



4women project

CONVENTION NUMBER 2020-1-DE02-KA204-007371

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership

Training Programme “Art, Civics, Sport & Coaching for Migrant Women’s Inclusion”

Unit *SENSORY THEATRE METHOD FOR IMPROVEMENT OF MIGRANT WOMEN'S SOCIAL SKILLS*

developed by BIDA e.V. Kultur und Bildung(Germany)

Overall duration: 120 Minutes

“Theatre is a form of knowledge: it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it!” Augusto Boal

Introduction:

The motivation to do this kind of workshop could be: “The desire to learn something more”, “To learn in a different way, to be entertained, surprised, fascinated about some unknown fact about the world”, but also “To have a good time!”

Knowledge and learning are central for the Sensitive Labyrinth Theatre, with the implicit question “How do you get to know the world?”. The accent is not only the (historical or scientific) fact, but on perception and interpretation, the act of getting to know something. This is a dramatic situation, because in the context of SLT to learn something means to get the risk and be surprised to allow your viewpoint to be shifted, to step out of the comfort of “knowing”. Learning becomes a quest, an action.

One of the things the labyrinth does to people is challenge the roles they have in society. In fact, a visitor in a labyrinth is an actor, as far as s/he is involved in the interaction in the different situational meetings. Ideally, like any role game, those meetings expand their notion of social and professional self, and help the communication with the other. This is the reason this method to be very useful with groups in risk.

The SLT challenges the roles of people in society, expands their motion of social and professional self and help communication with the others, making it very useful for work with disadvantaged groups

SLT uses A.R.T. (access, release, transform) method

The participants will be encouraged to become active in the local society by fostering their social awareness through participative art.

Necessary materials:

 blindfolds/ 2 spaces (interior and exterior)

Preparation for the session/recommendation for additional resources:





The trainer should be experienced in facilitating communication and defining the culture of a group with a mixed background.

METHODOLOGIES

1. **Ice-breakers** – used in the beginning of session aiming for participants to know each other, and to develop holistic complicity on the group.
2. **Open-spaces** –used to unblock creativity and inspire participants improvisation.
3. **Buzz groups** –used when higher participation levels are required.
4. **Group works** –used for concrete problem-solving tasks and can be facilitated.
5. **Learning games** – with special incidence on the beginning of the process to develop trust and interdependence within the group.

LESSON PLAN

Aim

Encourage and empower the migrant women to improve their social skills, to act on their role as active citizens of the society by fostering social awareness and inclusion through participative arts (more concrete- Sensory theatre method).

ACTIVITIES

The especially important moment in the workshop is the beginning. And to invite the participants to sit in the circle is a possibility to provide elements as equality, safe, supportive and dialogue space. You can introduce yourself and explain what will happen during the workshop. It is important to create an atmosphere of respect and trust for the individual. Be aware of the verbal and body language that you use. In the next movement game is especially important for the participants to have fun, to start to be open and to be ready to learn something new. It is important for everyone to feel accepted.

Warming up

In the warming up phase, the main targets are to raise a group dynamic, to get the participants being more comfortable and relaxed, so they can “let them fall” more into the main exercises.

Name Echo / 5min

The participants stand in a circle. This gives the possibility to provide elements as equality, safe, supportive and dialogue space. The leader should introduce himself and explain what will happen during the workshop. After that the participants are asked to say their names one by one. Everyone shall go one step into the circle and say his name in the way he/she wants and do a certain movement. After that he/she steps back and all the other participants echo their name back to them simultaneously in the manner and voice and movement in which they say it.

Baby Shark dance / 5min

The leader can choose one children's song with simple and funny dance moves. The group is asked to stand in a circle and the leader will show the dance moves, that the others shall follow. and it is a fun way to get the group warm and relaxed in their acting.

