



eCohérence: Innovating for sustainable development



Theatre of the EcoCitizen



eCohérence with the theatre company "The **Echomédiens**" share their practice, made workshops and performances of "**Theatre of the EcoCitizen**" during the European project ASAP "**Art for sustainable action project**". It was financed by **European commission** under the Life Long Learning Program with a Grundtvig Partnership Projects. It has four partners from: Romania, *Traian Demetrescu* Culture House ; Turkey, Gökkusağı Kültür ; Poland, The National Museum in Krakow and the Netherlands, ROC Leiden.

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History of Theatre of the EcoCitizen

The concept of Theatre of the EcoCitizen is based on the methodology and techniques of the Brazilian theatre director **Augusto Boal: Theatre of the Oppressed**. This theatrical innovation initiated in the 60's use art, pedagogy and psychology to make politics more democratic and citizens more active.

Since then, those theatrical tools of social transformation are used in over 70 countries on various issues such as pedagogy, psychology, social work integration, non-violent management of conflicts, the status of women, promotion of health...

In France, experimenting sustainable development issues with the Theatre of the Oppressed began with the project of "Theatre Laboratory of Eco-citizen" in the town of Grasse in 2004. The idea was simple: transpose the social problem of "Theatre of the Oppressed" in socio-environmental problems of the "Theatre of the eco-citizen.

The Theatre of the Oppressed is rooted in a denial of victimization. The victim suffers, he or she is unable to change the situation while the oppressed takes over his life, try to change it. By transposing, we can oppose the inactive polluted citizen but rather polluter and ecocitizen, as polluter, but aware and engaged in a process of changing its behaviours and social rules.

To allow the expression of all people, a multitude of interactive tools can be useful to struggle against the deleterious mechanisms of bodies, minds, emotions and relationships in society: games-exercises, Journal Theatre, Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Rainbow of desire, Legislative Theatre ...

Methodology

Participatory theatre can play with the complex and systemic (global) challenges of the 21st Century, gives the necessary perspective to foster better communication and commitment to change, perform in-depth work on co-responsibility and change behaviours. It brings together stakeholders on an issue and allows a collective search for progress.

Theatre of the EcoCitizen use especially the Forum Theatre because it is characterized by:

- Friendly and playful atmosphere
- Group Dynamics
- Approach focuses on the daily life
- Open process to the surrounding environment

Cooperative and expression Games

Why playing?

For pleasure (emotional release, healing...), personal development (learning...), the relationship to another (share, communicate...) and creativity.

Game Categories:

Presentation, relaxation, stimulation, self-confidence, concentration, creativity, group dynamics ...

Each game has multiple virtues it can respond simultaneously to multiple targets and it varies depending on the variants.

Eg. Game Guide / Blind with negotiation codes:

- sensory awareness
- explore the environment of the place
- confidence in the other
- contract, rules negotiation
- anticipating the needs of others (empathy)

Criteria for progression:

- Concentration to stimulation
- Body to emotional to mental
- Individual to binomial to group
- Confidence to taking risks o Relaxation to creativity o Known to unknown

Animation parameters:

- Choice of frame or adaptation of the framework (place, time, context, environment ...)
- Presentation and / or negotiation rules
- Launching or maintaining group dynamics
- Expression of feelings and awareness of learning
- Management of conflicts and problems
- Improvisation!

Start a sequence of games:

The first rule to be introduced for a sequence of cooperative games is the ability to opt out. Then the rules are defined collectively: What's likely to happen? What it takes for things to go well? What is done if the rules are not followed? In case of overflow, rather than let or punishment, it is better to mark the occasion by redefining the rule to make it more accessible.

Eg. for an instruction not to speak, if the silence can be obtained, allowing to redefine the set sounds like animal noises ..

