



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

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
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IO4

Practical guide for **leading** and **facilitating** Forum-Theatre activities



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INTRODUCTION

The CENV project **“For A Non-Violent European Communication : All on stage!”** is part of a European partnership for cooperation in adult education. The project is being developed by several European organisations and countries. Some of them, including STOP KLATKA in Poland, GIOLLICOOP in Italy and XIXA in Spain all work in the field of Forum Theatre and training. The others who are FUTURA GESTIONA in Spain and LE COMPTOIR DES COLIBRIS in France work in professional and social inclusion, skills improvement and training.

The CENV project led to the creation of a training approach and of a module entitled “Communication upskilling for people with fewer opportunities, based on Forum-Theatre and assertive communication methods. The CENV project led to four distinct but interdependent results.

This practical guide explains how to run and lead Forum Theatre activities, provides the keys to create theatrical and cultural modules adapted to the project context and explains the Forum Theatre methods and processes. It also hands over useful advices and techniques for the training module facilitators who take on the role of the Joker, which are all illustrated by experimental experiences from the pilot structures. This document is called the intellectual tool no. 4, and supplements the data of the three other tools, namely : the practical guide to the creation, use and implementation of a guided collective logbook (O11) during the module; the methodological guide for adult education organisations wishing to develop the approach in their own structures, aiming at strengthening the knowledge of future structures and the disseminating the approach (O12); and finally the guide of teaching tools and resources for implementing the User-friendly guide to support the module of training based on the Forum-Theatre and on assertive and empathic communication methods, for people with fewer opportunities; module, i.e. the architecture and content of the module (O13).

This guide is composed of 3 distinct parts:

- The first part briefly reviews the background of the creation of the Forum Theatre and focuses on the reasons of the CENV's partners in using it and the specific methodology of the process.
- The second part introduces the main guidelines for setting up the Forum Theatre within the partner organisations. It describes the techniques and important points to take in account for the role of the Joker, the running of a Forum Theatre session and the various work stages. It also clarifies the distinction between Forum Theatre and Role Play.
- Finally, the third part describes the experience of the three pilot structures, offering concrete examples of the creation of a scene with target audiences and illustrating the methodology presented in the previous parts. Some feedbacks from the perspective of Forum Theatre professionals helps to put things into perspective and to reinforce the consideration points to keep in mind when it comes to the attitudes of the Joker.

1. Methodology

1.1. About Forum-Theatre

Forum-Theatre is a technique invented by a Black woman in Peru, at the time when Augusto Boal was conducting the so-called "simultaneous playwriting", asking the audience to suggest solutions for the scene of oppression they were watching. The technique consisted in a spectator suggesting a solution to the actor protagonist, who then experiments with it on stage.

This woman was not satisfied and asked to go on stage herself to try out her own idea.

Boal approved and recognized this variation as so important that from then on, he used it in every session.

Thus, Forum-Theatre was born, and the spectator became the spect-actor.

This is the core of the Theatre of the Oppressed method invented by Boal.

The Theatre of the Oppressed is inspired by the Socratic principles of maieutics, i.e. the art of asking people questions in a way that allows them to discover the truth... which, translated into Forum-Theatre, is the solution to an oppression.

The Theatre of the Oppressed is based on solidarity between oppressed people and their allies. It is, therefore, a political theatre, not ideological but maieutic.

Dialogue is another key concept: dialogue between actors and spect-actors, dialogue between social classes, genders, ethnic groups, cultures, etc. But it is not conceived as a mere verbal exchange. Dialogue in the Theatre of the Oppressed implies mutual respect between people and for their needs, and is based on the balance of power.

In this context, Forum-Theatre, as a specific technique within the Theatre of the Oppressed, has its own rules or, in other words, advice and attention.

As the method is powerful and suitable for a range of contexts, we try to help those who want to apply it to their own reality.

Building a Forum-Theatre play involves creating a series of scenes and running a public session.

1.2. Why we used Forum-Theatre in the context of the CENV project

In the CENV project, three organisations tried out elements of Image-Theatre and Forum-Theatre with their groups featuring people with fewer opportunities from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. All of the participants had experienced some kind of difficulties in relation to the labour market (such as unemployment, oppression in the work environment and in the workplace, discrimination and difficulties finding a job).

In our experience as organisations who have worked with this method, Forum-Theatre can be useful in working with such participants because it stimulates empathy and engages the participants. The story is relevant to them and as such becomes a real field for investigation. People with fewer opportunities may benefit from Forum-Theatre as a means to identify, explore and challenge instances of oppression in their own lives.

In the group work process, the participants have some time to connect the material with their own experiences and identify where, and how, they can make new choices in their lives. They can improve existing interpersonal skills, gain insights, receive feedback, or test newly acquired interpersonal skills.

The possibility of interventions (which are a crucial part of a Forum-Theatre play) encourages them to try out different strategies in situations which can be close to the ones they experience in their everyday life, but this time, they can try dealing with them in a safe environment by stepping into roles. Such experience of trying out and seeing the consequences of different strategies when dealing with the oppression can motivate them to reflect and make positive changes in their own lives. In our view, the tool was effective in making the participants reflect on their current situation on the labour market.

Last but not least, the sense of solidarity during a session of Forum-Theatre where the participants recognise common situations can bring individuals to collaborate so as to perform and generate scenes together instead of focusing on individual problem-solving in a single specific situation.

The creation of scenes and interventions can generate strong emotions, which may surprise and also frighten the participants. That is why the person who leads the process with such a group and decides to use elements of Forum-Theatre (or even create a whole Forum-Theatre play with them) needs to be aware of the advantages, disadvantages, and the specificity of this method. In part 2 of this publication, we will have a closer look at the facilitator, or the Joker, as this person is called in Forum-Theatre.

1.3. Typical Forum-Theatre process: group building, researching and working with individual stories, extrapolation and co-creation

When starting to work with the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), it may be beneficial to shift from the complexity of the approach (theory + method + techniques) to a simplification. For instance, Forum-Theatre is often used as an isolated tool or for purposes that are not fitting the TO values: as a method to liberate people from oppression, not to adapt people to the oppressive conditions. One crucial methodological element is that in order to carry out a typical TO process, one needs to follow the path that Boal describes in the following steps:

1. De-mechanisation
2. Knots research
3. Theatre creation
4. Cleaning the embryo
5. Forum-Theatre or other techniques useful to find solutions
6. Extrapolation.

1. De-mechanisation

This stage is more than group-building. According to Boal, it has a particular meaning that has to do with the holistic concept of human beings in the Theatre of the Oppressed: as an ensemble or a system differentiated in mind, body and emotion.

The exercises used in this phase go further than creating a good atmosphere; their goal is to de-mechanise the participants at 3 levels.

What does it mean?

According to Boal, we are all more or less “mechanized” in our everyday social relations where our behaviour is predetermined by implicit social norms. For example, when someone enters a bar, they do not break into song or jump onto the table, the bartender is not crying or dancing, their body is adjusted to their daily tasks, etc.

The first liberation in Boal’s view is to release such mechanisations and prepare the participants to be creative and less constrained by the social conditioning.



Exercise: Greet someone in a different way than usual, fot. STOP-KLATKA

This phase is not just a warm-up. Its significance is to start the liberation process.

2. Knots research

This phase should start only after a sufficiently safe setting has been created. After de-mechanisation, if the atmosphere in the group is friendly and there is trust among participants, the search for oppression at individual perception begins. Some tools that can be used here are story-telling, images, exercises and reflection, all to focus on the individual feeling of being oppressed.



Fot. Canva

3. Theatre embryo creation

TO, according to Boal, is not singular but plural: it is not the “I” but the “we”. Therefore, based on their individual experiences, the participants need to find links between the different perceptions.

Easy as it is when the group is homogeneous and has similar living conditions, this task becomes more difficult when members differ in terms of everyday life and contexts.

However, there must be something they have in common. Using the tools mentioned above, this might mean a story that resonates best with the group, an image that is shared the most, etc.

Moreover, in this step, the group or sub-groups are invited to improvise the first theatre scene or image that contains as many ideas from the individual perceptions as possible.



Fot. Canva

4. Cleaning the embryo

The first improvisation is usually rather complex, with good and bad aspects, possibly confusing characters, unclear oppression, boring and poorly executed, etc. This is the time to “clean” the embryo, as it is called in TO. There are several tools Boal invented/created, called “rehearsal techniques”, but besides them, it is necessary to talk, improvise and reflect while keeping some guidelines in mind (see part 2.7 of the analysis).



Fot. Canva

5. Forum-Theatre or other techniques useful to find solutions

Staging the oppression is conducive to analysing it, as the participants can re-think their reality from a different perspective and show others what is in their mind. After that, the key part comes, where the group shows the play to an audience (the rest of the group or outsiders) and uses special techniques to find changes, transformation opportunities and solutions.

The most used technique is Forum-Theatre, but Boal created several more, such as Image-Forum, Rainbow of Desire, Cops in the Head, or Breaking Down Oppression.

Depending on whether the oppression is rather internal or external and the skills in the group, different tools can be used to find alternatives and liberation paths.

Sometimes, the solution is to take action outside the theatre, such as a strike, a social campaign or a boycott, but this should be decided together with the group.



Scene presentation, training in Trento, fot. Giolli

6. Extrapolation

This phase is often neglected, but Boal insists that the main result of a TO path is not the catharsis but the extrapolation.

