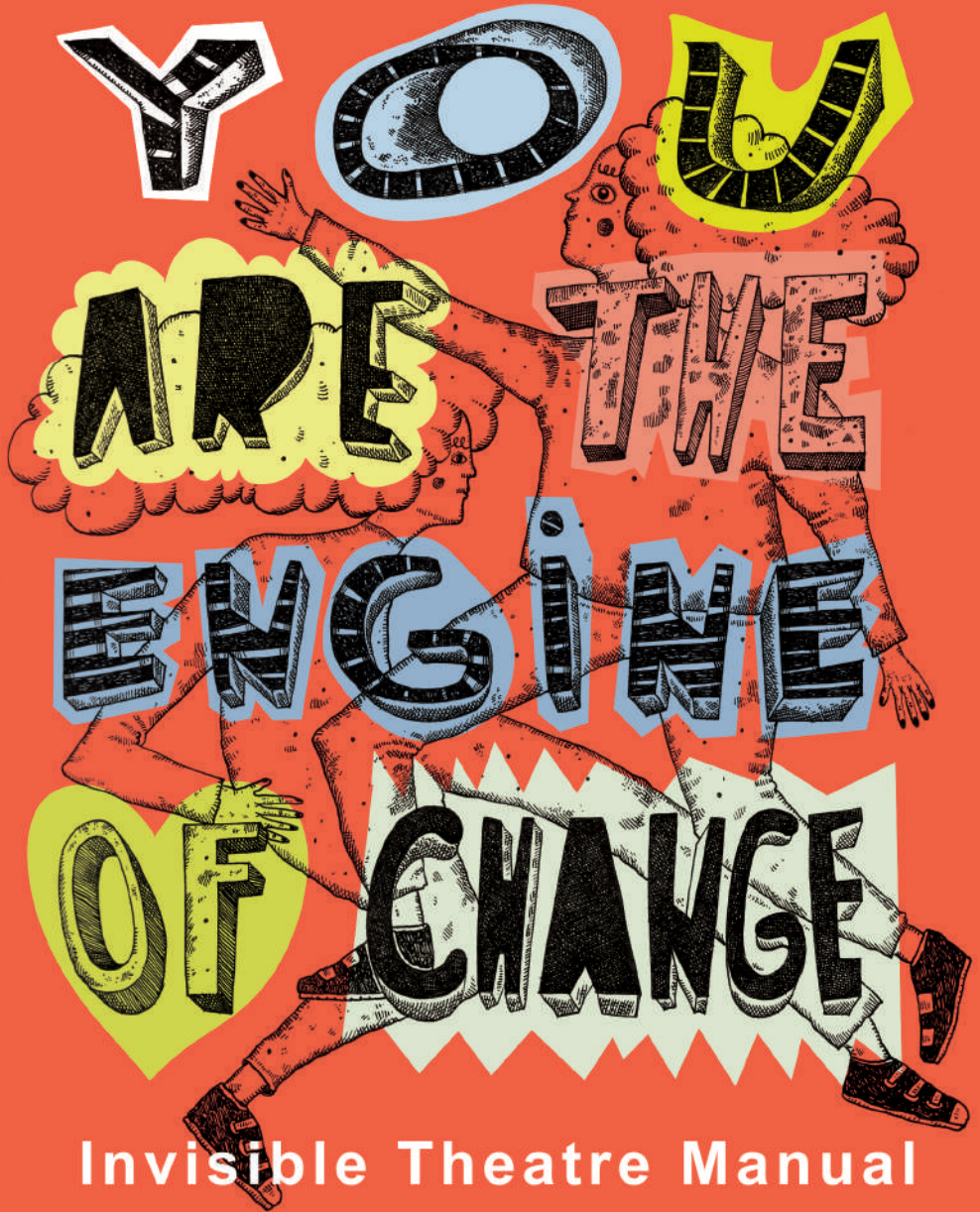


ANDREEA-LOREDANA TUDORACHE



Invisible Theatre Manual

2019



# You Are the Engine of Change

Invisible Theatre Manual

2019



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*“Theatre can help us build our future rather than just waiting for it.”*

*“Invisible Theatre makes oppression visible.”*

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**Augusto Boal**

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# Introduction

*What is this manual about?*

This manual represents the result of a long exciting journey in Theatre of the Oppressed field. For years, we have explored Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, and, later, Newspaper Theatre, as deep as we could, and when we finally experimented with Invisible Theatre, which was a bit of a surreal experience.

**It was powerful, very intense, gave us a rush of adrenaline, it happened faster than we could process, left us with lots of questions, wonders and also a strong feeling we triggered some change (even we did not know what and how).**

The intensity of such experiences is quickly followed by doubts, uncertainty of continuing, fear of risks and many teams end up actually having only a one-time exposure to such a method. **The one time that is highly glorified, but at the same time, there is that “something” that prevents them from trying it again.**

That “something” is connected to fear of failing the second time, understanding that it requires much deeper and serious preparation, fear of risks that were, maybe, avoided the first time by chance, that it was a one-time fluke, and not a real thing, etc. Whatever that “something” is, it is interesting to observe its existence, which is strongly related to the unusual nature of Invisible Theatre, but not only.

Very often, actors embark on working with Invisible Theatre insufficiently prepared, underestimating its complexity, seriousness, potentially damaging nature, etc. and that can also be a reason to not continue working after a one-time “trial”.

In this manual we have gathered an almost complete package, to support actors in working with this method. **At the same time, very important, this is not a manual for beginners in Theatre of the Oppressed field.**

Invisible Theatre is the wickedest of all Theatre of the Oppressed methods; it requires competencies which need to be developed first in other type of methods, and, hopefully, any interested potential practitioner will seriously reflect before working with this method.

**This manual includes** very useful information, which, on one side, could be informative for any curious person, but also very helpful and practical for anybody interested to actually practice this method.

- Clear explanations on what the aim is, and overview of this method;
- Concrete examples from our practice and other colleagues in the field;
- Practical guidelines and steps to follow in the process of preparing and implementing Invisible Theatre;
- Ideas and suggestions for handling risks associated with this method;
- Concrete tools for assessing the impact and evaluation of Invisible Theatre results;
- A view on some of the dilemmas triggered by this method;
- A curriculum of exercises, to be used for preparing the actors;

**The aim of this manual is:**

- To contribute to a more serious, responsible and profound attitudes towards working with Invisible Theatre.
- To equip and prepare Invisible Theatre actors more holistically.

Any person who wishes to use this manual is invited to do it wisely, responsibly and with lots of care for the people involved in the process (actors and non-actors).

Enjoy the reading,  
**Andreea-Loredana Tudorache**



# “You Are the Engine of Change”

## *Project Overview*

**A.R.T. Fusion Association (Romania)**, together with its partners, developed this project to answer to different needs detected in partner organisations’ countries and regions. In youth work field there is a lack of advanced competencies in practical methods aiming to improve the situation of their direct target groups.

Partners involved in this project and which made it true are coming from Burundi, Bulgaria, Kenya, Latvia, Nigeria, Portugal, Romania and Tanzania.

The main goal of the project was to raise the capacity of youth work sector to increase the participation and involvement of young people by enabling them to use theatre of the oppressed methods.

This methodology is highly adaptable, with a large capacity to cover all kinds of social issues, power abuse and oppression.

*The project was implemented between November 2017 and October 2019.*



## **The project achieved the following objectives:**

- To introduce innovative methodologies in youth work field on 2 continents;
- To raise the capacity of partner organisations to operate at European level and in intercontinental mobility projects;
- To stimulate the exchange of best practices in youth work field across continents;
- To increase quality of youth organisation projects in the 2 continents;
- To develop and improve competencies in Theatre of the Oppressed methods for youth workers from Europe and Africa;
- To stimulate the development of a network of Theatre of the Oppressed multipliers in various regions of Europe and Africa;
- To develop proactive attitudes and the sense of initiative among the NGO partners' members and, also, among the beneficiaries of the partners (young people).
- To increase the level of active participation among the direct and indirect beneficiaries

**The project's main beneficiaries (32 youth workers)** took part in a long-term training course focused on developing practical working competencies in theatre of the oppressed methodology.

The training approach was designed as the following:

1. **An initial training course for developing basic competencies in theatre of the oppressed methodology (Image and Forum Theatre)** for the future multipliers (it took place in Bujumbura, Burundi, in October 2018);
2. **A practice phase in each of the partner countries**, where the multipliers, prepared and implemented Forum Theatre performances for at least 1600 young people (at least 200 in each country). Topics of the performances were bullying, mobbing, domestic violence, family manipulation, gender inequality, drug abuse and early pregnancies.
3. The practice phase was followed **by the second training course** (which took place in Busteni, Romania, in March 2019), **for assessing the**

first practice phase results, for developing advanced competencies in Theatre of the Oppressed and developing skills in Newspaper and Invisible Theatre.

4. **The second practice phase** took place in the partner countries, where the multipliers transferred their competencies in a new round of performances for more than 100 people in each country. The topics tackled in this phase were: bullying, violence against women, cyber bullying, emotional manipulation in a relationship, road accidents etc.
5. **A final evaluation meeting** was organized in Riga, Latvia, in August 2019, in order to assess and evaluate the impact of the whole project and plan how the network will continue to work in a coordinated manner from now on.
6. **Each partner disseminated the project results** (including this manual) in their communities, to interested people and other organisations, in order to increase the interest of the civil society towards theatre of the oppressed methodology and its impact.





### The main project results were:

- **A network** of strong organisations competent in theatre of the oppressed on 2 continents (Africa and Europe).
- **32 multipliers** who are confident and independent practitioners in theatre of the oppressed field.
- **120 volunteers** who got involved in the local performances as actors and support members.
- **52 performances (Forum, Newspaper and Invisible Theatre)** implemented in 8 countries on the topics of bullying, mobbing, domestic violence, emotional manipulation in a relationship, cyber bullying, violence against women, gender inequality, early pregnancies, road accidents, racism, etc.
- **2400 direct audience members**, mostly young people who took part in the interactive process, explored examples of oppression from their life, increased their motivation and got empowered.
- **53 additional local partners** such as schools, social services institutions, youth centres, foster homes, other civil society members, media and local authorities.
- **9200 indirect beneficiaries.**
- **This manual** (which you are reading at the moment), to support youth workers in Theatre of the Oppressed field.

# Theatre of the Oppressed Methodology

## *Brief Overview*

**Theatre of the Oppressed** is a type of theatre methodology developed by Augusto Boal (1931-2009) in the 1960s, inspired by the critical pedagogy and pedagogy of the oppressed concepts of Paulo Freire (1921-1997). Both of them were based in Brazil at the time, and the social-political context of those days (post-colonialist era and authoritarian military junta regime) significantly influenced the development of these concepts, approaches and methodology.

**In the 1960s Augusto Boal experimented with theatre** in order to give voice to the oppressed, to empower them to fight the oppression in their life. At first, he was active in Brazil, and then he was forced to leave the country, so he continued to work with these methods in other South American countries, and later predominantly in Europe. During his lifetime he got in contact with many theatre practitioners, as well as other people interested in working with theatre for social change, and he trained and worked together with them in various countries in the world. The initially developed methods were transformed and new methods emerged as well. The people who he got in touch with continued working with these methods in their communities, adapting and adjusting them to their own contexts.

It is estimated that from the '60s to present times, the methods included under the umbrella of Theatre of the Oppressed have probably reached more than 100 countries, although, in fact, it is difficult to monitor this aspect because there is no coordinated monitoring system that can track down all the practitioners around the world.

Due to various factors the methods were transformed, upgraded, adjusted, adapted, changed, etc. **and at the moment there is no set of concrete and specific criteria that could attempt to define or standardize this methodology.**

The richer arsenal of approaches and the complete freedom in working with these methods allowed beginners and experienced practitioners to work in various settings, types of communities and beneficiaries, which lead to different levels of impact. The downside of this “freedom” also lead to practices which could be categorized as potentially dangerous, for the team or public, for their emotional and, sometimes, physical wellbeing, regarding the message that they sent (sometimes reinforcing oppression or promoting violence) and doing more harm than good.

**Very often, the practitioners in the field use the same terminology** (which is often taken for granted), but refer to different things, and there is no concrete reference point to be used.

Although the methodology was initially developed as a community-based approach, for community intervention and empowerment, these days you will find various types of Theatre of the Oppressed being used in workshops or training courses (as a tool for introducing or debating on specific topics), or as a method of teambuilding in the corporate sector.

We make these mentions in order to be aware of them while referring to, or exploring Theatre of the Oppressed in this education material and, also, in other contexts.

**Main features of Theatre of the Oppressed Methodology** (*which should not be confused with criteria for defining Theatre of the Oppressed, since they do not exist*):

- **It is an interactive type of theatre** – the audience engage actively, they can participate in the process and become “spect-actors”;
- **Tackles real-life oppression** in its various forms (the discussion on this topic is vast, as, very often, oppression can be interpreted in endless ways, and can be applied to almost all areas of life);
- **It aims to bring along a change** in relation with the specific oppression approached – mostly by empowering the oppressed and people around them.

**Main types of methods included under Theatre of the Oppressed umbrella** (*the description provided here is simplified and, for sure, will not provide enough understanding regarding the methods, but rather give a basic idea*):



## Forum Theatre

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- It is one of the most popular types of Theatre of the Oppressed methods. In a Forum Theatre performance we often see a depicted real-life case (which reflects a concrete situation of oppression), in which the audience is invited to actively participate by coming on the stage to propose solutions to the exposed examples of oppression. Based on the proposals, ideas, interventions of the audience, a discussion (forum) with audience takes place;
- In the long term, it aims at the audience applying the proposed solutions in their real life (if the depicted topic is relevant for them, which should be the case);
- The process is facilitated, moderated by a Joker, who makes the connection between the stage (actors) and the audience;
- Being so popular, it is also one of the methods that are being applied in an extremely large number of approaches. We have developed a very detailed manual on how to work with this method based on our experiences. Besides detailed information about the structure and technical aspects of the method, the manual includes a comprehensive curriculum for starting up a Forum Theatre group. The manual can be found here: <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1503>

## Image Theatre

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- The main characteristic of this method is that it works with body statues/postures (images) to depict aspects related to oppression in certain forms. This technique can be used as a supporting exercise in the process of development of the other methods (Forum, Legislative, Newspaper Theatre, and Rainbow of Desire) or as a separate method in interaction with the audience.
- Working with images also leads to a variety of approaches, as it is very easy and leaves a lot of space for creativity and imagination.
- In the previously mentioned manual on Forum Theatre we have included, as well, a section on Image Theatre and one approach of working with the method described in detail.

## Newspaper Theatre

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- The same as Image Theatre, it can be used as a technique (exercise) for the process of development of the other methods, or as an independent method.
- The main characteristics are that core sources of information (which are later used in its process) are newspapers or media materials (articles, advertisements, etc.). These can be used as inspiration or provide the main material for the artistic outcome.
- Among its aims is stimulation of critical thinking and “consumption” of media content, in order to push engagement and interest towards issues raised through the performance (linked with oppression).
- Newspaper Theatre is quite loosely shaped and implemented based on the way newspapers inspire the working team. It can also make use of black humour and irony in order to trigger deeper reflection and debates on various topics.



## Legislative Theatre

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- It addresses examples of oppression, which are supported or done by state institutions, and for which attitudinal changes are not sufficient to overcome the oppression, but the system needs to change (laws, procedures, regulations, etc.)
- It often follows the same structure as Forum Theatre, but aims to extract ideas from the audience, in order to draft proposals for a law or changes in a law (at local, regional or national level).
- This process should be organized in partnership with the institutions which are responsible for taking the proposed drafts further (municipalities, local councils, schools, parliaments, etc.). The organising teams follow up with advocacy work and make sure the proposals reach the responsible institutions and are taken into consideration.
- There is no guarantee that the ideas of the citizens will actually make it into the final version of the law/s.

## Invisible Theatre

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- It is implemented in public places (streets, cafes, restaurant, shops, etc.) and it is based on an initially planned scenario, which is then changed by the people from the public space. The initial scenario includes and anticipates engagement of the audience – public present on the location of the performance.
- The action looks naturally and passers-by should not realize that this was, in fact, directed before. According to them, they truly believe this is a real-life situation.
- It can tackle examples of oppression that are happening in public places, but usually nobody intervenes (and in this way they are stimulated to do so), or oppression on a bigger scale, present within the society (in order to open a debate in this regard).
- It is one of the methods with more risks and additional precaution is

needed for its implementation. Also, it is one of the most misused and misunderstood methods from the whole arsenal.

- In the next sections of this manual we will offer detailed information about this specific method and guidelines on how to work with it.



## Rainbow of Desire

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- This method mainly tackles inner oppression, which exists within us from various past events and relationships.
- It has a therapeutic approach and it does not require exposure to an audience. It is designed mainly for a personal inner process within a trustworthy group, which encourages the group members to empower themselves (by reducing or eliminating the inner oppression) through different exercises (mainly based on Image Theatre techniques).
- Bearing in mind the extremely personal approach of this technique, it should be used with extreme care and by professionals that can handle strong emotional processes within a group.

Around the world there are various formal and non-formal educational programs (of various lengths; delivered by various institutions, organisations, theatre groups, etc.) aiming to train different professionals in Theatre of the Oppressed methods (to introduce these methods or to build their capacity to apply them in their communities).

**This methodology is not standardized through any coordinated system, which means that none of these available options of education in the field have more authority than the others.**

# Invisible Theatre

## Overview

**Similar to other methods of Theatre of the Oppressed**, Invisible Theatre emerged as result of a constraining environment in which Augusto Boal found himself in a certain moment. In this case, he was in Argentina (early '70s) and the team he was working with was afraid of the police, regarding the team's theatre activities – therefore, Invisible Theatre, **the theatre that does not look like theatre, was born**. They wanted to do theatre, but did not want the police to know they were doing it.

**The key aspect of Invisible Theatre is that it is *invisible*** – only the actors know that what they are doing is theatre (they have prepared for their roles and the scenario of the play before). **There are no spectators**, because a spectator knows they are a spectator – there are people that happened to be part of that specific context in which the play is being implemented.

**The process is interactive** (*as it is the case with all the methods of Theatre of the Oppressed*) and **has a certain goal** (agreed by each team, case by case, depending on their topic).

**The main general aims of Invisible Theatre** are, in fact:

- To make different types of oppression visible
- To stimulate debate
- To provoke reactions towards specific types of oppression

### **Main characteristics**

- It takes place in public settings such as streets, public transportation, shops, bars/restaurants, markets, etc.
- The scenario of the play has to be realistic in terms of taking place in that specific public location. It does not necessarily mean that it

reflects situations that actually happened there or that they occur often – it means that whatever scenario is developed has to be perceived as something which could realistically happen there, hence the people around will not suspect it is theatre.

- The topic of performance has to reflect/address oppression which takes place in the society where the play is implemented.
- **It is not revealed to the audience members that it was theatre at any stage in the process (or afterwards)** - for all non-actors involved in the process this was reality (*more details on the reasons behind this aspect are introduced later*).



# Invisible Theatre

## What It Is and What It Is Not

**Invisible Theatre** is the most difficult method from all Theatre of the Oppressed methods. It is also the method that is approached with the most superficiality by many wannabe practitioners. Despite its high level of complexity and difficulty, it is perceived as simple, easy to do and often implemented with these assumptions, therefore not reaching its real impact and general goal.



### Invisible Theatre is NOT:

- **A social experiment!**

Invisible Theatre is not meant to be done in order to test people's reactions in certain situations or events and extract conclusions out of this. As the name suggest, experiments are conducted by scientists and they have precise criteria, indicators and hypotheses they follow, as well as certain experimental code of conducts and ethics.

Invisible Theatre is implemented by actors who do not have any hypothesis and do not want to test reactions. Indeed, various social experiments can also be "invisible" and can resemble, from this point of view, the outlook of Invisible Theatre, BUT the main distinction here is the different purpose and process.

In a social experiment, in order to not alter the accuracy of the results, there is no influence on the subjects - there is a certain created situation and then just monitoring of people's reactions. In Invisible Theatre, in fact, to be **interactive and engage people is the core part of the process** and that cannot be standardized. The scenario often changes during the implementation.

- **A researching tool!**

Invisible Theatre is not done in order to see how many people react (and how they react) towards the created situation. The number of people who react/get involved depends on many factors besides the scenario itself, like the improvisation skills of the actors, the coordination among performers, their level of experience, the relevance and importance of the topic for the people, the location, the number of people at the location before the start of the performance, etc.

Of course, there is evaluation and impact assessment in Invisible Theatre (*see the chapter in the manual on how to conduct it*), but that is done in order to measure the level of achievement of the planned objective and assess the process; it is not an objective in itself.

- **A prank, joke or trick!**

More specifically, we refer to comedy gigs similar to the ones seen in TV shows using hidden cameras in which situations are “invisible” at first, soon become a prank/joke/trick played on the involved people.

The purpose of such gigs is to entertain the people who will watch the material later on, or only the people who planned the prank, and by this it is evident that they are NOT Invisible Theatre in the sense of Theatre of the Oppressed.

- **A flash mob!**

A flash mob is not an invisible action, to beggin with. No matter the type of flash mob we are referring to, people around notice that it is a flash mob (*or at least some sort of action*). A flash mob cannot be confused for an Invisible Theatre action, even if it is delivered in public settings spontaneously and suddenly.