Some games:

Warming

slow motion race

As its name suggests, is that which comes last who win. This type of game allows body "demecanisation" required to acting.

familiarity

Send the signal names

- Make a circle
- Send a clap hands to the right neighbour faster as possible
- Change direction
- Then with his first name
- Then with the name of the person to whom I send
- Finally, in all directions

I Like, I do not

- Make a circle
- In the middle someone say I love or I not like something by mime
- Then others come closer if they had the same taste or otherwise go away.

This game can also learn about others, stimulate creativity and imagination ...

In a Forum Theatre Project mime helps stimulate creativity and capacity for expression. It's a learning improvisational theatre and a set-up because anyone can get to improvise on what he likes or not.

Creative Signal

- Make a circle
- Everyone says his name with a sound and a gesture
- Someone calls someone else across the circle with the gesture and the sound of the other

Cooperate

The glass snake

- Make a single file and designate "guardian angels"
- All have closed eyes, except "guardian angels"
- Touch-recognition of the front person
- Guardian Angels broke the glass snake by mixing participants
- Participants reconstruct the snake in order by tactile recognition
- Once the snake is reconstituted participants open their eyes

Concentration

Mirror group

- Make a circle
- A person moves slowly and everyone reproduces his or her movements

Creativity

The circle of creativity

- Make a circle
- Somebody did something, the neighbour replies with another gesture
- Somebody says a word, the neighbour replied with another word
- The leader chooses an object and transforms the object and mimicking its use, he give it to the neighbour to create another object
- Then do the same with another object a tell story of the imaginary object

This sequence stimulates the imagination, creativity, spontaneity. The speed can bypass the mind and let it create. Attention, if nothing comes, it can be a bad experiences and bring blockages. So have the flexibility and confidence through the group: "You do not think, you say what comes and if nothing comes, so it is". The same attention should be paid to the group, if some do not follow, we must return to stimulation exercise. We can do lots of laps when the imagination is engaged it will not stop, but whenever the stress is gone. The sequence of exercises is much more alive when there is a progression and not just a juxtaposition.

Mouvement

Word image

- Make a circle
- Start a topic or word
- Everyone-turns, found an image that suits him to represent the word and turns to face the circle
- When everyone is facing the circle everyone shows their image

I sculpt, you become

- Make a circle
- Somebody is dedicated to "clay" and comes to the middle
- Somebody else sculpt "clay" in a significant position
- Others guess

Cooperative picture

- Somebody is dedicated to making a sculpture
- Others complete it depending on what they understand the situation

The battle of the sculptures

- By 2
- 1 Begins with a sculpture and 2 make a sculpture in relation to 1, which is unfreeze and make another sculpture in relation 2, which unfreeze ...

The body expression is more suggestive than talking, it allows for creativity and an unusual decline in our benchmarks.

Confidence

The drunk bottle

- Make a tight circle
- A person comes to the middle and while remaining straight and let herself go to the oscillating movement in all directions driven by the group

Cooperative choice of the work theme

7 + 7 = 7

- Individually, make a list of 7 words in connection with the general theme of work
- By 2, exchange on these lists and produce a new list of 7 words
- 2 + 2 exchange on these lists and produce a new list of 7 words
- Etc.
- At the end you can produce a list of seven words from the group

Vote with 2 voices

- words are listed on a flip chart and read aloud
- everyone is entitled to votes freehand for 2 words

Methodology

A first reflection on "what do we want to do and how we advance towards" leads to identify the target.

In this kind of workshop, which stimulates confidence, relaxation, spontaneity, dynamism, which is reassuring, it's a non-judgmental and confidential frame.

Ask the right to make mistakes and to have lack of decision as a framework, this will trigger confidence and therefore encourage spontaneity.

Relaxation exercises and visualization tools are also effective.

The participation of the facilitator to the games can also bring a confidence and group dynamics.

In addition, dynamic group will be the result of:

- The increase in confidence
- The definition of the objective
- The group size (8 to 15 people)

Image theatre

From words to images, from pictures to words...

Image Theatre is particularly interesting for understanding the complexity of sensitive situations by avoiding the excess or lack of words.

