<p><b>How</b></p> <p><b>1. Mechanization</b></p>	<p>Starting from basic exercises of the theatrical work of mechanization adopted from the social Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, the aim will be, as a first step, destroying what Boal calls "Physical Oppressions". Across dissociation games between the body and words, some actions and intentions, users explore and play with their own abilities and limits.</p>
<p><b>2. Foundation of a group through the concepts of identity and sharing:</b></p>	<p>From the theatre of the oppressed by Boal, it would be taken those instruments and exercises which aim to the creation of a working group, based on mutual listening and collaboration.</p>
<p><b>3. Start of the work on the theatrical clown, which will bring to the construction of gags and characters through the experimentation of:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the discovery of the audience;</li> <li>• the entrance of clowns;</li> <li>• the gaze and comic timeframes;</li> <li>• the face;</li> <li>• the discovery and use of the red nose;</li> <li>• the art of ridiculous;</li> <li>• disguise, characters and the hierarchy on the circus clown;</li> <li>• the relationship between Augusto, Bianco and Monsieur Loyal;</li> <li>• Jacket and Hat, the relationship of clowns with objects;</li> <li>• Rag time and melot;</li> </ul>

<b>4. Inventing stories:</b>	A composition by the group of stories and rags which will become an important instrument for the following improvisations. To this end, some creative writing exercises are very useful: they start from the most childish couple and from the imaginary theory and passing through the pataphysics it gives to the user the chance to exercise the imagination.
<b>5. Some exercises of free improvisation, on rag and guided improvisation.</b>	In this phase of the laboratory they will be working on the creation of the character, their own clown, starting from themselves and from their body as a necessary source of creativity.

## Saying it through your words

<b>Aim</b>	This exercise comes within those of the mechanization phase, a phase of physical and creative awakening which precedes and facilitates the work on clown.
<b>Setting</b>	A quite, big area in order to easily host the participants and allow physical activity.
<b>Number of people</b>	At least 5 maximum 15
<b>Duration</b>	Maximum 20 minutes
<b>Required professional figures</b>	No professional figures required



**Exercise:**

1. To form pairs.
2. To ask each pair to choose an emotion to represent and communicate it to the leader only.
3. To divide the room into two parts, one of which will act as the audience, and the other one, provided with two chairs, will be the place where pairs will perform.
4. To ask each pair to represent emotions chosen with words or gestures which could express the contrary although the intention is maintained.
5. To ask the participants who are watching to guess the represented emotion.

**Variations:** variations could be several and depend on the emotions that we want to examine.

**Example:**

1. To express love just through the use of insults or hate or just across compliments and sweet words.
2. To express happiness with words and sadness through gestures and body posture and vice versa.
3. To express rush and anxiety very slowly, or tiredness and calm with frenzy.

**Notes:** To let users choose the emotions to represent, to be sure they feel comfortable with the dealt topics.



## The newspapers' cloud


<b>Aim</b>	The main purposes or aims are physical activation, creativity development and problem solving.
<b>Setting</b>	A quite, big area in order to easily host the participants and allow physical activity, presence of a sound system in order to use music.
<b>Number of people</b>	At least 10 maximum 15
<b>Duration</b>	Maximum 30 minutes
<b>Required professional figures</b>	No professional figures required

### Exercise:

The leader distributes to the participants old newspapers and ask them to walk through the room space.

1. After putting the music on, the leader asks the participants to throw some sheets of newspapers creating a cloud within which they start to move with the music.
2. When the leader stops the music he/she will say the name of an animal and in a few minutes the participants, using the sheets spread all over the room, will have to create a costume which represents the animal.
3. The leader goes around the room asking the participants to show and explain the costume to all participants.

As the game proceeds, the animals called by the leader will be more specific or totally invented, at that point it will be very interesting to listen to the explanations provided by the participants of their own costume.



**Variations:** Variations, different materials can be used and different figures which are sought by the participants.

**Example:** Fabrics or clothes can be used instead of sheets of paper, and you can ask for the representation of professions or objects in place of animals.



## Working with myth: how theatre came to Earth

The Nāṭyaśāstra, written probably between the 1st and the 2nd Century AD, is both a sacred text and a practical handbook, in which the rules of Indian drama are fixed. Its importance for the development of Indian theatre is paramount, but it has also been influential in recent Western theatre, with the reworking of the Rāsa system (which defines the relationship between the fundamental emotions and their expressions on the stage) made by Richard Shechner.

It begins with an outstanding myth, telling how the Gods conceived theatre, and presented human beings with it. The story is woven with several striking metaphors not only about the old debated question of good and evil, but also about theatre: the relationships between stage and audience, between the theatre and the world, and even, in dramatherapy terms, between dramatic and everyday reality.

The story is told in first person by Bharata Muni, the wise person chosen by the Gods to set up the first performance. Once upon a time, human people did not have the theatre. They lived their lives, worked, got married, had children and raised them, slept at night, and woke up in the morning. Every day they praised the Gods through the four Vedas, the sacred books of prayers: the Ṛgveda, or Veda of the hymns; Sāmaveda, or Veda of the melodies; Yajurveda, or Veda of the sacrificial formulas; and Atharvaveda, the Veda of the spells.

However, the Age of Gold had waned, and in the following Age of Silver people were becoming the prey of greed, anger, and arrogance. They would need something to distract themselves.

Thus, a delegation of people came to visit Indra, the God of thunder, to ask for his intercession. Indra went to the God of Gods, Brahma, in order to ask advice, and Brahma decided to create a fifth Veda, the Veda of theatre, taking poetry from the Ṛgveda, music from the Sāmaveda, dance from Yajurveda, and the passions from the Atharvaveda. Bharata was chosen as the man who would accomplish the task of putting it into practice, because, besides being pious and holy, he had a hundred sons and daughters. Bharata prepares the performance, which will be done in honour of Indra; it will celebrate the Feast of the Standard, reminding the primeval war when he defeated the evil gods, the Asuras.

Though, in the middle of the performance, in which the Gods are present as audience, as well as the whole of humankind and all the other creatures, the actors suddenly freeze, and, notwithstanding the efforts of Bharata, they cannot move at all. Indra notices that the Asuras stand among the audience, as uninvited guests, and they had put a spell on the actors, because they do not like to be portrayed in the way they saw in the performance: as a bunch of ugly, ragged losers. So, Indra takes back his Standard, and the battle starts again, this time not on the stage but in the audience stalls. It goes on raging, until an intervention of Brahma reconciles the two quarrelsome parties and re-establishes theatre as the place where both good and evil can be played out.

The method presented is aimed at encountering the myth and developing it, exploring how its message can be related to our actual practice of theatre as a way to deal with people's actual problems but also with their coping resources. The presentation is divided in two sections: the first is aimed at introducing some

of the main issues of the story through a series of exercises of embodiment; the second at exploring the story itself.

## Introducing the themes

### Goals:

- To create a playful atmosphere;
- To foster communication and collaboration among the participants;
- To experiment with conflict in a gentle way.

### Exercise 1: STICKING

People are invited to walk around the room. First, they will look around, becoming aware of the place they are in, and of the people they are with. Then, they will experiment with different paces, gradually increasing their speed up to a light run (but still being careful not to bump into each other), and eventually decreasing it to come back to a regular pace. Then, at a signal of the leader, the game starts: when a person gets near to another, they will be irresistibly drawn toward each other, until they touch each other with any part of the body. Once they touch, they are stuck together, and they must keep walking in that position. The leader suggest to act as if they want to get rid of the other, and try to push him/her away with all their strength, but still keep walking. It is important to keep the push constant, not using sudden shoves. After a few minutes, the leader will let people break off. They will keep walking around, and the game can start again with another partner.

## Exercise 2: WEST SIDE STORY

People stand in two opposite lines facing each other, at a certain distance (two-three meters). At any moment, a person from one of the lines will create a war-like gesture and sound, and start marching towards the other line, repeating it rhythmically. The others in the line will repeat the gesture and the sound, and advance following him/her. When they get near to the other line, it will start retreating, walking backwards but still facing their 'enemies', until it reaches the wall (or, if the exercise is in the open air, stops at a signal of the leader). At this point, the line that receded starts its counterattack: any person can begin a new gesture and sound, and the others will follow. The game ends when all the participants have had the chance to lead the attack at least once.

## Exercise 3: TIGERS AND LIONS

Like in the previous exercise, people stand in two opposite lines facing each other. It is important that people are in even numbers, so every person has a partner in the other line. The exercise is in three phases.

**Phase 1:** starting from a neutral position, each person will gradually take a 'fierce' position, imagining to be a wild beast, and start growling towards the other. They will advance very slowly, and while they walk their attitude will become more and more aggressive, and the growl will turn into a sonorous roar. When they face each other at a close distance, the aggressive stance and sound must reach its peak (of course not touching each other!); then, everybody will start receding, walking backwards, while they keep staring at each other, and the intensity of sound and posture will decrease, until they get back to their initial place, and they will take again the neutral position and relax.

**Phase 2:** the threatening advance is like the previous phase, but after the peak,


each person will go past the other, adding a disdainful gesture, and they will go on, decreasing the intensity, until they reach the opposite side of the room, taking the other's place. Then, they will turn back, take the neutral position and relax.

**Phase 3:** same start. When people get to the peak of intensity, the tension will suddenly drop, and they will hug each other.

## Section 2: Exploring the myth

The following sequence is a typical structure used in dramatherapy to work with myths and stories. It is very simple and flexible, and at the same time open to many possible variations.

