



## Theater Tips for Youth Work Erasmus Training Course

**ACT NON FORMAL**

16 – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017, St. Andreasberg, Germany

*Dear Youth Worker,*

*"Act Non-Formal" project aimed at providing new innovative methods to international youth organisations that can be applied on a local level in their daily activities, especially in order to include young people from marginalised groups, refugees, youngsters with minority background, people with disabilities and other groups with fewer opportunities. It is connected with the goals of the Erasmus+, as it provides new innovative methods and skills for youth workers to include marginalised youth into the society and provides opportunities for them to develop skills. Furthermore, it brings young people from different cultures closer together, and it helps young people to express and reflect their opinion, gain self-confidence and take active part in the society. The methods that the youth workers will learn during this project will help them to work in their local communities to foster cultural diversity, understanding and implementation of common European values, such as tolerance and respect of human rights.*

*The purpose of these Tips is to gift You with all beautiful days that participants of the TC "Act non formal" spent in work and joy with the outstanding international family!*

*Since this TC was about theater methods that can be used in youth work, here we concentrate on main energizers and workshops that can be easily adapted to any topic, such as refugees, minorities, integration etc.*



*These Tips will not only refresh our memory, make us remember all that we did, but they will also inspire YOU to either continue in the direction you are heading to or maybe even give You totally **new impulses for Your youth work!***

*It was our pleasure to have all participants in tiny St.Andreasberg who made it a metropolis with their great spirit and all that they contributed with to the success of this TC!*

*We are also very thankful to our partners of this project:*

*Notte Euromediterranea del Dialogo*



*Hellenic Youth Participation*



*Silver Fox North East CIC*



*Youth For The Environment- Y4TE*



*Asociatia Monomyths*



*Walk Together Association*



*Noored Ühisõnna Heaks*



*Ayuntamiento de Villalbilla*



*We wish great wind of inspiration always blew under Your youth work wings!*

*Sincerely,*

*NaturKultur Team*

*Maria, Mohammed, Slobodan & Svenja*

## **Trainers of the “Act non formal”**

Firstly, we would like to present you two amazing people who lead the participants through the beautiful paths of theater:



*Weee areee Mariaaa aaand MoHHHammed*

**Mohammed Awwad** is a Palestinian/international theatre creator. His experience is multi-cultured and widely developed through his international work. He was born in 1976, received his 2 years theatre training in a joint program by Kulturskolan Theatre (Sweden) and Ashtar Theatre (Palestine). In 2008, He achieved his MA in Drama and Theatre Education (DiE) from The University of Warwick (UK), in addition to enrolling in many courses in arts. He is a winner of KRSF scholarship award for 2007 placed in London. Awwad Performed, wrote, directed, and co-directed more than 30 plays, in Palestine, Arab world, Europe, and Asia. In UK, he theatrically coached and trained with Fishing Rod Experience (FRE) Organization. Mohammed co-founded three theatre companies in Palestine; Inad, Al-Harah and Diyar Theater where one of the plays he co-directed -Key and Life- won Best Play at the Philadelphia Amman Festival 2006. His latest plays' directing are Portraits of Fear, Destination Unknown and Diaries through the wall (Palestine).

Mohammed's talent and experience expands also in theater composition and improvisation, he was exposed to many modern techniques workshops. Mohammed Awwad is now a freelance artist and involved in developing number of local and international artistic projects related to cultures, genders and ethnicities.



**Maria Diaz Durillo** discovered theater and social change almost at the same time, when she was just a teenager, and all her professional career has been about integrate both of them in only one practice. A turning point for this was her participation in the 2nd Latin American Theater of the Oppressed Encounter in Guatemala in 2011. Since then she counts herself as one of the many practitioner of this kind of theater. In her particular training practice she included all her experience as acting teacher, communication officer, activist, non formal trainer, community youth worker and expat in some international cooperation processes. During the last years she implemented her trainings into E+ context with youngsters, both local and internationally. She works into the EVS training cycle for the Spanish NA and she is an EVS coordinator and mentor and also facilitates trainings and community processes as coordinator and trainer for the NGO where she works ([proyektokieu.org](http://proyektokieu.org)) and also for other organizations in Europe and the rest of the world. In this contexts she works with youngsters with fewer opportunities for economic, cultural or social reasons. She wrote a book address to formal educators to help them to include this non-formal theater and play techniques in their classroom. This work was included into a two year project to prevent violence in schools, named "Jugar y Actuar, nuestras armas para la paz" (Theater and Play our weapons for peace). In 2015 the E-Motive EU program awarded this work as a good practice in social change.



