

ANDREEA-LOREDANA TUDORACHE

NEWSPAPER THEATRE Manual



2021

Newspaper Theatre Manual

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**A.R.T. Fusion Association
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*“Anyone can do theatre, even actors.
And, theatre can be done everywhere, even in a theatre.”*

Augusto Boal



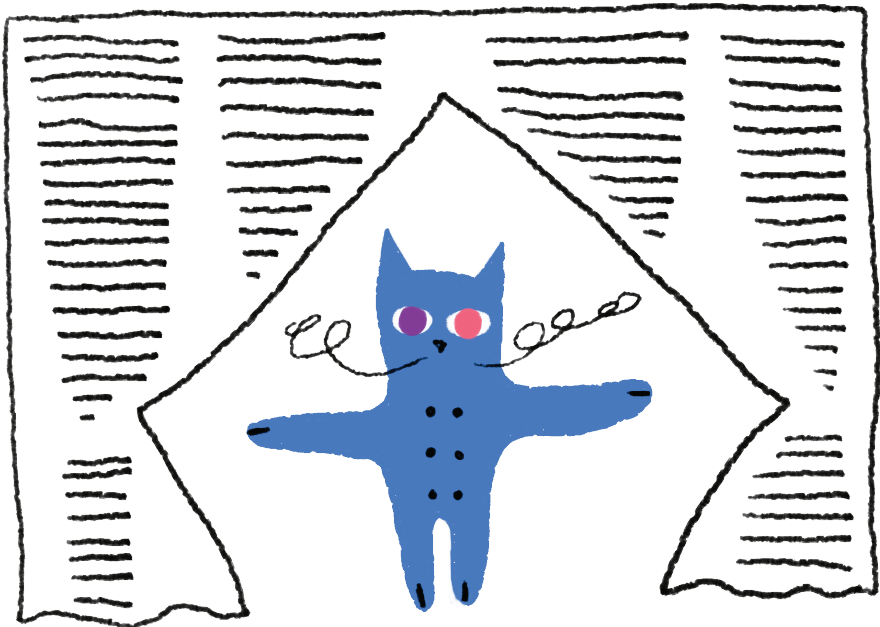
Table of Contents

Introduction - <i>What is This Manual About?</i>	7
“Using Theatre to Make Politics” - <i>Project Overview</i>	11
Theatre of the Oppressed Methodology - <i>Brief Introduction</i>	14
Newspaper Theatre	
<i>Overview</i>	21
<i>Techniques and Scenario Examples</i>	24
<i>Method Guidelines</i>	53
<i>Joker - Guidelines</i>	90
<i>Evaluation and Impact Assessment</i>	114
Preparatory Exercises	120
Final Remarks	232

Introduction

What is this manual about?

Newspaper Theatre is such a wonderful, fantastic and amazing method. Every play is unique and no scenario can be like any other. There is such an abundant area of possibilities to create, imagine, generate and transpose news into Newspaper Theatre performances. Performances that can be shocking, mind blowing, hard to watch, emotional or very simple and direct. It can trigger discussions on very specific issues, systemic or more general, local or global, philosophical, abstract or extremely concrete. It's a fascinating method, especially because it seems simple, but is not, it could be easy to work with and extremely complicated at the same time. It is multi-layered, not confined to a strict structure and doesn't promise more than what you are willing to do with it.



My path in working with Newspaper Theatre was driven by curiosity and excitement to explore yet another method from the rich and complex Theatre of the Oppressed methodology (*after working with Forum and Image Theatre for many years*).

I searched for materials to learn from the ways other fellow colleagues around the world work with this method. To my surprise, no material I found was helpful enough, so I ended up developing my own understanding and way of working. Together with my colleagues, we have learned by doing, with endless trial-and-error processes, from diverse practices and experiences. With the support and rich curiosity of my peers and learners, it was possible to write this manual.

I experienced a lot of frustration when noticing the lack of available material, with concrete guidelines, explanations and sufficient details that could help a beginner in the field.

At any search for “Newspaper Theatre” the online world comes back to you with the same one-page text, too often exactly the same, with the Newspaper Theatre Techniques (by Augusto Boal) described very briefly. The most you can get is the exact text from Boal, which comprises of 11 pages (*from his book on Legislative Theatre, which has a section on Newspaper Theatre*). I was not a beginner in the Theatre of the Oppressed field, nevertheless I was looking at these “techniques” as incomprehensible words, with a strong sensation that something was missing to help me decode this blurry piece of information. I had so many questions and unclear pieces of knowledge.

If you search for “Forum Theatre” you can find numerous materials written by different practitioners across the world, with detailed explanations, examples and guidelines on how you can reproduce the same process. Beginner or not, you will find your way in working with Forum Theatre by using the abundant material available. Even if not as generous, you can also find sufficient materials for “Legislative Theatre”. **For “Newspaper Theatre”, things couldn’t be more different.**



We have made our own sense of this method by applying it in different ways, settings, with different groups, giving it more clarity and nuance on the way. I also wished to create a learning companion for other people who, like me, may one day want to work with this method, and find nothing truly helpful in the online sphere. At least, from now on, there will be this manual you are reading at the moment.

Newspaper Theatre is the most complex method of all Theatre of the Oppressed methods, even though, in its most basic forms, it is the simplest.

This manual aims to bring to light its simplicity, but especially its complexity, and to help practitioners navigate their way around working with this method, in times when even the concept of “newspaper” is fading away with most of the news materials being published online.

What can you find in this manual?

- Detailed explanations on Newspaper Theatre and its techniques
- Concrete examples of scenarios from our work
- Practical Guidelines on how to work with this method
- Joker instructions adapted to the Newspaper Theatre process
- A large section of exercises which practitioners can use in their efforts to work with this method.

This manual is addressed to YOU if you:

- are comfortable without clear and strict structures
- are interested to think outside the box
- want to use Newspaper Theatre to tackle oppression in your community
- preferably, are not new to the Theatre of the Oppressed field
- want to manage in a responsible manner the experience of the actors and audience members

It is important to make a significant remark!

Our practice was inspired by the work of Augusto Boal and his followers, but we don't claim that our approach and methodological choices are reproducing Boal's work/approach. We have developed our own take and ultimately method, starting from the ground work laid down by Boal.

The terminology used in this manual (*referring to the Newspaper Theatre techniques*) **is not the same as the one used by Augusto Boal, which can be found with any online search.**

We have consciously decided to use different terms, which are clear and make sense for us, and were easier to be used in our work. We have also mixed some of the techniques, added a new one and left space for new techniques to be created by other practitioners.

We are unapologetic about this; even if our interpretation or approach might differ from those of other practitioners; ultimately the principles of Theatre of the Oppressed are respected and transversally reflected in our work – which we have described in details in the next pages.

Let this manual provide you with sufficient inspiration, motivation, guidelines and practical support in order for you to experience, to its fullest potential, this amazing method which Newspaper Theatre is.

Enjoy the reading,
Andreea-Loredana Tudorache

“Using Theatre to Make Politics”

- Project Overview -

This project represented an answer to the high levels of civic and political apathy amongst young people and envisioned an innovative way of bringing young people and authorities together.

A.R.T. Fusion Association (*Romania*) developed and implemented this project together with its partners coming from Greece, Hungary, Norway, Poland and Portugal.

The main goal of the project was to increase the level of civic participation and involvement in various democratic and policy-making processes amongst young people. The project was implemented between 2018 and 2021.

The project achieved the following objectives:

- To introduce innovative methodologies, namely Legislative and Newspaper Theatre, in the youth work field across Europe.
- To raise the capacity of partner organizations to operate in the advocacy and policy-making field at European level.
- To stimulate the exchange of best practices in working with authorities to tackle the issues that young people face.
- To stimulate the development of a network of Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners (focused on Legislative and Newspaper Theatre) across Europe.
- To improve project management, communication and leadership skills of youth workers.
- To develop pro-active attitudes and a sense of initiative among our members, and the general public.

The project's main beneficiaries 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 follows:

1. **An initial training course for developing working competencies in Legislative Theatre** for the future multipliers (which took place in Madeira, Portugal, in May 2019);
2. **A practice phase in each of the partner countries**, where the multipliers prepared and implemented Legislative Theatre performances for at least 1500 young people (250 in each country) and initiated advocacy processes on topics such as domestic violence, environmental issues, school curriculums, bullying, the inclusion of persons with disabilities and public transport infrastructure.
3. The practice phase was followed by **the second training course** (which took place in Busteni, Romania, in December 2019), **for assessing the first practice phase results, and developing competencies in the advocacy field and in the Newspaper Theatre method.**
4. **The second practice phase** took place in the partner countries, where the multipliers continued their advocacy efforts and transferred their competencies in Newspaper Theatre in a new round of performances for more than 250 people in each country. The topics tackled with this method were domestic violence, critical consumption of media content, migration, and cyberbullying.
5. **The Festival of Theatre of the Oppressed** gathered theatre groups from all partner countries. It took place in Hungary in 2021 and aimed to provide a space for sharing best practices, upgrading competencies and showcasing the benefits of Theatre of the Oppressed methods to larger audiences.
6. **A final evaluation meeting** was organized in Balestrand, Norway 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.

7. **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 civil society towards using Theatre of the Oppressed methods and thus raise their impact in society.



The main project results were:

- **A network** of strong organisations competent in Theatre of the Oppressed methods (Legislative and Newspaper Theatre).
- **150 volunteers** who were involved in local performances as actors and support members.
- **3000 direct audience members**, mostly young people who took part in the interactive process, explored examples of oppression and media content from their life, increased their motivation, civic competencies, critical thinking and became empowered to exercise their democratic rights.
- **60 additional local partners** such as schools, social services institutions, youth centres, other civil society members, media and local authorities.
- **This manual**, to support youth workers interested to work with Newspaper Theatre.
- **A manual on Legislative Theatre** to support interested practitioners. *(Can be found at www.artfusion.ro)*
- **A project movie** showcasing the project's process, meant to inspire other professionals from the field. *(Can be found at www.artfusion.ro)*

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 socio-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 lives. 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 came into 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 around the world. The initially developed methods were transformed, and new methods emerged as well. The people who he worked 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 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 with various beneficiaries, which led to different levels of impact. The downside of this “freedom” has also led to practices which could be categorized as potentially dangerous, for the team or the public, for their emotional and, sometimes, physical wellbeing, regarding the message that they send (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 point of reference 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 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 educational 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 in some of the methods, they become “spect-actors”;
- It 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 tackled – mostly by empowering the oppressed and people around them.



Main types of methods included under the 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 of each*):

Forum Theatre

- It is one of the most popular types of the Theatre of the Oppressed methods. In a Forum Theatre performance, we often see depicted a 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 examples of oppression presented. Based on the proposals, ideas, interventions of the audience, a discussion (forum) with the 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 ways. 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

- 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.

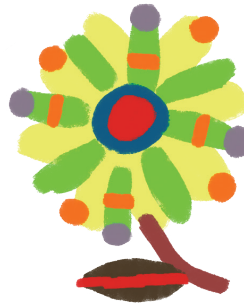
Newspaper Theatre

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

Legislative Theatre

- 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 is preferable to 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 that they are taken into consideration.
- We have developed a very detailed manual on how to work with this method based on our experiences which can be found at www.artfusion.ro.



Invisible Theatre

- It is implemented in public places (streets, cafes, restaurants, 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 natural and passers-by should not realize that this was, in fact, directed beforehand. They should truly believe this is a real-life situation.
- It can tackle examples of oppression that are happening in public places, but where usually no one intervenes (and in this way they are stimulated to do so), or oppression on a bigger scale, present within 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.
- We have developed a very detailed manual on how to work with this method based on our experiences which can be found here: <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/2636>.



Rainbow of Desire

- 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.

Although maybe less known and used by practitioners around the world, Newspaper Theatre was the very first method developed under the Theatre of the Oppressed umbrella. Augusto Boal, in his first attempts to develop participatory theatre, used articles from newspapers, more exactly: news. At first, he simply improvised the events described in the newspapers and facilitated critical discussions around the issues raised there.

The original objectives of this method were:

- To bring theatre closer to the people.
- To demystify the objectivity of most of journalism.
- To show how theatre can be played by anyone.

Some of these objectives are reflected, as well, in other Theatre of the Oppressed methods such as Forum, Image or Legislative Theatre.

As a distinct method, Newspaper Theatre is focused on the stimulation of critical thinking and consumption of media content, in order to push engagement and interest towards the issues raised through the performance (always linked with a type of oppression).

The core sources of information which are used in the preparatory process are newspapers or media materials (articles, advertisements, etc.). These can be used as inspiration or provide the main material for the artistic outcome. Even if, originally, print media was the main source, now practitioners make use of all type of media content (printed, TV, online, mainstream, alternative, etc.) in order to develop the final performance.

The topics raised by the media materials are examined from alternative perspectives through Newspaper Theatre, in order to bring them to the relevant audiences in a different light and angles and to trigger critical reflections.

Newspaper Theatre practitioners can use different techniques (see next chapter) to work with the news content they select (*which can be one or more articles from the same or different sources*). They may use one or a combination of different techniques in order to develop the final performance. There is no strict requirement in this sense. In the preparation process they may use any type of props, space, technology and they can be concrete or metaphorical/abstract in their approach. Many of the listed techniques offer a lot of space for using humour, irony, sarcasm, etc. in the theatre play which may be suitable for some audiences (*and not for all*).

No matter the final “shape” of the performance, it is Theatre of the Oppressed and it should be interactive and participatory. It is up to each team to decide how to organize the process, in which moment of the performance to engage the audience members in conversations and in the acting process; how to structure the flow of the discussion, to challenge the audience and to achieve the aim of the performance (in relation to the oppression tackled).

Newspapers or media content are sometimes used as inspiration in the preparation process for developing Image, Forum or Legislative Theatre performances. In these cases, we are not talking about a type of Newspaper Theatre, as each of the mentioned methods has their own structure, process and purpose. In the next chapters we detail the specificities of Newspaper Theatre as a distinct method.

Advantages of Newspaper Theatre (strong points)

- It provides a large space for creativity and thinking outside of the box
- It can trigger strong emotions
- It is very flexible in terms of space and interaction with the audience
- Its productions can be short and concentrated (time efficient)
- It can address different types of oppression from multiple perspectives
- It can directly address issues related to critical consumption of media

Disadvantages of Newspaper Theatre (concerning points)

- It can easily remain only an art production (*without adequate participation and interaction with the audience members or without addressing issues related to oppression*)
- It can be easily misused
- The lack of structure can lead to a chaotic process, low outcomes and/or risky situations (for the actors or audience members)
- It can be hard to estimate the emotional impact of performances tackling sensitive topics using emotional techniques
- It relies on a high level of facilitation skills of the Joker
- It is not recommended for complete newcomers in the Theatre of the Oppressed field.



Newspaper Theatre

- Techniques and Scenario Examples-

In the process of development of a Newspaper Theatre play, the groups can use different techniques in order to work with the media content they have selected or they are interested in. Depending on the chosen technique(s), they may need to find additional articles or media material to be able to use certain technique(s).

The techniques' main aim is to actually help the practitioners, providing ideas or different starting points on how to approach the articles. **They represent a tool to “translate/convert” the media content into a performance language.** They are a collection of options that CAN be used. None of these techniques MUST be used.

A Newspaper Theatre team can

- Use one or more techniques (*even if not mentioned below*) in their preparations
- Use none and decide to work with the material in any other way
- Create their own technique(s) to process the media material

Important to highlight

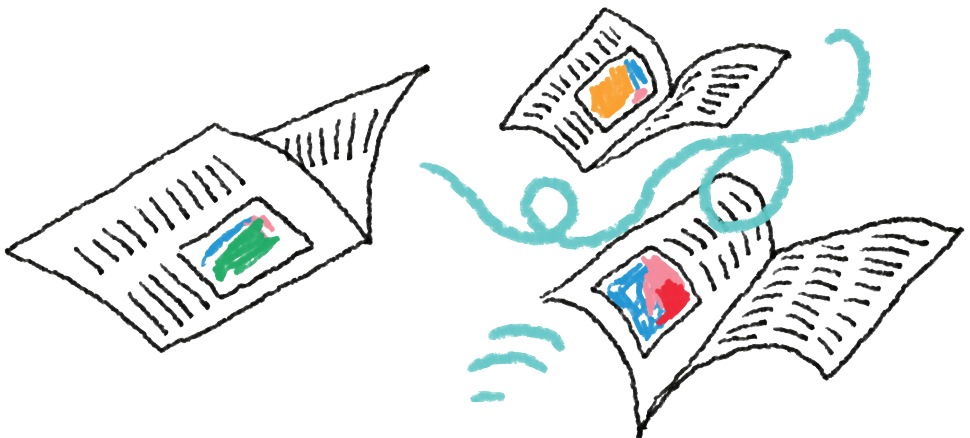
- In the final performance, the audience may or may not identify certain used techniques. In fact, it doesn't matter, as these are only used and useful internally, in the preparation process of the Newspaper Theatre team.
- Audience members don't have to be aware of the existence/use of these techniques. Actually, the audience is not going to be informed on which specific technique was used, why and how. It doesn't serve the purpose of the process with the audience and it can actually diffuse the focus of the discussions (*see more details in the next chapter*).
- Teams may decide to rename these options as they find it easier and more helpful for their internal preparatory process.

Below, we list and explain the techniques we use in our work, and give brief examples on how each can be used. After their enumeration we included a sample of scenarios from real-life performances indicating, in each case, which exact techniques have been used.

* By “Story” we refer to the story or events depicted in ONE single article.

Basic Story

The article is improvised exactly as it is described in the used material. There is no modification or addition made to the text or the depicted events. The performance may include/ combine the reading of the article text and/or acting of the described events (*especially when video news is used*). The intention is to improvise the material in a neutral way, without adding behaviours, interpretations, emotions and thoughts which were not explicitly stated or expressed in the material.



Story out of the context or in a different context

The events depicted in the article are acted out in different context than the one mentioned in the article in order to see them in a new light and perspective. The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the new context. The different context can be anything from a real and possible one to something absurd or unrealistic.

Examples:

- An article about a workers' strike acted out as a strike of children in the family or a strike of students in a school.
- News about a case of discrimination or racism acted out in an animal world set-up.
- A material about global warming acted out on a different planet/universe.
- News about sexual harassment acted out in an imaginary world where there are no gender roles or even different sexes.
- A material about online hate speech dramatized in a supermarket.
- An article about a beauty pageant acted out on a construction site or a factory.
- A media material about bullying in school is staged in a bus/flight/group visit to the museum/etc.

Story exactly in the context

The events are depicted exactly in the concrete context mentioned in the article. This technique is often suitable for stories which are narrated or presented with a cold/neutral distance and readers often don't really get to understand what it means concretely, to fully take in the story.

The "exact" context can be any of the following:

- On the ground where the depicted events actually take place
- In the personal lives of the involved people (which influence the events to take place)
- "Behind the doors", where different decisions are taken
- Inside of the mind of people involved in the events

- Global/local contexts depending on how the article covers the portrayed topic
- Other interpretation of what the “real context” can mean

The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

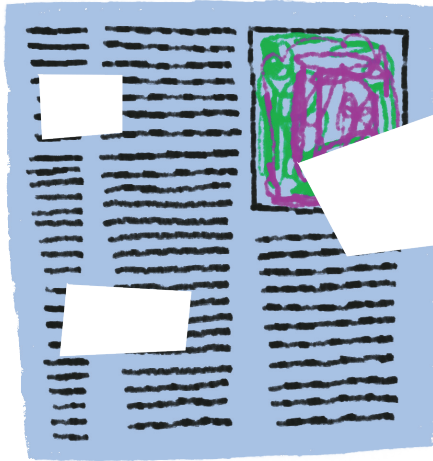
Examples:

- An article about war/refugees/migration acted out exactly on the battlefield/border/roads/ etc.
- News about protests against antiabortion laws acted out in the house(s) of different women and families themselves, getting a peak in their lives linked to the reasons for the protest.
- An article about a new controversial law proposed by the parties in power acted out at the meeting between different politicians, advocacy groups and different private interests groups (from where the law proposal emerged).
- A media material about illegal deforestation acted out to reflect the global implications of these events to portray the global context of these actions.
- News about a global treaty endorsed by UN countries dramatized from the perspective of the local context, to portray the relevance or lack of relevance at local level.

Story with the missing information

Media highlights and presents a single detail or a small part of what is usually a much more complex and bigger situation. The news is not false, but it is incomplete, the reality presented is truncated.

With this technique, the story is presented alongside with some of the missing information, which, very importantly, shouldn't be invented or guessed by the team. The missing information should be gathered from different reliable sources (official reports, statistics, case studies, research, interviews, platforms, etc.).



While working with this technique, the main questions a team needs to ask for each article are:

- What/ who is missing here?
- What/ who is not presented?
- What/ who is left out?
- What do we know is a part of this story, but was left out?
- Who controlled/influenced what exactly appears in the article?

These answers can guide the team towards specific sources of information from where to actually extract the missing bits they want to use in the performance. These questions can also be used as questioning tool during the performance – to trigger the finding of missing information with the audience or to raise critical questions about the “completeness” of a media article. The text of the article/media content, as well as the missing information, can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

Examples:

- An article about consuming patterns among young people acted out completed with statistics or info/reports about the harsh realities of the workers in factories where the objects sold the most are produced.
- A news story about a successful female CEO and her professional success, to be dramatized together with information about the number of female CEOs in that country/continent/field of work, as well as experiences of other women and how they were discouraged to follow similar paths, and faced strong stereotypes in male-dominant fields.
- A media material describing a project of a multinational company and their Social Responsibility projects acted out completed with information about the concept of Green Washing, and previous history of the same company’s lack of responsibility in different human or environmental rights area, in other parts of the world.

Story with parallel action

This technique implies to have two set of actions happening in parallel on the stage in any of the following ways:

- One person is reading different parts of the article and in another part of the stage different team members are acting out certain actions/ events (from the article).
- Two theatre actions (*portraying events happening in different locations*) in parallel on the stage (independent from each other) but linked with your news material. These two ‘actions’ can be chosen in order to complete or contradict each other, bring different light to the other actions, etc.

While using this technique, it is important to coordinate the speaking parts in a way that is not confusing. The parallel actions should both be clear at any given time on the stage. The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

Examples:

- An article describes the massive workload employees have in a certain industry and how this is affecting their health and social life, etc. The performance using this technique can show, on one side of the stage, the worker(s) loaded with never-ending tasks, and on the other side of the stage, activities which happen in the same time outside of the work (social life, family gatherings, etc.).
- A news story about a progressive new law regarding LGBTQ+ rights to be dramatized with a parallel action of stereotypes, bullying and negative behaviour people belonging to the LGBTQ+ community experience in day to day life.
- An article about refugees and their struggles to arrive to a country is acted out in parallel with the regular citizens from that community hearing about refugees, showing indifference, exchanging prejudices, negative statements as well as some supportive attitudes about them (*reflecting the opinions of the community at large*).

Contradictory Stories / Cross-Stories

For this technique, a team uses more than one article. Most often, articles which contradict each other are combined in a performance. Articles which are connected, complemented or complete each other's meaning, can also be used through the cross-stories approach.

The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow. The act can be shaped in any way from a natural, realistic manner to something absurd or paradoxical. The articles can be used in alternating scenes or mixed in the same scenes.

Examples:

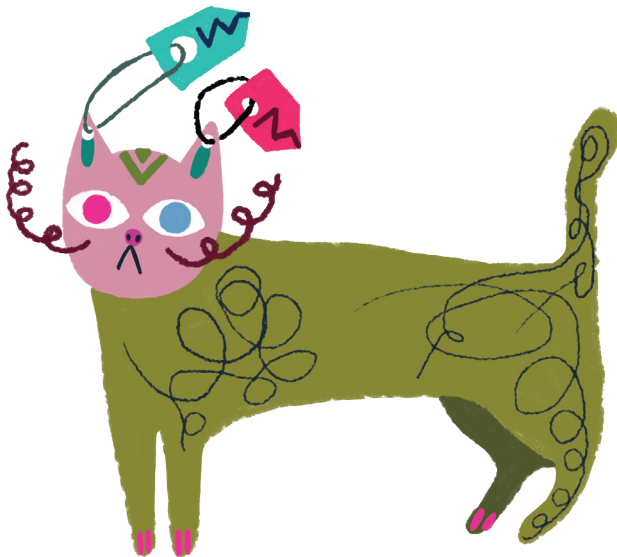
- A performance can use an article about food waste, and another article about poverty/starvation, and combine them in a way that highlights the contradiction.

- A scene combining an article about education curriculum reform and what topics should be covered, and another article which points out a high level of domestic violence in the society.
- A scene with news about the Xth general lockdown in a certain community/country because of Covid19, another one about the way New Zealand managed the Covid19 outbreak in 2020, one with news about different negative consequences of lockdowns and another one critical about New Zealand's way of handling Covid19. All these news stories are linked with each other in a cross or contradictory manner and can be transposed into a performance.

Story with exaggerated elements

The events are depicted with different parts/aspects exaggerated in size, appearance, volume, etc. This technique can make use of grotesque or clowning elements such as oversized objects, costumes, props, etc. which should be linked in a relevant way with the people, issues or actions captured in the article.

The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow. The act can be shaped in any way from a natural, realistic manner to something absurd or paradoxical.



Examples:

- An article about the abuse of police officers, to be acted out using exaggerated equipment of the police officers; even if they are not weapons, to actually show the power position and how easily the abuse can take place.
- To dramatize an article about street harassment or bullying by depicting the events with the victims of such behaviours carrying very big written labels (*dirty, ugly, fat, whore, smelly, faggot, thief, devil, etc.*) attached to their bodies; these being the labels that oppressors see when they look/think about these people (to some extent, the labels being the only thing they see).
- An article depicting stories of different women experiencing violence from their partners can be acted out with the feelings (*fear, power, sadness, anger, confidence, etc.*) of these women portrayed by different actors, dressed in a specific manner. During the performance, these “feelings characters” are either getting in the way of the women, hugging, surrounding, blocking them, or can become smaller and smaller, or getting as far as possible from the women.

Story with advertising elements

The purpose of advertising is to sell a product, service or idea, and it usually makes use of rather irrational methods such as:

- hiding the truth
- simple music, easy reproducible jingles
- photos of ‘pretty’ people – especially girls or women
- short phrases – slogans (to have an impact even if they are meaningless)

When working with this technique, the actors use similar methods in order to depict the events/issues from the chosen article(s). These methods can be used to “sell” certain aspects of the article or to emphasise certain issues or topics.

The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

Examples:

- Certain sentence(s) stated by a person in the article can become slogan(s)/jingle(s) and used repeatedly throughout the performance.
- An article about different statistics on how open-minded people are in society can be transposed to a performance staging a market/bazaar, where people are selling old thoughts/ideas and buying new thoughts/ideas.
- A material about general elections can be acted out as an auction of different candidates.

Story with historical approach

The events depicted from the chosen article(s) are connected to relevant historical facts/events from the past or from present times, from the same or different parts of the world. The comparison with the situations from other countries can be done with the purpose of exploring solutions, or to critically reflect on the circumstances in one's country/region.

The act can be shaped in any way from a natural, realistic manner to something absurd or paradoxical. The articles and the historical information/addition can be used in alternating scenes or mixed in the same scenes. The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

Examples:

- An article about the low wages paid to workers (from a specific industry or, in general, in the country) in present times is combined in the performance with moments/events from slavery times.
- News about the gender pay gap is acted out together with information about the situation of women before they had the right to vote.
- A material about overcrowded prisons is combined with information from another country, which has low criminal rates and low numbers of inmates in prisons; or it can be combined with the information from a previous period of time in the same country.
- An article about current restrictive abortion law in Poland combined with information about the consequences of the total ban of abortion during communist times in Romania.

Story with field interview

The individuals included in the news are interviewed on stage, during the action itself (the one depicted in the article) similarly to how football players give interviews during the breaks of the game. This allows for a deeper exploration of the inner realities and thoughts of the involved characters, and can also provide space for the audience to ask questions. It is up to each team how to use this technique – if all characters are to be asked questions or only some, and how long the interviewing part is compared to the other actions depicted.

The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow. The act can be shaped in any way, from a natural, realistic manner to something absurd or paradoxical. This technique can also highlight the often intrusive approach of journalists or reporters, as well as their lack of sensitivity on the ground and how they portray different events.

Examples:

- An article about refugees and migrants, acted out with interviews of refugees and migrants during their journeys from their own countries; on the roads, at the borders, in their interaction with different people on the way, including border control or police members.
- News about racist incidents, sexual harassment, hate speech, cyberbullying, illegal deforestation etc. could be dramatized with field interviews with the attackers/aggressors themselves.
- A material about precarious living/working conditions can be performed with field interviews with the people finding themselves in such situations.



Story with the corresponding emotions

Many articles depict different aspects from society in a very cold, heartless manner; especially the ones which refer to numbers, statistics, surveys, behavioural observations, etc. Media consumers are often desensitised from the realities they read about in the news. This technique aims to awaken the spectators' sensibilities and capacity to absorb news as something real and concrete; to reveal, on stage, what the story often hides beneath numbers, clichés or overused terms (which, due to overuse have lost their capacity to touch the corresponding emotions within the reader/media consumer).

This technique makes the corresponding emotions visible/real, through the use of analogy, symbols, or any other equivalent particular words or actions. The text of the article/media content can be used in the scene or it can be adjusted in order to fit the acting flow.

Examples:

- An article about the situation of LGBTQ+ rights around the world (focused on numbers and statistics) can be portrayed with small demonstrations of the realities of the people behind those numbers (how people are killed because of their sexual orientation, how tragic the life of some couples is in certain places around the world, etc.) with the purpose of triggering emotions beyond the knowledge given by the article.
- A material about cyberbullying and its psychological impact on teenagers can be dramatized by focusing on one student, to show their emotional life and struggles at home, their trust and broken trust in relation to their friends and different romantic partners, questioning themselves and life in general, and how all this leads to an increased vulnerability towards cyberbullying and how that became the drop filling the glass leading to a suicide attempt.
- News about plastic pollution, global warming and climate change can be acted out by using symbols and/or images of real victims of such phenomena: animals choking with plastic, species becoming extinct, fertile land becoming desert, animals dying of thirst, etc. combined with small scenes depicting negative consequences, such as people getting sick because of pollution or of new diseases, climate refugees, people getting flooded or being affected by storms or tornadoes, wild fires, etc.

From practice, some of our colleges signalled cases/situations when these techniques overlapped or it became rather difficult to differentiate between them.

Situations when this can happen could be:

- “Story with missing information” to be confused with “Cross/Contradictory Stories”. This can happen if the missing information is actually taken from different articles or media contents. The missing information can also be extracted from materials that are not media content; also, the “Cross/Contradictory Stories” technique may be used with articles that are not directly linked as information and content.
- “Cross/Contradictory Stories” can be acted out as “Story with parallel action” but it doesn’t have to be dramatized like that; when it is, we witness the use of two techniques in the same performance.
- “Cross/Contradictory Stories” can be confused with “Story with historical approach”; in “Cross/Contradictory Stories” we use different media articles, in “Historical approach” we use data from history books, official records, etc. which are sometimes published and publicised as media content. To some extent, if we operate with an understanding that any publication is a sort of media content, then “Story with historical approach” could be considered as a sub-technique of “Cross/Contradictory Stories”.
- “Story exactly in the context” could be similar to “Story with the corresponding emotions” especially in situations where the portrayal of the context aims to reveal or bring closer to the audience the emotions and feelings incorporated in the chosen article. Nevertheless, the exact context doesn’t have to be linked to emotions and “Story with corresponding emotions” doesn’t have to bring light to the context in which certain stories take place.
- “Story with corresponding emotions” can easily be confused with any other technique in which we choose to work with emotional topics or to show emotions. In “Story with corresponding emotions” our main purpose is to sensitise the audience to issues which might be abstract and far from their emotional reality. With the other techniques we aim for different purposes, sometimes also emotional, but for different reasons.



- There could be more examples of such situations, depending on the chosen article(s) and approach.

Yes, definitely in some particular situations, these techniques overlap, they are not 100% distinct and they can't guarantee that for any given material it is possible to create a piece which doesn't fit in another technique as well (at least partially).

It is okay to be like that, these techniques are only options, entry points and different tools to translate an article into a performance. It doesn't really matter if they are not 100% clear-cut tools. If they serve their purpose, which is to trigger the creative process, generate ideas and possibilities to work with the material, they have fulfilled their mission.

In practice, the actors combine these techniques in order to develop rich and more complex performances. To understand and work with each technique separately, it's done mostly to help the teams which wish to learn Newspaper Theatre method more in-depth.

We have selected samples from our work with Newspaper Theatre, from different countries, in order to exemplify how some of the techniques have been used in practice.

First, we indicate the countries, topics and the techniques used, followed by the expanded detailed version for each example.

