ERASMUS +, KA1, YOUTH

LET'S TALK, HOW WE TALK ABOUT GENDER

training course

10-17.05.2019, ZAKOPANE, POLAND

BROCHURE

About the project:

This publication summarises the background and the outcomes of the project "Let's talk, how we talk about Gender". The project consisted of a training course for youth workers, educators, teachers and trainers implemented in May 2019 in Zakopane, Poland and follow up phase and was designed as an answer for missing debates and regular talks between the various group on the topics of gender equality, gender-based discrimination and violence. The training became the space to explore, discuss and create using applied drama techniques and mainly Forum Theatre elements. Together with 26 participants, including trainers, we were working on case studies from our countries, media releases and much more.

Partners of the project:

Fundacja Inicjatyw Twórczych I Społeczno-Edukacyjnych Kurdybanek,
Poland – coordinator of the project
Asociatia 'Tine de Noi', Romania
Association for Educational Development EKVALIS, North Macedonia
Bilgi ve Beceri Dernegi, Turkey
Cubo d'Ideias – Associação Criativa, Portugal
Greek Youth Mobility – GYM, Greece
Efektas Group, Lithuania
SDRUZHENIE WALK TOGETHER, Bulgaria

Trainers:

Wioletta Szuba

Educator, art therapist, certified trainer of applied drama, she runs theatrical and drama workshops for youth and children, vocational training and development workshops for adults (focusing on woman and parents). She is an author of the program "With the tale to the world of emotions", where she is using original tales scenarios to speak with children about emotions, values and shape attitudes.

http://www.teatrzaangazowany.pl/ludzie-teatru/wioletta-szuba (Kurdybanek https://www.facebook.com/fundacjakurdybanek/)

Michał Maciejak

The graduate of Socio-Cultural Animation studies certified applied drama trainer, sexual educator and the actor of forum theatre plays ("The stage for the tough guy"- project about cultural patterns of masculinity, their impact on discrimination and violence because of gender). He facilitates the workshops for children and youth in the field of prevention of risky behaviours, the member of the violence combating network in the frame of project "Woman and men, boys and girls TOGETHER against gender stereotypes."

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FORUM THEATRE

Forum Theater is a drama method derived from the Theater of the Oppressed, created by the Brazilian director Augusto Boal. The key values of this method are based on the democracy of the entire theatrical and drama process, in which many actors take part in the 'game', becoming active creators of their own fate, able to question the existing order and act for change. Forum Theater allows expressing disagreement with injustice in an expressive and symbolic way. It is a theatrical method that aims to create a space for dialogue on topics related to the oppressive situation and to look for solutions to get out of these situations and understand the mechanisms behind them.

Forum Theatre is, on the one hand, an activity that empowers discriminated groups through a common feeling of injustice and disagreement with it, and on the other hand, by acting out improvised oppressive situations, it becomes a kind of general attempt at social change.

Forum Theater is **a theater of questions**, not answers. Everyone must answer the question themselves. On the one hand, therefore, the idea of TF is to reflect and research on different topics, but on the other hand, by showing the possibility of change and finding the common ground concerning the subjects it is also about empowerment.

VOCABULARY

Oppression

it starts when the dialogue turns into a monologue. It may be caused by difficult to solve political or social problem that affects a person, a 'no way out' situation. The oppressor can be a single person or a system. Oppression is the axis of the TF performance. Oppression in the spectacle cannot be decisive, and it must be possible for the target groups to cope with it.

Protagonist

the main character of the Forum Theater spectacle. A person who is in a situation of oppression. He tries to overcome it, but he also feels helpless, stuck, in a dead-end. It is the protagonist with whom the spect-actors identify and through their involvement in his situation, look for solutions, intervene and try to change the way he acts. Taking this role they experience life and reality 'as if' thereby strengthening themselves and the protagonist.

It is important for Forum Theatre to see that the change of reality begins with a change of own thinking and acting. And it does not give an answer.

Antagonist

oppressor. A person who puts pressure on a protagonist 'pushes him against the wall'. The antagonist can be a figure of a personified system. It is worth to follow the principle that the antagonist is less sympathetic than the protagonist.