## **Ready to act non-formal?**

***Do not worry, everybody is an actor!***

Theater in XXI centuries is changed from only professionals to both professionals and non-professionals.

Theater is both art and tool for social transformation! Understanding and being aware of yourself, your emotions and body, as well as the power of imagination helps us in dealing with problems that we face every day in a way of discovering new and different perspectives for solutions!

Before any exercise, very important things are **safety measures!**

- ✓ Comfortable clothes
- ✓ No shoes
- ✓ Caring Frame (both physical and emotional)
- ✓ Freedom and comfort zone

***So, finally here are the **Tips!** In order to drive you through the whole story of “Act non formal”, we decided to put them in chronological order! We also made a selection of those energizers/workshops that we believed can be used in your youth work!***

After the tips, we attached workshops created by participants during the training, since it was one of the tasks with the greatest outcomes. Also, we share the instructions and photos for the workshop **ARRIVAL**, since it is a great tool for understanding and compassionating with the situation of migrants!

Have fun! 😊

## **Energizers:**

### **Pantomime**

Just copy what I do with my body and face (add giggles and just simple intro to being silly, random and spontaneous without judging).

### **Who are you?**

Draw your name on the air with different parts of your body while hearing music.

### **Shake a hand**

Group walk in the space. Get the feeling of the space and the people around. Looking at each other while walking. Each one your eyes meet, you just shake their hand and move on. Each one your eyes meet, you wink to and move on. Each one your eyes meet, you touch elbows and move on. Each one your eyes meet, you hug, you pull a funny face, you shout in fear and faint, you say a silly word, you say your name, you say your name backwards... any other suggestions.

### **Cooperative chairs**

30'seconds to bring chairs (with count down)

Traditional game where participants have to sit and gradually there is less chairs. In this version nobody is eliminated and the whole group has the responsibility to be on the chairs all together. Remember the Care Frame.

30" to return the chairs and come back into a circle



*Some chair chaos over here*



### **The Spider Web**

Moving in space, filling it with our bodies, filling the gaps in space. Filling the space horizontally and vertically using body parts. Trying to connect the whole space by connecting all together like a huge spiderweb. Another spider web and another spiderweb...etc.

### **Doing opposite – Demechanisation**

The young actors are to react with the opposite of the order given to them. (Hug VS reject- shout VS whisper, Jump VS touch floor etc.)

### **What are you doing Mr/Mrs**

Circle. 2 MCs step in the middle, MC1 starts a simple Job he/she likes to do, an activity that he/she pantomime (washing dishes). MC2 comes and asks (Mr. Mohammed...what are you doing?) MC1 answers I am taking a shower. Immediately MC2 starts pantomiming taking a shower. The next one will ask : what are you doing, the answer: I am playing golf...etc etc.

### **The still image concepts**

Walking in space, stop, walk, stop, walk, freeze, etc. Next time freeze like, tree, chair, lamb, fork, etc. Next time you hear (hug): you hug the closest person to you. Walk, Hug, walk Hug. Next time you hear (hug 3), you hug in groups of three. Hug 4, hug 7, hug 13....etc. Hug 4...together you will build up as one body, an object of our choice: dishwasher. Fridge. plane...and finally a crazy machine of your choice. A machine that was nevercreated before. A machine that maybe can solve a problem of rain, or that transform smoke into balloons, or giving people eternal life...any machine....

### **This is an apple- Group focus & Harmony**

In circle, MC offers an imaginary apple to the next pax.

MC: This is an apple Pax: a what?

MC: an apple. Pax: ok thank you.

Pax delivers the same dialogue to the person next...etc.

MC offers another object

MC: This is a camera Pax: a what?

MC: a camera. Pax: ok thank you.

Pax delivers the same dialogue to the person next...etc.

Multiple dialogues keep being added, going around the circle with as much objects as possible.