What does it mean?

Extrapolation is taking all the discovered energies and ideas outside of the workshop/course/training/performance and applying them to life.

Barbara Santos, Boal's student, calls them "concrete collective actions".

There are a few exercises that can help with this stage.



Fot. Canva

As you can see, TO may be very complex, which is why this guide will help you effectively lead a group on a TO path.

Below, we briefly describe the path to help readers understand the complexity and use this structure to guide their work.

2. Guidelines

2.1. The role of the facilitator in a Forum-Theatre process

The facilitator plays a crucial role in a Forum-Theatre process. They should have a solid knowledge of the technique, as well as pedagogical and theatre skills. In this kind of process, the participants are invited to work on stories of oppression, deal with their emotions, and step into different roles.

For participants who have never experienced this type of engagement, the process can be challenging. That's why it is important to take extra care to create a safe and trusting environment from the very beginning, where the participants will feel at ease to explore, express themselves and fully take part. **The fundamental elements of such a safe space are clear rules of mutual respect, active listening, and non-judgment.** In such an environment, the facilitator can propose various theatre exercises and work on the scenes with the participants, encouraging reflection and critical analysis.

In Forum-Theatre, the facilitator is called the Joker or Kuringa.

In the following parts of the report, we will have a closer look at the role of the Joker-facilitator when working with a group with fewer opportunities, discuss the process of making Forum-Theatre scenes/play, and provide ideas for interventions with concrete examples and suggestions.

2.2 Skills, attitudes and competences of facilitators in their role of Jokers/Kuringas

Although there is no single ideal profile of the Joker/Kuringa, there is a set of skills, competences and attitudes that are fundamental for carrying out a Forum-Theatre process and facilitating dialogue, reflections, and extrapolation.

Based on the experiences and feedback gathered within the CENV project, the skills and attitudes proposed below can be useful for a trainer/facilitator who uses our combined approach.

Firstly, the Joker has a maieutic attitude, which means he/she does not know the truth but is curious to find it out together with the group. In other words, he/she is not teaching something, but stimulating group and individual thinking and awareness.

What this implies is avoiding judgments, evaluations, accusations and verdicts, and instead using questions that stimulate deep critical thinking and reflection, and help avoid automatic, pre-established ideas and conceptions.

Questioning is the Joker's main tool - when he/she wants to intervene in a debate or action, he/she should think in terms of questions. Questions are also an extremely useful invitation for participants to intervene, especially in contexts and with audiences who are not familiar with the Forum-Theatre method. In this sense, some good opening questions or interrogations that allow the participants to scratch the surface of the theme are: "What have we just seen/witnessed?", "What do you think happened in this scene?", "Did you like what we have just seen? Why?".

Another important aspect of the Joker's attitude is understanding that his/her position towards values and oppression is **not:**

- objective
- neutral

But Joker is impartial.

What is meant by being objective and neutral, but impartial? It might happen that spect-actors express opinions or strategies that the Joker personally disagrees with or sees as too risky or not

possible. However, having assumed the role of the Joker, the facilitator's task is not to censor these comments or proposals, but rather to problematize them by asking, questioning, letting the audience reflect jointly on these statements in order to review them critically.

Here is an example of a violent proposal and a possible reaction from the Joker:

Spect-actor: *"I want to kick my boss."*

Joker: *"OK, you want to do it, but what could be the consequences afterwards? Can you deal with them?"*

Joker: *"Do you all agree with this proposal?"*

Joker: *"I disagree with a violent solution such as..., but if you really want to try on stage, please..."*

Spect-actor: *"I propose to file a complaint against my manager."*

Joker: *"OK, do you know how to do it? What are the first steps you need to take?"*

That is, to be impartial means to give space to different opinions and solutions, but not to be neutral in the sense of having no values or attitudes towards such topics as racism, democracy, machismo, etc.

The maieutic attitude and the impartial position are the two main characteristics of an effective and coherent Joker.

Consequently, the Joker also needs some other key skills:

- ability to create a safe and encouraging space where people feel both at ease and challenged to explore new ideas/behaviours/strategies;
- ability to lead a group to build up a play that resonates with them and is also clear for their audience, with a good balance of time/actors' skills/depth of characters and contents.
- ability to help the group in decision making and group dynamics.
- ability to use different kinds of questions according to the play construction and the Forum management.

To do this, Jokers need some training and a lot of practice, as it is impossible to foresee all the situations that can happen during a course. It is also important to keep in mind that each Forum-Theatre process is different, even if the subjects covered are similar or even identical, as the audience, situation and state of mind of all the participants involved shape the way the Forum will go. That is, the ability to improvise and creativity of the Joker are fundamental and should be honed constantly.



Conversation between Joker and audience, fot. STOP-KLATKA

2.3. Improvisation and creativity

Forum-Theatre involves improvisation and theatre play as scene-making tools while the participants are free to experiment, try out different roles and solutions, and explore various possibilities.

Improvisation encourages creativity, spontaneity and the ability to adapt. This allows viewers to explore and develop characters, interact in diverse situations, and collaboratively build stories.

Improvisation is used in Forum-Theatre to create scenes and situations in which participants can explore social issues and challenges. Through improvisation, a space for experimentation and discovery is generated, allowing viewers to explore different perspectives and solutions.

Various theatrical techniques can be incorporated to enrich the performances. These techniques may include the use of voice, body movement, facial expression, music, and/or dance.

The use of theatrical techniques broadens the expressive possibilities of the participants, allows them to communicate more effectively, and deepens their interpretation of characters and situations.

Improvisation and creativity in Forum-Theatre give participants the opportunity to explore ideas, perspectives, and solutions spontaneously, which encourages personal expression, connection with others and the search for alternatives in theatrical performance. Working with creativity and artistic expression gives participants a chance to explore their imagination, experiment with new forms of representation and develop communication skills. These elements enrich the theatrical experience and promote a greater emotional and cognitive connection with the social issues addressed.

Examples of improvisation exercises to develop spontaneity and creativity:

- **Associated Words:** participants form a circle. One person begins by saying a word. The next participant must respond with another associated word, and so on. This exercise fosters creativity and connection among participants.
- **Scenes in 30 seconds:** participants are divided into small groups and assigned a topic or situation. They have 30 seconds to create and act out an impromptu scene related to that topic. This helps develop the ability to improvise quickly and think creatively about solutions.

Stepping into roles can be a big challenge for participants who haven't had any experience with it before. They can recall memories from their childhood connected to public performing in schools, classes, etc., which can cause stress and frustrate them. In order to avoid this, the facilitator needs to be aware of it and try to construct the further parts of the session taking this into account.

Propositions to consider:

- **The purpose of acting:** improvisation at the Forum-Theatre is not about acting perfectly, but about being willing to take risks and be wrong. It is important to foster a supportive environment where participants feel safe enough to experiment and express themselves without fear of judgement. The facilitator can highlight several times that roles are for them to try out different perspectives in different situations but also to have fun and enjoy this way of learning.
- **Gradualism:** it is important to proceed according to the principle of gradualism. We propose that the facilitator doesn't ask participants to improvise in front of the whole group in the first session, but instead tries to go through the process step by step. One possible way for this is to offer the role to everyone at the same time, and to do paired exercises where all pairs improvise at the same time, and therefore they don't feel that someone is watching them, which can cause them to tense up. At first, try to propose simple, short images or scenes where the participants can try out different roles for a short time and then slowly move further with more complex exercises.
- **Use of non-verbal forms:** non-verbal language plays a crucial role in the interpretation of characters and in the communication of emotions and messages. The participants can explore the use of gestures, body postures, facial expressions, and movements to convey their ideas and emotions. This can include body language exercises, improvising characters without words, and experimenting with communication through movement. Using such forms can also support participants in stepping into their roles without the additional stress of being verbal.
- **Freedom of choice:** it is important to point out that every participant has the right to choose which role they would like to assume. This can be ensured in various ways: by proposing

exercises which involve their imagination so that they can create their own characters, or by proposing scenes where there are more characters so that the pair/group can decide who takes up which role. Moreover, during the creation of their own scenes, it is good to point out that the participants should choose a role in which they feel comfortable.



Participants improvising at the same time, fot. STOP-KLATKA

2.4. Teamwork and collective construction

Forum-Theatre is a form of participatory theatre that emphasises teamwork and collective construction. These aspects are fundamental for the development of scenes, the exploration of solutions, and the generation of ideas. This strengthens viewer participation and fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility towards social transformation. Teamwork and collective decision making improve important skills but can also generate conflicts and difficult emotions among the participants. In this sense, there is also space for the facilitator to think about how to handle such situations.

Propositions to consider:

- **Resources of collective work:** Forum-Theatre encourages collaboration and cooperation among participants. It is important to point out to the participants that they work together in the creation of the scenes, sharing ideas, talents, and resources. The participants can bring forward their own experiences and perspectives to develop situations that reflect the social issues they wish to address.

