

# #THEATRE.MAKES.POLITICS

2022-2025



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**EXQUORUM**

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# Foreword by Anne Tysiak

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Lesvos, September 2023: More than 30 theatre pedagogues, artists, social workers, co-workers of cultural and educational institutions from various European countries sit in a circle under the Greek late summer sun. We share our reflections on our week of try out workshops during which we did not only get to experience the first results of the working groups but also a sense of community during shared meals and evenings by the beautiful Mediterranean Sea.

But the beauty of the island and the enriching human encounters do not make us forget the suffering of people who arrive in Lesvos as refugees and the multiple crises in our home countries, in Europe and worldwide. This ambiguity is also an experience that there is more than one truth and more than one perspective. In times of contradictions and uncertainties, fundamentalist und populist forces claim to have easy solutions, and thus polarise, and divide societies.

How can we oppose those anti-democratic powers that stoke hate and fear?

Our approach is to make productive use of diversity, to learn from each other, to exchange and embrace the multitude of perspectives, on both an institutional and individual level. As project partners and associates, we may come from different traditions, from different professional and social environments, but we also have a lot in common: We share the conviction that personal encounters, discovery through play and group experiences during theatre work can change one's perspective on the world. Consequently, we developed methods that are a synergetic combination of cultural and political education.

A theatre workshop – may it take place in a theatre, a youth centre, a school, a park or wherever – can be a laboratory in which different views can lead to new insights and where one does not only “act” but also feels encouraged to actively shape the world. Empowering young people to question simple answers and to find their own way to deal with challenges does make a political impact.

We are grateful for the opportunity to build a European network that advocates for an open society founded on values of democracy and tolerance. We are now looking forward to further local implementations of what this network has developed.

The handbook offers tools for practitioners and multipliers and it will hence have its effects and will be developed further in many different places in Europe and worldwide. This would not be possible without the work and commitment of all those who take action in emancipating and sensitising the youth. Thank you so much!

Anne Tysiak, Executive Board, Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik e.V. (BuT), 2023-2024

# Foreword by Lutz Pickardt

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I am delighted to be able to present our practical handbook for all people who work with creative methods in political education; be they media, dance or theatre educators, or any other people who work with young people in political education or would like to.

It is intended as a concrete aid for colleagues who are looking for answers to the socio-political challenges of our time using theatre pedagogy, reason, humour and empathy. How can we support young people in countering the widespread agitation against queer, non-binary, ecologically minded, anti-capitalist, refugees and people with a history of migration? Instead of falling for the populists' easy, often exclusionary solutions, to look for inclusive answers to social problems that also include the case and value the contribution of minorities. We want to work together shaping a world that works for everybody.

We were all aware that this would not be an easy undertaking: "The time is out of joint" William Shakespeare Hamlet said this more than 500 years ago, and the observation still rings true to us facing the current political situation in Europe and the world.

In Ukraine, a war with an uncertain outcome is raging. In Europe right-wing populists are winning majorities in parliaments and provoking a permanent state of emergency. Disinformation and conspiracy theories are spreading in social media, and both right-wing extremists and Islamist fundamentalists are committing violent attacks and creating a climate of chaos and fear

Not to forget Donald Trump, the newly (re-)elected president of the United States of America, who has overturned the entire post-war order of Europe and the world in just a few weeks.

Civil society, which is opposing these forces, is more challenged than it has been in a long time, and needs a lot of attention and support.

At the political level, there have already been major successes: in Poland, the right-wing populist PIS party was voted out of office again to clear the way for democratic forces; in the United Kingdom, too, the populist government had to resign: a majority of the British population now regrets the Brexit that has been implemented and wants to move closer to the EU again; Keir Starmer, the new Prime Minister, supports these tendencies.

Marine Le Pen was (still) able to be averted from becoming prime minister in France because left-wing forces united, and when plans by the Identitarian Movement and (in parts) the far-right AFD to "remigrate" migrants and refugees in Germany became public, millions of citizens took to the streets to oppose this misanthropic undertaking.

So there is hope.

We, as the German Federal Association for Theater Pedagogy, want to be part of this movement and have been asking ourselves for many years how we can contribute to the socio-political discourse. How

we can counteract the divisive tendencies in society with the means at our disposal: play, dance, theater, imagination and the ability to take on other perspectives - not only cognitively, but also experientially with our bodies, voices and feelings. How we can work with young people to find ways to construct diversity, overcome apparent contradictions and develop livable utopias for a world worth living in.

Many years ago, our association organized conferences and symposia on the possibilities of political influence of theater and theater pedagogy, with a special focus on theater with refugees. When anti-democratic forces came to power in Austria, Poland, Hungary and other EU countries, it was clear to us that this would be our next field of action: we must oppose the ongoing re-nationalization, not “seal ourselves off”, but “open up” is our motto, exchange instead of isolation.

At the beginning of 2020, we held numerous online think tanks with colleagues from 12 European countries and Turkey, discussing politics, migration, the situation of refugees and the associated theater pedagogical challenges in the context of political education. We sought and found allies for a strategic partnership: Together with colleagues from France, North Macedonia, Portugal, Greece and KJT Dortmund, we submitted an application for #theatre.makes.politics and after three years of intensive collaboration, the result is now available.

We wish everyone who wants to work with our book exciting and inspiring projects with interesting discussions and insights, fun with games, the courage to experiment and the composure to endure contradictory opinions and to find answers to the social challenges of our time together with young people.

Lutz Pickardt, project manager of #theatre.makes.politics

1st Chairman of the German Federal Association for Theatre Pedagogy from 2016-2023.