Portugal – Cyberbullying/ sexting/ peer pressure (“*Story with advertising elements*”, “*Cross/Contradictory Stories*”)

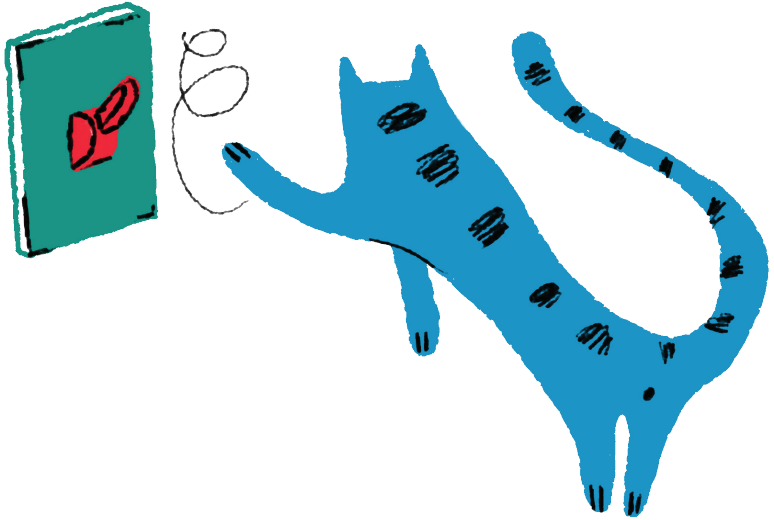
Romania – Gender-based violence in Romanian public discourse (“*Story with advertising elements*”, “*Cross/Contradictory Stories*”, “*Story with exaggerated elements*”, “*Story with missing information*”)

Poland – Women Homicide in Latin America (“*Story exactly in the context*”, “*Story with missing information*”, “*Story with corresponding emotions*”)

Hungary – Domestic Violence (“*Story with the missing information*”, “*Story with advertising elements*”, “*Story exactly in the context*”)

Greece – Housing Insecurity (“*Story with the missing information*”, “*Story with exaggerated elements*”, “*Story exactly in the context*”, “*Story out of the context*”, “*Story with advertising elements*”, “*Story with corresponding emotions*”, “*Story plus parallel action*”)

Norway – Lack of Public Transport Infrastructure (“*Story with the missing information*”, “*Story with corresponding emotions*”)



Title:

"Are you ON or OFF (line)?"

Topic:

Cyberbullying/ sexting/ peer pressure

Media sources:

<https://www.noticiasaminuto.com/tech/1415576/maioria-dos-jovens-portugueses-que-enviam-nudes-desconhecem-o-risco;>

<https://www.noticiasaminuto.com/pais/299650/sexting-a-ratoeira-que-coloca-os-jovens-a-nu;>

<https://criancasatortoeadireitos.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/conheca-os-perigos-do-sexting-e-a-forma-de-os-evitar/;>

[https://puresight.com/Real-Life-Stories/jessica-logan-1990-2008.html;](https://puresight.com/Real-Life-Stories/jessica-logan-1990-2008.html)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/gender-and-schooling/200912/sexting-and-suicide;>

<https://www.jn.pt/sociedade/alertar-os-jovens-para-os-perigos-do-sexting-1489919.html>

Techniques used:

“Story with advertising elements” and
“Cross/ Contradictory Stories”

Summary:

Five girlfriends are chatting about day-to-day casual aspects, in one of their homes. Suddenly, one of the girls receives a proposal from her boyfriend! He asks her to send him some “nudes”.

A discussion is generated around this issue where some friends support the idea (they already have a partner and also do it), other is against (concerned about the negative consequences) and one is just absent-minded from the conversation.

Scene 1: Commercial on TV – the group of girls is singing

We hear a commercial on TV – A jingle, which is a metaphor about how young teenagers are living/exploring their intimacy/relationships nowadays, unaware of consequences!

Scene 2: Girls freeze and a voice recording is heard on stage

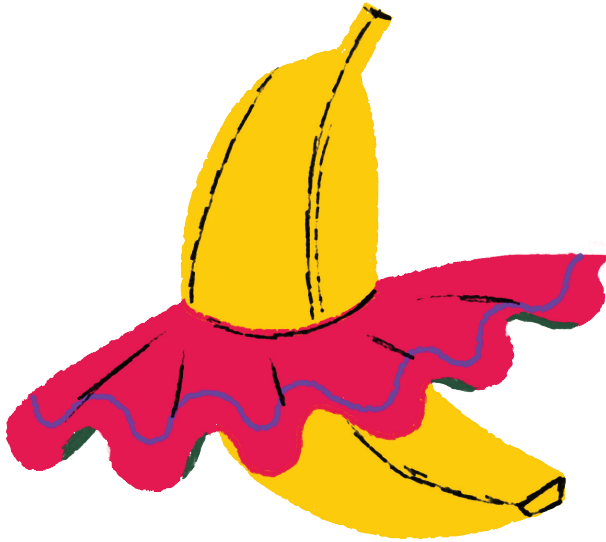
The boyfriend of one of the girls sends her a message with a request to send him some nudes (we hear a voice recording to exemplify the written message)

The group freezes – The first discussion with public take place.

Scene 3: The girl tells her friends what her boyfriend just asked

She tells her friends that her boyfriend asked for nudes and she is not sure what to do. She asks the opinion of her friends, but no one agrees. It finishes with an open ending.

The plot freezes again and another discussion takes place.



Title:
"Banana Cabaret"

Topic:
Gender-based violence in Romanian public discourse

Media material used:
news articles, videos, TV ads, online conversations (taken from an online specific group where girls are posting screen shots with conversations they had with random people approaching them online)

Main News articles:
<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/dana-budeanu-emisiune-violenta-femei-procurori-urmarire-penala-3030949>;
<https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/alexandru-balan-a-fost-retinut-vloggerul-colo-a-instigat-la-violenta-sexuala-3029101> (each of the individuals from these articles published a video where they exposed their views, which later became the subject of the articles)

Techniques used:

“Basic Story”, “Story with advertising elements” and “Cross/Contradictory Stories”, “Story with exaggerated elements”, “Story with missing information”

Summary of play:

The play takes the format of a cabaret/burlesque show with a couple of different moments managed by a host (*which is not the Joker of the play*): the vlogger who publicly instigated rape and reactions from activists and online commenters, the public figure who publicly instigated violence against women, a reimagined song with statistics on gender based violence in Romania, conversations with strangers posted by women online.

Intro – The actors are dancing and singing a short song which will be repeating after every scene. The song is reproducing a short part from popular disco Romanian melody (from the 90ties) which uses a play of words to hint to sexual aspects. (*The words include as well: banana*)

The host (not the joker) welcome the spectators to the show and introduces the first bit from the spectacle

Scene 1: Two actors, a man and women are impersonating different online conversations in which the man is making advances to the girl and becoming gradually aggressive because of the lack of response or rejection.

The host invites for applauses and introduce the next moment.

Scene 2: An actor is impersonating Colo, a Vlogger who repeats the speech he published on his personal account. (In which he promoted rape and victim blaming). After his speech the scene unfolds with different reactions: one activist woman made complain about this video and got backlashes from Colo’s supporters. The scene ends with Colo declaring he regrets and that it was only a joke, after police intervened.

The host announces a break for commercials.

A commercial previously filmed by the team is projects. The commercial includes different moments in which the hyper sexualisation of women is highlighted and exaggerated.

The host introduces the next invitee.

Scene 3: An actress is impersonating Dana Budeanu, the producer of an online show who repeats the speech she made in one of her shows in which she encourages physical violence against women, from their partners.

Other actors are adding, at the end of her speech, different recent statistics from Romania concerning the issues of gender based violence.

The host thanks everyone for their participation and closes the show.

The Joker takes over the discussion with the audience.





Title:
„Zapatos Rojos/Red Shoes”

Topic:
Women homicide

Media source:

An article titled „Latynoskie piekło kobiet” (Latin women’s hell) from Tygodnik Powszechny issued in January 2020. This article tells stories of women in Latin America, who face violence, abuse of any kind and at the end, death. This phenomenon is widely known there as “feminicidio” – women homicide.

Techniques used:

“Story exactly in the context”, “Story with missing information”, “Story with corresponding emotions”

Before or after each scene a narrator briefly describes and introduces missing elements of information to the audience.

Scene 1:

Maria and Diego are in their apartment in the morning, she's preparing a breakfast for him, he is late for work and evidently angry that she has not ironed his shirt and is slow with the breakfast. He yells at her and pushes her.

Scene 2:

Maria is on her way for a job interview (a fact, which she hides from her partner); she meets her friend - who has not seen her for a long time. A woman notices that Maria has bruises on her arm, looks tired and sad; she asks if everything is all right. Maria calms her down, saying that all is fine and rushes into the meeting. In the office, the boss, who is a woman, almost decides to hire Maria, but in the last moment she discovers that the woman is in early pregnancy, which disqualifies her perspectives of acquiring new job and having better life opportunities for the future.

Scene 3:

Maria comes back home, Diego is already there, clearly raging about her being outside home, late, not having prepared meal. The dance of abuse and violence starts between woman and man. Other „women characters” join in the scene, as a symbol of women victims worldwide.

Scene 4:

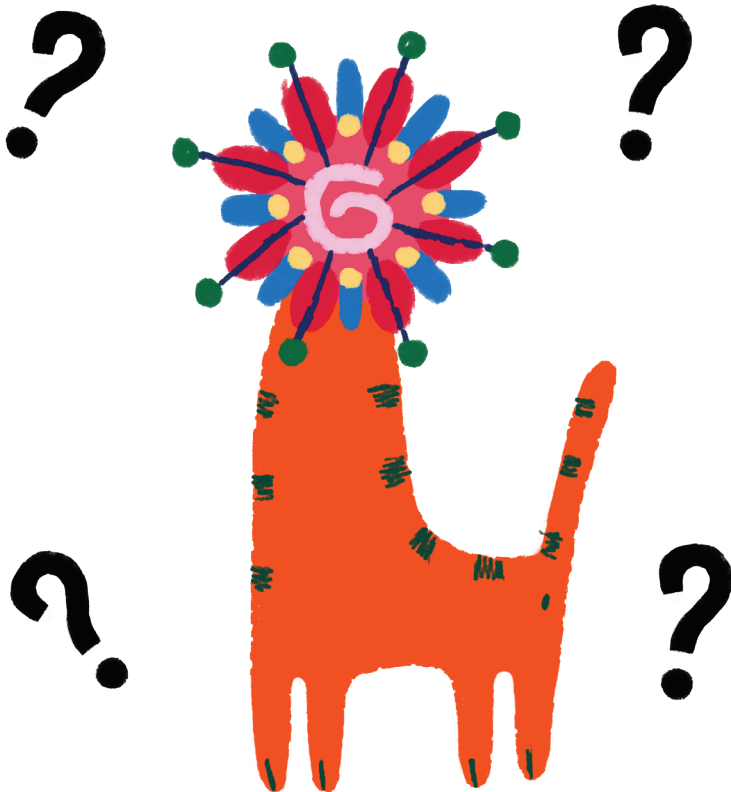
Couple of years later - we see Maria with her daughter, they pass a football field where boys are training sports. The little girl is interested in playing with them, so they approach a trainer, who is a woman, asking if it's possible to join the team. The trainer replies that football and this activity is strictly for boys, who are future champions, not for girls. Rejected girl and her mother walk away but suddenly they pass next to a protest, supporting women rights and fighting against domestic violence. Maria rejects taking a leaflet with information where to look for help, but her daughter takes it.

Scene 5:

Maria and her daughter come back home, Diego is already there - agitated as usually. His daughter approaches him with the leaflet, asking him to fold it into a plane. A man takes a look at the paper and becomes furious with the information he finds there. He starts yelling at Maria, pushing her and beating, she tries to fight back with help of the „women characters” (representing solidarity of victims), but can't handle him. In the style of a poetic, but tragic dance he kills her in the presence of their daughter.

Closure:

Actors provide brief fact summary about the „feminicidio” in Latin countries. The video of real life protests is being played at the very end.



Title:
The Riddle

Topic:
Domestic Violence (young man beating his parents)

Media sources:

An article in the mainstream media summarized it like this:

“A court file was open for a 24-year-old man who was regularly beating his mother, father and grandmother living with reduced mobility between July 2018 and December 2019. He took their money several times. It happened that he was under the influence of alcohol while beating his mother, he bit her hand and he kicked her while he was saying nursery rhymes. He bit his grandma, punched his father’s head with his fist. The prosecutor asked for penitentiary.”

Techniques used:

“Story with the missing information”, “Story with advertising elements”, “Story exactly in the context”

Scene 1: Police arresting Zsolt (the boy).

Scene 2: (past) Mónika (mother) is playing with the 4-year old Zsolt, she is teaching him nursery rhymes. Kálmán (father) is drunk, demands money from Mónika, starts beating and kicking her and the child too.

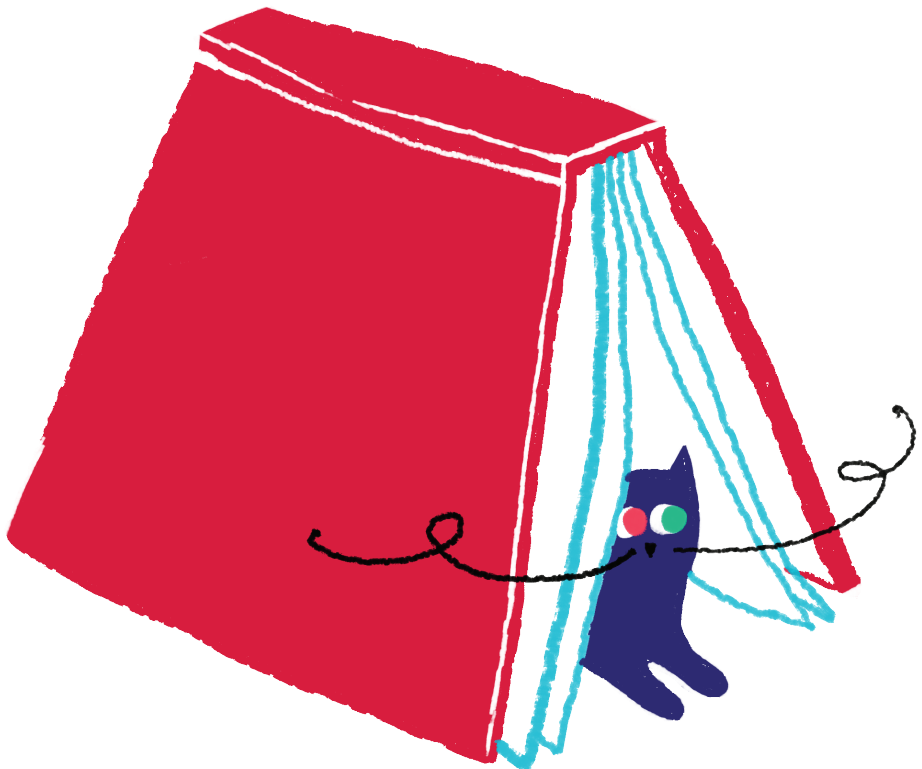
Scene 3: Kálmán, Mónika and Zsolt move to the grandma, as Kalman is alcohol and gambling addict - they lost the flat in the town. Ibolya, the grandma hates Mónika as she thinks she is the reason for the alcoholism of Kálmán.

Scene 4: Zsolt is taken into state care, as the parents cannot take care of him. Mónika rarely visits him, she beguiles him with promises to take him out of the institution, but this never happens. She keeps telling the nursery rhyme to her son during the visits.

Scene 5: Zsolt is 22 years old, gets free from the state care, returns home with the collected money that is spent by the family. Zsolt takes revenge for his lost childhood and starts beating the family. He starts kicking his mother while saying the nursery rhyme.

Scene 6: Prosecutor reads the charges of Zsolt.

Scene X (Used only in the preparation process): Kálmán is tempted to go to the bar and play the slot machine, angel & devil voices are telling him what to do, and he gives in to the Devil's Voice.



Title:

Welcome to the Vicious Circle

Topic:

Housing Insecurity

Media sources:

The main article was an interview with a homeless person, Leonidas, who became homeless at his 63, due to the economic crisis that made him lost his job, at a big bookstore, where he has been working for many years. Being homeless for almost 10 years, he finally somehow (through social media and due to a vast and quick public response) managed to gather thousands of books and to form a second-hand bookstore, which he keeps till nowadays and his employees are homeless people as well.

(<https://www.kathimerini.gr/life/people/1067108/mathimata-zois-apo-enan-astego/>)

Techniques:

“Story with the missing information”, “Story with exaggerated elements”, “Story exactly in the context”, “Story out of the context”, “Story with advertising elements”, “Story with corresponding emotions”, “Story plus parallel action”

First part

- We used imaginary elements, based on and connected to the Leonidas’ story (*Out of the Context + Exaggerated Elements*), to form a TV-Show game (*Advertising Elements*) and we also used some additional info and characters from other stories - articles (*Missing Information*), mostly about statistics concerning housing and homelessness, that we transformed into experiential stories (*Corresponding Emotions*), to form the questions of the TV-show game, in the style of the “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” show.

- The stage is split into two; on the left side, the TV show takes place and on the right half we see the apartment of Leonidas, some moments before he leaves his house for the last time and becomes homeless; Leonidas is watching TV and watching HIMSELF on the show that takes place on the left half (*Parallel Actions*).
- On the show (named **Vicious Circle**) we have 3 players: Leonidas, Adriana (his former employer in the bookstore) and Stamatis (a man who is about to lose his house). The other characters are the Presenter (a grotesque figure) and one Voice-Commentary.
- In the end Leonidas wins the show, answering all the questions correctly and then we understand that he knows so much about Housing Insecurity, because he IS homeless!

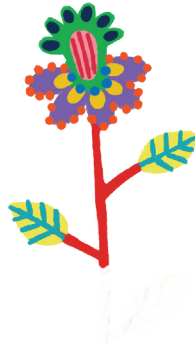
Second part

- When the show ends, Leonidas is depicted on stage, sitting on his house couch and we understand that he was watching the TV show, all this time and that it was a repetition (Past, Present and Future are somehow merged-alienating technique, to underline that everyone, at every moment, could lose their comfort and their house).
- Leonidas turns on the TV and starts packing his stuff and interacting with the apartment in various ways, to finally exit his apartment for the last time (all of this part is SILENT and DARK, in contrast with the first one that was filled with speech, music, noise and lights).

The end

- The audience can see Leonidas closing the door of his former house behind him, and walking away slowly, with his back turned to the audience. The lights go dark slowly and Joker appears.





Title:
Few Buses, Few Opportunities

Topic:
Lack of Public Transport Infrastructure

Media sources:

Local newspaper (in printed version); Social Media public posts of young people affected by the problem; Website of the bus company.

Techniques used:

“Story with the missing information” and “Story with corresponding emotions”

Scene 1: From School to Dance class (from one village to another)

The scene starts in a classroom in Balestrand, in the boarding high school. Two students try to get permission from their teacher, to leave the class five minutes before the end. They must reach the bus to take them to the Leikanger, where they have a dance class. Leikanger is 30 minutes away from Balestrand by bus. The teacher says no. The students must hurry after school’s bell ring. They plan to buy some food from the shop near the bus stop, but they are late, so they have to give up on the food. We hear their conversation in the bus. They are very annoyed for not having any food, but at the same time happy to be able to join the dance class which is their favourite free time activity.

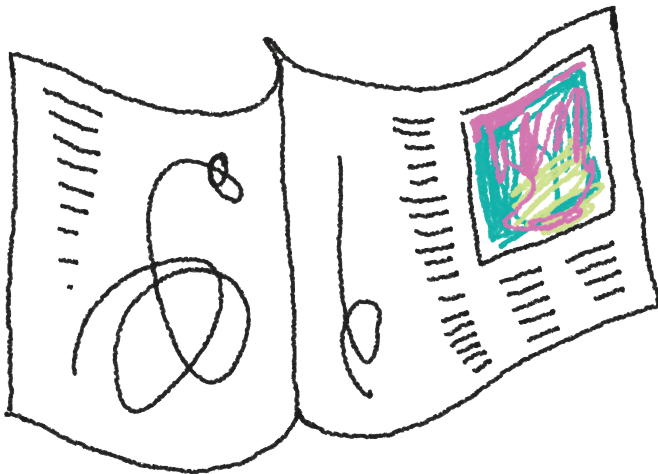
Scene 2: Free time activity/ dance class

The students arrive to the dance class and meet their friends and teacher. After the activity, one of the students informs everybody about a party, which they plan for the weekend in one of the nearest villages. Everyone is very excited about it. All of them want to go, but some of them find out that there is no suitable public transport to accommodate this trip.

Later, we see the two students from Balestrand trying to figure out how many hours they have to wait in Leikanger to be able to go back to their boarding school in Balestrand. When other students hear that the girls from Balestrand have to wait 3 hours, they invite them to a meeting they have planned for that night.

Scene 3: Youth council meeting in Leikanger

The girls from Balestrand are very happy about the invitation and join the meeting. This is one of the regular meetings of the youth council where they can discuss different problems they have in their everyday life and the public transport is one of them. The girls feel very happy when they see the cake on the table because they are very hungry. The time flies and they have a good discussion. Suddenly, the girls realize they are late for the bus. That is the only bus for that night, and they have no other choice for traveling back to Balestrand. One of the girls from Leikanger invites them to sleep over at her place.



In this chapter we included the most important aspects, which a team interested to work with this method needs to go through, understand and take the related decisions.

Newspaper Theatre, unlike Forum, Image or Legislative Theatre, doesn't have a precise structure. Therefore, we decided to introduce guidelines and questions to tackle on the way, and not some specific steps which need to be followed (*as there aren't any*).

Naturally, the beginning of this process, as it is for any group's task, is determined by the team, and the context of how this team ended up working together. There are many factors which influence the working approach: their previous experience, motivation, team dynamics, scope of the work, financial issues, timeframe, etc. The different combinations of these factors influence the time allocation for different phases of the process, as well as the level of "risk taking" in the overall undertaking. We don't wish to explore the dynamics of these stages, as we trust that each team finds their way based on their own specificities, profile and particular context.

In this chapter we focus on the specific aspects related to Newspaper Theatre, and how a team needs to deal with them at different times of their working process:

- **Type of Oppressions**
- **Aim and Audience**
- **Media Content and Preparation**
- **Performance and Interaction with the Audience**
- **Risks and Challenges**
- **Online Adaptations**

Type of oppressions which can be tackled in a Newspaper Theatre Play

The main source and starting point for any scenario is represented by media content in any form, broadcasted, published physically or on internet.



What kind of oppression is unpacking across media productions?

...well, all kinds of oppressions:

- **By individuals**, towards other individuals (or animals) in private homes, schools, working space, streets, shops, public transportation, parks, bars, restaurants, hotels, etc.
- **By state**, in forms of state representatives' abuses, corruption, discriminatory laws, lack of reaction or intervention, insufficient protection of oppressed groups, etc.
- **By private sector** in terms of workers mistreatment, abuses, discrimination, harmful practices on the whole chain of production, denial of responsibilities, illegal actions, blackmailing and corruption in relation with state authorities, etc.
- **By advertising industry**, in terms of promoting/perpetuating narratives or social representations which are harmful, discriminatory or dangerous to different groups.
- **By art and popular culture creators**, in terms of productions which stigmatise, discriminate; promote hate speech and other problematic values.
- **By different (organized or informal) citizens' groups/ movements** in the matter of actions affecting the liberties and rights of other groups or individuals in the society.

Media content can reveal oppression which happens at different levels:

- local, national or global
- micro, macro or meta
- individual, institutional, systemic or socio-cultural mentalities
- visible or invisible
- concrete or abstract
- emotional, rational or behavioural

In Newspaper Theatre we can address oppression from different points of view. We can connect local situations with national/international circumstances or frameworks, as well as with value systems across different generations or institutions; in the same time we can go deep in only one level and analyse all the specificities of a very concrete context.

A Newspaper Theatre play should focus on ONLY one specific type of oppression which can be explored at one or more levels.

This requirement is important in order to keep the focus of the discussions with the audience, and to trigger different types of actions towards the same problem of oppression.

Clearly, almost no type of oppression is a stand-alone problem in the society, without being connected or shadowing on another type of difficulties.

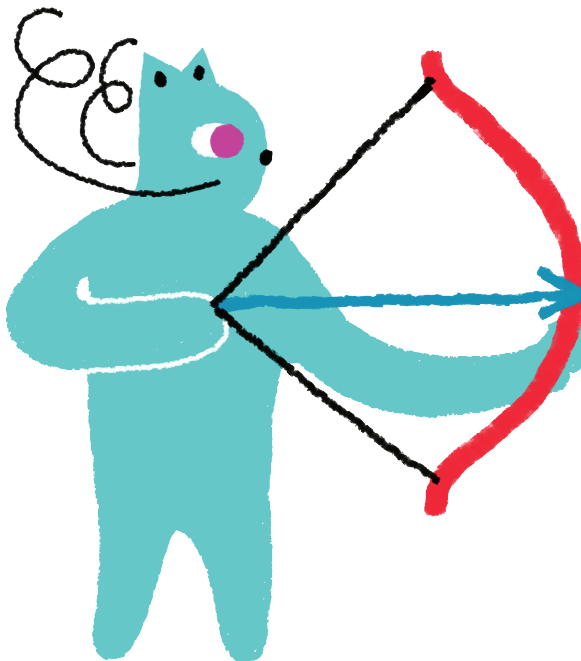
Understanding the connections and links between issues in a complex system of problems is helpful and recommended. This is different from addressing multiple problems, which should be explored equally and in balanced manner; focusing on multiple problems usually leads to either approaching them superficially or stirring a very confusing discussion.

Examples

- **Environmental Degradation** can be explored by using any combination of articles/media content such as: a case study about a dam construction which led to draughts, animals dying and compromised livelihoods; an ad about the product of a multinational corporation;

a study about the progress of achieving Sustainable Development Goals worldwide; an article about a protest of students against illegal deforestations; an article about Earth Overshoot Day. The topic can be tackled locally, nationally, internationally, individually, institutionally, visibly and/or invisibly.

- **Gender Discrimination** can be explored with the help of an article on gender roles and stereotypes among children; one about sexual harassment in campuses; other about the statistics related to women representation in politics and leadership positions; one article about the role and power of women in different religions around the world; also different ads objectifying female bodies, comparing to male ones. A play can be done by using only one of these articles, to zoom in that specific context/level, where the oppression is manifesting, or combining more of these articles and balancing the discussion between children education, negative behaviours, religion and spiritual influence in this topic, society at large and other perspectives on the same topic. The topic can be tackled emotionally, rationally, behaviourally, locally, nationally, internationally, individually, institutionally, visibly, invisibly, concretely and/or abstractly.



Aim and Audience

We often receive this question from new learners and colleagues interested to work with this method.

*Why are we working with Newspaper Theatre,
what is the purpose?*

It reflects a valid need of knowledge regarding the scope of our work, to frame it, and to give it a clearer meaning. We have this answer for the other methods of Theatre of the Oppressed, so what is it for Newspaper Theatre?

As a reminder, for example

- *Forum Theatre* aims to change attitudes, decisions, and to empower different individuals (oppressed, allies, neutrals) to act differently, in the situations of oppression in which they are involved.
- *Legislative Theatre* aims to change the system and legal framework which enables oppression between individuals or when the structured system directly oppresses various groups.

Newspaper Theatre can have, for example, any of the aims that Forum or Legislative Theatre has, or any other; **it doesn't have a strict scope of action! It is one of the reasons this method is so rich and versatile.** It will go as far and as large as the team working with it aims to.

Because of this aspect, many teams actually fail to set up a clear focus and objective to achieve with their performance.

! They get so immersed in the process of working with the media materials, reading and researching, activating their creativity while combining different techniques and end up losing the point of why they are doing this performance.

! They get attached to a specific article or technique they want to use and apply which doesn't necessarily bring the topic in the light they initially wished. They change the aim on the way, due to artistic or personal choices - they lose the real target of this performance out of sight.

Our recommendations are the following:

- **Set up a clear aim at an early stage in the process.** This helps you to glance through the media material, to focus your search and yield better and more useful results. The aim also helps with the choice of techniques you may use and facilitate the development of the performance.
- **Your aim should refer to a specific topic, target group and the change you want to trigger in the audience members.**
 - The topic has to be related to real-life oppression.
 - The target group (potential audience) can be people affected directly or indirectly by this problem, allies of the oppressed people, by-standers or even oppressors (*but, oppressors should never be the main target group*).
 - Your target group should be people connected, to some extent, to the issues you are addressing; it should have relevance for their lives.
 - The change you want to instil can target viewpoints and stands on certain topics, different actions, decisions, concrete involvement in the approached issues, etc.
- **Calibrate your aim to the conditions in which you can organize yourself:** time available for development and performance itself, experience of the team, especially the Joker, the level of sensitivity regarding the chosen topic in the society, potential risks and challenges, as well as the capacity of the team to deal with them, etc. **Try to be realistic and aim within the possibilities of your team and available time.**
- **Your aim should be specific and not vague or general.** A loose aim is as good as no aim at all; it might be formally listed, but never useful in the process. A clear and concrete aim can also be evaluated and measured in terms of immediate and long-term impact (*see the chapter on Evaluation and Impact Assessment*).

“To stimulate general interest regarding discrimination in Romania” is quite futile aim comparing to “To stimulate pro-active behaviours among young students regarding discrimination of Roma people in Romania”

- **Even if you wish to use this method to inform and bring awareness about certain problems**, which may not be relevant/present in the lives of a certain audience, it is advisable (and for sure possible) to find a connection and to link the issues at hand to their own lives (even if in abstract or spiritual way) – there are Newspaper Techniques that can help in this aspect. This is important and helpful for the change desired in these people; when people feel connected, it is more likely they will be interested to know more, to get involved and do something.
- **Check your aim during the preparation process.** It often happens that teams get carried away in their process, and go off-track with their ideas, which, to some extent, don't get along with the agreed aim. The aim should be used to guide the process, but also as a tool to monitor and check the progress, accuracy and thoroughness of the performance in relation to the aim.
- **Do not determine the aim after you already developed the performance.** The aim is not a title you give to your piece after you wrote it. The goal influences your decisions in terms of which articles or techniques can support achieving the aim the best and logistically, to make sure you reach the audience that needs this play the most. Shaping all these aspects to a mould you have created (the ready-made performance) is showing disrespect to the method and principles of Theatre of the Oppressed, if done intentionally and/or superficially approach, which, very likely, leads to hollow outcomes.

Critical Reflection: Should the media critical consumption be part of the aim of the performance? Can we do a performance without actually aiming to stimulate media critical consumption?

Opinions are divided here, each side with their own valid arguments

- Newspaper Theatre is offering us only the tools to address, in artistic complex way, different types of oppression, to engage the audience in a very specific conversation and invite them for change regarding that oppression. **Why add the issue of media consumption on top of this?** Sometimes it doesn't help; it is forced on top of the main issues we want to work with and it is defusing our focus.
- **We can use newspaper/media materials as sources for any other type of Theatre of the Oppressed methods** and we will not name those performances Newspaper Theatre. The specific aspect of this method is, besides its creative development process, the fact that it is working with media products. For any topic we address, we can raise the question on how media portrays, covers such topics and how we position ourselves as consumers of such media content. It doesn't have to be about critical media consumption in general, but at least on the topic of our performance.



Media Content and Preparation

In the framework of Newspaper Theatre, we consider media content practically everything, that is/was created and aimed for public outreach and wide dissemination. If in the past, we could reduce the avenues for such content to print (*newspapers, magazines, flyers, etc.*), radio, TV, cinema and recordings. Nowadays, we have a much broader spectrum of options, facilitated especially by the use of Internet.

The Internet has definitely facilitated the emerging of new types of media, and creation and spreading of the “news” around, more easily and faster. At this moment in time, anyone can be a media creator; we don’t rely anymore on traditional media institutions for our need/wish to be up-to-date with what happens in the world; we also don’t settle to be just a consumer, we produce and/or disseminate media content to other people – we actively participate in the complex media network.

In Newspaper Theatre we may use materials from mainstream, alternative or independent media actors, which can be either formally, or informally organized groups, as well as self-employed individuals.

By **mainstream**, we refer to various large mass media outlets, which influence many people and both reflects and shapes prevalent values, norms and narratives in the society; they are usually either financed/controlled by state or large corporations/private institutions. They often make use of multiple channels of media production and dissemination (print, broadcasting, internet, etc.); even if they are named differently and it may appear they are not owned by the same people or structure(s).

The alternative media usually reaches out to a smaller number of people, uses fewer channels for disseminating their productions, and it presents alternative perspectives compared to the mainstream media. They tend to have less private support and rely more on contribution from their own clients/media consumers. Alternative media actors may be, but, aren’t always also independent media producers; the latter are transparent and open regarding their funding and total lack of ties to any state or private interests.

Type of media material which can be used:

- *Articles*
- *Commentaries*
- *Interviews*
- *Speeches*
- *Reports*
- *Videos*
- *Photos, images, memes, etc.*
- *TV/ Radio shows*
- *Podcasts*
- *Surveys*
- *Statistics*
- *Researches*
- *Newsletters*
- *Campaigning materials*
- *Ads, posters, jingles, banners, billboards, etc.*
- *Social media posts*
- *Consumer engagements (comments, reactions, etc.)*
- *Forums*
- *Public chat rooms*
- *Emails*
- *Press releases*
- *Graphics (also in term of how items are placed on published pages)*
- *Movies*
- *Documentaries*
- *Music*
- *Recordings*
- *Books*
- *Government and private mandatory public information*
- *Video games*
- *Street art*
- *Comics*
- *Cartoons*
- *Apps*
- *.....*



In the process of Newspaper Theatre development, preference should be given to journalistic materials, which cover current events, issues, trends and people; these can be combined with different type of information collected from other type of materials. Nevertheless, there is no strict rule in this sense; depending on the topic of oppression chosen, it be might more relevant and accurate to use other types of content (from the previously mentioned).