- **Rules to establish:** one of the distinctive characteristics of the Forum-Theatre is the collective creation of the scenes. Teamwork implies listening to and respecting the ideas of others, seeking common ground and making decisions collectively. Collaboration dynamics should be established in such a way that all participants feel valued and can actively contribute. The facilitator can take care of this from the very first session by establishing group rules to reflect the values which can guide the participants also in group work exercises. Collective construction implies a process of active listening, dialogue and negotiation among the members of the group. All participants have the opportunity to contribute ideas and shape the scenes, thus creating a more inclusive and diverse representation.
- **Diversity of opinions:** during the creation and interventions, different opinions can appear. While building the scenes, the participants are invited to explore different approaches and alternatives to address the conflicts presented. Space for dialogue and reflection should be fostered where the proposed ideas can be discussed and evaluated, and decisions can be made jointly. As the facilitator, you can also highlight that it is natural that the participants don't agree on every aspect, but it is important to try to find a common solution.
- **Constructive dialogue:** dialogue allows different voices and perspectives to be heard and respected, and fosters effective communication between participants. An environment should be created in which the participants are encouraged to express their opinions, share their experiences, and listen carefully to others. **Elements of constructive dialogue are: respecting each other's opinions, speaking without judging, speaking about one's own thoughts and emotions, referring to facts rather than interpretations.**
- **Conflict resolution through dialogue:** one of the objectives of the Forum-Theatre is to seek conflict resolution. Through dialogue, different perspectives can be explored and collaborative solutions found. The participants can propose alternatives, discuss different points of view, and work together to find more inclusive and fair approaches.
- **Role-play and Forum-Theatre:** Forum-Theatre is not role-playing; it seeks to use a particular scene or episode to jointly search for strategies and ways to resolve or overcome problematic and oppressive situations. When using Forum-Theatre, the starting point is often an individual story where a person presents a situation where he/she felt oppressed or in trouble. In our world, there are many problems, but not all problems are considered oppression. For instance, meeting a beggar in the street is not oppression, but it might be an oppressive situation for the beggar. If some people feel it is oppression, I ask them: why? Who has more power in this relationship? To what extent can you and the beggar make choices? Did the beggar choose to be in this situation, or was he/she forced? And so on. In the same way, if I talk with my partner, colleague or schoolmate and we don't understand each other, I wouldn't say "I am oppressed by them" but rather "There is a miscommunication". What does this mean? There are many problematic situations where one can feel uneasy or uncomfortable, but only some of them can be considered oppression. In a strict sense, in the TO view, oppression occurs when a person belongs to a less advantaged social group with fewer opportunities and power, and therefore they have fewer opportunities to control their life paths, to take action, to make decisions and to create their future. When a person is exploited, discriminated against, excluded, or abused, they can be in a situation where the attitude of the oppressor is more aggressive/ violent, or the oppression can be more subverted, executed with kindness. Oppression comes in many colours, and individual participants may have experienced 'different colours' of oppression to each other. Taking into consideration the above, in the context of a Forum-Theatre process, when you as the facilitator first ask the people to tell their stories, you can choose to ask them about problems, troubles, difficulties... or oppression. Further, when people tell a story that is recognised as common by the group and staged, you should also reflect with the group whether it is oppression, a misunderstanding, bad communication, or something else entirely. If the case is communication, it is better to use role-play, that is, playing roles to explore and improve attitudes and situations so as to avoid misunderstandings. If the situation seems oppressive, it can be better investigated using Forum-Theatre (see part 2 and also section 4 in IO2).

- What is the difference?

Role-play explores the roles and how to properly play them, improving communication and acting. Whilst Forum-Theatre explores the dynamics of oppression and power imbalance, and tries to re-establish the process of liberation and make the relationship fair again by trying to find strategies to change the oppressive mechanisms, not just the individual behaviour.

There is another tricky aspect: dealing with conflict. Conflict is a struggle between parties that have different needs/goals, maybe even opposite ones. In the first case, mediation has the potential to resolve the conflict; in the second case, mediation is to be avoided until a balance of power between the two sides is reached. The same applies to gender violence: mediation is possible only when the two partners have similar power, or it will only be alliance with the more powerful side.

Another difference between the two techniques is that role-play does not need special aesthetics as it reproduces reality, while Forum-Theatre represents reality. Role-play uses a naturalistic style, staging the situation as it appears. Whilst Forum-Theatre chooses the key elements of oppression, power dynamics, and social forces, and puts them on stage with different aesthetic tools like scenes, characters, story-tellers, songs, pictures, etc. The style may be realistic, but it doesn't need to mimic reality, it can be more creative.



In Forum Theatre, we explore various means of expressing the theme and the accompanying emotions, fot. STOP-KLATKA



Scene presentation and searching solutions, for. Futura Gestiona

2.5. Analysis and reflection

Forum-Theatre is not simply about improvising and acting out scenes, but also about analysing and reflecting on the issues and social conflicts presented. Analysis and reflection allow participants to deepen their understanding of the presented problems and seek possible solutions.

The phase of analysis and reflection in Forum-Theatre is essential to deepen the understanding of social problems and promote the active participation of the spectators in the search for solutions. Critical reflection is a central element in Forum-Theatre, since it fosters deep analysis of social problems and critical awareness among the participants. This reflection goes beyond the mere identification of the problems; it seeks to understand the underlying causes and question the social structures and practices that perpetuate them. Through critical discussion and the generation of alternatives, the aim is to empower the participants and promote social transformation.

The facilitator's role should be to encourage the participants to pursue this path. Analysis and reflection are skills that should be practised, so they can be implemented from the first session by proposing different forms of verbal reflection at the end of each session so that participants can get used to it as part of group and individual work.

Propositions to consider:

- **Analysis of causes and consequences:** critical reflection involves exploring the causes and consequences of the social problems represented in the scenes. The participants must look at the roots of the problems and consider how they are connected to larger systems, such as inequality, discrimination or injustice. It is important to challenge the social norms and structures that perpetuate the problems and explore how they can be addressed in a more inclusive and equitable way.
- **Challenge of dominant narratives:** Forum-Theatre seeks to challenge the dominant narratives and stereotyped representations in society. Through critical reflection, participants question the images and preconceived ideas that are perpetuated in relation to social problems. It is essential to foster critical thinking that questions stereotypes, prejudices and social constructions, and promote the construction of new, more inclusive and diverse narratives.

Critical reflection becomes a motor for mobilisation and commitment to social transformation.

In this sense, Forum-Theatre is a powerful tool to promote critical awareness and active participation in the construction of a more just and equitable society.

2.6. From reflection to action

Forum-Theatre seeks not only to raise awareness and understanding of social issues, but also to drive social action and change. Critical reflection and mobilisation are fundamental aspects of this form of participatory theatre.

Propositions to consider:

- **Reflection on social reality:** in Forum-Theatre, the participants are invited to reflect on the social reality in which they live. Through the representation of problematic and conflictual

situations, the discussion and analysis of problems present in society is stimulated. The reflection on social reality allows viewers to become aware of the injustices, inequalities and conflicts present in their environment. This can generate a sense of urgency and motivation to seek solutions and work towards positive change.

- Transformative action: Forum-Theatre also seeks transformative action. The participants are invited to consider how they can contribute to social change and what actions they can take to address the issues represented. This implies the identification of specific strategies and the creation of collective action plans. It seeks to go beyond reflection and promote the identification and implementation of concrete actions. The participants are invited to consider how they can contribute to social transformation in their communities. For this, it is necessary to identify individual and collective actions that can make a difference, ranging from small changes in attitudes and behaviours to participation in broader social movements. There is also the space for the facilitator to propose particular forms for encouraging this way of thinking, such as creating mind-maps with ideas of concrete actions stemming from each participant's environment and with the wider context taken into account.

Forum-Theatre can serve as a catalyst for mobilisation and activism. Through the theatre experience, participants can be motivated to take action, join social movements, and work for meaningful change in their communities. In this sense, a safe space is provided to explore and practice activism, fostering civic participation and commitment to social justice.

2.7. Staging a Forum-Theatre play and the role of the Joker

Narrating one's own experience is a way to put outside, in front of you a particular situation to be better analysed. It is useful as a tool for distancing typical for human beings that allows to reflect on reality and choose one alternative among many.

But Forum-Theatre goes beyond that, as there is a second level of distancing implied in representing reality by the means of theatre.

In this way, the situation is not only in your own mind but outside and visible to others. It implies you can manipulate this image of your reality, entering it and improvising, changing your and others' behaviour, inventing new situations, and more. Such visualization of a personal situation is a starting point for solidarity and common vision. Staging a story is not simple. The main elements need to be selected; in TO they are the way oppression works, sometimes with invisible forces. Staging implies studying the words used, the narrative expressed, the non-verbal communication, the use of space, the legislation and social sources reinforcing the oppressive side, the resources for the oppressed people, etc.

To help with this step, TO developed a set of exercises, called rehearsal techniques, that can be found in Boal's books. Some tips are presented in the following section.

If the facilitator sees the potential to work not only on particular scenes with their group, but also aims to stage a whole Forum-Theatre play with an audience, there is a need to consider additional aspects. To build a Forum-Theatre play, the trainers/Jokers need to develop their skills in two main steps of the process:

- Building the Forum-Theatre model
- Leading the Forum-Theatre session as a Joker

1) Creating the Model

If Forum-Theatre is used to address oppression, the structure of the model, that is the final play we want to show internally or to an external audience, is to be taken into account. The questions to be asked to the audience, the characters included, the texts, the dialogue, including the verbal and non-verbal communication used to oppress/resist, all need to be considered.

In addition, you have to decide on a structure of the play, which might be used as part of research throughout the Forum-Theatre session.