Moving joints and body / 5min

The group keeps standing in a circle. The leader asks everyone to stand still and to start moving only the index fingers of both hands up and down fast. After a reasonable time the group shall also start moving all fingers up and down, with the emphasis on that the rest of the body still is not allowed to be moved. With this task, gradually more and more parts of the body join the movement, so when a new part joins, the part before that doesn't stop it's movement but keeps doing it. The order for the exercise is: *index fingers – all fingers – hands – forearms – whole arms – shoulders – neck/head – feet – whole body*

In the end the participants should be moving all the parts of their body in a chaotic way.

After that for around a minute everyone is asked to stand again still, close their eyes, take a few deep breaths and feel their body.



This exercise gets the participants' bodies warm and helps them to get more comfortable in their being and behaviour, seeing how funny it is and looks like, to be moving like this.

Main exercises

Pass on an object / 5min

The group stands in a circle facing inwards. The leader describes and demonstrates what the task is. He starts by miming and forming an **imaginary** ball in front of him with his hands. After that he transforms this ball into a certain object and shows it by e.g. using it pantomimically. The person next to the right of him shall show when she/ he has understood what it is, by e.g. nodding. Then the leader passes the object, and the person is asked to first form a ball out of it (as kind of a baseline, so everybody knows that a new object is about to be shown) and after that transform it into an object, pass it to the next participant and so on.

This exercise can also be made without the baseline ball, but in our experience, this seems to be sometimes too confusing, so we recommend it with the baseline ball.

Shake hands with all / 10 min

This exercise consists of two similar rounds in which one rule is changed. Everyone is asked to walk around randomly and start looking at the other participants. The task is to shake hands with another person and not let the hand go, until you have found a new hand that you can shake.

In the first round the emphasis lies on the task that you can only let a hand go, if you have found for yourself another hand to shake.

When the round is over, the exercise will be repeated. But this time the task is that you are first allowed to let a hand go, when you have found for yourself a new hand **and** your partner has at this moment of time also another hand that he is currently shaking, so you do not let your partner go alone.

After this second round the participants are asked what their feelings and thoughts are about the two rounds and the group can discuss what we can learn from it.

One of the main points is that in the first round you are mainly focused on yourself and on your goal to find a new hand. But in the second round you are forced to interact with the group around you, to look after your partner, and by the fact that he/she is also looking and interacting with other people, a whole net is created in which basically everyone is paying attention for everyone. The group awareness, group dynamic and the attentiveness for the environment are raised by this exercise.

Instant sculptures / 10min

The group splits into smaller groups that work together. The trainer asks the groups to produce an image using all materials that they can find in the environment. There is no task about what or how it has to be shown. The groups are completely free to use everything they can find to create anything they want.

In this exercise the leader should rush the people a bit so they are forced to act and create more spontaneous and are prevented from over-thinking.

After the time is over, all the groups walk from artwork to artwork and can talk or explain about what is shown.

This exercise shows the participants the power but also the awe of the position of having the ultimate freedom for doing and creating anything you want. It can be at the same time the most simple and the most difficult task – similar to our lives.

Word image / 15min

The group splits into smaller groups of about 4 people who work together. The trainer prepares notes in advance for every group on which he writes down 5 different words. 3 of them are normal words and 2 are compound, e.g. living room, coffee mug, bookstore etc.

The words can be completely different and from various topics. E.g. certain objects, feelings, emotions, nature phenomena, animals, abstract words, etc.



The groups are then given a few minutes to choose one of the first 3 words and to prepare an image of it, allowed to only use their bodies, gestures, and facial expressions. Then one by one the groups come into the front of the others and show their image. The other groups are asked to nod when they have found out what the shown image is and when every group has understood it, the next group can come to the front and show its image.

There are two important rules that should be emphasised a few times, so the exercise is more effective.

First, the participants are not allowed to talk. They can only communicate without words.

Second, the chosen word has to be shown as an image, a taken photograph. Movements or sounds are not allowed.

After every group has shown its images, a second round begins, where the groups shall show one of the compound words. For this there are two forms of doing the exercise: Either the rules are kept and an image has to be shown or the participants are given the new rule, that they are allowed to show 2 images, one for each word of the compound word. In between they can make a certain sound or movement, just so that the new word is about to be described. Depending on the compound words, the leader chooses, he/she can make the second round of this exercise this or this way.

