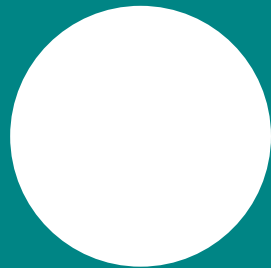
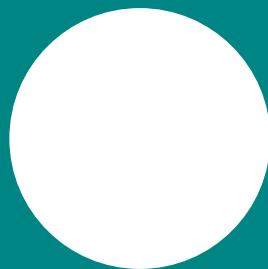
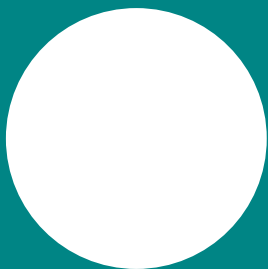


# PODER

Theatre of the Oppressed to address oppression through the use of two lenses: *the intercultural and the structural approach*



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. How to use this toolkit

This manual is aimed at individuals interested in incorporating the use of Theater of the Oppressed (TO) into their work or life environments by integrating it into a broader reflection on intercultural and structural approaches.

This toolkit complements and deepens the content presented in the three videos that make up this work, which are part of Project Result No.5 in the PODER project.

### ***The identification of oppressions in the Theatre of the Oppressed***

(<https://youtu.be/GLsWkIL2wXQ>)

### ***Dealing with oppression in the Theatre of the Oppressed***

(<https://youtu.be/Ughtm4Lj-HQ>)

### ***The importance of the Joker's maieutic attitude in all phases of a process managed with the Theatre of the Oppressed***

(<https://youtu.be/nCIdOmR1krY>)

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If you are already an expert in TO you can simply incorporate the suggestions to add the two main approaches.

If you are not familiar with this theatre, it is best to attend a basic workshop to learn the fundamentals of Boal's method.

We also suggest first reading the manual and then watching each video to benefit from both visual and written languages.

Depending on your level of knowledge, the videos may be exhaustive on their own or may require written expansion. If you have appropriate information and experience on TO, this written toolkit will serve only as a complementary document.

During the project, we explored two areas, producing tools to help adult educators deal with problems emerging with groups of learners (read our manual: ***Critical Incidents and Competence Framework***):

- 1) Cases where the issue happens among learners
- 2) Cases where the conflict is between the trainer and one or more participants.

In this product, we focus on how an adult educator can conduct in-depth research together with the group, around an issue that interests the group. So we do not directly address the two aforementioned areas, but instead we prepare the groundwork to analyse in depth a common concern (or oppression, in our TO jargon).

Another possibility we explored during the training is the use of Rainbow of Desires techniques to address internal oppression and self analyse the trainer's behaviour.

We just cite this possibility here, but do not go further as it was not fully developed. It is an insight for the next project.

## 1.2. Structural and intercultural approaches

In our guide *Integrating the intercultural approach in structural competency training*.

**A guide for change**, we explain how we can fruitfully combine two approaches, the **intercultural** and the **structural** to analyse a critical incident<sup>1</sup>.

The significant difference between the two manuals is that in the "Guide for Change" we use mainly verbal intelligence, while in this one, we focus on body and emotional intelligence within the framework of theatre language and the Theater of the Oppressed method.

You can see in the "Guide for Change" the combination of these two different approaches:

- intercultural
- structural.

As adult educators, when we face difficulties, these can be different: sometimes they are linked to cultural misunderstanding, sometimes with power relationships, and sometimes to both. Therefore, both approaches are useful to manage critical situations in adult education settings.

In this manual, we tried to combine the two approaches using participatory activities. Here we try to do the same using Theatre of the Oppressed.

Indeed, we discovered a possibility to incorporate both approaches in the TO method, which seems to us one of the main results of PODER.

This way, we can use TO, enriched by these elements, in our practices or to combine TO with the tools from our "Guide for Change".

### **How are these two approaches embedded in TO?**

We propose incorporating an **intercultural approach** into the character work and the **structural approach** into the staging work, that is, in theatrical jargon, character **interpretation** and **dramaturgy**.

#### INTERPRETATION

In theatre work, there are many ways to play a character. Within the TO framework, we often refer to the Stanislavskij method, which is also partially included in the TO method. This means that the task of an actor is to create a true character based on real personal emotions, meaning the actor/actress must strongly believe in the character without judging their behaviour but feeling as if they were the character.

To achieve this, we use simple techniques (see Boal's book in bibliography) called rehearsal techniques.

One of them for instance is called the "police interview to character".

It works like this: the actor sits down in a chair and empathises with the character. When ready, a rain of questions is directed at them by their colleagues, and they must answer immediately, embodying the character and responding as the character would do.

<sup>1</sup> Experiences of individuals who interact with others who have different norms, values and representations and as a result they experience an emotional reaction that points to surprises, misunderstandings or conflicts.

A variation is to show the scene, allowing the group watching to stop and ask a character questions, who should react immediately while staying in character.

This is the usual way to prepare the actor to deeply become the character, avoiding caricature and triviality, as the research into the problematic situation must be as deep and true as possible.

### **What did PODER suggest to us?**

Following the intercultural approach, we have to dive in the Other's iceberg, detecting their values, norms and representations. We must do the same with ourselves as individuals.

So, a way to use TO to do this research, rather than just talking, is through acting: using the two techniques mentioned above, as well as others, we can ask the actor/character about their values/norms/representations. After the technique we can ask the actor/actress to write down their discoveries and use other exercises to embody these values, norms and representations.

In this way, when we later will use Forum-Theatre, these three elements will be embodied in the characters, making the research of solutions linked to the intercultural approach.

### **DRAMATURGY**

How can we include the structural approach in the TO process?

The way that seems meaningful to us is to embody it into the script.

There are many ways to do this, but the first step can be a brainstorming session to collect as many structural forces as possible.

Then, a selection may be useful if there are too many.

The third step is to creatively enrich the script with these structural elements.

Just an example:

**Patriarchy** can be represented by:

- A symbolic figure saying some slogans
- A narrator reading or expressing some thoughts about it
- Reading or exposing a text with data
- Including some meaningful sentences in the dialogues, at another level than the usual conversation, a level of reflection about the concept
- Showing a scene related to how patriarchy is thought and learned
- Dancing and singing
- Etc.

## **1.3. Glossary of the basic terms**

- Theater of the Oppressed: a theatre approach aimed at identifying oppression by working with oppressed groups and collaborating to a collective liberation from oppression using specific theatre tools. The method is based on maieutics, meaning it does not teach people what to do to solve their problems, but activates their own agency, to empower them instead.
- Oppression: an unbalanced power that reduces the rights of some groups in favour of other privileged. Not all problems are oppression. Sometimes problems arise due to bad communication, misunderstanding... They are not oppression stricti sensu (you can read our textbook: Identity, power, inequality: questioning group based exclusions in the context of adult education).

- Joker or Jolly or Curinga : the key figure of TO. They are the leader of the process, both leading the research of the group around oppression and managing the research of solutions. As already explained, their major feature is the maieutic attitude.
- Pedagogy of Conscientization: refers to Paulo Freire's concept, that opposes to the banking pedagogy where learners are invaded by the teachers' knowledge. It implies a common research, rejecting the idea of possessing the truth, the idea that truth is eternal; it implies a participatory research into the world where oppressed groups live to get critical consciousness and to organise for change.
- Dialogue: the foundation for both Boal and Freire. It does not merely mean talking, but keeping a balance among different social groups to avoid oppression by one group over another. It is not a feeling even if in TO we start from the experiences of participants, but then these elements should be collectivised and deepened.