In order to analyse the play in an effective way, as a Joker, we suggest 6 areas to pay particular attention to:

A - THE QUESTION

Each Forum play should have a main question, which is the one you propose to the audience for debate. It is not a philosophical or moral question, but rather "What can character X do to improve the situation and get out of Y's oppression?".

First, A good question should lead to good debate/research.

Second, the issue must be relevant to the actors and to the public.

Third, the issue can be announced, but it is best if it is implicit in the story and expressed by the behaviour of the protagonist/oppressed.

A question that is too generic or too strict leads to a generic or impossible debate/research.

B - REALITY

The story must be real.

Boal distinguishes between 'real' and 'realistic'.

The story must be real, but can be non-realistic, for example symbolic or expressionist. What is important is that it contains real oppression and real mechanisms, even if they are transfigured by creativity and imagination.

C - STRUCTURE

The simplest structure useful for a Forum play is the following:

- 1 Protagonist/Oppressed who tries to change the situation
- 1 Antagonist/Oppressor who wants to keep the situation stable because he/she has advantages, obeys an order, fears change, etc.
- a conflict between them.
- mechanisms of oppression: these can be the use of space, speech, action, body language, law, etc. They should be staged and used in a way that is appropriate to the situation.
- a bad ending: no solution to be found.

Boal suggests also stopping at the "Chinese crisis", that is when the Protagonist makes a choice and fails, but the spect-actors can see other possibilities to achieve the climax and avoid the narrow situation where the Protagonist is more likely to experience powerlessness. Such tool might be useful, but it is not obligatory, as the structure of the scene should represent reality, which doesn't necessarily contain a "Chinese crisis".

Another angle to look at the issue of structure is the recommendation of Julian Boal not to reduce Forum-Theatre to a struggle between 2 individuals, the oppressor and the oppressed.

In some workshops, he suggests creating a structure where the main point is not the oppression, but the difficulty to organise the oppressed people. For instance, in a story about harassment at work, he suggested focusing on the Protagonist's attempt to involve, to awaken, to engage with her colleagues instead of working on how to defend herself against the perpetrator.

The focus shifts from the oppressor/oppressed dynamics to the relationship among the oppressed and potential allies. The question is not how to prevent the boss from harassing their employee when they are alone, but how to spark solidarity among people that are potentially in the same situation or possible allies as they share the same value of respect.

The idea is to explore ways to create alliances with people who are not antagonistic, only potentially afraid, unaware of the problem, or unwilling to take the risk of opposing to the boss.

D - CHARACTERS

They must be as complex as human beings are. Avoid the trivialisation of oppressors, a black-and-white outlook, the simplification of oppressors as bad people. After all, they also have reasons for their behaviour, even if others do not agree with them, and they usually believe in what they are doing.

Their reasons, motivations or forces behind their actions, or what simply makes the mechanism of oppression effective, is part of the group research.

In Boal's terms, this means that characters need to be created with internal contradictions, a will and a counter-will, different internal aspects and a real life.

E - THEATRICALITY

Sometimes the Forum-Theatre plays are very poor in aesthetic terms. This is a pity, because a beautiful play is more appreciated by the audience and can generate more identification.

Therefore, this aspect should be taken care of too, even if it is not the most important one.

There are several exercises that can be used to improve scenes (see Boal's book).

F - MICRO-MACRO

This is a very important point because practice shows that sometimes, a Forum-Theatre session becomes a struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor: in one corner, someone who is trying to deceive the oppressor or impose a solution, in the other an oppressor, in the sense of a physical person facing the oppressed, who might not even be the main one, but just a messenger, a mediator, etc.

In the play, in order to enhance the audience's ability to analyse oppression more deeply and find a more effective solution, the link between the microcosm and the macrocosm needs to be shown.

How to do it?

There are many ways, such as:

- some key laws can be read out by a storyteller during the play;
- information on the cutting of social assistance can be quoted by a character;
- the influence of the ECB (European Central Bank) on people's lives can be expressed through a voice-over;
- decisions taken at a high level in an institution can be illustrated by another scene where the director of the health unit decides to lay off staff in a sub-unit to save money;
- the mechanism of competition in the international market can be illustrated by a symbolic song or dance.

Therefore, the model should have two levels:

- a typical story (the interaction between the oppressor and the oppressed, as a specific episode)

AND

- the wider context of the mass-media, social media, vox populi, socio-economic elements such as religion, cultural aspects, ideologies, institutions, legislation, specific policies, etc.

In other words, oppression should be presented through a lens different than the simple Newtonian perspective (action-reaction between two realities); a quantum approach comes to mind as a useful allegory here (in a field of oppression, there are several roles, interactions and forces that keep the field up).



Working with a group on the social context - what broader context (e.g., media-related) influences the behavior of the characters in the play?, fot. STOP-KLATKA

2) The role and attitude of the Joker during a Forum session

In leading a Forum play, the oppression-aware Joker must:

- highlight the cultural and narrative elements of the oppressed and the oppressor, inviting the public to take them into account in the proposed strategies;
- ask questions not only about tactics, but about strategies; not only about individual actions, but about collective ones;
- invite people not only to verbally challenge the oppressor's narrative, but also to use action-based strategies; in the non-violent framework, persuasion is only one strategy among others, such as non-collaboration, boycotting, symbolising opposition, etc.

Some practical advice:

A) How to structure a public session?

Usually, a Forum-Theatre session is divided into 4 stages, according to Boal:

- Introduction: where the Joker outlines the event, the role of the audience, the subject, the group of actors, the rules of the game.
- Activation: the Joker animates the audience with simple games or jokes, to prepare them to become spect-actors.
- Show: the actors act out the play.
- Interventions: the Joker invites the audience to intervene, to replace the protagonist or his/her allies, and to try to change the bad ending.

One of the partner organisations in the CENV project who has extensive practice and experience with TO and Forum-Theatre, Giollicoop from Italy, added a final step:

- Closing: the Joker summarises the results of the session and possibly invites participants to take action on the problem presented.

B) What to say in the first step?

It's up to the Joker to decide with the actors what he/she should do, how much time they should spend on the role, etc.

Some possible discussion points:

- personal and group presentation
- The Forum-Theatre and its rules
- something related to the subject, perhaps some key questions
- the role of the audience in Forum-Theatre.

C) What to do in the second stage?

The simple games explained by Boal are a great tool here, such as "Circle and cross", "Hello", etc.

In some cases, the Joker can start by asking people simple questions (e.g., What do you prefer to eat for breakfast?) and gradually we move on towards the topic.

Alternatively, the topic can be discussed in pairs with the help of some specific key questions. In some cultures, it is preferable to start dancing or signing together, which also works extremely well.

It is up to the Joker, who reads the audience, to decide how to warm them up and for how long.



Warm-up with audience, for. STOP-KLATKA

D) How to manage the fourth stage in a Forum session?

This is the most difficult stage.

Some rules to help:

- at the end of the play (3rd stage), the Joker can ask three simple questions to warm up the audience and focus them on the story:

1 - Is what you have seen real? Does it actually happen in society?

2 - What are the problems?

3 - Is there anything that can be done? What can be done?

- before the intervention, the Joker explains that the play starts again in the same way as before, and that only the audience can say stop and freeze the actors. Then anyone who wants can come on stage, replace the protagonist or their allies and act out his/her own idea. The rest of the actors will improvise, still in their own characters.
- Every idea is welcome and the next people can build on it and improve it.
- During the play, if no one shouts "stop", the Joker could stop the scene and ask the audience: What is happening? What could he/she do?
- If a spectator is ready to step in and enter the stage, the Joker invites the audience to applaud and stays close to the spect-actor to encourage them to continue.
- When his/her action is no longer creative or is weak, the Joker can say stop, thank the person and send him/her back into the audience.
- Then, ask the actors in the show: Have you noticed any changes, however small? Which ones?
- And the audience: Are there any other options that can be performed?
- Continue with interventions from the audience.

E) How to conclude?

The Joker could summarise the lessons learned, the different opinions and strategies, the missing explorations, the relevant elements of the debate, etc.

A ritual is often used as closure, such as breathing together or playing a collective game.

CONCLUSION

Directing a Forum-Theatre play is not easy but it is a joy and an opportunity for reflection, change and a deeper sense of justice, possibility and transformation. These tips and guidelines were written down just to help you get started, but only good practice will develop your skills and make you confident to use the tool productively.

It is also useful to watch videos or other Jokers working.

That said, it is impossible to foresee every event and prevent mistakes or problems, but the role of Forum-Theatre in changing society is so important that the risks are worth taking.



Fot. La Xixa Teatre

3. Experience and supportive material from CENV project

3.1. Introduction

In the CENV project, three of the organisations involved implemented test modules and led sessions divided into 6 thematic parts which were then shaped into a training programme developed under IO3 (link to the annex in IO3). The last sessions were dedicated to creating Forum-Theatre scenes. We present here a survey and examples of scenes as inspiration and a closer view into how a Forum-Theatre scene can look like and what kind of preparation can be done before work on the scenes starts. These materials can help and guide facilitators with no previous experience with Forum-Theatre or the Theatre of the Oppressed, as they allow them to understand the objectives, structure, and implementation of the approach.