- 1. Listening to the story:** people are invited to sit and relax, while the leader tells the story.
- 2. Setting the stage:** together, people decide to identify different parts of the room as the places of the story (ex. the city where people live, the mountain where Indra dwells, the throne of Brahma, Bharata's home, the theatre of the first performance, etc.). Simple elements (cloths, scarves, cushions, chairs, etc.) can be used as rough scenery.
- 3. Taking the roles:** people are invited to volunteer for the main roles (in this case: Indra, Brahma, Bharata and his wife). If more than one person wants to play the same role, they can: it is possible to have different actors in different moments, or repeat the scenes changing the actors. The remaining people will be in turn: the humans pleading with Indra; Bharata's sons and daughters (in 'real life' and on stage, playing the roles of Gods and Asuras); the audience of the first performance (including the Gods and the gatecrashers Asuras). Although they will mostly act as a chorus, it is useful that people try to personalize their roles.

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4. **Performing:** people are invited to improvise the story, with a little help from the leader in order to shift from one scene to another, and some coaching intervention now and then.
  5. **Processing:** people are invited to discuss the experience, including the themes they found relevant.
  6. **Developing:** in sub-groups, people are invited to devise a simple scene dealing with the themes previously discussed.
  7. **Final processing:** free group conversation about the whole process.





Divadlo

bez

domova





# Divadlo bez domova

Our main mission is to work with marginalized communities of citizens in an unconventional creative form using the means of theatre, performing arts, dance or singing. Divadlo bez domova (Theatre with no home) provides a platform for presenting social topics that are being overlooked in the commercial artistic sphere. We combine the artistic with the social in order to help tear down stereotypes that marginalized communities face in the society.

DBD was informally founded in 2004 in the course of work on theatrical projects with people without a home and it became registered with the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic on 12. 05. 2006. We are based in Bratislava where we have organized the International festival of homeless theatre ERROR since 2006. This unique event presents theatre groups where the actors and actresses are from different marginalized groups of people.

## **Why do we share our methods?**

We have decided to select 4 methods which are crucial in our work and can be adapted easily by many kinds of groups. Our intention is not to give a "recipe", but to show that there is something happening even before the rehearsals (Coffee ritual), then the beginning of regular work (Playing with rhythm and tempo), then a method which might lead to a creation of a concrete performance (Elevator) and than the long-term sustainable way of keeping the group vivid (Soft joints).

## **Who do we work with?**

Our community of actors and actresses is made up of people without homes (homeless people), physically disabled, people from socially underprivileged communities, Roma people, migrants, people with psychiatric diagnose, social workers, theatre artists, students and anyone who is interested in our theatre. Our actors and actresses receive financial compensation for performing in our

theatre plays.

**Key words:** Group building, self-confidence, ritual, safety, trust, discovery, empowerment, flexibility, self-expression, long-term work.





# Coffee ritual

<b>Key words</b>	Ritual, sharing, rules, beginning
<b>Why?</b>	<p>Rituals, in general, are a very powerful part of theatrical and community work. There are many kinds of rituals: more formal, having more or less strict structure...</p> <p>Others less complicated - almost invisible.</p> <p>This is the kind we want to speak about. For strangers, it may be impossible for them to even notice or recognize them as rituals, but for our community, for us...it is an inevitable part of our theatrical life.</p> <p>For us particularly, because we work with homeless people, coffee is a very strong and important element. It is much more than a "habit" or "thing we just do".</p>

	<p>Along the years we know, that we need to take care of our coffee ritual, we have to plan the activities around it and not forget all we need for it, especially when we travel.</p> <p>Of course, coffee ritual can be replaced or be modified to coffee/tea ritual etc. In fact, we have tea ready also as and in winter it is somehow popular as well. We used coffee phenomenon to underline the fact, that for our community it is an essential drink.</p>
<b>What?</b>	<p>Coffee ritual is an activity, which takes time always at the beginning of rehearsals and before performances. It is truly a moment where a lot is happening: meeting others, greeting and talking, helping those who need help, sharing...</p> <p>In our case we have a small, simple kitchen. Thanks to a kettle we can very quickly prepare a cup of coffee, many times with sugar, sometimes with a lot of sugar.</p> <p>It is partly a homely atmosphere, partly a warm drink itself that helps people to tune to the activities afterwards.</p>
<b>How?</b>	<p>We always make sure that we have the means to carry out our ritual – a kettle, coffee/tea, sugar, mugs – but most of all, the time to devote to making our participants feel wanted and valued.</p> <p>Generally to handle coffee preparation is easy, it requires a place with electricity, respectively gas where water can be boiled, cups, spoons, coffee and sugar.</p>

	<p>But according to our experience to rely on coffee ritual as a ritual is good not to forget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set basic rules;</li> <li>• set time;</li> <li>• have a person(s) who is (are) responsible to make sure there is enough coffee and sugar;</li> <li>• calculate expenses and have a budget for it;</li> <li>• cups, kettle and water.</li> </ul>
<b>Rules</b>	<p>Who wants to have coffee, must come on time.</p> <p>Who drinks coffee is responsible for his/her cup and must wash it and put it back to the kitchen (cabinet).</p>
<b>Time</b>	<p>The coffee ritual time starts minimum 15 min before the beginning of the rehearsal or performance.</p> <p>It means this is an extra time for team leaders to calculate with. It allows people to be more flexible with time. Usually, we arrive at our place 20 or 30 minutes before and always some of our people are already there.</p>
<b>Person(s) responsible</b>	<p>All depends on own needs, but in our case we go to buy coffee and sugar along the year maybe 1 – 2 times per month. It is important to have somebody who in advance informs about shortage of coffee and sugar and can go to buy this.</p>
<b>Expenses</b>	<p>For many organizations money is an issue and coffee consumption can be expensive. In our case we pay for it from money we collect from voluntary entrance to our performances.</p>



**Note:**

By mentioning the fact of buying the coffee we are trying to highlight the fact of giving different roles (coffee keeper, coffee buyer, cleaning keeper...) to the people we work with. In our case to homeless people, ex-prisoners or other people who have experienced in their life large lack of confidence or responsibility by taking these kind of roles – somehow on the edge of the real and theatrical life are reenforcing their abilities and learn, or re-learn, such skills like taking care of others, think in the team, calculate with time, etc.

**Artistic note:**

The ritual itself or some of its parts can be inspirational for artistic approach as well. A lot of elements of it can be remembered or reflected by actors developing their characters, e.g. gathering, informal talk or routine. It is something what can be a point of reference, because everybody knows it or is somehow part of the whole group.

In our case we even use it in the performance Flashback – which reflects 10 years of our work and stresses the most important elements – and the coffee ritual is one of them.



# Playing with rhythm and tempo

This is a way of thinking about common cooperation on different levels:

1. **Practical** - to find variety of rhythms which are in the same or a different tempo, expressed by an instrument, voice, body or another way.
2. **Group dynamic** - to find speed in entire work in which all members of the theatre group feel comfortable.

## Key words

Rhythm: a strong, regular repeated pattern of movement or sound.

Tempo:

1. Music: the speed at which a passage of music is or should be played.
2. The rate or speed of motion or activity; pace.

<b>Why?</b>	<p>Actresses and actors coming from different backgrounds are likely to be different in their rhythm and tempo. In many aspects: walking, speaking, moving etc... Experimenting different rhythms and tempos can show differences and similarities among participants.</p> <p>Another element is to find common rhythm and tempo to be able to create something together: a song, a dance, a scene...</p> <p>Rhythmical exercises can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• keep focus;</li><li>• reach a common goal;</li><li>• help to express something that we don't want or can not express with words;</li><li>• stress diversity;</li><li>• have fun.</li></ul>
<b>What? How?</b>	<p>There are infinite ways to express rhythm and tempo. Dancing, singing, speaking, rapping, clapping...playing instruments... and many more ways...</p> <p>Our aim was to focus on playing instruments, especially percussions and rhythmic instruments. Establishing a band can be surprising source of inspiration.</p> <p>In our case we didn't have any real musician among the participants. So, for all members of the theatre group it was somehow their first touch with music-making. We did have a rapper, who somehow helped us to keep our band in „songs“ or „tunes“. It is somehow important to have pieces of music which can be rehearsed or you can work on them.</p>

	<p>Not necessarily music with singing or rapping. It can be fully instrumental, or improvisational within a certain theme, or a definite piece of music – song or tune.</p> <p>Before starting, it must be clear how people will play – with instruments or without.</p> <p>Musical instruments, if they are of different kinds, are a source of discovery. How to play on them, what is the right sound, or what sound can I produce... On a different day, or different rehearsal, it can be a different instrument, or a particular person takes his or her instrument and can gain some progress in playing it.</p>
<b>For who?</b>	Any size of group as long as there are enough instruments and space.

**Note 1:** for a group of actors and actresses with special needs (CP or other movement disorders):

It is important to have percussions which people can play, that they can comfortably hold and play alone. In this case Maracas (Rumba shakers) are very good, or anything with long handles.

**Note 2:** for a group of actors and actresses with a homeless background:

Any instruments are fine, we have found that a triangle, with its special sound and function, can give extra focus on very little detail with strong impact. Triangle can be played just once in a while – but it is always heard, thanks to its sharp sound. In our case the triangle is played by Pišta – a person who with his 130 kg and physical appearance of a big man is enjoying the soft and gentle way of playing an instrument.

This method offers many possibilities to play with certain contradictions – speed, accent, soft and strong sounds and infinite other possibilities.

## Exercise: How are you doing at the moment?

1. All instruments are in a big basket or on the floor and placed all in the middle of the room. People seat around in the circle.
2. Each person takes the instrument which attracts them today, or grabs the instrument they like.
3. The leader (or the first person) asks a question to the person next to them: *How are you doing at the moment?*
4. This person does not answer with words, instead produces sound with the instrument. We clearly hear and see certain tempo and rhythm, short performances with some power, expression and in this way the group perceive his or her mood.
5. Than this person asks the same question "*How are you doing at the moment?*" to the next person and again we can hear the answer made only by their instrument...
6. One by one everyone asks with words and is answered by the playing of instruments until the circle is completed.