# 2. Video 1 – How to search for oppressions

## 2.1. When to start the search?

When we have created a brave and safe space (see our toolkit: ***Creating brave and transformative learning spaces***) we have the groundwork to proceed in the research to find oppressions affecting that specific group of people.

We do not start from the general analysis, like capitalism and patriarchy, but, in the framework of TO, we prefer to focus on the daily life of people, to find the social cells where we live oppression.

The approach is similar to the micro-physics of power by Michel Foucault, as Boal, recalling Karl Marx, stated that in each social interaction are represented the norms and values of the ruling class as its ideology and practice are dominating society.

So, facing micro-interactions is not trivial but seems to us the best point of departure for this research for means of liberation.

### What is oppression?

We do not discuss the concept here as it is already explored in the textbook ***Identity, power, inequality: questioning group based exclusions in the context of adult education***, but refer also to the glossary for the specific way TO defines it.

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## 2.2. How to search for oppressions?

Now we have a group and we want to proceed with searching for stories.

Depending on the group, the trainer, the specific constraints and possibilities, you can choose among different ways:

- The simplest may be to ask the group to tell stories where they felt oppressed. If you want to facilitate openness, make it in pairs to ease people's openness.
- An alternative is to create images, starting from the basic TO exercise "Sculptor and Clay", and asking people to create images related individually to an oppression using their own body and self-sculpting. Then you can ask people to join the most similar images.
- You can also ask them to create images sculpting others to show a personal situation of oppression. Then, you can ask the group to choose the most significant image.
- You can also ask the group to play the oppressors all together and then to group for similarities.
- There are also other exercises that can be used for this purpose (see Boal's texts).

You can describe these ways as the «narrative approach, visual approach, body approach, sound approach, and metaphorical approach».



# 3. Video 2 – How to step against oppression

## 3.1. What does it mean to face oppression?

To face oppression in TO approach means to become aware about the mechanisms of oppression and to stand up and take action.

In this method, the process is collective and based on the Freirian dialogue, where people, with the help of educators, explore the issues they are concerned with. This is far away from propaganda, one-way teaching, and transmissive pedagogy. It is inspired by critical pedagogy, where even the roles of learner and teacher are different—they both learn, and the knowledge of learners is valued.

This point is linked to the maieutic attitude of the teacher, called here Joker, which is really a key element of TO and also of Pedagogy of Conscientization.

## 3.2. What are the steps?

In the TO process, the steps are set in a spiral way, not in a linear logic. It means we can proceed from step 2 to step 3, then maybe we need to return to step 1, and again we can go forward and backward many times, depending on the research and the state of the group.

For instance, if the group is searching for solutions and the inner trust is lost, we need to go back to step 1. Or if we are “cleaning” the embryo and we lose our focus or the oppression seems not so important, we can step back to stage 2, etc.

1<sup>st</sup> step: creating the brave and safe space

2<sup>nd</sup> step: searching for knots

3<sup>rd</sup> step: creating collective embryos

4<sup>th</sup> step: toward the model

5<sup>th</sup> step: transformation

6<sup>th</sup> step: extrapolation.

These steps are typically followed when using the Forum-Theatre technique in step 5.

The choice is made by the Joker if the oppression shows an external conflict between oppressor and oppressed, with a clear will from the oppressed to release oppression.

There are cases where the will of the oppressed is not clear or it is multiple, or the conflict is more internalised and the antagonist is not really an oppressor, as in many love relationships or friendships.

In such cases, Boal developed a set of new techniques called “The Rainbow of desires” that uses mainly body images to externalise/collectivise what is internal and private.

# 4. Video 3 – How to use maieutics

## 4.1. What is maieutics?

The key point is the maieutic attitude, which is the trust on learners' capacity to analyse and solve their own problems by means of participatory theatre. Maieutic implies non-judgement, but the use of questioning as a key way to facilitate awareness raising.

In general, maieutics refers to Socrates and his attitude as a philosopher who asks questions instead of giving answers. In asking questions, he leads the people to question the knowledge and certainties they have. Socrates used it primarily to reveal the ignorance of the powerful.

Boal takes inspiration from this attitude and applies it to the attitude of the Joker/Jolly, those who lead a group with the TO up to the presentation and management of the Forum-Theater. In Boal's idea, maieutics is not a way of asking questions to reveal people's ignorance but rather, to develop, as Paulo Freire also claims, a passage from naive consciousness of the world ("the world has always been like this", "we can't do anything") to critical consciousness ("this world is modifiable because it was created by human beings", "everything can change, and "we have the power to improve it").

The Joker's questions therefore help the group to become more aware of reality in a critical way by delving into the causes of problematic situations, whereas naive conscience does not do this; it is fatalistic.

In Freire, maieutics is based above all on dialogue with students about their world. He opposes the transmissive attitude, where a teacher fills the heads of students with knowledge, considering them empty and ignorant. In Freire's dialogic method, knowledge is co-constructed and renewed each time, researching with students how to understand and transform their world.

Similarly in Boal, maieutics manifests itself in the creation of theatrical scenes (transition from the discussion on reality to the staging of reality) and above all in the management of the Theatre-Forum, where an attempt is made to transform theatrical reality as a premise for acting in our daily reality .

Maieutics is **not**:

- being neutral: I can hold the value of solidarity, but accept a different opinion
- letting everything happen: if I see that the process is going in unwanted directions, I can intervene—without imposing, but by asking questions or expressing doubts
- disappearing like a ghost...: on the contrary, requires a strong presence to guarantee everyone the right to speak and act, avoid abuse, give space to divergent opinions, etc. but always doing so in a way that problematizes rather than imposes or manipulates.

## 4.2. Where do you see it in our work?

As mentioned, the Joker operates in two different moments of the process:

- A. when they lead a group to act out their own oppressive situations.
- B. when they manage the search for solutions, usually with the Forum-Theater technique, but not exclusively.

Therefore, the areas where to use it and what to concretely do are:

**A)** *In the process, in more detail, the joker must be maieutic:*

- In managing the group, without imposing its own vision of the world, but by asking (questioning) what oppressive situations the group experiences and dialoguing with them to select the most suitable ones, but also examining them in depth.
- In the transition from a narrated story to a staged story, making requests to the group that are not too narrow so that they can search and explore with great freedom (for example, without giving them a narrow definition of oppression, but asking which problems the group experiences or which life situations want to improve because they are unsatisfactory).
- In the divergences that may emerge in the group on which stories to represent or which scenes to use, being careful to balance the need for the effectiveness of the stories with the freedom of the group to make its own choices. Here too, with light comments, perhaps making proposals for alternatives to choose from, or asking the reason for certain choices, or pointing out inconsistencies between the message they want to give and the scene...
- In the comments on the exercises, where the joker refrains from making judgments on what happened, but problematizes and delves deeper: how was it for you on an emotional level? What did you learn from this exercise? What does it tell you about the group? Does it evoke oppressive situations for you?...
- In choosing the story to represent, letting the group choose, possibly suggesting how to do it (by vote, with eyes closed, etc.)
- In answering the questions and doubts of the participants, trying to avoid presenting oneself as the wise possessor of truth, but posing the question to the group; or by responding, but showing that one's idea is not the only possible one, there are other visions also within the TO.