3.2. Survey before the test

Before the first testing phase, a survey was provided to the participants in each organisation in order to learn more about their specific environment and the kind of situations they struggle with. Such a survey can help the facilitator to see the structure of the group and the types of oppression that appear in the participants' life, and therefore to guide the work in a way that will be relevant for the particular group. Broader knowledge of the participants' situation influences the choice of venue for the proposed improvisations, the selection of characters, the title of still images, and so on. Moreover, it can help in constructing the groups for creating the scenes, for example people with similar difficulties can be organised into one working group.

The participants' answers can also be of significance. The proposed survey is short and consists of direct questions. Not all of the questions need to be answered, and the ones left blank can also be meaningful for the facilitator, indicating the level of self-reflection, shyness and sense of safety.

Questionnaire for participants:

1. What work situations do you feel the worst about? (Reword: What work situations make you feel the worst?)
2. What situations of oppression do you live in or have experienced in your professional environment?
3. What is the most difficult thing for you in your working relationships?
4. Do you have beliefs about yourself and the world that block/hinder your development at work?
5. What do you think can be the causes of your dreams not (yet) having come true?

3.3. Scenes proposals and possible interventions

During the seventh session in the testing phase of the CENV project, the participants created scenes based on their real-life experiences. These work situations highlighted oppression in the form of verbal aggression, a lack of respect for others, or the feelings of being oppressed, crushed or hurt.

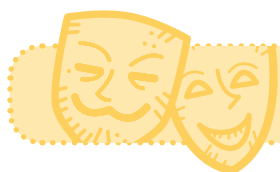
Below, three scenes are presented, one by each organisation. Each of them was created by the participants and speaks about the work environment and type of oppression they had experienced. After each scene, the reader can find two interventions which took place and were proposed in the session by other participants (who were spect-actors). The participants who proposed the interventions tried to use empathic and assertive communication approaches (which they learned in the fourth and fifth sessions) to find alternatives to the initial conflict; however, it is worth emphasizing that the participants weren't forced to use these techniques and they weren't the only strategies used during the interventions.

The scenes can help a facilitator to see the diversity of scenes that a group can prepare in different countries with different work environments. In the section below, the scenes and interventions are presented as they were proposed by the participants. In each case, there were more interventions, but we decided to limit our descriptions to only two.

It is important to add that these scenes were created by the participants at the end of the testing process, as part of the seventh session. After presenting the scenes and dedicating some time to interventions, the trainers proposed exercises for deepening the context and enriching the scenes. The participants were also able to think about the situations and possible solutions in a more complex way.

As the excerpts below include some stages of creating Forum-Theatre scenes, we found it important and interesting to add comments from the trainers who led the processes. For a wider perspective, comments from external Forum-Theatre experts were also added.

3.3.1. Scene by the group led by Stowarzyszenie Praktyków Dramy STOP-KLATKA



SCENE 1 – INITIAL

Roles: a female administrative worker, 2 male colleagues, a male boss

Venue: the office of the administrative worker in a big company.

The administrative worker is in her office, typing on her laptop.

A colleague enters her office: *“Hello Ana, can you please check if the transport is supposed to be next Tuesday or Wednesday? I forgot my account details and I cannot login to the system.”*

Ana looks disturbed.

Ana: *“Yes of course, I just need to finish this...”*

Colleague: *“No-no darling, I need this info ASAP, I have a meeting in 5 minutes, please check it now.”*

Ana: *“Okay, I will call you in 2 minutes with the info.”*

Colleague: *“Great, thanks, you are the best.”*

The first colleague goes away, Ana wants to check the requested information, but another colleague comes in.

Colleague: "Ana, where are the documents for the report?"

Ana: "Which report?"

Colleague: "You know, the April report with the satisfactory data."

Ana: "I will send it to you in two days, I'm finishing it."

Colleague: "I thought you'd already sent it to us."

Ana: "No, the boss asked to send it by Friday."

Colleague: "Yes, but I will be on holiday next week, you know. Why don't you send it earlier? Just don't tell me that you have so much work that you haven't had the time to do it. I need this document by tomorrow, right?"

Ana: "Ok, I will try."

Colleague: "Yes, please try, it's not so complicated to put together some data, please."

The second colleague leaves. Ana tries to go back to one of her tasks, but she is unsure where to start. Just then, she gets a phone call from the boss.

Boss: "Ana, can you please come to my office in 5 minutes? We have an urgent order by tomorrow, you need to proceed ASAP. I will give you the details."

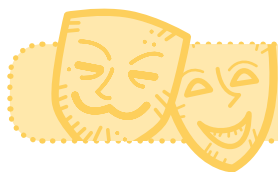
Ana: "Yes, but I should work on the report..."

Boss: "Don't you understand, darling, that this is urgent? Leave those things, just don't tell them that you can't do it and come here."

The boss finishes the call, Ana sighs and closes her laptop, then leaves her office.

Comments from the trainers leading the process:

The scene was described by a female participant who felt oppressed by all the male workers and her male boss as well. They always gave her more and more tasks and didn't respect her time or that she had other tasks to do. The methods of oppression varied: some were doing it more kindly, some in a more annoying way. We talked about it after the scene and the participant described the context so that the group members understood the situation in depth. Up to that moment, there had been several tasks and moments where the participants could talk about their work environment, so the group had broader knowledge about the context of each other's work oppression.



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION 1

The administrative worker is in her office, typing on her laptop.

A colleague enters her office: "Hello Ana, can you please check if the transport is supposed to be next Tuesday or Wednesday? I forgot my login to the system."

Ana looks disturbed.

Ana: *"Yes, I could. But I just need to finish this...."*

Colleague: *"No, darling, I need this info ASAP, I have a meeting in 5 minutes, please check it now."*

Ana: *"I understand, but I have other tasks to do, and I need to call somebody I don't have time for, ok? I will check when I finish the task I am working on."*

Colleague: *"But it will only take you 2 minutes. Can't you just stop the things you are working on and check it?"*

Ana: *"No, actually I need to finish it first and it really disturbs me when somebody enters while I am working on something else."*

Colleague: *"You are strange, do you have a problem with me?"*

At this point the second colleague enters:

Colleague: *"Ana, where are the documents for the report?"*

Ana: *"Sorry, but at this moment I am talking with your colleague and I have tasks to do, please come back later."*

Colleague: *"But I just need you to send me the report."*

Ana: *"I cannot answer you now, come back later."*

The two colleagues leave, the boss calls.

Boss: *"Ana, can you please come to my office in 5 minutes? We have an urgent order by tomorrow, you need to proceed ASAP. I will give you the details."*

Ana: *"I just need to finish the report you asked me to do till Friday."*

Boss: *"Darling, leave everything and come here ASAP!"*

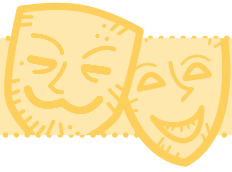
Ana: *"Ok, but then I won't finish the report till Friday because it will be too much. Are you okay with that?"*

Boss: *"Yes, yes, just come here."*

Ana closes her laptop and leaves the office.

Comments from the trainers leading the process:

The idea of the group member who proposed the intervention was to make herself more visible to the others by communicating that she is not always available and has tasks to do. After the Joker's question whether she feels satisfied with the proposition, she said that she doesn't know how this situation would influence her next days as the boss didn't want to acknowledge that she has other tasks to do. Other group members pointed out that in this proposition, the colleagues faced with answers different from the kind they had got used to could possibly change their behaviour towards Ana and respect her more.



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION 2

The administrative worker is in her office, typing on her laptop.

A colleague enters her office: “Hello Ana, can you please check if the transport is supposed to be next Tuesday or Wednesday? I forgot my login to the system.”

Ana looks disturbed.

Ana: *“No, I am busy at the moment. Please go and send me your request via e-mail.”*

Colleague: *“But darling, it will only take you 2 minutes.”*

Ana: *“I cannot, I need to call somebody back now.”*

Ana starts her call.

Colleague: *“But...”*

Ana: *“Hello? Yes, Ana Kowalska speaking. I am calling you regarding the order...”*

The colleague leaves. The second one wants to enter, but Ana stops him.

Colleague: *“Hello, Ana, just about that report.”*

Ana continues to talk on the phone and doesn't react to the colleague.

Ana: *“Yes, order number 57384. We requested the warranty document, which wasn't sent...”*

The colleague leaves.

Continuing the call, Ana stands up and puts a sign on her door: DO NOT DISTURB.

Meanwhile, she sees that she has a call from her boss, but decides not to pick up and finish her call.

Comments from trainers leading the process:

The group members who were watching the intervention described this idea as effective if Ana could stick with this attitude in the long term. The first time, her different reaction could be perceived as strange and a symptom of bad mood, but if she remained consistent, e.g. by using the “Do not disturb” sign from the second intervention onwards, maybe her coworkers would accept the change. Somebody raised a doubt that some of her colleagues would like her less or think she was rude if they didn't understand why she was behaving like this.

After the intervention, there was an interesting discussion about the boss and the strategy that could work with him, as he was much harder to deal with than the colleagues. Moreover, the participant who brought up her story for staging raised that she would be afraid that if she started to behave like this, it would feed the men's (including the boss') solidarity against her and put her in a very difficult situation.

Comments from an external Forum-Theatre expert after reading the scene:

The scene is narrow and focuses only on the clash moment, without any introduction or analysis

of the macro-context. In this case, the first interventions, as usual, try to directly and individually stop the oppressors using communication skills. This is rather a tactic than a strategy, bringing short-term results.