No media actor is 100 % objective in their news coverage or reporting. There is a bias; if not in how they present the topic, then at least from the point of view of the information left out, or both. Of course, there are differences in how objectively some articles are written in comparison to others, but, it's important to always remember that, to some extent, **all media is biased - situated somewhere on the spectrum of objectivity.**

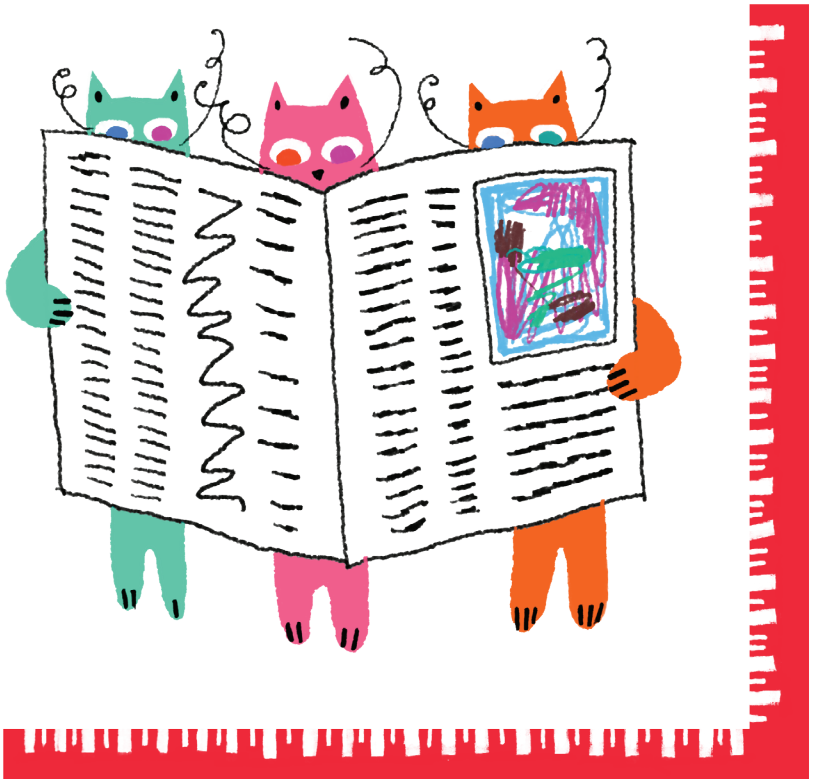
Facts are supposed to be accurate reports about events and aspects of society, such as the economy, politics, culture, etc.; facts can be checked and verified across different official documents and publications. **Opinions** are definitely subjective, based on interpretations, perspectives and views of different people, as well as on their background, experience or life situations. **Sometimes, opinions are presented as facts in various media productions.**

Some people (*from diverse power roles such as politicians, elected officials, leaders of religious movements, CEOs of corporations, etc. as well as the media creators affiliated to them*) occasionally contest the truth of different facts, by presenting their own versions of the contested events, and naming them “alternative facts”. **There are no “alternative facts” – facts are facts!** What occurs in these situations is that opinions or fabricated facts are presented and masked as “Alternative Facts”, to induce confusion and to raise doubts about the validity of any factual reporting.

“Fake news” refers to articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, designed to manipulate people’s perceptions of real facts, events and statements. The information is presented as news, known by its (at least original) promoter to be false, based on facts that are demonstrably incorrect, or statements or events that verifiably did not happen. This definition eliminates unintentional reporting mistakes, satirical productions, and biased (but, not false) reports.

Although it’s stated the presence of intention is a condition for spreading fake news, it often happens that people, who genuinely believe the truth of news they follow, share and promote them among their social network.

Thanks to the internet, information is only a few clicks away and seems limitless. In theory, this should be empowering. In practice, we find that information that is untrue or generates fear spreads most widely.



Guidelines for the Newspaper Theatre team

**In the “Preparatory Exercises” chapter you can find different type of activities which can support teams to go through some of the points mentioned below.*

Self-critical reflection

Every person interested to work with this method first has to reflect on their own behaviour, practice and values as a media consumer. To begin with, there must be an assumed acknowledgement of the fact they are a media consumer, intentional or not; far too many times we hear people who claim they don't follow news, watch TV or similar statements.

We like it or not, we wanted or not, we are all exposed to media content in our day to day life; only if we will live remote, in an isolated place, cut off from any links to the society, we could claim such a fact. This exercise is important in order to identify patterns, preferences, biases and judgments regarding media productions. It is essential to clearly frame the value system behind our choices and preferences, in terms of media content and covered topics, in order to identify the blind spots and the issues on which we have low exposure and awareness.

Humbleness

We all navigate in a world overly complicated, dense and overcrowded with information, ambushing us from all directions and sources. It is hard enough to keep track of what is true and what is not, besides keeping close to our moral compass and values. Our choices don't make us better, smarter or more enlightened about what is happening in the world, in comparison to other people. This specific self-work is important, in order to check and control our judgments, about media products and consumers' behaviours, with which we don't agree.

Newspaper Theatre is a great tool to trigger debates and healthy conversations on issues raised by the media; NOT a tool to preach or put down people with different choices/preferences in terms of media consumption.

By no means, we should condone any type of behaviours or topics raised in the media (*especially when it might be dangerous for the lives of different people or groups*), but we need to acknowledge that, the very existence of such materials and end users, are not in a vacuum.

Everyone had their own journey towards believing what they believe at the moment. If we make hierarchical classifications, and we position ourselves on a superior place, it will reflect in our work – we will be imposing and not creating a space for constructive and transformative discussions.

Privileges

They are a set of mostly unearned benefits or advantageous positions, given to people who fit into a specific social group. Some privileges (such as the ones related to age, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, etc.) are regardless of one's efforts (at any point in their life) and others (such as the ones of social status, educational level, etc.) could be gained through time, based on various efforts that one person has made.

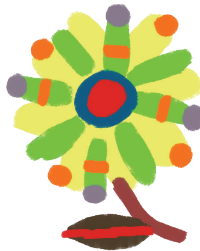
Privileges are often invisible to those who have them, and they are shaping and narrowing (to some extent) the kind of life experiences we may have.

A Newspaper Theatre team needs to consider and reflect on their own privileges especially when they work with topics not relevant for their own life. When you address the oppression endured by different people, and you only have media material as “evidences” of their experiences, it's important to acknowledge that you may never truly, fully, understand their experience. The different privileges and life perspectives may lead to an oversimplification or worse, to a victimisation of the groups you want to portray. If necessary, in the preparation work, a team should have direct interaction with the people experiencing the situations you want to portray. It may help to have a deeper, meaningful, more sensitive understanding and consequently, a more nuanced performance. This is necessary also for portraying the people concerned in a sensitive and respectful manner.

Selection of the media materials

There are two main starting points at this stage; you either already have a topic or you want to identify a topic to work with.

When you already have the topic/ type of oppression you wish to work with, at first, you should go through the most important recent media productions. As a piece of advice, it is better to start with mainstream and popular media and to select various pieces which covers your topic (directly or indirectly); then, analyse the alternative or independent media and select a few options from there as well; make sure you go through materials which you don't often follow. Keep an eye on issues (events, incidents, situations, etc.) which received a lot of attention (of any kind) and select them as well. If you already know who your audience is, it's good to use this filter while selecting the first round of materials. What you gather so far now represent the “**generative stash**” of media contents.



When you are searching for a topic and you have full freedom in terms of what type of oppression to focus on, check first, if there is any burning or high-interest topic among your team members, which they wish to explore through this method. If no topic emerges from within the team, move on to what media has to offer. Divide the roles in the group, to monitor different type of media content (*including content from sources your team will not usually go through*) for few days and select “red flags” type of materials. Gather the materials, analyse and identify common trends, issues, connections and narrow down to a specific type of oppression and potential angles to approach it. From this moment, it is good to search for additional materials on the same topic (tackled directly or indirectly) in order to form your “generative stash”.

Material transformation and performance creation

Once a team has a “generative stash”, they start “playing” with the materials, connecting them with the Newspaper Theatre techniques and the proposed aim. If you don’t have an aim by now, this should be the first thing you need to decide, before starting to work with the gathered documentation.

In this brainstorm-creative-free phase it is good to explore as many ideas as possible; do not get overenthusiastic from early stage and stop the creative process. More ideas may lead to more content, to be search and added (*depending on the chosen technique*) and a richer pool of options from which you can select and construct the final version of the performance.

There is no frame or structure of a Newspaper Theatre play, therefore the ending result depends on how you pack the most suitable ideas which emerged in the brainstorming phase. The logic of the performance can unfold in any way, and the artistic flow can capture ideas from classic to very unusual type of performing acts.

These are some examples of what can be done or used (or not):

- One storyline (of one person)
- Multiple storylines (of different people)
- Chronologically or in random order
- Mixing concrete real world with abstract realities
- Using any genre or a mixture of genres
- With or without words
- Monologues and/or dialogues
- Using technology aspects such as projection, music, lights shows, etc.
- (Un)conventional spaces
- Each scene in the same or a different location
- Static or travelling performance (between different sites)
- Audience physically involved in the performance
- Clear delimitation between actors and audience or not
- Acting fully exposed to the audience or partially hidden

A team should decide on how it is best to proceed, in terms of balancing and alternating, between discussions or rational planning, and acting out the ideas or rehearsing.



In “theory”, some of the group’s ideas may look very different when dramatized - harder or impossible to be played; not as strong or powerful as expected; or, when visualised, they may be changed and modified. It is advisable to avoid planning almost the entire performance without trying out some of the ideas on the way. The exact opposite is also not advisable, as acting and playing out exclusively, leads to risks of losing objectivity, valuable ideas and logical framing of the performance. Each team should find their balance point in how to maximize the strong points of each work dimensions, rational planning and physical experiential testing.

There are no requirements regarding the **number of actors** necessary in a Newspaper Theatre play, either minimum or maximum. A team can organize themselves as they think it is the most suitable. Actors can play double roles as well, with the condition to make the difference between roles clear and not confusing for the audience.

The Joker shouldn't have any acting role in the performance, no matter the kind of concept you create for the play. Even if there is a talk show, cabaret, etc. that has a “host” concept built in the design of the performance, this person cannot be the Joker, as this role is still an acting role. The audience needs to have an authentic, reliable companion in this process, there only for them, and not for their part in the play as well. (*You can find more details on Joker role in the next chapter*).

Although, there is a lot of space for creating and using ideas as wild as a team wishes, there are some key aspects that, nevertheless, still need to be carefully assessed case by case, in order for the performance to be conveyed to the audience better:

- **Clarity** – Can the message of your play be easily understood? Can you make it clearer without compromising its artistic outline? This aspect is extra important for performances that have consistent abstract, symbolic or metaphorical segments, which are the most likely to be misunderstood.
- **Short** – Keep it under 15-20 minutes (the shorter the better); focus on the main aspects and elements. Too many events, actions, characters will lead to an exhausting (and contra-productive) process with the audience.
- **Safety** – Make sure the experience you design for your audience is safe physically and emotionally. The audience shouldn't feel forced or pushed to be involved directly in the act, at any moment. Any proposed interaction always has to provide the option for the audience members to refuse, stay out or just observe. Be sure you don't incite violent behaviours from the audience on you, as actors, or on the other audience members. For sensitive and emotional topics ask an external person to feedback on your performance.

- **Shocking and/or provoking factor** – It is connected to the previous point, but should still be addressed separately. It may be that your purpose is to develop a shocking performance, to provoke and trigger strong feelings, even negative ones, among the audience, which, then, need to be processed by the Joker and transformed into positive changes. This is a conscious decision a team takes, but it needs to be taken based on the knowledge you have about the audience and the potential risks you are willing to take. Not every person is comfortable, open and willing to be provoked – thinking otherwise reflects a condescending attitude. Try to know your audience as much as possible before deciding to develop a provocative piece. Very important: do not do it if your Joker doesn't have advance competences in facilitation!
- **Respect** – there is a blurred line between making fun and using humour in order to address serious, delicate and sensitive topics. If you are not sure that your production is approaching the topic and how you chose to represent it in responsible manner, better do not use humour. The risks and negative consequences could be substantial and totally overshadow any possible positive outcome your idea could have. For sure, there are some topics, which can almost never work with humour, such as rape, murders, child abuse, and so on.



The representation of oppression

Analyse the performance you have created and critically assess the overall message and spirit of the performance. Does it put the oppression/oppressor in a positive and good light? Does it seem that oppression is actually good and (sometimes) acceptable? Does it put blame on the oppressed people, for their situation? Etc.

There is difference in portraying different problems, and encouraging or condoning the type of issues you cover. If you use the “Basic Story” technique to reproduce an article which encourages hate speech, it is very different from the option in which you apply other techniques, go far from the original article, and develop, for example, a performance glorifying racist behaviours.

“Basic Story” Technique gives us the opportunity to directly address how media portrays and covers different current issues; any other technique reflects (also) our own choice/vision in the representation and we cannot use “media” as an excuse. If we want to reproduce media 100 %, we use only Basic Story. Of course, it’s the Joker’s job to process, discuss and challenge the audience members regarding the oppression portrayed on the stage – but, a Joker can only do that much, they cannot do miracles; for sure they cannot reverse the main message of the performance.

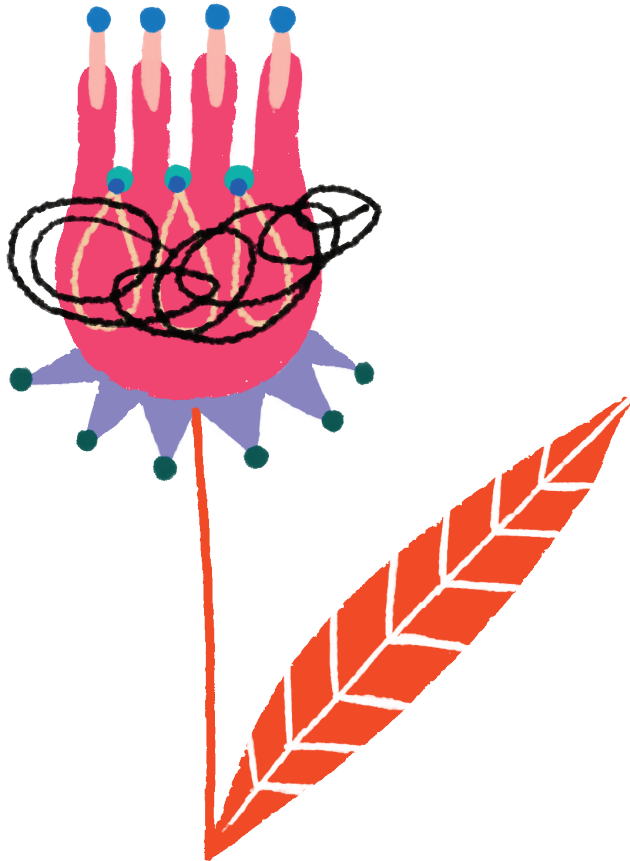
True or/and Fake Information

As mentioned before, there is all kind of media content that reaches the public, from mainstream or alternative media actors; all are biased, various are more subjective than others, and some are fake and/or misinforming the people.

This is what is out there, this is what we use. It can be a deliberate choice to use fake news, in order to address exactly the issues of truthful media, or maybe for other artistic/aim-related reasons. It is important to check the sources for any material used; who are the people behind and the (hidden) owners of the concerned media outlets; to fact-check the revealed information, and if there were any follow-up articles, responses or comments of the people mentioned in the used media content.

Even if all this “background check” information is not going to be used in the performance itself, it is necessary for the team to have it and make it available to the audience if needed. To ensure the trust of the audience, it helps to be transparent regarding the sources and materials used in our preparation, and also to show that we have looked into the chosen materials critically.

**Nevertheless, it is crucial to not to use false information, but accurate and true information for the Technique “Story with the Missing Information”, to the best effort and knowledge of the team.*



Changes from the originally used material

Except the “Basic Story”, all the other techniques bring changes, modifications, interpretations and transformation to the media content on its way to become a part of the performance. Depending on the used number of techniques and amount of media content, the final performance might have very little resemblance with the original materials.

This raises questions to many practitioners, who feel that getting so far from the media content itself rather represents a misuse of the method. There are different standpoints on this topic: more traditional (*which doesn't get too far from the Basic Story*) and more unconventional (*which combines, transforms and reinvents some of the media materials totally*).

Each practitioner should define, for themselves, where they stand on this aspect. The Newspaper Techniques offer tools for everyone, from whichever point of view they support. A team can choose to use the media content(s) as a “pretext”, to create a meaningful context for addressing an example of oppression, OR they can make the media content a purpose in itself, in which case more resemblance to the presented content is required.

As a sign of transparency and honesty, a performance can be introduced as inspired, based on or reproducing specific media contents. The exact used content can be mentioned or presented either at the beginning or at the end of the performance.



Performance and Interaction with the Audience

Newspaper Theatre, unlike other types of Theatre of the Oppressed, which need a more organized space and process, offers a larger freedom in terms of choices of locations and structuring of the performance. The main factors that weigh in are the design of the acting part and how the interaction with the audience is planned.

We have witnessed performances or parts of different performances taking place in:

- Theatres
- Hallways
- Conferences/seminar rooms
- Youth or cultural centres
- Prisons
- Toilets
- Balconies
- Storage areas
- Classrooms
- Schools
- Campuses
- Bars/Pubs
- Gardens/Parks
- Parking places
- In front of buildings
- On stairs
- Tents
- Exhibition areas
- Podiums
- Sport halls
- Online
-



We can't emphasise enough the importance of the interaction with the audience, and that it is mandatory! Without it, we are not talking about Theatre of the Oppressed!

The interaction with the audience can be done at different times during the performance, either by the joker or by the actors, during their scenes.



Interaction facilitated by the Actors

The actors' purpose in engaging and interacting with the audience during the performance is to make the spectators feel as a part of the depicted actions and events, to raise their interest, attention and motivation. Actors don't do the work of the Joker, which is focused on analysing from a detached and external perspective. Actors, in fact, help the audience blend in the performance and be or feel as a part of it.

Actors can engage the audience during the performance by:

- **Verbally or physically asking them to join the action.** Especially for the scenes which depict events happening in public places, the audience can be treated as they are there themselves, in that specific public place. Nevertheless, such engagement can be designed for other type of scenes as well.

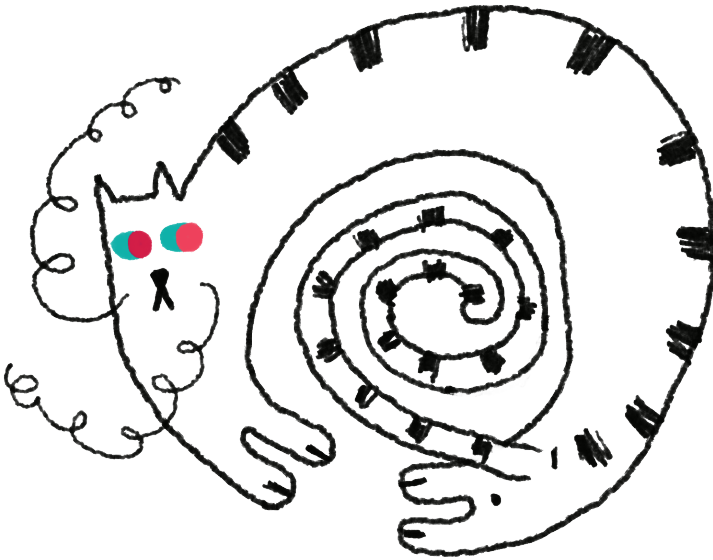
Examples:

for a protest or gathering, the actors can invite the audience to join as well; when there is a dance play or an action in a club/disco, they are encouraged to dance; if there is a song/slogan/jingle/etc. they can repeat and join the chorus; if there is a border crossing physically in the room, they are treated as they are also on the way to cross the border; if there are two sides fighting or opposing, the spectators are invited to take sides and give support to their favourites; they can give votes for different actions or people ; if there is a play about cyber bullying, they can be invited to write down offensive words a bully can use in the scene, to make it more realistic; they can engage with different online tools which can be projected in real time during the performance, etc.

- **Acting in the audience places.** Actors can sit in the audience area, even before the performance starts; have conversations from their role, with the spectators (before or during the performance), with other actors who are also placed in the audience area or on the stage;

- **Offering different objects to the audience members.** These objects can be papers with the thoughts of the actors in that moment, flyers from the planned protest, tools of the workers, weapons of the police, etc. The objects can be given without any explanation, mentioned in the dialogue of the actors or in the conversations between actors and audience members.

At the end of the play, if the team plans to mingle and interact with the audience, they shouldn't be in their roles anymore. The end of the play signifies, as well, the end of their characters, regardless of how they have interacted with the audience members during the performance.



Interaction facilitated by the Joker

**more detailed instructions and advice for the Joker's work are found at the Joker Guidelines chapter, next in the manual.*

The purpose of the Joker is to guide and support the audience to understand, connect, analyse, exchange opinions, views, critical points and extract significant (empowering) learnings relevant for their lives.

The Joker can ask questions and discuss with the audience before, during and after the performance.

The most prevalent and in the same time essential, is the conversation done after the performance. It is the most easy to be put in practice and planned, BUT Newspaper Theatre offer so much more potential in terms of interaction with the audience which Jokers can valorise by:

- **Asking questions and having an initial discussion before the performance**, which prepares the audience for the topic, for the acting part (especially if there are aspects which need advance warnings); raising some critical points which can later be observed in the performance, etc.
- **Discussing with the audience in between scenes, to decode what happened in the previous scenes**, take the pulse on how the audience feels, thinks about the events unfolding on the stage, asking their wishes, expectations for what will happen next and reasons why, etc. Audience can be invited to join in the next scene and play either one of the roles already existing or a potential role, to make sure what they wish to happen in the next scene happens. Of course, any physical intervention on the stage should then be discussed with the audience, regarding the changes or impact in the overall situation and connections with the real life.

**if physical involvement of the audience is wanted, it should be carefully planned with the whole team and not be organized spontaneously; the actors must be prepared to improvise based on the changes made by the audience members.*

- **Discussing with the audience during a scene.** Actors could freeze during the scene (*either at the signal of the Joker or of the audience*) and the Joker unpacks the situation with the audience on the spot. It can be combined with invitation for the audience to join the scene, either by replacing one of the actors, or by adding another character in the situation.
- **Discussing with the audience members after the performance ended.** This should be the main and the most important discussion. The Joker, together with the audience, analyses and wraps up all the issues raised during the performance, connects them to their own lives, and also addresses the issues of changes and transfer in their own lives and realities.



Risks and Challenges

As all the work we do in public places, with people we don't know personally, touches on issues that are sensitive or controversial, Newspaper Theatre also comes with a series of risks and challenges. These need to be acknowledged, assessed and prepared for, and, in some cases, be taken seriously enough to not go further with some ideas or even the whole planned event.

Some of the most common risks and challenges encountered in our work are coming along with the following aspects:

Controversial Topics

Media covers a wide range of issues, among them, as well, topics which polarise the society, are taboo or touch on a sensitive cord of different groups. The decision to select such topics should be carefully examined and critically analysed, in order to determine the potential reactions of the audiences. No assumption should be made in terms of how the audience will embrace the angle of portraying a certain topic.

It is better to list all the worst possible situations or reactions generated by the performance, and to assess in advance, the chances of handling those hypothetical situations when they occur.

Among the biggest risks are conflicts and/or violent behaviours unleashed in the audience, which are often difficult, if not impossible to be contained and handled in a constructive manner.

There are some specific factors which increase the probability of certain risks to occur. A combination of more than one of such factors should raise a warning trigger for any team, who may, then, decide to approach other topics instead.

- **Unknown audiences.** Performing for groups, about which we know very little, have no control of who they are, and how they got to know about our event, is definitely a risk factor. Usually, performances designed for general public and advertised as widely as possible carry high risk in relation to this factor.

We always recommend knowing the profile of our audiences as much as possible, in order to set up clear and specific objective for our performance. When that is not possible, a team should carefully consider what topic to go further with.

- **Very open, public and exposed locations for the performance.** This aspect brings along high chances for all sorts of people to storm in, out and get 'interested' for our performances in wrong way. In such locations, there is often little control of what can happen during the event itself, or of managing crowds and unexpected situations.

We generally recommend, in fact, not performing in such locations, to begin with, but sometimes we are either forced by different circumstances or, literally, we have no control of the locations of our performances. In these situations special logistic measures should be planned, different team members ready to intervene should be on stand-by positions, and, also, clear rules of participation should be presented to the crowd.

- **Topic which strongly divides the society.** In any society, every day there are different issues affecting or intersecting with people's lives. Some are more controversial than others, and few are very clear on the extreme polarisation spectrum. Such subjects can very easily and fast make a crowd super involved, passionate and it can boil up tensions and aggression. A team may have all the best intentions in creating a context to debate, in what they think is a healthy and constructive environment, and suddenly realise that this is not going happen, and more than this, things might go out of control.

We strongly recommend that ONLY experienced teams take such topics on board. Experience comes with different learning and wisdom, which filter, from a more realistic perspective, the decisions a team takes in the preparation process.

Provocation Level of the Performance

Regardless of the approached topic, a performance can be designed in a very provocative manner. Some of the Newspaper Techniques enable the creative process in such directions. A team may wish intentionally, as their objective, to provoke and challenge the audience on a specific oppression issue.

What provocation means is relative to the target group, and within this group there are variations on how a person can take a specific gesture, act or behaviour based on their personalities, life experiences, views and values. Of course, there are little chances for all the people in an audience to resonate to a specific performance in the same way. When a provocation is desired, it is aimed at least at the majority of the spectators.

A team needs to know their audience as much as they can, in order to assess very well what could be the tipping point for a provocation, as well as the boiling point, in order to design something in between the two points. It is always a good idea to try a rehearsal with different people, outside of the team, and also to have some plan B or C, in terms of alternative acts for different scenes, to be played on the spot, depending on the reactions of the public.



There are different possibilities that can take place in reality:

- **The expected provocation doesn't happen.** The audience doesn't take the performance in the way the team has planned it. The team didn't dramatize their idea in a sufficiently provocative manner for that specific audience (it may be very provocative for another audience). This doesn't pose any risk or challenge in particular, it can only be a negative point for achieving a specific objective.
- **The expected provocation happens as intended.** The team designed a concept which triggers, challenges and provokes the audience in a healthy and constructive manner. The provocation level is reaching its target. There is no risk or challenge in this case, unless the Joker doesn't have enough experience and competencies to handle and facilitate the discussion. An unprocessed provocation could have negative consequences among the audience.
- **The expected provocation doesn't happen as intended - the audience gets "super" provoked.** In this case the team downsized the reference of the audience regarding what they can tolerate and the audience gets angry, upset, violent, uncooperative, defensive, etc. All these reactions very likely kill the flow and the process of the event. With some skilful Joking something may still be salvaged, but with an unexperienced Joker, the damage can be irreversible.



Intense Emotions (*depicted and/or triggered in the audience*)

In some cases we may approach intense emotions as part of the provocation factor, but in most cases, emotions are part, by default, of the structure of the performance. Theatre, in general, and especially dramatization of issues pertaining to oppression, generates emotional experiences for different audiences, sometimes quite strong and powerful.

This becomes a serious risk and challenge to be dealt with, when the emotional impact on the audience is extremely high and manifests in reactions such as crying, shock, leaving the location, lack of response and reaction to the Joker questions, etc.

We may re-enact traumas, scare or emotionally hit our audience with performances which are very realistic, deep in the emotional life of oppressed persons and/or very close to the emotionally hard experiences of the audience themselves.

Almost never a team desires such serious impact on their audience. Whenever this happens, the process is very much compromised; the audience members enter a negative emotional state which dominates the entire flow of discussions.

This happens usually based on a serious underestimation of how the performance may emotionally affect the audience. The tricky aspect about Newspaper Theatre is that it may be hard to assess how a person may receive an abstract, metaphoric and creatively designed performance. Very often, the Newspaper Theatre productions are unique and original, never tested before, and it is always risky how an audience will receive it.

A team needs to be sensitive and very careful about this aspect; ask for external feedback or support while developing a performance, to check its emotional triggers. It is also very important not to embark on potentially risky performances without a Joker that is able to handle and manage the emotional experience of the audience in a healthy and constructive manner.

Loose Structure

One feature of Newspaper Theatre method is that it doesn't have a strict process or flow which needs to be followed. Therefore, a team may design performances which enable a lot of spontaneity, participation, interactions and involvement of the audience themselves, even if not necessarily intended or desired by the team. When we introduce a very loose set-up to the audience, with little or almost no rules, borders or limits – anything can happen, such as audience not leaving the stage anymore, interrupting dialogues of the actors, getting involved in arguments with the actors or other spectators, etc.

This is a very specific and unique risk and challenge associated exclusively with Newspaper Theatre method. The other Theatre of the Oppressed methods have specific formats which “restrict” the freedom of the audience, and offer them concrete paths for participation in the terms we have laid down explicitly.

Our advice go mostly to the teams that are new in working with this method. Start with semi-structured format, in which you do lay down some ground rules of involvement and participation, and then, after several experiences with different topics, performances and audiences, open up to fully lose and open set-ups.

As a team, you always need to put yourself in the position of the audience and identify the way the performance makes you feel; does it motivate you to participate or not?; does it make it clear and easy for you to get involved? Are there any conditions in order to participate or not? Etc.

The Joker needs to make it very clear to the audience, what is the framework of the event and in which moments and conditions their participation is needed and allowed.

Online Adaptation

Before year 2020 we haven't even considered working with Theatre of the Oppressed (*any of its methods*) in online format. We valued and we still do, human connection in the same space, feeling each other, being present and connected in real time. We still believe that theatre, and especially theatre of the oppressed, has its biggest potential, impact and quality level when we are together in the same physical space, actors, audience and Joker.

The year 2020 challenged and forced us to transform some of our activities to online set-ups; it was either that or nothing. Even if we had (sometimes) satisfactory processes and results we still recommend organizing physical events whenever there is a possibility.

In the case of Newspaper Theatre, as it has such a flexible and loose structure, it came easier to adjust it to online context or to situations where audience and actors cannot be in the same physical space.



The options we have used:

- **Everyone (actors, audience, Joker) in a different physical place meeting in the same virtual place.**

In such cases, the play was performed in real time, adjusted and using only artistic and dialogue options possible in virtual set-up. When the performance was delivered, the spectators had their video cameras off so the only video action was that delivered by the actors. The interaction with the audience was reduced mostly to the work of the Joker, in order to make it easier for the audience to follow the process and to engage in conversations. The conversations with the audience took place either verbally or in writing in the chat spaces. Also, direct intervention in the scenes was possible, but it was harder to motivate audience to “get on the stage” – due to the virtual and rather awkward context. It was also helpful to have 2 Jokers, in order to share responsibilities; one to manage the spoken conversations and the overall process, and the other one to follow the chat, the issues raised there and to make sure they don't get lost, but addressed properly.

- **Actors in the same physical place and everyone else (Joker, audience) in different physical places – meeting in the same virtual place.**

The main difference between this option and previous one, was that actors can deliver a more nuanced and complex performance, as they can all act in the same space. The interventions or suggestions from the audience for change in a scene (if this was part of the process and discussions with the audience) were enacted directly by the actors and not by the audience members.

- **Audience members and the Joker in different physical places meeting in the same virtual place.**

In this case, the play was filmed and the scenes were shown and discussed with the audience at different moments. The actors were not present at the event.

- **Audience members and the Joker in the same physical place.**

Similarly to the previous option, the actors were not present at the event; the performance was filmed in advance and shown to the audience, in the same manner as the performance would have been played (*e.g. Show the first scene, stop for discussions, continue with the second scene, and so on; discussion, full performance, discussion; etc.*)



In this chapter we introduce the Joker role and general guidance to help any person in the position of a Joker in a Newspaper Theatre Play.

Joker in Newspaper Theatre

- Is the person who intermediates the process between the audience and the play (performed by actors);
- Doesn't have any acting role in the play;
- Is the host and overseer of the entire process;
- Has a crucial role in achieving the objectives of the performance;

Each Theatre of the Oppressed method requires a specific type of Joking process, as their objectives and structure are different.

In our previous manuals we have provided detailed information to help a Joker to work with those specific methods.

- In the **manual on Forum Theatre** (see <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1503>), a method where we focus on individual stories and what people themselves could do differently, we have included the process, structure, steps and specific guiding questions to be used for working with this specific method.
- In the **manual on Legislative Theatre** (see www.artfusion.ro), a method where we zoom out from individual stories and look at what needs to change in the system, we have provided different guidelines as the questions and the flow of discussion have a different structure (from the one in Forum Theatre).