Sometimes the attempts appear to justify the antagonist - which opposes the idea of Forum Theater.

Spect-actors

the audience of the Forum Theatre session, involved in the process of generating solutions to the protagonist's situation. This involvement is possible due to the fact that the spectacle is dedicated to a homogeneous group by which the presented problem is identified. This condition makes the audience speak. In order for the audience to transform into spect-actors, it is necessary to break the barrier: stage – audience. That is why Boal emphasises the importance of establishing contact with the audience through various exercises, establishing theatrical community and introducing Joker – a person who builds a safe atmosphere.

Intervention

a situation in which, during the second performance, the spect-actor can stop the action at any time, saying "stop" and try to solve the situation of the protagonist in a different way, give him a different behaviour/resolution. Thus, it expands the spectrum of possibilities for action, empowering the protagonist, the audience who identify with the protagonist and themselves.

Forum session

the whole event, starting with introducing the audience to the subject, presenting actors, breaking the barrier: stage – audience, playing the performance twice, interventions, summary, the role of the Joker.

Dynamization

a category that replaces catharsis in Forum Theatre. It is a concept introduced by Augusto Boal, which consists of the active involvement of the spectator in the activities taking place on stage and thus transferring them further into real life.

Crossing one's own boundaries in intervention, in thinking, contributes to attempting this transgression in reality. The viewer leaves the theatre with a desire to change the harmful social situation.

Joker

the person who runs the entire Forum session, asks questions. He introduces spectators to the subject, manages interventions; he is the link between the actor, the audience and the intervening person. He assists, but does not affect solutions; he is impartial. One of the most important things that the Joker is responsible for is always referring to what has been said, and not to his own interpretations. He formulates statements in the form of questions; he does not decide on anything.

Spect-actors

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FURTHER READING:

Games for Actors and Non-Actors, Augusto Boal Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal

SCENARIOS

Scenario 1

Authors: Fidan, Cevdet, Bea, Ana, Kristina

Lavand

15-year-old guy who doesn't want to hear: "no". He acts cool, he is messing with girls, and he is really aggressive. He thinks no one can stop him.

Sofia

protagonist – is a 13-year-old girl in elementary school, she really likes art lessons, and she is also a member of the volleyball team. She dreams about becoming an artist and having an exhibition of her own in a gallery. She lives with her mom and dad, and she has never thought about having a family of her own because she thinks she is too young for that. She is now very confused about her orientation, and she thinks she might like girls instead of boys, also she is afraid of telling thins because she thinks anyone will understand her. She sees herself as a good person because she tries to help her parents and friends, and she studies to have good grades. She is a happy girl.

Iris

the passive actor. She is quiet, but she worries about her friend, and she tries to understand what is going on. On the other hand, she is also too scared to do something to save her friend.

Helland

oppressor 1. She is a 14-year-old student in elementary school who is outgoing and wants to be accepted by her friends. She does not have many beliefs because of her age, but she loves fashion. Helland does not believe that she is a bad person, but she is affected easily by other people.

Laura

oppressor 2 – 13-year-old girl, who tries to be cool and she doesn't have any future plans. She is just having fun, tries being with friends. She is friend of Sofia. And she doesn't want to understand that she might be lesbian.

Part 1

The girls are talking in the schoolyard about their weekend

Sofia: Guys, what did you do this weekend?

Iris: I finally met that guy, he was very handsome.

Helland: I went to shopping.

Laura: Oh, nothing special, I was studying, and what did you do?

Sofia: I was home studying for an exam, actually I had fight with my parents .. (shyly)

Helland: About what?

Sofia: I better not tell, I don't feel like.

Iris: We are friends, you can share everything with us.

Sofia: I am still confused about myself, about my orientation, not sure yet. Don't take it seriously.

Laura: C'mon, are you still thinking about it?

Helland: Oh you don't even try with boys, how do you know? It is nice we all tried it!

Sofia: Meh, I don't know, never mind.

Part 2

Lavandovski comes and asks Sofia to go out with him.

L: Hey!

Girls: Hi!

Background sound girls are confused about who is he..

L: What's up?