It is important for the Joker to let the participants try the simplest and immediate actions that come to their mind, but then it is also the Joker's task to make them scratch the surface of the situation.

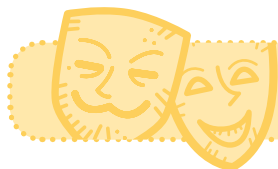
The play also shows an unbalance of power as the boss has more power than the others, while the colleagues seem similar in that regard.

The suggestion for the Joker could be:

- before the play, try to build up a more complex story where the underlying mechanism is visible. For instance, why are all 3 people urging her to do something? Is it because they are men (patriarchy?), or maybe because they are pressured, too (job organisation?), because they are stressed or angry for other reasons? Because they hate the female colleague? Is this situation exceptional or an everyday occurrence? Such reflection with the group can help to better understand the system where the episode happens, to find its causes and remedies.

- during the Forum session, try to ask the audience questions to dig into the micro-situation and into each character's behaviour, to research around the oppression. Then invite the spect-actors to think not only in terms of tactics but also strategies, not only in terms of individual but also collective reaction: to discuss the organisation of work with the colleagues, to decide common rules to work better together, to protest together against the boss and the rhythm of work, to propose improvements to the woman's contract, to build solidarity instead of competition with the colleagues, etc.

3.2.2. Scene by Le Comptoir des Colibris



SCENE 1 – INITIAL

3 key actors: a waiter / a chef / a kitchen assistant (commis)

Another actor (waiter) can intervene to close the scene (contextualisation of the generated problem)

The scene takes place in the kitchen of a restaurant during the lunch service.

The waiter arrives in the kitchen in panic and yells at the assistant: "I got told off by a customer because there was feta cheese in her Italian salad and she had pointed out that she was lactose intolerant! Shit, I told you!"

The kitchen assistant checks the order voucher and is annoyed because he can't see anything: "I'm sorry, I can't see anything relevant written on the order form."

The waiter: *"I told you, you don't listen to anything, I told you dammit, it's always the same, it pisses me off!"*

The kitchen assistant: *"But..."*

The waiter: *"No buts, I'm sick of being told off for your bullshit."*

The kitchen assistant is on the verge of tears: *"But..."*

The chef arrives to find out what's going on and to get the kitchen and service to work again: "What's going on here? Calm down, we've got the lunch service to do!"

The waiter replies: *"It's the kitchen assistant's fault, I said no cheese in the Italian salad for table 2 and he put it in anyway. The customer complained because she's lactose-intolerant and there was feta cheese on her plate!"*

The chef to the kitchen assistant: *"Feta cheese in an Italian salad, that's nonsense, it should be mozzarella! When are you going to learn the recipes on the menu, for God's sake, you good-for-nothing!"*

The chef to the waiter: *"And you, another good-for-nothing! Don't you know that you have to write down this type of information? What if someone got poisoned because of you? And then, can't you check your plates before serving? What have I done to deserve such incompetence!!!!"*

Another waiter comes in: *"What's going on, we can hear you shouting and we're waiting for some action..."*

The chef: *"That's it, everyone get back to work and get cracking, you incompetent fools!"*

Comments:

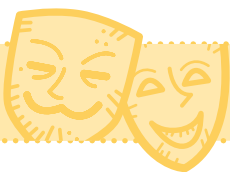
In our experiment, the settling of scores went on for too long in the kitchen, which is not possible in real life because there are customers waiting to be taken care of. We added a fourth character to end the conflict. The audience felt oppressed by the aggressive and judgmental comments made by the waiter and, above all, the head chef, who did nothing to ease the pressure.

Lunchtime service in the restaurant industry is a source of stress, and communication can sometimes get out of hand. That was the starting point. And then the situation showed a problem of communication between the service staff and the kitchen staff. We can deduce that the way in which the head chef talks and looks down on the staff does not help to establish respect in the exchanges between all the members of the professional team.

Questions to ask:

Is this way of communicating habitual or occasional?

What is the wider context for each protagonist (mood, character, position in the hierarchy, etc.)?



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION 1

The waiter returns less angry but more annoyed by the situation: *"I've just been reprimanded by the customer at table 2 because there was feta cheese in her Italian salad and she had mentioned that she was lactose intolerant. You can imagine what could have happened. Hadn't you heard me?"*

The kitchen assistant checks the order voucher and is annoyed because he can't see anything relevant: *"No, with the noise in the kitchen it's not easy to hear everything, and there was nothing written on the order form as there should be. I was making a new salad, I'll get it ready without cheese in a moment".*

The waiter: *"Thank you. I'm very upset, I don't like being told off by customers."*

The kitchen assistant: *"I understand, but next time please make a note of all the important information on the order form to avoid going through this again."*

The kitchen chef present adds: *"And I think it's also necessary to check the plates you bring to the customer in such a situation".*

The kitchen assistant: *"Here's your salad. Pass my apologies to the customer".*

The waiter: *"Thank you, and sorry I forgot to write it down..."*

Comments from the trainers leading the process:

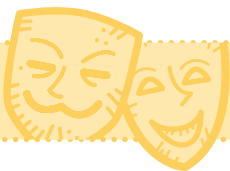
In this situation, better communication and emotional management meant that the situation did not escalate and that the kitchen staff's expectations towards the waiter were verbalised. The commis was no longer cornered; in the end, the mistake was the waiter's, but he himself was not cornered either and the procedures were re-explained.

Comments from an external Forum-Theatre expert after reading the scene:

Good for the workers, but what about the chef? Why he entered shouting in the first version and now not? What made them change their attitude completely?

Why do things like this happen? Is there something in the organisation of work that does not fit everyone's needs? Or is there something outside the workplace affecting the characters? Or is the competition among restaurants the issue? Or the chefs' system of education? For instance, in the healthcare system, the bad relationship between doctors and patients is modeled by the way doctors learn during their apprenticeship.

Moreover, the first oppressor had their attitude changed, but what if they do not change and the commis is still the scapegoat? In Boal's terms, this is called a "magic solution": the oppressor changes because the spec-actors replace the oppressor and not the oppressed. This "solution" can only show what should happen but does nothing to change reality.



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION 2

This scene was written after performing it several times, with many changes. It reflects a condensed version of the communication tools used during the module. We wrote it up at the end of the theatrical exercises as a summary of how the communication tools were used. Of course, there was a lot going on during the theatrical experiences, but it's impossible to note down everything that was said and done, given that everyone was fully involved and without a detached observer. The scene takes place in the kitchen of a restaurant.

The waiter arrives in the kitchen in panic and yells at the assistant: *"I got told off by a customer because there was feta cheese in her Italian salad and she had pointed out that she was lactose intolerant! shit, I told you!"*

The kitchen assistant checks the order voucher and is annoyed because he can't see anything relevant: *"I'm sorry, I don't see anything about it written on the order form."*

The waiter: *"I told you, you don't listen to anything, I told you dammit, it's always the same, it pisses me off!"*

The kitchen assistant: *"But... "*

The waiter: *"No buts, I'm sick of being told off for your bullshit."*

The kitchen assistant is on the verge of tears: *"But..."*

The chef arrives to find out what's going on and to get the kitchen and service to work again: *"What's going on here? Calm down, we've got the lunch service to do!"*

The waiter replies: *"It's the kitchen assistant's fault, I said no cheese in the Italian salad for table 2 and he put it in anyway. The customer complained because she's lactose-intolerant and there was feta cheese on her plate!"*

The chef to the kitchen assistant: *"So, the priority now is to bring the customer a new plate. Can you make one without cheese?"*

The kitchen assistant: *"Yes chef!"*

The chef to the waiter: *"When you come into the kitchen and shout at the assistant using foul language because of something that wasn't his fault, I'm upset and feel a sense of injustice, and that makes me feel bad towards the customers. Right now, I'd like you to take the salad to the customer and apologise. Then I'll arrange to meet you after the service to discuss what's just happened and to go over who should do what to ensure that the team works properly. Do you agree?"*

The waiter: *"Yes, boss!"*

The kitchen assistant: *"Here's the salad without cheese."*

The waiter: *"Thank you."*

He exits.

The chef to the kitchen assistant: *"When I hear that you've put feta cheese in the Italian salad, it makes my skin crawl. It's made with buffalo mozzarella! Can I ask you to follow the recipes carefully so that you don't get any more complaints from your customers, please?"*

The kitchen assistant: *"Yes, chef! I'm going to reread the data sheets and keep some close by."*

Comments from the trainer leading the process:

In this situation, communication is regulated by the intervention of a third party, the head chef, who sets the framework, priorities and their needs as the team leader in a benevolent manner, in order to meet the needs of the customers and maintain the quality of the restaurant's services.

Comments from an external Forum-Theatre expert after reading the scene:

Again, we see the second oppressor with a different attitude, but what to do if the chef does not change and the problem remains on the commis?

In this case the game is a role-play, not a Forum-Theatre, as it seeks to replace all roles in search for good behaviour. This is not a bad thing, but it is not Forum. Forum implies there is an oppression to solve, not a role badly played. Oppression means there is exploitation or violence against someone with less power.

So, here's what I'd suggest to the Joker:

- during the play building, check if the situation is a problem of a bad role or an oppression. If so, you can choose role-play instead of Forum-Theatre. The big difference is the aim (to play the role better, or to change an oppressive dynamic?) and the replacement of all characters or only the oppressed.