**Photos:** if not specifically noted, photos are taken by Lutz Pickardt in the context of youth theatre workshops in Essen and Hamburg, Germany, between 2010-15

# Gratitudes

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## Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik

### We are deeply grateful for...

- Andreas Poppe and Raimund Finke (BuT) who developed the basic project idea together with me at a conference in Halle years before we applied for it.
- our associate partners for attending our input workshops, in particular for their collaboration in the working groups - Matthias Damberg (Treibraft Theater Hamm), Anne Tysiak (Junges Theater Wiesbaden), Jenny Holzer (Theater Würzburg) and Nadja Smoll (Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Oberschule Berlin)
- the numerous pupils of our pilot projects all over Germany
- students in Augsburg, Zurich and Berlin for trying out our methods and giving precious feedback
- the islamic scholars Orkide Ekzem, Dr. Piotr Sudr and Prof. Harry Harun Behr who have provided important suggestions for the chapter on Islamic fundamentalism, as well as Ahmad Mansour and Team from *mind prevention*, esp. Kaan Pecenek and Asmen Ilhan for their eye-opening workshop in Berlin
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- Giorgos Moschos for his contribution in the research workshop in Lesvos
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- Prof. José Manuel Pureza, Prof. Teresa Toldy, Prof. Júlia Garraio, Pe. António Martins and Rafaela Jacinto for their valuable contributions of helpful experts for an initial in-depth reflection and sharing of their knowledge and concerns, in the workshop in Évora.
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- Prof. Celeste Santos e Silva for her support, especially with translation support.
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# Kinder- und Jugendtheater Dortmund

Our associated partners for their collaboration:

- Jugendring Dortmund
- JuLeiCa Koordination Dortmund

## La Transplanisphere, Paris

La Transplanisphère would like to thank the colleagues associated to the project: Caronie Berthod, Noémie Besace, Alexandra Breukink, Emeline Chaumereuil, Elia Chevrier, Emma Doude van Troostwijk, Yana Klisovska, Coline Lechat, Ophélie Lucarelli, Nicola Loré, Hassmeni Mathevannan, Hugo Pereira, Taïgué Ahmed.

# #Theatre.Makes.Politics – project overview

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## **Empowering democracy through theatre: confronting anti-democratic forces in Europe**

The consortium recognizes the critical importance of equipping youth workers engaged with young Europeans with creative tools. #TMP proposes to critically examine and counter the manipulative tactics employed by populists and extremists across the political spectrum. The project investigates the mechanisms by which certain groups foster opposition and even hostility towards others, including refugees, Muslims, non-believers, LGBTQ+ individuals, and various marginalized communities.

## Project outcomes and goals

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The project aims to achieve the following through its deliverables (creative worktools, handbook, and network):

- 1. Empowering Youth Workers:** Enabling youth workers to shift perspectives in their practical work, fostering an effective inclusive and understanding environment.
- 2. Promoting Understanding:** Helping young people to develop a deeper comprehension of individuals from diverse backgrounds, overcoming prejudices and stereotypes.
- 3. Encouraging Interaction:** Facilitating opportunities for young people to engage, collaborate, and form connections with individuals they might not otherwise encounter.

## Target audience

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The project specifically addresses the needs of professional dance-, media- and theatre pedagogues, as well as youth workers, including:

- Youth educators
- Social workers
- Professionals in youth education (members of associate partners)

These individuals will participate as learners in workshops and contribute to practical research during training courses.

# General Objective

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- 1. Combating anti-democratic attitudes:** Empowering and encouraging youth workers to incorporate methods that address and counter anti-democratic attitudes, including racism, nationalism, intolerance, and religious fundamentalism in all its manifestations.
- 2. Expanding a methodological tool kit:** Enhancing the repertoire of methods and tools available for youth work by integrating techniques from theatre pedagogy and other performing arts.
- 3. Developing skilled practitioners:** Establishing a core group of youth trainers and workers equipped with the necessary skills to address sensitive issues effectively in their work and serve as multipliers, spreading knowledge and best practices within their communities.

By focusing on these objectives, the project aims to create a more inclusive, understanding, and democratic society through the power of youth work and creative engagement.

## Project timeline and phases

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The project began with a Research Phase from September 2022 to January 2023, focusing on gathering data, insights, and foundational knowledge to support the initiative. This phase took place in the 5 associated countries. 4 workshops gave the stakeholders to gather in France (Paris-Montreuil), Greece (Lesvos), North Macedonia (Berovo) and Portugal (Evora). For every workshop, a specific topic was explored and led by the hosting organization.

Following this, the Design Phase took place between January 2023 and June 2023, during which key concepts, structures, and methodologies were developed and discussed between partners online. In September and October 2023, a Partners' Workshop was held in Lesvos, Greece, bringing together stakeholders to collaborate, share ideas, and refine approaches. By January 2024, the project moved into its Pilot Youth Workshops, testing and implementing activities designed to engage and educate young participants.

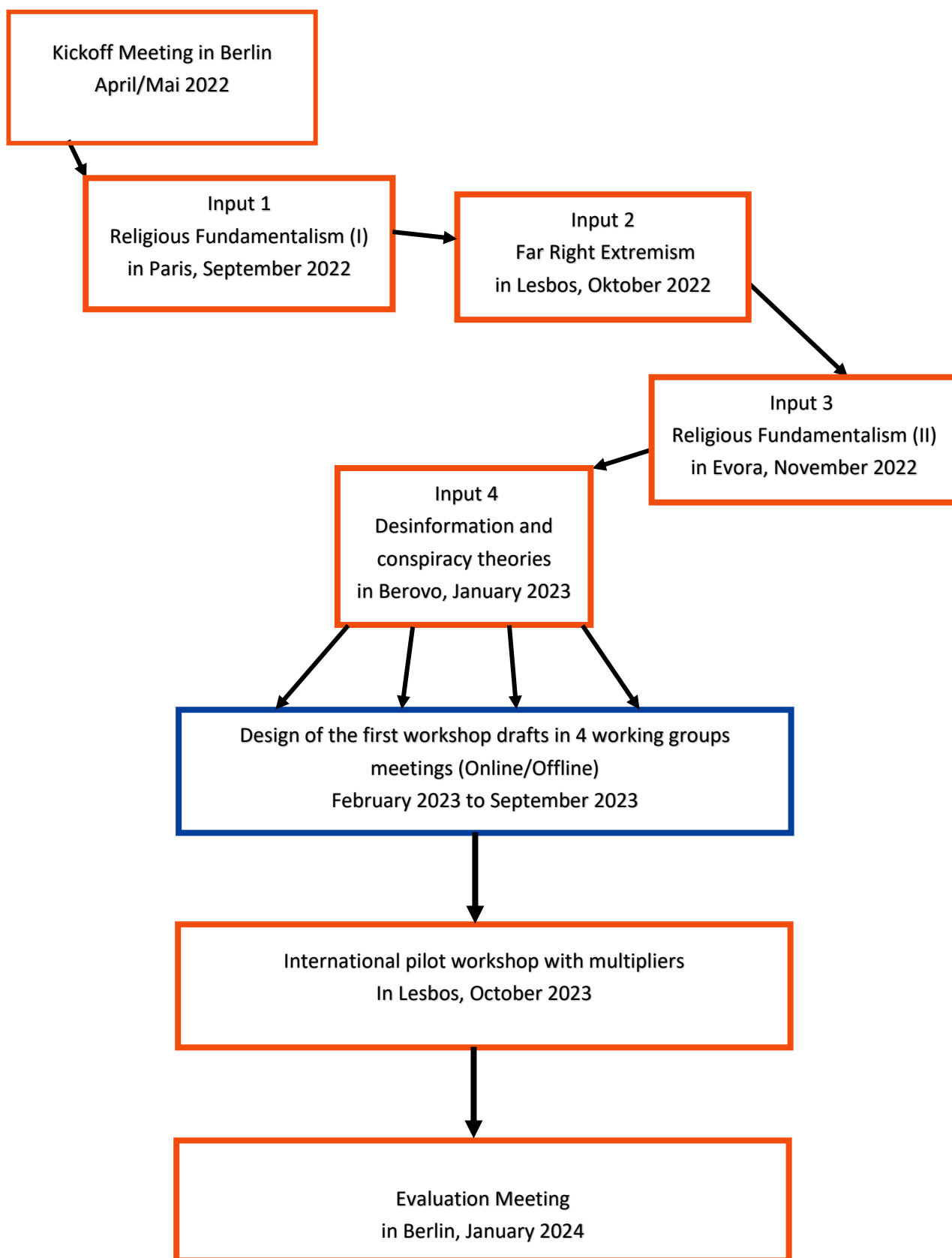
Simultaneously, from January to December 2024, the focus shifted to the Handbook Design, ensuring the development of a comprehensive resource to support the initiative. As the handbook neared completion, translation and final editing occurred between November 2024 and April 2025, ensuring the content was accessible and polished for publication.