**Note:** It can be interesting to do this exercise at the beginning and then at the end of the rehearsal.

**Varieties:** The question can be changed to anything what requires mood expression:

How was your weekend?

How did you like the last rehearsal, performance, travel to the theatre...?



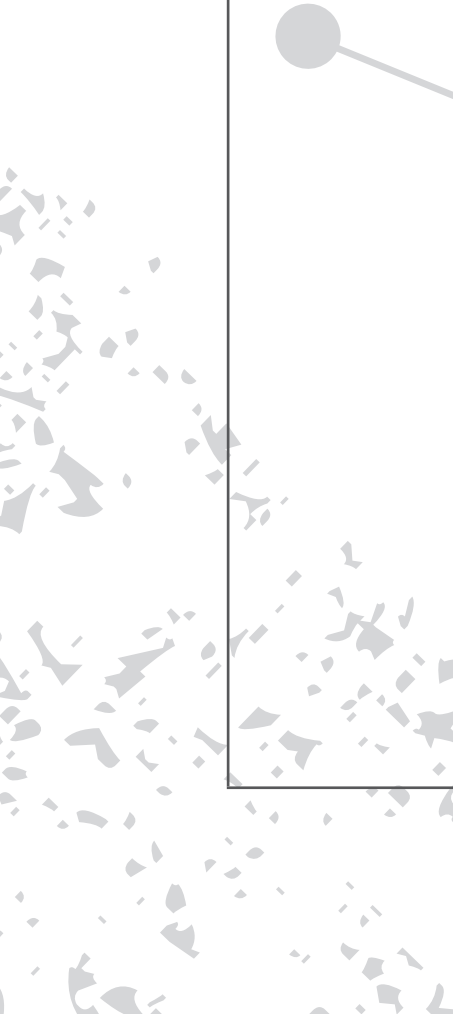


# Elevator

<b>Key words</b>	Own text, creativity, feedback, performance
<b>For whom?</b>	<p>This method is for drama-therapeutic groups or theatre groups where actors and actresses are people who are disabled, have mental health issues, homeless people or other marginalized groups, socially or culturally excluded people or people with dyslexia or/and dysgraphia.</p> <p>Anyway, this method is suitable to any other theatre groups, which are artistically active and perform to the public.</p>
<b>Why?</b>	<p>In our artistic work with homeless people and people with disabilities, we have a need to work with theatrical text which would be created by actors and actresses themselves in a specific theme and it would come from their personal statements, experiences, emotions or life situations. Creative writing of dramatic text is a relatively complicated process. For people, who have never written any text or are dysgraphic or dyslexic, writing could be itself a big barrier and challenge to their engagement in theatre. We asked ourselves what method we could use which could put their ideas and thoughts on to paper without losing the authenticity of their voice, whilst keeping to the theme we wanted to bring on to the stage.</p>

<p><b>What is the method giving us?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helps to formulate ideas, feelings, inside pictures of actors and actresses</li> <li>• creates structure of a specific theme which we are using for the performance</li> <li>• supports creativity of the actors and actresses</li> <li>• creates own theatrical text</li> <li>• helps to discover own performing and acting expressions</li> <li>• elevates motivation</li> <li>• creates original content of the play</li> <li>• combats complexes</li> <li>• develops abstract thinking</li> <li>• allows therapists to have a look into internal thoughts and feelings of the actors and actresses through theatre</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tools</b></p>	<p>Paper and pen, computer and printer.</p>
<p><b>Practical description</b></p>	<p>If possible, two drama-therapists (team leaders, directors), especially if you work with more than 10 actors and actresses.</p> <p>1. Drama-therapists (team leaders, directors) prepare at home a set of questions around the theme, which they want to work on in the theatre. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you feel when you are forced to spend a night on the street?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do you remember when you accepted for the first time that you are a person without a home?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think about the situation in which you cannot cross the street with your wheelchair because of a barrier?</i></li> </ul>





2. At the rehearsal the first drama-therapist asks one by one the actors and actresses to answer with their own words, with their free associations and memories. The second drama-therapist writes down the answers on the paper. It is important to save enough time for each person and their thinking. In this phase is very important that the drama-therapist formulates the questions clearly and keeps the focus of the actors on the theme. In the case when somebody does not understand some word or question it is important to explain it properly.

3. All the collected answers should be rewritten on the computer and printed out, but without questions – just the answers. At this stage it is important that the answers stay in their own language, including the slang or strange expressions and shouldn't be corrected (yet).

4. Printed text is handed to the actors and actresses. It means each of them has their own text on the paper.

5. The drama-therapists ask the actors and actresses to read loudly their texts if possible, if not they help them to read the texts for them. Now the authors of texts can still make changes if they are not satisfied, they can add or remove whatever they want. The final version of the text is again rewritten and printed out.

6. Regular reading of the text at the following rehearsals helps the actors and actresses to memorize it. The drama-therapists can (and should) add other exercises, including movement and action, in which the text becomes a theatrical performance and step by step can be managed into a theatrical performance.

**Our experiences**

Thanks to this method we developed a play Flashback, built of own texts, which brought onto the stage personal experiences and relationships towards theatre and the roles they have had and how they developed over the years. All the actors and actresses felt deep satisfaction after performing their own ideas formulated into their own lines.





## Soft joints

### For who is it for?

This method is for drama-therapeutic groups, theatre groups or groups which artistically work with disabled people, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues, homeless people and with different socially and culturally excluded people (actors / actresses).

It is also suitable for all other group's artistic approach and their performances and other artistic outputs that are presented to the general public (theatre performances for the public).

**Problem description**

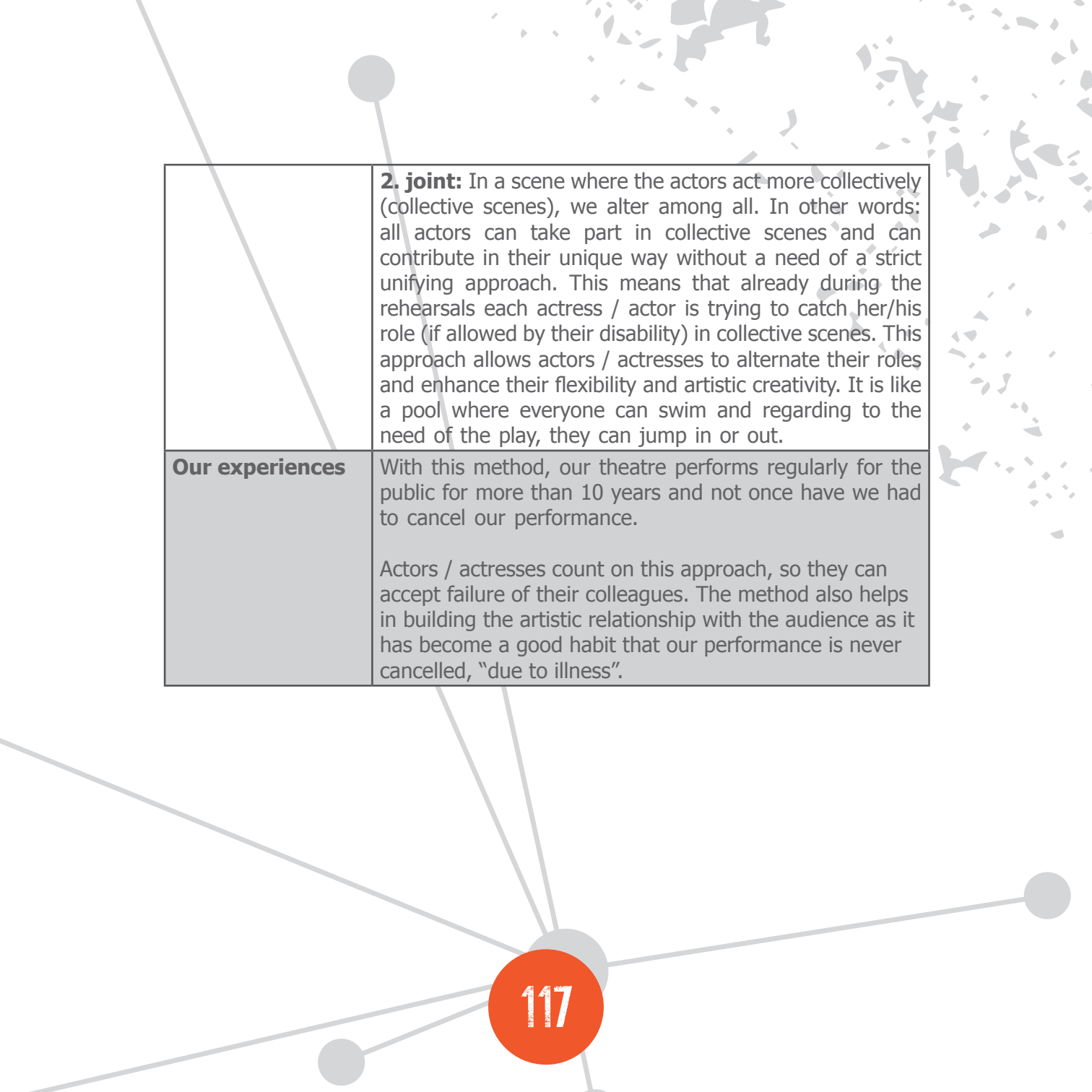
In our artistic work with homeless people and people with disabilities we have encountered the problem of actors not attending for various reasons (injury, illness, alcohol excess, the departure, death, etc.).

The sudden absence of actors / actresses before the scheduled public theatre performance provokes uncertainty and tension throughout the performing team and staff (therapists).

Several months of preparations for the play was in vain or at risk of failing because of the absent actors / actresses. Within the team emerged tensions, conflicts, accusations and quarrels.