## Workshops:

### **1. THEATER OF THE OPRESSED ARSENAL**

**Check: "Games for Actors and non Actors" by Augusto Boal**

#### **Concepts from Theater of the Oppressed (TO):**

- ✓ Theater of the oppressed belongs to the oppressed cause it helps the oppressed to explore their reality and take responsibility in changing it.
- ✓ Sometimes we have difficulties to understand us like oppressed and tend to explore the reality of other people that we consider oppressed (or much more oppressed than us). That's not at all the aim of this kind of theater. When working with groups with TO, we need to consider this difficulty as part of the process.
- ✓ Theater of the oppressed is based in a particular ideology and ethics: it aims to transform society into a more happy and solidarity one. TO makes its ideology explicit from the beginning, this does not mean that the rest of the theater does not have any ideology: all human manifestation has a behind ideology. Nothing is neutral and TO helps to understand this too.
- ✓ TO helps to balance two key words into it: freedom and solidarity. That's why it works towards two different directions: personal and collective. Individual and personal learning is encouraged as well as having the group as a reference and a "collective back". Theater is a collective-individual art and that's why it is so useful for social transformation where individual and collective changes are also needed.

#### **De-mechanization**

- ✓ In our modern societies we use our bodies mainly for production and reproduction. Theater and playing open a new perspective from where to develop ourselves, our bodies and emotions. Its connected with the idea from TO of re-humanize humans and together create a less mechanical and more human society to live in.

#### **Theater of the oppressed arsenal**

- ✓ Augusto Boal structures the actor's regular training into the TO system. In fact the exercises and games collected in his books are part of any learning theater curriculum. What makes the difference is the intention that is behind the system that he created.



*Participants in action*

**Lazarillos - blinded and guides:** participants work in pairs; one person's eyes are covered and he/she lets the other person guide him/her through the house; game of trust and building connection between people)

### **Sculptures**

1. work on sculptures by couples
2. work on sculptures by couples and making connections perfect human / the perfect man / the perfect women
3. working on the whole group on the museum of the evolution; rainforest forest in fire, revolution. DNA chain

### **Machines (from Augusto Boal)**

- ✓ how to make it
- ✓ huggy 2 – 3 to have 3-4 groups
- ✓ create and disassemble the machines

### **Debriefing: “the arsenal of the TO and what does it mean into the TO system”**

- ✓ FEELING WHAT WE TOUCH
- ✓ LISTENING TO WHAT WE HEAR
- ✓ DYNAMISING SEVERAL SENSES
- ✓ SEEING WHAT WE LOOK AT
- ✓ THE MEMORY OF THE SENSES
- ✓ First step in the TO system is put us humans in contact with our own humanity to



be able to fulfill the ultimate goal of this kind of theater which is re-humanize society and therefore contribute to create a more human and fair world.

## ***2.Improvisation and Creative Writing:***

- ✓ It is crucial is to create our own stories: it helps us to understand better ourselves and our reality.
- ✓ The ability to tell stories is needed to be able to shape (dream, imagine, create) “the new”.
- ✓ Improvisation helps your brain, body and expression to expand beyond limits you could even imagine.
- ✓ Like piano is the piano player instrument; body, voice and imagination are the instruments of the improviser (his/her own and the ones of his/her colleagues on stage). It takes time and effort to understand and make this instruments play in an artistic way.

### ***IMPROVISATION: impro cafe***

#### **Scene division**

1. Tongue touch nose (banana), tongue touch ear (Cow), tongue touch floor (springies)-
2. Answer silly questions with touch nose- practice to delete self judgments.

Questions:

- Tell us what did you do this morning in one minute?
  - Explain do you wash your underwear?
  - How can you become a Zombie?
  - What do you do to annoy your partner?
  - How do you do yoga in the bathroom?
  - Tell us how to make lemonade while giving birth?
  - Can you explain how to hunt elephants in the supermarket?
  - If you wake up one day, a gay, what is the first thing you will do?
  - How do you take selfies, when you don't have arms?
  - How do you tell your fish a bedtime story?
  - How did your grandfather propose your grandmother?
3. The 3 lines dialogue- very short scenes to enhance dialogue.
  4. No rules- 3 minute scenes to encourage random skills.
  5. Yes, No, Die- 3 minute scenes to encourage collective improv.
  6. Two headed expert- 3 minutes scenes to encourage dual improv.
  7. The Alphabet scene- 3 minute scenes to enhance focus on the goals.
  8. Pillars- 3 minutes scenes to enhance interaction.
  9. New choice- 3 minutes scenes to encourage spontaneity.