- In the manual on **Invisible Theatre** (see <http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/2636>), a method where there is no designated Joker to handle the process and all actors act as Jokers (they are all “undercover” Jokers), we have provided specific guidelines on how such role can be delivered at optimum level.
- In these manuals we have also included **general recommendations and advice for the Joker**. Particularly in the Legislative Theatre manual, we have included ample details on various challenges faced by Jokers and mistakes they do, together with ideas and guidance on how to better handle and avoid difficult situations. Many of these aspects are valid for any of Theatre of the Oppressed performances which are delivered for specific audiences (*with the exception of Invisible Theatre*).

Newspaper Theatre doesn't have a specific structure and process to be delivered with the audience. Therefore, also for the Joker Role, there is no specific format which has to be applied to any Newspaper Theatre Play. This is one of the reasons we don't recommend this method for beginners in the field of Theatre of the Oppressed. The Joker role requires more complex competencies, many from the area of facilitation in general, in order to achieve the objectives of a performance.

Instead of a concrete structure and steps that need to be respected at very specific moments during a performance, in Newspaper Theatre we follow a more general structure, inspired by Experiential Learning theory from Non-Formal Education.

This structure offers a theoretical model which supports the concretizations of different Joking formats applicable to any type of Newspaper Theatre play.

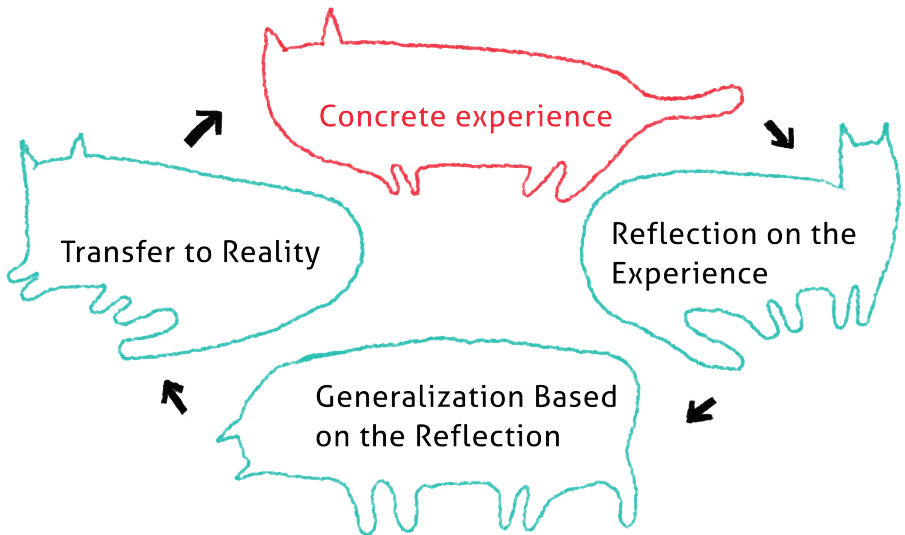
This theory is also behind the Joker structures for the other Theatre of the Oppressed methods. In those cases, it doesn't need to be actually acknowledged and integrated consciously – that's because the proposed formats are clear, fixed and can be applied to any type of Forum or Legislative Theatre plays. Because every Newspaper Theatre performance is different, practitioners need to properly understand this theory, in order to translate it to different operational Joker action plans.

Next, we introduce the theory of Experiential Learning Cycle (*adapted from the model developed by David Kolb, an American educational theorist*) and guidance on how it can be used in general, in educational settings, and specifically, by a Newspaper Theatre Joker during the interaction with the audience.

Experiential Learning Cycle

This theory can be utilised for diverse life events, planned or unplanned, organized or unorganized. The main idea of this theory is that we learn through experience, but in order for an experience to actually lead to the best learning outcomes, it has to be processed/debriefed, either individually or as a group, self-facilitated or with the support of an “external person”/facilitator.

The next graphic exemplifies how learning happens according to this model.



Concrete Experience

It represents a very specific episode from a person's or a group's life, which take place in a certain moment or period of their existence. This theory can be used for very simple and short experiences (*e.g. getting burned while touching an object, falling down the stairs, etc.*), as well as for more complex situations (*e.g. relationships, travels, shopping, school, trainings, etc.*) which can also have shorter or longer durations. The cycle can be applied for experiences taking minutes, days or years of someone's life. Our lives are, in fact, a big complex web of connecting different lived experiences of one person's life; every day we go through different "micro" experiences, which are part of bigger, much lengthier "macro" ones.

In our next explanations, we focus on group experiences that are planned and organized, either as learning experience in a non-formal education setting or as part of a Newspaper Theatre process - linked to the Joker role.

Specifically, in Newspaper Theatre, this phase of the cycle refers to

- **The emotional and rational experience the audience has during the performance;** the experience generated by witnessing and taking part **in the acting part of the event.**

If the subject of the play is close to the audience's lives and the process is engaging, the whole experience is going to be much stronger and deeper. A powerful experience is more likely to generate solid learning outcomes. The experience can be introduced to the audience with a brief discussion. In this case, the Joker may ask the spectators a few questions, in order to prepare and activate them for the performance, which can lead to more attention, interest and curiosity during the performance (aka the Concrete Experience). This preparation also warms-up the audience for the next stages of the process.

Warming-up of the audience is something that needs to be considered by a Joker, either before the play or ahead of the discussions with the audience.

The next 3 steps of the cycle are, actually, thinking phases, each one of them focused on a different specific train of thought. In none of these next 3 parts of the cycle the learner/participant is actively engaged in an experience, but is engaged in a “decoding” process of their lived experience. These 3 phases are also called as a group, Debrief, because the Concrete Experience is debriefed or processed in these stages.

In non-formal education and other type of participatory group learning processes, all the phases (*except the Concrete Experience*) are, often, a discussion (*mixing individual process with group ones*) facilitated by an educator/facilitator. This person uses specific questions, suitable for each thinking phase, and moves on to the next topic of the discussion (phase of the learning cycle).

Learners don't have to be aware of which phase of this cycle they are finding themselves in, they don't need to know this. It is part of the role of the Facilitator, to guide the participants to go through each part of the cycle in a natural manner. **In Newspaper Theatre this is what the Joker does.**

Each of these 3 phases from the cycle is building on the outcomes of the previous step – hence is very important for their order to be respected while planning the discussions and different specific moments during the performance and the Joker Part.



Reflection on the Experience

This phase is named Reflection, because it's taking place immediately after the experience, and the first thing that often comes naturally, without a specific facilitation, is to talk about what just happened, similar to a light emitted from a shining body/object, reflecting.

The aim of this immediate step, after the Concrete Experience finished, is to:

- Support the expression and venting of the feelings that build up during the experience.
- Extract the immediate impressions and thoughts from what just happened.
- List and review all the important moments that happened during the experience.
- Provide a space to exchange personal perspectives and views regarding the experience itself; same experience always generates different feelings and thoughts in different people.

Generally, in a participatory learning process, in this step the facilitator uses different questions, exploring the feelings learners had during the experience, what made them feel like that, what happened during the experience, how they behaved, why, what they did in some specific moments, etc. The exact questions are developed and adapted to the specific provided experience, and also to the behaviour participants had during the experience. The questions target exclusively the “experience” and how the learners experienced it, from emotional and rational points of view.

It is preferable for this step to take place right after the Experience is finished, as the impressions, reflections and memories are very fresh and bubbling up – it is the best to provide an immediate context, to process them adequately.

Specifically, in Newspaper Theatre, this phase of the cycle may include one or more of the following options:

- **Reflecting during or after one or more scenes.** The Joker asks the audience what they noticed, felt, did, reacted to and thought of what happened in the previous scene. After a few responses the next segment can be acted out. The answers collected in this brief reflection phase may or not be used in the next acting scenes, but they should be made of use in the next steps of the learning cycle.
- **Reflecting at the end of all the acting parts.** In this case the Joker doesn't ask questions during the performance but only after it finished.
- **Reflecting after a physical intervention of an audience member on the stage** (*if such participation is planned in the Joking process*). The Joker asks the person intervening how they felt, what they have tried to do, what impressions they gathered, etc.; then they asks the audience what they noticed, felt, did and thought of what happened when the intervention took place. These answers may be used in the discussions triggered by the next scenes and/or interventions.
- **The reflection can be organized** as discussions in pairs, small groups or with the entire audience at the same time.
- **The audience can be given, in advance, a set of cards**, marked with colours, symbols, numbers or words (representing different feelings/ thoughts) which can be shown at the same time by the spectators when the Joker asks some of the reflective questions.
- **Some parts of the reflection can be** done by inviting the audience to use their bodies to express their feelings or reactions to what they have seen. (*A Joker should use this option only if they consider the audience is comfortable enough to join such invitation*)

Reflection is an important phase in the learning cycle and a crucial phase, especially for emotional, sensitive, strong and challenging Newspaper Theatre Performances. Without adequate time, space and facilitation of a reflection phase there is a low yield of outcomes in the next phases. Sometimes, the reflection is necessary only in order to provide a context for the audience to share and talk about their feelings triggered by the performances (in pairs or trios) without sharing with the rest of the audience; its purpose can be to only talk and vent in order to be able, later, to focus and more rationally analyse what the performance depicted.

Generalization Based on the Reflection

This phase is based on the outcomes of the previous one, the reflection points from the performance/experience. **This phase is named Generalization**, because we take something that is rather specific, in this case the reflecting points from a specific experience, and we explore them more broadly; we expand our thinking process to a larger context.

The aim of this step, after the Reflection phase, is to:

- Link the experience and the reflection points with the lives of the learners/spectators.
- Connect the issues portrayed in the performance with real-life examples, situations and processes from the society.
- Make parallels and analogies with other life situations and experiences.
- Integrate the main reflections into a systemic perspective of the society.
- Crystalize learning points relevant for their lives.



Any facilitator should pay attention to how they manage the discussions, not to move too fast to the generalization before having a proper reflection, or to go back and forth between the phases.

Generally, in this step a facilitator uses different questions, exploring the connections that can be made with real life events, analogies, how the people/roles/actors observed in the experience act in real life, what links could be made at systemic level, what needs to be learned out of this, etc. The exact questions are developed and adapted to the answers the people gave in the Reflection phase.

Specifically, in Newspaper Theatre, in this phase of the cycle, the Joker touches on the following aspects:

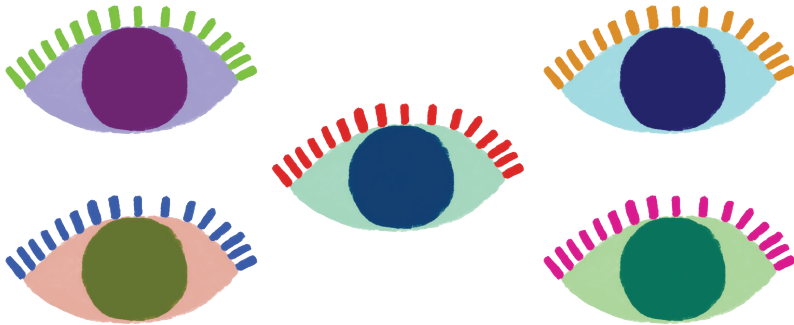
- Sharing of similar cases/situations.
- Mapping the relevant power actors in this type of cases.
- Analysing the causes and consequences of such issues.
- Brainstorming solutions to the portrayed problem(s).
- Identifying the potential triggers for change.
- Exploring potential paths and avenues for making a change.

Where exactly in the flow of a Newspaper Theatre event these issues should be addressed, it depends on how the performance is build:

- **Parts of generalization can happen during the performance, in between scenes** (*after the reflection on the scene/intervention*), especially if each scene is depicting a different case/example of oppression. In this situation, for each specific part/segment, the audience is invited to share different relevant examples/insights/connections from their lives. At the end of all acting scenes, the Joker can summarize the points made in the previous discussions, and then continue with the second part of the generalization, which takes into consideration all the aspects touched upon in all the scenes.

- **Generalization is done fully at the end of the performance.** This option is used more often, as it is the easiest to be put in practice. In the cases where reflection was done after each scene, the last conversation (after all acting scenes) can summarize the reflection points, leave space for additional reflections and move the discussion to the generalizing aspects.

The Generalisation can be organized using combinations of discussions in pairs, small groups or with the entire audience at the same time. If you use small groups' discussions, it is important that the audience share their conclusions with the rest of the spectators, as generalisation insights are helpful for the entire group, to grasp the complexity of the system surrounding these issues and it adds to the group's learning outcomes.



Transfer to Reality

This is the last stage of the learning cycle and it is orientated towards the future. It starts in the organized setting (*e.g. educational or the performance event*), but it continues in reality, at a later stage, depending on what is offered by life circumstances.

This phase is named Transfer to Reality, because in this stage the participants, individually or as a group, narrow down the paths that can be taken after the cycle is completed. The Generalisation stage yielded many ideas, connections and learning points; in this last stage participants select the concrete options/ideas/thoughts/learnings/etc. which they actually want to take forward to their own life and use them in future experiences.



The participants need to think how they can transfer their learning outcomes to their own reality before they actually transfer them. Once they transfer them, a new experience is created, and then a new learning cycle starts (*most probably in an unorganized educational context*).

The aim of the Transfer phase is to:

- Prioritize points of actions and the immediate ones that could be taken.
- Take (personal) decisions regarding future situations where similar events take place.
- Make commitments regarding personal change or different actions in the society.
- Motivate the participants to have different behaviours in future situations.
- Explore potential obstacles or opportunities for putting certain changes into practice.
- Prepare for different future circumstances.

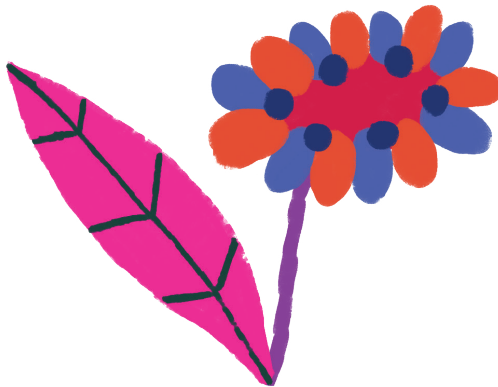
Generally, in this phase the facilitator stimulates the group to think how they can use the learning outcomes (*the ones that appeared in the generalization phase*) in their life from now on, what they can do differently from now on, what they will put into practice, what they will need more of in order to put their new ideas into action etc. The exact questions are developed and adapted to the answers the people gave in the Generalization phase.

It is very important that all the transfer ideas come from the participants themselves, and not suggested or imposed by the facilitators. Each person might transfer a different learning outcome than other people, but it has to be an intrinsic decision and motivation for it to actually be carried out.

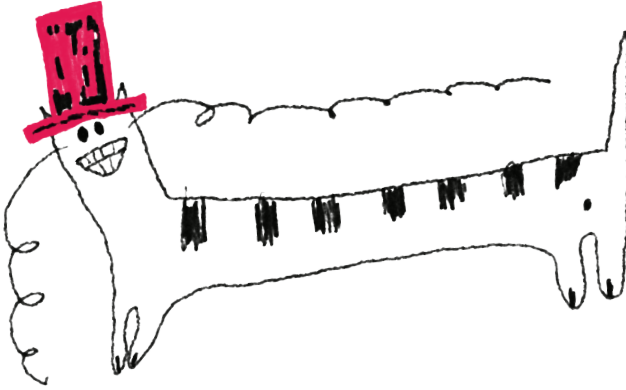
Specifically, in Newspaper Theatre, in the Transfer phase of the cycle, the Joker touches on the following aspects:

- Listing the most important take-away from the event.
- Assessing their own level of motivation towards doing something/ getting involved or taking an action (*related to the topics covered in the discussions*).
- Listing the required steps to achieve a certain change, as well as the potential obstacles that may appear along the way.
- Preparing and planning for different real-life future situations.
- Sharing different examples of what they will personally do in future similar situations.
- Encouraging each other for acting differently from now on.

The Transfer phase can be organized using combinations of discussions in pairs, small groups or with the entire audience at the same time. It is always done after all the scenes have been acted out, the Reflection and Generalizations discussions took place and exactly before the end of the event.



Joker Role - Qualitative factors



- **It takes time!** Depending on the size and profile of the audience, as well as the performance itself, the discussions can take from 20-30 minutes to 1 hour and more. Therefore, sufficient time should be allocated for the implementation of the event.
- **Follow the phases in the given order:** Reflection, Generalization and Transfer. A productive flow of conversations should follow these steps, which maximizes the learning outcomes. This structure, in fact, helps the Jokers, because it makes it easier for them and the audience to follow the way the discussion is building up and crystalizing into learning points, which can be transferred and applied in their lives.
- **The aim of the Joker!** Facilitating a discussion with the audience is not an aim in itself; it should have a purpose linked with the aim of the Newspaper Theatre play. The questions chosen to be used should be relevant and building up on the aim that was decided during the preparation of the performance.
- **Adequate, good and relevant questions.** This aspect is strongly linked with the previous two. They have to lead the audience member towards deep and profound thoughts or insights. General questions are fine, but not enough for a deeper discussion; specific, tailored questions and reactions (*to the issues raised by the audience*) are elevating the discussion with the audience.

Guidelines for a More Successful Joking Process

** recommended for beginners or Jokers that struggle to boost their facilitation*

Before the Performance

- **Make sure you allocate enough time in the Newspaper Theatre event for the Joker part!** Carefully think about the time the performance and discussion would take, and make sure that there is enough time for the structured conversations with the audience.
- **Prepare the questions in advance** (*to match the aim of the performance*). **Write them down** in the proper order: Reflection – these questions; Generalisation - these ones; Transfer - these ones; this way you don't mix them up and use the structure randomly.

Writing them makes a huge difference. You may have thought about some very good question(s) and it can happen to not be able to remember them in front of the audience.

Until you have mastered your questioning skills and developed a strong sense of spontaneity to come up with an unlimited number of good questions on any given issue, you should write them down and use the list as a Joker.

Another benefit is to notice what kind of questions you plan to use, in order to rephrase and modify them, to sound better and more adequate (*see more on questions below*).

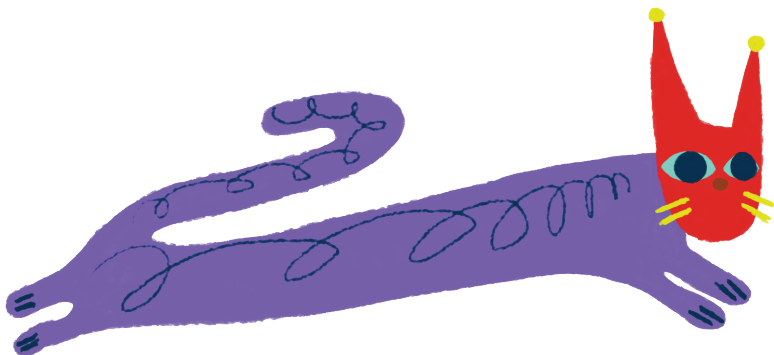
It also helps to have a balanced conversation and not to spend too much time on Reflection, and very little on Transfer, for example. Each phase should be adequately tackled.

- **Prepare alternative questions.** It can happen that some of the questions you thought of in the first place don't work because the audience members don't respond or react as expected. In order for you to not feel lost, improvise something inadequate or rush to the end of the discussion, it is better to think of alternative questions, for each planned section of the discussion, which can be used in case of necessity. Write them down as well.

- **Reassess the time allocated to the Joker based on the planned set of questions.** Do some very simple maths to help you out: how much time answering questions can take if 5 people respond to it? What about 10 people? Factor in how many questions you have initially planned? This should give a general idea of the time needed for the discussion and if it matches what you actually planned.

During the Performance - The Acting Part

- **Observe the dynamic of the audience.** Take mental notes (or write them down) of what they do, how they behave, if there are any individuals behaving atypically (not engaging, leaving the room, etc.) and any other relevant observation that might be used in the discussion part. Pay particular attention to how emotionally impacted they seem to be during the performance in order to change your strategy for Reflection phase (*allowing more time, starting with discussions in pairs, etc.*).
- **Review the discussion plan.** Based on the audience dynamics and the issues that emerged during the performance, you may decide to change the aspects you want to focus on more in the discussions, and change some of the questions in order to tackle the issues you have observed.



During Joking Time

- **Organize the discussion in the best suitable setting.** The audience is sitting (always avoid having a discussion with people standing), there is no noise or disruption of the discussion, so the focus and attention of the whole group is entirely allocated to the discussion.
- **Your voice and body language.** Make sure you talk loudly enough for everybody to hear, that you have eye contact with the majority of people in the audience (*meaning you don't look only at one side of the group but at everyone*) which allows you to also see who wants to talk or not.

Generally, try to be conscious of the message that your body sends to the group (including facial expressions); does it invite people to engage, does it show signs of tiredness, boredom or even emotional reactions you might have to people's answers?

Your face might be the most sensitive to the spectators' comments. Try to control the value of reactions to what they say. Even if you don't openly say that you like or dislike something, nevertheless, your face might show it clearly.

- **Managing replies and silence.** Allow enough time for people to reply to your questions, don't rush or panic. Most likely the audience handles the silence worse than you - there is always somebody who answers.

If you are not sure the question is clear, you can ask the audience if it is, and they will let you know. If too many people want to reply to your questions, remind them to come with additional points, to not repeat what others said and, if needed, do tell them you will move on to the following questions – you are not obliged to keep giving them the word.

When you feel the question has been covered enough, move on. Managing the time is your responsibility – not of the audience!

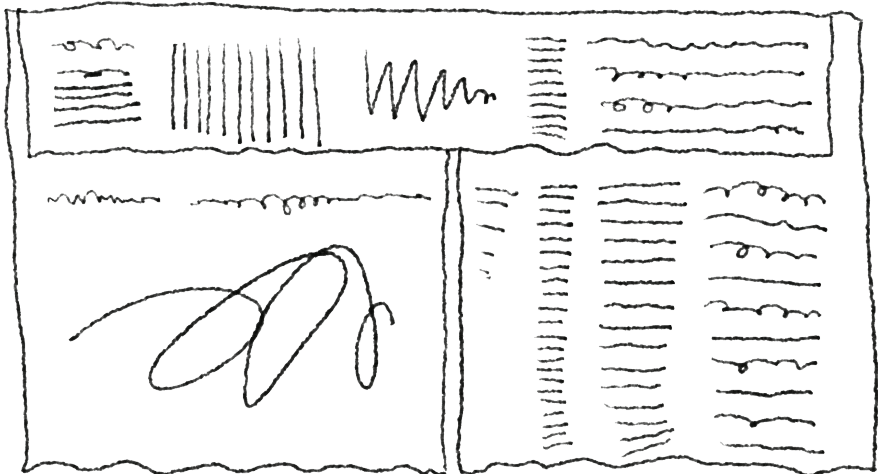
- **Skilful questioning needs to be matched by careful listening,** to understand what people really mean with their answers. Don't behave like a robot, which follows a questions plan without adjusting and connecting the questions to the already received answers. Take their answers into consideration, follow up on them; combine your originally planned questions with their input. This leads to a smooth, natural, rich and fruitful discussion.
- **Listen to your inner voice or intuition.** While the discussion is going on, if you are relaxed enough, you may detect inner signals that tell you on what to focus more, or in which direction to go with your questions. This intuition might tell you not to ask a certain question anymore, to ask another one, to delve deeper into certain issues, etc. which contributes to deeper insights of the audience members.



After the performance and Joker role ended

- **Do a critical self-assessment** of how you conducted the discussions and what results it had. What went well? What went wrong? What was the biggest struggle? Analyse the plan you made and what happened in reality. What changed and why? How did you manage the group interventions and silences (if there were any), which questions proved to be more efficient and which ones did not? Did you notice any interesting dynamics during the discussion? How much time did it take compared with what you planned? Did you need more time for it? etc.
- **Take note of the things you want to do differently next time.**
- **Modify the discussion plan** or add alternative questions and keep them for the next time you work with the same Newspaper Theatre performance.

**as you can notice, the recommendations for this section are actually an invitation for the Jokers, to go through each stage of the Learning Cycle after they had their concrete Jokering experience.*



The Key Tool of The Joker: Questions

There are two important aspects for mastering the discussions with an audience in a Newspaper Theatre context:

- Properly understanding the theory and logic behind the experiential learning cycle.
- Advanced questioning skills.

Questions are the main tool for putting the main ideology of this learning theory into practice. For some people, asking questions and exploring any given situation more deeply comes naturally, even without prior preparation. For others, serious and responsible preparation is a requisite. We strongly believe that any Joker can become very skilled in using questions if they invest time, prepare themselves, are self-critical and listen to their intuition.

Next, we list various ways to differentiate between types of questions, so you can have a better understanding of what you can use, and also try to include them in your discussion plans, in a balanced manner. Any overuse of the same type of questions does not, in fact, lead to a smooth and enjoyable conversation, so you should use diverse types of questions.

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) and take little time, as the answers are very short.

Examples:

Do you agree? Do you make any connections? Do you plan to do something regarding this? Do you consume media? How often have you seen that? Do you see a problem here? Are you supporting this point of view? Are you following them in real life? How likely is it that you will encounter similar situations? Etc.

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 the audience's answers. They often require answers longer than one word/sentence

Examples:

In general, any questions starting with: what, how, why, which.

What happened in that moment? Why did they do that? What did you see? What do you think about this? Which behaviours have you noticed? How is this affecting you/the society? What can anybody do about this? How the media covered the topic? Why are certain topics not covered by media? Etc.

Closed questions are considered problematic when overused, as they are limiting and they 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? What are your reasons? How important is this for our society? In which ways is this 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 preferred 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 audience members 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, isn't? What is the delay of the police intervention in such situations? The second proposed solution was better, was it not? What do you prefer more, following news on TV or on social media?



Broadening Questions

The aim of this type of questions is to advance from a certain point of the discussion, which might be on a narrow path at the moment, very local or specific only to some people's contexts. These questions push the discussion to a broader perspective, different points of view or issues to be addressed.

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 have to choose a specific topic in which you are interested to zoom in together with the audience. The topic may appear through the discussions with the audience or was portrayed in the performance. You can start either with a closed or open question, and then, continuing with Zooming questioning, gradually go deeper, to zoom in on some specific layer of that topic.

Examples:

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

Specifying questions

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

Examples:

Can you 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 audience members. You might pick up on something interesting, which you want to explore more, and you can address it by asking the others spectators.

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)*? *(First repeat the comment of an audience member)* Let's see what the others think about it, as well - what is your take on...?



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.

The main focus of some practitioners goes on the implementation of the Newspaper Theatre play, losing out of sight the planning and measurement of the actual impact on the audience members, and if possible, on the society at large. If we just assume there must be some effect, it must be (*as beginners in the field often think*) without measuring it with the best possible tools to identify the exact impact and the degree of change we produced; we are not accountable for our efforts.

Practitioners who plan serious evaluation and impact assessment processes are perceived as more responsible, taken seriously by different potential partners and authorities; get more credit and validation for the work and results they achieve.



To draft and develop an evaluation plan, a team needs to analyse different dimensions, which then need to be analysed and compared in reference to the desired Aim of the Newspaper Theatre Process.

As we emphasised previously, the aim should be clearly framed at the beginning of the process and be main reference in the evaluation assessment.

If the aim is not clearly framed, then we cannot be critical about our results – anything we achieved is ok!

The two dimensions we need to look into are:

- The Achieved Results
- The Process to Get to Those Results

Results

- **Quantitative:** number of actors, plays, performances, audience members, age group, gender distribution (for each performance), number of partners (state and non-state), number of audience members engaging in conversations, etc.
- **Qualitative (short and long-term):** relevance of the audience members, partners, interventions/reactions of audience, influence on the actors' team, audience, society, future cooperation etc.

Process

- **Team process:** positive, negative points, conflicts, management, challenges, strategies to overcome obstacles, feedbacks, etc.
- **Partnership process:** positive and negative points, conflicts, management, power dynamics, challenges, strategies to overcome obstacles, feedbacks, etc.

Methods to Measure Results or Process

For each of the indicators and aspects mentioned previously (*at the Results or Process*), different tools and methods can be used in order to gather data, qualitative information and measure the produced change.

Some of the possible methods depend on the specific context in which practitioners are operating, so each team should explore and choose/design the most suitable and adequate methods.

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.

Quantitative Results

First tool is an example of a monitoring sheet which can help you to track the quantitative data during performance time. The example can be modified and adjusted based on each team's specific desires and needs.

For the rest of the indicators, each team can easily develop their own system to collect that respective information.



Newspaper Theatre Play Observation Sheet

Location _____

Date _____

Name of the play _____

Main topic addressed in the play _____

Aim of the play _____

- How long (in minutes/hours) was the performance together with the discussions and interventions (if you had)? _____
- Number of people in the audience _____
- Number of people in the audience belonging to the oppressed group _____
- How many people left during the performance? ____
- Number of women: _____
- Number of men: _____
- Number of other gender/non-binary: _____
- Age group(s)-approximate estimation: _____
- Assess the overall level of interest and active participation of the audience during the play (high, medium, low) _____
- Number of people that went on stage to make interventions (if you had) _____
- Approximate number of people actively involved in the discussions _____
- Relevant feedback, impression from the audience regarding the topic and your aim!
-
-
-
-
- Other comments/observations:

Tools to Measure Qualitative Results - examples

Some of these tools can also be used to collect information about the process.

Team Process and Impact on the Team

Throughout the working process the team should have regular meetings with the aim to assess their own process, the impact on themselves, exchange feedback, identify challenges, brainstorm strategies and changes they should do for a more constructive and productive team work. These meetings can be facilitated by an external person or they can switch roles to empower group members to take more responsibility.

A very important discussion takes place immediately after the performance. The purposes of this meeting are:

- to process the feelings of the actors from their performance;
- to list each actor's perspective on the process with the audience;
- 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;

Assessment of the Impact on the Audience – examples

- If the audience members are using mobile devices connected to the internet, you can use an online tool for collecting their fresh impression and thoughts from the Newspaper Theatre Event. You can write on a visible place the specific link they can use and kindly ask them to do it before leaving the premises. The survey should be short, to combine quantitative marks, as well as qualitative ones.
- After the performances, team members and other volunteers can go in the public and interact with the audience members, ask them directly how they feel about it, how relevant was this process for them, what they want to do next, etc.?

- Big pieces of paper could be placed outside the location and audience members can write on them when they leave the performance. Questions should be specifically related to the topic of the play and shouldn't be more than 3-4!
- The same questions as before, together with some others connected with the issue, could be made into a short evaluation form. The Joker could mention, at the end of the event that some volunteers will come and ask them a few questions, and they are kindly invited to support the initiative.
- The same evaluation form, mentioned before, can be already placed on the seat of each person, and they can individually fill it and give it to the team at the end of the performance. The Joker should mention it and encourage the people to do so.



Ideas for longer-term evaluation with audience members

- You can collect their contact details (during the performance) and after some time contact some of the spectators (via e-mail or phone) and invite them to some follow-up meetings to discuss the problems, the changes in their life and the society – or ask them directly via e-mail or phone (post-performance impact evaluation).
- You can set up a specific online medium for the follow-up process after the performance, where, whoever wants to be involved or informed, can join/sign up. Post the exact location of this medium in a visible place and invite people to join. The activity from this medium can offer information on the long-term impact – how many people have joined / are following the specific topic/issues tackled/promoted, how many of them got actively involved, what kind of reactions they have, etc.

Preparatory Exercises

The theatre preparatory process includes different categories of exercises: group building, drama and theatre games, specific exercises for Newspaper Theatre, improvisation, getting into characters and activities to support the rehearsals, etc. Each team, depending on their profile and experience, need a differently tailored preparatory program and time to be ready for a performance.

In this manual we haven't included a general curriculum, to be used with a group from the beginning to the time of the performance.

We have detailed a generous amount of exercises (specific for Newspaper Theatre), which can be framed in different training programs. Any team can decide, based on the needs of their group members and available time, on their own selection and structure, by combining games and activities from other manuals and the ones listed here.

We have already developed manuals on other Theatre of the Oppressed methods and we don't want to repeat games or activities which can be used in Newspaper Theatre Process as well.

In the Forum Theatre manual (<http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1503>) we have listed a general curriculum which can be used for working with a new team (with no experience in the area). There are diverse warm-ups, theatre games, power and oppression exercises, which can serve as a resource for any team.

In the Invisible Theatre manual (<http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/2636>), there is a variety of exercises meant to prepare and support a team working with this specific method. There are exercises on group work, power, emotions, and improvisations that can also be used for working with a team in Newspaper Theatre.

In the Legislative Theatre manual (<http://www.artfusion.ro>), there is a variety of exercises meant to prepare and support a team working with this specific method. There are exercises on society and power distribution at macro level, problems and solutions (from different society actors' perspectives), personal reflections and improvisations. Depending on the topic addressed through the Newspaper Theatre play, some of these exercises can also be used.

The exercises we have listed are separated in different categories, which should all be included in a Newspaper Theatre preparatory training program – for each category, a team might use one or more exercises, to answer to the needs of the individuals or the group overall – in relation with Newspaper Theatre process.

The exercises are separated in generic categories and a group might decide to work also on other aspects and issues, not listed here, for a more complex training program.

Preparatory Exercises - General Considerations

Some of the listed exercises 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 facilitator has to use their own judgement while choosing, adapting and using these activities with different groups and people.

For many of the activities described below, the facilitator needs to search and select the media materials necessary to deliver the activity. This might represent a challenge in different contexts and should be planned in advance in order to have sufficient relevant materials available. For several activities though, the participants have to search the media they generally access or is available in order to fulfil the given tasks.