**B)** *In the Forum Theatre*

Here, the Joker is maieutic at various times.

There are 5 phases in the Forum:

1. Introduction
2. Warming up
3. Presentation of scenes
4. Management of interventions
5. Conclusion.

## **1. Introduction**

When The Joker introduces, they do not state that these stories are oppressive unless it is obvious to everyone. They do not give their own key to understanding the stories, they do not explain a theory or an ideology. Instead, the Joker provides objective information useful for understanding the session, such as the rules of participation.

## **2. Warming up**

In this phase, the Joker activates the public with games and questions.

## **3. Presentation of scenes**

During this phase, theatrical scenes are presented. At the end the Joker asks the audience at least three questions.

- Is this story real?
- What is the problem?
- Can something be done to transform it?

Here, the maieutic role is evident as the Joker asks questions and does not correct the public or give their opinion. Any comments made serve to problematise or deepen the reflection.

## **4. Management of interventions**

This is the phase where maieutics is best seen because the Joker manages the interventions of the spectators who try to change the story for the better by replacing the oppressed. The Joker invites spect-actors to intervene but does not oblige. They make the spectator choose who to replace and from what moment. At the end of the action, the Joker does not judge the proposed strategy but asks the audience or those who spoke to comment. The Joker may attempt to summarise the strategy in their own words, but then asks the intervenor for confirmation. The Joker also asks the audience to evaluate the strategy's effectiveness and feasibility, and if he has doubts, asks further questions, etc.

## **5. Conclusion**

The Joker concludes by summarising what has been done and the strategies that emerged, without saying which one they prefer. They may underline that no other possible directions have been sought (problematizing function) or pose further questions.

# 5. An example of training

## DAY 1

### ● Introduction

Registration, agreements, technical communications, etc.

### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

Exercises from Boal and beyond to get to know each other, build trust, enhance creativity, etc. This is an essential step before exploring oppression, as it helps to build mutual trust and improve useful skills like creativity, improvisation, body language, etc.

1. **Sociometry:** this activity provokes simple and immediate interactions between people in the group. Starting from a free distribution in space, the group is organised according to certain indications from the trainer: groups by eye colour, organization, country, nationality, month of birth, knowledge of the English language, etc.
2. **Name and mime** on «what activity you like to do in your daily life»: each person walks through the space and when they meet someone, they stop in front of this person, say their name, and mime with their body the activity they appreciate in their daily life.
3. **Space series:**
  - Occupy space evenly, as on a raft;
  - Try out various speeds as a group walking through space;
  - Quickly form groups of X (the trainer says a number) people and then break them up to form new groups;
  - Making a collective construction with their own bodies (e.g., a coffee machine).
4. **“How are you?”:** In a circle, each person asks «how are you?» to the person opposite in the circle, listens, and returns with an image. The people to their right and left join in to complement or emphasise the image. The person who has spoken looks at the image that is returned: they modify it if not satisfied, dissolve it with a clap of the hands if it is OK. Now repeat the process with the person on the right side of the first speaker, and so on.

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### ● Safe and brave space creation

Sharing of supporting devices (detailed information about this tools can be found in our toolkit **Creating brave and transformative learning spaces:**

1. Oops e ouch;
2. Calling in and calling out;
3. Confidential trios;
4. Listeners.

## ● Preparation to tell stories

### 1. *Image-Theatre*:

The trainer invites the group to walk randomly in the room. From time to time, they give more instructions:

- individual, random, or rapid (no history);
- exaggerations and opposites;
- «how do you feel?/What character are you?»;
- «how do you interact with others as a character?»;
- exploring different characters from an image (Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? With whom?) and looking for interactions to develop in two or three people.

### 2. *Welcome to diversity*: in a circle, answer YES to the questions asked by the presenter by stepping forward.

Ask participants to stand in a circle facing the centre and looking at each other.

Explain that you are going to make a series of statements, and that each time those who agree are invited to take a step forward towards the centre while everyone else stays still in the circle.

After each statement, invite the participants to look around and recognise both those who moved and those who stayed, without judgement. Remind them that there is no correct or wrong answer and that we are doing this exercise to recognise and give value to the diversities present in the group.

Examples of statements:

- feel tired;
- feel curious about the training;
- took more than half an hour to come to today's session;
- were born in the same place where you are living now;
- were born in the same place where at least one of your parents was born;
- were born in the same place where at least one of your grandparents was born;
- can speak more than 3 languages;
- would like to be addressed as “she”- “he”- “them”;
- believe that finding a job is easy;
- like to work;
- don't have the job you would like to have;
- like to spend your free time in nature;
- consider yourself a creative person;
- have had troubles with your boss at work;
- have felt that you are not recognised/valued at your workplace;
- have been called “aggressive” or “hysterical”;
- experienced or witnessed oppression...that's why we are here!

Every time that you make a statement, ask some participants (both those who took a step forward and those who stayed) why they positioned themselves in a certain way and how this aspect affects them.

At the end of the activity, thank everyone for their participation and welcome the diversities that are present in the room, both those that were named and those that were not, as well as those that may not affect the group but are also present in society.



## LUNCH BREAK

### ● Check-in

Check in: form a circle, and take a step forward if you are ready to work today.

### ● Theoretical introduction

Theoretical background on Theatre of the Oppressed, its origins and the development of Augusto Boal's techniques based on his various political, social and personal experiences (TO tree).



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### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

1. **The sound doors:** make 5 pairs, each pair representing a sound door. Each "door" chooses 3 sounds: one for inviting people to pass through, one expressing the pleasure when a person passes, and one for farewell. Once the sounds are chosen and checked to ensure they are distinct, the remaining participants, with their eyes closed, try to pass through each of the 5 doors by following the sounds.
2. **Sculptor and clay:** in pairs
  - 1°) Partner A sculpts partner B. Partner B focuses on their own mind, body, emotions (perceptions, feelings, ideas, memories, ect.).
  - 2°) A sculpts B, while B feels the sculpture and starts to improvise non-verbally with A.
  - 3°) Similar to the previous step, but B also uses speech and A interacts accordingly.
  - 4°) A sculpts B, who improvises after feeling; but A also sculpts themselves. Both improvise together.



5°) Similar to step 4,° with a focus on the theme of power.

6°) Similar to step 4, with a focus on the theme of conflict.

7°) Share, whether easy or not, what touched you?

## ● Exploring stories

Selecting Critical Incident to be staged involves collecting personal stories from participants. Ensure at least one story where the trainer had a conflict, and one where the trainer faced a conflict between participants.

1. Each participant should take a moment alone to reflect deeply on a personal experience. This should be a moment where they either witnessed or, even better, played a central role as the protagonist in a critical incident that was unexpected and possibly incomprehensible.
2. Whoever has the story stands up.
3. Those without a story approach someone with a story to form pairs.
4. In pairs: A tells the story to B, who listens without commenting, only asking for clarification if needed to understand the story better.
5. In a plenary session, brief descriptions of the stories are shared, summarised and selected. The group then divides into three smaller groups to work on the three most significant stories.