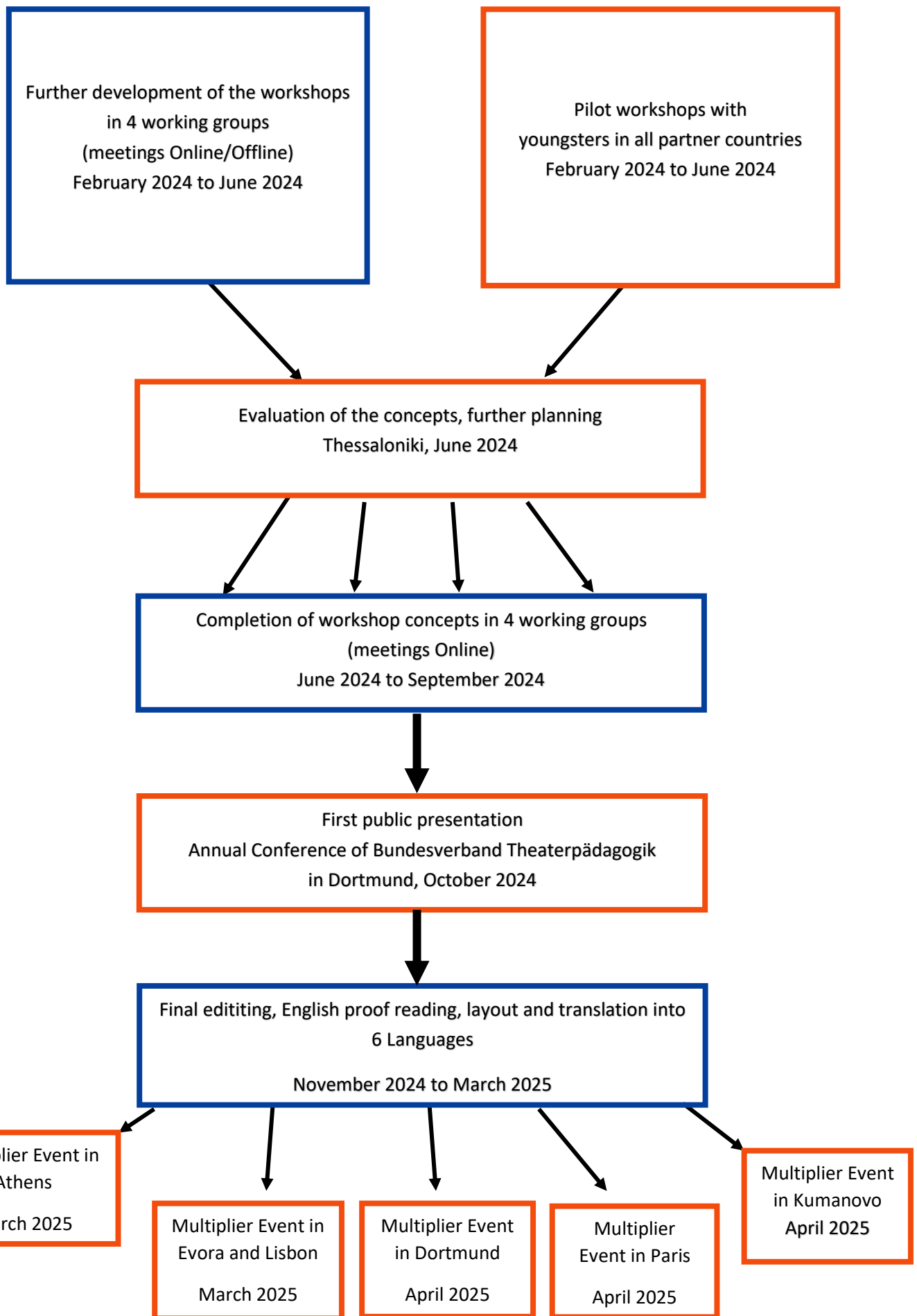
Finally, the project's Promotion and Publications Phase was scheduled from February to April 2025, focusing on dissemination and outreach to maximize impact and engagement. The project has been

concluded by multiplier events in the differing countries of the partnership associated with a major promotional event in Greece (Athens, March 25). The project results of the Theatre.Makes.Politics#Theater.Power.Politics project allowed us to collect the methods designed into a handbook. This too has been enriched by videos and tools available online which have been widely disseminated amongst youth organizations in Europe as a valuable tool for youth workers. Another outcome of the project was also dozens of youth workers trained to the new methodologies and capable of renewing their workshops with youth groups, including young people living with fewer opportunities. Together, they will address the fight against extremism in Europe and the promotion of the EU civic values in a creative way.