Working with Media Materials

- *Media Detectives* (120-180 min) 124
- *Media Content Scavenger Hunt* (90 min) 130
- *Levels of Oppressions in Media* (90 min) 133
- *Fact or Opinion?* (90 min) 136
- *Editorial Team* (90 min) 139
- *Ad Creation* (180 min) 144
- *Media That Touches Us* (90 min) 147
- *Media Rework* (90-180 min) 150
- *The Headline* (60 min) 153
- *Field Journalists* (180 -300 min) 157

Critical Perspectives on Media

- *Where Do You Stand?* (60-90 min) 160
- *Freedom Unlimited or....?* (90 min) 164
- *Narratives Used in Media* (120 min) 168
- *Propaganda Detectives* (90 min) 175
- *Fake News Creators* (90 min) 182
- *Bias in Reporting Violence* (90 min) 185
- *Freedom of Press* (120 min) 189

Self-Reflection

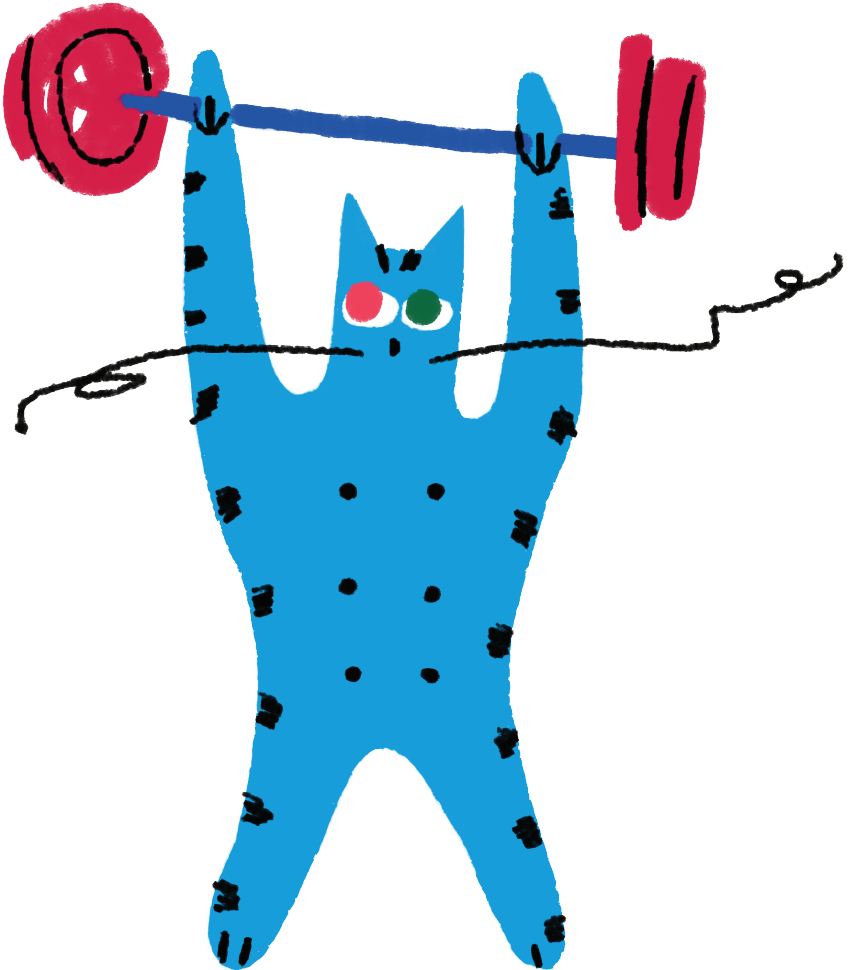
- *Media Habits Bingo* (60-90 min) 192
- *What Kind of Media Consumer Am I?* (90 min) 195
- *Levels of Online Participation* (90 min) 198
- *Citizens Journalism* (90 min) 201
- *Personal Bias* (90 min) 204

Improvisations/ Acting Skills / Rehearsals

- *Article in Reverse* (60-90 min) 208
- *Media in Different Genres* (60-90 min) 210
- *Reporters versus Commentators* (60 min) 212
- *Let's Create an Article Together* (60 min) 214
- *News With the Real Protagonists* (60 min) 216
- *Reporting from the Field* (60min) 218

Emotions

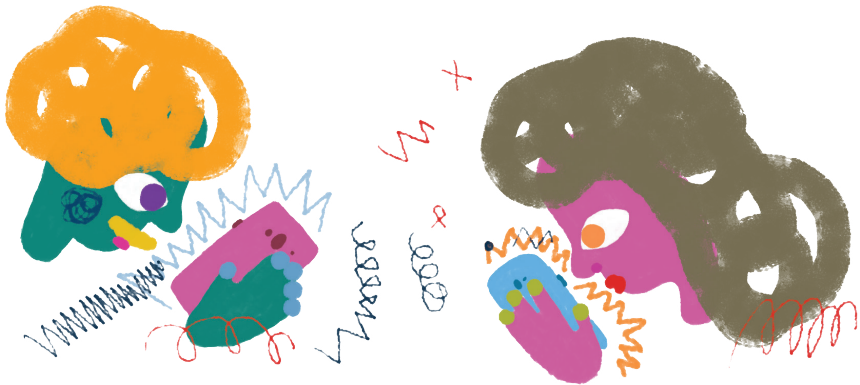
- *React to the News* (30-50 min) 220
- *Social Media Reactions* (60 min) 222
- *Reading With Emotions* (60 min) 224
- *Affect Your Partner* (60 min) 226
- *React to Emotions* (30 min) 228
- *Frustrated by the Media* (90 min) 230



Working with Media Materials

Title:
Media Detectives
(120 to 180 minutes)

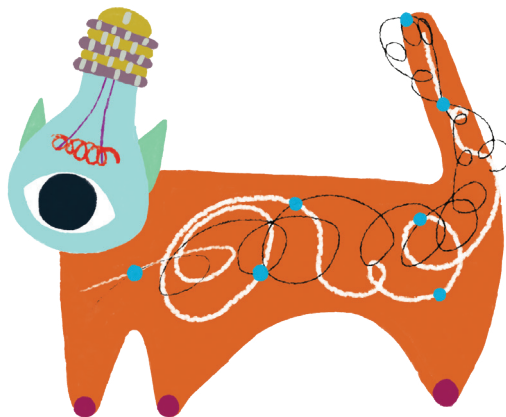
Objectives: To develop analytic skills for screening media content; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to map and create connections between different elements of a media outlet; to identify main examples of oppression present in media; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to make comparisons between mainstream and alternative media; to trigger a change in the media consumer behaviour;



Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 people.
- Each group can use one newspaper from a mainstream outlet and one from an alternative or independent source for the task. You can select the materials for each group or create a common stash of different examples from which the participants can select the newspapers they wish to work with.
- As an alternative, if you don't wish or cannot work with printed materials, use the online versions of each media actor you want to provide as options.
- Each group has to analyse the two media products using different criteria. For each criterion they need to write down their observations. You may give some or all of the following criteria to each group:
 - ▶ **Type of content** – number of items from each category : News Reports; Feature Writing; Investigative; Interviews; Lifestyle; Reviews; Commentary/Perspective/Opinion; Letters to the Editor; Sponsored Content; Advertisements; etc.
 - ▶ **Topics** – number of topics/categories of issues; which ones; number/percentage of articles for each topic/category; which topics/aspects have the biggest headlines; etc.
 - ▶ **Facts** – number of fact-based and opinion-based articles; number of wrongly framed pieces (e.g. opinion-based ones presented as factbased); number of articles mentioning sources for verification; etc.
 - ▶ **Groups' representation** – number of different groups (gender, race, ethnic, religion, nationalities, sexual orientations, etc.) represented in the media; which groups; percentage of coverage per each group; connections between the type of topics and covered groups; etc.
 - ▶ **Geographic representation** – number of covered/mentioned locations (cities; neighbourhoods; regions; countries; continents, etc.); which ones; what percentage of each; etc.
 - ▶ **Emotional spectrum** – number of articles covering positive, negative or neutral news; which topics/categories are covered in positive/negative/neutral way; etc.

- **Images** – number of articles with images; how images are linked to the article; which people/groups are depicted in the images the most; etc.
- **Journalists** – number of journalists in the editorial team; the gender structure of the editorial team; number of articles for each journalist; type of articles/topics for each contributor; etc.
- **Media consumers** – target audience of the newspaper; possibilities of readers to influence the content; space for comments/replies; etc.
- **Advertisements** – number of ads present; which products/services they are promoting; percentage of the media space the ads are covering; etc.
- **Gender representation** – number of articles covering each gender (as the main focus of the article); number of ads portraying each gender; differences on how each gender is portrayed in articles or ads; connections between the type of topics and portrayed gender; etc.
- **Finances** – how much money does the product cost; differences in prices for different types of customers; who owns the media; who is giving money to this newspaper/media product; etc.
- **Subjective observations** – order of topics, structure of the newspaper, bias in reporting, manipulation, topics/issues/aspects missing; general impressions and conclusions, etc.



- Groups have between 60 to 120 minutes (depending on how many criteria are used) to write down their observations.
- Each group presents their findings. The rest of the groups ask questions for clarification or examples to illustrate the presented information.
- Start by presenting all mainstream newspapers and then move on to the alternative/independent ones.
- Instruct the participants to pay attention and to take notes of significant similarities/differences between the presentations. After all the groups presented move to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

- What did you notice in all the mainstream media presentations? What was common and what was different?
- What about the alternative media presentations? What was common and what was different?
- What did you observe as similarities between mainstream and alternative media presentations? What about differences?
- What was the dominant narrative/message of the mainstream media? What about the alternative one? What does this mean?
- What conclusions do you have regarding each criterion (*go one by one through all criteria*) analysed?
- What thoughts do you have about the bigger picture/context in which these media products exist?
- What is missing and should be present in the media?
- To what extent do you think your observations reflect other media productions as well? Could you give some examples?
- Why is this happening? Why is the situation like this and not different?
- What does that mean to you? What relevance or impact does it have on you personally? What about the impact on the society?
- Which aspects are signalling a problem or something to pay more attention to?
- As a media consumer, how often did you think about these aspects before?
- To what extent these aspects need to be acknowledged by the media consumer? Why?

- In which way are media consumers affected by the way media products are “providing” them with information about the world?
- How do you want your life as a media consumer to change from now on? What do you wish to do differently?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Depending on the time available and the number of groups you are working with, you may provide the same newspapers to different working groups and provide different criteria to analyse them. In this way you make sure you use more or all criteria for a specific media product. You can also give the exact same tasks and media examples to different groups in order to compare their findings and observations.
- In order to reduce the time, you may select a few articles to be analysed instead of the full newspaper (*printed or online version*), but this options will not provide sufficient information of the bigger picture analysis of the content.



- You can follow-up with the “Editorial Team” activity (see next) in order to put the group on the other side, to create media content and use the insights from this activity for their role as an editorial team.
- If you meet regularly with your group, as a follow-up, you may give one criterion per person, to be observed in the next days across the main media content providers; compare their findings and conduct a discussion about current perspectives across media and current trends and events. The task can also be given as homework and the presentations and discussion can take place in the session itself, with the whole group.
- Another specific homework is for the participants to observe and notice examples of oppression covered in media during a specific period of time. To write down their observations, to collect and categorize them at the group meeting. This information can be used as a starting point for deciding which specific type of oppression they wish to tackle in the Newspaper Theatre Method.
- A very specific alternative version of this activity is to give as a task, to identify the adjectives used in an article in relation to a specific group. Participants need to scan an article or a complete media material and whenever there is a reference to a specific group, which is oppressed in the society, (*e.g. immigrants, refugees, different ethnic groups, religions, gender identities, sexual orientation, women, elderly, etc.*) to mark the used adjective (if there is any). This exercise is more useful when done with more than one article, to have a more complete picture of a specific newspaper/media product. The collection of adjectives needs to be presented, compared to what other groups discovered and addressed in the discussion.

Title:
Media Content Scavenger Hunt
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop analytic skills for screening media content; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives.

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 or 5 people.
- Give each group one specific newspaper and provide a common stash to be used in case of need during the exercise.
- In 30 minutes, each group has to identify a number of items in the given newspaper. Some of the examples that can be used are:
 - An article covering positive news
 - An ad with a naked man
 - A front page article written by a female
 - An image portraying children
 - An article about a minority living in your country
 - An opinion-based article critical about the government/public authorities
 - Media content challenging gender norms
 - A piece covering events from another country/part of the world
 - An article portraying a situation of oppression
 - A satiric piece about the society
 - An article covering the work of an NGO/civil society structure
 - A piece about the wrongdoings of a private company (bonus for a team which can find an article or piece portraying the same company in a positive light)
 - An article covering an issue your team feels strongly about
 - A piece which they consider to be objectively written

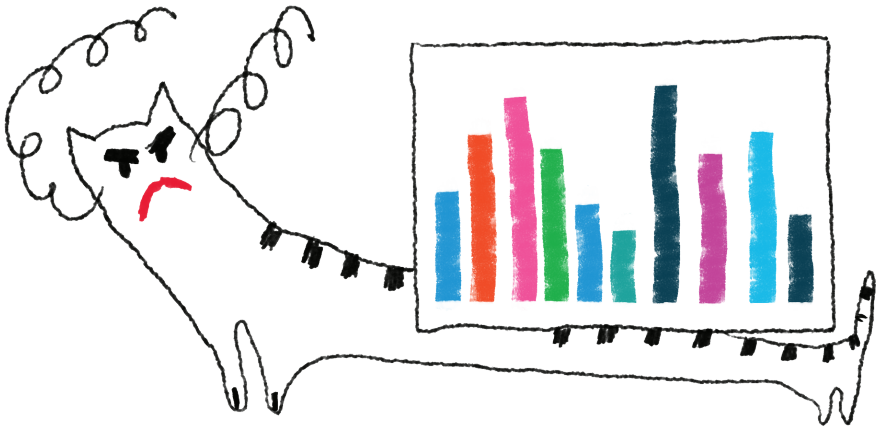
- If a group doesn't manage to find one requested item in the given newspaper they may try to discover them in the common stash. In this case they need to write down exactly in which specific newspaper and the page they found it on.
- One article cannot be used for more items from the list.
- After 30 minutes, each group has to briefly present their findings and then move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this task for you?
- How was your process as a team? How did your work together?
- What feelings did you experience during the task?
- What was the easiest to find and why? What about the hardest? Why?
- How many aspects did you have to identify in the common stash (*because you didn't find them in the given newspaper*)?
- What was common among all the groups? What was different?
- What surprises you? (*Either from your own findings or from the findings of others?*)
- What other observations do you have about the task, the process or the findings?
- What does this reflect about our society or about the media in our society?
- Who is influencing the media content?
- What do you usually notice when you read newspapers or go through media material?
- Why do you notice those things and not others?
- What are the things you don't notice or think much about? Why?
- How is the media shaping the world view of the media consumer?
- How can a media consumer be exposed to a more diverse type of messages?
- Who is responsible for this?
- What do you want to do differently from now on, regarding the issues we talked about?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If you think it's beneficial, organize the activity in a competitive manner; either by rewarding the team that finds all the items first or by creating certain limits or obstacles in accessing certain newspaper or materials (*e.g. first come first served, same article cannot be used by more than one team, etc.*), but make sure to address this part of the process in the discussion.
- The material selection needs to be done carefully, to include a balanced perspective of the newspapers present in the society, from the most popular to the most alternative and independent.
- Give only mainstream examples to each group and leave the alternative ones in the common stash; use their process to compare the two types of media, the exposure of the media consumers and the overall context in the media space.
- The specific list of items needs to be adjusted to the current context and dominant trends. You can also use the exercise to gather a stash of articles and perspectives on the topic you are working with for the Newspaper Theatre play – in this case the list should include mentions from the same area of topic/oppression.
- The given list can be made in easy version, by including general and common type of items or difficult, by including rare and hard-to-find items. Each approach reflects different aspects of media reality and it is suitable for groups with different level of experience.
- As an alternative, for an individual or pairs activity, insert the list of items into a Bingo table. In this version, the participants have access to a common stash of printed materials and/or internet options, and they need to find all the mentioned items as fast as possible.
- If you meet regularly with your group, you may give the list of items as homework and invite the group to observe, follow and identify them in as many diverse sources as possible. Their findings could be used for a discussion on what is prevalent in the media sphere, what alternatives are available and what recent and current events or trends were observed.



Title:
Levels of Oppression in Media Content
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to acknowledge the phenomena and impact of hate speech; to investigate, on a deeper level, different type of oppression that exist across media spectrum; to stimulate proactive behaviour against oppression;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 people.
- Each group receive a list of examples of different statements/ images/situations/etc. in which offensive, threatening, bullying or intimidating declarations are made, through a media channel, in relations to a specific group (*which is often the target of oppression in that specific community*).
- They need to list the given examples in the order of their perceived gravity (influence on the involved people, or in general, on the society), from the most serious to the least serious. They may place more than one example on the same position. Give 30 minutes for this task.

- Before the groups start to present their lists ask the participants:
 - ▶ How did you feel doing this activity?
 - ▶ How easy was it to get to a conclusion in your team?
 - ▶ What was the most difficult part of your discussions?
 - ▶ Did you manage to have a final list? If no, why not? If yes, how did you get to this conclusion?
 - ▶ Do you want to add any other comments from your process?
- One group presents their list. The other groups should mention if they have the same order or a different one, and what is different.
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- What are your impressions after you heard all the groups' arrangements?
- What are your thoughts about the group differences?
- To what extent do these examples reflect realities present in the public space and facilitated by different media channels?
- Do you know other examples?
- Who is their target?
- Have you ever been a target of such situations? If yes, could you give us more details? In which way did it impact you? What have you done differently after that?
- What are the dangers of such situations? Who is the most vulnerable and at risk in our society?
- Do you think there are different levels of oppression enabled by social media (*besides traditional media*)?
- What makes the difference between them?
- What are the immediate negative consequences of such type of statements/behaviours?
- What about the long-term ones?
- Who has power to change something in this regard?
- What is the role of people that are not the target of such situations?
- What is the role of media users?
- What do you want to do differently from now on, when you witness similar circumstances?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- The given examples can be fictive (*but inspired by real situations*), but, if it is possible, examples should be true recent examples. There should be around 10 to 12 situations/examples covering contexts such as: private messaging; comments on different social media posts or articles; statements from various politicians; public posts/articles from any group which is against a certain minority or pro superiority of a certain group; offensive memes/jokes shared in social media; comics; ads; tweets of famous people; lyrics of songs etc. For a selection of statements referring to gay people you can use the hand-out from “Bookmarks – Combating hate speech online through human rights education” manual from Council of Europe (*see the activity “Saying it worse”*). The manual can be found online.
- The number of people in a group is deliberately chosen to be even, in order to increase the chances for a tie if groups use voting in their process. In this way, they are forced to discuss more and use alternative methods for taking decisions.
- Be aware if this activity or the chosen example can trigger strong reactions from your group; many people don't feel comfortable to rank people's experiences of oppression. Be sensitive in how you introduce the task and how you handle the discussion; don't imply that some people's experiences are less valid than others'.

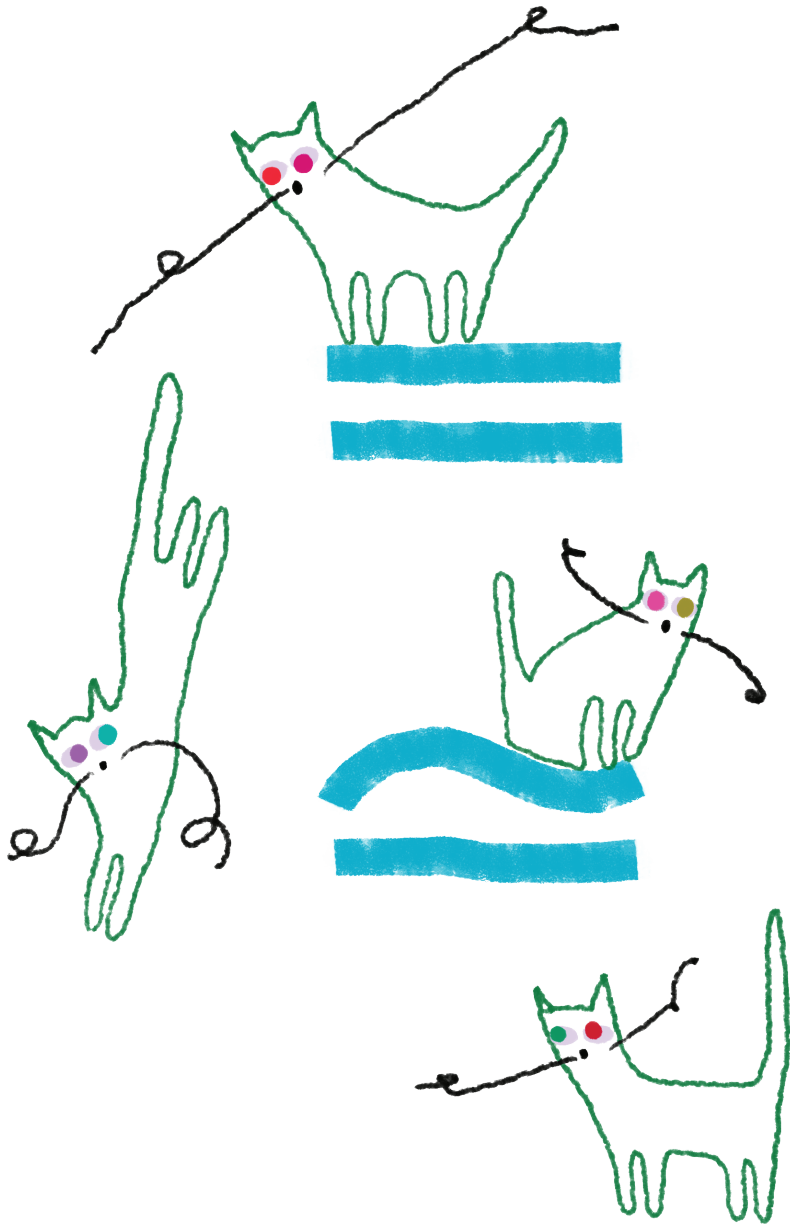


Title:
Fact or Opinion?
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop analytic skills for screening media content; to distinguish fact-based articles from opinion-based ones; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives.

Details and description of the activity:

- Clarify the difference between a fact and opinion. Ask the group to give a few examples from each category in order to make sure the distinction is clear.
- Invite the group to mention/guess which type of articles (*present in media sphere*) is fact-based and which ones are opinion-based. Explore their views on whether all supposedly fact-based articles are 100 % such. Ask for examples if they have any.
- Divide the group into pairs. Provide each pair with one copy of an article which supposed to be fact-based (*News Reports; Feature Writing; Investigative*). Choose an article from recent history and from a very popular media outlet. Provide the same article for every two pairs, to use for comparing.
- The pairs have 10 to 20 min (*depending on the length of the article*) to read the article and to mark all the information which they consider to be fact or opinion.
- One pair briefly shares the article they had to work with and their observations. They also have to provide a verdict for the article they work with – if it is an opinion-based or fact-based article.
- The second pair, which worked with the same article, has to point out if they agree or if they have a different opinion. When there are major disagreements between pairs, ask the other participants to provide their own view and to have each aspect clarified.
- Once all pairs have presented move on to the discussion.



Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this task for you?
- How easy was it to mark certain information as fact or opinion?
- How often did you disagree in your pair? Why?

- Why did it happen that 2 pairs working on the same article had different observations/verdict? (*ask only if this happened*)
- Why isn't it always easy to decide if information is fact or opinion?
- Why a fact-based article also includes opinions? How is that influencing the nature of the article?
- What is your opinion about media content that claims to be fact-based and is not?
- How often do you think such materials are present in the media which the majority of people access?
- What could be the impact of such materials on the media consumer and on the society in general?
- Did you ever come across media content which appeared to be fact-based, you believed it, and later on it proved to not be? If yes, could you give some examples?
- Have you witnessed, during your social media activity, people sharing information as facts without verifying the information? Could you give some examples?
- Regarding media content, what is the difference between fake news, opinions and facts?
- How can a media consumer be more alert and spot misleading information faster?
- What do you want to do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Check in advance the articles you want to use and spot yourself the information which is fact or opinion. Use predominantly articles which have a big content of opinions, although they shouldn't, and which are not so easy to be spotted. Make sure to have at least one article which is truly 100 % fact-based in order to have an example of a "proper" material.
- For the introduction, you may give some examples from public/popular social media accounts in order to spot and differentiate between fact and opinion.

Title:
Editorial Team
(90 min)

Objectives: To understand the complex process behind creating a newspaper (printed or online version); to explore the power dynamics in an editorial team; to more deeply understand factors that influence an event to become news; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content and producers; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives.



Details and description of the activity:

- Ask the group to mention what factors they think influence the decision making process of an editorial team when they decide which articles to publish.
- Start with a brainstorm to include all the possible ideas the group has. Check the factors list mentioned at the end of the activity (recommendations), introduce them if the participants didn't already point them up.
- Next, together with the group, agree on the most important, determinant, possible and realistic factors that could be actively used by an editorial team in real life. You may discuss if these factors are different for a mainstream media outlet than for an independent one.
- Divide the participants into groups of 6 people. Each group now represents an editorial team and they have to decide what kind of media outlet they are, what their profile and the target audience is.
- They have 30 minutes to decide what topics and news they want to include in their next edition of the newspaper. The stories, titles, articles they want to include may be invented, as there is no sufficient time for a real research of the current social reality for actual events. It is recommended that at least 50 % of their ideas should be inspired by recent and current events.
- Each team member can propose up to 5 ideas for articles/pieces to be taken in consideration. As a group, they need to decide on a maximum of 10 stories to be included in their next edition; in their decision, they have to use the factors decided as the most important.
- After the allocated time, each group presents their profile and their final editorial decision. The other groups may ask for clarifications and then move to the discussions.



Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was your editorial process? How did you feel to be part of it?
- Was it hard or easy? What made it like that?
- What kind of stories did you propose? How many of your ideas have made the final cut?
- As an editorial team, how did you decide which stories will be included? Were any factors stronger than others in your decision?
- What are your impressions after hearing all the groups' outcomes?
- What main similarities did you observe? What about the main differences?
- What other observations do you have?
- To what extent is it mirroring the real life (*either of an editorial team or of the final decisions of an editorial team*)?
- Does your group's final decision match your own preference in terms of what you want to read and get updated about? If not, what are the reasons?
- What kind of news, stories, and topics do you follow and are interested in? What about the people around you?
- What type of stories gets published in reality?
- What types of stories don't get published? Why don't they get published?
- What factors do those stories lack? Are these factors fair? Which factors should mean more?
- Which stories deserve to be published or get more attention from the media or media consumers? How can they get published or brought into the attention of general public?
- How can the interest and "taste" of media consumers be shaped and influenced in a certain direction? How can you shape your own preference in terms of what type of media you consume?
- What are the most important learnings from this activity/discussion?
- What do you want to do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- We recommend dividing the participants into groups with an even number of people. In this way, there are more opportunities for a tie in terms of decision making, in which case the groups have to find alternative ways to take decisions. An odd number of people ease the way for a majority to decide. You could have some groups with even number and some with uneven, and then compare their decision making strategies.
- Next, we listed some of the factors that are thought to have a big power for an editorial team decision. This list can be used in order to complete the suggestions of the group in the brainstorming phase.

Reader preference and expectation: Media outlets want to ensure that people consume and engage with their content. Each publication has a certain audience in mind, and that audience expects certain things from the publication, so each outlet tries to fulfil its niche.

Civic duty: Journalists who cover important local, national, and world events often feel that they have a civic duty to inform readers. For this reason, major newspapers write about natural disasters, wars, famine, and other topics that qualify as “bad news,” even though they might not be as preferred by readers as some more light-hearted stories.

Geography: Local papers emphasize what’s happening in their city or area. They might have a small section devoted to national or global events, or they might not cover these at all, assuming that people get that news from other sources.



Rarity: Unusual events get more coverage than ordinary events.

Impact/severity: An earthquake that kills 10,000 will get greater coverage than one that kills 100.

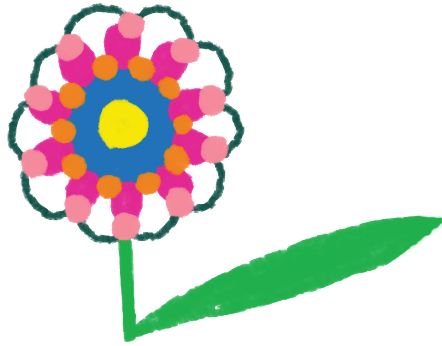
Celebrity/power: If a well-known politician or a famous person does something, that's more likely to be covered than if your neighbour does the same thing.

Competition: Very often, if one outlet covers a story that promises or actually engages big number of readers, others follow suit. Sometimes outlets try to distinguish themselves with an original "angle" or approach to the story, but sometimes they just want to be seen covering what everyone is talking about.

Exclusivity: In the same time, if an outlet knows it has a story no one else has, it has a big incentive to run that story.

Timeliness: Events that happened recently are prioritized over things that happened days or weeks ago.

- For a lighter and faster version of the activity, prepare in advance a list of 30-40 stories that can be used (one sentence each) and the editorial team have to select from this list their final shortlist of 10 items. In this way you can influence the topics that they choose from and have a discussion focused on certain areas/issues.
- As an alternative version, which require more time, the editorial team select from already written/published materials the ones to be included in their final version.
- For a longer activity, each team has to design the front page for their edition, which will include the main headlines and, in some cases, 1-2 sentences from the main article and some images. In this version, the discussion can also address issues regarding the structure of the page, which stories were selected to appear on front page, which ones took more space comparing to others, what images were used, what was the main emphasis, etc.



Title:
Ad Creation
(180 min)

Objectives: To develop analytic skills for screening advertisements; to trigger interest and curiosity in the strategies used by advertising industry; to develop critical thinking regarding the advertising industry; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of advertising in people's lives; to engage with advertising industry more responsibly.

Details and description of the activity:

- Provide a common stash of printed media materials, as well as an online collection of media outlets (*that can be accessed easily*).
- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5.
- **First phase** (30 min): each group has to go through different materials and analyse all ads they find. They should identify the marketing strategies used by those specific companies/institutions. Their purpose is to list different general categories which are used in the majority of the ads they analyse. They may look into printed ads, online images and video clips.

- **Second Phase** (20 min): each group presents the marketing strategy categories based on their observations. Combine the groups' suggestions in one unified list to be used for the third phase of the activity
- **Third Phase** (60min): Each group has to create an ad by using some of the marketing strategies they just identified. The “product” they should create the ad for should be inspired by the news materials they have at their disposal. It doesn't have to be a concrete products or service; it can also be an idea, behaviour, project, etc. Each team needs to create a visual and an acting scene (representing the ad clip).
- **Fourth Phase** (30 min): Each group presents their ad. The other groups are invited to comment on: general impression, used strategies and impact on themselves (*how it makes them feel, would they buy or not, etc.*)
- Proceed to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this task for you? What were the dominant feelings?
- How did you find the first phase of the activity? How many ads did you analyse?
- How easy was it to identify the marketing strategies? What other impressions did you collect from that part of the activity?
- How was the process of creating an ad? How satisfied are you with your final ad? Why?
- How did you decide which news material will be your “product”? What criteria have you used?
- Which marketing strategies have you used? Why them?
- Which ones do you think are more effective?
- How easy was it to translate the strategies into the ad?
- How many ideas have you brainstormed before deciding on the one you have used?
- What impressions do you have about all the ads you shown today?
- What common elements have you observed? What were the main differences?
- How much power does the advertising industry have in our life? Could you exemplify?

- What is the connection between ads and different society norms?
- To what extent was/is your life influence by ads? What is the positive influence? What about the negative one?
- How accountable is the advertising industry for the ads they produce?
- If an ad is offensive for a specific group from the society what can be done about it? Do you know any examples?
- What are important insights you have from this discussion today? Is there anything you want to do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Be ready to mention different examples (*gender roles, consumerism, sexist/ racist ads, etc.*) if the groups don't, in order to challenge participants' perspectives on advertising.
- If you meet regularly with your group you can organize the First Phase of the activity as homework - the groups will pay attention to the ads they are encountering in their day-to-day life and identify the marketing strategies. As a follow-up invite the group to continue their observation process and identify the type of social norms perpetuated by the ads, as well as any problematic or offensive ads. These examples can be discussed at the next meeting.



Title:
Media That Touches Us
(90 min)

Objectives: To more deeply reflect on the emotional impact of the media on the media consumer; to develop empathy towards people affected by oppression; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives.

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask participants to share, in pairs, examples of how media influenced them in the past. It can be from any moment in their life history. The influence could refer to a strong emotional impact, memory of certain events, a call for action, a change in their behaviours, decision, etc. They have 10 minutes for this. This discussion is a warm-up for the rest of the activity.
- After the 10 minutes, ask each pair to share the type of influence media had on them – they don't need to go into the details of that specific memory.
- Provide each participant with a newspaper (*or a selection of printed articles*). For the next 15 minutes, they are invited to go through the given material, to read the articles (fully if it is something that touches them) and to take mental notes on how they feel when they see certain images or read different stories/pieces.
- Divide the participants into groups of 4 or 5 people.
- In these groups the participants share one example from the media material that touched them on a deeper level. Together, they have to create a scene in any form they wish, to depict how the media content touched them. They have 30 minutes for this task.