PROTAGONIST	ANTAGONIST	TITLE
YOUNG FEMINIST TRAINER WOMAN	OLD EXPERIENCED TRAINER MAN	I AM HERE TOO
<del>YOUNG</del> YOUNG WOMAN	OLD WOMAN	WHERE IS HOME? <i>EMOTIONAL</i>
YOUNG WAITRESS IN RESTAURANT	OWNER OF THE PLACE	ONLY <del>THE</del> VISIBLE TO ME?
TRAINER	PARTICIPANTS	THIS IS BORING
NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR	PROF/EXPERIENCED LEADER	LOOSING GROUND
TRAINER	YOUNG GIRL <del>PROF</del> PARTICIPANT	I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED <i>80%</i>
WHITE GERMAN YOUNG <sup>5/10/17</sup> HIGH EDUCATED WOMAN	CYPRIO QUEER VOCAL MAN	WHOSE VOICE IS REALLY THE LOUDEST? <i>100%</i>
TEACHER ITALIAN <del>TRAINER</del>	GERMAN LEARNERS	I AM ITALIAN, TOO

Work in groups:

- tell more about the story;
- identify roles;
- set the scene;
- engage in improvisation.

### ● Closing the day/check-out

Conduct a short evaluation: form a line-up to share insights on learning/emotions-body/group atmosphere.

## DAY 2

### ● Introduction

Introduction to the training diary: small booklet where participants are invited to write thoughts or observations for the next four days.

### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

1. **LIT** (Italian sport theatre association) improvisation: in a circle, A moves to the centre with an image, B completes the image and starts a small improvisation, A adapts and follows.

STOP: A leaves the stage and B remains frozen in the image, like a statue.

Then A leaves the stage and C enters, who completes and starts a new small improvisation on a new situation, B adapts and follows.

And so on...

2. **The «how's it going?» train**: in a circle, each with their hands on their neighbour's shoulders. The circle moves in one direction.

STOP: when someone makes a gesture and a sound to represent how they are feeling, the emotions they are feeling at the moment.

The entire circle repeats and then resumes moving in the opposite direction.

And so on...

### ● Exploring stories

Work in three subgroups to analyse in depth the case, to identify the values, norms and representations of the characters.

### ● Some theory

In this training, the proposal is a simple process of elaboration and creation with the Theatre of the Oppressed method, as usual. We aim to incorporate the intercultural approach and the structural approach to the analysis of Critical Incident into a staged story as an added value of the TO method. Theatre offers something inestimable: the concrete situation close to life, the ease to see the situation from a distance (physically and psychologically), and the chance to play with reality and invent alternatives...

So we propose a way to do that by using TO instead of intellectual/verbal discussion only.

We think that:

- It is possible to investigate the values-norms-representations of opposing sides (drawing from the Intercultural approach) by enriching characters with some rehearsal techniques. This process is known in theatre slang as "interpretation of the character" work.
- It is possible to enrich the plot with elements from society like ideologies, social aspect, culture, etc. (this comes from the Structural approach). This is referred to in theatre slang as "dramaturgic" work.
- Finally, after these two analyses have been materialised into a staged story, we can move on to the negotiation phase using Forum-Theatre.

A comment on Forum-Theatre and oppression and specific suitable techniques.

In our work with adults of various backgrounds using Theatre of the Oppressed, we face situations that are not always suitable for Forum-Theatre or other commonly used techniques.

As we deal with life problems expressed by participants, we have to be careful and make a distinction among different types of problems and then choose the right techniques.

In a general sense, we can meet at least four types of problematic situations:

1. Situations where the Protagonist faces difficulties because of the counterpart's **lack of skills**: for instance, a teacher struggling to manage a class, a social worker not able to communicate properly, an officer lacking competence in dealing with clients, etc.

When the issue is the counterpart's lack of competence or when working with professionals lacking some skills, the main tool is "role play", as developed by Jacob Moreno.

In such cases, scenes are set in a realistic style, allowing the group to intervene and replace who wants to, to improve role behaviours.

2. Situations where the Protagonist is not able to manage communication with a counterpart and there is more or less the same power in the relation, often due to issues such as poor communication, de-evaluating, criticism in an arrogant way, undermining the self-esteem of the Protagonist, mutual misunderstanding, lack of listening, etc.

In these cases, we can use exercises from outside of Theatre of the Oppressed to improve communication skills. Here's some examples:

- Thomas Gordon's approach to active listening and the method without losers
- Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent communication, which suggests identifying our needs and emotions, to express them without accusing the other party, etc.
- Jerome Liss's Constructive criticism, which guides us to make a criticism in a positive way by focusing on our observation and emotions, avoiding generalisations and accusations, etc.

3. Situations where the Protagonist is in trouble because they live in an unbalanced relationship where they are weaker and their rights/needs are not satisfied; often due to belonging to a marginalised social group. Typical situations include exploitation, violence, humiliation, lack of resources for health or education, racism and all kinds of discrimination affecting a group.

In these cases, Forum-Theatre is suitable—a tool where there is a clear agent of oppression (one or more persons) acting against the Protagonist in various ways, depending on the specific oppression.

Using Forum-Theatre is not trivial as you should analyse the oppression not solely as the result of the Oppressor's bad will, but rather by detecting the specific social mechanisms at play in the situation.

4. Situations where the Protagonist feels a problem but the oppression is internalised. Here is the usefulness of the Rainbow of Desires set of techniques.

Typical situations here are:

- The Protagonist knows what they want but when they try to get it something is blocking them from within.
- The Protagonist is confused about what they want.
- The Protagonist knows what they want in a specific relationship, there are no blocks, but they cannot attain it, because in the developed dynamics with the counterpart they end up as a loser.
- The Protagonist would not behave in a bad way, but is not able to change their behaviour in that specific situation.
- The Protagonist and Antagonist have a relationship affected by mutual stereotypes, and the Protagonist is not able to break free.

And many others.

So, about Critical Incidents, it's important to distinguish if they fall in one of these categories and use the appropriate tool accordingly.

## ● Rehearsal techniques

In this phase, we work on character building.

We have worked within three sub-groups:

