



Fundația pentru
Dezvoltarea
Societății
Civile



Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre, as the name suggests, is a form of theater that enables the interaction and debate, being in the same time a tool for social intervention. At first glance, it would seem that Forum Theatre is a type of theater, but the distinct attribute of "forum" creates a new way of expression and interaction with the public. The forum theatre play takes place so that a group of people exchange ideas and opinions, looking for solutions and action patterns appropriate to the situation in which the participants are involved.

Forum Theatre focuses on the moments that people meet daily but don't take into consideration as a habit. Unlike life, theater allows those who participate in it to observe the scene as an outsider, to pursue the tragic situation, such as a witness hid behind the curtain and to understand where the ignorance, carelessness, labeling or discrimination can lead. Thus, after the first performance, the participant can say, "STOP! I did not like what happened here! If you would have acted sooner would not have gotten into this situation!"

Why use Forum Theatre?

The Forum Theatre method can be used in different contexts of non-formal education giving participants a chance to learn from direct experiences as it is a method that is based on experiential learning.

The method can be used in all communities where there are people who are at risk of social exclusion, which meet situations of discrimination of certain categories of people, in any context in which we see people supporting stereotypes and prejudices, in which intolerance and compassion are feelings that cause suffering (such as educational system, family, public, street, neighborhood, Roma communities, prisons, etc.). The Forum Theatre is staging in public and in front of people that face a problem, in order to create a learning environment for the general public (children, youth, adults and the elderly). Topics addressed can be very diverse because the play takes scenes from reality of the audience.

How to use Forum Theatre?

Preparing the play

A group of volunteers, most often non-actors are well trained in the forum theater method through a specific training which develops the skills of theater with exercises, games and debates specific method. They identify a problem of oppression in a particular community or are informed by project managers, community facilitators and others who want to do a change. A volunteer team then develops a project around it, using forum theater method, a tool for participatory art that the experience proved very suitable for social interventions.



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The theatre part

For the success of the performance is good to have between 30 and 70 spect-actors and to better promote the event to the target group. Effective deployment of a forum theatre play has three main stages: play, discussion and forums. First, the situation of oppression is presented in approximately 15 minutes with the characters and their interaction. Characters of the forum theater are constructed incomplete so that the public can identify that with these, even more, to feel the need to complete their actions, by replacing that character.

The Forum part

In the second stage, the moderator of the play, called Joker, facilitate the discussion about the presented situation, the causes of oppression, about the relationships between characters and the position of each performer in the play: oppressor, oppressed, their allies, neutral characters. The Joker's role is to motivate and encourage the public to come up with realistic solutions or improvements to the situation presented to them and to play on stage. In the forum part, the play is resumed and the public becomes active. The public can change all the characters, but the oppressor.

Interventions

Each spect-actor can intervene during the re-run of the play by clapping. Actors will "freeze" and remain motionless on stage while members of the public come and replace the actor in the play. The aim is for the public to act on the characters who did not take a stand and who can change in a positive course of action that can help the oppressed to take a decision that can sustain and develop him positively.

Therefore the spect-actors can intervene in every scene of the play, one by one, replacing characters until it reaches the solution that will be voted by the public as the most realistic and useful in the present situation. After choosing solutions, discussions are taking place about how it might be implemented in everyday reality – in the community facing the issues discussed in the play.

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