# Theatre.Makes.Politics – Timeline

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# How the political situation evolved in the partner countries from 2022-25

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## Portugal

In Portugal, until three or four years ago, it was normal for the political centre to alternate, with the PSD more or less conservative and the PS more or less democratic socialist. However, in the most recent elections (2020 and 2023), a populist party (CHEGA) managed to elect deputies to the National Assembly for the first time in modern history (post-Estado Novo-the state of the Dictator Salazar ). As the influence of this extreme nationalist right has grown, the more radical left-wing parties have lost ground in terms of influence and voters. As for the major traditional parties, none of them has managed to achieve a stable majority.

Investing in hate speech of a distinctly misogynist, homophobic, transphobic and xenophobic nature, even referring to intentions to change laws and the constitution, spread in the style of Bolsonaro's Brazil and Trump's USA, often using religion through evangelical churches and more conservative sectors of the Catholic Church. In fact, moderate right-wing and conservative parties are using far-right causes, such as security, to extend their influence to the far right. It's worth noting that Portugal has one of the lowest crime rates in Europe, even among immigrants.

## Greece

After the 2023 Parliamentary Elections New Democracy won a clear victory, which secured another term for Mitsotakis. The elections reflected a stable political environment, though Greece continues to face challenges such as youth unemployment, income inequality, and migration issues.

As in other European countries, far-right parties have gained some ground in Greece, with groups like the Greek Solution gaining support, especially during times of economic or social uncertainty. The country also faces challenges in managing environmental concerns, particularly forest fires and energy resources in the Mediterranean. The government holds a controversial stance on immigration, including building border fences to curb migrant flows from Turkey. Regarding foreign policy the government is strengthening its ties with the US, Israel, and Egypt, and navigating tensions with Turkey over issues in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly regarding territorial waters and energy exploration. Therefore there is significant dissatisfaction from the people particularly regarding austerity, income inequality, and social issues.

And as a result public sector workers, including teachers, nurses, and civil servants, have organized strikes to demand better pay and working conditions. There has been resistance to privatization and cuts to public services, which are seen as a result of austerity measures. Transport workers from

railways and metro services in Athens have been involved in strikes, particularly related to safety concerns and privatization of public transport. Doctors and healthcare workers have staged protests against the underfunding of the public health system and demands for better pay and improved working conditions, exacerbated by the pandemic's strain on healthcare services. Strikes in Greece are not just limited to labor unions but are often part of broader social movements. For example, there have been protests against the government's handling of the refugee crisis, with migrants and civil society organizations also organizing strikes and demonstrations.

The anti-austerity protests from the SYRIZA years are still echoed in some of these movements, with people protesting not just for workers' rights but also for social justice and equality.

## **North Macedonia**

North Macedonia continues to face political and social challenges, particularly since beginning EU accession talks in 2022. Resolving a historic dispute with Bulgaria, including constitutional amendments to recognize a Bulgarian minority, was seen as a step forward but also sparked domestic tensions and debates about national identity

In 2024, the election of Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova as the country's first female president marked a shift in leadership. The right-wing VMRO-DPMNE party, which opposes further constitutional changes, secured a parliamentary majority. This stance complicates EU negotiations and reflects growing public frustration with perceived concessions to foreign powers. Populism and disinformation are increasingly shaping public discourse. Right-wing rhetoric has gained traction, with fringe groups exploiting socio-economic frustrations. Disinformation campaigns, often targeting ethnic divisions, amplify mistrust in institutions and hinder political stability.

Ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, the two largest communities, remain a sensitive issue. While the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement improved minority rights, tensions persist over cultural and economic disparities. Political parties often prioritize divisive agendas, but younger generations show potential for fostering cooperation. North Macedonia's path to the EU remains challenging, requiring efforts to combat extremism, promote inclusivity, and strengthen democratic institutions.

## France

### France in the 2020s: A Period of Political Turbulence and Social Challenges

The 2020s have been a tumultuous decade for France, marked by political fragmentation and social unrest. The June 2022 legislative elections saw significant gains for both the far-right and radical left, despite President Macron's re-election, reflecting an increasing polarization of French politics. For two years, the center-right government struggled to implement its policies due to a lack of a clear majority in the National Assembly. International conflicts, including the wars in Ukraine and Palestine, created political tensions, forcing parties to take sides. The Israel-Palestine conflict, in particular, sparked tensions among students in many schools, accompanied by a rise in racism and antisemitism. 2024 proved to be a pivotal year in French politics. In June, President Macron made the controversial decision to dissolve the National Assembly and call for snap legislative elections in July, following the far-right's victory in the European elections.

This move, incomprehensible to many citizens, resulted in an even more fragmented National Assembly, making the formation of a stable government exceptionally challenging. Unlike other European countries, France lacks a tradition of coalition governments. The country experienced an unprecedented level of political instability, changing its government four times in just one year—a situation not seen since the 1950s. This revolving door of governments has hampered the country's ability to address pressing issues effectively. The conclusion of the Samuel Paty trial on December 20, 2024, marked another significant moment. The trial of those involved in the murder of the middle school teacher by a radicalized Chechen youth sparked intense debates across French society. It highlighted the connection between online hate speech and acts of terrorism, emphasizing the dangers of misinformation and the critical role of education in developing analytical and critical thinking skills.

As France navigates these complex challenges, 2024 will likely be remembered as a turning point, testing the resilience of its democratic institutions and social fabric. The country faces the daunting task of bridging political divides, addressing social tensions, and restoring stability to its governance structures in the coming years.

## Germany

Political developments in Germany over the last three years have been characterised by a number of important events and trends. Time and again, topics such as democracy and populism were at the centre of attention, with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the 2021 federal election and developments in the political landscape having a particularly strong impact on the political climate. The federal election in September 2021 was a defining moment in German politics. After 16 years of Angela Merkel (CDU) as Chancellor, her era came to an end and Olaf Scholz (SPD) ran as the SPD's chancellor candidate. Eventually, the SPD, the Greens and the FDP formed the so-called traffic light coalition, with Olaf Scholz being named the new Chancellor.

The formation of the government marked the end of the Grand Coalition (SPD and CDU/CSU), which had dominated for many years. The new government set itself progressive goals in the areas of climate protection, social justice and digitalisation, but was divided from the outset, as the Greens and FDP in particular have diametrically opposed policy approaches.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to a series of measures such as lockdowns, restrictions on fundamental rights, vaccination requirements and state aid packages that lasted into 2022. While the majority of the population supported the measures, there was increasing criticism and protests, particularly from the right-wing populist and conspiracy-theoretical movements, which perceived the state interventions as a restriction of democracy.