### **1. Interrogatory variation of Hannover**

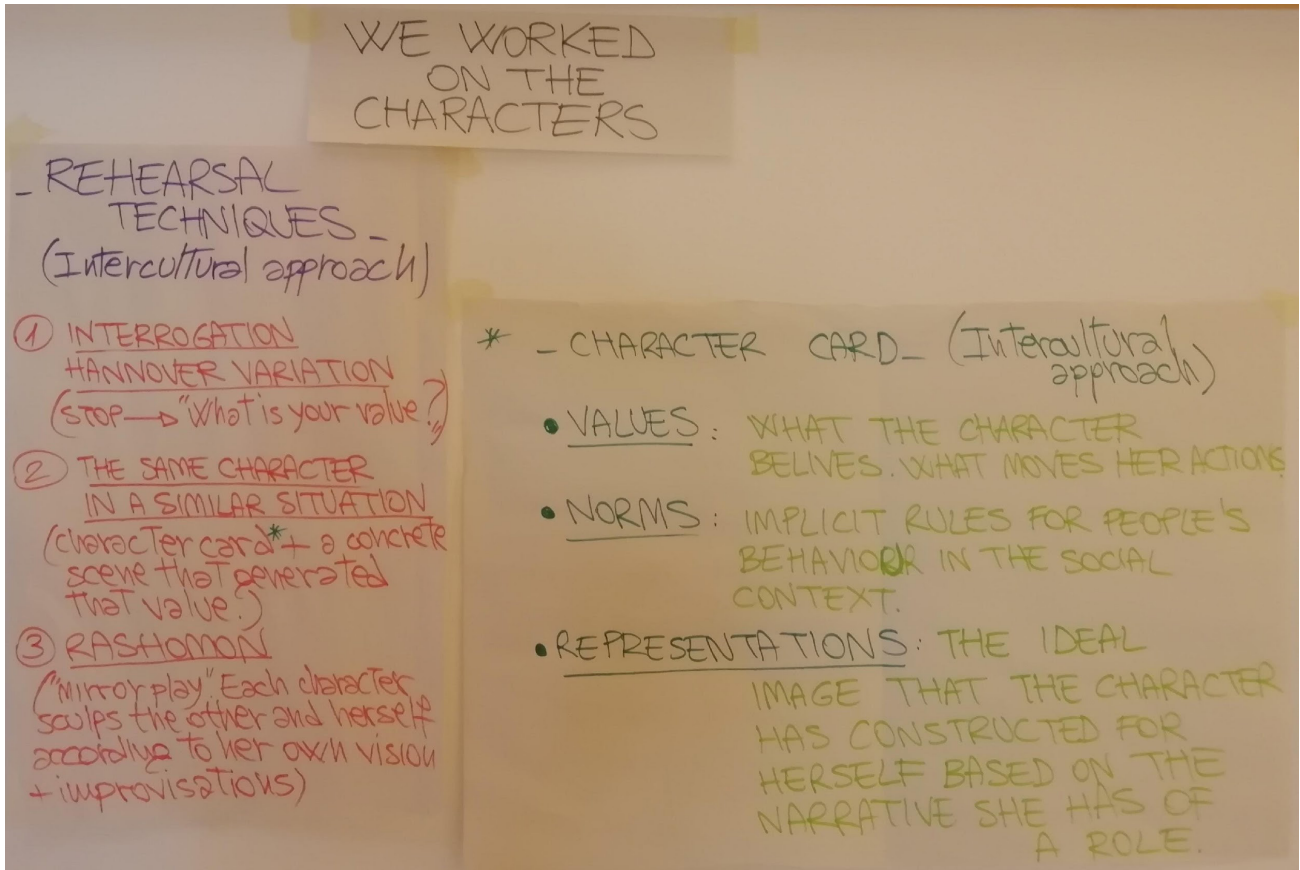
The scene begins, and the audience can stop it and ask one or more characters to answer a question. In this case the question was related to values: what are your values here and now? What is important to you? Any time the scene is stopped, the actor/s answers shortly and then the scene goes on.

### **2. Character card**

Each actor/actress has a time to write some key elements of their character on a card: name, biography data, the will and counter-will...values, norms, representation...

### **3. Same character in different context**

Each character thinks about one important value they have and, with the help of the group, improvises a scene where this value was created or reinforced most.



## ● Check-out

Participants raise their hands to comment on the morning's activities: high position for positive evaluation.

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## LUNCH BREAK

### ● Character and values awakening

Participants begin with a neutral walk through space. The trainer guides each person to embody their character using the voice:

1. "I believe in..." (each person expresses their own values);
2. Identify a point on the body where that value resides;
3. pair meetings in which one convinces the other of the importance of their value. Then they change by enriching their motivations more and more (concrete arguments, examples...).

### ● Forum-theatre session

1. Guided scene preparation: What was the character doing five minutes before? What do they believe in? What moves them? What is their inner speech?
2. Vision of the scene (The story revolves around a queer person who intervenes too much during a conversation, taking off the floor for others to speak).
3. Interaction with the audience:

- What is the problem?
- Is there anyone in more difficulty than others?
- Is it possible to change the situation?

4. Interventions from the audience.

Tips for the trainers: we think it is important, if we want to focus on values-norms-representations, to integrate them not only into character building but also during Joking. That is to work, as Joker, to raise these elements, to highlight them and bring the audience to reflect on them.

## ● Closing the day/check-out

Some short evaluation with post-it.

## DAY 3

### ● Introduction

Verbal sharing on how it is going + questions on the previous day.

### ● Safe and brave spaces

Creation of trio buddies and discussions.

### ● Check-in

Verbal round where to express how each person feels at the moment in the process.

### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

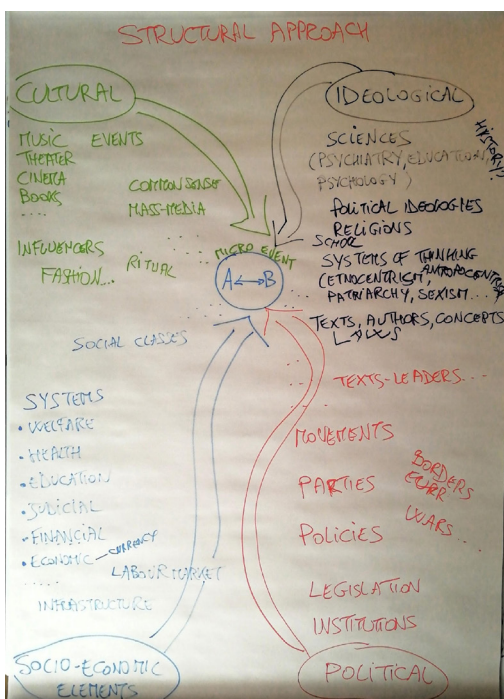
**People to people game:** Join together according to the number of body parts the leader proposes (e.g., two elbows, four feet, two heads, and three shoulders) + people for people (each person touches the others with two hands and one foot without remaining isolated, like a spider's web).

### ● Some theory on the structural approach

Objective of the PODER project: to increase and improve the facilitator's sensitivity and tools in addressing and solving power issues in educational settings.

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Each problem is not solely defined by the relationship between A and B or by different/irreconcilable cultural elements, but rather one must consider the structural context in which the subjects act.



Giolli's research over the years has led to identifying these contextual elements as SPIC:

- Social
- Political
- Ideological
- Cultural

These elements can be integrated into the staging to provide a broader reading and understanding of the macro-level context.



## ● Techniques for applying the structural approach

Experimenting with certain techniques to integrate these macro aspects. In this case, work is done on dramaturgy.

### 1. **The image of conflict** (to work on internal power differentials in the scene)

After the scene presentation:

- someone from the audience sculpts the actor/actresses on stage to represent what really happens in the action—not just what is seen, but what is present and unseen.
- Check: who holds more power?
- Repeat the scene as it is written, but standing in the positions/ images assigned by the audience member who intervened.
- Result: a scene that is not realistic but rather real, reflecting the perception of someone who has seen the scene.
- Someone else from the audience tries out another possible version.