- Each group dramatizes the scene they prepared. After each scene ask the other groups:
 - ▶ How do you feel?
 - ▶ What are your thoughts, impressions about this scene?
 - ▶ What kind of media content is behind the creation of such scene?
- After each scene, the actors reveal what media materials they have used and in which way it touched them.
- After all groups performed move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How easy was it for you to find an article/media content that touches you?
- How was your process as team?
- Did you have similar or very different experiences to use and combine?
- What did you notice in all the performances?
- What were the main similarities? What about main differences?
- In which ways do media touch people? Could you give specific examples?
- To what extent do media use emotions in order to pass on a specific message to their readers/consumers?
- What emotions are prevalent in media contents? What emotions are missing or rare?
- To what extent are the media consumers emotionally affected by the media they consume?
- Are there topics/articles that don't touch you, but touch other people? Why does that happen?
- What is the difference between media consumers? Why are some more affected and some aren't?
- How can media sensitize or desensitize a certain audience on a specific topic?
- On which aspects/topics from the society do you think people from our society could be more sensitized and emotionally involved?
- What can be done in this sense?
- What do you want to do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- You can divide the groups by the media material given; give copies of the same materials to a number of people which later join to work together. In this way the participants have the chance to share and exchange impression with people that went through the same material. It can also be used in order to analyse how same material affects diverse crowds in similar or different way and why.
- As an alternative, the participants are invited to notice how the reading affects their own body. Instead of sharing how they feel, they do a self-sculpture (*adding sound and movement if they wish*), followed by a group sculpture.
- If you already have a topic to work with for your performance, use materials which include more articles and perspectives on that specific topic.



Title:
Media Rework
(90-180 min)

Objectives: To explore media content from multiple perspectives; to develop analytic skills for screening media content; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to develop competencies as media content creator;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare a stash of newspapers, magazines, articles print-outs and any other media materials you deem necessary (*including print-screens of social media content*). It should include sufficient material for the groups to process and work with.
- Divide the participants into groups. The number of people in each group largely depends on which reworking option is used for the task. The task given to a group can be any of the following:
 - Rewrite an article that is biased or misinforming its audience (or any article of their choice).
 - Rewrite an opinion-based article, to make it a fact-based article (or reverse).
 - Rewrite an article /story by changing its perspective on the covered topic.
 - Remake a newspaper (or only the front page) in order to include the issues that matter in the way that matter (using cut articles and headlines from any provided material).
 - Shuffle the media content (change the headlines of the articles, the order, the structure, the images, the adds etc.).
 - Remake one or all advertisements from a newspaper in order to be true, honest, ethic and relevant.
 - Recreate a newspaper in order to include only positive news/ or only articles/content about women/specific groups from the society/etc.
 - Rewrite an article by reversing the gender mentioned in the article.

- For more complex task it is recommended to have around 4-5 people in one group; for more simple tasks 2-3 people could be sufficient.
- The allocated time depends on the complexity of the task: 30, 60 or even 90 minutes. Use your own judgement for each specific case.
- After the allocated time each group present their work, introduce the original materials and the modified ones. If there were any created visuals, they can be posted as an exhibition which can be used as reference in the discussion. The rest of the groups can ask questions to clarify and understand the work of each group better. Move to the discussion.



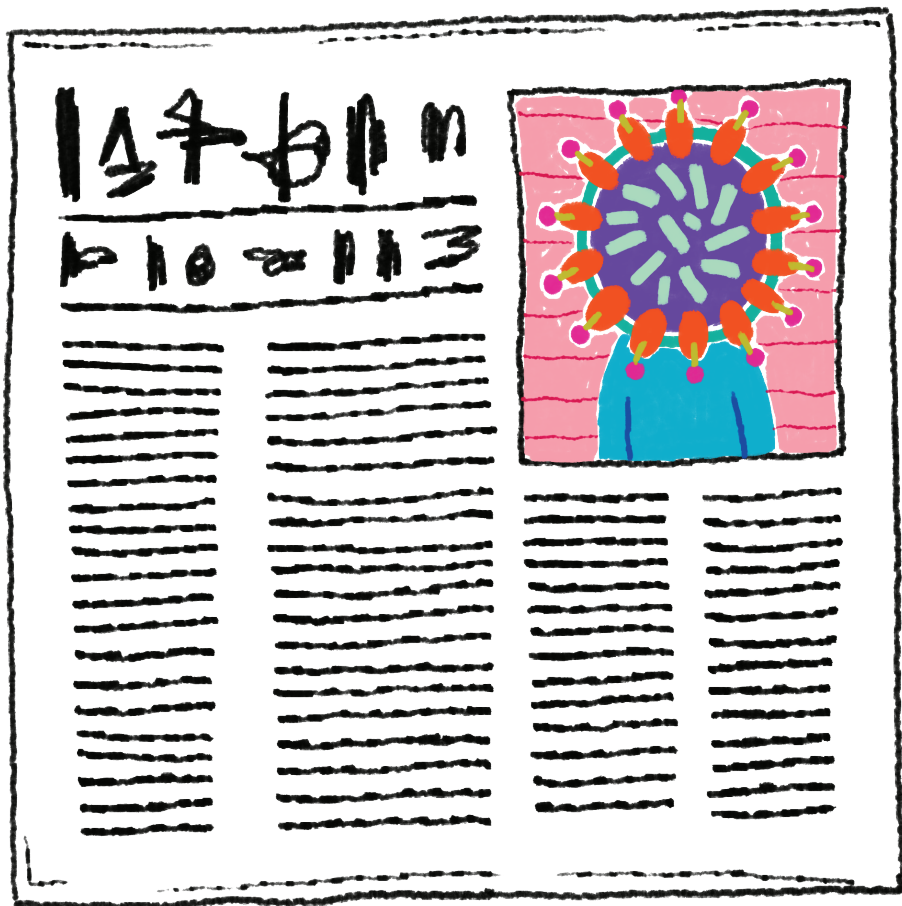
Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions

(to be adjusted depending on the chosen task):

- How was the Rework process for you?
- How did you feel doing it?
- What was hard and what was easy?
- What observations have you made during all presentations?
- Do you notice any similarities? What about differences?
- How much did the Rework change the original work? In which way?
- Are there any similarities of what you created with something that already exists in reality?
- What can this exercise reveal about the media content we are exposed to?
- What are the main challenges of a media content creator?
- How can a media creator produce meaningful content adapted to the needs of the media consumers and to the needs of the society?
- What are your needs, as a media consumer?
- What do you think is the difference from other people's needs?
- Do you see yourself as having "mainstream" needs or alternative? Why?
- To what extent do you feel the present media productions cater for your needs?
- How do you satisfy your needs as media consumer?
- Are you a media producer? In which way?
- Why do you publish anything that you publish?
- What can you do differently from now on as a media content producer *(even at a small level)*?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If you meet regularly with your group, you may give the task as homework, in order for the groups to observe the current media events/trends and have sufficient time to produce content with more accurate and complete details.



Title:
The Headline
(60 min)

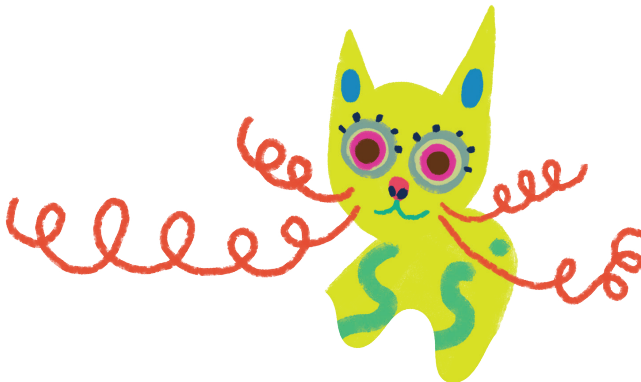
Objectives: To trigger interest and curiosity about the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to better understand the media bias and power in influencing the society;

Details and description of the activity:

- Explain to the participants that they have to create a headline appearing on the front page of a typical mainstream newspaper in their society.
- They have 8 words to use for this task (which are listed in a visible place in the room). This is a suggestion of words that can be used: Tree, Lipstick, Dramatic, Refugee, Strange, Night, Crowd, and Neighbour.
- The headline has to include a title and short introduction to a more comprehensive article which is usually in the inside pages of the newspaper. The introduction should comprise maximum 2-3 sentences. It is important to emphasise that this length refers to “regular” newspaper sentences, which are usually quite short, similar to social media posts.
- Divide the participants into two groups. One group has to write a headline intro that reflects the common discourse/narratives about refugees in their community. The other group has to write an intro that reflects something that is not common in the public discourse/narrative/mentality in their community.
- Their task is individual; each participant writes their own headline according to the group thematic they are assigned. They have to use all the given words, they are allowed to repeat these words, but they should add as little additional words as possible (** here we don't refer to connecting words*).
- Participants have 5-7 minutes to write their own headline.
- After time is up, each participant is invited to read their article. Groups should read their stories taking turns (starting with the common discourse group), so the similarities and differences are more clearly observed by the participants. Participants are invited to carefully listen while the others are sharing their texts, and they are encouraged to write down their impressions – what they see similar, surprising, different, key words they notice, etc.
- There is no discussion after each headline; only after all of the articles are shared.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- What impressions did you have listening to the headlines?
- Do you have any questions regarding any specific article?
- What did you notice in the read headlines?
- What were the dominant elements of the “common perspectives”?
- What were the dominant elements of the “uncommon perspectives”?
- What differences did you notice in each specific category?
- What observations do you have about the gender of the characters in the read headlines?
- How was it for you to come up with these specific examples of articles? How easy or hard was it and why was it like that?
- How did you come up with the specific story to expose? How did you decide it is a “common” or “uncommon” story?
- What are your thoughts on the fact that you used the same words, but developed such different stories? What does that reflect?
- To what extent do you consider the articles you wrote are reflecting the type of media messages in your society? Could you elaborate? Could you give some examples?
- What do you think are the long term consequences of certain types of stories being frequently presented in the media?
- What is the role of media in shaping our world views or opinions about refugees in general?
- What is our own role and power in this aspect?
- What could you do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?



Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If necessary, at the beginning of the activity clarify with the group what common narrative/perspective around a specific topic in the society means, to avoid misunderstanding of the tasks later on.
- You should be ready to challenge (*with additional questions*) the group if they fail to point out if the common narrative is not really reflecting the present situation or if they fail to identify various stereotypes or misconception around the topic. The gender aspect is often ignored by the group and, if not intentionally mentioned very often, participants don't notice how the gender norms and stereotypes were reflected in their headlines.
- The list of words suggested in the activity was created in such way to include sufficient cues for the participants to draft a story; it includes words that could be used in order to answer who, where, when, what, why questions, required when developing an article. The list also includes unusual words, in order for the participants to use their own imagination and creativity and to not use ready-made story existing in the media sphere.
- The key word in the list is Refugee – which, at least in European context, is a trigger word for many intense and controversial public discussions, politics, attitudes and behaviours. In this way, this exercise can reveal, as well, different prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions related to the topic spread by different media actors, which can be addressed in the discussion.
- In the contexts where refugee issue was not part of the current social events, we have used, instead of the Refugee word, Politician. At least one word has to be relevant to a current situation. It can be replaced with any other role/person that can reveal different sensitive views and attitudes of the society (*different ethnic groups, religions, gender identities, professions, etc.*)

Title:
Field Journalists
(180 to 300 minutes)

Objectives: To trigger interest and curiosity about the topics and narratives present in media; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to develop journalistic competencies; to explore their own city through the eyes of a journalist; to get more confidence in actively engaging in media field;



Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into pairs. Provide each pair with a photo of a specific place in the neighbourhood or their town/city. Give every 2 pairs the same photo, but the pairs are required to work independently from each other.
- Participants have to find the place from the photo (without your help), go there, explore the specific place, interview people, collect information, take photos, etc. They now represent a team of journalists who needs to draft an article starting from this photo.
- The exact angle, topic, aspects, structure of their article, role division, etc. is entirely up to their own decision. They have 3 hours for this task. After these 3 hours, they need to present their draft article.

- The groups don't have to spend all their time in the location captured in the photo; depending on the topic or perspectives they want to include, they can go to other places in order to compare, interview specific people, get more complete information, etc.
- If the group is a beginner in the field of media literacy, start with a short introduction or brainstorming of the most important aspects they should take into consideration, as journalists, in their process. Make sure to touch on ethical aspects, responsibility, balance, representation, consent for taking photos, publishing people's names, diversity of sources, safety, neutrality, factual, correctness, etc.
- Each pair presents their draft articles. The other groups can ask questions and provide general comments about the article they just listen to. The second pair, that covered the same location, presents their article.
- After all pairs are done move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you feel to be a Field Journalist?
- What were the biggest challenges you had to face?
- How did you decide what to write about?
- What were the key aspects of your process?
- What was similar and what was different between the pairs covering the same area? Why was it like that?
- What observations do you have about all the articles you have created?
- What type of articles have you created?
- How objective and neutral have you been in your role?
- Who would be interested to read your articles and why?
- What kind of articles a journalist from a popular media would have developed about the same place you have received? Why?
- Can news be created out from any location/place?
- Are there, at the moment, places, people, issues which don't appear in the news, but they should? Could you give some examples?
- Why don't they appear in the media?
- What issues do you care about and you wish to be covered more in the media?

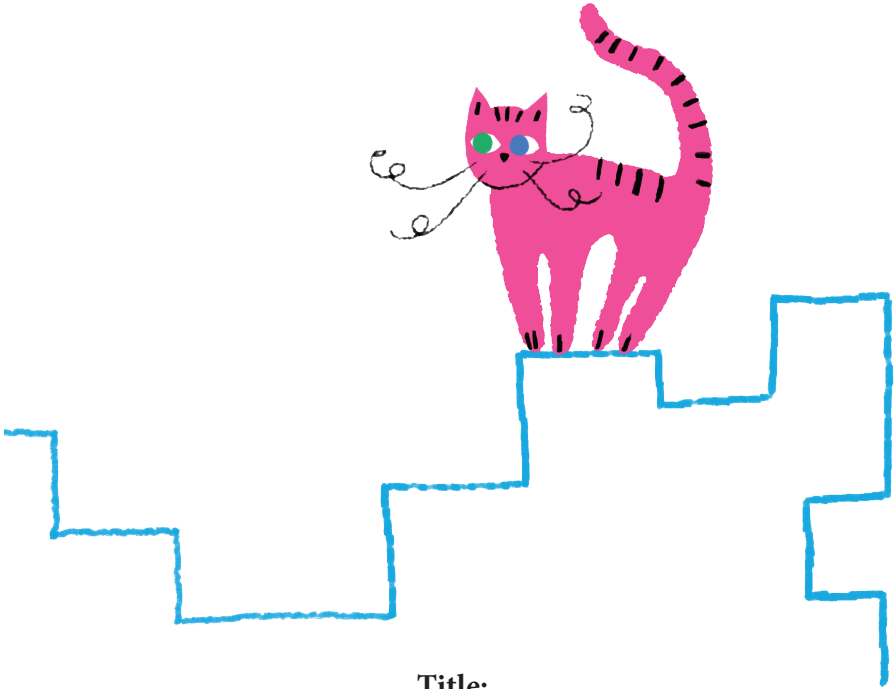
- Is there any media source which covers such topics?
- What can you do to bring such topics in the attention of more people?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- When you take the photos make sure you include sufficient information for somebody who is familiar, to recognize the exact place. Don't make it too hard for them to find the places, as this is not the purpose of the activity. Take photos to diverse type of locations (shops, religious places, parks, traffic, animals, flat buildings, shopping malls, hospitals, public authorities, factories, civil society, public events, restaurants, etc.), to trigger a diverse type of articles to be developed.
- You may publish their articles on your social media platforms, as part of promoting your work and preparation for the Newspaper Theatre event. In this case, you may give a clue regarding the expected type of articles, to have a common thread, e.g. human rights, oppression, etc.
- If you meet regularly with your group, you may give the task as homework, in order for the pairs to adequately work on their tasks and have sufficient time to produce content with more accurate and complete details.



Critical Perspectives on Media



Title:
Where Do You Stand?
(60 – 90 min)

Objectives: To provide a constructive space for participants to express their views on challenging statements regarding media; to develop their critical thinking; to encourage participants to reflect on their own opinions and reactions to very different opinions;

Details and description of the activity:

- Introduce the activity as a discussion or an opportunity to express participants' views on various statements for which people generally have different opinions. It is an exercise that aims to explore what stand we take in relation with some, among others, controversial points.

- In the room there are two sides, 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 out loud some statements (*which can, also, be written on some big paper, so that everybody can see them during the discussion*).
- 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.
- Explain and remind the group that there are no right or wrong opinions and no conclusion should be extracted out of their exchange, but it’s just an opportunity to get to know different perspectives and expand our own critical thinking.

Suggestions for sentences

(We encourage you to come up with your own sentences or modify these accordingly)

Media is useful for being an informed person.

Media is manipulating.

Media is always biased or subjective.

Media can encourage people to become active citizens.

People should form opinions based on real life experiences and not on the media.

Reading media content without critical thinking is as dangerous as not reading it at all.

Media made people more stupid and ignorant.

No matter the degree, all the media is making some level of misinformation.

You can never incorporate all the details in news - something is always left out.

Media in these days is perpetuating stereotypical thinking.

People are not interested to read well documented articles.

Social media changed the media consumer's mentality/ views/ behaviours in negative way.

In the name of free speech, media is free to propagate hate speech/ hateful attitudes.

Everyone is a media consumer (even if they don't want to be one).

Everyone is affected by the media in one way or another.

Media consumers prefer negative and dramatic news.

Media covers only negative news.

People are becoming insensitive to the news from other parts of the world.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- How was this activity for you?
- Why is it important /necessary to know each other's stand on such issues?
- What is the most important aspect of this activity for you?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- It is usually recommended to have 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 to repeat what has already been said.
- There are high chances that during the activity some people dominate the discussions, especially the very confident and outspoken ones, and you should stimulate the ones that talk less to speak up.
- It often happens that some participants get emotional and personal in the discussion, and get affected by the way the exercise goes; you should pay attention and calm down the tension if it appears by reminding them of the aim of the exercise and moving on to another sentence.

- The impartiality of the facilitator could be challenged in this exercise as they can favour the position they personally support by giving more space to those debaters, therefore, they need to be careful about it; also, they should not express their own points of view, because it could influence the group. In the case in which one side is not represented strongly, one of the facilitators can play “devil’s advocate” by bringing on arguments that could challenge the other side. This strategy should be introduced and used as such, not to give the impression that the facilitator really stands behind what they say.





Title:
Freedom Unlimited or....?
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to explore the concept of freedom of expression and hate speech; to stimulate participants to critically assess their own positions regarding these concepts; to explore the reasons why limiting freedom of expression may be needed in certain situations; to encourage participants to defend human rights and act against oppression;

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask the participants the following questions. If you consider necessary, clarify together with them what freedom of expression and hate speech are. If these terms are included in the legislations in your country/region check the definitions listed there. These questions are meant to warm up the group and set up the base for the activity. The participants might disagree with each other and you shouldn't take any sides.
 - ▶ What are the ways one person can 'express' themselves apart from speaking or writing?

- What ‘freedom of expression’ means to you?
 - Does freedom of expression mean anybody can say whatever they want whenever they want?
 - If no – could you give some examples? If you think some ‘expressions’ should not be permitted in certain mediums what criteria should be used? Who should decide and how?
 - What is hate speech? Could you give some examples?
- Divide the participants into groups of 5-6 people.
 - Each group receives a case about a situation touching on issues of „freedom of expression” and „hate speech”.
 - Participants have to act out the given situation, as well as to imagine a scenario of post-situation; how the situation will be handled, what are going to be the consequences on person/institution concerned in the situation (if any), etc. The future scenario also has to be depicted in a scene.
 - The dramatization can be presented in any way the group desires. Their act may show views that are pro or against hate speech; it’s their decision, as a group, how they wish to depict the received case and the possible future.
 - The cases should be elaborated based on recent, relevant and current situations from the community of the participants. The following examples are some general ideas that can be used as a starting point:
 - An influencer making racist comments in their video blogs/posts.
 - One of your FB friends posting offensive remarks about LGBTQ people.
 - Your work/school colleague making jokes in front of other people about different ethnic groups.
 - A politician declaring themselves supporter of a Nazi group.
 - A singer making sexist and degrading remarks to women in their songs.
 - Your favourite actor being accused of sexual misconduct (he denies the accusations).
 - A journalist publishing a satiric piece about a specific religion.
 - Two teenagers posting a prank video about people with disabilities.
 - A CEO of a popular multinational company is very critical and aggressive about cancel culture and political correctness.
 - One of your closest friends is accused that 5 years ago they posted online articles supporting the ban of refugees entering Europe.

- ▶ A religious figure declaring that, according to his religion, gay people go to hell.
 - ▶ On the website of “Men Rights Association” there is a statement in which Women are accused of destroying the traditional families, children’s lives and oppressing men.
- Allocate 30 minutes for the preparation and rehearsal of the scenes, which shouldn’t be longer than 5 minutes.
 - One group performs their scene. After each performance, ask the rest of the participants:
 - ▶ Do you have any questions about what you saw?
 - ▶ What are your impressions about the scene?
 - ▶ What did the situation expose concerning freedom of expression?
 - ▶ Is this familiar?
 - ▶ Did you hear/witness similar cases before?
 - ▶ Is this situation an example of hate speech?
 - ▶ Why?
 - ▶ How the future scenario unfolded?
 - ▶ What are your impressions about it?
 - ▶ How realistic is it?
 - ▶ Do you have any other comments about their scene?
 - After all the groups deliver their performances move on to the discussion, where each group can elaborate more on their process and choices.

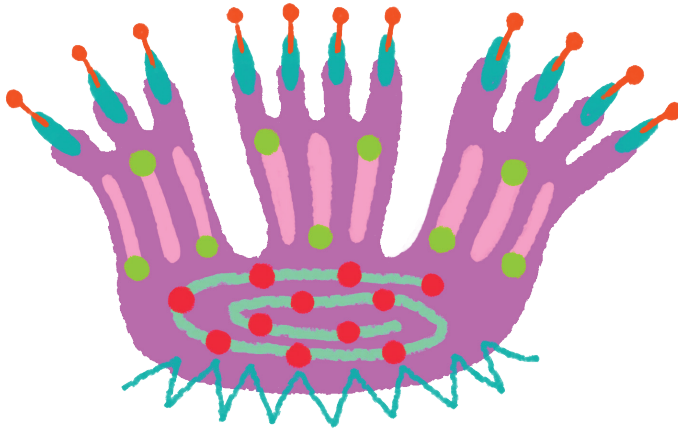
Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was your process as team?
- What were the key aspects of your group dynamic?
- How did you decide how to depict your case?
- How did you decide how the future scenario should look like?
- What observations/impressions do you have about all the performances?
- What were the main similarities?
- And main differences?

- Which situations are the closest to your own reality/experiences?
- Could you give us some examples? What did you or the other involved people do?
- What do you think could be the impact of unlimited freedom of expression?
- Is it negative or positive? (*Make sure to ask what is the impact on the targeted people, if isn't mentioned by the group*)
- In which situations do you firmly believe freedom of expression should be regulated and why?
- Is there a context in which the 'freedom', that should otherwise be regulated, could be allowed?
- If yes, could you give an example?
- What do you think about cancel culture? What does it actually mean?
- To whom does it apply? In which contexts? To which behaviours does it refer to? Does it apply to your friends at school/streets or only to famous people/institutions?
- If you hear that somebody close to you has publicly expressed hateful views about different groups from the society, what will you do?
- What role or power do we have in how certain prejudices/hateful worldviews get perpetuated?
- How do you wish to use this power from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Depending on the group you are working with, this activity might prove to be challenging to facilitate, especially if there are participants with very extreme and strong views (*e.g. pro/against hate speech or cancel culture*). You need to remain neutral and to not influence the discussion in the direction which matches your own views.
- If in your group there are people belonging to groups often exposed to hate speech, choose the specific cases with care and sensitivity.



Title:
Narratives Used in Media
(120 min)

Objectives: To increase awareness of the power of media and its influence on our (world) perspective; to trigger interest and curiosity in the topics and narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives;

Details and description of the activity:

- In this activity participants play the roles of journalists and try to depict the reality in different journalistic approaches.
- Read to the participants an article about an event that took place in a certain city (*see the article below*). The article is actually fictitious and has been created for the purpose of this activity, but do not share this aspect with the group. The article refers to various people/characters who are engaged in a specific event portrayed in the article. Read it as many times as needed, so the participants have a clear understanding of the article.

- Make an introduction to the different types of narratives used in media (dominant, concealed, resistant and transformational).

(You can use the details included in the T-KIT 4 on Intercultural Learning (revised version), more exactly in the session called *Alternative Narratives*: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/10762748/Act1.pdf/982ad02d-d2d2-f8e4-70a9-4a7b28feb3ea>)

- Explain to the group that they have to operate with these narratives in the second part of the exercise. These narratives should be listed in a visible place for all participants.
- Invite 4 volunteers from the group to play the roles of the people from the story. They each receive a role card that describes the factual information about their experience in the story (real/ factual information about them - *see below*). They have to read the card and try to impersonate that specific character as much as possible. They will be asked questions by the other participants, who act as journalists. The volunteers could also be chosen from the participants who are more experienced in the topic and you can suggest in advance that they take the role.
- The rest of the participants are journalists who have the task to check the facts of the article they have listened to and write their own version of the article. They are divided into groups of 3 people each. Each group has a different narrative they should portray in their article. They are assigned randomly, either the *dominant narrative* or the *alternative narrative*. If they are assigned the alternative narrative they can choose any of the 3 options from the introduced list (concealed, resistance or transformational).
- Each group of journalists prepares a list of questions they can ask directly to the people involved/connected to the story. Their aim is to collect as much information, facts and details about the events as possible, as they have to write an article afterwards (which has to reflect the narrative they are in charge of portraying). Allow 10 minutes for this preparation part.

- The questions and answers session takes place in an adjusted version of a press conference. The characters sit in front of the group and the “journalists” will ask questions to various characters. You decide who can ask a question and how long the “conference” takes place. It is important to emphasise the time limit and that participants need to keep the focus on collecting factual information as much as possible, and to avoid the “fun” questions.
- Allow about 20 minutes for this part and make sure that all characters are asked several questions. Instruct characters to reply in short sentences and to try to stick, as much as possible, to the information on their role cards.
- After the “press-conference” each journalist group has to create an article about the event they investigated. If they want to include any additional information such as statistics or statements from other real actors/institutions on the thematic, they can search online and include these in their article. The article shouldn’t be longer than 10 lines. The characters also use their right of reply in order to underline the truth by presenting their own version of the story (their article also shouldn’t be longer than 10 lines). They have 20 minutes for preparation of this article.
- Each group will share their articles. The journalists share their articles and then the characters share their own replies to the article that is analysed. Among journalists, first it is the dominant narrative group/s and the others continue.
- There is no discussion after each article – all of the articles are read first, and only afterwards the discussion continues.



The hand-outs to be used in the activity:

The Story Read to the Group

Fatma Ozturk (14) was returning home from Golbasi School when she was attacked by a Syrian refugee who tried to steal her bag. She fell down and injured her knee. Ozturk's father, Ali Ozturk, who is suffering from a serious heart condition, was contacted by our correspondent. The father said Fatma is in shock and currently unable to speak. The refugee was taken into custody, and then released. An eyewitness, Ayse Kocak (85) called the police.

!!!! The true story (not to be read to the group) !!!!

Fatma (20) was returning from the cafeteria where she works as a waitress when she was pushed by someone in a hurry. She fell down; her bag flew to a distance. Sacit Mohammed, a refugee, was walking there; he picked up her bag to give it to her and helped her get up. While she was thanking him, an old lady, Ayse Kocak, saw them as Fatma was down on the ground and Mohammed was trying to help her get up, and immediately called the police who happened to be right on that street. The police came and took Mohammed away in custody immediately. Fatma tried to explain that the man was innocent, but the police wouldn't even listen to her. So she headed home. She told her father only that she fell down, because she didn't want to worry him with details.

Girl

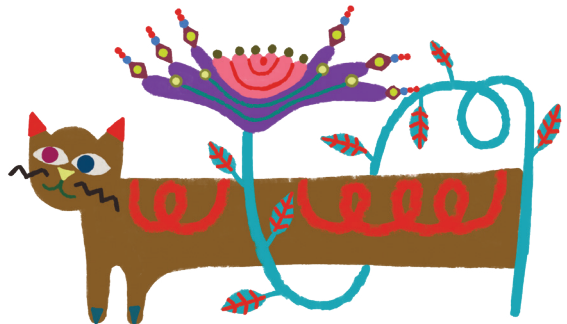
- *My name is Fatma Ozturk, I am 20 years old, and I work as a waitress in a cafeteria.*
- *Someone was running and accidentally bumped into me, I lost my balance and fell down*
- *I got help from this kind young man and luckily I could go home.*
- *The police came and took him; I tried to explain that this man helped me, but nobody listened to me.*
- *I went home and told my father that I had fallen down, but that I was okay.*
- *We had a nice dinner.*

The father

- *My name is Ali Öztürk, I am 55 years old.*
- *I am a Gym teacher at Gölbaşı School.*
- *One evening a week, I do volunteer work in a shelter, providing food for homeless people.*
- *I am surprised to hear my daughter was involved in a police matter*
- *I am also surprised at the police's attitude to the young man who tried to help her*
- *I am shocked by the article.*
- *I am here to show I am in wonderful health*
- *I was never contacted by any correspondent. This is the first time I am talking with any journalist*
- *I wish to say thank you to the young man who helped my daughter.*

Refugee

- *My name is Sacit Mohammed, I am 25 years old.*
- *I am a refugee from Afghanistan, trying to learn Turkish.*
- *I am working in a restaurant.*
- *That day I saw a young lady being attacked, and automatically ran in that direction to help her.*
- *Luckily, the man ran off.*
- *I picked up the lady's bag, and bent down to help her get up.*
- *Just as she was thanking me, I suddenly found myself in a police car.*
- *I had difficulty explaining to the police that I had done nothing wrong, that I had tried to help the lady.*
- *The whole night was like hell, waiting for what would happen and not knowing what would happen.*
- *Thank God, 24 hours later, I was released.*
- *I still have no idea what happened!*
- *But this isn't the first time.*



Old Lady

- *I am a 85 year old lady.*
- *I spend my days watching TV and looking out of the window.*
- *I am a responsible citizen, as the police very well know.*
- *Just tonight, as I was looking out, what did I see? A young girl being attacked by this Syrian refugee.*
- *This was the third phone call I made this week to the police.*
- *I have a street like the news on TV. The streets are full of strangers.*
- *These are dangerous times for young ladies nowadays. Even I am afraid for myself.*

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

Ask the characters:

How did you feel when you heard the articles from each group? Can any of you detail why?

Ask the journalists:

How did you feel when you heard the characters' articles and/or the other journalist groups? Can any of you detail why?

Ask everyone to abandon their roles and become participants and continue the discussion:

- How are you now, after this experience?
- What are your immediate thoughts regarding what happened here?
- What observations do you have regarding the articles you have listened to?
- What surprised you in the stories?
- What were the common elements or main differences?
- How did you prepare as journalists? Could you take us through your process and its main elements?
- How easy or difficult was it for you to collect data and to create an article according to the narrative you had to portray?
- How do you think these articles can influence people's perceptions about refugees? In which way?

- Which of these articles are more close to the way things are portrayed in your media? (Including the first article read to the group)
- What kinds of narratives are present in the media in your countries?
- Which ones did you notice? Can you give examples? Which ones are you following?
- What makes you believe an article is true or not?
- How can you be sure?
- What responsibility do you think you have as media consumer?
- How can you influence the type of narratives that are used in the public discourse about refugees?
- What is the most important thing you would like to do differently from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Be extra careful while working with mixed groups (refugees and non-refugees), in order to make sure it ensures a safe environment for all participants to express their views.
- Carefully assess, as well, if you can handle any potential negative emotional reactions from various participants, which could be triggered by the articles or the process.
- Change the names from the article as it is suitable for the context in which you are implementing the workshop. You can also use gender neutral names (if possible in your native language) and address this aspect in the debriefing by helping the group to identify their own assumptions.
- You can ask the group how the events would be portrayed in media if all genders would be reversed, and then ask them to check the way these events were presented in the original article.
- This activity was created by a group of educators (*from different European countries*) in a project related to refugees. You can create other articles to work on, inspired by real events from your society, which concerns other groups experiencing discrimination and negative portrayal in media.
- You can follow up with a practical work with real media content within the context of the participants, with the task of identifying the narratives used by different media producers.



Title:
Propaganda Detectives
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop an awareness of how propaganda is used in everyday society; to develop an understanding of the ways in which propaganda is used to misinform, anger and incite people; to learn to adopt a sceptical approach to truth claims made by propaganda providers; to develop critical thinking skills about propaganda techniques used across sectors;

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask participants to say what Propaganda is and who is using it. It is often associated with manipulative structures, distant from our close realities, and it is often assumed that it can be easily detected.
- Clarify the meaning of the concept with the group. You may use the information listed below.