- **Street theatre!**

Yes, Invisible Theatre often takes places on the streets (but not only), yet this does not make it street theatre because the latter is, in fact, *visible* theatre and it is meant to be *visible* and attract people to be spectators of the planned performance.

# Invisible Theatre

## Examples

To better illustrate what we mean by Invisible Theatre in our practice we provide a few Invisible Theatre examples. In the next chapters, where we introduce more technical details on how to construct an Invisible Theatre play we will refer to some of the examples listed here.

The following productions were prepared and delivered by groups of actors taking part in intensive Theatre of the Oppressed training programs.

We included a few, with brief descriptions, to provide a general overview on the way an Invisible Theatre play looks in reality. More abundant details on how to prepare and structure such performances are included in the next chapter.

### June 2019 (Madeira/Portugal)

- Location: beach
- **Aim : To provoke reactions countering sexualisation of women**
- Scenario: 2 men (oppressor and ally) are staring, taking photos and making comments about 2 women (oppressed and her ally) as they are doing yoga poses and stretching on the beach. The women are responding and initiating a dialogue about the behaviour of the oppressor, who, in return, justifies it as being provoked by the oppressed herself. At the same time, on other parts of the beach there are neutral and allies (actors) of both sides, commenting on what is happening. The interaction between the oppressor and the oppressed is happening nearby and their conversation is loud enough. More people (non-actors) engage in the discussions on the topic with different views, subtly directed by actors' inputs.
- Duration: approximately 40 minutes
- Impact: approximately 15 people

## March 2019 (Buşteni-Sinaia/Romania)

- Location: bus and bar (2 performances)
- **Aim: To stimulate proactive reactions against racist behaviours**
- Scenario:
- BUS: One black lady and her friend are getting into the bus. A couple which is already in the bus is obviously disturbed by the sight of a black person. Other actors (neutral or allies) are placed in different parts of the bus. The oppressor starts talking to his partner about black people and making nasty comments and jokes. The friend of the oppressed overhears and tries to challenge them – the discussion becomes heated, the other actors join in and, also, few other passengers (non-actors). According to the plan they go out of the bus at different stops.
- BAR: The scenario is similar, except for the fact that actors take different seats in the bar. The impact was stronger in the bar, as more people got more strongly engaged against the oppressor.
- Duration: approximately 15 minutes in the bus and 30-40 minutes in the Bar
- Impact: approximately 5 people in the bus and 10-15 in the bar.

## 2019 (Madeira/Portugal), 2017 and 2019 (Sinaia/Romania)

- Location: bar (3 performances)
- **Aim: To stimulate proactive reactions against homophobia**
- Scenario: The actors enter a bar at various moments. First the oppressors, allies, neutrals and the last to enter are the oppressed (a same-sex couple - in our example it was a lesbian couple holding hands). They all sit at different tables, but still in each other's proximity. The homophobic person starts making remarks and comments with their friend, as well as to the waiter (non-actor). Oppressed, allies and neutral get engaged in the discussions at different moments, based on the argument and evolution of the conversation. Non-actors are involved in the dialogue of the actors, who can also pretend to not hear/understand what is happening, and ask questions.
- Duration: approximately 30-40 minutes
- Impact: approximately 10 people in each performance.





## 2019 - (Sinaia/Romania)

- Location: supermarket
- **Aim: To stimulate a debate around the topic of environmental (eco) behaviours**
- Scenario: A group of friends are entering the supermarket to make shopping. The oppressed already has reusable bags or containers in order to avoid using plastics or unnecessary packaging. Other people from her group do not care and buy as they find (also, they did not bring any bags). While shopping, the main oppressor in the group is constantly teasing and mocking the protagonist for her useless attempt. The discussion gets a bit more heated around the cashier and evolves in bigger discussions about infrastructure of recycling, who is responsible, who is polluting more, what actions are worth it / changing anything, etc.
- Duration: approximately 30-40 minutes
- Impact: approximately 10 people

**The next to introduce are a few examples from other practitioners.**

Many of these examples were mentioned in various materials without sufficient details on the place, time and impact.

We include only the general overview of the scenario in order to add more ideas which can help to understand how this method looks in reality. By no means should the simplified explanations of these examples be taken as easy to reproduce scenario drafts. Each of these performances was based on intensive and extensive preparation work and was adapted to the specificities of the location.



- **To counteract passivity around domestic violence** (*locations: shop and bars*). One couple with obvious tensions enters the location. The other actors are already on set in various proximities. The man is irritated and constantly verbally abuses his partner or humiliates her either for the things she says, chooses, orders and even by the people she talks to (which happen to be other actors in the scenario). Some non-actors from the location were engaged in discussion with the allies and neutral and, at times, with the oppressed or oppressor himself. More often it was noticed the people were more engaged in related conversations after the couple left the premises. In one situation the shop owner threatened by calling the police as a result of the way the conversation evolved and the oppressor becoming more obviously irritated.

*\*similar concept was tested by our actors in 2017 and in 2019, with similar results, especially with more lively reactions after the couple exited the location.*

- **To trigger critical debate on health insurance** (in American context) (*location: shop/restaurant*). After making a purchase/going out of the place, the main protagonist is showing considerable distress due to her problem with kidney stones. Her friend intervenes and suggests taking her to the hospital, but she refuses as she doesn't have health insurance and doesn't have the means to pay. From this point a bigger discussion with other present people (actors and non-actors) is generated, about the social rights, health insurance, rich versus poor, power etc.
- **To provoke debate around the topic of dowry and its negative consequences in India** (*location: bus*). One couple starts having a heated discussion about dowry and marriage based on the case of one of their sisters. The conversation becomes heated and other actors join in from various parts of the bus. Non-actors get involved and quite an ample debate around dowry takes place.

**Next to introduce** are some of the most popular **scenarios developed and implemented under Augusto Boal's direct supervision.**

The full scenarios (with the text used by actors in their roles) can be found in Boal's books and articles.

- **To trigger debate around poverty and economic gaps in the society** (*Location: restaurant in Peru*) Actors are seated at different tables in the restaurant. The main protagonist orders luxurious meals and at the end declares he will pay by labour work, as he doesn't have the money to pay the bill. This leads to strong reaction of waiter (non-actor) and also comments of the actors and non-actors from the other tables. These reactions generate heated discussions about money, poverty, labour payment, capitalism, solidarity, equity, huge gaps in the society, etc.
- \* **In Belgium (few years later)** Augusto Boal worked with a similar concept in a different scenario performed in a supermarket. This time the main protagonist is buying a few necessities and at the cashier he declares he doesn't have money, but wants to pay with labour work, as he

is unemployed (*at that time in Belgium there was a high rate of unemployment*), but he really needs those products. Different actors are placed on the cue or in the vicinity of the conversation between the seller (*who eventually calls the manager*) and the customer. The discussion evolves on touching on topics of poverty, labour power, survival, solidarity, etc.

- **To provoke reactions towards sexual harassment** (*Location: metro in Paris*). The scenario was unfolding on a longer journey of a metro line in Paris with actors coming in and out at various stops. The first part of the scenario was focusing on some common type of harassment from a man towards a woman (actors) like rubbing his leg against hers or touching her. She is protesting and telling him to stop and he is denying anything happened. Another actor defends the oppressor. The assumption at this stage was that nobody will intervene and, indeed, nobody did. The oppressed eventually moves to another part of the metro.

At the next stations more actors come in and perform the second part of the scenario with a female harassing a male actor in a similar way and he reacts similarly like the female victim in the previous scene. From here more actors started their roles to trigger more comments (also from non-actors) in relation with what was considered acceptable before and should be acceptable now as well (because nobody sanctioned the male aggressor's behaviour before).

More discussion evolved on gender roles, double standards, power, violence, victim-blaming, what is acceptable or not regardless the gender, reasons to stand up against such behaviours or not, etc.

- **To provoke dialogue about racism and islamophobia in New York in the aftermath of 9/11 events** (*Location: public touristic squares*). The actors were portraying tourists taking photos of the Empire State Building. The oppressors were commenting about 2 other female tourists (actors) in hijabs, and making remarks about terrorism, safety and war. The women responded and more actors and non-actors got involved in the bigger discussion.

# Invisible Theatre

## Concrete Guidelines

This chapter contains information and details necessary for a team of actors to prepare and implement Invisible Theatre. The content of this unit is meant to provide theoretical input and clarification on how to work with the method and specific guidelines for preparing and developing scenarios.

**It is important to mention/remind that the requirement from any team/person interested to operate with this method is previous experience in other Theatre of the Oppressed methods.**

The explanations provided in this chapter are often referring to concepts and theories which are familiar to practitioners in Theatre of the Oppressed field.

In the next chapter we list a series of games and exercises meant to prepare the actors for the acting in Invisible Theatre performances.



## Context Analysis

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**This is the very first step that a team of actors needs to do at the beginning of their journey** of development of scenarios in Invisible Theatre.

By context we refer to the national, regional and local context as they, at various times, might be relevant and help the team take decision for further phases.

Analysing the context includes actions such as:

- **Reading/ Following media** and noticing topics of main interest or concern. Analysing media can also signal location of different type of oppressive situations and peoples' reactions happening in public spaces.

This documentation might show huge differences in what can be a hot topic among cities in one country, regions, as well as national interest compared with local one. For example, one topic can be generally relevant at national level (like domestic violence), but some topics can be very regional and trigger much more interest from the people in that region (maybe even more than the nationally relevant topics) - for example, discrimination/violence towards a certain ethnic group, as the community has a big population of that specific group or issues related to tourists in a very touristic spot of the country.

- **Reading/ searching statistics and reports** regarding different types of oppression from the society (main topics, affected groups, answers of relevant actors, concrete cases, etc.).

This action helps not only to understand the context and eventually choose the most suitable topic, but also to develop the scenario and lines of the actors. This documentation also provides information about age groups and how they are affected by various issues directly or indirectly.

All this information will influence the choice of locations which have different age groups (like a bar in a student campus would offer different demographic compared to a bar near train station or local market).



- **Visit to public places and events in the town/city:** markets, supermarkets, malls, public squares, museums, parks, touristic spots, bars, restaurants, bus/train stations, public transportation areas, campuses, dormitories, hotels, festivals, concerts, public authorities' areas, schools, etc.

In these visits team members should observe: demographics, traffic of people, the differences in flow of people present in those locations throughout the day, what the people do in these locations, durations of stay, existing type of security, as well as any unusual happenings, events, discussions occurring in those locations, etc.

All this information is relevant for choosing possible locations for the performance.

## Topic of the Performance

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The context analysis, if done in-depth and adequately, offers sufficient information to choose the most suitable topic to work with.

The topic should be:

- **A burning issue at that moment in the area** (*could be only a relevant local topic or a national one*).

It has to be **an issue reflecting oppression**. It could either be a very concrete example of oppression between individuals, or more abstract, by society, system, mentality, or oppression supported or done by state institutions towards its citizens.

It is important to reflect on the type of topic the team wants to work with: will it be a topic with which the team relates to emotionally, or more intellectually? Emotional topics trigger (heated) reactions more easily, but can come with more potential risks. Intellectual topics are easier to unfold debates and more complex discussions as people are emotionally detached.

**A burning issue shouldn't be taboo.** Invisible Theatre does not introduce topics to a specific group, does not make a group aware of things they do not know about, does not tackle topics out of the norms or things which are considered illegal. For example, in a country where homosexuality is criminalised, this is not a suitable topic to approach with Invisible Theatre. The topic should be of general interest and within the legal terms of the country/region it is implemented.

- **A genuine concern for possible future “audience”**

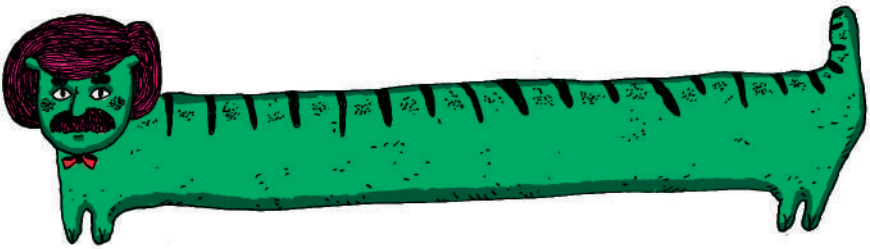
They are either directly affected, or indirectly, but in a strong way, in order to be sufficiently triggered by the possible performances and engage in them.



- **Safe enough for the team to deal with.**

Some topics are heavier than others, more sensitive or able to potentially provoke stronger reactions. The team needs to assess their level of expertise and competence to handle discussions or reactions which can get heated up. For sure, beginner groups should work on topics that are considered “lighter” and safer.

Nevertheless, no matter the level of experience of certain team, groups should avoid working with topics which often trigger violent reactions. If, for example, in the researching phase transpired that there are often physical attacks on immigrants or specific ethnic groups, such topics should be avoided or extremely carefully assessed before deciding to work with them.



This is more of an optional criterion, but it definitely helps the process, as the actors are more motivated to work on performances which touch on their own interest, as well.

**Once the topic is chosen,** the team needs to **decide on the specific objective/s they want to pursue with the performance.** This helps with the choice of location, but also with the construction of the play and role development.

Generally, the main aim of Invisible Theatre is to stimulate debate and/or to provoke reactions towards the specific types of oppression. The team needs to decide on the specific objective/s and to clearly state them, in order for all actors to be equally aware of them and to have them as a guiding force in the later stages of the process.

## Location

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The possible locations for the performance narrow down by putting the information from the last two phases together.

Once the topic is chosen, the objective/s and the preliminary observations of various public places are analysed together, it will become more evident which locations are suitable.

### Some criteria to have in mind for the final decision:

- **The location needs to have an average people flow** (*at the planned time of the performance*).

Too big or too small people flow is both coming as disadvantage for implementing Invisible Theatre. The way big crowd comes as a hindrance is often miscalculated and not taken seriously by teams. The first thought is that the more is better, but in reality, the bigger the crowd the easier it is to lose the interest/attention/focus of people in a “naturally” occurring event such as invisible theatre. Big crowds are very good for street theatre or actions which are visible and meant to attract attention, but they negatively affect the potential of an Invisible Theatre piece. What average means is, of course, relative for the location itself and should be decided within the team, based on their judgement.

- **The noise factor has to be carefully assessed.**

If the location is noisy, a concert is planned, music is always loud, etc. then it is not a suitable location. Invisible Theatre needs an ambient where people (potential audience) can overhear conversations among actors and they are more likely to be pulled in the discussions.

In order for the performance to emerge in the chosen location naturally the dialogues should happen at a normal volume or slightly louder. If there is a need for shouting, then most likely the people around will notice this is pre-directed.

- **Demographics of the location.**

Which types of people/groups frequent that specific location the most and how relevant are they for the topic you have chosen to work with? Depending on how specific your topic is the demographics can influence the choice of exact place heavily. For example, if you want to address cyberbullying you might want to select locations where youth are gathering (as they are more affected by this topic); if you want to address political agendas before next elections you might want to select a location where voting population spends time, or if there is a specific issue on the agenda (*such as LGBTQ+ rights for example*), then you might want LGBTQ+ friendly or neutral places.

- **Familiarity to the actors.**

You need to choose a location on which the chance to come across acquaintances of any of the actors is very low or zero. These chances need to be assessed not only before the performance but also after the performance (what are the chances that actors will meet the people from the performance again).

**Invisible theatre is meant to remain invisible not only for its duration but also afterwards.** Therefore, there will be no disclosure of what happened to the involved people. This aspect puts pressure and brings some sort of difficulty to the actors, as they don't have the chance (as in other types of theatre) to get out of the role and be themselves with the audience. Therefore, being recognized by familiar people can ruin the scene and meeting with the audience in a different context (later on) can affect its impact negatively.

The "audience" witness reality and truth, and if they engage they do it because of their genuine interest. Finding out that the other involved people are actors and that it was a scenario might create feelings of being deceived, lack of motivation for involvement in future and even aggression. Therefore, the reality they experience should remain as they experienced. To address these issues, sometimes actors chose to perform in cities/towns different from their own, or in neighbourhoods which they never/rarely visit.

## Structure of the Performance

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**The team starts to brainstorm possible ideas** for how the topic chosen can unfold in the decided location. The group is invited to imagine anything that is realistic to happen in that specific location which can make it easier to involve people. As a reminder, it doesn't have to be a situation that actually happened or was witnessed in that specific location but possible to happen nevertheless.

**The realism factor has to be assessed by team members** which should be part of the community where the performance will take place. No matter what type of the topic (emotional or more intellectual) the plot has to be strong enough to trigger interest from the audience.

At this stage it is helpful to collect as many ideas as possible in order to sort and select the most adequate ones afterwards. Brainstorming phase brings in ideas which could be out of the box at the first sight but could inspire the development process later.



**From the examples of Invisible Theatre provided before two types of performances are evident:**

- Very down to earth, simple and probably common type of situations reproduced in Invisible Theatre. (*Most of the examples from our practice and other practitioners*).
- Performances with a certain degree of audacity, having “something” that made them not unrealistic, but certainly little bit (or more) out of the norm, that might trigger “Are you serious?” type of reaction. (*These can be noticed in the examples from the Boal’s direct supervision*).

The first type is definitely easier to develop, acted out and blended in any type of environment. The second one requires much more creative and out-of-the-box thinking, being more careful in not crossing the border, becoming too unusual and being suspected as unnatural event, but rather planned in advance.

**For the plot construction there are also two options** (first one easier than the second):

- Most of the actions happen in one go, without any involvement of the audience; as a follow-up of the action (which is usually rather short) the actors start their part of the roles which include interaction with the audience (*see the plays related to the health insurance, homophobia or racism*).
- Since early stage of the action there is intended interaction with the audience and the rest of the plot unfolds on the way (*see plays related to sexualisation of women, environmentally responsible behaviour or dowry*).

**In our practice with Image and Forum Theatre we have used a specific structure for portraying oppression in the performance.** The play is focused on only one specific example of oppression (not more), it has only one oppressed character, only one oppressor (there is a relation between them), each of them has 1-2 allies/supporters on their side and

there are also 1-2 neutral people in the story. (*For more information on structure of Forum or Image theatre please see our other manual: <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1503>*). This structure is based on the idea of offering a balanced perspective of the oppression and offers multiple pathways to the spect-actors to make changes

**For Invisible Theatre structure we start from the same model,** but there are some differences depending on the approach to the oppression chosen by the team. The balanced approach is also needed in Invisible Theatre, in order to give options to the actors to pull people into discussions and the scenario.

**Depending on the type of oppression** (more concrete, between individuals, or more abstract and systemic), as well as the angle of presenting the problem, we can separate two possibilities:

### **Direct Oppression or Indirect Oppression.**

This classification strictly refers to visibility of concrete oppression shown in the performance (though the oppression is always reflected in the performance).

This separation influences the type of roles that have to exist in the play and the way the plot is constructed.

- **Direct Oppression.** A performance which seeks to show direct oppression has to include pretty much the same type of actors as for Forum Theatre: Oppressed (plus allies), Oppressor (plus allies) and neutrals. (*All the examples from our practice are using this structure, as they used direct oppression in their structure*). If in Forum Theatre the spectators have a chance to go on the stage and replace actors, in Invisible Theatre this is not happening; therefore there is less strictness in having only one clear oppressed or oppressor.
- **Indirect Oppression.** In this type of structure the only missing type of actor is the Oppressor, but we have all the others, so the oppression is carried on in the performance by the allies of the oppressor, who

defend it (from the previous examples of *Invisible Theatre* such structure is visible in the plays about dowry, health insurance and Boal's Performances in Peru and Belgium).

In Forum and Image Theatre a limited number of actors are needed in order to keep the timing and flow of discussions under control. There is a required minimum of 5 actors and usually not more than 8-9 actors.

**For Invisible Theatre** it might be helpful to have even more actors, depending on the location and type of scenario. The minimum is either 5 or 4 actors (depending on whether the Oppressor is present or not), but from practice we recommend to have more than this number, in order to increase the possibilities of pulling audience into the scenario.

No matter the final decided number (which might depend on the team members), the distribution of roles has to be done in a balanced way, among the types of characters: oppressors, oppressed, allies and neutrals.



## **Rules and guidelines to have in mind while constructing an Invisible Theatre play**

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### **Inclusive decision making process**

Each member is equally important and valuable, and everybody's ideas have to be included in the final shape of the play (regardless of each member's background or experience - this process belongs to each person in the group).

**Each actor and team members have to allocate serious attention and commitment for implementation of this principle.** It should regularly be checked with the team if they are on board with all the taken decisions or developments of the scenario. Very often, valuable opinions are not heard or taken into consideration because strong or dominant personalities overpower the discussions, and they are not aware of the lack of space for the expression of others.

It is advisable to have regular "check-points" where everyone communicates their views on what has been discussed until that stage and, if needed, some decisions can be revisited. If there is an external facilitator handling this process they should make sure everyone's voice is heard and taken into consideration by the whole group.

Consensus is often taken for granted by interpreting silence or passivity as silent agreement, and a team needs to be aware when there is a "fake consensus" building up, and react against it.

The responsibility for the success of an Invisible Theatre play is shared, and in order for the process to reflect this, all actors have to feel the ownership of the process, their play and its outcomes. If, during the play, the actors expect the others to do more than them, the play will fail for sure.



## Incomplete characters

In Forum Theatre we build characters that are “incomplete”; they do something, but not enough, in order to leave space for the audience to change and to “complete” these characters, show different behaviours, attitudes and solutions to certain problems.