3.2.3. Scene by Futura Gestiona



SCENE 1 – INITIAL

2 main actors: Nurse / Doctor

2 supporting actors: Nurse / Family member

In the Intensive Care Unit of a hospital, a nurse and a doctor attend to a critically ill patient who is dying after an accident. The doctor neglects medical follow-up for a day. After the patient's death, the truth comes to light, and the family demands the report, which the doctor falsifies. The head nurse advocates for honesty, while the doctor opposes it. Another nurse observes and eventually joins the head nurse, both encouraging the family member to seek justice.

Nurse 1: *"Have you gone crazy? How dare you falsify a report you didn't even write?"*

Doctor: *"Leave me alone. I'm busy."*

Nurse 1: *"Leave you alone? You mess up your job and still act this way?"*

Doctor: *"Mind your own business."*

(There's a second nurse, Nurse 2, observing the argument)

Nurse 2: *"Are we here to fight?"*

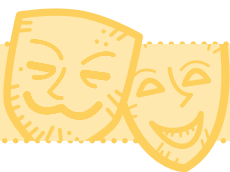
Nurse 1: (ignores Nurse 2 and speaks to Doctor) *"Look me in the eyes. Don't hide, idiot."*

Doctor: *"Be careful what you say. I can make you lose your job."*

Nurse 1: (to Nurse 2) *"Aren't you going to say anything?"*

Nurse 2: *"Should I? I think you should mind your own business."*

(Doctor smiles and leaves the room. There's a lot of tension among everyone, and nothing is resolved in the end)



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION

Nurse 1: (concerned) *"Doctor, we have to talk."*

Doctor: (frustrated) *"Not now, I'm busy."*

Nurse 1: *"It's important. It's about the patient who died yesterday. You didn't do a medical follow-up on him in the last 24 hours."*

Doctor: (angry) *"Yes, you're right, I was busy."*

Nurse 1: *"I think we should talk to his family."*

(Nurse 2 is also in the room, watching the conversation with interest.)

Nurse 2: *"Is something wrong?"*

Doctor: (angry) *"No, it's okay."*

Nurse 1: *"Yes! The doctor omitted that the patient who died yesterday had not received medical follow-up in the last 24 hours."*

Doctor: (annoyed) *"Stop it!"*

Nurse 2: *"And why didn't you?"*

Doctor: *"I haven't had time, we are under a lot of pressure in the hospital. There are no resources to serve everyone."*

Nurse 2: *"But you have to tell the truth."*

Doctor: *"I know, you're right."*

Nurse 1: *"So, what do we do?"*

Nurse 2: *"I think we should tell the family and the hospital management."*

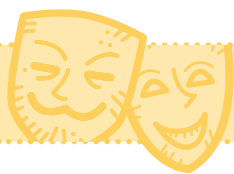
Nurse 1: *"Let's do it."*

Doctor: *"Then I'm afraid I can't do anything."*

Comments from the trainer leading the process:

We notice a profound disconnect from the character of the Doctor. The participant who played him was focused on doing what he thought was right, not what someone in the Doctor's position would do. Also, we saw too much enthusiasm and bravery in the Nurses: this is perhaps not very realistic.

We repeated the scene again, encouraging the participation of the spectators (other participants from the group).



SCENE 2 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION

Nurse 1: (concerned) *"Doctor, we need to talk."*

Doctor: (frustrated) *"Not now, no. I am busy."*

Nurse 1: *"It's important. It's about Andrés, the patient who passed away yesterday. He didn't have medical follow-up for 24 hours."*

Doctor: (angry) *"We're not going to discuss that now. It's not the time."*

(Nurse 2 is also in the room, observing the conversation with interest.)

Nurse 2: *"Is something going on?"*

Nurse 1: *"Yes, there is. The patient who passed away yesterday didn't receive medical follow-up for a whole day."*

Doctor: (annoyed) *"Enough already! I did provide medical follow-up; I just didn't write it on the computer."*

Nurse 1: *"I have no doubt about that. But protocols must be followed, and the family is demanding that report. I think we should give it to them."*

Doctor: *"We're all under a lot of pressure. We don't have enough staff. I don't have the time to write reports."*

Nurse 2: (uncertain) *"I... I agree with my colleague. The family deserves to know the truth."*

Doctor: *"You two are crazy! You don't understand the complexity of the situation."*

(Days go by, and the tension grows. Finally, Nurse 1 decides to talk to the Family member.)

Nurse 1: (to Nurse 2) *"I think we should talk to Andrés' family and tell them what happened."*

Nurse 2: (to Nurse 1) *"You're right. We should tell them."*

(The nurses talk to Doctor again)

Nurse 1: *"Doctor, the family deserves to know the truth about Andrés."*

Doctor: (resigned) *"If they learn the truth, I'll lose my job."*

(The Family member enters the scene seeking answers)

Family member: *"What's going on?"*

Nurse 1: (with empathy) *"We're so sorry. You must know that Andrés' medical follow-up was neglected during the last day. The doctor did it after Andrés' death, under pressure."*

Family member: (furious) *"How is that possible? Is that legal?"*

Nurse 2: *"We're here to help you find answers and justice."*

(Family members show distress. The nurses share their testimony about medical negligence and falsified reports.)

Nurse 1: *"We apologize for hiding the truth. We want the real story to be known."*

Nurse 2: *"We're willing to testify and support the pursuit of justice."*

Family member: (relieved) *"Thank you for your honesty and bravery. We'll fight for Andrés."*

(Family member exits the scene)

Doctor: (ashamed) *"I believe the truth will always prevail. But you've ruined my career."*

Nurse 1: *"Truth and ethics must guide our profession."*

Nurse 2: *"I think we've done the right thing."*

Comments from the trainer leading the process:

It took us quite a long time to decide which story we would use for this practice. Once the story was selected, it took a while to help the participants internalize their roles. Initially, people playing

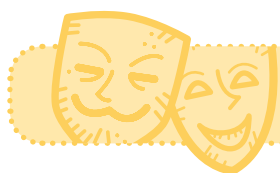
the Doctor's character tried to act in a way that seemed "correct" rather than how that person would truly behave.

Finally, we were able to resolve the story with the collaboration of the other participants, who weren't particularly active before.

Comments from an external Forum-Theatre expert after reading the scene:

I do not know the Canarian situation, but in Italy it is quite difficult for a nurse to act so bravely as the doctors have a lot of means to silence them. The nurse has to be really courageous. The solution is possible, but I suppose for few nurses. Therefore, as the Joker, I'd have investigated if the solution to the situation is, in fact, this easy. If the spectators said yes, I'd accept, but only after challenging them.

About the plot: the scene focuses strictly on the critical point, but it would be nice to have something before to showing the relationship among the three roles, the dynamics of power, etc. Doctors are educated in Italy to have a power relationship over the nurses, educators, social workers, etc., not a cooperative one. This element is important when explaining that the doctor here is not necessarily a bad person but was educated in this way to preserve the power and reputation of the profession. In Italy, there is an organisation of medical students that researched this issue in depth, analysing the "poisonous pedagogy" in which students are immersed.



+1 SCENE

The scene presented below was created based on the role cards which the reader can find in the IO3 document of the CENV project (PART II, Session 4). In the role cards, a situation was proposed from the different points of view of the two main characters. What is important is that in the role cards, a conflict was presented. One participant got one role card with one character's perspective, the other participants the other role cards with the other character's perspective. Their task was to act out the scene where the two characters meet and try to solve the conflict between each other. In Futura Gestiona, the situation presented in the role cards provided the inspiration and the help to work on it further as a Forum Theatre scene. We think it is interesting to show a scene which was not created based on the participants' personal stories but on a fictional scene. Sometimes, it can be more relevant and effective for a group to work on.

Comments from the trainers leading the process:

We worked on the story of Tania and Susanna, proposed for the first scene in Session 4 (Part II in the IO3 document). Given that we spent much time in the previous trial deciding the story to use and subsequently preparing it, the facilitators decided to use the story already worked on in Session 4, with the role cards of Susanna and Tania, as it was familiar to all participants and best suited everyone's work context (it's a situation that typically occurs in workplaces).

First, the already-known story of Susanna and Tania was re-read by all (using role cards from Session 4), and then we proceeded to introduce the new story.

After resolving their differences and clarifying the misunderstanding between them, Susanna and Tania continue to work together, although the relationship is not the same as before. They greet each other and talk occasionally, but there is a clear distance between them.

A few months later, Susanna faces inappropriate attention from her boss, Oliver. He insists on flirting with her, and she feels uncomfortable and fearful of rejecting him. One day, Oliver confronts her in his office, threatening to fire her if she doesn't agree to a date. After the encounter, Susanna shares everything with Tania, who disapproves of Oliver but lacks the courage to confront him.

When Oliver overhears them talking about him, Susanna decides to deal with the situation and express her discomfort.



SCENE – INITIAL

Oliver: (approaching Susanna with a smile) *"Hi, Susanna. Ready for another lunch?"*

Susanna: *"Oh, um... no, thank you."*

(Oliver insists, crossing boundaries and taking advantage of the situation.)

Oliver: (lightly touching Susanna's arm) *"Come on, don't be shy."*

Susanna: (trying to withdraw her arm) *"Seriously, I can't right now..."*

(One day, Oliver calls Susanna into his office and closes the door.)