The far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD), the Querdenker movement and Sarah Wagenknecht (a former Die Linke politician who founded a new party called the Sarah Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) in 2024) gained popularity during this time by criticising the government's response to the pandemic and presenting themselves as guardians of 'true' democracy. They accused the government of acting in an authoritarian manner and suppressing civil rights, which increased their popularity among certain segments of the population.

From 2021 to 2024, there were several terrorist attacks and attempted attacks in the Federal Republic of Germany motivated by Islamist or right-wing extremism. While the federal government saw right-wing extremism as the greatest threat and announced numerous measures against it, Islamist terrorism became the focus of public attention, with the liberal refugee policy of the Merkel era being identified as the culprit. Since the Greens, in particular, stand for a humanistic and cosmopolitan society, they too came under particular fire.

Politicians from the right-wing camp have long been calling for tighter restrictions on migration and a reduction in the incentives for refugees to come to Germany.

This thinking has now been adopted by almost all parties, even the Greens. Another decisive event was the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022. The German government played a central role in supporting Ukraine, particularly through arms deliveries, financial aid and the admission of refugees. AfD and BSW deliberately oppose this support and maintain their position.

With their strictly pro-Russian and anti-immigration policies, they were able to win majorities in the last state elections in eastern Germany. In November 2024, the coalition broke up due to irreconcilable differences and new elections were called for February 2025.

Another attack occurred in January 2025. A mentally ill man born in Afghanistan who had recently been ordered to leave the country used a knife to kill a small child and a man who was trying to protect it. Several other people were seriously injured. In response, the conservative candidate for chancellor, Friedrich Merz, put a motion to a vote in the Bundestag.

It was about combating illegal migration and improving internal security using radical means. The fact that Merz accepted a majority with the votes of the AfD for his plans met with fierce criticism, especially from the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party, but also from civil society.

Many media outlets spoke of an 'unprecedented event' and a day that would change 'politics in Germany'. As a result, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of all major German cities every weekend to protest against the threat of a 'shift to the right'.

Nevertheless, Friedrich Merz's conservative CDU emerged as the winner of the election and will form the next government together with the Social Democrats

# Theatre Makes Politics - project overview

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## **an Erasmus+ Youth Project 2022-2025**

- Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik e.V., (BUT), Germany (Project Coordinator)
- La Transplanisphère, France
- Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet), Greece
- Ex-Quorum, Portugal
- Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (CID), Republic of North Macedonia
- Kinder und Jugendtheater Dortmund (KJT), Germany

[theatremakespolitics.eu](http://theatremakespolitics.eu) / [butinfo.de](http://butinfo.de)

The Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik e.V. is the major association for theatre pedagogy in Germany. Next to the federal association it is the umbrella for two further regional associations in Hessen and Baden-ürttemberg and collaborates with the independant regional association for theatre pedagogy in Niedersachsen.

Theatre Pedagogy is a discipline which is mainly known in the German speaking countries, but there are similar professions and colleagues all over Europe and beyond. It brings together pedagogy and social work with methods from performative arts, including performance, film and creative writing. Summarized artistic skills are used as a vehicle to work in the social sector with people of all ages like children, youngsters, adults and seniors. Numerous target groups can be participants of theatre pedagogic groups, projects and courses, like pupils, refugees, prisoners, psychiatric patients, disadvantaged or disabled persons a.s.o.

Nevertheless the majority of theatre pedagogues are working with children and youth in formal and (very often) non formal contexts. The Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik e.V. has about 700 individual members and more than 100 institutional members like theatre-pedagogical centers, socio cultural centers, private or communal theatres and so on. 40 of them educate theatre pedagogues following a strict curriculum created by its association. If participation is successful, participants can be assessed as Theaterpädagog\*in BuT / Theaterpädagogin BuT, a title which is protected by copy right and a strict quality assurance and considered at the highest degree in this profession next to bachelor and master.

Yearly the Bundesverband hosts national conferences with changing topics related to theatre pedagogy. In the last years it organized conferences about cross border projects in Europe, working with refugees, the possibilities and limits of political youth education via theatre pedagogic work a.s.o. In its further education program it offers master classes with outstanding teachers from Germany and Europe for their members and others who are interested.

In the business office the Bundesverband employs three paid colleagues for management, coordination and organizing other types of further education. Additionally it engages colleagues on a project basis for special events like organizing the annual festival of youth clubs at theatres, preparing and organizing conferences a.s.o.

The executive committee of the Bundesverband is completely voluntary. Next to the 1st chairman there are two vice chairmans and 7 assessors, completed by two members of the regional associations. There are several more voluntary working groups which deal with specific topics like internationalisation, working in the health sector, preparing live or digital conferences a.s.o.

# Short abstracts of the practical workshops

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## Far right extremism and populism.

### *Racism and anti-refugees' rhetoric*

The focus of this workshop is racism, populism, far-right extremism, and anti-refugee rhetoric, encouraging participants to critically examine these concepts and explore different perspectives through theatrical methodologies. Following the three-step “creation, presentation, feedback”, participants first reflect individually before collaborating on artistic installations using materials, sounds, and words to represent the four themes. Through performative exercises there will be a transition from symbolic abstraction to real-life connections: Using Theatre of the Oppressed and Educational Drama techniques, groups present dynamic images and develop narratives that explore the underlying mechanisms of these ideologies.

## Searching for Identity - “Everybody is somebody”.

### *Focussing the attraction and threats of extremism*

A workshop to concentrate on the challenges of identity formation in young people, who navigate the contradiction between independence and uncertainty. Overwhelmed by curated choices, media influences, and contradictory narratives, they face immense pressure to define themselves in a landscape filled with misinformation. Right-wing populism and radical Islamism—exploit this uncertainty. Both thrive on insecurity and identity crises, posing significant threats to democracy and social cohesion. *Searching for Identity* critically examines these seemingly opposing yet fundamentally similar forces, analyzing their recruitment tactics and societal impact.

## Religious dogmatism and politics.

*Religious (christianity) dogmatism and politics – and how it moves our lives*

This work explores the complexities of Christianity's contradictory dual legacy of compassion and extremist militancy. Christianity, with its long history, has shaped Western society through both enlightenment and deliberate conflict. Using theatrical practice, participants examine historical memory, gaining perspective on social and human relationships. Key themes include exploitation, extremism, and attitudes toward outsiders. Participants reflect on religion's influence on individuals, families, schools, and society. Through drama in education, young people analyze how religious dogmas, particularly within the Orthodox Church, shape modern life and politics.