* *Propaganda is communication that is primarily used to influence an audience and push a specific agenda, which may be selectively presenting facts, in order to encourage a particular view or perception, using loaded language in order to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is presented. Propaganda is often associated with material which is prepared by governments, but activist groups, companies, religious organizations, the media, and individuals also produce propaganda.*

Propaganda appears in a variety of forms and can be found everywhere (journalism, civil society, authorities, private sector, etc.). It is strategic and intentional and aims to influence attitudes, opinions and behaviours. Propaganda can be beneficial or harmful and may use truth, half-truths or lies. To be successful, propaganda uses our deepest values, fear, hopes and dreams. Most importantly, propaganda utilizes several means and techniques to accomplish its goals.

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 people. Give each group a media material, source (article, website, campaign presentation, flyer, etc.). The groups have to go through the material and check if any propaganda techniques are used. They have 30 minutes for the task.

Propaganda Techniques

Name Calling or Stereotyping:

Giving a person or an idea a bad label by using an easy-to-remember pejorative name. This is used to make us reject and condemn a person or idea without examining what the label really means.

Examples: “Communist”, “Tree-Hugger”, “Leftist”, “Environmentalist”, “Feminist”, etc.

Virtue Words or Glittering Generality:

These words are used to mislead us into accepting and approving of things without examining the evidence carefully.

Examples: “Natural”, “Democratic”, “Organic”, “Scientific”, “Ecological”, “Sustainable”.

Testimonial:

When some respected celebrity (or alternatively someone generally hated) claims that an idea or product is good (or bad). This technique is used to convince us without examining the facts more carefully.

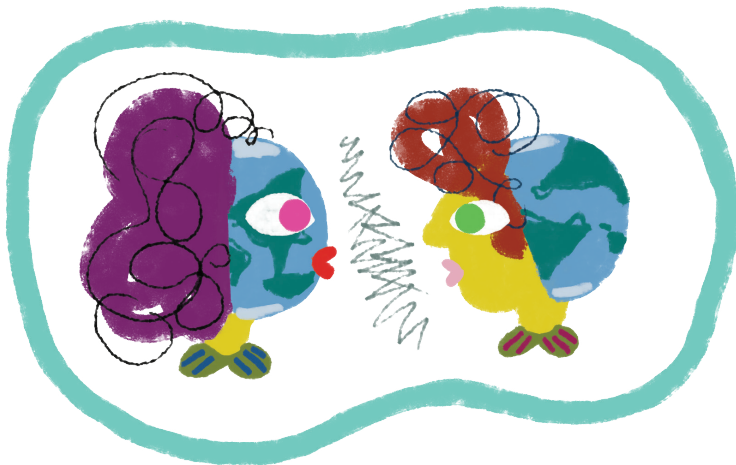
Plain Folks:

This is a way that a speaker convinces an audience that an idea is good because they are the same ideas of the vast majority of people like you.

Examples: “This is the will of the People”, “Most people...”. Another example would be when the speaker tells a story about a family or people that are “just like you” to reinforce the speaker’s point of view.

Band Wagon:

This common propaganda method is when the speaker tries to convince you to accept their point of view or else we will miss out on something really good. The Band-Wagon technique is often used in advertisement but more and more also transposed into populist speeches and claims of the political rhetoric.



Artificial Dichotomy:

This is when someone tries to claim there are only two sides to an issue and that both sides must have equal presentation in order to be evaluated. This technique is used to dupe us into believing there is only one way to look at an issue, when in fact there may be many alternative viewpoints or “sides”. Like most propaganda techniques it simplifies reality and therefore distorts it, often to the advantage of the speaker.

Hot Potato:

This is an inflammatory (often untrue) statement or question used to throw an opponent off guard, or to embarrass them. Examples “Have you stopped beating your spouse”, “When will you pay the taxes you owe?” The fact that it may be utterly untrue is irrelevant, because it still brings controversy to the opponent.

Scapegoat:

This is often used with Guilt-by-association, to deflect scrutiny away from the issues. It transfers blame to one person or group of people without investigating the complexities of the issue.

Examples: “Person X got us into the crises/war/conflict”, “Party X caused the national debt”.

Fear or Guilt:

“Of course the people don’t want war. But after all, it’s the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it’s always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it’s a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger.” Quote by Hermann Goering, Nazi Party member and convicted war criminal.

Guidelines for the group task:

- ▶ Identify the message, the sender or author of the message and the recipient of the message.
- ▶ Reflect on the following questions: What is the purpose of this material? What do you think it wants to communicate? How does it communicate it?

- ▶ Pay particular attention to details. Think about the use of colour, language, space, fonts or symbols.
 - ▶ Put yourself in the shoes of the recipient: Who is the target group? The message has to match with the expectations of the targeted audience, what do you think are the expectations of the public that the material deliberately attempts to address and fulfil?
 - ▶ What does this material suggest about the audience's beliefs and values?
 - ▶ Do you think these assumptions made about the target group are accurate? If yes, the use of this material is effective and the propaganda is likely to reach its goal?
- After 30 minutes, the groups present the material they had to work with and their conclusions. The other groups may ask questions, if necessary.
 - Once all the groups finished their presentation, move on the discussion.



Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this exercise for you? What are your immediate impressions?
- How difficult was your task? Give us more information from your working process?
- What did you notice in all the presentations? In which materials did you find propaganda techniques and in which ones you didn't? Why?
- What is this telling us about the media and communication materials we are coming across every day?
- Is all propaganda bad? What are your views about propaganda for a good purpose?
- How easy is it to detect different techniques? How easily can people be misled?
- What can work on you? Why?
- How can people protect themselves against propaganda techniques? What should they do?
- What do you want to do from now, in order to be more alert and to detect propaganda attempts faster?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- As an alternative, the groups may prepare a scene from the provided article/material, in which they should highlight the specific propaganda techniques used. This version supports the development of acting skills, the preparation for the performance and allows a more physically active session.
- Check the materials in advance, to make sure the participants can find some of the listed techniques. It is good to find materials in which different techniques are used, so that, at the end, they witness examples of all the listed ones.
- The activity can be enlarged beyond identifying propaganda techniques, to all types of misleading information. At this link you can find 10 types of misleading news (<https://eavi.eu/beyond-fake-news-10-types-misleading-info/> - with versions in more than 17 languages) and only one of them is Propaganda. Provide more materials for each group and ask the participants to find examples of those specific types; so that, by the end of the session, the group has evidences of all the 10 categories.

- If you met regularly with the group, as a follow-up, ask them to notice different examples of misinformation in the media they come across for the next days, and to discuss them at the next meeting.
- As a follow-up or separated activity, aiming at sharpening critical thinking skills, focus on the strategies and tips for spotting and handling manipulating strategies used by media creators. Divide the participants into groups, to brainstorm, search for additional inspiration and create a performance, in any format they wish, which should depict tips and strategies, to be used by any media consumer, to protect them from misleading and manipulation.

Some supporting information:

<https://eavi.eu/lies-damned-lies-statistics-data-literacy-primer/>;

<https://eavi.eu/beyond-headlines-online-news-verification-game/>;

<https://www.newseumed.org/poster-weed-out-propaganda-seed/>;

<https://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=609513&p=4274530>;

<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/29/774541010/fake-news-is-scary-heres-how-to-spot-misinformation?t=1617425675657> ; <https://www.gapminder.org/factfulness/>





Title:
Fake News Creators
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop critical thinking skills for screening media content; to trigger interest and curiosity in how and why fake news are created; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to develop skills for promoting responsible and truthful news; to motivate them to get involved in handling fake news spreading in their day-to-day life;

Details and description of the activity:

- Start with a brief discussion with the group, to make sure they know and have same understanding of what Fake News is.
- Divide participants into pairs. Each pair has to play an online game in which the player has to create fake news. The game is taking the player through the world of fake news creation and guides them through the process and used tactics. A game takes about 15-20 minutes to play.

You may use one of the following examples :

- ▶ <https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro> (general fake news)
- ▶ <https://www.goviralgame.com/en> (misinformation about Covid19)

- If some pairs are faster in playing a game they may repeat it, or you may give the second game to be tried out.
- Move on to the discussion

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was it to play the game? Say, in one word, how you would describe your experience. Do you want to detail?
- How was your process as a pair? What was easy, hard, confusing, surprising, etc.?
- What did you learn about fake news and how they are created?
- How much does the depicted game mirror what is happening in real life? Could you give some examples?
- Why do fake news exist?
- Why some people believe fake news?
- Did you ever spread fake news? What about people you know?
- What are the dangerous aspects of spreading fake news?
- Do you think all the fake news are spread by people who know they are fake news? Why is that happening?
- What can a journalist / media content provider do in order to avoid spreading fake news unintentionally?

Ask the groups to pair up again (*into same or new pairs, as you think is more suitable*). Invite them to play another online game created by BBC, “BBC I Reporter”: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-8760dd58-84f9-4c98-ade2-590562670096>

In this game the players, as reporters, have to make sure everything they post is from reliable and trustable sources, and in the same time deal with the pressures of reporting the current events in real time.

This game takes about 15 minutes.

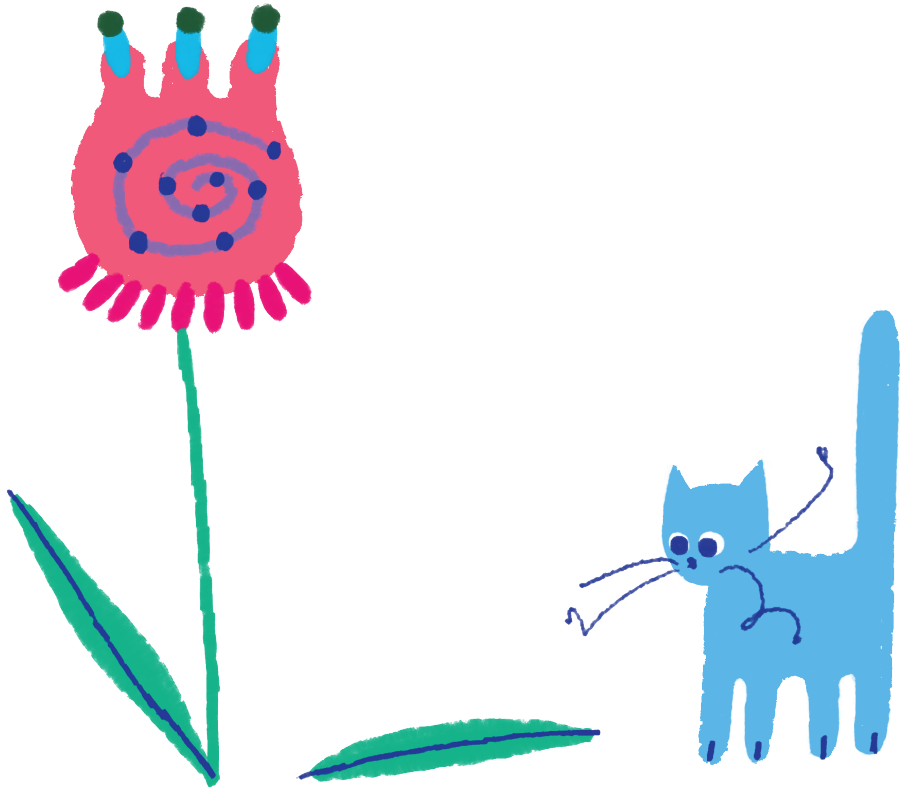
- ▶ How was the experience of this game?
- ▶ How easy was it to provide reliable and factual information?
- ▶ What were the main strategies that had to be used in this sense?
- ▶ What can a media consumer do in order to detect fake news?
- ▶ What should they do when they detect fake news? What are their options?
- ▶ What can you take from this activity and apply in your life from now on?
- ▶ What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- BBC has produced more educational material on the topic of Fake News; consult and use them as follow-up materials for a different session:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/young-reporter/evidence-toolkit/z6v3hcw>

- If you meet regularly with your group, as a follow-up, invite them to notice examples of fake news in the media they come across for the next days, and to discuss them at the next meeting.



Title:
Bias in Reporting Violence
(90 min)

Objectives: To develop analytic skills for screening media content; to trigger interest and curiosity in the narratives used by different media producers; to develop critical thinking regarding the bias of media content; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to motivate participants to more responsibly engage with the messages promoted by the media;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare a stash of articles and media materials covering local and international events.
- Divide the participants into pairs. Ask each pair to look in the provided newspapers and articles, and to select 3-4 articles depicting actions of violence. They have 15 minutes for this task.
- Each pair needs to present the headlines of the articles they have chosen.
- If another pair selected an article covering the same events as any of the already mentioned headlines, but from a different newspaper/source, they should come together as a group.
- If all the pairs have selected events which weren't chosen by other pairs, just randomly combine every 2 pairs for the second part of the exercise.
- In the newly formed groups, the participants have to analyse the selected articles and detect bias manifestations. They have 30 minutes for this task.

They may use the following guidelines:

When reporters are limited by space, they must make decisions about what information to include and which to leave out. They must also consider the angle from which they wish to tell the story, in order to appeal to their audience. In cases of violence coverage, the angle of a newspaper report can influence with whom an audience will sympathize or lay blame on.

Key questions to consider:

- ▶ From whose point of view has the story been told?
- ▶ How might it have been told differently if it had been told through another voice?
- ▶ How are the perpetrators portrayed? What about the victims of violence?
- ▶ How is gender reflected in the coverage?
- ▶ What kind of feelings can it trigger in the audience?
- ▶ With whom will the audience empathise more?
- ▶ What has influenced the message?
- ▶ How did the length of the article influence the message?
- ▶ Are there any stereotypes used in the text?
- ▶ Are there any social/cultural norms perpetuated by the style of reporting?

Check the following 8 categories to detect concrete bias:

Headlines –

They can be used to summarize the bias of the newspaper. For example: “Rape Case at the Local High school” sounds a lot more explicit and direct than “A Romantic Night Out Took a Wrong Turn”.

Placement –

Where a newspaper editor places a story is very important. For example: Placing “Rape Case at the Local High school” deep in the back of the paper may imply that the newspaper doesn’t consider the story very important.

Names or Titles –

How someone is referred to, can say a lot about the bias of an article. For example: The same person may be referred to as a “rapist man” or a “boyfriend” depending on the angle of the article.

Omission –

Sometimes, a reporter may choose to omit some of the information from a story. For example: An article called, “A Romantic Night Out Took a Wrong Turn” might leave out the fact that there wasn’t any consensual date.

Images –

For example: Of the many photos taken where someone is smiling or neutral, an editor may choose the one photo where the person is looking sad – to trigger empathy for them.

Statistics –

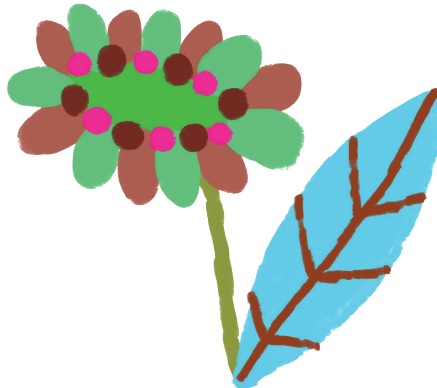
Words and numbers can be used to shade the truth. For example: “The number of reported cases of sexual assault is the smallest in the whole region” gives the impression there isn’t a problem to deal with. But if the next statistic is added “1 in 3 women declare to have been sexually assaulted and are afraid of reporting it” the situation looks different.

Words –

The choice of words can express bias. For example: There is no questioning the bias in: “The man charged with murder for a shooting spree at the spas had “a really bad day” and was seeking to “eliminate” a sexual “temptation” prior to killing eight people” as comparing to “Eight people, many of them women of Asian descent, have been killed in the shootings”.

Source –

From where one gets their information can say a lot about how credible the story is. For example: If the main source for “Video Games Don’t Lead to Violence” is the president of Game Box Corp, you may have some questions.



- After 30 minutes, the groups present their conclusions regarding the level of bias in the articles they analysed. The participants may stick the newspaper on bigger boards in order to better illustrate and highlight the bias for their presentations.
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this exercise for you?
- How did you choose the first batch of articles?
- What criteria did you use?
- How did you feel while analysing the articles?
- How hard was it to detect bias in the materials you worked with?
- What were the similarities among all the groups? What about differences?
- Did you identify any materials that didn't present a bias level? Could you give examples?
- What does this tell us about the media content that we are exposed to?
- Can journalism be neutral? Why?
- How is the media influencing or shaping the worldviews, attitudes and opinions about certain groups in the society?
- Could you give examples?
- How much do you think media is normalizing (or perpetuating the normalisation of) behaviours, acts or norms which are sexist, racist, breaching human rights, etc.?
- Could you give examples?
- What can the media consumer / the target of such media coverage do?
- How can they read the news without being influenced by the bias of their reporting?
- What can you take from this activity and apply in your life from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?



Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- For the 8 categories mentioned as guidelines, it is recommended to use examples from local media relevant to your group.
- If you met regularly with your group, as a follow-up, invite them to notice bias in how media is covering certain type of topics in the next days, and discuss them at the next meeting.
- As a follow-up discussion or incorporated in the final debriefing of the activity, you may address the issues of personal bias and rise of filter bubbles in our online reality (**people only share, create and communicate in an online 'bubble' composed of individuals with views and attitudes that mirror their own*), how is this truncating their absorption of worldview perspectives and what they could do to break the bubble.

Title: **Freedom of Press** *(120 min)*

Objectives: To reflect on the freedom of press in their own country and around the world; to develop critical thinking regarding the media content and its reflection of freedom; to stimulate deeper reflection on the role of media in people's lives; to motivate the participants to advocate for free press;

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask the group:
 - ▶ What do you think Freedom of Press means?
 - ▶ Do you think Freedom of Press is restricted?
 - ▶ If yes, by whom and where is that happening?
 - ▶ How much Freedom do you think the press has in your own country?
 - ▶ In which country in the world do you think the Press is the most free?
 - ▶ What about the most restricted?
 - ▶ Why do you think so?

- Divide the participants into group of 4-5. In these groups participants use the following websites:
<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>;
<https://rsf.org/en/barometer>;
<https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>
to explore the state of Freedom of Press around the world, including their own country.
- They may check the guesses they had when you addressed the initial questions.
- The task of the participants is to select 2 other countries, besides their own, one that has a very good score in terms of freedom and another one that has a very low score. They should read the information provided on the websites, search additional ones and prepare a performance in which to portray the state of the Freedom of Press in the 3 countries.
- It is up to them how they wish to present the gathered information, but it should be clear, during the performance, which aspects refer to which countries. They have 60 minutes for this task.
- After a group performs ask the audience:
 - What are your impressions?
 - Do you have any questions?
 - What surprises you?
- After all the groups performed, move on to the final discussion.



Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this activity for you? Say in one word.
- How did you feel during the preparation time?
- Were there any aspects that surprised or shocked you when you researched for the task?
- What were the main similarities in the way you depicted your own country? What about the differences?
- Why did you choose the countries you chose?
- What are the main differences between these countries and your own country?
- How do you feel about the situation in your country? What should change?
- How can freedom of press be protected?
- What is the role of media consumers locally, nationally or at global level?
- How much power do we have?
- What do you take with you from this activity?
- What is the most important learning for you?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- If you want to avoid duplication of countries, you may preselect for each group or put papers with randomly written countries in a hat, so participants can pick the ones they should work with.
- If you are doing this activity with an international group, you may randomly distribute the countries represented in the group, or ask the groups to work with the countries of their colleagues and instead of their own.
- On some of the provided websites, you may find reports from previous years; as an alternative of the session, you may give a task to depict the evolution/involution of the situation in some specific countries, and to reflect on the factors that lead to the changes.

Self-Reflection



BINGO

Title:
Media Habits Bingo
(60-90 min)

Objectives: To identify personal media consumption habits; to reflect on which habits are negative and which are positive; to stimulate group connection; to increase critical thinking towards ones behaviours; to stimulate changes in personal media consumption patterns;

Details and description of the activity:

- Distribute one copy of the Bingo sheet (*see next page*) to each participant.
- At your signal ask the group to interact with each other in order to fill out the Bingo. The instructions for filling are detailed in the hand-out. Invite the participants to talk to people they don't know very well and to ask for more details if they wish so.
- The games continue until the first person completes the whole grid.
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was it to play Bingo? How did you feel?
- Were there any challenging sentences? Which ones?
- How many people did you identify?
- Did you find out anything surprising?
- Let's go one by one and have an overview of the group. (*Mention one sentence from the Bingo and ask the people to raise their hands; Invite some people to give more details; continue for all sentences or only the most important*).
- What are your impressions about the group?
- What seems to be similar in the group? What are the main differences?
- Do you have any patterns in your own media habits? Are they negative or positive? Could you give some examples?
- Is there anything you would like to change about your own habits? Why?
- When can you start implementing these changes?
- What can help you?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- You can change the sentences to either cover general media habits, or predominantly problematic/negative media habits, in which case the discussion should focus on why they are problematic and how they can be kept under control.
- Modify the sentences based on your group, in order to make sure that a participant has a fair chance to actually complete the whole grid. You may, intentionally though, put predominantly hard and difficult-to-find habits – to make it as the main point of the activity. This version might be frustrating and should be properly handled in the discussion.

Media Habits Bingo

You have to go around the room and find people who can answer YES to the different sentences from the table below. You have to find one person for each sentence. Write down the name of the person next to the specific statement. You can have one person's name in your grid maximum two times, but try to talk with as many people as possible.

You say BINGO when you have found people for all the mentioned sentences.

I read printed newspapers at least every 2 days.	I never watch TV.
I produce/create media content.	I scroll on my phone before I sleep.
I intentionally follow media content providers from different value platforms.	I share articles on my social media account
I often engage in online conversations with people I don't know.	I don't trust any traditional media outlet (<i>TV channel, newspaper, radio</i>)
I am subscribed to an online international newspaper	Sometimes, I read only the title of an article and get to a conclusion about it
I believed (<i>and shared</i>) Fake News.	I don't get influenced by the ads I come across.
I bought certain items after I saw their ads online on my social media platform.	I don't have social media accounts. <i>Or</i> I don't use my social media accounts.
I unfriended/banned somebody on my social media.	I have, as social media "friends", people I never met in real life.
I regularly and actively get updated about what is happening in my community, country and in the world.	I spend more than 6 hours online every day (unrelated to my work).

Title:
What kind of media consumer am I?
(90 min)

Objectives: To identify personal media consumption behaviours; to reflect on which habits are negative and which are positive; to increase critical thinking towards one's behaviours; to stimulate changes in personal media consumption patterns;

Details and description of the activity:

- Provide one copy of the “Me - A Media Consumer” table for each participant. Ask them to fill it in for the next 20 minutes.
- After this time, divide participants into groups of 4 and ask them to share their outcomes. Invite them to ask each other more questions, to get more details about each other's habits. Each group is asked to identify the individual patterns, group patterns and to point out if there are any interesting, surprising, thought provoking aspects from their exchange. Give the group 30 minutes for the discussions.
- Ask each group to share their impressions and comments based on the provided guidelines. The other groups may ask additional questions.
- Once all groups finished, move on to the discussion.

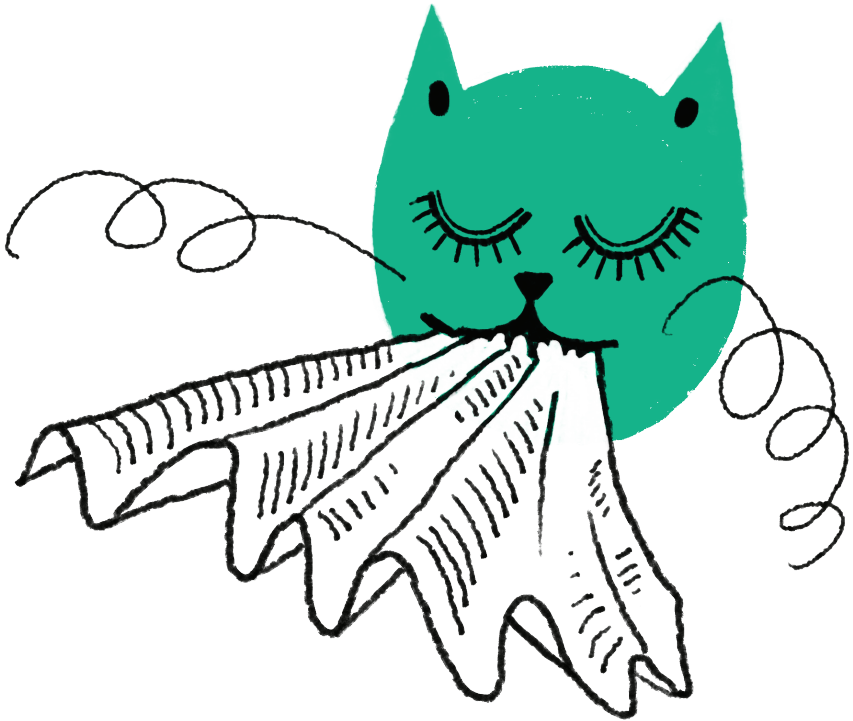
Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did it feel to be part of this exercise?
- Were there any challenging aspects and why?
- How were your conversations in the groups?
- Did you find out something surprising or new about yourself?
- What seems to be similar in the whole group? What are the main differences? What does this tell about our group?
- How present is media in your lives?
- To what extend is it shaping your worldviews and decisions?
- From your observation, is there anything missing from your media habits or from the group's ones? Why?

- Is there anything you would like to change about your own behaviours? Why?
- When can you start implementing these changes?
- What can help you?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

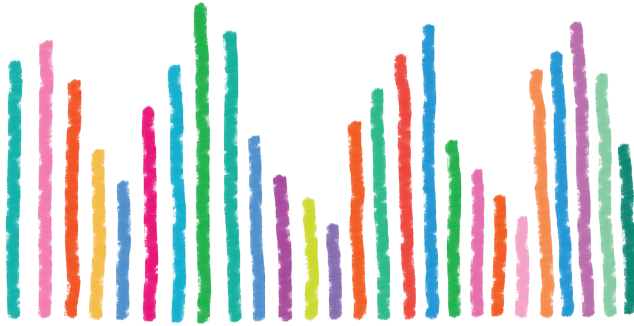
- If you meet regularly with your group you may give them, as homework, to fill in a Media Consumption diary for a week, in which the participants write down what they did and engaged with every day, from the Media perspective. This task can be given either before this activity or as a follow-up, and addressed in the next meeting.



Me - A Media Consumer

Behaviour	*Why? What topics? How? How many? How often? What programs/shows? How many hours?
I read newspapers (physical/online)	
I read books	
I am subscribed to a newsletter	
I watch TV (Including TV shows, series, movies, etc.)	
I listen to the radio	
I listen to different podcasts	
I follow influencers	
I have social media accounts	
I react to other people's posts on social media	
I share content on my social media accounts	
I mindlessly scroll on my phone/ social media	
I can recollect commercial ads I came across in the last month	
I play video/online games	
I follow the government's official reports/agencies/etc	
I participate in online forums	

** answer to all the questions applicable to the item/behaviour you are reflecting on*



Title:
Levels of Online Participation
(90 min)

Objectives: To reflect on which type of online participation they have; to increase critical thinking towards online participation; to stimulate changes regarding personal involvement in online sphere;

Details and description of the activity:

- Provide each participant with the table from the next page. Ask them to individually reflect on their own behaviours, and to provide a percentage of how much of their online activity goes to each type of actions. Allow 15 minutes for this. They may add additional type of behaviour examples besides the already provided ones, if they are more relevant to their life.
- First round of exchanges among participants. Divide the participants into groups based on the given percentage; participants with the highest percentage in the same category join the same groups. If one participant doesn't find anybody else from their own category they can go to the next percentage number category. For 15 to 20 minutes the participants exchange with each other why they gave that percentage, give examples of what they are doing or engaging with, etc. After the time finished, each group has to provide a summary of their discussions, focusing on the main aspects.

- Second round of exchanges between participants. Mix the previous groups in 3 new groups, to have equal number of representatives from the previous groups in the newly formed ones. In these groups, for 20 minutes, invite the participants to share their distribution and choices, and to reflect on the role of each type of behaviours in the “ecosystem” of online world.
- Move one to the discussion with the whole group, where you will address, as well, the aspects covered in the last round of exchanges and discussions.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How easy was it for you to analyse your levels of participation?
- Are you satisfied with the percentage you gave yourself? Would you like to have a different distribution? Why? Could you give some examples?
- What is the role of each level of participation? (*Ask the groups to share their conclusions*) How many roles can you have in the same time?
- Which roles support social change? Which ones hinder it?
- What is the impact of such behaviours on the people themselves? Are there any negative consequences? Could you give examples?
- How could we participate in a manner more responsible to ourselves and to the society?
- What would you like to do differently from now on and why?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- For a shorter session, you may place, in different parts of the room, the levels written on big papers and ask the participants to place themselves where they are more participating. You could also give different topics/issues where they might change their level.

Level of participation	Examples of Behaviours
Creators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Publish a blog/video blog ◆ Publish your own web page/ social media ◆ Upload a video you have created ◆ Upload audio/music you have created ◆ Write an article or stories and post them ◆ Initiate public discussions or peaceful protests ◆ Start online campaigns ◆
Conversationalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Update status on a social networking site ◆ Post updates on Twitter, Facebook, etc. ◆
Critics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Post ratings / reviews of a product or service ◆ Comment on someone else's blog ◆ Contribute to an online forum ◆ Contribute to / edit articles on a wiki ◆ Participate in a survey about some initiatives, products, etc. ◆ Comment on local / national legislation ◆ Criticise public discussions ◆ Observe and report on the work of public authorities ◆
Collectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use RSS feeds ◆ Vote for a website online ◆ Add "tags" to web pages or a photo
"Joiners"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Maintain your profile on a social networking site ◆ Visit social networking sites ◆
Spectators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Read blogs ◆ Listen to podcasts ◆ Watch videos from other users ◆ Read online forums ◆ Read customers' ratings / reviews ◆ Read tweets ◆
Inactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ None of the above

* Based on the 2010 model by Bernoff, J. and Li, C. (2010), 'Social technographics revisited – mapping online participation'. In *Participation Models: Citizens, Youth, Online*

Title:
Citizen Journalism
(90 min)

Objectives: To identify different levels of citizen journalism; to reflect on their personal power and motivation to involve in citizen journalism; to increase critical thinking towards citizen journalism; to stimulate a more responsible engagement in digital journalism.

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask the groups what citizen journalism is. Get a few answers and clarify if there are any misunderstandings. (*Citizen Journalism – citizens or general public are playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information, especially by means of the internet*)
- Divide the participant into groups of 4-5 people. In these groups they have to read the “11 layers of citizens’ journalism” article by Steve Outing (<https://www.poynter.org/archive/2005/the-11-layers-of-citizen-journalism/>). The article covers the topic from the perspective of the news organizations. We have extracted 9 Levels of citizen journalism (see below), in terms of specific behaviours from the citizen side. The participants have to assess themselves, personally, based on current or past activities, on which level(s) they are/were.
- They have 30 minutes for this task.

9 Level of citizen journalism

Level 1: Provide comments to the article, video news, etc.

Level 2: Provide contribution (a link, a picture, etc.) to a professional journalist’s article;

Level 3: Provide a more direct contribution to guide or support the journalists (collaborative journalism), e.g. the journalist needs to interview somebody and asks the readers to suggest the questions;

Level 4: It concerns the citizen-bloggers, especially at a local level. They are either given a blog space in the newspaper or a reader blog is selected;

Level 5: It is related to the transparency concept – it involves the readers in the writing task (e.g. news organization);

Level 6: A participatory journalism website/platform entirely handled by the readers who now become journalists and write especially about local events that involve themselves personally and can consequently be testified;

Level 7: Similar to 6, but this time news are published immediately, without being checked or edited;

Level 8: Mix of professionals' articles (remunerated) and citizens' articles (free content)

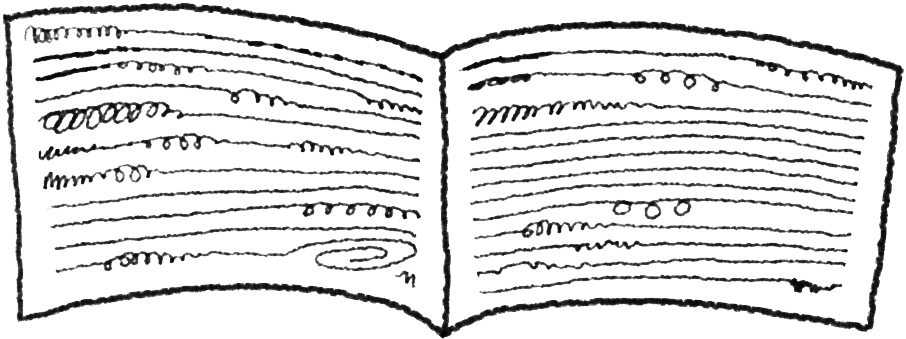
Level 9: WikiJournalism – everyone can write and publish news/stories, and also edit what has been already written (adding photos and links, or providing the text with other details or little corrections etc.).