In Invisible Theatre we think in a similar way: the characters have to show their position (in relation to oppression), but it shouldn't be complete; we need to leave space for the audience to complete and add elements to the discussion and scenario. Unlike in Forum Theatre, where audience actually changes the actors, in Invisible Theatre they complete them by adding their thoughts, behaviours, attitudes into the situation.



## No physical violence

This is a general rule in Theatre of the Oppressed and lots of attention is required to the way violence is portrayed in conflictual situations chosen to be tackled.

In Forum Theatre, the main reason against showing direct physical violence (even low-key) is that it can turn off the audience from coming on the stage to make changes, and it can be too emotional to be handled in a safe space. Also, it can incite violence as a “solution” to stop the violence.

**In Invisible Theatre the risks are much bigger** for the actors and for reaching the aim of the play. The authorities can be called immediately, the priority is given to handling violence, and the chances to have meaningful discussions about the problem behind are decreasing drastically. Therefore, there should be absolutely no physical violence exhibited and, also, extra attention should be given to the way psychological violence is shown. Very often, as actors, we get carried away with our acting and do not realise how emotionally strong our play could be.



**Realism up to 100 %**

Reality and realistic performances are key aspects of any of the Theatre of the Oppressed methods.

Portraying real situations in realistic manner often requires various compromises from the team; some aspects can be more flexible when we operate with “visible” methods.

If, for example, in Forum Theatre, a young-looking person can act a role of a parent or grandparent (and vice-versa), this cannot happen in Invisible Theatre. Every role has to be realistic to its maximum potential; therefore the distribution has to take into consideration the ages of the actors and their genders, to reflect whatever scenario is being acted out in very realistic manner.

The clothing, objects and props used in the play have to exist and to be realistic. For example: if some documents or photos are mentioned in the conversation, these documents should exist; if actors show each other something which triggers elements of the plot, this something has to be real, not only mentioned; and so on.

Extra attention has to be allocated for casting actors for different ethnic groups from their own for the same reasons.

## Independent scenario

The way the plot unfolds has to have multiple ways of implementation and, in order to continue, **it should not depend on a specific intervention of the audience.**

The team needs to make sure that the plot continues even if audience members do not engage/respond in the way you wished. Neutral roles can jump in and input as required by the scenario, or the other actors have to be prepared to improvise and continue regardless of the way and time the other people are pulled into the conversations.

Do not base your scenario on the assumptions you make in relation to people's reactions! It is the same in Forum Theatre, we do not know what solutions or ideas the public has for our play and we do not suggest any to them either!

## Plan the entry

As a part of the reality-check of the scenario and, also, to help the actors to get more comfortable with their roles, you should actually start acting before getting to the location.

If you go to the neighbourhood of the planned locations as a team, have a starting point of the pre-play. From these point, actors start getting into their roles, separate on their journeys, start conversations with each other from their roles (depending on their relationships), and go on to the exact place of the Invisible Theatre, in different order, as it was previously agreed.

**The pre-play is only for the actors and it is not meant for the audience;** it doesn't matter how low they talk to each other or what information they share – it is important that they have a clear memory of the lines and details that have to be mentioned during the play itself.

If possible, you should have an instant-message group, so you can communicate with the whole group during the performance (and pre-play part) if needed; it can happen that the first actors who get to the scene notice aspects of the location which prevent or delay the next scenes from taking place, so the actors have to be warned in order to postpone their entry, or totally abort mission and go to the next location.

The actors must have a reason for their entire journey, from the starting point of the pre-play until the return to the same place (or another neutral place chosen by the team as closing point). These reasons might not have any influence on how the plot unfolds, but they surely influence the smoothness, simplicity and fluency of the acting part. It also helps the actors have a clearer and more in-depth developed part in the scenario and not to be left off guard at any moment during the play.



## Indicators to stop/finish the play

Decide on the kind of indicators to use in this sense, in order to plan the full departure from the location. Some actors might have roles which include departure during the play, but others have to stay until there is no more need or purpose to stay at the location.

Actors often have different assessment of how well a play went and when it is time to stop it. Their personal assessment is influenced by how they feel, how much they interacted with the audience, what kind of reactions they received, etc. BUT essentially, personal assessment is less relevant for decision on the time to close the performance.

The team needs to have a discussion at the preparation stage, on the **clear indicators which will be used in order to wrap up and leave the scene**. These indicators should be **objective as much as possible**: the number of engaged people who dominate the discussions (taken over from the actors), the type of arguments or positions that prevail the conversation (which should be related to the objective of the play), etc. and, **also, some safety signals**, when things go awry, on how to cool down the situation and leave.

The departure has to be done as naturally as the arrival, until the starting point of the pre-play. Depending on the number of team members, if possible, it is helpful to have at least one person present at the location, who does not actually involve in the process at all.

This person monitors involvement of the people and the shadow effect after the actors left the premises – the information gathered by this person is very important for the evaluation and impact assessment of the play (*see later chapters*).

## Dynamic acting

Whatever scenario is being developed, it has to be filtered from the perspective of its dynamics. How can it be more dynamic and mobile?

**A dynamic scenario offers more paths to engage “audience” than a static one.**

Elements such as: going to toilet, talking on the phone and moving, going out and coming back (*and asking for /receive information*), waiting and bringing some new actor to the scene, checking something at the bar, etc. whatever is possible to do, which helps the actors move around the stage, is advisable.

This increases the potential for exchange of information around, which increases the chances of pulling people into the conversations.

### **Prepare for multiple locations**

Often in our practice, the first location which was considered very suitable, turned out not to be at the exact moment of the play. Either there were few people, or too many, the actors got blocked, or the performance just wasn't picked up.

We operate in uncontrollable environments, so you should not invest all your energy in planning for one location, as unexpected things can happen easily (and often they do).

From the beginning you need to have 2-3 locations in mind, not extremely close to each other, and to get ready to move if needed.

### **Rehearse as much as possible**

Invisible Theatre has a small planned scenario, but endless improvised scenarios, based on the input of the people from the location. These possibilities should not be underestimated, taken easy or simply.

The team has to rehearse all potential scenarios as much as possible. In Forum Theatre an actor who makes a mistake is forgiven by the audience, especially since they are usually not professional actors, and essentially the priority is to address the oppression from the performance.

In Invisible Theatre there is no forgiveness for making mistakes; if an actor gets blocked, starts laughing, forgetting their lines, etc. the play might get totally ruined and there is no way back – the audience will know something is strange here - that this is “fake”.

Extensive rehearsing provides actors with skills for facing all types of situations they may encounter during the play. It also shows if there is a need to change roles, or to have back-up roles in case the original cast don't handle the situation adequately.

It is helpful to have a lists of key sentences that each actors has to use in their Plan A scenario, a list for other situations, as well as a list of controversial and provocative arguments/sentences (depending on the embraced role) to use during the play.

Rehearsals should take place on different types of locations, in order to get used to diversity of contexts and places, since a team should never rehearse on the location of the play (which is possible in other types of theatre).



## Joker Role

### – interaction with the audience

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In all the other type of Theatre of the Oppressed methods we have a role of a Joker who facilitates the process and the interactivity. The joker asks questions and stimulates the audience to comment on the play and the raised issues, and invites them to come on stage and make changes in order to bring solutions to the presented problem.

**In Invisible Theatre there is no designated joker to handle this process, all actors act as jokers – they are all “undercover” jokers.**

This is the aspect that makes this method the most difficult among the arsenal of Theatre of the Oppressed methods. The task of the actor includes more elements than acting and improvising based on the changes proposed by the audience. Within their roles, the actors have to find opportunities to engage people in the plot and process. The scenario has to offer pathways for actors to use these opportunities.

**In order for an invisible theatre play to be successful all actors have to assume and embrace their “joker” double role!** This mind-set change is challenging for some actors. In our practice, we have encountered many actors who expected the audience to react and intervene just because the actors did a certain action, which was not the case – audience needs help in the same way as in the other types of Theatre of the Oppressed methods.

#### **The “traditional” joker makes use of different tools:**

- Asks questions (*Asking questions, the right questions, is a skill, and it is developed through time and with practice*) - predominantly open questions, to stimulate sharing and development of ideas
- Summarises discussions
- Rephrases or paraphrases comments of the audience
- Stimulates audience to take sides on various aspects: on the presented



solutions, on taking decisions, etc.

- Never gives solutions, but stimulates audience to provide them
- Remains neutral

**In invisible theatre**, the neutral aspect of the joker role is compromised, so we don't talk about a complete Joker Role in this context.

**All the other tools are used in a similar way by the actors - undercover jokers in Invisible Theatre.**

- **Asking people around what is happening** (usually more easily applicable by neutral roles), which makes sure the information from the scenarios gets to the audience.

The neutral actors do not take any clear positions on the oppression, but they are there to help the information flow and to potentially stimulate people to engage.

With these questions the actors pretend they do not understand or have not fully followed the events/discussion, and ask the non-actors for the help to provide the information which pushes their interest as well.

- **Asking people around what they think about what is happening.**

These questions are more directed, as they already incorporate the main aspects of the tackled issues. They are different from the previous type of questions, as they already include the topic.

These are suitable for neutral or allies on any side to pull in conversation with other people and trigger debate on the topic.

- **Searching for agreement.**

The actors state their point of view or perspective (*in whatever moment of the plot they find themselves*) and then ask people if they agree with this or not.

These questions are stimulating people to take sides and then can be pulled in the discussion/debate by other actors with similar or opposite views. These are more applicable by oppressed or oppressors, as they have strongly developed roles and they are directly engaged in the situation, but are handy for allies as well.

- **Searching for involvement.**

The actors ask the people around to get involved in whatever action is happening at that moment.

This is much more directed and very concrete request from the people around and it is mostly used by oppressed or allies of the oppressed, in order to gain support in a specific moment of the action.

- **Searching for solutions.**

If the problem, situation, became clear and evident, and the discussion focuses on exploring the problem, actors can ask what can be done, what are the solutions.

These types of questions can be asked by any of the actors, depending on where they are in the scenario and its later development.

- **Responding to questions or curious looks.**

There are people who can be triggered by the play, but do not engage immediately/soon. They might be shy or need a suitable pathway to “get in” the action. They usually spend seconds/minutes observing the action and what is happening, and depending on the way events continue, they might engage or not.

This type of people is more common than it is thought and they just need a small push to become engaged in the process.

Actors need to approach this type of person very carefully. Too strong and direct approach might turn them away immediately; however,

a soft, low-key approach through a question or two can make these people significantly engaged.

- **Raising critical issues for debates.**

Depending on how the plot unfolds, how scenario develops and what kind of arguments/points of views are raised, the actors can pick up on some of the already mentioned issues and challenge people around with more controversial sentences/affirmations, which might trigger the crowd.

The sentences might be said as a personal opinion or more as a philosophical statement which, due to its provocative nature, stirs up some part of the audience who will have something to input on the matter.



- **Going deeper into discussion with the people.**

If any person around comments or engages in the scenario even briefly, the actors who are the most related to their input (or to whom they addressed their opinion) should follow up on that and try to explore the views of the person more deeply.

This could be done in multiple ways: either by asking why they have that specific opinion, debating with them on that specific issue, raising new related aspects and asking their opinion on it, etc.

The actors have to assess, on the spot, which option/s are the best to be used in line with the development of the scenario and dominant opinions in the overall discussions.

## Coordination among actors

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There is a script, and actors follow the script. The scenario includes the order, the lines, signal words/sentence (which trigger specific replies of other actors) and the alternative follow-ups, depending on people's reaction and involvement.

Part of this process can be planned in detail in advance, while the other part cannot, and it relies on actors' capacity to coordinate among each other on the spot.



The following aspects can help this coordination:

- **All actors are deeply aware of the objectives of their performance.** This makes the team members focused on what is happening and how the discussions take place, and makes sure there is sufficient space for voicing out the opinions which support the objectives, and debating.
- **Actors are helping/supporting each other.** This reflects not only in acting their own role, but also by doing their best to make sure all the other actors are acting out their own part, and helping them to do that, if needed; this can happen by asking them questions (which were not planned, but remind the actors what they should do or say) or by pointing out some topics which should have been pointed out by the other actors, but for some reasons they haven't done that.

## Common Mistakes - What not to Do

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### **Insufficient preparation/Approaching the method superficially**

Beginner or/and overconfident teams often oversee many of the issues presented before. They get stuck with the fact that, nevertheless, there are a lot of unpredictable aspects, and they trust their own skills to improvise and deal with any possible situation.

Of course this is not true, not even for professional Invisible Theatre actors, although experienced and serious practitioners have a more serious attitude towards the preparation process.

In our practice the teams which had a superficial approach to the preparation process had the most difficulties and failed on the spot.

In the previous parts of the Manual we have listed ALL the things a team needs to go through, and they are not optional if you wish to have success in working with Invisible Theatre.

### **Insufficient acting as Jokers**

Actors are too much focussed on their role; they do not see the people around (actors or audience) and do not use all possible opportunities to pull people into the discussions.

This happens because it is hard to have multiple roles to act at once, and it does require preparation and additional skills (besides acting and improvising) – *check out the next section for preparation of a team.*

The Joker competencies, in general, improve by practice as a joker, but also by facilitating discussions in learning processes. That is why this method is not meant for beginners in Theatre of the Oppressed, because of its very specific difficulties which could be handled by more experienced actors and jokers.

In theory and in the rehearsals, it might seem easy to act out the double Joker role, but on the spot many additional feelings and emotions are experienced (stress, excitement, shame, nervousness, anxiety, fear, confusion, adrenaline, etc.) which can make one actor end up delivering their primary role (and expect the other actors to pull people into the discussions, or expect public to jump in themselves).

The difficulties in acting as a joker also manifest in handling the discussions with the people and rooky jokers have a hard time feeding the discussions in order to get to the planned objective(s).

### **Loosing motivation too fast**

Generally, there is abundant excitement for working with Invisible Theatre. Teams are loaded with different emotions and extremely high expectations. They often feel they have one shot to pull this thing and all their mental and emotional energy goes in that one shot. They tend to be extra optimistic, expect that things will go well from the beginning and very first time.

**And...it is not the case for the things to go exactly as planned (almost never).**

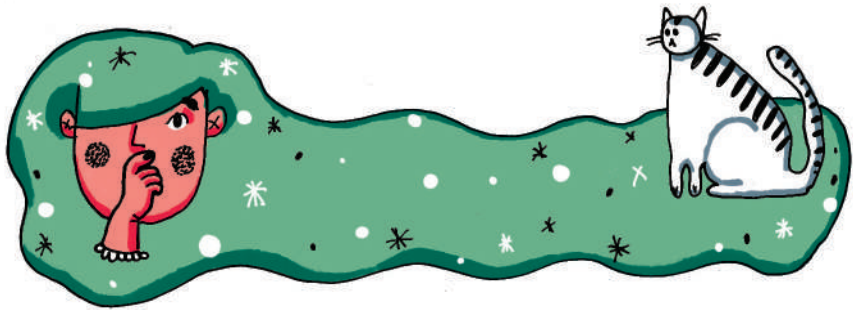
It could happen that the flow of people is low, or the people don't respond to the scene well, they do not get involved, the actors start making mistakes, etc. anything can go awry and that is fine as, in theory, there is a Plan B and C (as previously explained).

The alternative plans are there, but the team loses motivation and trust after the first failure. Sometimes they wish to cancel the mission entirely.

This can be prevented with adequate preparation and risk assessment, as well as more realistic expectations developed by the team.

It can also be handled on the spot by taking a break with the team, distancing oneself from the location and the Invisible Theatre mission,

and objectively reviewing the facts (of what happened) and the emotions of the team, as well as planning the next steps. This “break” helps the group to steam out, digest their emotions associated with the “failure”, and become able to think about the situation more rationally.



### **Revealing it is Invisible Theatre**

One of the fundamental rules of this method is that it should never be revealed to the audience, during or any time after the performance.

Unfortunately, some actors, after having a very good connection with some of the audience, consider that by revealing this it will help them continue to work on their relationship. The actors might also reveal this when they panic, assess that the situation became too challenging to be contained and they consider revealing will cool it down. This can actually trigger even more negative reactions of people around.

Unless there is a very extreme situation (such as police intervention, for example), the team has to make strong efforts and retain themselves from revealing.

**The potential dangers, especially long-term dangers of audience finding out it was theatre, have more impact than almost any benefit which appears by this disclosure.**

# Invisible Theatre

## Risk Management

Invisible Theatre is a method that has many risks associated with it. The team needs to do an in-depth analysis beforehand and prepare alternative plans for the challenges which may occur. **Each play has its own specific risks.**

We list some general categories of the dangers of an invisible theatre below, but, nevertheless, there might be more, depending on the particular developed scenario. **For each of the mentioned risks we list possible approaches on how to handle them.** These are suggestions, and for each particular case other actions might be more suitable.

As it is risky by default, the general mottos for working with method is - **Take risks, but take care!**





## Unsafety of Actors

Invisible Theatre makes oppression visible. This means that problems which are known and happen in a society are reproduced and acted in a “controlled manner” in a micro society. That is why it is very important how a specific topic is chosen and what type of scenario is developed.

**Very sensitive and strong scenarios are more likely to trigger stronger reactions from the people around.** The way people react can reflect attitudes or behaviours which can be violent or endanger the safety of actors.

These risks are higher when conflicts are reproduced and more emotional topics are tackled. For example, topics as domestic violence and homophobia (*which were exemplified in our practice before*) triggered very fast reactions of the people around, against the oppressor.

**Their reactions could become physically violent.** It is very possible that the violence can also be oriented towards the oppressed or allies, if the people from the location might be supporting the oppression heavily. The probability of violence occurring is in direct relation with the type of topic and scenario developed for a specific location. As mentioned in the guidelines referring to the choice of topic, it is very important to carefully select the topic for the performance, and assess the potential risks.

**As a reminder, no matter how important a topic is, if it has a high risk of violence, it should not be approached.**

### Tips to deal with this risk

- **Cooling down**

Safety risk comes in light when people around the performance get heated up by the way the actors are acting. If strong reactions are ignited, above the level which is considered safe, the actors have to step back and “cool” down the situation.

An aggressive person manifests their aggression first verbally (swearing, making threats, etc.) or through their bodies. Once this is noticed and assessed as dangerous, the conversation has to cool down and avoid the potential aggression from escalating.

The actors have to be very sensitive and sense when the persons around cross the borders of a heated debate into the direction of physical encounter.

“Cooling down” can be done in realistic manner, by the fact that no matter the discussed issues, nobody wants to get into a physical fight. They should verbally say this, apologise if needed, and try to leave the scene immediately after this.

If the cooling down of the main target of the potential aggressor is not sufficient, the other actors (from their roles) should try to cool down the potentially violent person/situation. As an alternative, the discussion could continue on the topic of violence and what it is solving (*if this conversation naturally emerges in the moment*).

- **Changing the topic/conversations**

This can be done with the purpose of cooling down, but also to keep the engagement of people (even if the situation is heated) and use it for a safer discussion.

This has to be planned in advance as an alternative scenario, depending on the reactions of the persons around. If the discussion touches on gay rights, for example, and it ignites people around, it can be transformed in a more informative discussion (therefore, less emotional one) about famous people that are gay; or to totally change the topic and talk about corruption or some other big problems in the society at that time.

The main idea of this strategy is to defocus from the play topic (which generated strong reaction) and go to another direction. The opportunity to do this transition is by reminding the persons around that

X or Y issues are much more important, so let's talk about that.

Even though it might change the objective of the play it can still be valuable and rich in outcomes.

- **Back-up help**

This should be considered only if the risk is assessed as very probable and the team still decides to work with the topic.

In this case the team has stand-by people that can intervene in case of violence; these people should have skills in handling violent people, in order to calm down the created situation.

In their practice, some groups have even decided to communicate with authorities in advance and ask them to be on hold in case there is a need, and sometimes a police representative comes at the location in civilian clothes.



## **Overpowering the Oppressor's Side**

This risk depends on the level of preparation of the actors and the profile of the people present at the location.

It might happen that the audience members are supporting the oppression, and the oppressed and their allies find themselves in the minority in a conversation dominating them.

This risk is endangering the achievement of the objectives and also increasing the chances to reinforce the oppression and emotionally (and maybe physically) harm people that are on the oppressed side.

### **Tips to deal with this risk**

- **Preparation**

The team needs to allocate generous amount of time for the preparation phase, which includes the suitable choice of topic and location, as well as the scenario development and rehearsal.

This risk has to be foreseen and the team should prepare for it with alternative scenarios and conversation lines to keep it under control.

- **Decreasing the power expressed by the actors acting as oppressors**

If the non-actors take over the oppressor's side, the actors acting as oppressors should become weaker, give more space to the oppressed; also, the oppressor and their allies could show change of thoughts and opinions to show to the non-actor oppressors that they can change their point of view.

- **Cutting the play sooner**

If the scenario develops in the opposite direction from the planned objectives, and the initial strategy does not yield any results, then all

efforts of the team has to be directed towards stopping the discussion from going further, and shrinking the space for expressing oppression, to the point where the oppression does not receive any more attention.

It is better not to reach the objectives than to give even more power to the oppression.



## Photographing/filming the play by non-actors

This is a risk for the actors themselves. As one of the features of this method is to remain invisible to the involved people (including any time after the performance has finished), being photographed or filmed endangers this aspect.