This exercise really gets the whole group to stretch its imagination though care must be taken to make sure that the words are appropriate to the group.

The participants are given the situation to think of how to use their bodies, their facial expressions, and gestures, which raises body awareness and leads to a more reflected thinking about one's own facial and body appearance. Also, that talking is forbidden shows the people that communication can have many layers beyond words.

The plain mirror / 15min

For this exercise, music can be used.

Two lines of participants, each person looking directly into the eyes of the person facing them. Those in line A are the "subjects", the people, those in line B are the "images". The exercise begins. Each subject undertakes a series of movements and changes of expression, which his image must copy, right down to the smallest detail. *The subject should not be the enemy of his image – this exercise is not a competition, but a cooperation.* The idea is not to make sharp movements which are impossible to follow, but to seek a perfect synchronisation of movement, so that the image may reproduce the subject's gesture as exactly as possible. The degree of accuracy and synchronisation should be such that an outside observer would not be able to tell who is leading and who is following. All movements should be slow (so the image may be able to reproduce and even anticipate the movement) and each one should follow naturally from the last. It is equally important that the participants are attentive to the smallest details of facial and body expressions.

After one round, the leader announces that the partners will swap roles. He/she gives a signal and at that moment the subjects and images change their roles, without stopping their movement and continuing it with the new roles.

The outside observer should not be able to perceive the change of roles, and this invisibility of change-over can be achieved if the synchronisation and imitation of actions are perfect.

Who said "Ah"? (blindfolded) / 10min

Everyone closes their eyes and wanders slowly and gently around the space. Talking or making sounds is not allowed. The leader who is not blindfolded designates by a soft touch on their head one person to say "Ah" loudly in any way they like. The rest of the group must work out who it was.

As a blindfolded exercise, the participants are taught to use their other senses to discover the world. With closed eyes you receive a whole new viewpoint on the world and your awareness for other information other than the visual is raised. By this you can create more mindfulness for your environment and the people in it.



Blind Journey (blindfolded) / 20min/ Best if done Outdoors

The participants are asked to work in pairs, preferably with partners that aren't from the same origin group. One person is blindfolded and the other takes them on a "journey" through the environment for about 10 minutes. The blindfolded person can also be led to e.g. listen to a certain sound, touch something, interact with other pairs, etc. The sighted partner always needs to take care of the blind one. After that partners switch roles.

Also in this activity the participants aren't allowed to talk.

It is a silent exercise, so the participants can not obtain information by words or by seeing. They have to rely on the other sensual information that they actually always receive, but usually do not pay attention to. The environment can be "seen" blindfolded in a much wider perspective and mindfulness is taught.

Final Game: Finger Touch / 5min

The whole group stands in a circle. The participants touch tip of their two neighbours' index fingers with their own index fingertips. Everyone in the group then tries to clap at the same time. Anyone can initiate the clap.

The exercise is about waiting a reasonable while and feeling the impulse, the energy of the group and to clap all together.

EVALUATION / REFLECTION

Evaluation/Reflection

After each exercise the participants should be given some moments to be able to say something and to evaluate and discuss. Because there are several exercises, we recommend to evaluate after each one for a few minutes or as long as the group dynamic shows. After all exercises the group can then sit down in a big circle and talk about feelings, thoughts, emotions, recognitions, etc they had during the whole activity. Everyone should be given the chance to speak out for as long as he wants and the leader should also try to include also the people that tend to not talk so much. But no one should be forced to talk or to say something he/she doesn't want.

There are several questions that can be discussed

-  Were you able to explore and develop your personal and cultural identities?
-  Raise awareness concerning key issues of today's society?
-  Can we say that this workshop promotes active citizenship and social skills?
-  What do you think about the sentence: Positive "strokes" are the best energy raisers of all?
-  What do you think about:
 - my relationship to me
 - my relationship to you
 - my relationship to my world?

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