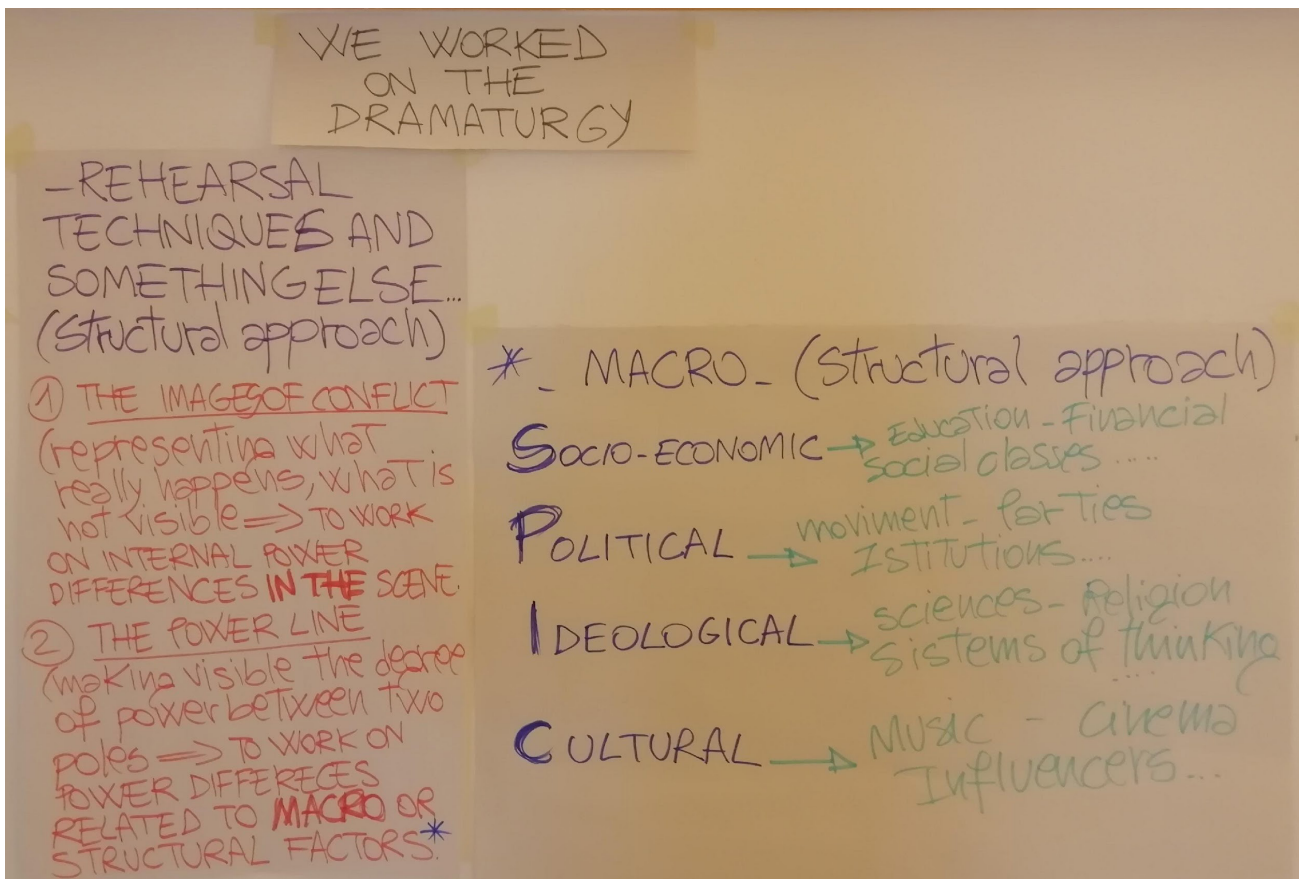
### 2. **The power line** (to work on power differentials related to macro-structural factors):

The characters position themselves on an imaginary line between two poles, representing their power levels based on macro-structural factors such as: social class, ability/disability, knowledge or not of the dominant language, sex, gender identity, being white or not, religion...

The varying degrees of power (more or less) of the characters is made visible.

The audience can intervene to change the positions on the line, giving reasons for these changes.

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## ● Check-out

Raise your hand to comment your morning evaluation

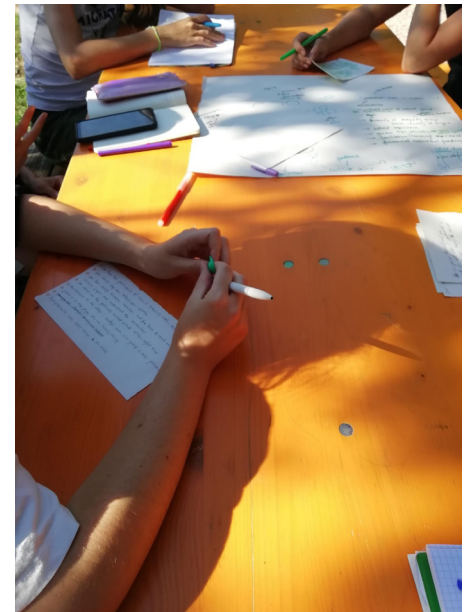
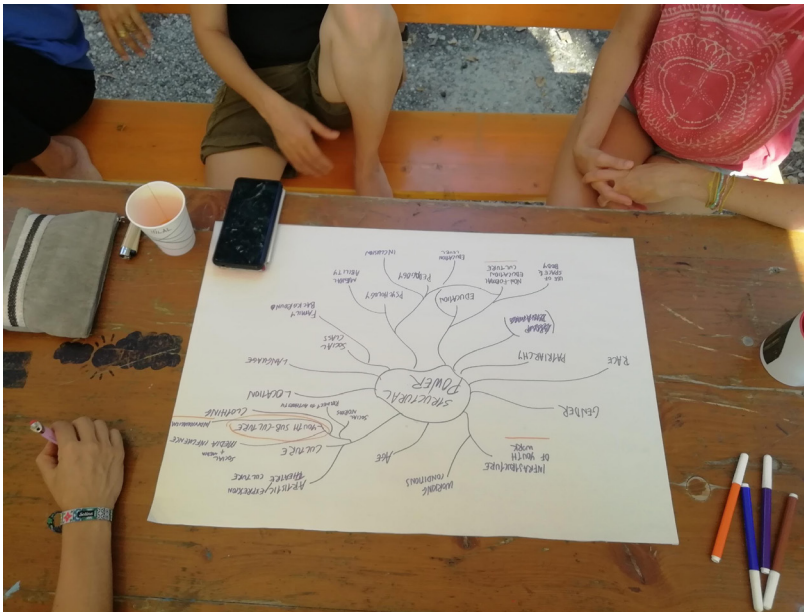
## LUNCH BREAK

## ● Group building/de-mechanisation

1. **Rhythm circle from Toronto.** Participants form a circle. Someone leads and proposes a rhythm with sound and movement Then, once the circle achieves harmony,
2. **Another person proposes a melody**, which the group repeats, alternating between soloists and choir... choir and soloists...
3. **The character song:** participants find the most representative phrase(s) related to SPIC. Improvise a rhythm and melody. Alternate soloist and choir.

## ● Work in the three groups

Participants work in three groups to integrate macro-structural elements into the dramaturgy using songs, poems, short additional scenes (such as pop-ups), literary texts, articles from newspapers.



## ● Closing the day/check-out

Evaluation: in a circle, one participant stands sharing their evaluation aloud and whoever agrees, approaches the speaker. Then a free discussion follows.

## DAY 4

### ● Introduction

collective summary of what we've done until then, learnings and discoveries. Expectations for the last two days, needs.

### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

Pushing each other: in pairs, participants put their hands on each other's shoulders. They push against each other as much as possible while maintaining balance, feeling the partner's strength and adjusting theirs to be in a dynamic balance.