Sofia: I am Fineeeeeee. (annoyed)

L: Still didn't change your mind about going out with me?

Sofia: No, I told you couple times that I don't wanna go.

L: Why?

Sofia: Because I don't want I told you!

L: Cannot be!!! (annoyed) Fine!

[Leaves angrily]

Laura: Who is he?

Helland: I have never seen him around.

Sofia: Oh, he is texting me from a long time and annoying.

Girls: Why won't you go out with him?

Sofia: Because I don't want?

Girls: Maybe it is time for your stupid thoughts about being lesbian to go?!

Laura: You can try with boys, it is your opportunity!

[Bell rings]

Part 3

[Gives backpack, informs that gonna leave for toilets]

[Near toilet Lavanski grabs Sofia's arm and Sofia's struggle]

[Sounds from toilet, violence, raping]

Iris: What's going on there, I am worried?

Helland: Girl, give them some space.

Laura: Everything gonna be fine, nothing can happen, worse case she will try.

Iris: It takes too long, let's go and check on them.

Laura: Don't worry, it is okay.

Part 4

[L: leaves the toilet]

L: She said no near you, but she did it, good girl ha?

1 minute later

[Sofia leaves the toilet comes to the room, grab her stuff and shyly trying to leave]

[Girls are trying to understand what's going on]

Iris: Are you okay? What happened? Is It true?

Helland: OMG, will you have infection now?

Laura: Did you like it at least? You're not virgin anymore.

Iris: STOP IT! Are you okay?!

[SHE LEAVES]

[THE END].....

COMMENT

The problem presented in these few scenes concerns a young girl, a teenager, who tries to define her sexual orientation, feels alone in this topic, there is not much to talk about, at home she does not find understanding, her friends – peers are sceptical about it, urging the main character to 'test' her sexual orientation by 'trying with a man.' They trivialise the topic, which means that Laura also has no support among her friends.

The conflict outlined in this scenario has two vectors: conflict and Laura's internal considerations, who asks herself: who am I? And the second conflict, between Laura

and her friends, which is their lack of understanding, disapproval of the protagonist's dilemmas, and finally in persuading her to deny her real needs, are the figure of the oppressor. With their behaviour, lack of tenderness, not giving support, ignoring the signals that something bad is happening, they exert invisible pressure on the main character, suggesting what she should do and trivialising her life dilemmas.

Tips and recommendations:

At the stage of creating the script, for me, it is worth thinking about where to give space to intervene by spect-actores. In my opinion, in the scenario, the characters of Laura's friends (oppressor figure) could be more personalised, so that interventions of protagonist (Laura) could present more possibilities of behaviour in relation to different types of pressure applied by the oppressor. In the last scene, Laura goes backstage leaving her friends (oppressor) on the stage, leaving the viewer with various guesses: whether she came home and cooled down, did something bad, or is she broken now.

When it comes to the readability of the Forum performance, I think it is worth paying attention to the difficult situation of the protagonist, his 'no way out' situation. This can cause greater empathy among spectators and a desire to engage in showing proposals and opportunities for change. In this case, the main character could be left alone in the final scene, without anyone. Her loneliness, lack of acceptance and lack of knowledge as to what to do with each other would be more pronounced.

Wioletta Szuba

Scenario 2

Authors: Lina, Ines, Marius, Erhan

- An evening at the weekend in Alex's and his daughter Joana's House
- Rose is in the shower
- Alex' father of Joane is watching TV. He is 55 years old, retired Policeman. His wife left the house after a long-lasting violence

Doorbell rings. Alex is going to open the door.

Three friends come to invite Joana to go out.

Father is very kind, he invites friends to come in.

They sit in the couch.

Father: Do you want to drink vodka?

Friend Rose: No, thank you. Maybe just water.

Friend Paul: Yes.

Friend David: Yes, please.

Father brings three glasses of vodka and a glass of water. Paul, David and Alex drink.

Father: What's the reason for coming here?

David: We came here to take Joana out, and we will meet our friends at disco.

Rose: Joana is a great friend, and she is very good at work. She deserves to have a break.