## Truth or Lie - simple responses to a complex world.

Disinformation, Malinformation, Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories

We look inside the ever expanding influence of disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories across the digital world. These phenomena have the power to shape our perception of reality and undermine our trust in media, politics, and society. Present across political and religious extremes, they manipulate and exploit emotions of fear and anger to distort public opinion. This workshop aims to explore the dynamics of disinformation, recognize its dangers, and debunk myths in both a humorous and critical way.

# Ideal working conditions

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The influence of working conditions should not be underestimated when it comes to achieving satisfactory results in workshops. I would like to discuss four points in the following:

- Time planning
- Team
- Premises
- Embedding in the organisation



*Photo: Yana Klisovska, taken at the pilot workshop in Lesvos 2023*

## Time planning

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Our workshop concepts are each designed for 4 days of 4-5 hours each. Of course, we are aware that your reality may be quite different. Maybe you only have 1-2 days available, or you want to design a whole semester?



**4 days of 4-5 hours each**

Please consider what impact your scheduling has on the group process. A common problem for many educators is to pack the available time much too full, because you just want to accommodate too much

– we had already addressed the topic above. If you do that, it can cause a lot of stress for the leader and the group, which can lead to a lot of dissatisfaction. Less is often more. Plan for exercises to take longer or much longer than anticipated. If you need less time than planned, consider in advance what you could still play or practice in this case. If you take longer, that's often a good sign: the group is motivated to go deeper into the work. Important question:: how do you end the respective unit before the next one is scheduled for the following day or the following week? Don't start an exercise that requires a lot of explanation or has a high potential for conflict when time is too short.

## Team

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As in most theatre and media education projects, it often makes sense to work with a team rather than alone with the group. At the very least, get an intern on board to help you with the organization and take some of the pressure off you.

### **working in pairs or teams**

Especially with a larger group of 15, 20 or more people, we recommend working in pairs so that you can split the group up from time to time or ensure supervision for the small group work. If you work at a school and are not the teacher yourself, it can be useful to involve the class teacher in the work from time to time, so that the workshop does not remain a closed event, but can be followed up with the processes afterwards. The keyword here is sustainability. Of course, whether or not this is useful always depends on the individual person as well. Trust your intuition.

The workshop 'Searching for Identity' deals, among other things, with 'Islamic fundamentalism'. For many Muslim students, this is a difficult topic because they are often discriminated against because of their religious affiliation and quite a few non-Muslims equate Islam and Islamism. Here it can be very helpful to consult a colleague with a Muslim social background to support these students and to gain greater credibility as a leader.

# Premises

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The rooms in which you carry out the project should not be underestimated either. If you are dealing with a school class, try to find rooms that are not so familiar to the students and remind them of their last maths exam. This could be in or outside of the school, and at the same time makes visible the special feature of the project, that it is not about achieving good grades, but about overcoming prejudices and improving coexistence. It should have a welcoming atmosphere, enough daylight and lamps whose brightness can ideally be varied and is not cold, the windows should not be visible and, of course, you need a lot of space for the movement units, which should not be underestimated.

Sometimes you want to sit on the floor or do floor-based exercises. The floor should therefore be clean and not too cold. Wooden or linoleum floors are ideal for working on, we would advise against tiled or stone floors: they are too cold and there is an increased risk of injury.

If the group is smaller than expected, the question arises as to which of the prepared exercises can no longer be implemented or simply no longer make sense, and which of the exercises are even better suited. It is also possible that completely different exercises present themselves that would not have been conceivable with the planned group.

If the group is large and the room is too small, the situation is different. Can you change the exercises that take up a lot of space, adjust the rules of the game, or do you want to try completely different things with this group that are better suited to this room size? If, on the other hand, the room is too big, you may need to organise room dividers so that you don't get lost in it: are there movable walls, tables and chairs standing around, or even large plants to mark out the playing area and make it smaller?

Or you can go outside: some work units, in particular image theatre or scenic improvisations, can also be easily relocated to other places, in the schoolyard, the basement or the stairwell: ideal conditions for 'site-specific performances' (explanation below at the end of the text).



*Photo: Yana Klisovska, taken at the pilot workshop in Lesvos 2023*

## Embedding in the organisation

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Last but not least, there is the question of how the project is embedded in the organisation in which I am carrying it out – be it a youth centre, a theatre, a cultural centre or a school.

Is the project wanted by everyone or is there competition with other groups or spaces? Is it only wanted by the management, but colleagues are sceptical? Or is it the other way around, with everyone supporting the project but the management not taking it that seriously?

These are questions that should be considered.

Where can I find allies in my organisation, who can support me in my work – not only in specific ways but also in team meetings or the internal and external organisation, which questions need to be clarified urgently before the project can begin? Who do I urgently need to get on board, and what can I do to ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction at the end of the day?

# What is a site-specific performance?

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Site-specific theatre is a theatrical production that is created from or for a space outside of the traditional theatre space. We look for exciting locations and, taking into account the spatial conditions, the specific aesthetics and atmosphere, stage theatre presentations there, such as Orpheus in the Underwood, storytelling in a castle ruin or the interpretation of a classic piece in an unusual environment. Often, the audience moves through several rooms in which different scenes are played. These are often buildings or outdoor locations that were not originally intended for theatrical purposes.

(Source: <https://www.theaterschule.de/praxisorte/site-specific-theatre-und-immersives-theater/>)

# How to use this book

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The workshops presented here were developed by four international working groups that worked independently of each other: Workshop 1 on the topic “Far Right-Extremism/Anti-Refugee Rhetoric” was developed by the Greek and North Macedonian partners, Workshop 2 entitled “Search for Identity” by the French and the two German partners (BuT and KJT), Workshop 3 entitled “Christian Religious Dogmatism”, Here the Portuguese joined forces with the French and Greek partners, and for workshop 4 “Truth or Lie”, it was BuT, the North Macedonian and Greek partners working together.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the four workshops differ significantly in their design and it is obvious that several colleagues have worked on each of them. We believe that this is not a disadvantage, but on the contrary, it is an expression of the diversity of our international and multi professional team with experts from 5 countries.

A reader may prefer one style of workshop over another. Hopefully this choice will give a variety for everyone to look for something that suits them..

The timings of the length of exercises given are estimates. We realise that anyone who has ever worked with groups using creative methods knows how difficult it is to plan the precise duration of a workshop in minutes and seconds..Where something interesting occurs in discussion or scene creations this shouldn't be curtailed prematurely. Other exercises go much faster than expected. Of course, the size of the group also plays a role here. The larger the group, the more time you should anticipate.