For us – the staff (drama-therapists, social workers) who are often committed to making theatre performances happen on a regular basis, such situations cause stress and uncertainty. We tried to find a way that would allow for performers to not attend and the theatre performance could still happen.

<p><b>What does the method give us?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigates the consequences of failure of the actors/actresses such as unexpected, sudden absence of actor(s) in rehearsals and theatre performances</li> <li>• Gives the actors/actresses, staff and audience security (theatrical performance may not be cancelled)</li> <li>• Gives an opportunity of sustainability of a play in the future</li> <li>• Fosters creativity and flexibility of your acting team</li> <li>• Increases the motivation for self-improvement, the actors / actresses (mutual motivation between the actors / actresses)</li> <li>• Provides high level of certainty for drama-therapeutic process</li> <li>• During rehearsals allows full and active involvement of all actors / actresses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Description of the method</b></p>	<p>The method of "soft joints" has two approaches.</p> <p><b>1. joint:</b> The structure of the theatrical production is produced from particular individual scenes / outputs of one actor / actress that is followed by another output of the next actor / actress. In the absence of somebody the scene missing an actor / actress is simply "omitted" and the performance can continue without endangering other dramatic sketches. The performance is shortened but not cancelled.</p>



	<p><b>2. joint:</b> In a scene where the actors act more collectively (collective scenes), we alter among all. In other words: all actors can take part in collective scenes and can contribute in their unique way without a need of a strict unifying approach. This means that already during the rehearsals each actress / actor is trying to catch her/his role (if allowed by their disability) in collective scenes. This approach allows actors / actresses to alternate their roles and enhance their flexibility and artistic creativity. It is like a pool where everyone can swim and regarding to the need of the play, they can jump in or out.</p>
<b>Our experiences</b>	<p>With this method, our theatre performs regularly for the public for more than 10 years and not once have we had to cancel our performance.</p> <p>Actors / actresses count on this approach, so they can accept failure of their colleagues. The method also helps in building the artistic relationship with the audience as it has become a good habit that our performance is never cancelled, "due to illness".</p>





# Društvo ProSoc





## Društvo ProSoc

Association ProSoc is a voluntary, non-profit, humanitarian, interest association of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. Members of the association are experts working in the social welfare system and culture.

The main objective of the association is to improve the quality of life for socially vulnerable groups of the population.

ProSoc's main priorities are implementation of human and child rights in the social welfare system and developing of social entrepreneurship. The association is a member of Slovenian voluntary network system.

### Main areas of action:

- **SOCIAL CULTURAL WORK** – theatre group CARNIUM LEGANDARIUM. Members and actors of the group are vulnerable youth, homeless and people with mental or physical disability.
- **RESETLEMENT** – housing for social excluded groups
- **TRAINING ACTIVITIES** - for professionals in education, social welfare and culture and social entrepreneurship
- **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP** – employment of youth in social and green economy.

**Theatre work** includes treatment of the person as a whole, both physical and mental, spiritual and social aspect. The red line of the method is creativity in the deepest sense of the word. The focus is on the concept right here and now. The purpose of the exercises is to place in the body, incarnate and proceed on the basis what we have at the moment. Big attention is given to group dynamics and overall well-being and care for all those involved. The basic question is "How do you feel?" The focus is on process rather than outcome. The only true leader of the group is a set of unconscious energies that creates the creative process. The manual includes

the following methods: creative movement, ActEmo, Mosaic and Forum theatre for internal use. The first two are intended for movement and awareness of one's own feelings, Mosaic for creative writing script / games, involving all interested parties. The last method is intended to constructively resolve any disputes or problems within the group or those which individuals bring with them.

**Target groups:** Homeless, vulnerable youth, mental and physical disabled, other stigmatized groups, local community, professional and lay workers

**Key words:** Empowerment, self-expression, performing art, movement, embodiment, holistic approach



# Creative movement

<b>Key Words</b>	Movement, dance, creativity, exploration, self-awareness, team work
<b>Why</b>	To create a story through movement and dance (single, pair or group); to raise awareness of one's present feelings and emotions; to learn how to communicate non-verbally in a group; to convert mental processes into physical action; to empower through expression and collective work
<b>What and how</b>	In the method of creative movement we are talking about the expression of thoughts and feelings through the body and movement. We invent movements, create and connect them and so form a "dance movement." A participant in this method communicates, creates and learn through a variety of physical, dance and social games, various forms of relaxation, and he/she are getting to know all areas through the movement. The basic principle is the relationship between the movement and inner feelings and emotion.
<b>For whom</b>	For anyone who can express through movement


<b>Goal</b>	To express thoughts and feelings through body movement and expressive dance and put them into choreography/ performance
<b>Space and requisites</b>	Suitable big space with soft floor; music and straps (optional)
<b>Number of participants</b>	Group of 4 to 16
<b>Time</b>	60 minutes
<b>Professional Involvement</b>	Someone who understands movement, body work, body expression, individual and group dynamics. Someone who is experienced in observing the inner processes of all participants with a performance as a goal.

## Exercise 1

In the beginning of the exercise, the participants move into a space and close their eyes. Through guided meditation they place themselves in space and time (right here, right now). Then we focus on the body. The trainer uses words describing parts of the body from the feet to the head and thereby exposing the connection with the ground. Several times the trainer asks, if there is any tension or discomfort in any part of the body; if there is, it must be removed and the body must become calm. We can do this easily with focus on the tense part of the body and consciously relaxing it.

## Exercise 2

Next step is presentation of the participants by movement. Each of the participants



presents him/her self by a movement. Any part of the body can be used. The movement can be simple; a gesture with an arm, leg, maybe jump..., but you can connect them into one movement as well. This exercise can be repeated several times.

### **Exercise 3**

In the next exercise, participants sit down on the floor. Each one of them imagines (for example) an image of an animal and tries to adopt the animal's movement. In this exercise it is important to explore and experiment. What are different ways of possible movement? Here it is important to raise awareness of the individual parts of the body. Keep a straight arm really stretched. Let the foot touch the ground. How high can you raise your hand? We can connect movements with simple elements such as pass forward, roll backward, do a handstand, etc. We need to adjust the course to the motor abilities of the participants. It is important that the trainer repeatedly asks the participants about their feelings. It is desirable that the participants pour out their emotions through movement and dance. Anger and extreme joy should be pronounced and leave the body.

### **Exercise 4**

Follows the main part of the exercise. Each one takes an imaginary ball, and explores the space with it. Up, down, forward, backward, left, up high, on the ground... Throw it to the side. Try to connect the movement of the ball with feelings. The exercise can be in pairs or in a group. Explore and experiment. It is important that the participants think about what the ball is and how can we use it. Let them play with it. Everything is possible and they should be encouraged to allow free imagination, real emotions and body. What is important here is the

synergy that occurs in the space. This exercise can be concluded in a way that the movers / dancers come into the room at intervals one after the other, in a duet or subgroups and so form spontaneous choreography.

## Exercise 5

Conclusion. At the end we take time to unwind and relax. This exercise can be carried out in pairs. It is time to take care of each other. For example a short massage. Massage should be done throughout the body (with the exception of intimate parts) slowly, with a sense of feeling the muscles on both sides.

**VARIATIONS:** For an advanced group of participants, which has already established trust and gained basic skills of creative movement, there is the exercise "Liquid Dance". In this case, the participants cover the eyes. The trainer can drive them into a journey with the music. Participants follow the basis of the music to express themselves freely. We suggest that the background music is selected so as to slowly intensify and harmonize well as the second part of the music goes slowly down. As the practice is carried out in the dark the exercise is suitable only for a group in which a high level of confidence and self-esteem is established. In the last part of the exercise participants can come off script and freely pursue. Experienced groups can continue the exercise in silence, without background music.

**RISKS:** The exercise is wholly about movement, it is non-verbal, which tends to be for many people unusual or even disturbing. It is important that in such cases, the participants put focus on their body and feelings in them. Let them express this through movement.

The exercise "Liquid Dance" is performed with closed eyes, which can cause discomfort and mistrust of oneself and the surrounding area. Management by the

assistants is therefore particularly important at the beginning of the exercise. The assistants should protect participants, keeping them safe from potential crashes. The exercise requires a very strong imagination and empathy into feelings, which can be difficult in the beginning. With persistence and a few attempts almost everybody progresses.

During the exercises, especially in the final rehearsal it leads to touch. This requires that all involved are respected. If somebody does not like to be touched, he/she must be respected and in that case try to avoid touching.

**NOTES:** The exercise is entirely non-verbal. Participants should be barefoot and wearing clothes that allow moving.







## The forum theatre for internal use

<b>Key Word</b>	Problem solutions, group empowerment
<b>Why</b>	To remove blockages; confrontation of stereotypes, prejudices and real conflict situations; empowerment of participants
<b>What and how</b>	The method is related to Forum Theatre (by Augusto Boal), but the prelude and preparation are slightly different.
<b>For whom</b>	All groups
<b>Goal</b>	Resolving personal conflicts, conflicts within the group
<b>Space and requisites</b>	Adequate space depending on the number of participants, pens, paper B2
<b>Number of participants</b>	8-20
<b>Time</b>	2h
<b>Professional Involvement</b>	Facilitator must have a sense of group dynamics. Management of the group to the correct definition of the problem and defining the roles is essential.

## Exercise 1

Active guided meditation. Each participant finds a comfortable place to sit down. A facilitator starts with guided meditation. The exercise is carried out in silence, heard only are the voice / instructions of the facilitator. Ask participants to close their eyes and relax completely (can be e.g. take a few deep inhales and exhales of breath). Proposal for carrying out guided meditation: "Imagine that you are in the park. It is a beautiful sunny day and you decide to go for a short walk. Eventually it becomes hot, you see for a tree with a large crown, where you sit in the shade. It is not hot any more. You feel good, you look around and see a piece of clay. You take the clay in your hands' (the facilitator encourages participants to mime taking the clay in the hands and illustrated this with them) they knead the clay and slowly form a face. We should be really focused on individual parts of the face - eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, forehead, hair.. When a face is designed do the hairstyle and add colours. Then, give the mask a name. The mask becomes the creator's friend. This friend has a social problem. The problem could be the owners, friends or acquaintances. What is important is that the "imaginary friend" finds himself in a real need, asserted by someone else.