Father: Yes, for sure, I know my daughter. I love her very much. She is my an Angel, my treasure.

Paul: She is a very sensitive friend.

At this time Joana comes, she sees her friends are hugging, smiling.

Rose: Joana, we came here to take you out for a meeting with our friends at the disco.

Joana: I will take my coat, then we can go out.

(Joana is taking her jewellery on)

Father: You are not allowed to go out tonight.

Joana: No, I will go.

Father: (In higher voice) No, no you can not go. This is my house you should listen to me.

Joana: No, it's summertime, I will go. (She turns to her friends) Oh, our bus will be in 5 minutes, you can go now. I will come in two minutes; just I will comb my hair.

(Friends are leaving the house.)

Rose: Have you seen that? That was really bad. Maybe she is in danger.

Paul: Ohhh! What's he doing? That's not good.

David: He is her father. He has the right to act like this. There is no problem, I think.

Rose: But she is a grown-up woman. She earns her own money, and she could make her own decisions.

(The Friends Leave The House)

Joana is taking her things to go out. She is going out of the house, but she saw that she is without her telephone.

Joana comes back for her telephone.

She found her telephone, but at the same time fathers came back and he saw that Joana is still going out.

Father: Where have you been?

Joana: I forgot my telephone and came back to take it. I am leaving...

Father: NO!

Father beats Joana...

COMMENT

The scenario presents a situation of family oppression in which a daughter, an adult woman, is subject to oppression on the part of the father, an alcoholic, which resounds in the scene when she wants to go to a disco with her friends, and the father opposes it. The situation of oppression and building tension is very clearly marked here, because the father in his first words says that the daughter is his treasure, outlines the kind of bond that connects him with his daughter, in who he does not see an adult woman but a little girl, over who he may have power. The situation of oppression is, therefore clearly marked, the antagonist is strong and reliable.

Tips and recommendations

What I would pay attention to is the personality of the main character, who in the first scene behaves as if going out with friends was not associated with any problem on the part of the father. For me, the behaviour of the antagonist indicates that the violence that occurs in the scene is constantly happening at home. I think that an additional scene showing the basis of the abusive relationship between the daughter and father could bring more tension and would allow a better understanding of the protagonist, her fear and hesitation. In my opinion, this character would then be more credible, and the viewer could, through compassion, identify with her more and enter into interests more easily, wanting to help her.

Wioletta Szuba

Scenario 3

Authors: Leo, Patrícia, Sotiris, Ava and Mihaela.

Characters:

Carla She is a teacher at about 45 years old, and has a new girlfriend Rachel.
She is being abused by Rachel.

Rachel She is a lawyer at about 40 years, she is rather a tough woman, and she abuses Carla.

Corina She is also a teacher and a friend of Carla, Anna and David.

Anna She is a colleague and friend of Corina, and she enters a relationship with Carla.

David He is a policeman and a friend of Corina.

I. Act: The meeting

Carla and Rachel are going for a walk in the park, and they meet Corina and her friend Anna. meeting is not planned. Carla and Rachel wear sunglasses.

Corina noticed Carla: Oh, hi, how are you?

Carla: I am fine and you?

Corina: Fine.

Carla: I want to present to you my new girlfriend, Rachel.

Rachel: Nice to meet you, Corina.

Corina: Nice to meet you too. Let me introduce my colleague, Anna. Anna, Carla and Rachel.

Till they are talking, they are interrupted by David, the policeman. David introduces himself to the others. He talks about his job

Carla says: It is good to have a friend, who is a policeman.

Carla invites everyone for dinner tomorrow at 8. Anna noticed the beautiful dress of Carla.

II. Act: At home at 8 p.m.

Carla and Rachel have some unpleasant talk about the invitation.

The doorbell rings.

Carla goes and opens the door.

Anna, Corina and David notice that Carla has a black eye and they asked her about what happened.

Carla: I am o.k. I fell down in the kitchen.

Rachel (is approaching her and says): Oh, yes Carla had very unpleasant accident. She fell down on the bath floor because it was slippery.

The others are confused and asking them whether to come or not.

Rachel and Carla insist on the invitation and say in a voice: Yes, of course, please come and have a drink.