Often, less is more. Give an exercise or game session the time it needs Include clarifications and reflections. Take out what you do not need when you are working to a schedule. Nothing would be less helpful than rushing through the program because you want to fit everything you have planned into it. Something essential could be missed.

Each day begins with a warm-up which acts as a catalyst to get the group moving and into the game, to reduce fear of contact and to build confidence etc. All of this is well known in theater pedagogy, which is why we usually do not describe warm-ups in great detail. However, sometimes a warm-up already includes a thematic introduction, in which case we have described it in more detail.

Otherwise, we would like to refer you to the appendix of the handbook with numerous exercises and game suggestions and trust that the facilitators will pick the ones that best suit them, the group and the situation.

There are extra chapters on image theater, forum theater and TV shows, because we often use these formats and do not want to repeat ourselves. You can find them in the appendix of this manual.

Again, nothing is set in stone: a real forum theater, as described by its founder Augusto Boal, would take at least a day or more. Feel free to pick and choose the elements you think are necessary and leave out others. The same applies to image theater, which also goes back to Boal, and the TV shows.

We explicitly encourage our readers to experiment. Pick and choose what is interesting for you, appropriate for the group, and feasible in terms of time.

Of course, there is a logic to our structure: where we start, where the center of the workshops are positioned, and how we end them. The individual workshop days also make sense in their order. Therefore, we advise you to roughly follow the structure of the workshops. So, play, try out, discard parts and invent new ones.

We wish you every success!

## #theatre.makes.politics

# Workshop : « Far Right extremism and populism. Racism and anti-refugees' rhetoric »

## Workshop abstract

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The purpose of this particular workshop is to address the concepts of racism, populism, far-right extremism and anti-refugee rhetoric as entrenched, but also to encourage the participants to question their personal perception of the concepts and explore the perspective of the others. Through an artistic imprint to face all the mutually complementary aspects even if they are conflicting and to try to deal with them within the safe framework of the theatrical form.

The method to be followed is Bruner's spiral, which includes three basic faces: creation, sharing presentation, feedback. This cycle is repeated, giving creators and audience the opportunity to examine their theme more deeply.

The workshop is focusing at first on the individuality of each participant and then participants have to create through collaboration in groups their artistic impressions of the four concepts: populism, anti-refugees' rhetoric, far right extremism. These artistic works consist of installations of materials, sounds and words concerning the chosen theme of each group. They then react as a group with the installations after a kinetic warm up that follows the instructions of the facilitator.

They create a collective machine as an extension of the installation after exploring their individual kinesiology and then through the method of automatic writing they capture the unstructured, primary text, resulting from previous experience. They then describe the installations as the engine that activates racism, populism, right-wing extremism, anti-refugees' rhetoric. From the symbolic and the general they pass to the specific that is to connect with real life through investigation of their role. The game of "bombs and shields" can be helpful to do this. Then the groups successively present the dynamic images that they have just created and using techniques from Theatre of the Oppressed and Educational Drama they explore the resulting stories.

Each group lists 4 ideas that emerged from the substitutions as possible solutions - and make proposals in the form of a manifesto. They then create a final collective sculpture, to capture the expectations after this address. (Hope sculpture) And finally they are closing the workshop with a ritual action.

# Methodology

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We select a spiral course, which is based on Bruner's Constructivism (1966). His theory includes three basic consecutive phases: creation – sharing presentation to other participants – feedback from the audience. At the stage of feedback, the audience comments on what they have seen concerning its form, content and the effect that the presentation had on them. These comments aim at helping the group who made the presentation revise their work and make changes to clarify it and bring the presentation closer to its goal. The cycle creation - sharing/presentation - feedback is repeated, giving creators and audience the opportunity to examine their theme more deeply and extensively. By this way knowledge is structured by learners themselves as they acquire new experiences, and every new piece of information is incorporated into their cognitive potential.

It Could Be Me – It Could Be You Drama/Theatre in Education methodologies and activities for raising awareness on human rights and refugees, Edited by Nassia Choleva Nassia Choleva, Published by the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr) p.132

## Aims of the workshop format

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- deposition of individual stigma
- artistic and expressive media research
- sharing documents and updating on the current reality
- participatory non-hierarchical creation of artistic impressions about these concepts
- exploration with the method “Forum theater” tools to address and deconstruct the oppressions born within the environments we explore

## Target group(s)

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- Youngsters 15-20 years old
- Group of 12 - 22

# Materials required

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## Day 1

- Magazines, newspapers, markers, cardboard, scissors
- Measuring paper and markers
- Mobile phones and internet
- Newspaper articles, news clippings, youtube videos, photographs, information from the press or from surveys, legislation, personal testimonies, historical documents.

## Day 2

- Five random items that can be found in the lab area
- Materials and items collected by the groups from a strolling

## Day 3 and Day 4

- We' ll use the installations that have been constructed the previous days.
- Music from a laptop or another source

# Required room situation

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A large room with many corners where the groups can work separately. Outdoor space for collecting natural materials. (if it is possible)

*The concept described is designed for four days. Depending on the focus, target group and time resources, shorter versions can be put together from the individual modules suggested.*

# 1st workshop day: “Documentations on the topics”

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“ We do not lack communication, on the contrary we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present. ”

– Deleuze, G. Guattari\*

## Introduction to the topic

### I. Familiarization exercise: “The collage of myself”

**Time:** 40 minutes of preparation + 30 minutes of presentations

**Goal:** Acquaintance among group members and artistic exploration of whom I am in the given moment. An introduction to the concept of identity based on the principles of intercultural education, which perceives self and identity as non-solid, but dynamic and constantly changing.

**Description:** individually each participant chooses from the offered materials images and words that express - characterize him/her and creates a self-presentation image.

### II. Mind warm exercises: “The iceberg of civilization”

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Goal:** Introduction to the concept of cultural identity based on the principles of intercultural education, which perceives culture as not fixed and identity as not fixed, but open to influences from the environment.

**Description:** as a group we investigate the elements of culture that we consider to be visible on the surface (visible part) and the elements of culture that are hidden below the surface and make up the bulk of the iceberg. We write them on the measuring paper with different colors. Then we discuss them in plenary and possibly present some of the elements that are below the surface with still images.