## Exercise 2

In the next step, the group presents problems of friends. Among all, depending on the number of participants choose the problems which have the most similarity (at least 4 participants to come to one problem, that is, in a group of 8 we have 2 problems, etc.). Writing on paper, describe all the characteristics and information (as many as possible) your friend's problem - who, when, why, where ...? It is necessary to answer the following questions: Which persons are present in the story and their characteristics? Who is the oppressor and who is the oppressed? What the problem is and who has it? Furthermore, the participants form a person's

story. Among the group divide the roles and act out a story several times as a rehearsal.

### Exercise 3

After we have selected the problem, scenario and a group that makes a story, continue to exercise on the principle of forum theatre. Forum theatre is a method where actors first play a short scene in which you clearly show the person who is oppressed and the person who oppresses. The scene is then repeated with the difference that the viewer can intervene and replace an oppressed actor in order to change the course of the game. The method is based on improvisation, actors and spectators in one (spect-actors). Interventions take place one after the other, never at the same time. (Suggestion for intervention: when a spectator wants to enter into a play simply clap and then replace an actor). Spect-actors play their proposals to deal with the situation and physically show them on the stage. This is followed by discussion within the group about the reality of the intervention and the real possibilities of the proposed situation, the scene is repeated several times with different interventions and options. In Forum Theatre there is a Joker (facilitator) a bridge contact between spectators and actors, which encourages viewers to actively participate, to discuss and to reflect. In this method, the theatre offers possibilities for real personal and social changes - it is a reflection of reality and practice for future action in the situations of life.

**VARIATIONS:** This method is intended for internal use, but the last exercise, of course, may also be implemented in the classical version (by Augusto Boal) for an external audience.

Scenario / a play generated as a result of the work of the participants can be also perform on a stage.

**RISKS:** It is very important to correctly identify the problem in Exercise 2. Roles of the oppressed and the oppressor must be clearly and specifically defined. As the chosen theme can be very difficult and mentally demanding it is necessary to be very attentive so on condition of an individual, as a group. Games for quality performance requires a very subtle approach.

**NOTES:** The script for the play should be written by the participants themselves. The facilitator directs them to a successful definition of the problem and gives them support constantly.





# Mosaic

<b>Key words</b>	Active participation, mobilization of internal resources, improvisation, experiment
<b>Why</b>	To encourage participants to participate; to have a new experience; to detect potentials, to empower
<b>What and how</b>	The method is talking about empowerment through member active participation, the use of his/her creative potential and talents. Piece by piece rehearsal after rehearsal the group will do a unique mosaic – performance.
<b>For whom</b>	All groups
<b>Goal</b>	To set a performance
<b>Space and requisites</b>	Quiet, comfortable space for rehearsal; flipchart, other requisites if needed
<b>Time</b>	60 min +
<b>Professional involvement</b>	sense for group dynamic, encouraging participants and common exploration is needed.

## Exercise 1: Ritual

Every group should have its own ritual. We are using it for connecting the group and it gives us also a feeling of belonging and safety. You can use ritual as an opening and closing at every rehearsal.

Example: we start and end every session with a circle. A moment of silence we devote to ourselves and the group.

## Exercise 2: Theme

Choose a theme on which you'll work. A theme is a basis to set a performance and also working material for participants. It is important that every member of a group sets a personal relationship with a theme. Let everyone ask him/herself: What do I have to do with this theme? After a theme is chosen and collectively accepted you can do a brain storm and write everything that comes out on a flipchart. Then take time for a discussion and contemplate about it.

**Example:** a group has chosen a theme love. Potential questions: What is love? What is my relationship with loved ones? Why am I so shy? How can we share love with others? Next step is to transform a theme into a performance. In that case set a love story, for example the original version of Romeo & Juliet or you can do it your own way.

## Exercise 3: Mosaic

Set a story. It is desirable that all members participate. You can either write a scenario or not. What is important is to set the bases in a story. Who, how, when and what will happen are basic questions in a story. The beginning, end and crucial

points in a performance are bases. If you want members to actively participate and not just wait for instructions, leave a free space between bases. Then it's their turn. Let them fill free space with improvised act and text. How they can act out? With an act, movement, body, tongue or any other way? Maybe you need to encourage them constantly. Give them examples – maybe they experience it before. Researching and experimenting are the main tools here. In every case, they should give their best. You can note the result of improvisation in text. Nothing is wrong if at the next rehearsal, performance or text are changed. A performance or text is just a path from one base to another. The story builds and is created promptly and spontaneously. After every step/chapter in a story do a test and if necessary change the course. It is desirable for all members to actively participate with concrete suggestions what and how they can do it.

**Example:** First we choose a theme – Love. We decide to set a performance Romeo & Juliet and we'll do own version (not Shakespeare's). Together we set bases: 1. Romeo & Juliet, 2. They have a fight, 3. Romeo has a test – a potential lover appears in a story, 4. A lover wants to move Juliet out of the game, 5. Romeo recognizes his mistake and protects Juliet, 6. Romeo & Juliet promise love to each other until the end of their time. After bases are set, we are creating paths from one base to another with improvised action and text.

**Note:** Mosaic can be done piece by piece, not necessary in one rehearsal. Usually we need 7-10 rehearsals to set a story.

Suggestion: It's more fun to do a comedy.

## Exercise 4: Role

Roles to be distributed spontaneously. It is best if the actor/actress with the role completely identifies with their role. Take advantage of individual potential and his/

her talents. Note that potential of an individual is potential of a group. Everyone should be satisfied with a role in the play. Do not block other suggestions and if necessary change roles.

**Example:** if you have a person in your group who can play an instrument try to include this talent in a performance. Or maybe there is a person with a very good athletic predisposition – let him/her use this.

### **VARIATIONS:**

**RISKS:** It is very important that all members actively participate. For users who are passive, this can be challenging. Mosaic will probably call for more rehearsals so it is desirable that the participants are always present.

**NOTES:** The method requires a lot of adjustment, flexibility and search for new solutions.







# ActEmo

<b>Key words</b>	Emotions, polarity, act
<b>Why</b>	To learn about emotions, to learn how to express emotions, to recognize body response to emotional state, to learn how to share emotions with others, to reactivate inner power
<b>What and how</b>	Method includes the use of a guided meditation and creating postures. Together trigger intensive mental processes that the person expresses through the body and acts it out.
<b>For whom</b>	All groups
<b>Goal</b>	To connect mental with emotional state and act it out
<b>Space and requisites</b>	Quite comfortable empty space
<b>Time</b>	60
<b>Professional involvement</b>	Sense for guided meditation; use of imagination and the ability for spontaneous creation of a story.

## Exercise 1

In the beginning of the exercise, the participants should find enough space to feel comfortable and close their eyes. Through guided meditation place them self in a space and time (concept right here, right now). Let them forget everything that happened in that day and put focus on the body in the current space. In the beginning of the active guided meditation set them a question: "How do you feel? Can you act out your feeling, your emotion? Set your body in a statue, which represents your current mood." Try to neutralize the emotion through relaxing the part of the body where the tension is. Then let them follow your voice and guide them with a story/voyage.

## Exercise 2

A story should contain the following contents: beginning, challenge, struggle, victory and calmness.

The story must involve next stations of emotional states: sadness-happiness, hate-love, acceptance-rejection, fear-bravery, vulnerability-struggle, despair-victory or any other emotion polarity. At every station participants should set their body in a statue/posture. At every posture you can repeat a basic control question: "How do you feel?"

Focal points for the guided meditation:

- a garden with fountain (for the beginning and the end)
- a ladder to enter into an underground world (subconscious)
- a tunnel (connecting of mental processes)
- rooms (confrontation of different emotional states)

**Example:** you are standing in a garden full of birds, trees and many different

plants. There is a fountain in the middle of the garden and you are approaching it, since you are interested in what is in the fountain. You see a ladder and this causes distress in you – TRY TO SET YOUR BODY IN A POSTURE OF DISTRESS. How do you feel? You are wondering where the ladder leading to, so you decide to climb down and you are entering a tunnel. You are walking through and soon you see the light at the end and now you are located in a big hall. There is a door and you decide to enter into a room. It is a very happy room, you feel free and very alive. You feel happy – TRY TO SET YOUR BODY IN A POSTURE OF HAPPINESS. How do you feel? Do you like it? Suddenly you see a child in a corner of a room. He is sad because he is lost. You feel all the sadness of the world in this little child and you are very compassionate - TRY TO SET YOUR BODY IN A POSTURE OF SADNESS. How do you feel?

**Suggestion:** You can continue the story on in that way and include different emotional states. At the end a person stands in a garden and do a posture of peace and calmness.

**VARIATIONS:** An exercise is also possible to do as a group. In that case, don't close eyes.

**RISKS:** There can be present the inability of the participant to express emotions in first rehearsals. If this appears it is important not to give up. Sometimes it takes longer but progress is ensured.

**NOTES:** It is optimum to do the exercise with closed eyes. Ask in the beginning if this is uncomfortable for somebody and change it if necessary. Always finish an exercise with positive emotional state.







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Introduction

→ Meta Methodology → Meta-Analysis

PRACTICE BASED METHODS

Organisation

Presentation (1/2 paper)

METS/7



# Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (in Dutch: Hogeschool Rotterdam) is a large urban university in the Netherlands, with 35,000 students and more than 3,000 employees, offering bachelor, master and associate degree programmes in eleven institutes.