## **Creative Writing**

### **Collective creation**

- ✓ In two groups, one group wishes to attract the attention of our colleagues. (while they draw automatically on a piece of paper)
- ✓ Together we “read” what has been drawn (some people write all these words in the same sheet of paper):
  - weather phenomena
  - animals
  - emotions
  - coordinator reads all words out loud and each person writes a list with some of the words (the ones that stick in the brain)
- ✓ Individually we write a story or poem with all these words (around 15-20)
- ✓ We share the stories/poems (some of them)

### **Collection of creative writings**

1. This is an apple- Practice to warm up brain and encourage focus.
2. Fortunately/unfortunately- practice to encourage change of thoughts.
3. One sentence at a time - Practice for collective thought creativity.
4. Surprise yourself- Practice to enhance individual creativity.

Answer these questions:

- a. Can I have a non-geographical location?
- b. Please give me an occupation, a hobby?
- c. Can I have a room in a building?
- d. Can I have a title for a book/a song?
- e. Please give me an emotion?
- f. A genre of film/literature/theatre/song?
- g. Relationship between 2 people?
- h. An item you would find in the kitchen/garage/attic?
- i. Problem that needs to be solved?
- j. An important moment in history?
- k. An era? A year?
- l. A mode of transportation?
- m. A foreign country? (See Gibberish)
- n. An animal? (See animalistics)
- o. If you want to be a little more original try things like
- p. What did you want to be when you grew up?
- q. What is this? (Open your hands or arms as if you hold something)
- r. Give me a place where you have been lost
- s. Why was my spouse limping this morning?
- t. Give me a place you would not want to be alone at night



- u. What would be a nasty/annoying habit?*
- v. Give me a place where you would likely meet unusual people?*
- w. What would you never want to hear from your 4 year old daughter?*
- x. Can I have a state of mind?*
- y. What was the best birthday present you ever got?*

### **Integrated Arts by PETA Theater**

- ✓ We make groups of 4-5 participants
- ✓ Working in groups, each person, chooses 3 personal objects that complete the sentences: "I come from...", "I am..." and "I dream of..."
- ✓ Share the meaning of this objects with my working group
- ✓ Together, with all the group objects we create a collective art installation
- ✓ Collective writing, together now we complete the sentences: "We come from...; We are... ; We dream of... ; We are going to..."
- ✓ We give life to our creative writing

### **3.HOW TO PREPARE YOUR OWN WORKSHOP?**

We have the afternoon to prepare a session to share with the rest of the participants along next day.

10 different groups

You can design a session around 20 minutes or a full session of 2h and then decide which exercises to share with the group. The "delivered" workshop will be only 20 minutes, what we call a "**workshop seed**" of something each group would like to explore and further develop once back home.

Each group have to decide which areas to explore (from all the contents worked so far) accordingly with their own area of interest:

- ✓ Techniques include (theatre training, Theater of the oppressed exercises, Forum Theatre, Improv. creative writing...etc)
- ✓ Trainers provide actors with written practices prepared in advance.
- ✓ Actors are free to design their own activities given the previous experiences.
- ✓ Trainers will assist working groups along the process.

From each group we ask to deliver a "plan sheet" before dinner so we can plan the day of tomorrow also with some internal and logical "flow".



*Theater workshops involve hugging – as a way of connecting and getting awareness of collective action importance*

#### 4. INTEGRATION MOMENT

**“Q&A, ideas, references, observations, challenges that might occur”**

Here we've put together some of the ideas and concepts that were circulating among participants in this particular learning process: “Act Non Formal Training Course”. Therefore, the following ideas and reflections make sense considering them attached to the learning process that we all created together. Furthermore, the following sentences do not aim to be general or universal statements (applicable to any learning process) but just a partial register of the learning outcomes that we all did together along this particular Training Course.

##### **Approach and General Ideas:**

✓ **Experiential approach.** Theater is experience and “how are you going to offer this kind of experience to anybody if you never lived it fully beforehand”. During most part of the training until now participants have been just this: participants. Only at the very end (day 6, 7 and 8) they had the time to start connecting the lived experience with their own professional practice back home.

Along the process the group has often demand more “information and guidance” before or during the experience. But being our approach experiential, we (coordinators) have



hold the group uncertainty to make participants have the full experience and later on, at the very end, discuss about it. At that moment we have included some analysis elements that have helped each participant to make his/her own learning outcomes in connection with their own particular practice.