Anna, Corina and David enter the dining room; they sit and start talking. Carla and Rachel go to the kitchen.

Rachel: Where is the coffee?

Carla: Here it is...

Rachel: I am asking you, where is the coffee. I can't see any.

Carla: Here it is, please let me stay to find it.

Rachel: You ask me to let you stay, so where is the coffee?

While they are arguing, the guests one by one start to leave out.

Corina, David and Anna say: We are leaving, we have to wake up early tomorrow, we have work. Maybe it is better to leave now.

Rachel says: Why you have already been here, please stay.

And then they continue the quarrel between them.

Carla: We finish, that's the end.

Rachel replies: What are you saying, you leave me...

Leave me then, go!

...and after that she tries to beat Carla, and they are of the scene.

III. Act: The Final.

Two years later, Carla and Anna enter a relationship. Then some things have changed. In the middle of the space, Anna is lying down on the floor, and Carla is sticking her with a knife. When Anna dies, Carla begins to cry.

So, David, the policeman, comes near Carla and arrest her. She is sentenced to prison.

THE END

COMMENT

The script presents the relationship between two women, Carla and Rachel, who live in an abusive relationship. In the first scene we see the outline of the character and introduction to the relationship – already at this moment it is worth introducing some element showing us who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist. It does not have to be a strong message; it can be subtly scratched.

The second scene leads us directly to confrontation and oppression, where the effects of violence, blackmail and aggression appear - this is indeed a perfect space for intervention.

Tips and recommendations

I miss the linking scene, maybe just before the black eye or just after – I would need increasing pressure and oppression to sympathise and begin to empathise with the main character. At the end of this scene, the protagonist ends the relationship – thereby saving herself, but such closing of the second scene means that she doesn't have to be helped – since she defended herself. The last scene: the death of an antagonist, may cause her not to be considered an antagonist and the roles will blur. On the other hand, if you start to create Forum Theater performances, use stereotypes, play with the stereotypical image of masculinity, femininity, show stereotypical uncles, aunts, a cousin from the United States, who succeeded in everything. Oppression must increase, and it is better when its solution is not based only on assertive attitude, but something deeper.

Michał Maciejak

Scenario 4

Authors: Andrej, Sanja, Maria, Mitko, Sarunas

Characters:

Alexandra the protagonist

Hesus, Tanja and Petra antagonist

Sofia passive player

Scene 1:

Narrator: Hesus, Alexandra, Petra, Sofia and Tanja are in the classroom. Tanja and Petra are bullying Alexandra. Sofia is just sitting there in the classroom.

Tanja: Look at her, she looks like she ate a pig.

Petra: Yes, she is so fat. She is taking so much space, she needs 2 chairs just for her.

Tanja: She will never find a boyfriend who will love her. She is huge.

Hesus: Hey girl, how are you?

Alexandra: Not very well.

Hesus: No worries, don't listen to them. They are just jealous of you, you are beautiful.

Scene 2:

Narrator: Hesus and Tanja are at Hesus's house.

Hesus: Should I text her to have fun with her, she looks so easy.

Tanja: Yes, she will give it to you right away. No one wants her, she looks desperate.

Hesus: Okay, let's text her.

Hesus texts to Alex: Hey Alex, do you have plans for tonight.

Alex: Not really.

Hesus: Do you want to go out for dinner?

Alex: Yes, I would like that. By the way, thanks for protecting me today in the class.

Hesus to Tanja: Look at this stupid girl. She thinks that I was helping her.

Alex texts to Sofia: Hesus texted me and asked me to go for dinner.

Sofia: What did you answer?

Alex: Of course I said yes. I like him. It's the only guy that cared about me.

Sofia: But he hadn't done anything until now. If he really cares about you, what took him so long?

Alex: Well you are not doing much either. At least he tried to help me.

Sofia: I don't think that he is such a nice boy like you think he is, but okay - do whatever you want.

Scene 3:

Narrator: Hesus and Alex are already in a relationship for six months. Hesus, Sofia, Petra and Tanja are in the club and Alex will join them later.