One of those institutes is the School of Social Work which offers full time and part time courses. Within this school you can find the Cultural Social Work programme which is meant to provide students with the foundations of the cultural and social work profession, which guides and supports people in giving shape to their lives in the context of culture and our increasingly complex society. And to prepare students for job roles in which they design and organise programmes and projects which invite people to participate in cultural and social exchange.

In order to promote people's personal and social development and give them a voice, influence and place in their communities and society as a whole, students learn to actively initiate strategic (multidisciplinary) coalitions and partnerships and plan for the long-term sustainability of their initiatives. Through informal educational, (multi)cultural or artistic activities, which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning, graduates are able to realise potential and improve life opportunities for individuals, groups and communities and promote social cohesion.

The knowledge and skills acquired are transferable across different sectors such as education, the arts, profit as well as non-profit. Graduates find work either in permanent employment or in short-term projects that cover a wide range of social



needs and promote cultural and social change. Especially in the minor programme Art in Social Action the arts are applied as a means to develop human capital, specifically using the theatre. Especially in this minor programme students explore and research a topic of their interest (by way of "artistic research") in order to bring about positive social change.

By implementing their projects in specific localities they experience in a hands on way how socially engaged art can be a response to social issues in an attractive and alternative way.







BIELSKO BIAŁA 2016

# Teatr Grodzki





Bielskie Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne

# Teatr Grodzki

The Bielsko Artistic Association Grodzki Theatre was founded in 1999 in the town of Bielsko-Biala, Silesia Region in Poland. It brings together artists, pedagogues, culture promoters and entrepreneurs engaged in local, regional, national and international projects for children, teenagers, adults and the elderly from the socially excluded groups. The Association runs a wide support program for the assistance and motivation of the disadvantaged, based on creative and artistic approaches.

Grodzki Theatre has a long-standing experience in implementing projects within the European Union programs. It has been cooperating with organizations from all over Europe, and also from Asia and Israel. Its activities are funded by the National Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Fund, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and Bielsko-Biala authorities on a regular basis.

Our Association has produced a number of books, films, and multimedia materials of an instructional nature, it also organizes trainings, conferences and seminars related to the arts, education and social economics. It runs the Occupational Therapy Workshop "You're needed!" for 30 disabled people, as well as two Vocational Rehabilitation Units (sheltered enterprise), where over 60 disabled workers are employed.

**Target groups:** The group of direct beneficiaries of our programs include physically, mentally and sensory disabled persons, families at risk, young offenders, victims of alcohol and drug addictions, unemployed, seniors and all those alienated from the mainstream of social and cultural life.

**Key words:** puppet theatre; visual narration; sign language; disabilities; social inclusion



## Development of an Integration Theatre Group

The following presentation (methodology) shows the process of working with the group of adult amateur actors. It includes a detailed description of activities which stimulate group cohesion and its effective development. The main aim of all four methods is to engage the participants in a free creative activity enabling them to share knowledge, experience and individual talents, to learn from each other and cooperate effectively.

This methodology was tested during the workshop process involving a group of 14 people aged from 32 to 76. There are people with learning difficulties, mental and physical disability, as well as the deaf, and also healthy participants in the group. They have been working together for five years creating six performances and presenting them in Poland, UK, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany and Holland. As part of the MEDART project activities, the group has taken a new important challenge. The participants tried their hands at leading workshops with children themselves. It was a great and rewarding experience for the whole group. Moreover, a new puppet play was created and presented to MEDART partners during the ERROR Festival in Bratislava (November 2016).

The methods presented below have been chosen from among the great number of techniques and approaches for their efficiency and replicable character.



## Group games and exercises

<b>Why?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To warm-up the group for theatrical activities;</li><li>• To accustom participants to working together and opening up to new challenges (self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as communication and cooperation, decision making, problem solving and creativity).</li></ul>
<b>For whom?</b>	For all kinds of groups (adults, youth, children). Certain level of mobility required.
<b>What and how?</b>	A playful way of integrating the group and stimulating participants to be active.
<b>Space</b>	Any kind of space, both indoors and outdoors, appropriate for the free movement of the group
<b>Number of participants</b>	6-18
<b>Professional skills necessary to implement the method</b>	none



## Exercise 1 : You are a sheet of paper

The exercise is intended to get participants moving, and motivate them to take an active part in the workshop. It can also help participants to concentrate on a specific task and overcome shyness and fear of using their bodies.


All participants stand in front of the trainer, each with some space around them. The trainer is holding a piece of paper - in an upright position, and performs different movements, like bending a corner, turning it in the air, folding it in half, shaking it, holding it in an horizontal position, etc. The task of the participants is to find a body movement which corresponds to the movement of the paper. The exercise involves not only the body but also the imagination of the participants - each one reacts differently, which stimulates reflection.

**Notes:** The exercise is an interesting and intriguing experience, and allows participants to discover the diversity of ideas and behaviours in a group. Participants are often not aware of how much effort they are really making. They concentrate on the task at hand, and forget about the fear they felt earlier. The exercise works well when the group's energy levels are low, and what is needed is a refreshing "shakeup" for the participants. As well as sheets of paper, other objects can also be used - for example, cardboard boxes or scarves - these changes encourage creativity and the discovery of new ways to move within the group.

**Duration:** This activity takes just a few minutes.

## Exercise 2: I am the only person in the group, who...

This exercise works very well at the beginning of the group process and helps to integrate participants. Thanks to the game they learn about each other and



everyone has a chance to show their own unique skills or experience. All the people stand in a circle. Everyone is allowed to step inside the circle and finish the sentence, by expressing an experience, skills or life situations, which distinguish them from the rest of the group. For instance: "I am the only person in the group, who can walk on stilts." The sentences the participants say should be true. If any of the others in the group can also walk on stilts, or has done it in the past, they then join their colleague. It often proves that the feature, which according to someone seems to be special and unique, appears to be shared by other participants. The rules of the exercise do not impose any specific number of presentations, the game keeps going, until it ends in a natural way. The participants are presented with an opportunity for getting to know each other better, a lot of new, interesting information emerges, which is interesting for the whole group, everyone may share with other people information related to their passion and prove their own uniqueness.

**Notes:** A continuation of the exercise intended to help the group decide on a direction for further activities might be to present the following question: "I am the only person in this group, who would like to talk about ..." .. or "I am the only person in this group who is interested in ...". The responses to such statements can help to crystallise the needs and interests of each particular member of the group. A huge advantage of the exercise as the integrative technique, is its dynamic, revitalising character, as well as the literalness and accessibility of the ad-hoc images created with it.

**Duration:** The exercise – depending on the number of participants and their willingness to act - can last from 15 minutes to half an hour.

## Exercise 3: Bamboo

The essence of the exercise is readiness to cooperate to achieve the task, the ability to communicate with others and explain their views and ideas. The exercise teaches us to collectively find a solution which leads to the completion of a goal. Participants line up opposite each other, in two lines. They stretch their arms forward so that the index fingers of all people are arranged alternating at equal intervals in a straight line, at chest height. The trainer places a bamboo pole on the group's outstretched fingers. The group's task is to put the stick on the floor - all the time touching the fingers of all participants. The exercise seems very simple, but it actually requires a great deal of concentration and team effort. (The pole more often ends up being raised rather than lowered).

**Notes:** The course of this exercise is usually surprising to the participants, which increases their level of commitment. At the same time, however, it can lead to conflict. In the game there are often leaders who try to impose their ideas on others, or blame them for a lack of prompt and effective action. It is therefore essential that the trainer shows the group the importance of patience, understanding and consistency when trying to achieve a goal. Larger numbers of participants should be divided into two groups performing the exercise at the same time - then they have the added factor of competition, further stimulating activity.

**Duration:** This exercise normally lasts around 15 minutes.

## Exercise 4: The Belt

In this exercise the most important thing is concentration and synchronisation of each participant's activity with the rhythm of the whole group. It is a good way of practicing discipline.

Participants in the game line up in a row at an imaginary conveyor belt. The instructor presents and repeats several times the sequence of rhythmic and automatic actions accompanied with counting, such as standing with both arms leaning on the belt (starting point), and then the left hand puts a nail on the belt (one) and the right reaches for the hammer (two). After that, the nail is fixed with one stroke (three), the hammer is laid aside (four), an alleged object is shoved towards a neighbour (five), left hand goes back to the belt (six) and the right hand also goes back to the belt (seven). On the cue from the instructor the first person in the row enters into the action. Other participants join in succession, according to the rhythm of the “moving” belt.

**Notes:** This exercise is very helpful in developing basic skills for use in everyday functioning. Most importantly is fitting in with the given tasks, which requires much concentration and dexterity. The group’s loud, rhythmic counting helps to maintain the tempo. If the suggested version of the task turns out to be too difficult at the beginning, it can be reduced to four or five simpler movements. The participants themselves may also have some good ideas for various forms of production-line work.

**Duration:** The exercise may take several minutes to half an hour.

### **Exercise 5: Hold it!**

Participation in the exercise demands ingenuity and quick decision making. Every participant of the game gets some object, such as a shoe, a ruler or a slip of paper. The group stands in a row or in a circle, and the leader signals subsequent probations. At the repeated command “Hold it!” everybody finds their own way to grasp the object; usually there are many ingenious and amusing solutions. This exercise may also involve various forms of competition, like when

all the participants hold their objects in the same manner and their task is to cover the delimited area in a specified way (leaps, walking backwards or on tiptoe).

**Notes:** The exercise is usually treated as good fun by the participants who, taking it less seriously, find it easier to react spontaneously. In reality, they have to show initiative and flexibility, conquer shyness and fear of ridicule. For those who find the game too difficult or stressful, the trainer can suggest working in pairs.