Oliver: *"What the hell is going on, Susanna? Why are you avoiding me?"*

Susanna: (feeling scared) *"I don't know what you're talking about..."*

Oliver: *"I've been nothing but nice to you for weeks. I have kind words for you, I pay more attention to you than to the rest of your colleagues. I invite you to lunch and dinner, and you're never available."*

Susanna: *"I'm sorry, I don't know what to say."*

Oliver: *"I've been reviewing the company's accounts, and I think we might have to let someone go soon. Do you want to have dinner with me or not?"*

(Susanna leaves Oliver's office really shaken and sees Tania, whom she tells everything)

(Susanna and Tania talk in a corner of the office when Oliver surprises them)

Oliver: (forcing a smile) *"What are you whispering about over there?"*

Susanna: *"We were talking about you, Oliver. This needs to stop."*

Oliver: (aggressive) *"What are you complaining about, Susanna?"*

Susanna: *"Stop it, this is inappropriate."*

Oliver: (sarcastic) *"Oh, is it? And who are you to judge what's appropriate and what's not?"*

Tania: *"Oliver, I think you need to understand that this isn't right."*

Oliver: (shouting) *"Enough, both of you! You have no idea what it means to be a boss."*

(The argument becomes more tense as Susanna and Oliver confront each other)

Susanna: *"You have no right to treat us like this!"*

Oliver: *"Look who's talking about rights! If you don't like it, you can leave, Susanna."*

Tania: (nervous) *"Susanna, maybe we should calm down a bit..."*

(Finally, everyone leaves with their own frustrations and no resolution)



SCENE 1 – INTERVENTION PROPOSITION

Oliver: (approaching Susanna with a smile) *"Hi, Susanna. Ready for another lunch?"*

Susanna: *"Thank you for the invitation, Oliver, but I'd prefer to have lunch alone today."*

(Oliver insists, but Susanna maintains her stance)

Oliver: (gently touching Susanna's arm) *"Come on, don't be shy."*

Susanna: (politely pulling her arm away) *"I really appreciate your interest, Oliver, but I'm not interested."*

(Oliver calls Susanna into his office to talk)

Oliver: *"Susanna, I feel like we've been having some disagreements. Could we talk about it?"*

Susanna: (calmly) *"Of course, Oliver. I appreciate your willingness to clear things up."*

Oliver: (getting serious) *"What's going on between us? Why are you avoiding me?"*

Susanna: *"I'm sorry if I've made you feel that way; it wasn't my intention. I appreciate your interest in me, but I'm not interested in you."*

Oliver: *"Alright, I thought you were interested in me, which is why I treated you in a special way. From now on, I'll treat you like the rest of your colleagues."*

(Susanna leaves Oliver's office a bit concerned and sees Tania. She approaches to talk to her and explain what happened)

Tania: (concerned) *"Susanna, I'm sorry about that. We should address this."*

(Susanna and Tania talk in a corner of the office. Oliver exits his office and overhears them talking about what happened)

Oliver: *"What are you discussing here?"*

Susanna: *"We were discussing the situation between you and me, Oliver. I believe it's important for all of us."*

Tania: *"Yes, we need to find a solution that works for everyone."*

Oliver: *"I understand. I believe we actually resolved this a few minutes ago in my office. But if you have anything more to add, could you please tell me about it?"*

Susanna: *"Well, your behaviour has made me really uncomfortable over the past few weeks. We want a more professional and harmonious work environment."*

Tania: *"Yes, we're here to work together respectfully and professionally."*

Oliver: *"I appreciate you bringing this to my attention. It wasn't my intention to create tension. I'll consider your feelings, and believe me when I say this won't happen again."*

Susanna: *"Thank you for listening, Oliver. We hope we can work together to improve our dynamics in the office."*

Comments from the trainer leading the process:

This time, the practice flowed much better. Everything was faster. Everyone knew the characters, so we only had to introduce Oliver, whose intentions were easy to understand.

At the beginning, there was a bit of trivialization with the character of Oliver, but as other spectators assumed the role, it started to go better. There was a lot of participation from the audience, who were encouraged to swap roles or introduce new characters that sometimes enriched the story, although they also deviated from the goal of resolving the issue of workplace harassment.

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VIDEOS SHOWING TOOLS FROM THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED:

LISTED BY AUTHORS

◆ AUGUSTO BOAL Exercises

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4cZ8pa0v-Y
What is TO?
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxQ6SsfhiCw
Teatro-Fórum
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZhlpnSVRUg
Augusto Boal, Forum Theater, Harvard-2003 (Part 3/5)
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B0xx_mG29g&t=197s

◆ JULIAN BOAL Forum Theatre - Oppression in the Educational System

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecwFetYMy5Y
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLqMsdCH2w&t=492s
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFBwCRYxu4k

In Spanish

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh_Hr93lFQw&t=79s
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GMGsWn0hUs&t=100s
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Dk53FY6LAA&t=57s

In French

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OGyleNzqw0&t=3s
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSGm1BvkSDw&t=3s

In Portuguese

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZRrc7bMZ5w&t=3057s
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xx8JjOZaBA

HECTOR ARISTIZABAL **ImaginAction working with ex-combatants in Tiger's Bay**

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu9EAbolx24&t=218s
- + Hector on Forum Theater (Dutch)
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJzDXSjIX4g&list=PLqwi4Mz9loTnuVRW2Q_txHc8KWk7YKr0S

DAVID DIAMOND **Out of silence**

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=7V0-HDPKmPI&feature=youtu.be

JANA SANSKRITI

A Doll's House forum

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPwiIwgLMg8
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc8dmh3Fzsc&t=61s

BARBARA SANTOS

Aesthetics of Justice - KURINGA Festival Play 2018

- www.kuringa.de/en/productions-en/production-aesthetics-of-solidarity-en
Hotel Europa
- www.kuringa.de/en/productions-en/hotel-europa-barcelona-2018-en
Hotel Europa
- www.kuringa.de/en/productions-en/hotel-europa-lisbon-2016-en

BY TECHNIQUE

◆ Forum-Theatre

Forum theatre performance | Shannon Ivey and STATE of Reality

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcLcXeXJVDU

Katy Rubin di New York

- Theatre of the Oppressed NYC: Sneak Peak
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi1HfSiMxCU

An Example of Forum Theatre

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbYx01re-ec

Forum Theatre: How to Use it in Non-Formal Education?

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANtkDBd9UNI&t=10s

The Theatre of the Oppressed: Forum for social change

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTA1b4rITXI

Annexes

1.TEMPLATE FOR A FORUM-THEATRE SCRIPT

OPPRESSION

What is the key question to give to the audience? (concrete and not philosophical; action-based)
Can you describe in a few sentences the related oppression and the mechanisms at inter-personal and systemic level?

STRUCTURE

What is the best structure to explain this oppression (a single scene, more scenes forming a story, more scenes showing different aspects and environments, one story with flashbacks, with a narrator, with songs...)
How the macro context (the level not visible in the micro-interactions but affecting them) is shown in the play?
What are its main elements?

STYLE

What style can be useful to show the problem clearly? Realistic, symbolic, surrealistic, or maybe a mixture of several styles?

CHARACTERS

Who is the Protagonist (the oppressed, the one who wants to change reality)?
What is his/her will and counter-will?
Who are the main Antagonists?
What are their wills and counter-wills?
Are there any allies of one or the other?
What are their wills and counter-wills?
Are there other important roles?
What are their wills and counter-wills?

PROPS AND MUSIC

What kind of objects and costumes are essential?
What kind of music?

SUMMARY OF THE PLOT

A few lines to explain the essence of the play.

PLOT

Write the main action/dialogue/key sentences to be acted out and optionally comments about the emotion or action, the placement of music, and any notes for directing the play.

Merci!

A tous les participants et participantes des expériences pilotes, professionnels et personnes bénévoles volontaires et accompagnées. La réalisation de cet outil pédagogique et pratique n'aurait pas pu se concrétiser sans leur participation pleine et entière.

Thank you for your support!

To all the participants in the pilot projects, the professionals and volunteers who volunteered and were supported. The production of this educational and practical tool would not have been possible without their full involvement.

Dziękujemy za wsparcie!

Wszystkim uczestnikom projektów pilotażowych, profesjonalistom i wolontariuszom, którzy zgłosili się na ochotnika i otrzymali wsparcie. Stworzenie tego edukacyjnego i praktycznego narzędzia nie byłoby możliwe bez ich pełnego zaangażowania.

¡Gracias por su apoyo!

A todos los participantes en los proyectos piloto, a los profesionales y voluntarios que se ofrecieron voluntarios y recibieron apoyo. La elaboración de esta herramienta educativa y práctica no habría sido posible sin su plena implicación.

Grazie per il vostro supporto!

A tutti i partecipanti delle esperienze pilota, ai professionisti e volontari, a coloro che hanno dato e ricevuto supporto. La realizzazione di questo strumento pedagogico e pratico non sarebbe stata possibile senza la loro piena partecipazione.



Le Comptoir Des Colibris, France, www.lecomptoirdescolibris.fr

Futura Gestiona, Spain, www.grupofuturagestiona.com

Stowarzyszenie Praktyków Dramy STOP-KLATKA, Poland, www.stop-klatka.org.pl

La Xixa Teatre, Spain, www.laxixateatre.org

Giolli Cooperativa Sociale, Italy, www.giollicoop.it



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

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