After 30 seconds the Joker invites to change the parts implied: e.g. back to back, bottom to bottom, etc.

### ● Forum-theatre session on scene 1

After, free comments in plenary.

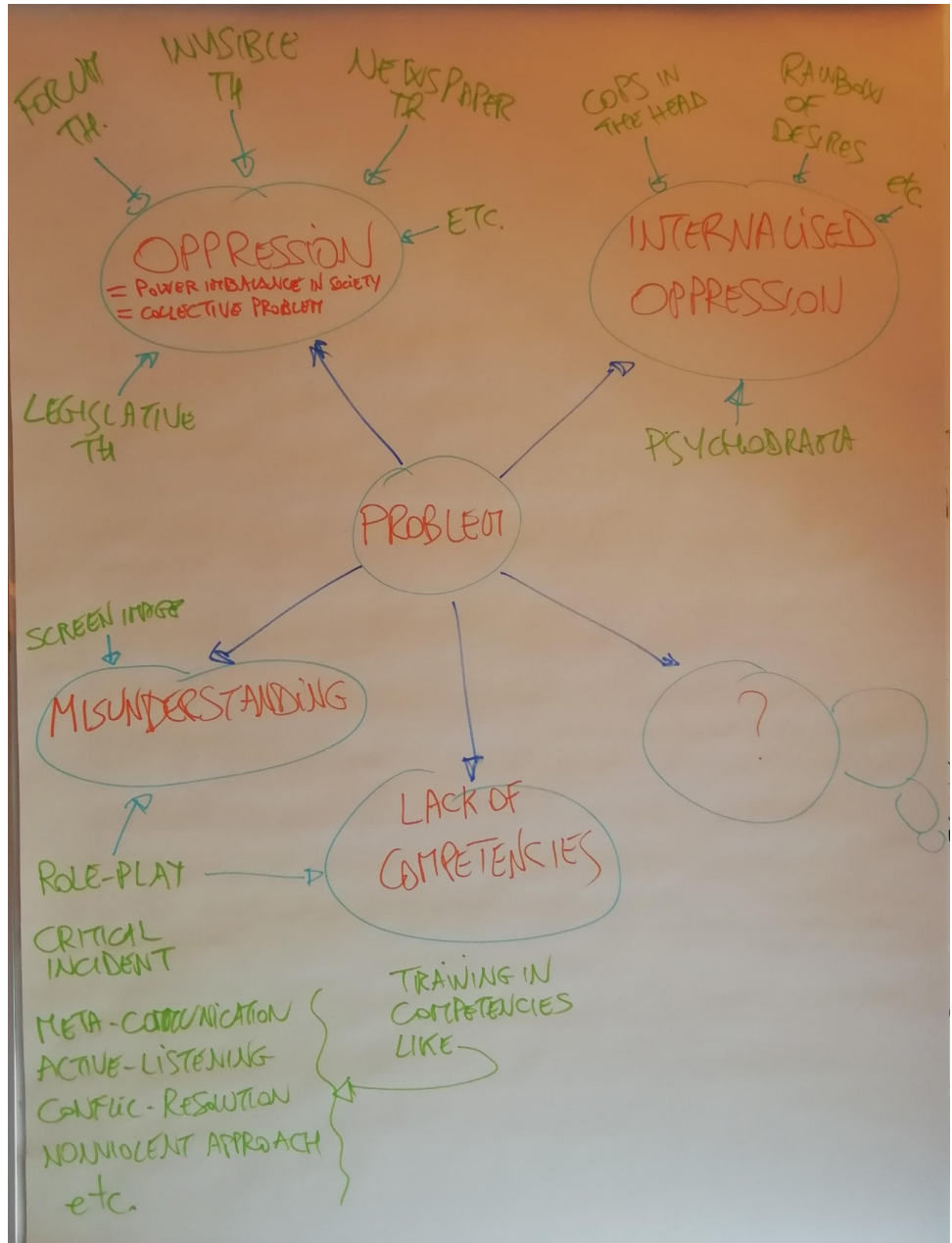
### ● Director's work on scene 2

#### ***Constructive forum:***

Here, as the group was not satisfied with the staged story, we use the Constructive Forum, which is a way to replace each character as the task is to create a better story, with more clear problems and clear mechanisms. In this case, who intervenes is not trying to solve the problem but to create a more real and deep story. The Joker does the normal job but ask questions like:

- Is this portrait realistic?
- If not, what should we change?
- Can you replace this character and show a more real behaviour?
- Etc.

**LUNCH BREAK**



● Group building/de-mechanisation

**Complete the image:** in pairs, A and B take turns using their bodies to integrate themselves into the image proposed by their partner, in sequence and in an immediate way, making the body work first rather than the mind.

Then in pairs.

Then build a collective image.



### ● Some theory on techniques

For each situation represented there are more or less suitable techniques. We could choose to apply different techniques to our three different situations.

Generally speaking, in the case of representing a collective social problem that contains oppression and its oppressive mechanisms linked to power imbalances, there are very suitable Theatre of the Oppressed techniques such as: Forum-Theatre, Newspaper-Theatre, Legislative-Theatre, Invisible-Theatre.

If the crux of the problem involves internalised oppression, the most suitable techniques are those from the Rainbow of Desires Set or Psychodrama.

In the typical contexts that the PODER project research is investigating, however, misunderstandings or difficulties may arise due to unpreparedness or a lack of effective tools on the part of the facilitator. In such cases, it is possible to use role-play, screen image, or other types of approaches that facilitate awareness and motivate change and improvement.

## ● Example of technique of rainbow of desire on scene 3

1. Vision of the scene.
2. Identify all internal elements (emotions, feelings, sensations...) of the protagonist and make them visible with images/characters.
3. The protagonist engages in a confidential exchange with each image. «I am like this because... I would like to be less (or more)».
4. Improvisations with images: pure emotion enters the scene one at a time, and the other characters react accordingly. What happens? What changes?
5. Real constellation: the protagonist organises their emotions in space, as the group (the rest of the characters on stage) perceives them. That is, from the point of view of the group of which the protagonist is the trainer.
6. Ideal constellation: the protagonist arranges all the images of their inner sides as they would ideally like them to be perceived by the others.
7. Agora of emotions: the protagonist has the opportunity to listen to all the images of their activated emotions, to walk around among them and to listen to their conversations. The emotions talk to each other to decide what to do and the protagonist can only listen (or, in case, also intervene).
8. The scene restarts with the emotions activating and demonstrating with gestures and sounds that they have come into play, based on the protagonist's behaviour in interactions with the other characters.



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## ● Closing the day/check-out

Body images related to the current emotions/feelings.

## DAY 5

### ● Introduction

Goal of the day: to gain strategies on how they can integrate empowerment and awareness raising of structural oppressions in their education activities - regardless of the subject of their training.

### ● Group building/de-mechanisation

Some exercise to warm-up and prepare the discussion.

#### 1. Motifs from Wrentschur

In a circle, A starts with a movement and sound (a motif), B copies as much as possible, C copies B and so on. Do not vary intentionally as for sure there will be variations, due to our differences.

#### 2. Thanks the qualities

Walking in the room and when one meets another to recognise a quality of the other person during the training.