**Duration:** The exercise may take from several minutes to half an hour.

## Exercise 6: Degrees of Difficulty

This exercise teaches concentration and discipline and helps to overcome discouragement and deal with difficult situations.

Participants stand in a row. On the other side of the room, facing the participants is a row of chairs - one each. The trainer describes the tasks to be performed - everyone is to do the tasks at their own pace, ignoring the others.

**Stage 1.** We walk up to our chairs, avoiding an imaginary obstacle half-way (for example, walking around a puddle). We sit on a chair, in our minds count to five, get up, go back to the start, remembering the obstacle in the middle of the road.

**Stage 2.** Repeat all previous steps, this time having some object on our heads, like a newspaper or a piece of paper - we try to keep our balance, if an item drops - we pick it back up and we walk on.

**Stage 3.** Repeating the previous two tasks, we add another: Each participant, making their way to their chair and back, with an object on their head and twice avoid the obstacle, clearly announces what they've done that day, from waking up,



to this very moment.

The exercise can have a more complex structure, if the operator or the participants themselves propose additional challenges.

**Notes:** In a practical way, this exercise allows the participants to experience the acquisition of new skills, and the persistent pursuit of an objective. This direct experience of effort and repetition of increasingly difficult steps gives them some idea (on a tiny scale) about the challenges posed by working on a performance or continuing their education. At the same time it helps to conquer the fear of failure, and also gives a sense of success (participants are always able to successfully complete at least one small part of the task).

**Duration:** The exercise - in the described structure of the three degrees of difficulty - takes up to half an hour.



## Selfie with objects

<b>Why?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To team-build and create an environment for effective cooperation;</li><li>• To create space for self-expression and for getting to know each other;</li><li>• To help participants with discovering their own values and personal capacities (self-knowledge, self-appraisal, self-esteem and self-confidence).</li></ul>
<b>For whom?</b>	For anyone who is ready for self-presentation in a creative and unconventional way.
<b>What and how?</b>	An adventure with objects and materials involving both individual and group work.
<b>Space</b>	Any kind of space, both indoors and outdoors, taking into account the size of the group. Each participant needs a place marked off for their own activities.
<b>Number of participants</b>	6-12 (optimal)
<b>Time</b>	2.5-4 hours

<b>Professional skills necessary to implement the method</b>	General understanding of the rules of visual narration and ability to lead the discussion.
<b>Description of the activity</b>	The participants are invited to find their own place in the space available and look for objects and materials which can be helpful in creating an image - a "selfie" of themselves. They work individually, having about 20-30 minutes to complete the task. The main aim of "mapping ourselves" is to find a visual expression for the most important and characteristic features of each person – their personality, interests, situation in life. When all "selfies" are ready, the participants, one after the other, are visited by the rest of the group. First the visitors give their feedback on what they see and how they understand the meaning of the whole picture and it's individual elements. Next, the host/creator of the image justifies the logic of the structure and explains their ideas and reasons behind choosing specific visual elements. The leader points out the importance of shape, colour, size and positioning of every element chosen to the meaning of the image. The participants, together with the creator of the picture can apply some changes to the original version and later discuss the influence of these new solutions on the message conveyed by the image.

**Notes:** It's a good idea that the leader prepares a collection of objects in advance to stimulate participants' creativity. Different kinds of stones and cones, as well as kitchen utensils, pieces of fabric, ribbon and buttons work very well. In bigger groups it will be difficult to discuss all the "selfies", as sometimes it takes a long time, if the participants are eager to ask questions and to propose changes.





# Introduction to puppetry art

<b>Why?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To teach participants how to make simple puppets using ordinary materials;</li> <li>• To introduce participants to basic animation skills;</li> <li>• To develop team work skills (communication and cooperation, decision making, problem solving and creativity).</li> </ul>
<b>For whom?</b>	The use of puppets is very good when working with people who are shy and reserved and not very eager to act themselves. In this kind of action there is always a chance to hide oneself behind a puppet.
<b>What and how?</b>	A short course in puppetry art meant for discovering and exploring an alternative to acting in theatre.
<b>Space</b>	Any kind of space, both indoors and outdoors, big enough to allow free movement of the group.
<b>Number of participants</b>	6-18
<b>Time</b>	2.5 – 3 hours

<b>Professional skills necessary to implement the method</b>	General knowledge about theatre work.
<b>Description of the activity</b>	<p>The participants are divided in sub-groups of six (optimal) or four-five persons. Every group is given a few packages of plastic sheeting (polythene) which can be easily found in shops with building materials (usual size: 5mx4m). Some string and scissors will be also needed.</p> <p>The first task for each group is to agree on the figure to be created jointly in such a way that every person gets one part of its body to animate. For instance, in case of the puppet representing a human being, 6 people can be involved in it's animation - one responsible for moving the head, one for the trunk, two for the arms and two for the legs. The example of such a plastic puppet animated by 6 people as part of the show "Magic Mountain or a few facts from M`s life" can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2vc53-wJbo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2vc53-wJbo</a> (6,55 minutes). Different animals or fantasy creatures can also be created.</p> <p>Next, the members of each group build their puppet together and learn how to animate it. This task requires close cooperation and teamwork.</p> <p>The last stage of the exercise involves working on a short scene showing the puppet in a specific action. Each group prepares a mini show, a simple story of their hero.</p> <p>At the end all groups present their stories one by one and the audience share their impressions and suggestions how the scene could be further developed and improved.</p>

**Notes:** Plastic sheeting comes in a wide range of thicknesses. All of them suit the exercise.

Instead of plastic sheeting, other materials can also be used. Brown wrapping paper, cardboard or different kinds of fabric work very well. An example of making and animating paper puppets can be found in the form of a learning path placed at the ARTES good practice platform:

- <http://artescommunity.eu/paper-puppets-in-action/>

Also the film of material and a training App showing how to make a puppet have been made available as a part of the COUNT ME IN TOO project:

- [http://www.cmi2.eu/pl/app\\_generator/app/82/](http://www.cmi2.eu/pl/app_generator/app/82/) or
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ5-Tsf65CA&feature=youtu.be>





## Workshop participants become workshop leaders

<b>Why?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To familiarize the group with the roles of leaders and “educators”;</li> <li>• To let participants use and practice skills and knowledge previously acquired in a new context;</li> <li>• To prepare participants for their own, independent activities in everyday life (self-appraisal, self-esteem and self-confidence, communication and cooperation, decision making, problem solving and creativity).</li> </ul>
<b>For whom?</b>	For groups who have been working together for some time and have some confidence in group work.
<b>What and how?</b>	An experience of practicing new roles in life.
<b>Space</b>	Any kind of space, both indoors and outdoors, taking into account the size of the group invited to participate in the workshop.
<b>Number of participants</b>	6-12 (optimal)
<b>Time</b>	Preparatory stage: 6-8 hours (at least); Implementation stage: 1.5-2 hours.

<b>Professional skills necessary</b>	General understanding of group dynamics and some experience of leading workshop activities.
<b>Description of the activity</b>	The activity consists of two stages. The first one is meant for structuring the workshop to be later led by the participants themselves and for practicing new roles. The second stage is the workshop itself.
<b>Preparatory stage</b>	First, the participants discuss the structure of the workshop referring to their own experience – to the process they went through themselves. It is a good idea to divide bigger groups into sub-groups (5-6 people in each team is optimal). They should choose one warm-up activity (for instance “You are a sheet of paper”) and one task-oriented action (for instance “Introduction to puppetry art”). Next, the division of specific tasks among the team members is necessary to decide who will do what. Different solutions can be applied, depending on individual capabilities of participants. For example, there might be just one person responsible for leading the whole session and the rest of the group would simply accompany him/her by showing how to perform the tasks. Or, different people can lead different parts of the workshop independently or in pairs. The last, very important phase of the preparatory stage is to practice the course of the future session a few times. Similarly, as it happens in the theatrical process, also in this case the rehearsing is crucial for obtaining confidence and freedom of action. Everybody has to understand what they are supposed to do and feel comfortable with their role.

### **Implementation stage**

After the rehearsing stage, the group should be ready to run the workshop with the chosen audience. It can be organized for different groups. In our case, these were children from two local day-care centers and from a primary school. Three sessions were conducted and each of them consisted of two elements – paper puppet making and learning the rudiments of sign language. The recording of one session can be viewed (available only in Polish) at: <http://www.teatrgrodzki.pl/book/teatralne-spotkania-pokolen/> (3.16 minutes)

It is important to discuss in detail all the organizational issues and the specific character of the session with the host institution in advance. Perhaps, it will be needed to prepare workshop participants for working face-to-face by meeting with the beneficiaries.

It is equally important to sum-up the session with our group after it's completion and to analyze thoroughly the whole experience.

**Notes:** Usually, the support of the group leader is necessary during the workshop led by participants, since learning these new roles is a long process. In particular, talking to the group and explaining the tasks is very difficult for many people. Also, various unexpected things always happen during the workshop process and dealing with participants' reactions, needs, expectations, limitations and resistance requires decision making and problem solving skills. This is why the assistance of someone experienced is so important.

# Conclusions

Summing-up the presentation of MEDART methodology, it might be useful to go back to the basic assumptions set by the project partners at the beginning of their joint actions. The most important targets have been expressed in a nutshell in the project title – Methods of Education for Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre. After two years of activities undertaken in eight partner countries, each of these words translates into specific methodological findings crucial for this handbook content. The following are the examples of how specific understanding of education, support for disadvantaged adult learners and creative use of theatre art have been interpreted and shared by project partners in their methodological propositions.