Petra: Hey Hesus, are you still in a relationship with that fat girl Alex?

Hesus: Yes.

Petra: Did you already fuck her?

Hesus: Of course, we are together for six months. I'm fucking her every day.

Petra: But, did you fuck her in a public place?

Hesus: No.

Petra: I bet she will never do it in a public place.

Hesus: Alright, do you wanna bet that we will do it tonight?

Petra: It's a bet.

(Alexandra is entering the club)

Hesus: Hey love.

Alex: Hey.

Hesus: I'm so horny right now. Let's fuck in the toilet.

Alex: No, I don't want to.

Hesus: Come on. It's not a big deal.

Alex: No.

Hesus: How can you say 'no' to me, we are in a relationship for 6 months already. Come here, let's go.

Alex: No, I don't want to.

(Hesus is pushing Alex in the toilet)
(If no one intervenes, Alex will be raped)

COMMENT

The scenario shows a very complicated problem of pressure and oppression among peers at school and the level of discrimination at school.

Alexandra, a protagonist, is being discriminated in the first scene, experiencing verbal aggression. He receives 'help' from Hesus, who in the next act will show us from a completely different angle. The issue of discrimination based on race, sex, appearance, and views - is a topic suitable for working with the Forum Theater method.

Tips and recommendations:

In the second act, I lack the space for intervention because the action takes place in parallel. We see Hesus, who is urged by Tanja to hurt Alexandra in his home. We also see Sofie, who wants to protect her, but gives up at the end. However, we do not have a connecting space here, because the antagonist and protagonist are sitting in their homes. The scene fulfils its role because it builds tension, but as I wrote at the beginning, there is not enough space for intervention. The last scene in the club, where Alexandra might be sexually assaulted, is very strong. I think that at the beginning of work with the performances of Forum Theater it can be too strong. The situation of oppression is very visible; the character of the antagonist and protagonist is strongly outlined. What I see in these two scenarios are 3 acts, for me it is not enough, I would need at least 5, then you can expand the situation, build tension, thereby creating a space for intervention. When creating Forum Theater, remember that the solution to oppression cannot be a magic solution.

Michał Maciejak

SUMMARY

"SOCIAL CHANGE STARTS FROM SINGLE PERSON" AUGUSTO BOAL

Wioletta Szuba

Our time spent together came to an end. After several days of workshops in the frame of "Let's talk, how we talk about gender" project, youth workers from 8 European and neighbouring countries take with them experiences of Forum Theatre as a tool for facilitating the dialogue for socially relevant topics.

By the implementation of this project, following the mission of our Foundation, we created the space for dialogue in the democratic spirit, respecting the opinion of every person in the group. To achieve educational objectives of the project, we used the Forum Theatre method, which fosters the dialogue and enables the view from various perspectives, allows the understanding of various motivations and contexts.

The mission of our Foundation is education for dialogue in the democratic spirit, with the respect of the opinion of each and every person. We teach methods, which give the opportunity to comment on socially relevant topics, in the way of seeing different points of views and understanding various motivations and contexts. Forum Theatre is such a method. It enables being in the dialogue, looking at the situation from multiple perspectives, makes you sensitive to various viewpoints.

During the project, we were using this method to approach the topic of gender, which in sociology is understood as cultural context of sex. Thanks to the presence of youth workers and leaders coming from different backgrounds and cultures, we had a great opportunity to look at and compare, how this construct functions in various societies, in which aspects it may restrict being of girls and boys, women and men and, finally, how to talk about it and how to act, so the culture and society does not limit the personal resources of both sexes. Participants of the project created plays, which, for us become the triggers for the debate on the topic that boys and men can let themselves be caring and sensitive and girls and women can pursue the activities, which give them sense of perpetration, satisfaction and appreciation.

During 8 days of training, we were learning to see microworlds of each human and empowering them in a way they can feel fulfilled. The male and female elements present within each human create a whole.

Once more, we saw, how Forum Theatre teaches dialogue and respect to the others, with all their inner and social world.

Disclaimer

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FUNDACJA INICJATYW TWÓRCZYCH I SPOŁECZNO EDUKACYJNYCH Kurdybanek