### ● Reflection groups

How to implement our learning during this training in our professional contexts? Split into groups.

1. What would you use of the things you have done, what do you feel like doing?
2. What do you need to do this?
3. What do you have left undone?

Doubts-discoveries-boundaries-possibilities/impossibilities of application-what more could be needed.

### ● The image of the group

This practice has two versions, a softer and a stronger one.

Let us experiment with the soft one:

1. Build a collective image that represents the group.
2. Continuous proposals and adaptations until arriving at a shared group image.
3. Everyone has the opportunity to change their position if they do not feel comfortable where they are.
4. Everyone from where they are says what they want.

In the strongest version each person represents themselves in the group.

# 6. Conclusions

This guide has many challenges, like the combination between intercultural and structural approaches and the incorporation of these approaches into TO without betraying its origins and essence. Additionally, we aim to blend videos and text seamlessly to prevent redundancy.

We still believe that logical intelligence should go together with other forms of intelligence (emotional, sensory, visual...). This guide is designed with this holistic perspective in mind.

The last speech to the readers and practitioners.

We would be happy to receive comments and reports from you.

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Giolli Cooperativa sociale, Centre for Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Italy)  
[www.giollicoop.it](http://www.giollicoop.it)

## – VIDEO

### With AUGUSTO BOAL

#### + What is TO?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxQ6SsfhiCw>  
In short the essence of TO. English. 2 minutes.

#### + Teatro-Fórum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZhlpnSVRUg>  
Boal explains how Forum-Theatre was created, with real images from the past. In Brazilian with subtitles.

#### + Teatro Forum: che cos'è?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Yw\\_R1GwfGI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Yw_R1GwfGI)  
Olivier Marcol explains with images and examples how Forum-Theatre works. In Italian.

#### + Augusto Boal, Invisible Theatre Belgium

[https://vimeo.com/242782011?fbclid=IwAR0jXWufqQT5xJGyKy8e-vqR9yRGhrIC9\\_SU-eZEAKiJoQxB8ArSjB1I-heM](https://vimeo.com/242782011?fbclid=IwAR0jXWufqQT5xJGyKy8e-vqR9yRGhrIC9_SU-eZEAKiJoQxB8ArSjB1I-heM)  
Young Boal explains TO and Invisible-Theatre, then pictures of the workshop and the action at the supermarket are shown. In French with English subtitles.

#### + Augusto Boal Interview: April 16, 1931-May 2, 2009 PART 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0L2KHBE2Cw>  
TV interview with Boal on what TdO is, the concept of 'being theatre'. Broadcast on the day of his death. In English. 10 minutes.

#### + Augusto Boal (April 16, 1931 - May 2, 2009) - PART 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXutHbXGQfg>  
TV interview with Boal about his work, how TdO started. In English. 8 minutes.

#### + Augusto Boal, Forum Theater, Harvard-2003 (Part 3/5)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B0xx\\_mG29g&t=197s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B0xx_mG29g&t=197s)  
A Theatre-Forum led by Boal, with many interventions, a clear example of what the Jolly does. In English, 15 minutes.

## With JULIAN BOAL

### + Forum Theatre - Oppression in the Educational System

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecwFetYMy5Y>

Forum-Theatre at school where the oppressive system is well visualised. No intervention from the audience. In English with French subtitles.

### + Soirée théâtre-forum avec Julian Boal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSGm1BvkSDw>

EN: J.Boal explains very well Forum-Theatre. In French only. 3 minutes.

### + Julian Boal 1, Iniciación al Teatro del Oprimido. Presentación

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh\\_Hr93IFQw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh_Hr93IFQw)

J.Boal explains Forum-Theatre and oppression. In Spanish.

### + Julian Boal — Six idées qui changent le monde — «Le spectacle terminé, la lutte commence»

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_OGyleNzqw0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OGyleNzqw0)

Lecture by Julian Boal on the Theatre of the Oppressed; he talks about its origins and Virgil's episode. In French, 13 minutes.

## With JANA SANSKRITI

### + A Doll's House forum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPwi1wgLMg8>

One can see the model and the interventions. Clear the Joker's role. In Bengali with English subtitles. 1 hour long.

### + Jana Sanskriti extrait

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc8dmh3Fzsc&t=61s>

Forum about women oppression. Only the moment where the audience intervenes. Clear the Joker's role. In Bengali with English subtitles. 3 minutes long.

## DAVID DIAMOND

### + Out of silence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7V0-HDPKmpI&feature=youtu.be>

The Canadian project "Out of silence" about domestic violence in a native family.

## BARBARA SANTOS

### + Aesthetics of Justice - KURINGA Festival Play 2018

<https://kuringa.de/en/productions-en/production-aesthetics-of-solidarity-en/>

Video on borders and a very aesthetic model with great rhythm and music well present. It lasts 5'. English with subtitles.

+ Hotel Europa

<https://kuringa.de/en/productions-en/hotel-europa-barcelona-2018-en/>  
The Hotel Europa project by Barbara Santos. In English only. 6 minutes.

+ Hotel Europa

<https://kuringa.de/en/productions-en/hotel-europa-lisbon-2016-en/>  
The Hotel Europa project by Barbara Santos. Clear the warming up and model, no Forum. In English, 4 minutes.

**With HECTOR ARISTIZABAL**

+ Imagination In Action

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSt8bVW-9IE&t=18s>  
EN: It tells the story of Imagine Action's work, with many workshop pieces in various parts of the world. In local languages with English subtitles or Hector's speech.

+ Hector on Forum Theater (Dutch)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJzDXSjIX4g>  
Hector Aristizabal explains what Forum-Theatre is. English with subtitles in Dutch. It lasts 6'.

+ ImaginAction working with ex-combatants in Tigers bay

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu9EAbolx24&t=218s>  
Good information on how a Forum can be built, how one can work with a group, how transformative this already is, but one does not see the Forum moment. In English. 6 minutes.

+ Hector on Forum Theater (Dutch)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJzDXSjIX4g&list=PLqwi4Mz9IoTnuVRW2Q\\_txHc8KWk7YKr0S](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJzDXSjIX4g&list=PLqwi4Mz9IoTnuVRW2Q_txHc8KWk7YKr0S)  
This video has footage of a Forum created by Hector in Holland and he explains well what the Jolly has to do, the complexity of the model and the aesthetics, illustrating it with snippets of work, but you don't see the Jolly at work. English with subtitles in Dutch. 6 minutes.

**With CARDBOARD CITIZENS**

+ Cardboard Citizens: Newspaper Theatre, January 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfRY1wTRrWA>  
Cardboard Citizens, a historic homeless group from London; dynamic video, it is a possible example. 3 minutes long. In English with English subtitles.

**With JOSÉ SOEIRO**

+ Estudantes Por Empréstimo: a Legislative Theatre Project, 2010

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5P3\\_foN64c&list=PLtaqi3oV2D-NP5CHV4Avb0g0sS\\_tsntjiP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5P3_foN64c&list=PLtaqi3oV2D-NP5CHV4Avb0g0sS_tsntjiP)  
This video summarises the two-years project "Estudantes Por Empréstimo" ("Students in Loans"), carried out by José Soeiro, a left-wing deputy that created a national network of Students Associations to discuss problems related to Higher Education through TO and made TO enter the walls of the parliament. In Portuguese with english subtitles, 10 min.



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