## Education

There are many different definitions of education, but still the most popular approach is to equate it with formal schooling. However, it is only one section of teaching-learning processes and the others are equally important. In the context of MEDART project, the definition proposed by Mark K. Smith, a researcher and informal education promoter based in London, seems to be very adequate: “Education can be defined as the wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life” (<http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-education-a-definition-and-discussion/>)

Two components of the above definition – “cultivation” and “sharing” have been paid special attention to by all the educators presenting their experience in the form of workshop scenarios. We are all sure that creating a safe and friendly environment for learners is of vital importance, and a precondition for taking up

educational challenges. In the previous chapters one can find many different ideas for motivating adults to continue learning and self-development. In particular, various warm-up games, movement exercises, group activities and rituals have been presented as efficient mechanisms nurturing (cultivating) interest, engagement and determination of adult students. In all these actions not only the mind but also the body, as well as emotional and spiritual cognition are involved. Thanks to that the process of learning and acquiring new skills becomes a creative adventure embedded in a collective experience.

When it comes to the possibility of sharing, MEDART methodology offers a whole range of cooperative actions, which allow free expression and help the learners to unveil their real identity and share life experience, expertise, capability and knowledge. Different storytelling techniques and improvisation exercises proposed by individual partners are good examples of sharing and exchanging. With their help everyone has a chance to contribute to the joint process of creation.

## **Disadvantaged Adults**

The fact of being disadvantaged means in practice that someone faces specific difficulties in everyday life. Since each disadvantaged person has to overcome different obstacles and barriers, it is very important to fix everyone up with what he/she really needs. This is why, all the partners pay special attention to tailor their theatrical interests and passions to the needs and constraints of their workshop groups. In this context, some specific solutions based on the MEDART training staff experience are particularly interesting and worth following.

Taking into consideration a high risk of the rotation inside their workshop group (homeless and disabled people), Divadlo bez domova proposes to construct the performance in such a way that the absence of one or more actors does not destroy the whole production ("Soft joints" approach). On the other hand, the



Asociación Acunagua describes the situation in which they decided to totally change the initial idea of creating a performance with their imprisoned wards and to replace it with manual art work ("T-shirt making"). It was decided so to respect the will of inmates not to expose themselves in front of the public. Still the main goal of artistic activities run in prison was kept and the prisoners got a chance to communicate with the outside world. The third example is an educational experiment successfully undertaken by Teatr Grodzki with an integration group of the deaf and disabled people. They were invited to try their hand at running classes for children and young people themselves, thus going far beyond what was expected at the beginning of the theatrical work ("Workshop participants become workshop leaders").

In all three cases the proposed methods and approaches testify to the importance of being courageous and flexible, not stuck with the initial ideas but always considering both the limits and hidden potential of disadvantaged students.

## Theatrical Roots

This wording draws our attention to a whole range of different creative methods for which theatre serves as a source of inspiration. In our handbook both traditional drama theatre, and other stage conventions, as well as various paratheatrical approaches have been considered. It has been also presented here how theatre can help us to discover non-theatrical ways of enhancing creativity, well-being and self-development of disadvantaged students.

The MEDART experience proves that there is no one and universal methodology of using theatre in adult education and in working with the disadvantaged. In fact every kind of artistic activity rooted in theatre can be equally efficient, if carefully adjusted to specific needs and circumstances. And so, it might seem that

a word-based theatre which requires acting skills is unreachable for many groups of disadvantaged learners due to their problems with memorizing texts and fear of being exposed on stage while speaking in public. However, the example of AHA company and their long experience in staging drama pieces with homeless people shows that such an approach works, if specific conditions are met ("Situating process-based and -oriented help"). On the contrary, acta offers a playful way of creating the show through the collective effort, where everyone contributes to building the story from nothing ("Julie Story"). This method is a perfect solution for drawing adult learners into theatre. Yet different theatrical approach enriches MEDART methodology thanks to the experience of CSC. They have been successfully using dramatherapy techniques through exploring the myths and discovering their hidden meanings while improvising and playing different roles. Finally, Društvo ProSoc shares their non-verbal and purely physical ways of theatrical expression based on movement, dance, guided meditation ("ActEmo", "Creative movement").

The diversity of approaches composing MEDART methodology shows that theatre in adult education means many different things. Clowning, puppetry art, working with symbols, staging Shakespeare, playing instruments, celebrating coffee time are all "eligible" theatrical ways of supporting disadvantaged adult learners.

## International Cooperation

Ending the last paragraph of this handbook, it should be repeated one more time that a special value of MEDART project lies in its collaborative character. According to the rules of ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnerships Program, the possibility to work together allows educators to improve their provision for learners and share innovative practices. Such an interchange took place thanks to MEDART and a one-week training session hosted by the Spanish partners in Lanzarote and attended by all the project directors was its culmination (July 2016). Then, the MEDART

International Conference organized in Bratislava, Slovakia (November 2016) was a valuable occasion to reflect on the project methodological findings and share them and discuss with external educators and artists.

It is worth quoting here the representatives of project training staff to show what concrete benefits they have gained thanks to the exchange of methods and approaches during the lifetime of the project.

*I would like to highlight the fact of seeing and feeling different ways of delivering the workshops. Different styles allowed me, as a participant, to be involved differently – in some cases more as an observer, in other times more active and sometimes even as a protagonist or simply activated and inspired person being in the middle of "the happening".*

*Partners' feedback and reflection of our part of the workshop helped us also to name other aspects and elements (e. g. discovery, enjoyment, trust building), that have been implied in the process of our methods' presentation and that we use in our regular work with our participants. These facts inspire us to think more and more about other methods we already use, but we have never named and described them as "methods".*

***Patrik Krebs, Divadlo bez domova***

*Through taking part in other practitioner's workshops and observing their practice, we have come to recognise acta's approach is not particularly spiritual, but more pragmatic and practical. Observing how physical some of the other methodologies were led us to question our less physical approach, which is more based around devising, using verbal improvisation, characterisation, storytelling and dialogue.*

*This challenged us to consider why this might be, and our conclusion was that our approach had been guided and formed by our knowledge of our*

*participants and what they feel at ease doing. acta often works with people who don't feel theatre is for them; therefore we always need to find an approach that makes them feel safe and comfortable. For these reasons we feel a more physical approach might discourage participants, and prevent them from taking part.*

***Ingrid Jones and Rosalie Pordes, acta***

*Directly after the training in Lanzarote, we found a way to apply the group exercise called "Julie Story" presented by the trainers from acta in the storytelling workshop with our group of adult amateur actors. The workshop was meant to encourage participants to openly express themselves and to give insight to their life experience.*

*We were using different means of artistic expression in order to enable participants to share their personal stories with others. To structure chosen stories more in detail, we successfully used "Julie Story" technique adapted to our needs. It helped our theatre group to create a scenario of the new puppet show premiered in June 2017.*

***Maria Schejbal, Teatr Grodzki***

*The workshop highlighted the variety of approaches that all partners use on a daily basis with their different targets. This is for us the most important finding of the Lanzarote workshop. The MEDART project gave all partners the opportunity to reflect on own methodologies and compare them with others. We mainly work with migrants. So we met different ways of working with different target groups. The training was also very challenging from an emotional and personal point of view.*

*The workshop stressed the difficulty of working with vulnerable groups on a personal level, the difficulty to detach oneself from the emotions you live when working with these particular target groups. It is important to balance own emotions and control ourselves while helping other people if we want*

*to be good practitioners and professionals. The several methods showcased in Lanzarote workshop will help our work with migrants as various exercises can be applied to this specific target groups.*

**Dario Ferrante, CSC**

*We discovered what kind of effects the projection of our emotions has both on the actor and on other people. What it means to show a mirror to others. How important it is to touch and to be touched: how our fingers remember our partner's face, how we, as sculptors, can and want to make the beautiful even more beautiful. How important rituals are – no matter how simple they might seem. We also enjoyed how the ritually shared coffee built our community stronger and stronger each day. We returned over and over again to the question: "who am I, how do I see myself, how does my environment see me?" We had the opportunity to draw a card without hesitation, saying: look, that's me. Never alone.*

*Then we listened to stories with our eyes closed, we enjoyed its silky sound, sometimes its wild race, and we meditated on its truth. We experienced the difference between being part of a circle or excluded from it. It was a great challenge to open up to other people, even if I knew them well. What is a team? What is a group? Where am I in it? With my treasures am I able to achieve what my group expects from me? The regular meetings have an outstandingly strong effect on people in need.*

**Sándor Füsti-Molnár, AHA**

*For us, island people, it is big gift to have so many opportunities to share, learn, host and exchange. MEDART Project we find very enriching and empowering for our society and community.*

*What was the main impact of this project on our life? MEDART Project is about giving names to our work, about making visible and more effective our actions, about reconfirming rightness and sense of our work direction. Yes,*

*it was extremely important to have two years of MEDART Project, we got a chance to stop and to observe our work, to consult it with other professionals in the field of art and social work. MEDART Project gave us a clear picture of common power we created with all partners, thanks to the professionalism, devotion and common will of all of us.*

*MEDART Project brought us confirmation that however different backgrounds or work conditions we have, we are strong and connected in our common aim- to do our jobs the best way and always, when is possible- TO SHARE.*

***Magdaléna Komárová, Acunagua Association***

*I believe that the added value of the manual is mainly in a diversity of methods. At only few places we can find similarities. Everyone who is interested in this kind of work will be able to find something useful. From classical drama performances to movement improvisation. Using rhythm, storytelling, instruments and working with objects or puppets are opening again another dimension. The methods described also give opportunity to write the script, and if necessary, resolve conflicts within the group or individual. The common denominator of all the methods are experiment and exploration that all those involved (some more vulnerable than others) can bring useful and valuable new experiences.*

***Domen Rakovec, Društvo ProSoc***

All the statements quoted above clearly show that exchange of ideas and experiences among adult educators is truly needed and has a strong effect on the quality of their everyday work. This handbook is simply one more way of sharing working methods with a view to support disadvantaged adult learners through theatre and related arts.

***The MEDART partners***









# Partners



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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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