- ✓ **Process vs Result.** We consciously focused in the PROCESS instead that in the RESULT. That's another key element in social theater and drama: we do not necessary look for a performative result or show. The result we aim for is the process that each one of the participants make along the experience: his/her own learning experience and personal transformation. Any kind of difficulty observed under the “learning process perspective” is right: everything helps to learn.
- ✓ **Care Frame.** In theater all is possible, we can experience all kind of life situations, movements, relations, emotions, adventures... that's the trans-formative power of theater. There is only one limit to all this: nobody can be hurt, nothing can be broken. Even in the most violent scenes we do take care to each other. When somebody or something is damaged then, theater ends.
- ✓ **Never open what can not be contained.** How far you'd like to go with an exercise as coordinator is up to you... but keep in mind the previous rule applies for you the first (as group responsible). Be aware that, as group coordinator, you are working with sensible material and the coordinator role holds a lot of power and responsibility. At any critical moment, ask yourself: Am I pushing this group (person) to a place in where they do not want to be, in where something that I cannot contain will be open? Keep it in mind.
- ✓ **Demand and Need:** how to read the group. Coming into a new group to learn new things awakens some anxieties (healthy ones) and is the group coordinators task to observe them and help the group to process them appropriately. These anxieties are connected with what the group demands from the coordination and what they really need. What the groups openly demands (in our process together was name games) is not all the time what it needs. Coordinators have to read the need of the group out of its explicit demands. Following our group example (name games) we identified the real need behind it like the need of knowing each other and get some common ground. Knowing this, we were working actively in this need, generating the spaces for the people to meet and connect to each other. At the same time, to keep the frustration in a appropriated level, we included some games with names into the previously foreseen tasks without modifying what was important into our program.

## **5.EVALUATION and CLOSURE MOMENTS**

### **“Personal and collective; forms; future steps”**

#### **Evaluation Walk:**

- ✓ Individually we walk around and answer some of the questions that will be placed around the house to help each one to evaluate the whole process.
  
- ✓ This will be the questions:
  - What was a good experience for you during this training?
  - What learning/ tool / achievement from this training can be useful for your activities back at your organization?
  - Who did support your learning during this Training Course?
  - Who will benefit from your learning here? When?
  - Which persons from this training will you meet in the future? Why?
  - What did you enjoy learning during this training course?
  - What's stopping you to be the professional you want to be?
  - When will be the next time that you will think about your learning aims?
  - What did you learn that you expected to learn before coming?
  - What did you learn that you didn't expect to learn?
  - What did you expect to learn that you didn't?
  - What else would you like to learn about Theater, Social Change and Youth Work?
  - Take off your shoes and walk.
  - Hug me
  - Shout
  - What is your dream to transform the world?
  - Lay down and watch the sky
  - How are you?
  - What do you need to keep growing?
  - What will you do related to your learning process after this training?
  - Which intelligences are you good at? Musical, existential, interpersonal, visual-espacial, logical, naturalistic, linguistic, kinesthetic, intra-personal...
  - Sit somewhere, close your eyes, and be in silence for 2 minutes...
  - Do you learn better alone or in group?
  - Take a selfie with a learning commitment written down in your learning notebook.
  - What did you learn during these days in Germany?
  - What did you learn the last month in your country before coming to Germany?



- How do you plan to know more about theater and social change?

### **CLOSURE MOMENT**

**“We close this space to make other space to be born. We process together goodbye and coming back home emotions”**

#### **Bees and pollen:**

- ✓ each person draws a flower and writes her/his name
- ✓ when the draw is finish, place it in a place in the room
- ✓ once we have finished with our own flowers we fly around the flowers of the others leaving our own ideas, drawings, messages into them... like insects with pollen, we move seeds around us and, by doing so, we allow further life and ideas.

All together closure ritual breathings 😊



## **REFERENCES:**

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- ✓ Theatre of the Oppressed (London: Pluto Press, 1979)
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- ✓ The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy. (London: Routledge, 1995)

### **PETA Theater main published works:**

- ✓ PETA Theater Workshop Manual Series 1 – BITAW, Basic Integrated Theater Arts Workshop (Quezon City, 1989)

### **María Díaz and Nicolas Ost:**

- ✓ Jugar y Actuar, nuestras armas para la paz. (Madrid: InteRed 2012)
- ✓ (only in Spanish)

### **Videos:**

- ✓ Augusto Boal e o Teatro do Oprimido, Zelito Viana (Brasil, 2011)
- ✓ Tras las huellas de Augusto (2015).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVslx8OmE3k>
- ✓ **E-Motive España-Philippines (2015):** <https://vimeo.com/145374837>