Nowadays people very easily publish their everyday experiences on their social media account.

If materials with the actors gets online, it increases the risk of actors being recognized by people they know and affects future performances, as well as the opinions of the people who posted the material (*if somebody comments that they know the filmed actors*).

### **Tips to deal with this risk**

- **Make over**

The actors could dress up and use make-up which makes them look different from their daily appearance, and makes it harder to be recognized in any online material.

- **Request not to be filmed**

Very often people who start taking photos and videos do not think there is a problem in doing this, especially in public places. But, nevertheless, the created situation is a personal experience and the involved people can kindly ask not to be photographed or filmed without their permission.

This can also be requested by actors who were not actually filmed, who can intervene and ask the public to not do that if they have not gotten their permission first.

## Cultural “Resistance”

This is a risk which is mostly expressed by practitioners from countries in which, culturally, it is not very common/easy for people to interact with strangers or involve in their discussions/personal affairs.

This concern was expressed by colleagues from countries such as Latvia, Estonia or Norway, but could be shared by other practitioners from other parts of the world.

The main underlying risk is, in fact, lack of engagement of people and failure of the performance.

### Tips to deal with this risk

- **Careful assessment of the context and choice of topic**

In cultural contexts where there is such a concern much more time has to be allocated to this phase and decide on various alternatives.

It can be helpful for team members to observe people’s interactions in various public situations and to list possible natural pathways to engage them in the scenario.



- **Overcoming the fear/be ready to be surprised**

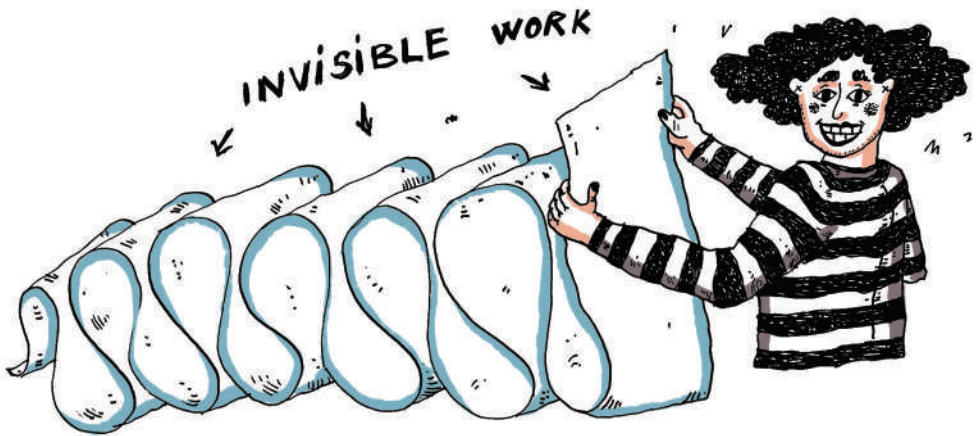
Often, beginner Invisible Theatre actors have this fear and do not trust the method will work, or that their efforts yield relevant process in their specific context.

Our recommendation is, in fact, to do it anyway, as such cultural interpretation of social dynamics might not reflect actual reaction of the involved people.

Very often, just changing the mind-set on a specific situation changes the way the engagement and process unfold on the spot. As a reminder, Augusto Boal himself have experimented with this method in Stockholm (*which can be considered as a society where people do not easily engage with each other*) in the 70s.

- **Detailed scenario alternatives**

The actors should prepare very detailed lines and alternative scenarios which are considered to trigger reactions and make it easier to pull the audience members into the conversations.





# Invisible Theatre

## Evaluation and Impact Assessment

**Like anything we do in our work, no matter the methods we apply, it is very important to know if and how we have achieved our objectives.**

In Invisible Theatre there are big question marks regarding the existing possibilities to actually measure our impact. Of course, it is more difficult to measure results of “invisible” work, but, nevertheless, it is not impossible.

Unfortunately, evaluation process is very easily compromised and/or sacrificed because of the fluidity of the Invisible Theatre process and the heavily loaded process the actors go through. Sometimes there might be a rush to leave the stage or the actors are overexcited by what just happened to them, and they rather need to talk to other actors in a safe zone than to stick around.

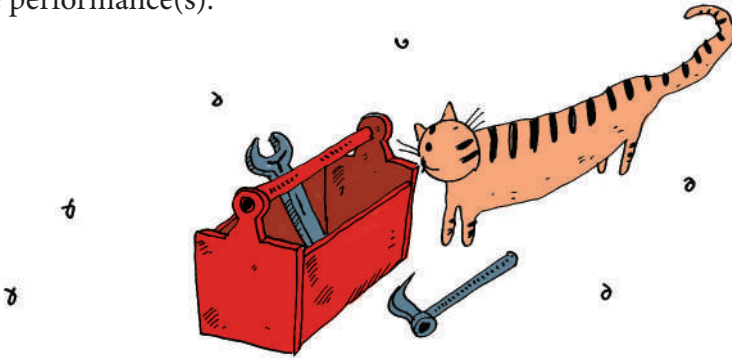
In order for the evaluation process to actually be delivered, it has to be carefully planned in advance, as a part of the entire Invisible Theatre process, so the actors can internalise it as such, and not something to be done AFTER. Very often, this “after” is what decreases the chances of actually implementing the evaluation.

To draft/develop an evaluation plan a team needs to analyse different dimensions:

- **Quantitative:** number of performances, number of impacted people, age group, gender distribution (for each performance), etc.
- **Qualitative:** level of achievement of the objectives, type of interventions/reactions of audience, challenges on the spot, team process (before, during, after), etc.

Next, we list a series of tools that can be used to assess the impact of such type of work and the advice is to use as many as possible and compile their findings in one set of conclusions.

We mostly address short-term evaluation with these tools. The long-term impact assessment is very hard to be implemented as long as we do not work with a group of audience with whom we can be in contact after the performance(s).



### **Observations on the Spot**

One (or more) team members share this responsibility, which is not an acting role, but an observation and monitoring of what is happening before, during and after the invisible theatre play.

They are positioned in a neutral zone of the location and they are the first from the team to arrive. Their position should offer a good perspective on how the scenario is implemented and the reactions of people around.

The observers take their notes in a subtle manner and keep a low profile during the scenario, so they do not attract any attention. The observers have to stay around also after all the actors have left the stage, and record the “shadow” effect: what the people are doing/talking at the location after the play has finished.

Next, you can see an example of such monitoring sheet.

## Invisible Theatre Play Observation Sheet

---

**Location(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the play** \_\_\_\_\_

**Main topic adressed in the play** \_\_\_\_\_

- how long (in minutes/hours) was the performance togheter with the discussions and interventions in each location in which you performed in one day? \_\_\_\_\_
- number of people who got engaged in the discussions in total: \_\_\_\_\_
- number of women: \_\_\_\_\_
- number of men: \_\_\_\_\_
- age group(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- what type of interventions they mostly made:  
supporting the oppression      or      against the oppression
- what were the main points raised by the public in relation with the topic?  
-  
-  
-  
-  
-
- main challenges the actors faced:
- shadow effects of the play:
- other observations:

## **Team Discussion**

This discussion preferably takes place immediately after the performance in a neutral place (as far from the performance location as possible).

The actors feel very intensively the need for this meeting, as there is a lot of emotional impression to be shared and listened to. As their impressions are very fresh, it is very useful to take advantage and address other relevant evaluation aspects.

The purposes of this meeting are:

- to process the feelings of the actors from their performance;
- to list each actor's perspective on the level of achievement of the objective(s);
- to give feedback to each other;
- to explore the challenges and how they were dealt with;
- to identify the strong and weak points in the scenario and in the overall process with the audience;
- to take decisions regarding changes which should be made if implemented again;

For this conversation to happen smoothly, constructively and efficiently, it is preferred to have it facilitated by a non-acting team member, if possible.

The main discussed points should be recorded for future references.

## **Individual Reports from Actors**

The actors have very rich experiences during the performance, which can easily get "lost" if they are not documented adequately.

For a more structured and detailed collection of this data we recommend using individual reports, which should be filled in by actors, after the performance.

The structure of these reports, especially its format, should be decided by the team, or the team coordinator; should it be more free-style or more structured; and if structured, what type of information should be requested.

The advantage of the individual reports is that you can explore much deeper aspects, which are often insufficiently discussed in team meetings. This way, the different perspectives the actors have of the events can be more easily noticed.

**Bellow there is a list of questions that can be used in order to create a standard reporting form.** Of course, these questions are just suggestions, all or fewer can be used and/or modified according to each team's contexts.

- Describe the environment. Was it easy or difficult to move around? Was it confined? Open? How loud was the environment?
- How did people seem to relate to each other before the main action of the scene? Did this seem to change throughout the course of the scene?
- What types of communication technology (i.e. cell phones, computers etc.) and/or media (i.e. TV, radio, etc.) were in the environment? How did this impact the performance?
- Did the audience alter the space in any way? Did they make physical connection with the actors?
- Did audience move closer to or farther away from the main action of the scene? Did this influence your performance?
- Describe your role in the scene. Did you have to change your role from what was rehearsed during the performance? Why?
- Did you engage audience members in dialogue? Did spect-actors engage you in dialogue?
- What were some specific things you said in the course of the performance?
- What were the things you heard others say, either to a member of the team or to another spect-actor?
- Did you hear others discussing the event or related issues without an actor being directly involved?

- Compare and contrast this scene with others we have performed.
- Any other thoughts, comments, reflections

### **Taking photos/videos**

This is a more sensitive tool, as it is not easy to record what is happening during such type of performance with photos and videos.

Taking someone's photo without their permission is not ethical, and if, nevertheless, they are collected in some way, they should not be published either online or offline - they should be used only for the evaluation purpose.

In the eventuality of conflict situations these evidences can come handy at a later stage, if there is any involvement of the police.

### **There are 2 options for taking photos/videos:**

- With secret camera(s) placed in some key areas on the location, or objects of the actors. (*This option has to be carefully assessed to be in line with the legal regulations of the country/region where it takes place*)
- By some of the actors, but only when the situation gets a lot of attention, people around show interest and they start filming or taking photos themselves.

If there are people taking photos or filming the events around, the social media should be monitored for the rest of that day or the following day, to notice if anything is posted in relation with these events.

# Invisible Theatre

## Ethical Dilemmas

Because of its “hidden” nature, this method raises ethical aspects which need analysis and reflection by any potential practitioner.

**Any person interested to work with this method needs to take a clear stand on these dilemmas in order to be an authentic Invisible Theatre actor.**

If any of the following issues are very strongly felt by the actors or team, it is advised that they do not pursue working with this method. They need to be in peace with Invisible Theatre, not have any doubts or negative feelings. They should clearly think of their reasons/arguments for each mentioned dilemma.

We have mentioned our own response to these issues, but each practitioner has to reflect more deeply and find their own positions, which may (not) be similar to ours.



## “Lying” to the Audience

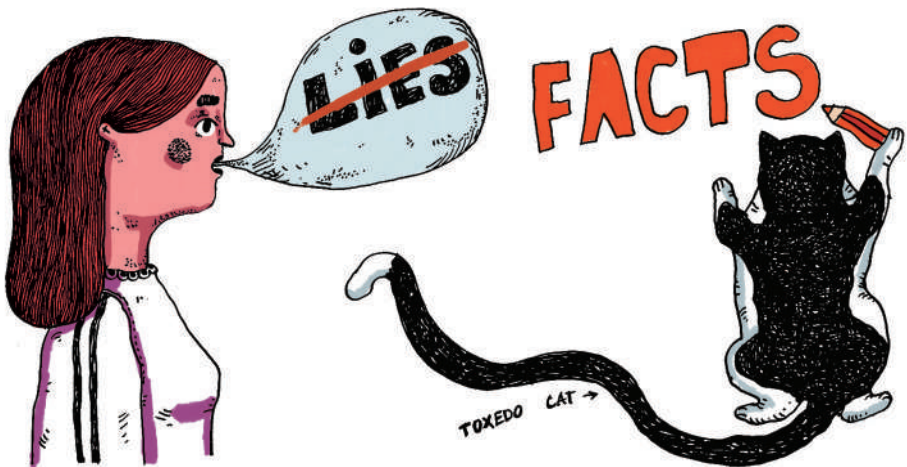
*The audience never finds out the experience they went through was theatre. This aspect is considered unethical, as it means it is a technique which relies on defying, secrecy and lying to the beneficiaries. It is not a transparent, correct process and it is based on a lie as a fundamental definition. The audience cannot choose to be a part of the artificially created process.*

### Response:

The scenario is not a lie; it is a truth which is only enacted by our team. Even if that specific scenario did not happen to the actors present on the stage IT DID happen to other persons. The audience is not forced to react or take part in the scene, they always have the choice.

The invisible part actually makes the events and involvement more natural for everybody present, as there is no setting, frame, structure to formalize the roles and relationships between actors and audience.

Revealing the fact that it was theatre at the end reduces the impact of the whole process, as in that moment they might actually feel deceived and tricked and any achievement of the performance is gone.





## Triggers Emotions in Uncontrolled Environment

*The play is meant to trigger reactions. The scenario is developed with this purpose and it has different levels of emotional strength. We enter the lives of random people who might not want to be triggered in this way, they just want to mind their own business, and we enter their micro world, upset them, and maybe affect their emotional mood for the rest of the day. We have no control of the way they will deal with their emotions after our performance.*

### **Response:**

Nobody is free from emotions throughout the day; the world we live in is abundant in information and situations which can trigger emotional reactions.

It would be a lie to pretend that people live in a secluded emotional world; they do not, and every day “something” happens.

The fact the Invisible Theatre makes visible oppression and this triggers emotions is just a part of the life we live in - we should not be blind for what happens around us.

In fact, in Invisible Theatre there is space to talk and potentially deal with the emotional reactions. Also, any type of “visible” theatre can be emotionally very strong and affect them beyond the performance itself.

## Harming People

*Invisible Theatre triggers reactions by a scenario with a mixture of provocative actions/behaviours and dialogue which either supports oppression or is against it.*

*Expressing supporting views and actions for different forms of oppressions is potentially harmful for the other people who are around. For example, acting out homophobic attitudes can be emotionally harmful for any potential gay person around. In the same time it also reinforces such attitudes of other homophobic people in that context and affects other people in the future.*

*If the scenario becomes heated and potentially violent, and we have already pulled in people, we expose them to violence.*

**Response:**

A badly constructed play, an insufficiently or superficially prepared team, mistakes on the spot, etc. all these, unfortunately, can very likely lead to unnecessary harming of people.

This is the reason for which we emphasised in this manual that it is not a method for beginners and, also, that it requires serious investment of efforts in the process.

The aim of Invisible Theatre is not to perpetuate oppression or to strengthen it in a society, it is exactly the opposite, and everything needs to be done in order to reach the planned objectives of the play. A well-constructed, prepared and delivered performance of Invisible Theatre does not harm its audience.



## It is Manipulating

*Invisible Theatre has a tricking nature. We “ambush” audience in a certain context, we allure them to our dialogue with smart and carefully constructed sentences, and we incite their curiosity and persuade them to get involved in our artificial context. All this is, in fact, pure manipulation of the audience in order for us to reach our own goals.*

### **Response:**

Everything that happens in Invisible Theatre is happening in the reality as well.

Indeed, actors are prepared, but they are not prepared for everything, more than 70 % of the scenario is based on improvisation.

The truth is that, in fact, it is actually hard to pull people into the conversations and into the scenario, in the same way as it is hard to have debates on controversial issues with people in any given context.

Any goal that we try to reach is for a society which stands in front of oppression, as society that has more free and empowered people than it seems. It is a process for the greater good, and if a little trick can lead to that, then we believe it is justified.



## Preparatory Exercises

Becoming an Invisible Theatre actor demands skills from different areas, such as acting, improvisations, handling stressful situations, conflict management, etc.

**Acting in such performances is not advised for beginners in Theatre of the Oppressed or acting field.** In the previous chapters we emphasised the high complexity, difficulty and risky nature of this method.

Now we plan to detail a series of exercises which can be used in the training process of a team of actors, BUT, nevertheless, it is not (and cannot be) a complete package.

On one side, no matter the time or effort invested in preparation process, concrete experience in acting in different performances (especially in other Theatre of the Oppressed methods) is still required.

On another note, as we already published a manual including a generous list of activities and exercises meant for beginners in Forum Theatre, we do not intend to duplicate that work. At this link: <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1503> there is an extensive list of preparatory activities which are aimed at building basic competencies in acting and, also, introducing and deeper exploring of the main concepts from Theatre of the Oppressed.

**The assumption is that a team willing to work with these methods already has sufficient basic experience and competencies in relevant fields/areas. Therefore, we trust that any interested team can responsibly sort out, choose, order and use any or as many presented exercises.**

We have included different types of activities to complement the ones presented in the previous manual (suitable for Forum and Image Theatre practitioners), in order to address new type of skills required by this method.

**Some of the specific skills required for Invisible Theatre actor,** which need to be cultivated in the preparatory phase are:

- Operating out of comfort zone
- Debating (from any side of an issue)
- Clear focus under (heavy) stress
- Handling conflictual situations
- Facilitation
- Dealing with ambiguity
- Dealing with silence
- Dealing with sudden change
- Operate in inconstant environment
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Dealing with awkward feeling
- Acting in public spaces
- Emotional detachment / Letting go

**The next list of activities transversally touches one or more previously mentioned skills and is suitable for various groups' size.**

Some evidently cannot be done with small groups (of 5-7 people), but all can be adapted, adjusted and serve as inspiration for any practitioner interested to make use of them.

The mentioned duration is estimative, as it is heavily influenced by the group size and the discussions required in some of the cases.

The sequences in which they are introduced loosely follow this structure:

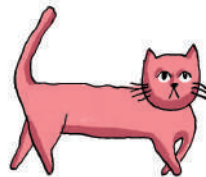
- Spontaneity Warm-ups
- Trust, Power and Balance
- Emotions
- Improvisations
- Debating

## Spontaneity Warm-ups

Natural Disasters – (20 min)	80
1, 2, 3 – Stop – (20 min)	82
Dance and Hide – (10 min)	83
Vampires among Us – (20 min)	85
Bears and Woodcutters – (15 min)	86
Hey, You there! – (15 min)	87
Say and Do the Opposite – (10 min)	89
Bad is Good - Good is Bad – (15 min)	90
Groups and Numbers – (20 min)	91

## Trust, Power and Balance

Explore the Common Space – (30 min)	93
The Person and the Shadow – (30 min)	95
Name Whispering – (30 min)	97
Find the Hand/Face – (30 min)	99
1, 2, 3, 4, 5... - Faint – (20 min)	100
Rope Leading – (30 min)	102
Lead while Being Led – (30 min)	103
Keep the Balance – (20 min)	105
Moving Square – (20 min)	107
Chaos Game – (40 min)	109



## Emotions

Just You – No Mask – (30 min)	112
Favourite Place and Person – (15 min)	114
1, 2, 3, 4, 5... - Oranges – (20 min)	116
Meeting at the Station – (15 min)	117
Spaceship and the Alien – (15 min)	118
I Lied, You Lied, We all Lied – (20 min)	120
Magic House / River of Emotions – (20 min)	122
Catwalk – (15 min)	124

## Improvisations

Imaginary Objects – (25 min)	126
The Creature and the Sound – (20 min)	128
Act out the Story – (20 min)	129
Angel Devils – (25 min)	130
West Side Story – (20 min)	132
Subjects and Objects – (30 min)	133
Question to Question – (20 min)	135
The Revelations – (30 min)	136
Guess My Passion – (40 min)	137
Secret Mission	139

## Debating

Where do you Stand – (60 min)	142
Fish Bowl – (60 min)	145
Asking Questions with a Purpose – (90 min)	147
Mission in the Community – (120 min)	152

## Spontaneity Warm-ups

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Groups and Numbers – (20 min)	91

### Natural Disasters

(20 min)

#### Objectives

To react to external factors fast, to activate and energize the group; to trigger competitive spirit; to increase coordination among team members; to stimulate imagination.

#### Details and description of the activity

- The group walks around the space without talking and listening to next instructions.
- As a facilitator, you have to prepare (in advance) / improvise on the spot a story/text which includes from time to time mentioned key words representing natural disasters: FLOOD, FIRE, EARTHQUAKE or ALIENS ATTACK.
- Whenever the group hears any of these words they have to immediately act out a response-behaviour in order to protect themselves from the “disaster”. FLOOD – they have to go up on chairs, tables, etc. to not



be in contact with the floor anymore. FIRE – they have to lie down on the floor. EARTHQUAKE - they have to touch any wall around. ALIENS ATTACK – they have to grab one person from the back (like hugging their back) in order to be saved; the person being grabbed is not saved; In this case only one person can grab another one, a chain is not allowed.

- The last person to react and respond by right behaviour is out of the game and helps the facilitator identify the next ones who do not manage on time.
- You need to use a text in which the trigger words come unexpectedly, but also naturally to the storyline, and also not too often, as the group can quickly get tired from the excitement.
- You can continue until only one person is left in the game, but you can also stop on the way. Alien Attack usually takes almost half of the group out of the game, so you should use it more rarely.