In Image Theatre, the body is used to create images that help participants explore power relations in a group and find solutions to concrete problems. It's an exploratory mode of inquiry in which people express their feelings and experiences physically and visually. The physical image is created from one person or group's experience, but it is then available for others to make their own interpretations or modifications.

Each word has a common denotation for all and has a connotation that is unique for each. Each will have his own interpretation of "sustainable development", and to demonstrate a such idea, when we show rather than make a speech, it provides a clearer understanding of those different definitions.

The Image Theatre concerns two types of approaches:

- The analysis of practices with groups who know and want to solve a social issue that concerns them (relations in a workplace or in a city, a decision to make, the balance to find between "economy" and "environment"...)
- The investigation with groups who do not know and need to make some individual points (personal difficulties to assert his skills, completion of a personal project, how to be more coherent with my thought, how to change my way of consumption...).

Forum Theatre

"Anyone can do theatre, even the actors" Augusto Boal

This form of interactive theatre is to serve the collective search for positive outcomes to the problems experienced. The Forum Theatre is both a tool and a method of active teaching, democratic debate and work on behaviour.

The creative workshop sessions alternating with knowledge acquisition puts peoples in positions of cultural authors. They broaden their vision of a problem, look for possible solutions and self identify as an actor of active citizenship.

The interactive performance widens the debate by opening up to other viewpoints and testing behavioural alternatives.

The author-actors educates their peers and the audience-actors trains for the challenges encountered during the transition from ideas to actions.

Terms:

- Establishment of a group (or subgroups) of 5 to 15 persons
- Conducting workshops staged at least eight hours
- Sessions or discovery learning. Eg courses, educational games, field trips on the environment, development workshops interpersonal skills, etc..
- Representation of a Forum Theatre around 1h15 between sub-groups and / or with their peers

NB: a representation of Forum Theatre with a professional compagny can initiate a workshop project, the goal is more clear for participants, it increases their motivation.

Performance:

First, the play is performed as conventional theatre during approximately 10-30 minutes.

When the play is run a second time, the audience is invited to shout "stop" at any point and take the place of any character whose they feel they understand struggles. In traditional Forum Theatre, this must only be a character depicted as oppressed, or one seen as struggling; in Theater of Ecocitizen this is extended to all characters. They must then attempt to alter the course of dramatic action by trying alternative solutions. These changes must not be "magic" – that is to say, they must respect the realistic parameters set by the characters and context. The actors within the scene must improvise responses to these interventions such that each proposed solution is confronted with realistic tensions and responses, and the consequences and drawbacks of each solution are explored live and with a debate. If an intervention fails, the play continues until another spect-actor stops the play again...

What we have done during the ASAP project

During **European meetings**, when presenting partners, we made a small Forum Theatre on the problem of waste in nature (Roumania May 20, 2010 and Turkey September 18, 2011).

In Romania we did a workshop of expression and creativity with an association of persons with disabilities ; then we concluded with a Forum Theatre on pollution of nature (May 18, 2010). We also participate to a workshop of an Romanian association of Theatre of the Oppressed with young people in prisons (May 21, 2011).



In Holland we have a workshop of expression and communication with migrants of ROC Leiden (May 27, 2011).



In France we organize the European meeting and we held a two days workshop on Image Theatre on sustainable development (March 3 to 4, 2011).



In partnership with the association "Pistes Solidaires", as part of another project on **European Citizenship "City Zen"**, we made a two day training on Forum Theatre with 4 others European partners (Belgium, Italy, Hungary and Latvia) ; we created with the Echomédiens a Theatre Forum about responsible consumption, particularly on transport and solidarity tourism ; then we did three shows in the south of France.

- May 05, 2010: on the occasion of Europe Day 2010, representation in Marseille
- June 13, 2010: at the "Festisol" in Saint Canat
- September 2, 2010: in English during the European Conference of responsible consumption in Marseille



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