- After 30 minutes ask all the participants:
 - ▶ On what levels did you find yourselves?
 - ▶ Could you give some examples?
 - ▶ Do you think there are other levels/types of citizen journalism not covered by the provided article?
 - ▶ Could you give some examples?
 - ▶ What do you think are the positive aspects of citizen journalism?
 - ▶ What about the negative ones?
- Play the video “What New Power Looks Like” by Jeremy Heimans (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-S03JfgHEA>). Alternatively, you may prepare yourself a presentation of the main points raised in the video or in the book he wrote together with Henry Timms, *New Power*.
- Proceed to the final discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you find this video?
- What were the main issues Jeremy signalled in the video?
- How can you link the concept of citizen journalism with the concept of new power he is talking about? Could you give some specific examples?
- How much power do people have to change their society?
- How can this power be channelled for a better purpose?

- What about citizen journalism? How much power can it have?
- Does a citizen journalist always chose to be one or sometimes they are forced to be? Could you give examples?
- Where do you want to position yourself in this context?
- Do you want to be a citizen journalist? Why?
- Who should be a citizen journalist and why?
- What would you like to take away with you from this discussion?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?



Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- For additional food for thought or materials to be used in the session, if wished, here is a link about pros and cons of citizen journalism (<https://weeksofcommunicationelaboration.wordpress.com/2020/02/10/the-pros-and-cons-of-citizen-journalism/>) and a video from Paul Lewis about Citizen Journalism (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9APO9_yNbcg)
- The session is touching on multiple issues, citizen journalism as concept, personal reflection, critical analysis on it, new power concept, combining these concepts and again, personal reflection. For some groups, with not so much experience in the field, it might be too much to process in only one session. Modify and use only some parts of the session, based on how ready your group is.



Title:
Personal Bias
(90 min)

Objectives: To get familiarised with the concept of hidden personal bias; to reflect on how internal bias affects our day-to-day life; to support participants to identify their personal bias; to increase critical thinking towards one's behaviours and actions; to stimulate a more responsible engagement with media content;

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask participants what they think Unconscious Bias is. It is very likely that many of them are confused, not sure or blank about this concept. Make use of the definitions listed below to clarify the concepts. Feel free to search for additional explanations and examples.

Supporting definitions

A **stereotype** is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group - a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputations passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

A **prejudice** is an opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but in common usage it refers

to a negative attitude. Prejudices are often accompanied by ignorance, fear or hatred. Prejudices are formed by a complex psychological process that begins with attachment to a close circle of acquaintances or an “in-group” such as a family. Prejudice is often aimed at “out-groups.”

Discrimination is behaviour that treats people unequally because of their group memberships. Discriminatory behaviour, ranging from very small to hate crimes, often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Stereotypes and prejudices, collected in time, towards “out-groups”, blur our perspectives and worldviews about the world – **it becomes biased** (subjective, partial, etc.)

Different researches have demonstrated that biases thought to be absent or extinguished remain as “mental residue” in most of us. Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately works to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes.

A growing number of studies show a link between **hidden biases and actual behaviour**. Hidden biases can reveal themselves in action, especially when a person’s efforts to control behaviour consciously flag under stress, distraction, relaxation or competition. Unconscious beliefs and attitudes have been found to be associated with language and certain behaviours such as eye contact, blinking rates and smiles, etc.

- Invite the participants to take part in an exercise, which might give them an opportunity to detect some of their inner, hidden biases. Explain about Project Implicit organization who aims to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a “virtual laboratory” for collecting data on the Internet. This organization developed Implicit Association Test, on various topics, which provide a platform for any interested person to detect their hidden biases (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>).
- Explain that the test has its limitations, it is not the most accurate or rigorous researching tool and it is rather biased towards North American audience (*the majority of reference data is coming from that part of the world*), but, nevertheless, is providing a good enough starting exercise to explore inner biases.

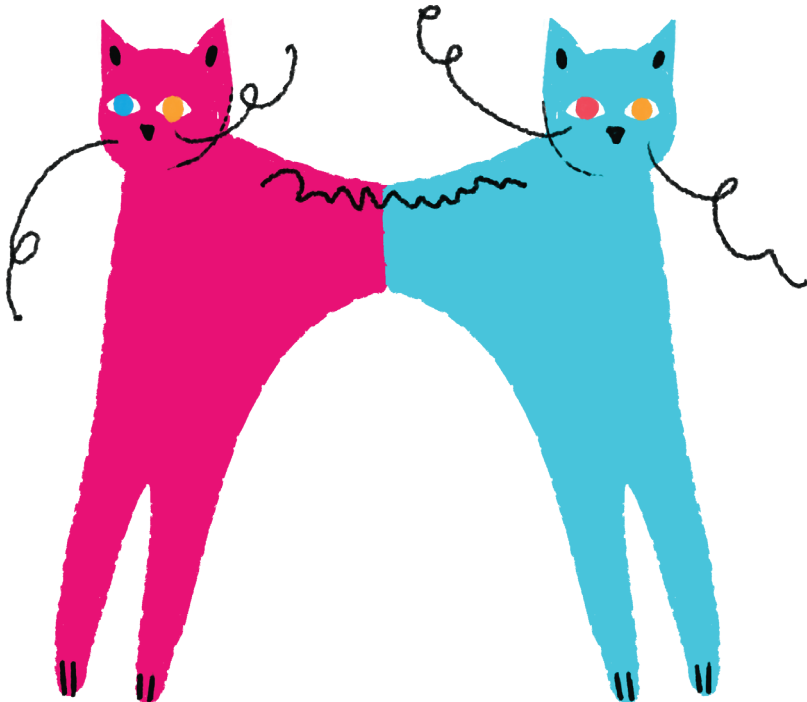
- Provide 10 to 20 minutes for the participants to take one or more tests from the website. Invite them to engage in the tests naturally and to not try to intentionally influence the results – as it is not going to serve the purpose of the activity.
- After this time, divide the participants into groups of 3 people. In these groups participants are free to share as much as they wish from the test they took, results they got, their impression, etc. They have 15 minutes for this discussion.
- After this time, proceed to the discussion with the whole group.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How many tests have you done?
- Which ones?
- What were your impressions from taking the test?
- What kind of results did you get, if you want to share?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How do you think the test is measuring the hidden bias?
(You may explain more about the mechanism behind the test)
- How relevant do you think it is?
- How else can you detect your biases? In what aspects of life do they manifest?
- What kind of biases do you have? How do you know?
- Do you think you have unconscious biases? Why?
- How do you think your life is affected by the existence of biases? Yours or of people around you?
- How is it influencing you as media consumer?
- How do you want to take this information further from now on?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- We don't live in a balanced and equally represented society or world; hence we have all been more exposed to certain groups, norms and values, which on a deeper unconscious level we might place on a higher position. We all have hidden biases and they often remain hidden if we don't trigger them to come out and to be aware of them in order to control them whenever they get activated in our day-to-day life.
- This activity might trigger resistance and non-compliance from new groups, with little common experience and also little previous experience in critical self-reflection. Don't try it out with groups you are not sure they will be open and willing to look critically at themselves.



Improvisations/ Acting Skills/ Rehearsals

Title:
Article in Reverse
(60-90 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to analyse media material from different perspectives;

Details and description of the activity:

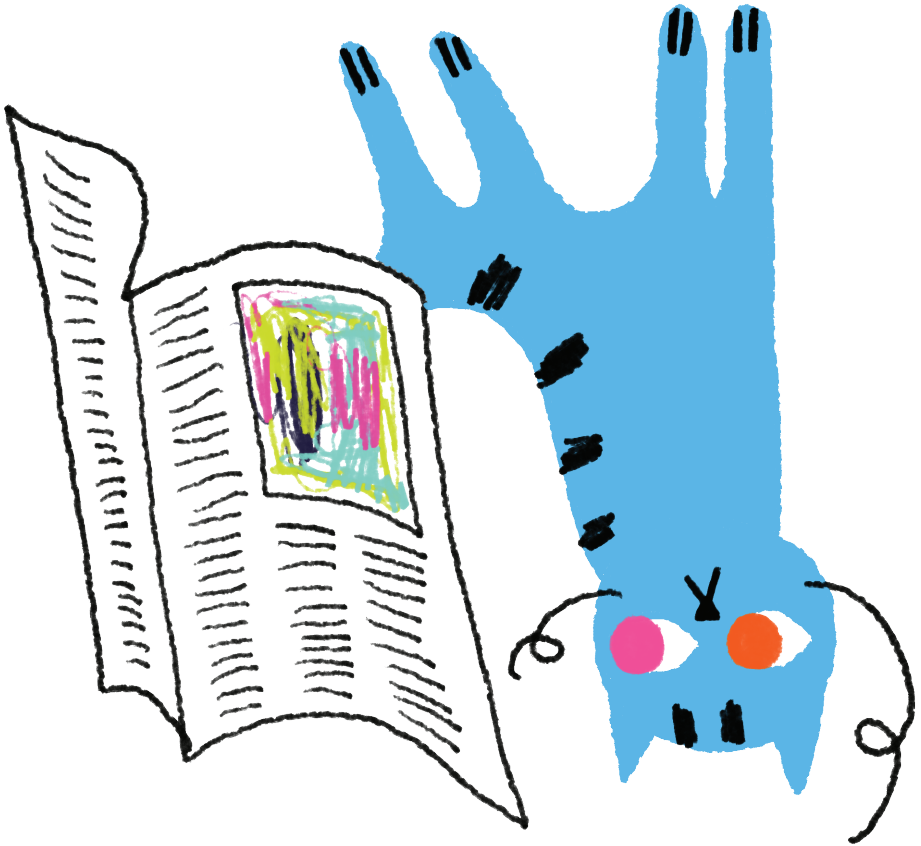
- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5.
- Each group receives an article (covering some current event/relevant news) which has sufficient details for the storyline of the depicted events.
- Each group has to dramatize the article but they have to do it in reverse, from the end to the starting point presented in the article. They have 20 minutes for the preparation.
- The groups perform their scenes. The other participants comment on what they saw, ask questions and share their views.
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How was the task?
- How did you feel while preparing?
- How challenging was to dramatize the article in this way?
- What observations do you have from all the performances?
- What surprised you when you saw the other groups' performances?
- Which new perspectives have you gained about the covered article?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- As an alternative, give the group a task to imagine a different ending from the one in the original article. The group can act the original storyline and an alternative one, or you may invite the audience to come on the stage and propose alternative endings for the article. In this version, you could address, in the discussion, aspects regarding what could be done in certain situations, to change the course of events, to take action and intervene before it might be too late.



Title:
Media in Different Genres
(60-90 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to analyse media material from different perspectives;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5.
- Each group receives an article (*covering some current event/relevant news*) which has sufficient details for the storyline of the depicted events.
- They have 20 minutes to read the article, distribute roles in the group and improvise the story depicted in the article in maximum 2 minutes.
- In a hat/box, prepare a list of papers with different genres written on: action, adventure, comedy, drama, fantasy, historical, horror, science fiction, thriller, romantic, musical, soap-opera, documentary, etc.
- After preparation time, one group come on the stage and deliver the short performance. Ask the rest of the people if the scene is clear; whether they have any questions and what genre they think their piece was. After the brief comments from the audience, the acting group takes a paper from the box and they have to repeat their performance, this time doing it in the new genre. Ask the group if they have any comments on the way the article changed now.
- Depending on how many groups you are working with you may give each group 2 different genres, before moving to the next group.
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you find this exercise?
- What was easy about it?
- What was the hardest part?
- What general observations do you have from the performances?

- What surprised you?
- Which new perspectives have you gained about the covered article?
- How did the meaning of the article change when it was played with a different genre? What does that tell us?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity / Adaptations

- Depending on your group's profile and the articles you want to use, carefully think if you want to add, as options, genres which are comic and funny, as this may lead to the portrayal of serious events (often portraying situations of oppression of different people) in a funny perspective.

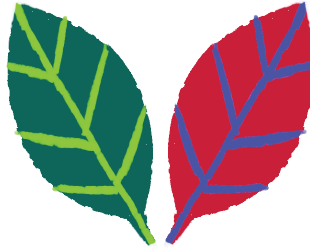


Title:
Reporters versus Commentators
(60 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to analyse media material from different perspectives; to reflect on the role of the media consumers and participative journalism;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into 2 groups. One group represents the Reporters and the other one the Commentators.
- The role of the Reporters is to relate different news and stories. They may do that by using media materials you provide on the spot, or from the recent news they got to know in the last days.
- The role of the Commentators is to comment, in real time, to what the Reporters are saying; similar to what is happening on social media or on some news websites, after an article is posted and anybody can comment on it.
- The process goes like this: one reporter goes on the stage and starts to communicate, as a reporter, certain events that happened recently. Allow about 1-2 minutes for the reporter to provide more details. At your signal a Commentator can go on the stage and start commenting on the issues raised by the Reporter. The Reporter may address the received comments or continue as before.
- At your signal, ask another reporter to replace the person already on the stage; you may allow 2 or 3 Reporters on the stage at the same time (*to also emphasise the amount of news/information we are exposed to in the same time*). The same goes for the Commentators, they are replaced or you allow more of them to be on the stage at the same time. Use your intuition to decide how it is best to proceed based on how the process goes and the interest of the group.
- After 30-40 minutes move on to the discussion.



Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you feel during this exercise?
- What was challenging for you and why?
- What general observations do you have from the improvisations?
- What surprised you?
- How realistic were the improvisations?
- Could you give examples?
- What is the role of the Commentators in the real life? What can they influence or trigger?
- Are you a Commentator in real life?
- If yes, what kind of commentator are you? Could you give some examples?
- What should reporters or media producers learn or take on board from the Commentators?
- And what should they not?
- How participative should the media content production be?
- Why?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- If some people in the group are new, they may only be audience without having any roles, and provide comments from their perspective.
- You can write different styles of commenting or reporting (*e.g. aggressive, supporting, critical, ignoring, philosopher, etc.*) on paper notes, which can be taken from a box by the group members when they go on the stage, in order to give a specific tone to their acting.



Title:
Let's Create an Article Together
(60 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to analyse media material from different perspectives;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into 2 groups (*preferably between 5 people to 10 people*).
- In the groups, the participants have to create a news article together. One person from the group starts with a sentence, the next person continues with another sentence and so on. At every 3 persons, whoever has the turn at the moment has to change the angle/perspective of the article.
- During this time, in parallel, the other group has to act out what the first group is saying. They may dramatize individually or together with others; they are free to improvise on the spot however the text is building up by the other group.
- You may give a topic to a group to deal with, or you may provide the starting sentence in order to make sure you cover the issues you wish them to approach in the article.
- Give each participant one or more adjectives to use during the creation time, whenever their turn is.
- Give 10 minutes per group for the task, which, depending on the number of people can count as 2 to 4 times per person to say a sentence.
- Make 2 rounds for each group, each time with a different topic, and then move on to the discussion.

Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this exercise for you?
- How did you feel creating the article?
- What about acting it out?
- What was challenging?
- What impressions do you have about the final articles?
- How did the articles get shaped?
- How did the storyline change?
- What kind of different angles, perspectives were brought in on the way?
- Did you wish to change the article in some direction and you couldn't? Could you give an example?
- Did any of the created articles / parts of the articles resemble anything from real life?
- Could you give some examples?
- What other insights do you have from this exercise?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- It often happens that the acting group goes one step further and anticipate what happens next, and they influence the next sentences coming from the group. If you notice this aspect, ask the article creators at the second round to participate with the eyes closed or with the back turned to the acting group.
- If possible, ask one volunteer or a colleague to write down the text they created to be used in the discussion and as reference for future work.
- If you want to help the group to remember when the time to change the angle is, you may signal every time that moment comes.
- You may try a version where every person has to change the angle of the article; in this way, it will be more difficult to have a coherent text, but it can provide more angles to explore the topic.

Title:
News with the Real Protagonists
(40-60 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to analyse media material from different perspectives;

Details and description of the activity:

- Ask for a group of volunteers, to be ready to participate in the activity.
- Give one article to a volunteer; preferably an article you plan to work with for your Newspaper Theatre play.
- The volunteer goes on the stage and starts slowly reading the article.
- In the moment a person is mentioned in the article, one of the volunteers comes on the stage and starts acting whatever that specific person is doing/experiencing in the article. One by one, all the people mentioned in the article come on the stage and improvise the full story.
- In case the details mentioned in the article are insufficient, the volunteers may complete the acting with their own imagination.
- When the article is fully read, the first volunteer acts as a reporter on the field, and goes around and asks questions to the protagonists of the article. The audience may comment and ask questions as well.
- Stop the process when you feel it is drying up in outcomes; continue with a second round, with different volunteers and move on to the discussion.

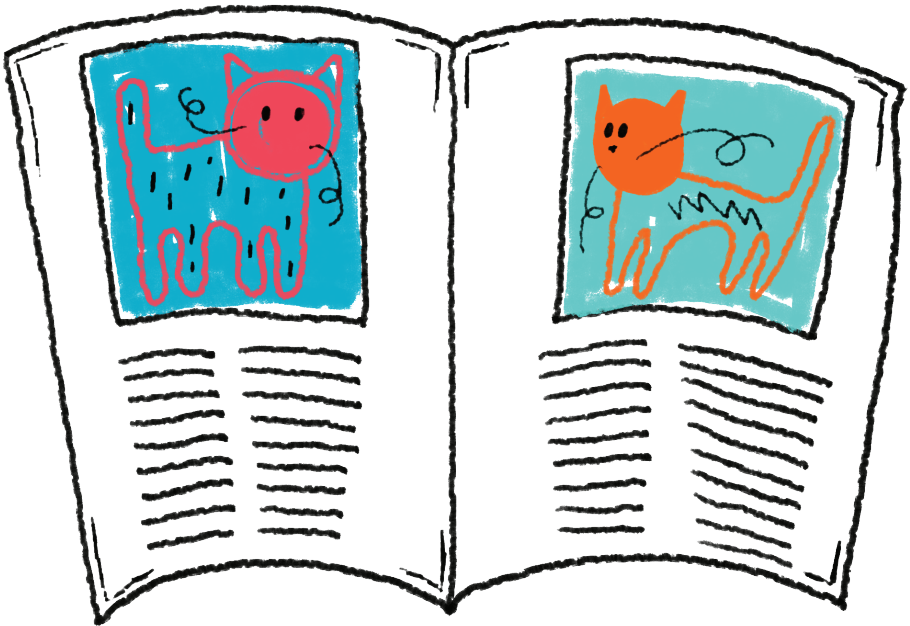
Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you find this exercise?
- How did you feel?
- What impressions do you have about the way the articles were acted out?
- What about the interviews with the protagonists?

- Did you notice any new perspective, angles to the topic?
- Was there anything missing from the story that wasn't captured in the article?
- Were there any questions that were left unanswered or not asked?
- What other insights do you have from this exercise?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- Depending on the number of participants and their interest, divide the group into equal numbers and each group has to deal with one article.





Title:
Reporting From the Field
(60 min)

Objectives: To stimulate group creativity; to prepare for acting; to develop improvisation and acting skills; to reflect on the role of the reporters in the field;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into 2 groups. One group is the audience and the others are the improvisers. The roles switch in the second round.
- In the improvisers group, 1 or 2 persons have to assume the role of the reporters, who go on the field and report from the action place.
- The “action place” can be represented by different locations inspired by reading media materials: a bar, beach, market, company, restaurant, hotel, border, police, flight, bus, train, streets, school, hospital, factory, house, parliament, municipality, conflict areas, refugee camps, meeting places of officials, a protest, a press conference etc.
- The rest of the improvisers have to pick a role they have in that specific place and improvise a scene, freestyle. At your signal, announce that, suddenly, the circumstances are changing on the action place; different natural or man-made events are starting to happen, such as: rain, sandstorm, blizzards, tornado, fire, floods, earthquake, locust attacks, fog, volcanic eruptions, avalanche, flight/bus/train crush, disruption in services (electricity, water, communication, signals, etc.), biological agents, chemical leaks, oil spills, armed attack, explosions, contaminations, etc.

- When the specific hazardous event is announced, the volunteers have to improvise based on the new situation. At this moment, the reporters have to provide information to the audience, about what is happening; they may take interviews or only observe and relate the events from their angles.
- Change, a couple of times, the circumstances for a group, before moving to the second round.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How did you find this exercise?
- How did it feel to improvise?
- How was it to be a reporter?
- What impressions do you have about the way the situations were acted out?
- What about the reporting on the actions?
- Did any part of the improvisations resemble anything from real life?
- Could you give some examples?
- What are your thoughts about the role of the field reporter?
- What are the challenges they face in order to relate, in complete and objective way, to what is happening on the field?
- What other insights do you have from this exercise?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- Most of the examples of given circumstances are negative but, if deemed necessary, you may use positive examples or even fantastic ones, e.g. free money falling from the sky, fairies and angels coming on the site, all people get contaminated with happiness and joy, there are no more problems in the world, etc.
- Be aware if there are vulnerabilities in the group that could be triggered by the created circumstances, such as armed attacks, contaminations, accidents, etc. to be ready to contain and handle them or to choose different kind of possible events.

Emotions



Title:
React To the News
(30-50 min)

Objectives: To express a variety of emotions in a short period of time; to prepare for acting; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on the role of the media in people's emotional life;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare a list of headlines from different newspapers/media outlets in advance. Choose diverse type of items, positive, negative, scary, neutral, etc. and it is good to have a mixture of headlines with photos and without. Gather up to 20 of them.
- Project the headlines on the wall.
- Participants are walking in the room and should be able to see what is projected on the wall at any time.
- Once a headline is projected invite the group to identify their emotional reaction to that specific headline and to act it out with their bodies. They can continue to walk or stay still. They need to express that specific emotion for as long as the headline is projected. Ask the group to look around and observe how the others emotionally reacted to the news.
- For each headline, give about 1 minute for the group to react and express their emotions.
- After all the projection ask the group to sit in a circle and move on to the discussion.

Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this exercise for you?
- What kind of emotions did you go through? How are you feeling now?
- How easy was to identify the emotional reaction from the given headline?
- Which one was the most challenging to have a reaction to?
- What did you notice/observed during the activity?
- To what extent was your emotional reaction matching the one of the other people?
- Did you notice any big differences in the group at some specific headlines? Could you give some examples?
- How often do you reflect on how media content emotionally impacts you?
- Does it happen that someone avoids certain articles because of this aspect? Could you give some examples?
- How sensitised or desensitized do you think people generally are in relation to media content?
- Do you think there is news which should trigger more emotions in people, but they don't? Why?
- What would people do regarding these topics, if they would feel them more?
- What is the most important thing you would like to do differently from now on, in relation to media content you are exposed to daily?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- The activity can be organized as a short exercise to work with emotions, without a deeper discussion afterwards.
- You may work only with images of the emotions; at the sight of a headline the participants have to create a body sculpture to represent their emotion. As an alternative, participants can work in pairs and create a common image.
- The activity can be transformed in an improvisation exercise, by inviting participants to interact with each other starting from the emotions they have as a reaction. They may talk about the news, the topics etc.

Title:
Social Media Reactions
(60 min)

Objectives: To express a variety of emotions in a short period of time; to prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on the role of social media in our lives;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare a stash of newspapers or printed articles on different topics, angles, etc.
- Invite the participants to choose one article they are interested in; something they could share on their social media account (*or with their friends in real life*).
- One by one, the participants have to stand in front of the others. They have three options of what they can do once there (*similar to when posting on a social media account*)
 - ▶ Show the article to the group (without saying anything)
 - ▶ Show the article and say something about it
 - ▶ Show the article and read a part of the article out loud.
- They can only use one of the options. They have 30 to 60 seconds for this (*depending on how many people you have in the group*)
- During this time, the rest of the participants have to react to what they did, in the same way as they would if they would see it online. They can use any of the emotions that social media offers reaction options for (like, love, care, angry, laughing, surprise, sad), to create a new one or to not show any reaction at all. They should show these reactions with their face/body and they should be clear of what they want to show.
- Additionally, the participants can also use cards which have SHARE and COMMENT written on them, to show alongside the emotional reaction.
- After all participants finished, move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How are you? What are your impressions from this exercise?
- How did it feel to stand in front of the group?
- How did it feel to react in such way to what the others did?
- What was different in this way from what is happening online?
- How often do you react (like, love, get angry with, etc.) to different social media posts from your friends, acquaintances or random people?
- What reaction symbol do you predominantly use? Was it the same now?
- When do you do that? What criteria do you use in this sense? Did you use the same criteria now?
- How often do you post anything on your account? What criteria do you have for that? Did you use the same now, when you chose the article?
- Why did you choose that specific article?
- If you don't post anything – why don't you post anything?
- How often do you share or comment on what people are posting?
- Why do you share a post?
- Why do you comment? Do you engage in critical conversations in this way?
- If you don't react, comment or share what other people are posting – why don't you do any of these things?
- Is there anything you would like to do differently from now, on your social media?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- You may allow time for participants to detail what comments they will make, on another piece of paper, and address this aspect in the discussion.
- You can modify the discussion plan and tackle issues regarding misinformation, spreading fake news, bubble filters, overflow of information or privacy and safety on our social media platforms.



Title:
Reading with Emotions
(60 min)

Objectives: To explore media material through various emotions; to prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on the role of emotions in the way we consume and digest media;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4 people.
- Give each group an article. The article can be from the preselected articles that could be used for the performance or general article covering issues of oppression.
- Each group has to read the article to the other participants by using different emotions. They have to split the article into 4 parts. One person starts to read using one emotion, the second person continues by using another emotion and so on.

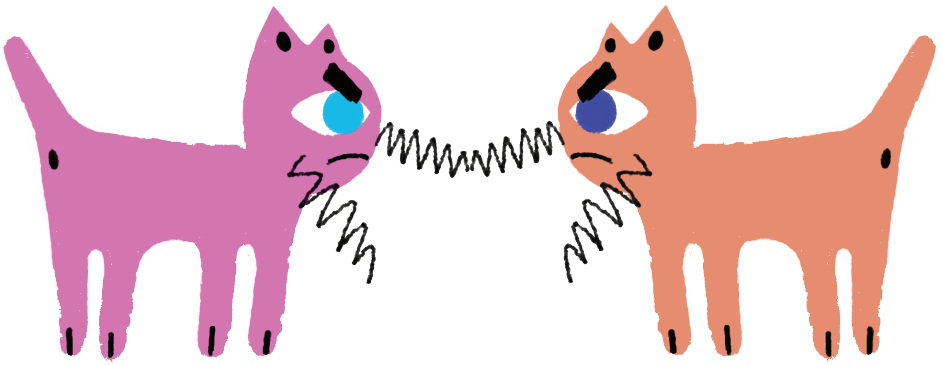
- The emotions can be chosen to be diverse and different for each group. You can use this website for idea of which emotions you can provide to the group: <http://feelingswheel.com/>
- When one group is reading, the other participants have to write down the emotion they think is used for each part. After each group ask them to reveal their guesses and what were really the emotions used.

Debriefing/ Suggestions for Questions:

- How was this exercise for you?
- How easy was it to read the article with the given emotion? Why?
- How easy was it to guess the depicted emotion?
- How did the different emotions change the meaning of the material?
- To what extent do the emotions associated to news matter?
- What is the difference between reading and listening to news?
- What impact does that have on the media consumer?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- You may include, for each group, “neutral” with no emotion to be shown, and then discuss with the group if it was really neutral, what neutral really means while acting, etc. You may link this aspect to the neutrality of journalist and whether that is really possible.
- For advance groups, provide complex and not often used emotions to challenge the participants to enlarge their emotional expression.
- If you need to warm up the group for expression of diverse type of emotions, you can start with a quick Emotions Counting activity. The participants have to count, one by one, saying a number in the right order; each number has to be said with a different emotion from any of the ones shown before. These emotions can be given to each participant in advance, from a common pile or they are left free to decide and express. To help the group diversify their knowledge about emotions, after a number is said, the person has to say which emotion they used.



Title:
Affect Your Partner
(60 min)

Objectives: To prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on how to use media material to trigger emotions; to develop introspective competencies;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare a stash of newspapers or other media materials on different topics, angles, etc.
- Divide the participants into pairs.
- Each participant has 10 minutes to prepare for the task. They need to choose an emotion or feeling they wish to trigger in their partner. Once they decided, they should find media material (e.g. an article, an image, etc.) to use in order to affect their partners. Their partners shouldn't be aware of the emotion they are trying to provoke. If they wish, participants may use more than one material; it is their choice how they want to use the material(s).
- Each participant has 10 minutes to conduct a conversation with their partner. Once the time is over they may reveal their intentions and experienced feelings/emotions to each other. They exchange roles for another 10 minutes
- Move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How are you?
- What are your impressions from the activity?
- How are you feeling now?
- What emotions did you want to provoke in your partners?
- What do you notice in your choice of emotions?
- Did you succeed in affecting your partner with the emotion you chose? How did you manage?
- Did you figure out what were your partners trying to trigger in you? How?
- What kind of media material did you select?
- How many did you use?
- How did you use them?
- Was the story from the media material sufficient itself or did you have to add other elements in your conversation?
- What kinds of media materials are very “good” at triggering emotions by themselves?
- What types of emotions are provoked the most?
- Are there any similarities to the type of emotions you tried to cause?
- What emotions are not so easy to trigger with the help of media? Why?
- What other comments or insights do you have from the exercise?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- As an alternative, you can organize the activity by asking the pairs to conduct their activity in front of the others, followed by asking the audience to guess, as well, on the targeted emotion.
- You may give the emotions to each participant in advance, randomly; in this way you make sure to have a variety of emotions covered in the exercise, but you cannot reflect on how their choice mirrors (or not) the emotions triggered by the media in general.

Title:
React to Emotions
(30 min)

Objectives: To prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on how we react to different emotions expressed by others; to develop introspective competencies;

Details and description of the activity:

- Prepare labels for all participants. On each label there is a feeling or an emotion written. Use a diversity of emotions, from very negative to very positive.
- Randomly distribute the labels to half of the participants. They need to embrace that specific feeling and to place their label in a visible place.
- At your signal, ask all the participants to walk in the room. The participants without labels need to react to the emotions they see written and expressed by the participants they encounter in their walk. It is up to them how they react to what they see; there is no indication in this sense.
- After 5 minutes change roles, you may use the same labels or different ones. The process repeats as in the first round.
- After 5 minutes, ask the participants who had labels to remove them, get out of their roles and move on to the discussion.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How are you feeling in this moment? How was this exercise for you?
- How easy was it to enact the provided emotion?
- How did people behave or act in relation to you?
- How did that make you feel? Why?
- How did you react to the others, when you noticed what their emotion was? How did they make you feel?

- Was there any person to whom you didn't know how to react to or didn't want to react to? Why?
- How often do you reflect on how you make other people feel when you are experiencing a specific feeling?
- Could you give some examples?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- Instead of emotions, on the label you can write different groups from the society, groups often exposed to negative stereotyping and discrimination. You may add, as well, some groups which don't face similar situation, to compare the reactions of the people. In this version, the discussion has to address the stereotypes and prejudices exposed by the participants, to challenge them and to reflect on the bigger context of these groups in the society.



Title:
Frustrated by the Media
(90 min)

Objectives: To reflect on how media makes us feel; to prepare for acting; to stimulate connection among group members; to stimulate imagination; to reflect on the role of emotions in the way we consume and digest media; to provide a space to steam out and vent negative emotions triggered by the media;

Details and description of the activity:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5.
- In the groups, participants have to share what frustrates them in media, what are their buttons that trigger frustration and negative emotions, what levels of frustration they experience and how often it happens to them.
- Based on this sharing, the groups have to prepare a short performance to incorporate the main points of their sharing. They can design and deliver the scene in any manner they wish. They have 30 minutes for sharing and preparing their performance.
- After one group acts out their scene, the other participants are invited to provide comments, observations and ask questions.
- After all the groups deliver their work move on to the discussions.

Debriefing / Suggestions for Questions:

- How was it for you to work on this task?
- How are you feeling in this moment?
- How was your process?
- How did you decide what to put on the stage?
- What did you notice in all the performances?
- What similarities did you observe? What about differences?
- Why do the media frustrate us?
- Is it something about us, or about the media?

- Which type of media doesn't frustrate you?
- How can this frustration be transformed in something positive? Could you give some examples?
- What do you want to do differently next time you experience frustration when you interact with some media material?
- What can we use from this activity for our Newspaper Theatre process?

Recommendations for Using the Activity/ Adaptations

- The format of this activity can be adapted to other type of strong feelings triggered by the media, which could be useful to work with, such as motivation, joy, energy, etc.



Final Remarks



Newspaper Theatre evolved from using printed newspaper, as the only media available to the general audiences, to present time, when the printed ones might be the least used ones.

Media consumption evolved from passive receivers to active citizens, engaging with media providers and creating media content themselves - we all produce media now!

If some things were unimaginable to happen in the online world before, some are now starting to take less and less place in the physical world.

All these things happened during one generation's lifetime – mine! I still think of myself as young, which means that in the same amount of time, but into the future, anything could happen, change and transform in ways unthinkable at this moment.

I don't think the purpose of media or theatre will disappear! They will transform and metamorphose the same as it happened until now.

My wish is that this manual can also serve in this process as well, to support significant change-making processes in the present, to influence this unthinkable future in a positive way.

May we all have energy and motivation to keep carrying on!

Andreea-Loredana Tudorache

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We add Wings 



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