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- Be aware of the space in which you implement this activity. If the floor is very dirty or there are many obstacles in the space you might reconsider implementing it. The group might not be motivated for the activity or they might actually get injured.
- It is important to remind the group to be aware of the others present in the space; whenever they have fast reactions they must be conscious of the others in the room and not hurt anybody.
- Sometimes in Alien Attack some participants decide not to grab the others so they can all continue to play. Remind the group about the rule but do not push them too much – sometimes it is also beautiful to just observe a group that does not want to be excessively competitive.
- Some groups get really passionate about this game; you can switch as facilitators and implement it more often by using different thematic stories.
- If you have a group with participants that had some traumas in their past regarding some of the events used in the exercise you might consider using other trigger words.

## 1, 2, 3 – Stop

(20 min)

### Objectives

To stimulate fast reactions; to work on the concept of stillness and slowness; to reflect on what is too fast or too slow; to stimulate excitement in the group; to have fun.



### Details and description of the activity:

- This exercise is used in different countries (at least in Balkans or East European countries) as a childhood game.
- Ask the group to line-up on one side of the room, preferably on the farthest end of it. You or any volunteer from the group, is near the opposite wall, facing it. Say out loud 1, 2, 3 and then STOP. When you say stop, turn to the rest of the group. During the time you are facing the wall, participants advance in the space by walking towards you (or the volunteer positioned near the wall). It is very important to use only walking and no running. When you turn, the participants have to behave like they did not move at all - they have to stand still.
- If, after you turn, you see any of the people moving, you need to tell them to move back to the beginning. The goal of each of the participants is to be the first one getting to the wall. The first person getting there takes the place of the volunteer and repeats the process.
- Repeat couple of times depending on the level of enthusiasm and interest in the group.

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- It is preferable to implement this activity in a very large space, so each round takes longer; participants do not rush and take their time in the process.

### **Dance and Hide**

*(10 min)*

#### **Objectives**

To loosen up; to get more free and mindless; to develop focus and attention; to practice calmness in stressful environment.

#### **Details and description of the activity**

- Invite the participants to find a pair in the group and to decide who the person A is and who the person B is during the activity.
- Tell the group that this is a dancing exercise (with some entertaining music) and they should be as free as they wish. Person A is turned with their back to person B, who, during the activity, has to imitate whatever A is doing, but in a mocking exaggerating style.
- Music starts and all A's are dancing as they wish, even with the eyes closed if that helps them loosen up. The B's are doing their task behind the A's. At any time A's can decide to turn suddenly, like they have a hunch something is going on in their back; at this moment B person has to seem very cool and minding their own business. If person B is caught off guard they have to switch roles.
- Instruct the group to not turn back too often (like every few seconds) as it can be a buzz killer.
- You can shuffle the pairs during the activity, to support the participants to connect with more people in the group

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can use real music for the background but you can also use imaginary music by mentioning only the style of music, and then participants have to dance as they imagine the music.
- If you notice B's are not caught off guard more than few times you can decide to just switch roles for the whole group at once.

### **Vampires among Us**

*(15 min)*

#### **Objectives**

To change moods and energy in short times; to loosen up; to develop more trust in the group; to activate all senses.

#### **Details and description of the activity**

- Instruct the group that in this activity they have their eyes closed at all times. If needed, prepare blindfolds for participants who cannot keep their eyes closed.
- They have to walk in the space slowly in order to be careful about not harming the other participants.
- While they are walking in the space you give a grip (soft squeeze) with both hands on the neck of some of the participants. When they feel the grip on their neck they have to make a very loud and strong sound, as of a heavy transformation. Now they become Vampires and they go around the group and try to do the same to other participants (to give a grip on other participants' neck), who, as well, when touched, have to make a very loud and strong sound.
- As the participants are always with the eyes closed, it might happen that they get to squeeze another Vampire. When that happens, the Vampire has to release another sound, which reflects a huge relief, and continue to walk in the space with their eyes closed (not looking for

other participants anymore) until they get their neck squeezed again and they are Vampires again.

## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

*As all experience was with eyes closed and the level of stress could have been high it is recommended to allocate space for some sharing after the discussions*

- How did you feel during the activity? What was the dominant feeling?
- What was the most stressful part of the exercise? What about the least?
- What helped you deal with these feelings in the process?
- How do you feel/relate to the group now?
- Do you have any other insights from your experience you want to share?



## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

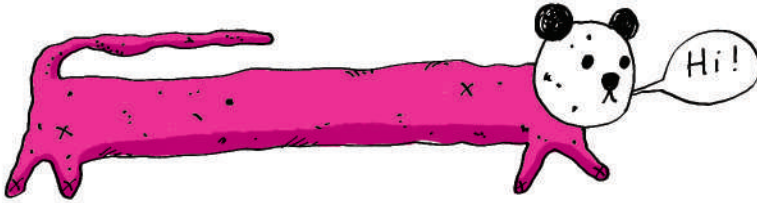
- It is important to implement the activity in an adequate space, large and with no objects or furniture that can interfere with the participants in their “blind” walk.
- You, as a facilitator, have to be alert and make sure no participant gets away from the group and redirect them back to the “action field”.

## Bears and Woodcutters

(15 min)

### Objectives

To develop focus and attention; to practice calmness in stressful environment; to practice different roles; to expand one's personal borders; to loosen up.



### Details and description of the activity

- Ask for 2 or 3 volunteers (depending on the group size). They play the roles of bears in the activity and all the others are woodcutters.
- The bears are facing the others with their back, or standing behind some furniture in the room. The woodcutters have to act out as they are in a forest and plan to cut a tree.
- Whenever they wish so, the bears have to make a very loud groan which signals to the woodcutters they are coming in the forest. When the woodcutters hear the groan they have to lie down on the floor and play dead.
- The bears go around, sniffing, moving and are trying to make the woodcutters move/react/show a sign of life. If they manage to get reaction from any of them, they become bears as well and go around checking the “life” status of the others.
- If the first round goes fast, ask for a change of roles and do it again.

### Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- It is important to mention to the bears to be considerate and mind personal borders while they check the “life” status of the woodcutters.

## Hey, You there!

(15 min)

### Objectives

To increase fast reactions, to activate and energize the group; to increase coordination among team members; to stimulate imagination.



### Details and description of the activity

- Explain to the group that they have to walk around the space, in silence, preferably exploring all the available space as much as possible.
- On a signal, a clap or a whistle blow, the group has to look at one point on the wall (you have to indicate the wall) and freeze staring at that point for couple of seconds, after which they have to move around the space again.
- On the next signal, the group freeze, staring at the first spot, then they point to another part of the wall with a finger and shout: HEY, and after few seconds they start moving again
- On the next (and last) signal, the group looks at their first chosen spot, point at the next one and shout HEY and then change the point again, and shout YOU, THERE!
- After the group gets the flow of the exercise, you repeat it couple of times; you may also work with the speeds of the movements (slower or faster)
- You can continue until the group start looking / pointing at the same points on the wall.

## Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions (optional)

- How did you feel the group in the activity?
- What did you observe about the group coordination in the exercise?
- What helped the group achieve synchronization in the last phase? Or why did it not manage to have it?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- You can start by asking the group to use the same point for all three phases, and then to change them, and even get to a more advance version where every point is on a different wall.
- It is an activity which goes smoothly in a space which is large enough to accommodate easy and large movements of all group members.





## Say and Do the Opposite

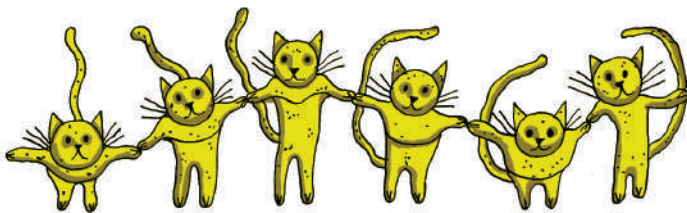
(10 min)

### Objectives

To stimulate imagination; to increase focus, attention and concentration; to increase coordination among the team members; to break the patterns of thinking and behaving.

### Details and description of the activity

- Ask the group to stand in a circle. Explain that you start, but then anybody else is invited to continue and challenge the group.
- The main idea of the exercise is to break the patterns of thinking and behaving as we are usually wired to do what we say. In this exercise the group has to do the opposite: for example, if you say Jump, they have to stand still; if you say Jump Left, they have to Jump Right.
- Use couple of triggers to warm-up the group: Jump Left/Right; Go front/Back; Bend down/Jump; Turn back; etc.
- Then ask the group to say what you say in the same time they do the opposite.
- Invite other participants to propose triggers to the group or combination of triggers, such as Jump Left – Go Front – Jump Left.



### Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- You can also use a version with saying the opposite words. So, if you say white, they have to say black and combine this with the movement. Basically you can play with the concept of the exercise to make it as challenging as you think the group can handle.

## **Bad is Good - Good is Bad**

*(15 min)*

### **Objectives**

To stimulate imagination; to increase focus, attention and concentration; to break the patterns of thinking.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask the group to stand in a circle. Explain that you start and everyone else continues after you, until a full circle is completed.
- Every person is invited to say something about themselves. It can be true or not, it is their choice, but it has to be framed as I sentence. They can say something positive (e.g. I'm beautiful, smart, etc.) or negative (e.g. I'm sick, disgusting, I smell bad, etc.). After each person has said their sentence the group has to react. For a positive sentence they have to BOOO the person and for a negative one they have to YEYY them. The group is invited to be loud and, if they wish, to also use their bodies to express.
- Ask the group to use different sentences from the previous people.
- After a full circle, you can do the second round and the group should use a different type of sentence than before; e.g. if they used positive the first time now they should use negative.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions (optional)**

- How did you feel while receiving the reactions of the group after you said your sentence?
- If any of you had an awkward, strange feeling, could you explain why?
- Did the reactions of the group affect what you said in any way?
- Was there any difference between the first and the second round in how you experienced the activity?
- What could help you in order to not be influenced or affected by people's reactions to your statements?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- If you work with a small group (max 10 people) you could carry out 3 rounds of the activity.
- A more advance version, for groups that know each other for longer time, is that from the second round, participants point at somebody in the group and say a positive or negative sentence: YOU are\_\_\_, followed by the group's reaction in the similar way as previously described.

### **Groups and Numbers**

*(20 min)*

#### **Objectives**

To stimulate imagination; to increase focus, attention and concentration; to increase coordination among the team members; to activate the group; to stimulate fast (silent) decision making process in the group; to stretch the bodies; to increase trust among group members.

#### **Details and description of the activity**

- Instruct the group that in this activity they walk around the space in silence, and whenever they hear a signal from you they should organize themselves very fast, to implement the task.
- The signal is represented by two indicators; the first is a number which represents how many people have to be in a group delivering the task and the second is a task they have to do, which is time they need to represent as a group, e.g. 1 o'clock or half past 10, etc.
- The representation of the time can be done in any manner they wish, but only by using their bodies, and they should not talk while doing it.
- The group walks around the space, and from time to time you give the signal. To put some pressure and stimulate the groups to think and act fast you can make it a competition; the last people go out of the game,

or the first one gains some advantage. The competitive nature can be added if the groups do not seem to act fast enough.

- Be aware of the participants' number and mostly use numbers which can be delivered by equal divisions of the group. For the last round of the exercise use the whole group to do the task.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this exercise for you? What made it like that?
- What was the most difficult part of it?
- What was the easiest part of it?
- What helped the group in the process of delivering the tasks?
- What did you notice in the process?
- Which aspect of this exercise can be used for the group process in general?



### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- Remind the group about taking care of each other; while some ideas might be extremely out of the box, some can also be dangerous and they should not risk their physical integrity.
- Think, in advance, whether the group can use furniture for their task, so you can reply if the group asks. It is preferable to not mention this in the instructions and let the group think freely about doing the tasks. Using objects can make the task easier, but at the same time the same groups might need this support.

## Trust, Power and Balance

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### Explore the Common Space

(30 min)

#### Objectives

To connect with the space and the group; to reflect on one's position in a group; to explore the space in unusual ways; to be triggered by movements and the positions of others in the group; to challenge the usual patterns of being in space; to develop trust in the group.

#### Details and description of the activity

- Explain to the group that in this activity they have the chance to explore and experience the working space in a very unusual way. There are 15 minutes allocated for the “exploration”. The exploration takes place in silence and it is clearly signalled from the facilitator when it begins, when half of the time has passed and when it finishes.
- Invite the participants to play with various dimensions: Level (up, middle, down, laying), Direction, Speed (stillness till running),

Proximity (to objects, people, etc.). Tell the group to alternate and try to use as many as possible depending on how they feel in the process. There is no rush and no pressure but an invitation to experience themselves in the space and in the group in different ways.

- Do not over-explain the task, but try to motivate the group to be free and follow what their intuition tells them in the process.
- One minute before the end of the 15-minute period inform the group that there is one minute left, so they can decide to move to their last position in the group if they wish. This last-minute announcement is also to make sure everyone connects with the group at least visually, as the invitation is to take the final position in the space, but with which they feel comfortable in the group.
- At the end ask the group to mentally keep the final picture of the last constellation before breaking it for the discussion, which is very important to conduct after such activity.



### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

*If the group is bigger than 15 people, you can ask the first questions for reflection in small groups (3-4 people) and then continue in the big group*

- What did you observe about the way you involved in the activity? What did you notice about yourself? What feelings did you have at different moments?
- What did you observe about the group behaviour in the process? Did you notice any significant moments?
- How do you feel about the last constellation of the group?
- Was there anything you wished to voice out during the activity? If yes, what was it?
- What does this exercise say about the group?
- Is there any relevant insight the group should reflect on more?
- Is there anything that should be used in future activities?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If the group really enjoy the process you can repeat it at different times and increase the allocated time to 20 minutes, for a more intense experience.
- The experience can be quite intense or emotional and it can be a very strong activity for the group. It is advised to implement it with a group that knows each other or has already had common experience.



### The Person and the Shadow

*(30 min)*

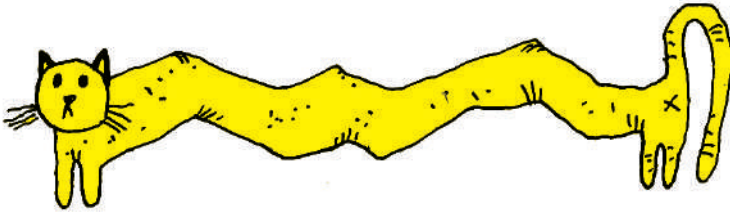
#### Objectives

To work with uncomfortable feeling; to stretch the physical boundaries; to get relaxed in stressful situations; to learn how to deal with strange circumstances.

#### Details and description of the activity

- Ask the participants to pair up. They have 7 minutes to experience the activity and then switch roles within a pair. One person in a pair has to walk around the space at different speeds (but never run) or directions. The other person has to follow the first one as a shadow, at a very close distance, and constantly tries to keep this close distance throughout the activity.

- The activity takes place in silence and with a serious attitude, which increases the tension and the weird feeling about it, emphasised by the longer length of the exercise
- It is important to keep the 7 minutes for each round, even if the participants show signs of discomfort; that is exactly the type of feeling aimed to be triggered by the activity.
- After 7 minutes ask them to switch roles and then follow up with a discussion.



### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- What kind of feelings did you experience in the activity as a followed person, and as a shadow?
- When did you have the strongest feelings and what were they?
- What made you feel in this specific way?
- How did your emotional journey change, if it changed, on the way of the activity?
- What made you feel more relaxed, comfortable in the process (if you became more relaxed)? If you did not, what prevented you from becoming more relaxed?
- What can you use from this experience to deal with “awkward” situations in Invisible Theatre performances?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- It is very important to remind the group to maintain a serious attitude in the activity; often, due to experiencing strong feeling of discomfort, people tend to cope with it by laughing, but this is defusing the feeling which we want them to experience more strongly.



## **Name Whispering**

*(30 min)*

### **Objectives**

To work with a feeling of discomfort; to get used to unexpected, potentially stressful situations; to learn how to deal with strange circumstances; to develop trust among group members.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask participants to find a pair for this activity; preferably somebody with whom they have not worked much in the past.
- You should have blindfolds for half of the group or ask the participants to bring scarfs for themselves or others in the group. You can also ask the participants to keep their eyes closed, but using blindfolds increases the intensity of the experience.
- The first person in each pair puts on a blindfold and then walks around the space. Their couple has to call them by whispering their name, close or further away from them, and should attempt to always do it from different directions. Whenever they hear their name the blindfolded participants need to go towards the direction from which they are called. Of course, the people that can see need to take into consideration the space and its limitations (from the objects or the other present people) and make sure that whenever they call their partner it is safe for them to move.
- Allocate at least 5 minutes for each round, although more time definitely intensifies the experience, and then move on to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- What kind of feelings did you experience in the activity?
- When did you have the strongest feelings and what were they?
- What made you feel this specific way?
- How did it feel to call your partner in comparison with the time when

you had your eyes closed?

- What made you feel more relaxed, comfortable in the process (if you became more relaxed)? If you did not, what prevented you from becoming more relaxed?
- How do you usually react or deal with situations which resemble the ones experienced in this exercise?
- Which aspect of this experience can you use to deal with “awkward” situations in Invisible Theatre performances?



### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can use the activity after you have distributed the roles and use the name of the actors instead of the real names, in order to help the actors get into their roles.
- The space where you plan to implement this activity has to be carefully chosen in order to be sufficiently large and free from objects and potential obstacles.

## **Find the Hand/ Face**

*(30 min)*

### **Objectives**

To sharpen attention and focus; to activate other senses besides sight; to support group connection and bonding; to get comfortable with human touches; to get relaxed in unusual situations.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask participants to find a pair, preferably somebody with whom they have not worked much in the past.
- In these pairs, ask them to touch, observe, analyse each other's faces (if the group has previously had common experience) or one of the hands (if it is a new group) for 5 minutes. They need to use these 5 minutes to the maximum, in order to identify all particularities, features and recognizable signs of the explored skin area.
- Ask the group to close their eyes, (use blindfolds if considered necessary) and ask them to walk around the space and mingle as much as possible.
- On your signal, each participant has to start searching for their partner. They have their eyes closed and they are allowed to explore only the face/hand of the people they meet on the way.
- The recognition process takes place in silence in order to rely only on the other senses, memories and strategies made in the observation phase.
- Once all pairs have found each other move on to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What was the most challenging aspect of it?
- How did you manage to recognize your partners?
- What prevented you from it, if you did not manage?
- How could you have recognized your partner more easily (but still

with eyes closed)?

- What could have helped you?
- How helpful do you think it is to have sharp senses, besides sight?
- How helpful can they be in an Invisible Theatre performance?
- How can you activate your other senses and make them as powerful as sight?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- Carefully decide whether to use this activity; people who are just starting to work with each other might experience a strong resistance to such a long and close physical touch. For sure, using the hand instead of the face is much more comfortable choice.

### **1, 2, 3, 4, 5... - Faint**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop trust among group members; to learn how to let go; to develop focus and attention; to develop interest and concern for all group members; to develop responsibility for the group well-being.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask the participants to count one by one, starting from 1, until the last person in the group says a number; in this way each participant receives a different number. They have to remember which number they have.
- Participants have to walk around the space close to the group, and not wander alone far from the group.
- Any time you call out a number the person behind that number pretends they will faint. Whoever is around that person has to serve as a supporting buffer, so they do not fall on the ground. After a few

second everyone comes back on their feet and continue to walk in the space.

- Invite the group to always be on alert and ready to help anybody that might faint any moment. Until the group gets in the flow of the activity, the first fainting people should be careful while falling, and pay attention if there is somebody there to support them.
- Generally, once the group gets into the proper on-alert mood, invite the fainting people to let go and trust the group more.
- Remember what numbers you called out; try to mention all of them and to, also, use duplicates in order to make all people constantly vigilant.
- Once you finish allow some time for a brief discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did you feel in this activity?
- What were the most dominant feelings you had?
- What helped you, or could have helped you deal with negative emotions?
- Did you notice anything interesting or worth reflecting on regarding the way the group acted out in the exercise?
- How do you consider the group behaviour regarding taking care of its members?
- What helped and what did not help in the process?
- What can be used or should be remembered for the process of Invisible Theatre from this experience?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- If you work with a big group, you might consider using different strategies to remember what number you already called out, including writing them down, in order to not leave somebody out or repeat the same person too many times.
- As an alternative, you can use storytelling, invented on the spot or prepared in advance, and whenever a number is mentioned the person behind it has to faint.

## **Rope Leading**

*(30 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop trust among group members; to deal with stressful and unexpected situations; to explore the concept of power; to personally reflect on how it is to be led or to lead; to let go.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask participants to find a pair in the group. It can be somebody with whom they did not work so much. Give each pair a rope about 1 meter long. They should tie this rope to their wrists.
- On your signal, one pair member starts leading the other person (who is having their eyes closed or having a blindfold) in the available space (preferably very large and with options for outdoor explorations). The rope is used to signal the direction of the walk. The exercise takes place in full silence.
- After 7 minutes ask the pairs to switch roles.
- During the activity, remind the participants to take care of each other, but, also, to still provide a challenging enough experience to their partners.
- After the two rounds ask the pairs to remove the rope and continue with the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this activity for you, in one word?
- What kind of feelings did you experience?
- How did you feel while you were led? How did you feel while you led?
- How much did you let go while you were led? Why was it so? What could have helped you to let yourself more in the hands of your partner?
- Which role did you prefer most in the activity and why it is so?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you link with what happens in a

performance of Invisible Theatre?

- How much does leading take place in such a performance? Who leads whom and how to make sure it does not lead in the “wrong” direction?
- What insights from this discussion can be used for the future performances?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- In the last minute of each round you can ask the people with the eyes closed to open their eyes and let the pairs to do whatever they wish in this one minute (but still in silence). It is interesting to reflect on the first reactions of the pairs in this minute of full sight.



### **Lead while Being Led**

*(30 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop attention and focus; To explore the concept of power; to personally reflect on feelings associated to domination; to work on trust among group members; to trigger personal reflections on how you can lead while you are led; to investigate the concept of balance in team dynamics.

## **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask participants to find a pair in the group.
- Each participant in the activity uses their hand in order to lead the other person. The partner has to stare at the hand (as if they are hypnotized) and follow the hand in the space as their partner wishes so. The movements should be slow enough for the partner to be able to follow the hand in reasonable pace. In the same time, the person being led is also leading their partner with their hand. It is a double mission.
- The exercise has to be done in silence, with care, and without harming the involved people.
- Allocate around 7 minutes for the task and then proceed to the discussion.

## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this activity for you, in one word?
- What kind of feelings did you experience?
- What was the most challenging aspect of it?
- What observations do you have from your process?
- What did you notice about the other pairs?
- How did the leading process happen?
- Was there a dominant leader? If yes, how did that manifest? If there was not, how did the balance happen?
- Can there be true balance in a group? If yes, how can it be achieved? What is needed in that sense?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you link with what happens in a performance of Invisible Theatre?
- What insights can be used for the future performances?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- For new groups, you can first try with a simple version of leading exercise; one partner is leading the other; then they switch; then you introduce the previously explained version.



- Another alternative, more challenging, is to have all participants in a chain; one person is leading another and being led by somebody else. The mobility is much more difficult in this case, but the reflection can touch on power dynamics in the whole group and the invisible links existing between group members.



## **Keep the Balance**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

To explore the concept of balance; to develop trustful and balanced group dynamic; to sharpen focus and attention; to physically activate the participants.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Divide the participants in two equal groups and ask them to line up and face each other (from the opposite walls).
- Ask each line to assign a number to each person within their line, starting from 1, in such way that number 1 from the first line faces the last number from the other line.
- Make a mark in the middle of the room, which also must be in the middle of the space between the two groups; the mark can be created with a tape on the floor or an object placed in the middle, to symbolize the centre of the space.

- Ask the first pair, the ones who have the number 1 (*placed at the opposite sides of the lines*) to start moving slowly in the space. They have to maintain an equal distance from each other and they should also mirror each other's moves. There is no specific indication of who should follow whom, but they should both work maintain this balance.
- On your signal, or when you shout 2, the pair with this number enters the scene, move and keep the balance in same way as it was instructed before.
- One by one, each number enters the scene with different movements and with the aim of balance in their mind.
- Once all numbers have been called out allocate additional couple of minutes for practice of balance within the whole group, then shout STOP, and all people have to freeze.
- Ask the group to observe the last constellation, unfreeze them and move to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did you experience this exercise? What kind of feeling did you experience?
- How easy or hard was it to keep the balance with your partner?
- What helped or could have helped you in this process?
- What did you notice in the group's behaviour during the exercise?
- Which aspect of this exercise is relevant for the work we do with Invisible Theatre?
- How should balance be reflected in the performance?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can be used for your performance?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- If there are more than 10 pairs involved in the activity you might consider asking each pair to freeze in a statue before asking the next number to enter the activity. It can get very tiring for the first numbers to continue doing their movements until the entire group finishes.

## **Moving Square**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop coordination and trust among group members; to develop focus and attention; to develop synchronization among participants.

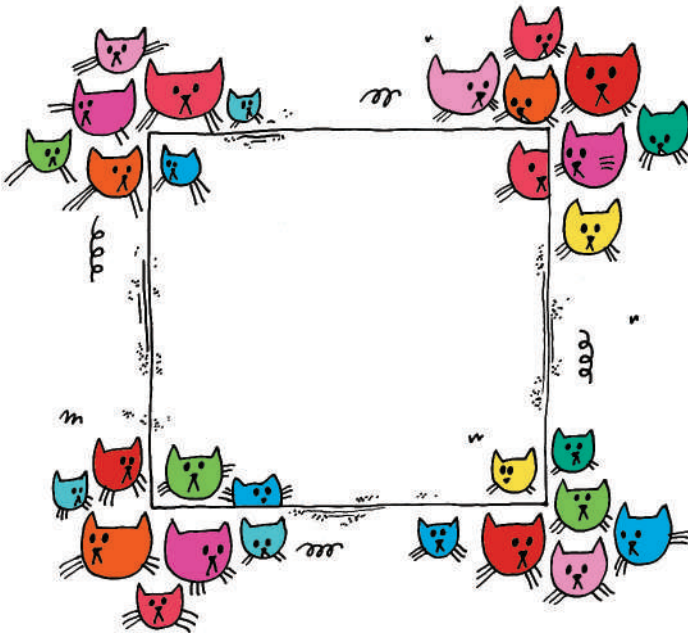
### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask participants to divide in 4 equal groups (as much as possible) and stand in lines forming a square.
- The activity starts from any line of the square. One person leaves their line, walks across the square and joins the opposite parallel line. Then, from the next line (either on the left or on the right) two people start (and it is obligatory they start at the very same time) and move to the parallel line. Then from the next line three people start and move to the parallel line. This continues until any line makes a mistake and then it has to start all over again, from the formation of the square, the way it was at the moment of the mistake.
- The exercise takes place in silence and it is based on participants' feeling of whether they should join the formation that is moving to the other side. There is no beforehand agreement on whom or when they start moving. If fewer or more than the number of people required for that round start moving, it is considered a mistake.
- Depending on the total number of people in a group, the counting can increase until 5, 6 or 7 and then start again from 1. You can adjust, depending on how the group performs.
- If one line does not have enough people to continue with the "counting", people from the other lines have to join and support the exercise to go on.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this experience for you? (in one word)
- What was the most challenging aspect of it?

- What made it difficult to do it right from the first try?
- What helped the process?
- How could it have been even more successful (besides having the chance to talk to each other)?
- Which aspects of this experience resemble the process of an Invisible Theatre performance?
- What can you use from this experience, in order to have more synchronization as actors during the performance?
- Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations
- You need to resist the group's attempts to talk with each other and make strategies to make the exercise successful. The aim of the activity is not reached in this way and you need to motivate them to explore alternative ways to feel the group and find the "right" moment.
- You can ask the group to loudly count from line to line (1, 2, 3, 4...) and create a rhythm as a group. In this way the task is easier to be carried out.



## Chaos Game

(40 min)

### Objectives

To develop focus and attention; to develop trust and coordination among group members; to develop skills to deal with confusing and frustrating dynamic; to deal with unexpected load of emotions and tasks; to handle stressful situations; to perform under heavy load of tasks; to deal with chaotic atmosphere and process.

### Details and description of the activity

- Ask the group to stand in a circle.
- Explain there are various tasks for the group to perform, one by one, and all tasks need to be done simultaneously until the exercise finishes.
- Task 1: give one ball to one of the participants. They have to throw it to another person in the group, who has to throw it to another person. Each time the ball has to be passed to a different person. Each person has to remember whom they have given it to. Once the last person has received the ball they have to throw it to the first person. This task has to continue repeating, always in the same order as in the first round.
- Task 2 (*is introduced once the first task has been mastered sufficiently*): Chose one person to start. This person has to go to another person in the group, clap both hands and change places with that person. Now this person goes to somebody else in the group. Each time they have to go to a different person. Everyone has to remember with whom they have changed places. The last person in the group has to change place with the first person that has started. This task has to be repeated, always in the same order as in the first round (in the same time with task 1).
- Task 3 (*is introduced once the second task has been mastered sufficiently*): Ask one person to say a fruit or vegetable. The next person has to say another fruit out loud. For the first round - every time the person on the left of the previous one has to say a new fruit. Exception from this is only when people are changing places in the circle, and a new person

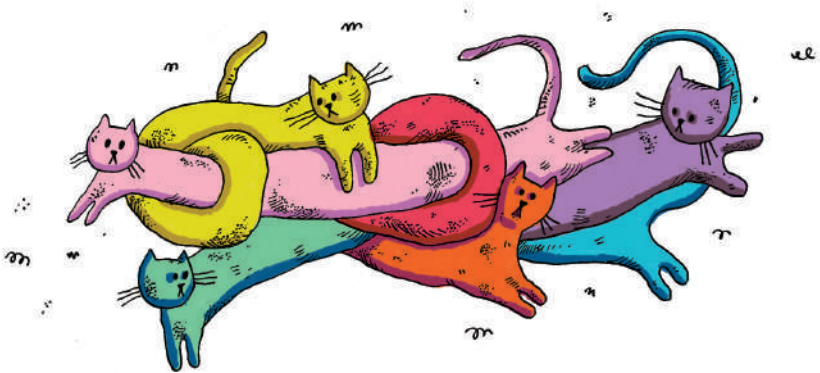
might come in the place of the person that already said a fruit. In this case the new person does not say it and the task continues with the person on their left until the whole group has mentioned a different fruit. Everyone has to remember what fruit they have said and which other fruit was mentioned. From the second round, the same order of the fruit has to be mentioned (*as in the first round*), regardless of how people are positioned in the group (*as they change often due to Task 2*). This continues happening in the same time with the other tasks.

- Task 4: Give an object to a random person in the group. This person has to pass the object to the person on their right, who continues by passing it to the person on their right. This goes on continuously (*in parallel with the other 3 tasks*)
- Task 5: give one object to be held in between knees of one participant. They have to pass it to the person on their left with their knees, and that person has to pick it up with the knees as well. Afterwards, they continue to pass it in the same way to the person on their left. This goes on continuously, in the same time with the other tasks.
- Allow sufficient time in between introducing each new task, but not too much, in order for the group to handle the stress and the load of the work they have to deal with.
- At this stage, explain to the group that, at any time, if anybody feels tired, bored or wants to take a break from doing all these tasks, they should find another person in the group, wink to each other (as a mutual agreement), come to the middle of the circle and dance with each other (and then they go back to any place in the circle).
- While they have the break, the group has to carry on with the tasks.
- After you introduce the last task, allow couple of minutes for the group to incorporate it (if they manage) for at least 1-2 rounds, and then stop the activity and move on to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- Please, say in one word, what was your dominant feeling in this activity?
- Is there anybody that wants to elaborate on their feelings?
- What happened in the exercise?

- How did you handle the execution of the tasks given to you, as a group?
- Can you identify a specific moment in which the group did not manage anymore?
- What was the most challenging part of the exercise?
- What helped or could have helped the process and the group to deal with these tasks?
- Was this a mission impossible or a very difficult activity? How did the group act out towards the given tasks?
- How should a difficult task be approached by a group? What can help to make it achievable?
- What similarities between what happened in this exercise and what happens (or can happen) in an Invisible Theatre performance do you see?
- What insights do you have from this exercise, which can be used while acting in an Invisible Theatre performance?



### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- For some of the tasks, you, as facilitator, need to keep track if a mistake is done, e.g. the fruit task, you need to be aware if fruits are being mentioned twice in the first round, and signal this to the group.
- The activity can be extremely frustrating for the group, which is intended, but it can trigger quite negative attitudes from some participants against you, the facilitator. You need to be careful that the activity still remains a learning experience and not only a painful one.

## Emotions

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### Just You – No Mask

(30 min)

#### Objectives

To support group members to reveal their true self to each other; to reflect on the concept of mask; to support group bonding and connection; to stimulate empathy among group members; to trigger the participants emotionally.

#### Details and description of the activity

- Ask the group to attempt to define the concept of mask (*masks that each of us carries in our day-to-day life*). It is a psychological term which is used widely, and it is possible that some of the participants might be aware of it. If none of them is, you need to be ready to make a brief introduction about it. (*\*Masking is a process in which an individual changes or “masks” their natural personality to conform to social pressures, abuse, and/or harassment. An individual may not even know they are wearing a mask because it is a behaviour that can take many forms*). Generally, a person without a mask is more genuine and authentic. Often, verbal



and non-verbal communication supports the masked to reveal their true feelings/thoughts. In this exercise, participants are invited to just be themselves.

- The setting of the activity is very simple, and due to its simplicity it is also very intense and powerful. The group has to be lined up, sitting (on the floor or on the chairs), and in front of them there is an open space. They are like an audience for an empty stage. The exercise takes place in total silence.
- The person on the right end of the line stands up and slowly walks forward, in a straight line, until the end of the stage. The person turns left and walks in a straight line, until reaching the middle of the stage. Now they turn towards the “audience” and look in the eyes of each person from the group. After that, they take a few moments and just stay there, in front of the people. Each person decides how long they want to stay there, “naked”. Then they continue walking slowly, over the same line, until reaching the lateral end of the stage. Once again, they turn towards the line with the audience, walk in a straight line, and take a seat (ending up on the opposite end of the line from the end they started from).
- The next person starts from the end of the line where the initial person arrived to. They repeat the same process.
- Invite them to, once they start walking in the space, try to leave the masks behind, to just be honest and authentic to themselves in front of the others.
- Once everyone has done the “free-of-masks” walk move on to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

*Ask the participants to find one or two other people with whom they can freely share their emotions and impressions from the exercise. After 10 minutes of this small-group sharing bring the participants to the whole group.*

- Is there anything that you wish to share with the entire group (thoughts, reflections that you have expressed in the smaller groups)?
- How was this experience for you?

- What was the most powerful aspect from it?
- How can this exercise help you as an actor in Invisible Theatre?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- The activity can easily get very emotional and people can get watery eyes or start crying completely. It is important to allow these emotions to be expressed freely and not to be comforted by the others (such behaviour often represents a mask or mechanism of people that cannot handle emotions). There is time after the activity to process and discuss about what happened.

### **Favourite Place and Person**

*(15 min)*

#### **Objectives**

To exercise different strategies of communication and persuasion; to reflect on one's positions towards other people in the group; to activate the group; to learn how to deal with rushed and chaotic situations.

#### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask the group to walk around the space. Invite them to explore the working area in different ways from what they have done so far. To observe details they did not notice before, to go to areas, corners to which they did not go before, to walk on different paths all the time, etc.
- While they are exploring the space, ask the group to also observe the group with whom they are working with and sharing the space. Invite them to make eye contact with each other and smile.
- Give 2 mental tasks: one is to choose their favourite place in the space and the other one is to choose their favourite person in the group. They should not indicate this to the person they choose. They do that

while walking and exploring the space.

- On your signal, which can be a clap or whistle, ask the group to take their favourite person to their favourite place.
- There will be some chaos but once everyone has fulfilled their task, move to the brief discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- Did you manage to fulfil your task?
- How did you do it? Could you share some of your “strategies”?
- How was it for you to be taken to another person’s favourite place? How did you feel?
- How did you make sure the person wished to come to your favourite place?
- Is there anything you could do differently, to accommodate everyone’s needs/wishes?



### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

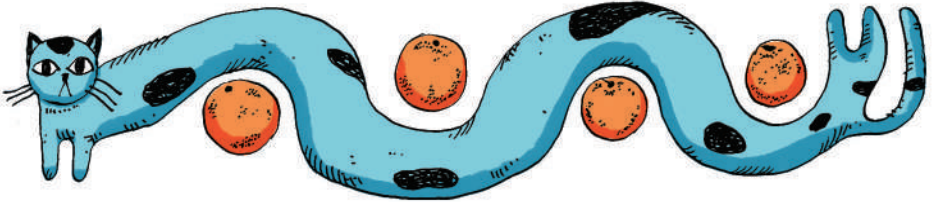
- Some participants get overexcited and competitive and they might get a little bit aggressive with their colleagues; it is worth reminding the group to be careful and not harm anybody while doing their own tasks.

## 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... - Oranges

(20 min)

### Objectives

To stimulate the manifestation of a variety of expressions; to stimulate imagination; to increase connection with the group; to develop focus and attention.



### Details and description of the activity

- Ask participants to count one by one, starting from 1, until the last person in the group says a number; in this way each participant has a different assigned number. They have to remember which number they have.
- The group is standing or sitting in a circle.
- You start the exercise by saying: "I would like to eat an orange!" This is an invitation for the person with number 1 to take over.
- In this exercise participants have to refuse the proposal and pass it on to somebody else. They can use variations of this sentence: "Oh, but why only ONE orange when you can eat... FIVE!"
- All the time, another number is mentioned and it should be one of the numbers that participants have. Invite them to always do it with different enacted emotions, play with it and have fun.
- Make sure everyone is mentioned at least once.

### Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- You can use any fruit or food product you consider more appropriate for your group.

## **Meeting at the Station**

*(15 min)*

### **Objectives**

To stimulate imagination; to stretch bodies; to express emotions in various ways; to stimulate connection among group members.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Explain to the group that in this activity they simulate a meeting in front of a station (May it be a train, a bus station, whatever is appropriate for your group).
- The group roams around the space, always looking for the person they are waiting for. They move around in slow motion, and whenever they think they met their friend (when they had an eye contact with another participant), they have to get very excited and happy to walk towards that person (still slow motion). Then, just before hugging/greeting this person they both realise they made a mistake, get disappointed and move to another direction in the room, to find their friend for real.
- The group continues, constantly thinking they found the person they were looking for, only to get disappointed by the end.
- Towards the end of the exercise, tell the group that the next person they find is actually their friend, so they can express their happiness as they wish.

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can play with this exercise either through the slow motion (as explained before) or with regular speed of action. The slow-motion version favours development of focus, attention, stretching, deeper connections among participants, etc. The fast version develops skills for operating in a fast-changing environments, higher awareness of the group, and connections with more people in the group, etc.

## Spaceship and the Alien

(15 min)

### Objectives

To stimulate imagination; to hide one's own emotions; to express a role different from one's true thoughts; to develop focus and attention; to stimulate connection among group members.

### Details and description of the activity

- Ask the group to stand in a close circle, with sufficient space behind them, so you can move around the circle.
- Explain the set-up of the activity:

“You are all on a space ship somewhere in the universe. An alien has infiltrated among your group and you have 5 minutes to save all the crew from the alien. Among you there is a captain I will choose. This captain receives a magic pass (in the shape of some random object) and once the 5 minutes start, they go around, and whenever they think another crew member is not the alien, ask them to touch this object, be saved, and join the captain in saving the other colleagues. Each crew member wants to be saved, and they can be saved only by touching this object, so they need to convince the captain to believe them that they are not the alien. Whenever the alien (who is, of course, hiding their true role) convinces the captain and touches the object, they have to make a terrifying sound which signals that all the crew members are doomed.”
- Ask the group to close their eyes, so you can go around and choose the alien and the captain. The alien is chosen by a touch on the back, and the captain is given the object that can save the spaceship crew.
- After they have opened their eyes, they see who is the captain and the 5 minutes start going. It is up to each person how they want to strategize in order to convince the captain to save them. Ultimately, only the captain decides to give the object to be touched.
- The activity stops either after 5 minutes (and they are all safe only if they touched the object), or when the alien was discovered and they are not saved.

## Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

- What impressions do you have from the exercise?
- How did the group manage to save themselves, if they did?
- If they did not, why did that happen?
- What strategies have been used by crew members to convince the captain? Which people did the captain believe more easily?
- What could have happened differently?
- Is there anything that can be extracted from this activity and used for acting in Invisible Theatre?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If time allows, you can organize a second round after the discussion.
- Depending on how big your group is, you might consider extending the time or having 2 aliens on board to speed up the process.



## **I Lied, You Lied, We all Lied**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

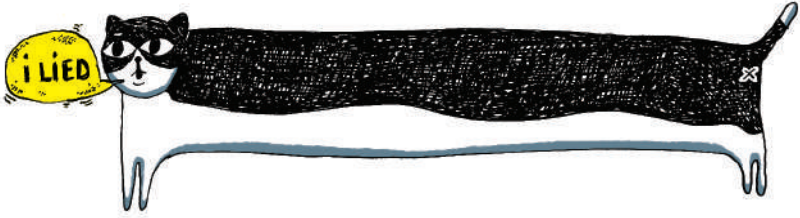
To stimulate imagination; to hide one's own emotions; to express a role different from one's true thoughts; to develop focus and attention; to stimulate connection among group members; to develop non-verbal persuasion skills; to develop observation skills for decoding true emotions.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Ask the group to stand in a close circle with sufficient space behind them, so you can move around the circle.
- Explain that after they close their eyes, you will go around and touch someone's back. They are now the "chosen" ones, but they have to hide this during the exercise. They do their best to make the others believe other people are the "chosen", and that they are not.
- After they open their eyes, they have to look around, in each other's eyes, and observe others' reactions in order to identify who is the "chosen" one. They have to non-verbally agree on one person in the group, who they consider to be the "chosen". They have only a few minutes for this.
- The group does not talk, but you, as a facilitator, have to clearly name the person they have pointed – so you can use this for the further discussion.
- There is a second round with the same procedure, and, once again, the group has to non-verbally decide who they think is the "chosen" one.
- After the second round allow the group to talk, BUT insist that they should not reveal who was "chosen" for real. Ask the group to discuss, at this stage, only about the way they discern when somebody is lying or not?
- After this brief talk, remind the group that in the first round they have pointed at X to be the "chosen" one, and then ask the real "chosen" ones to reveal. All the group members should step up – because you, as facilitator, touched everyone in the first round.



- Also remind the group who they chose in the second round, and then ask the “chosen” to reveal. No one will do so, as in the second round you should not have touched anybody.
- Proceed to the discussion.



### Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

- How do you feel now, in one word?
- What makes you feel like that?
- What happened in this exercise? How did the way you mentioned that you recognize when somebody is lying, work out in the activity?
- How did you divert people’s attention from yourself?
- What did you use in order to “accuse” somebody?
- What did you notice in the two rounds? Was there any difference in the way the group behaved/acted?
- Can you identify if somebody is lying only from their facial and body expression? Why and how?
- Is there anything from this activity that can be extracted and used for acting in Invisible Theatre?

### Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If you work with a big group, with more than 15 people, you can divide the group in two groups which work in parallel.
- Try to use a non-numbered way of explaining what happens in each round, in the sense of not giving hints that there might be more chosen people or none, to avoid being accused of deceiving the group. If it is impossible to avoid, be ready to be accused, turn it back to the group, and link it to the discussion about recognising when somebody is lying to you.

## **Magic House/ River of Emotions**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

To express a variety of emotions in a short period of time; to relax the group; to prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to activate their voice; to stimulate imagination.

### **Details and description of the activity**

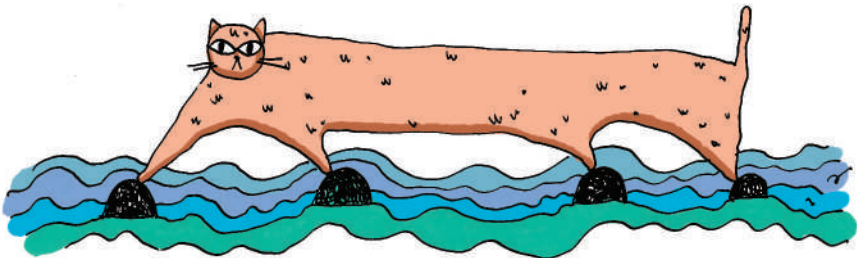
#### **Magic House (version)**

- Explain to the group that in this exercise they visit a magic house. We go around from room to room, one person goes first, to open the door, and enters. Once they enter, they feel something, how a certain emotion, mood is taking possession of them and they start acting out according to it. This gives the signal about the nature of this room to the other people, and once they enter, they also start behaving, acting like that. For example, one person enters in this invisible room, and suddenly feels very sad and starts crying, so we understand this is a sadness room.
- Allow few second for the group to get “infected” by the room and then invite another person to go to another room, to another side of the space.
- For the first emotions, you can open the rooms, until the groups gets into the mood and relaxes, and then invite participants to open the doors. Usually, each room will inspire another room, and the group gets more and more creative.
- Some emotions might include interactions with the others like: hugging, flirting, arguing, rudeness, etc. while some may not, like: happiness, sadness, shyness, arrogance, fury, frustration, boredom, fear, etc. Some rooms might have different happenings, events which create a different mood, state of mind or heart to the group, such as a room full of flies, burning floor, a very cold or hot room, business meetings, ceiling falling over the group, invisible monster in the room, becoming children or old people, etc.

- Continue for about 20 minutes or until you notice the group is losing interest and enthusiasm.

### **River of Emotions (version)**

- Prepare, in advance, an area which can resemble a very wide river. On this river, place “stepping stones”; they will be used by the participants to pass from one side of the river to the other. Participants cannot cross the river without using these stones. These “stones” are made from coloured paper or cardboard, with different types of emotions (you want the group to explore) written on them. Once a person lands on one of these stones they have to act and express that emotion.
- Ask the group to step on a minimum number of stones before passing (e.g. at least 6) and encourage them to land on even more than that number.
- The participants start the passing process one after another, and there can be more people on the same river side and/or on the same stone (if the size of the stone is big enough) in the same time. You can add stones which are explicitly made for more people, e.g. on their journey they need to use at least 3 stones which require 2 people to step on them in the same time, in order to be passed.
- You can use emotions/concepts such as: happiness, sadness, anger, enthusiasm, in love, jealousy, flirting, suspicion, shyness, politeness, boredom, annoyance, frustration, fear, nervousness, irritation, surprise, disgust, kindness, etc. You can also include empty stones, on which the participants should freely express any emotions they wish, but different than the ones before.



## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did you find the passing of the river / the visit of the house?
- How easy or difficult was it? Do you have any other impressions?
- Which emotions did you find the most challenging and which ones more easy to express?
- How easy was it to transit from one emotion to the other? Could you explain why?
- How could you express emotions you do not actually feel, in a more authentic way?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- The main differences between the two versions is that in the house, the type of experienced emotions depend on the group's imagination, while in the river version you can make sure certain emotions are tried out by the group.
- If the group is more experienced you can try a version with more complex type of emotions/concepts: power, hate, anxiety, doubt, trust, anticipation, envy, pity, shame, confidence, grief, bad temper, pride, modesty, etc.
- For the House version, some participants can dominate the process and constantly open the new rooms without leaving space to the others in the group. You need to constantly invite new people to open the doors.

## **Catwalk**

*(15 min)*

## **Objectives**

To support getting into the role; to stimulate imagination; to explore more authentic ways to express emotions associated to their assigned roles; to prepare for acting.

## Details and description of the activity

- This activity should be organized after the roles have been assigned to the team members.
- Divide the participants in 2 groups. One group prepares for the catwalk while the others set up the stage and become the audience.
- The participants who prepare for the catwalk of their role, do their best to impersonate the attitudes of their character, and, if needed, can use objects or props to support this.
- Once they enter the catwalk, they are in their role and act out the emotions and attitudes associated with it. The audience has to observe their roles very carefully, applaud and react to them like it usually happens on a catwalk presentation. After all “models” are on the platform, they stop in order to be analysed by the audience further.
- You act as an MC of the show and ask the audience what they think about each model: what kind of attitude they express, who they think they are, etc. All these comments help the actors work on their role further, to be more realistic and authentic.
- The groups switch positions, the previous audience prepares for the catwalk, while the previous models are now audience.



## Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

- How did it feel to be in the catwalk?
- What did you think about people’s comments? Especially if they were contradictory?
- What can you use for further development of your role?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- You can also use this activity as a general preparation exercise. To give random roles and to practice for getting into acting, in general.

## Improvisations

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### Imaginary Objects

(25 min)

#### Objectives

To develop imagination; to stimulate coordination among group members; to loosen up the group; to relax; to prepare for acting out.

#### Details and description of the activity

The activity has two phases.

- In the first phase, ask the group to stand in a circle. You start the activity by pretending you have an imaginary object. You mime it and use it exactly like you have it in your hands for real. Then you pass the object to the next person, who has to transform it in a new object, mime it and use it like you did, in such a way that the rest of the group understands what the mimed object is. The object is passed and transformed from person to person, until it gets back to you. If the

- group has fewer than 10 people, do a second round in same manner.
- Phase two of the activity includes dividing the group in pairs. Each pair will have to make use of an imaginary object (which you will name) and play, use and improvise based on it. All pairs do their activity in parallel. Potential objects to be used are: heart, balloon, bubble, rope, motorbike, toilet paper, soap, towel, ice-cream, etc. any object that can trigger more diverse options for a two-people play should be appropriate. Allow the pairs to play with each object for 1-2 minutes. If you notice that some objects do not yield much creativity from the groups introduce another one faster.

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- It is preferable to use a spacious location, even an outdoor one, for this activity.
- From time to time you can ask the pairs to reshuffle, so the participants have the chance to play with different people.



# The Creature and the Sound

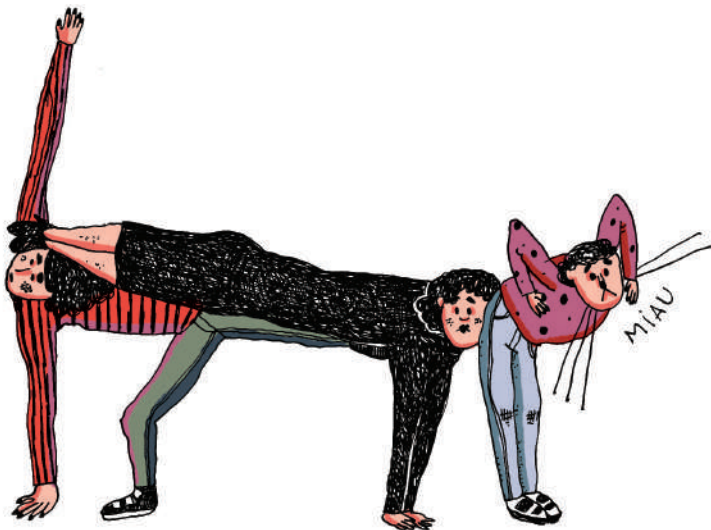
(20 min)

## Objectives

To develop imagination; to stimulate coordination among group members; to loosen up the group; to relax; to prepare for acting out.

## Details and description of the activity

- Divide the participants in two groups. One group is responsible for the sound making, while the other one is responsible for creating a creature out of their bodies.
- The sound-making group starts making a sound. One person from the other group comes in the centre and makes a movement associated to that sound, and this continues until all the “creature” group becomes a full creature. This group should try to create something that has a head, body, tail and it can start moving around the space. The sound group follows them, changes the sounds on the way, and the creature makes use of these sounds in order to express and move.
- After a few minutes change the groups, so now the creature group becomes a sound group.





## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions (optional)**

- How was this activity for you?
- How did you coordinate among each other in the activity?
- What was difficult for sound or creature group?
- Do you have any insights from this process?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can introduce a second phase of this activity in which each group represents a creature that is making their own sounds and have these two creatures interacting with each other.

## **Act Out the Story**

*(20 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop imagination; to stimulate coordination among group members; to loosen up the group; to relax; to prepare for acting out.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Divide participants in two groups. One group reads a story (which you prepared in advance), while the other group has to mime the story they hear. The story has to be read one sentence at the time (each person reads one sentence), so there is enough time for the acting group to act out, get into the mood and make a transition to the next sentence.
- The story should be created in such a way to provide surprise elements on the way. It could use fantasy elements and unusual settings, and a fine dose of emotions and action that could be used in the process of acting out.
- After a group acts out the story, they switch places, and another story

is acted out.

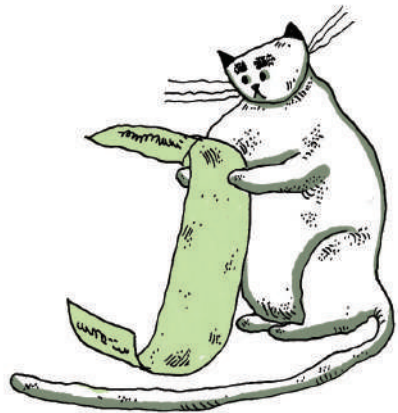
- You can prepare more stories and continue for another round or you could ask the group to create a story on the spot. In this case, any group member starts with a sentence, and the next person continues.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this activity for you?
- How difficult was it to act out the story?
- How difficult was it to create a new story for your colleagues?
- How did you coordinate among each other in the activity?
- What could have helped you to be more loose or creative in the process?
- Do you have any insights from this process?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can ask the acting group to act out with their eyes closed, if that might help them relax and loosen up.



## **Angel Devils**

*(25 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop imagination; to loosen up the group; to relax; to prepare for acting out; to break the regular patterns of thinking and acting.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Divide the participants in groups of 3. In each trio the participants have different roles which they switch after each 5 minutes.
- In each trio there is an Angel, a Devil and a Subject. The Subject is staying in the middle and the Angel and Devil are whispering things in their ear.
- The Angel is saying something nice (eat an ice cream, win the lottery, get a hug, etc.) but in a very nasty and mean intonation. The Devil is saying something negative (slap somebody, break something, hurt your finger, have a headache, etc.), but in a very kind and sweet way. The things they say must be something that can be reproduced by miming, not very abstract but rather concrete, practical things.
- The Subject listens to what they say and chooses one to mime it out. They continue until the first shift of 5 minutes runs out. After that, they switch roles and, in the end, each person will have tried all the roles.
- Proceed to the discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How was this exercise for you?
- What was the most challenging aspect of it?
- Which person have you listened to? Was it the Devil or the Angel? Why was it like that?
- What influences people to act in such way?
- How much does the intonation of the things we say influence other people?
- How can this experience help you for your role in Invisible Theatre?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- It is very important to emphasise the MIMING aspect of the task, the participants do not need to actually move around the space, touch or interact with the other people; they only have to mime it. You need to remind them about this if you notice there was a misunderstanding.



### West Side Story

(20 min)

#### Objectives

To activate the group; to stimulate imagination and creativity; to develop connection and coordination among group members; to prepare for acting.

#### Details and description of the activity

- Divide the participants in 2 equal groups.
- One group starts. They are positioned like a group of dancers and one person is in the front; any movements this person does everyone else in their group copies and tries to do like the leader as much as possible in real time. The movements aim to be like a show-off spectacle for the other group. The group is slowly moving towards the other group, which is moving backwards. The first group continues until the other group reaches the back wall. The leader can change at any time in the

process, if they wish so; they make a step back and anybody else from the second line has to continue doing “attack dance”.

- Once they “pushed” the other group to the wall, it is their turn to do their smug dance attack towards the first group, until they push them to the opposite wall.
- You can play with this structure, change leaders, and use different music style in the background, to help the group to loosen up, get into the mood and get more and more creative in the process.

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- This is an activity suitable for large spaces with no obstacles that can interfere with the movements of the groups.
- If you work with a larger group you can create 3 or 4 groups, so they take turns at the “dance-show-off attack”.

### **Subjects and Objects**

*(30 min)*

### **Objectives**

To stimulate imagination and creativity; to develop connection and coordination among group members; to prepare for acting; to get more familiar with related subjects and issues related to the topic of the performance; to develop skills for improvisation in suddenly changing environments.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Prepare a list of different objects written on different pieces of paper. The objects should be more of a weird, unusual nature. Fold the papers and put them in a bowl. Also, prepare a list of subjects/ topics which you want people to use in their improvisation conversations. Write them as single (or two) words on different pieces of paper which you

put in another bowl folded.

- Explain to the group that this is an improvisation exercise which might help them for the topic preparation as well.
- Decide with the group on a starting context where the action has to take place: shop, bar, house, school, beach, etc. let the group suggest and agree on one. Ask for 2 volunteers, to come on the stage. They can choose their roles (who they are in that specific context), pick a paper with an object and a subject, and they should make use of them in the conversation.
- After the conversation gets going, you can invite other volunteers to join the conversation. Each time a person comes on the stage, they pick a subject and an object which they must use in their improvisation.
- You can play with bringing in or taking people out from the stage and you can also freeze the action at any moment and ask the audience to choose another context. When it unfreezes, the actors have to improvise from the moment they left, but in the new context they find themselves in.
- You can continue as long as the group is engaged, interested to volunteer and improvisation is flowing.
- Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:
- What impressions do you have from this activity?
- How was it for you to change contexts?
- How could you have managed to smoothly get to the new context more easily?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you use for your performance in Invisible Theatre?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can do an exercise at the beginning of the activity, preferably in pairs or trios, in order to warm up the group for going on the stage and improvising.
- Although, generally, it is assumed that improvisation should be funny in order to be successful, it does not have to be like that. You can motivate the group to appreciate well thought arguments or conversation, besides funny, clumsy and cool punch lines.

## Question to Question

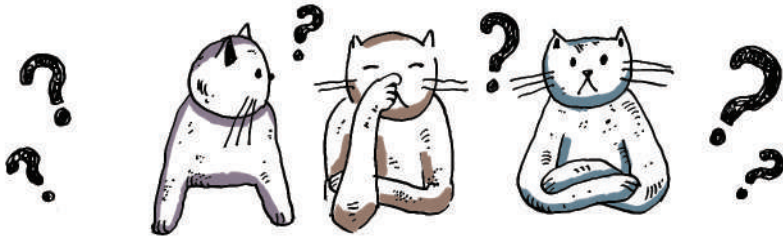
(20 min)

### Objectives

To develop communication skills; to stimulate connection among group members; to develop questioning skills; to develop imagination and creativity.

### Details and description of the activity

- Divide the participants in groups of 3. In these groups the participants have different roles, which change after 3 minutes.
- The task for the small groups is to have a conversation between 2 people (the third one is an observer and provides them with brief feedback) in which they use only questions. For every question they are asked they have to answer with a question.
- The groups work in parallel; after 3 minutes you ask them to change roles.
- Have a brief discussion afterwards.

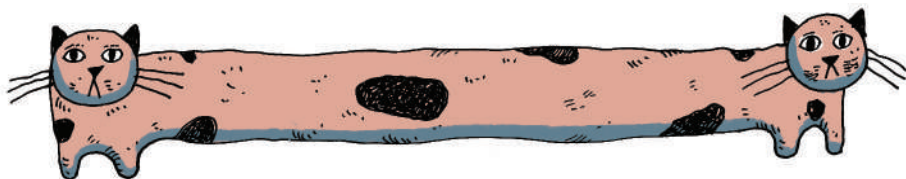


### Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

- How did you feel during this exercise?
- How did you find it?
- What was the most challenging part of it?
- What did you notice about the development of your conversations?
- How can you use questions in your performance of Invisible Theatre?
- How can you improve your questioning skills?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- This is a challenging activity and you must be aware of its difficulty before proposing it to a group. There are people that do not manage to do it at all and can get extremely frustrated.



### The Revelations

(30 min)

### Objectives

To develop communication skills; to stimulate connection among group members; to prepare for acting; to develop imagination and creativity.

### Details and description of the activity

- Ask participants to find a pair. Each pair has to choose a relationship between themselves, which will reflect in the improvisation. In this pair they decide who the person 1 is and who the person 2 is.
- The pairs start the improvisations, which take place in parallel, based on their relationship. Give a few minutes for the participants to warm up and get into their roles.
- At some point during the activity you shout **FIRST REVELATION** - at this moment the person 1 has to make a sudden revelation to their partner, by telling them a big secret, shocking news, something that can strongly shake up their relationship.
- Pairs continue to improvise for some minutes after the revelation was made. Then you shout **SECOND REVELATION** - at this point the person 2 also has to make a revelation to their partner, something totally unexpected.



- For some more minutes allow the improvisation to continue and incorporate the second revelation as well.
- Ask each pair to share with the whole group about their relationships and the shared revelations.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- Did you notice any similarities among the revelations?
- Why do you think such topics are kept secret in close relationships?
- What are the taboo topics in our society?
- How can we use the existence of taboo topics in a society during our performance?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- If the group does not consist of even number of people, you can have trios and have 3 revelations.

## **Guess My Passion**

*(40 min)*

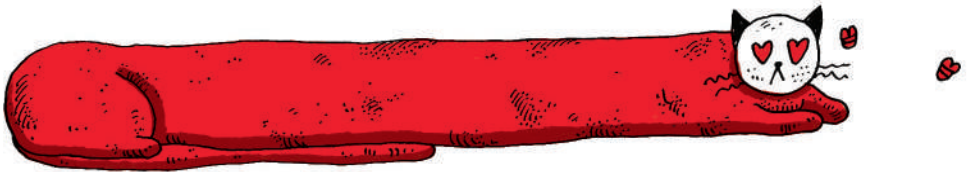
### **Objectives**

To stimulate imagination; to hide one's own emotions; to express a different behaviour from one's true thoughts; to develop focus and attention; to stimulate connection among group members; to develop observation skills for decoding true emotions; to prepare for acting.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- Divide participants in groups of 4. In each group participants share a passion, hobby they have in their life. They exchange these passions among themselves (each participant either chooses another participant's passion, or keeps their own).

- Then each group introduces themselves to the rest of the groups, mentioning the newly assigned passions.
- After a group introduces themselves, the others prepare one or two questions for any group member. These questions aim to check the reactions of the members and how they “lie” about their passion, as the question has to target the passion they claimed to have.
- After the questions and answers session, each audience group makes a guess regarding the way the passions are actually distributed within the discussed team. Depending on the number of correct matches, they get points (from 0 to 4).
- Each group goes through the same process and, at the end; the points are calculated in order to see which group has won the guessing activity.



### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did you find this activity?
- What are your main impressions from it?
- How did you manage, if you did, to make the others believe you have a passion which you do not have in reality? Why could you not manage?
- How can you hide your true thoughts and feelings in a certain context?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you use for your performance of Invisible Theatre?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can also decide to introduce the group and the passions they have without mentioning who has which passion, so the group asks anybody they want free questions.
- Usually, this activity yields lots of fun and excitement from participants, also because of its competitive nature.

## Secret Mission

### Objectives

To stimulate imagination; to hide one own emotions; to express a role different from one's true thoughts; to develop focus and attention; to stimulate connection among group members; to develop observation skills for decoding true thoughts; to prepare for acting.



### Details and description of the activity

- This activity does not take place as an organized exercise with the whole group. It is, in fact, an individual task which participants have to do secretly.
- It is framed as a competition among the participants and there is only one overall winner. The competition takes place during the participants' informal time. Therefore, it is suitable for residential trainings (when the group spends days and nights on the same location), but it can be adapted to a context where the group meets regularly.
- There are various versions of this type of the activity; the main idea is that each participant has as a task to take another participant out of the game. Once they do that, they receive the name of the person the "killed" person had, and it continues until one person remains in the game.
- Every participant takes a name of another participant from a stash. This is the first "victim" with whom they need to start their secret

mission. They keep a secret about their potential “victim”.

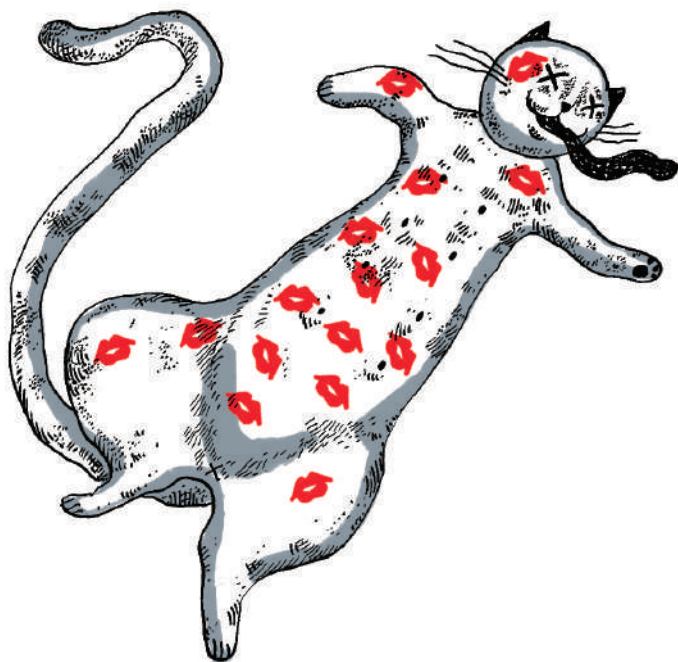
- Taking people out from the game can be done in diverse ways: e.g. they need to be kissed by their “killer” (on the cheek) without any witnesses; a more complex version is that, when they pick the name of the person, they also pick a paper with an object written on it (something that can easily be found in the space where you implement your activity, e.g. spoon, glass, paper, rope, etc.), and the killing happens by making the person take the object from a hand of the killer (it can be in people’s sight or it should be without any witnesses).
- Usually, in the version without allowing witnesses, if it happens that somebody witnesses the “crime” at the “crime scene”, the murder is invalidated.
- You, as a facilitator, could play the role of a referee in such cases, BUT if the facilitator role is shared in the group, everyone can join and there is no external referee.
- You can make a board to keep the evidence of who is out of the game; once a participant is out, they need to write their name on the board.
- At the end of the game, organize a discussion about it with the whole group.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did the Secret Mission happen in this group?
- What did you notice or observe since the mission started?
- How did you deliver your secret mission? Did you have any strategies? How did they work out?
- What were the reasons you have been taken out of the game?
- When did you struggle the most in order to take somebody out?
- Did it happen that you had to take out somebody who is very close to you? How did that feel? Was there any difference, compared to killing the other people?
- What would you do differently if we played the game again?
- Which aspect of this game is relevant for your Invisible Theatre Performance?
- If you would play it again, what could you practice more, that could help you for the performance?

## Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- There might be some errors in the process, which can lead to situations where people are trying to take each other out of the game, but they are not the last ones in the game; these types of errors are difficult to predict, rare to happen and should just be taken as an unwanted occasional side effect.
- Groups react to this type of activity in different ways. Some love it, and some hate it. You need to frame it in this Invisible Theatre context, in order to motivate the participants to engage in the process. To be on alert, vigilant, to hide their true intentions, to mislead other people, etc. all these aspects come in handy while performing in Invisible Theatre.



## Debating

Where do you Stand – (60 min)	142
Fish Bowl – (60 min)	145
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Mission in the Community – (120 min)	152

### Where Do You Stand

(60 min)

#### Objectives

To express one's views on challenging statements; to develop critical thinking; to encourage participants to reflect on their own opinions and reactions to different opinions; to develop debating skills.

#### Details and description of the activity

- Introduce the activity as a discussion or an opportunity to express views on various statements on which people generally have polarized opinions. It is an exercise that aims to explore what stand we take in relation with some, among others, controversial points.
- There are two sides in the room, usually 2 walls/areas facing each other; on these walls there should be two visible signs: I AGREE on one, and I DISAGREE on the other. Read some statements (*which can, also, be written on some big paper, so that everybody can see them during the discussion*) out loud.
- Tell the group: “According to how much you agree or disagree with the statement, you need to stand near the specific wall. There is no middle way, either you agree or disagree”.
- After participants position themselves ask people from both sides to express their points of view / arguments for the chosen side. If, while

listening to different points of view, somebody feels that they have changed their mind, they are free to move to the other side.

- You need to use sentences tailored for the topic and scenario developed for your Invisible Theatre performance.



### **Guidelines to develop a good set of sentences**

- List (more or less) controversial issues that you might think of regarding a specific topic;
- List dilemmas you might have thought of, or which are discussed in public space, around the topic;
- List common questions regarding the topic;
- Put these lists together by compiling and merging issues if they are very close or similar to each other. Some of them might already be formulated as a sentence which can be used in the exercise itself;
- Transform these aspects or sentences into your material for the activity. You need maximum of 10 sentences, formulated rather vaguely and in a thought-provoking manner. See examples below, use them if you find them attractive, but do develop your own, on other topics or even the same ones;
- Brainstorm reasonable arguments for both sides by yourself, if you fail to find for both sides, this could mean that the group will not be divided either. This brainstorming will also help you during the discussions, if you need to come in with more arguments.

**Here are some examples** we have used in a project on Human Rights. These examples are meant to show what kind of sentences you need to develop for your own specific topic.

- A person with extreme racist views should not have the right to express their opinion in any space.
- If there is a right to free movement, then there should not be any visa requirement for anybody in the world.
- If there are Human Rights abuses in one country, the other countries should not interfere.
- Abortion is a woman's right.
- If you buy/use/consume products made by the modern slaves, children or abused workers, you are also responsible for their Human Rights violation.
- To ensure the right to personal security, the government can suspend or limit some other human rights.
- Mentally ill people should not get married and have a family.
- Only states can violate your Human Rights, not individual people.
- In some circumstances, death penalty should be used as a punishment.
- If needed to survive, a family can give their children in labour.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

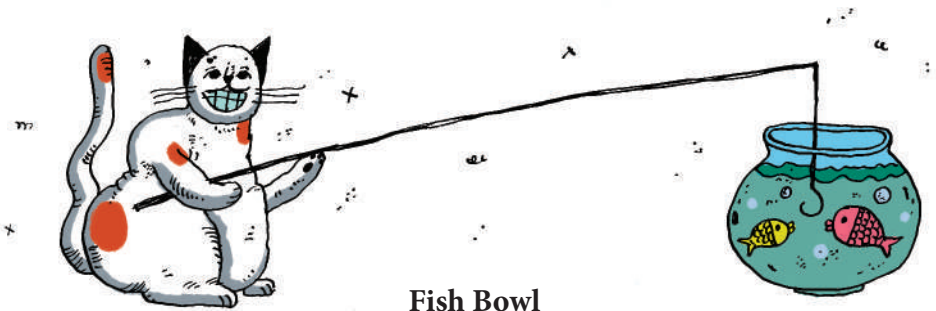
- How did you feel during this activity?
- How was this activity for you?
- How easy for you was it to challenge or find arguments to answer to the other side / point of view?
- Which aspect of this activity can you use for your role as Joker in Invisible Theatre?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- It is usually recommended to allow maximum 10 minutes for a debate per each sentence. After that time, debates become tiring and repetitive. Encourage each side to come up with new arguments and not repeat what has already been said.



- There are high chances that during the activity some people will dominate the discussions, especially the very confident and outspoken ones, and you should stimulate the ones that talk less to speak up.



## **Fish Bowl**

*(60 min)*

### **Objectives**

To express one's views on various topics; to develop critical thinking; to encourage participants to reflect on their own opinions and reactions to different opinions; to develop communication and debating skills; to develop focus and attention.

### **Details and description of the activity**

- This method is meant for group discussions and, unlike standard/classical big group discussions, with the help of this one, you can increase focus, attention and interactivity during the discussion itself.
- The general set up is that the discussion takes place in the middle of the room and only a few people (4-5 people) actually participate at once, while the others are placed outside of this small group, in a larger circle, surrounding the inner one. The name comes from this specific aspect, as the outside circle follows what is happening inside the small circle, similarly to the observation of a fish bowl.
- The process goes as follows: the people in the middle discuss a given topic or a question, and they give their views on the matter. As mentioned previously, the discussion takes place only in the centre, only those people talk, the outer circle is silent, they observe, but the

whole group can participate. These are the options for doing this:

- Whenever somebody from the inner circle feels they do not have anything else they have/want to say, they can just leave and take a seat in the outer one. At this moment, anybody from outside occupies the free place, continues the discussion and brings in additional aspects.
- At any moment, when somebody from the outer circle wants to comment on something that was mentioned, they want to bring in an argument that was not introduced and is relevant, they can just tap any person from the inner circle on the shoulder and take that person's place. The person inside cannot choose whether they leave or not - it is the rule and they have to get out. They can return later on, since one can be in the inner circle more than once.

### **Variations of using the method**

- The participants are themselves; expressing their own points of view during the discussion – therefore, they can replace anyone they wish during the process. The facilitator can ask a question, the group discusses about the answers and, after some time, the facilitator can ask another question. Participants can also propose questions, dilemmas for discussions and all the other members can contribute with their views. An alternative is that there is a box with topics to discuss (maybe subtopics of a larger one), or maybe questions in need of answers, and the people in the fish bowl approach them one by one and answer or discuss them. They decide when they feel they exhausted one topic and they wish to move on to the next one.
- The participants are divided into a number of different groups, according to the number of chairs placed in the middle, and each group has a different position towards the topic (whether the group members agree or disagree with it). They prepare in advance, as a group, a variety of arguments in favour of/defending the position they have, and then the discussion among the different groups takes place as a fish bowl - with a representative of each group. In this case, if a person leaves the inner circle, somebody from their own group has to replace them, and, if other members want to replace, they can tap only the shoulders of the people from their own group.

## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How do you feel at the end of this session?
- What are your main thoughts at the moment?
- With what learning points do you leave this session?
- Is there anything else you want to share with the group?
- How easy for you was it to challenge or find arguments to answer to the other side / point of view?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you use for your role as Joker in Invisible Theatre?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- You can use articles from media, related to your working topic. Select contradictory articles and use them in order to formulate sentences for the second option of using the method or for a free discussion (as the first option suggests).
- Depending on how controversial the discussed issues are, it could be a heavy, long and very intense session; you need to be aware of this and try to manage it adequately. Participants can get in very high spirits during the fishbowl activity and, if necessary, you can intervene reminding the group that this is an exercise meant to help us explore different views and constructively discuss on them.

## **Asking Questions with a Purpose**

*(90 min)*

### **Objectives**

To develop questioning skills; to diversify the type of questions used in a discussion; to stimulate thought-provoking attitudes in communication; to get more competent in conducting meaningful conversations.

## Details and description of the activity

- Make an introduction about questions and different types of questions. See next:

The most common distinction between questions is very simple and refers to the way they are constructed:

- Closed questions  
They have a limited range of possible answers, hence the closed aspect. The answers could be yes/no, maybe, a choice between given answers or range of answers, etc. These questions are easy to answer and useful to break the ice in a specific discussion. They also offer a very concrete type of information (included in the answer options).

Examples:

Do you agree? Do you make any connections? Do you plan to do something regarding this? Do you want to help me? Do you see the problem here? Are you supporting them? Are you on their side?

- Open questions  
As opposed to the closed questions, they do not offer any range of answers to the respondent. They are useful for getting details, deeper and qualitative aspects from participants' answers.

Example:

In general, any questions starting with: what, how, why, which.  
What happened in that moment? Why did you/they act like that?  
What did you see? What do you think about this? What is your interest in this? What do you want to achieve with this? What can anybody do about this?

Closed questions are considered problematic when overused, as they are limiting and they will block the free flow of a discussion. Therefore, any closed question should be followed up with a couple of open questions. You might consider opening a line of discussion with

closed ones and going deeper with open ones. Example: Do you agree? Why? Is this important to you? In which way this is important?

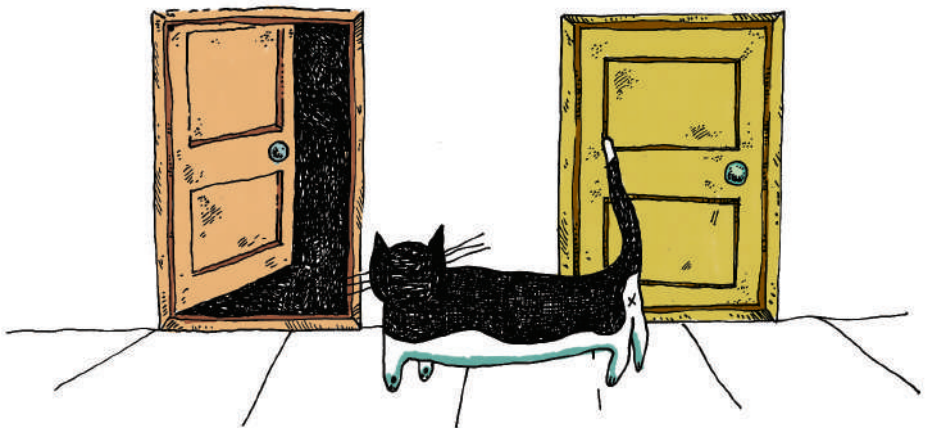
Below we introduce different types of questions which might be closed or open, but the classification is made more for the purpose/scope of the questions, and not for the way they are constructed.

- Leading/loaded questions

These types of questions are not neutral. They tend to subtly influence the respondent to provide certain answers. They are suggestive; they might include an assumption presented as truth, a personal agreement or disagreement at the end of the question. They are phrased in such a way that an easier answer is the one desired; offering choices which all are good for the one asking the question, while the respondent has no other choices; they tend to be closed and you should use them with care, as they are closely linked with manipulation, and when participants detect them, they do not take it well.

Examples:

Do you agree we all need to do something to change this situation? Is it true that you feel more motivated to do something now? That is a good thing to do, is it not? What delay do you think the police will have? The second proposed solution was better, was it not? Do you agree with ...or not?

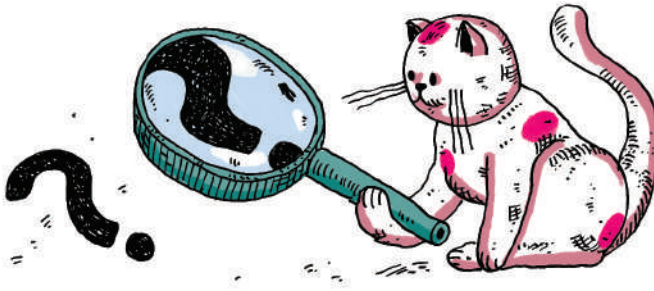


- Broadening questions

The aim of this type of questions is to advance from a certain point of the discussion which is, at the moment, on a narrow path, very local or specific only to some people's contexts.

Examples:

What other things can you say? What else is there? Where else does the same thing happen? What does this mean on a larger scale? Besides this, what else can you say?



- Zooming questions

You need to choose a specific aspect which you will approach either with a closed or open question, and then, continuing with that type of questioning, gradually go deeper, to zoom in on some specific issue.

Examples:

Who can do something about this? What exactly can they do? And if they do that, what will happen? Who will be affected by their decisions?

- Specifying questions

They will help move to more specific cases or aspects of a certain discussion, that is, at the moment, in a general or superficial state.

Examples:

Give an example? What exactly do you mean? Can you name some of these ...? Can you mention some of the things you ...?

- Echo questions  
Repeat what they say as a question for the rest of the people. You might pick on something interesting, which you want to explore more, and you can address it by asking the others.

Examples:

What do you think about that... (the issue/aspect mentioned by the specific person)? How can we use this in... (the context of your discussion)? You raised an important issue; let's see what the others think about it, as well - what is your take on...?

- Divide the participants in groups of 3. In each of these groups participants have to prepare a set of questions on a specific topic they want to discuss with a person. They should choose an issue related to the topic of your performance.
- They should use different type of questions from the introduced ones, in order to have a more meaningful conversation with their partner. They need to decide on a specific purpose they aim at with this discussion, and write down the plan of questions which can help them reach that objective. Allow about 10 minutes for the planning phase.
- In each trio, one person conducts the conversation, another responds to questions and involves in the conversation, and the third one takes notes on the type of used questions and the way they influenced the discussion. Allow max 10 minutes for the conversation, followed by 5-minute feedbacks from the observer and the respondent. The roles switch and the process is repeated two more times.
- Continue with a big-group discussion.

### **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- How did it feel to ask questions?
- How was it, in general? Was it hard or easy?
- How was the planning phase?
- How much of the plan did you put in practice and how much did you change? Why was it like that?
- Which type of questions did you use the most? Why?

- Did you notice what helped and what blocked your conversations? Can you give examples?
- What other observations did you have from your small-group process?
- Which aspect(s) of this activity can you use for your role as Joker in Invisible Theatre?

### **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- When you make the introduction about types of questions, try to ask the participants for as many examples as possible, so you can assess their understanding, correct them if needed, and help them actively work with your input.

### **Mission in the Community**

*(120 min)*

#### **Objectives**

To develop questioning skills; to diversify the type of questions used in a discussion; to stimulate thought-provoking attitudes in communication; to get more competent in conducting meaningful conversations; to get skilled in communicating with complete strangers; to get relaxed in initiating conversations in public places.

#### **Details and description of the activity**

- Comfortable to work with.
- Tell the pairs they have 1.5 hours to go in the community, but in a very different place from any of the potential Invisible Theatre locations. In this area, they have to do the mission (see below). For each of the mentioned tasks, the pairs have to approach a different person/group of people.
- Each pair has to do a plan and strategy on how they approach the people and get answers for each of the mentioned tasks.



- Invite participant to get into deeper conversations if they find them interesting, and, also, to try to challenge some of their respondents.
- Remind the group about different types of questions they can use, and to try to diversify them while they conduct discussions.

Mission in the Community (suggestions should be modified)

- Find (...some important place, often forgotten/ignored) and find out something about its history from the locals around.
- Talk with 3 young adults about night life in X.
- Talk with shop keepers, street sellers and people passing by about the (social) problems that concern them and why!
- Find out 2-3 superstitions that people still strongly believe in.
- Talk with 5 young people about social/charity projects, etc. in X (what is happening – if it is happening, what is their opinion on the matter, etc.)
- Find out which problems are more frequent in the X and for which authorities are not doing sufficient to tackle them. What is their opinion on the reasons?
- Find out what makes locals proud in X (from at least 5 people).
- Find out what is the most important place in X for local people (according to the opinion of at least 4 people).
- Choose one controversial topic (discussed in the media at the moment), explore locals' views on it, and try to challenge them. (If contexts allows).



## **Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions**

- What kind of feelings did you experience during the task?
- What made you feel like this?
- What was the best moment during this experience in the city?
- What was the worst one?
- How did people react to you? How open or interested were they?
- How did you make people interested in your mission?
- Did you do all the mentioned tasks?
- At this stage, if there are more than 10 pairs, you could split the group into mixed ones, with representatives from each mini-group, in order to share their findings with each other. In this way, the discussions are flowing easily and more people get engaged. Later, in the big group, focus on some of the conclusions each mixed group has for some of the tasks. If there are only few pairs, proceed with the discussion on their findings, directly in the big group.
- Did you challenge people's points of view? How did that go?
- What are your main learning points from this experience in the city?
- What can be used for your Invisible Theatre performance?

## **Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations**

- The list of tasks included in the mission should be modified according to the profile and reality of the local community, as well as based on the topic of the performance.
- It is the best to organise this activity after the previous exercise: "Asking Questions with a Purpose", as it offers a good context to practice the questioning skills once again.
- It is strongly recommended to do this activity before the performance, especially for first-time actors in Invisible Theatre. It helps the participants to break the ice for talking with strangers (which, nevertheless, they have to do in Invisible Theatre) and overcome the anxiety which is frequent for people that have to interact with complete strangers for the first time. (It is the equivalent of stage fright in Invisible Theatre).

## Final Remarks

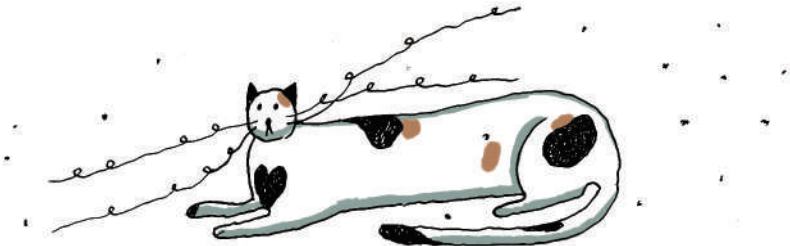
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While writing this manual, I often thought that, maybe, it is a mistake to give such clear and detailed instructions for using a method that can easily be misused and do more harm than good. Maybe this manual should not be allowed to travel freely, without being carefully and responsibly introduced to any potential user. Maybe it should be handed over only to actors who go through a specific training program, and this manual could be their background material.

Quite a load of doubts they were, but weirdly, there was another doubt coming along. What if, without this manual, whoever misuses (intentionally or unintentionally) Invisible Theatre, can do it even more freely and more easily – because there is no clear structure out there, that can be used as a reference for defining what is wrong use?

The last doubt won, so here it is, this manual in its final shape, and we strongly hope that, in the end, it will do more good than harm. We cannot stop the ones that wish to misuse Invisible Theatre method intentionally, but the others at least, now they have clear guidelines on how not to.

Have productive insightful processes, and truly be the engine of change!



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