## Core topic

### I. "Definition of concepts"

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** *The aim is to clarify the concepts, which are also treated as non-one-dimensional, but words that have the potential to be charged with thoughts and experiences of the young people in the group. After this process we have all become communicators of what each concept means to each member of the group.*

**Description** Children do a google search on their phones for each concept for 10 minutes in a circle. Then any child who wants gives the definition of each concept in the way they want, either from their own recruitment or from the field research they did. This process is done for each of the concepts:

- a. populism
- b. racism
- c. far-right extremism
- d. anti-refugee

rhetoric<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

### II. "Sharing documents"

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** *The aim is to correlate the concepts we are investigating with current affairs.*

**Description** They are divided into four groups according to the topic they are most interested in. If there is a disproportion in the number of children who choose a team, we urge them to ensure that the teams are balanced. Each group then tries to match the documents to the topic they have chosen. After they are read and shared in plenary, the participants argue and classify them into the four main concepts we explore. If there are conflicting opinions, a discussion takes place and the plenary makes a collective decision.

## 2nd workshop day: “Collecting material”

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“ Art begins not with flesh but with the house. That is why architecture is the first of the arts.\* ”

### Construction of installations

#### I. “Lets try an installation!”

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** The aim is to understand how a concept can be captured in space using materials, objects and their composition.

**Description:** The facilitator chooses five random objects that he can find in the school area and placing them in an arrangement asks the children words or phrases that come to mind, a title for what they see, a story. Then he asks the children to change the arrangement of the objects and the feedback process is repeated. **“Strolling for collecting primordial material”**

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** The collection of objects that will be used for the composition of the visual installation.

**Description:** the participants go for a walk in a nearby open place in order to collect materials and sounds - soundscapes with their mobile phones for their installations according to the theme chosen by each group (Alternatively, if there is no possibility for the group to go outside, we ask the children to bring materials and objects from home and we give them time to discuss in their groups what each member will bring).

#### II. “Construction of installations”

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Goal:** The aim is the creation of a visual installation by each group, which conceptually carries the theme they have chosen.

**Description:** we use the materials collected from the walk but also materials that will already be present in the area such as: newspapers, magazines, recycling materials, garbage, personal items (e.g. photos) branches, grids, wood, immortals-agave-sisal (they exist in Lesvos), reeds, shoes, clothes, balls of wool, pebbles, cards and we make the installations. Each group builds its own installation depending on the theme it has chosen (far-right extremism, populism, racism, anti-refugee rhetoric). After about 30 minutes we observe the works, comment on them and put titles.

## 3rd workshop day: “Post-dramatic transfer of Boal”

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“ This is, precisely, the task of all art and, from colors and sounds, both music and painting similarly extract new harmonies, new plastic or melodic landscapes, and new rhythmic characters that raise them to the height of the earth’s song and the cry of humanity: that which constitutes tone, health, becoming, a visual and sonorous bloc.\* ”

### Body installations

#### I. The conceptual body (still images)

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** Understanding the body's ability to produce meaning depending on its position and its relationship to space and what is in it.

**Description:** With the technique complete the image and the technique one at a time, we ask the group of participants to complete the installations with their bodies, perceiving themselves. living extension of them in a frozen image. We discuss what concepts are created each time.



## II. "Creation of the collectives machines"

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** *The creation of the collective "machine" - an extension of the installation.*

**Description:** In a process of individual kinesiology research, each participant tests and invents all the possible ways in which his body can become a conceptual extension of the installation, in the creation of which he participated. Everyone is then instructed to decide and make his/her personal choreography, composing a repetitive movement pattern in the form of a "machine", resulting from his/her previous research.

## III. "Fishing for words"

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Goal:** *To produce concepts, ideas and texts, as well as to record the feelings arising from the physical interaction with visual installations.*

**Description:** with the method of automatic writing we capture the unstructured, primary text, resulting from previous experience.

## IV: "Sharing the artistic process/Dynamising the installations"

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** To share concepts, ideas, feelings and texts in relation to our subjects, which arose through an artistic process.

**Description** With the one-at-a-time technique, everyone's "machine" is presented until all members of the group enter and the collective "machine" of each installation is spontaneously created. The rest of the members of the plenary become spectators and with the help of the animator occurs the first sharing - feedback on the creation of each group. We then describe the installations as the engine that activates racism, populism, right-wing extremism, anti-refugee rhetoric. And we ask the groups the question: What would be the form of the machine that is activated by this engine and produces all of the above and we ask them to capture it with a frozen image and in relation to the installation. Once the frozen images are ready we ask them to add a repetitive motion and then phrases recorded from the "Fishing the words" exercise.

The groups represent their composition and the audience gives feedback to questions posed by the animator, such as: what is happening? Who are these people? Where are they? What kind of relationships do they have with each other? etc. We also draw attention to elements of form, use of

levels, space, relationship with the audience, thus helping groups to become aware of the theatrical functions of their bodies, in order to then strengthen their composition.

As a basic methodological principle, we follow the creation-presentation-feedback model. After the distribution is complete we give each group 10 minutes to decide what role each person has in this machine.

## 4th workshop day: “Live extension and transfer”

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“ *Becoming is an antimemory.\** ”

”

### The spectrum of difference

#### I. “Bombs - shields”

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Goal:** *Through a playful process to physically experience the condition I am threatened - protected and then to think about the role they created the day before, what is threatened and what can protect it.*

**Description:** The participants spread out around the space. Each person chooses one other person without making their choice known; that person is their Bomb. Then choose another person; that one is their Shield. The aim of the game is to keep your Shield between yourself and your Bomb. There will be a lot of movement to begin with and the facilitator can count down from ten to one as the Bomb is about to explode. On the command freeze, the facilitator goes around the group asking if people managed to keep their Shield between themselves and their Bomb.

#### II. “Portraits”

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Goal:** *To make the CV of their role*

**Description:** with a guided improvisation, we ask the participants to visualize a real character based on the previous composition (how old is he, where does he live, is the place he is familiar or foreign, did he eat last night, what is his name, does he work? Where? What are his fears? His dreams? Is he alone where he is? etc.). On the occasion of the previous game they think about who can be his bomb and who can be his shield

#### III. “One step ahead”

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** *To investigate the social status of their role*

**Description:** Participants are placed in a straight line. Some statements are heard and if the role they made in the previous exercise answers yes to these statements, then the participant takes a step forward, if they answer no, they stand still. Roles are then revealed and feedback is given regarding the placement of the team in the space. What are the obstacles each character faces?

#### **IV: "Spectrum of difference"**

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Goal:** *To explore the ideological background of their role*

**Description** In lines: The space is defined as a spectrum from absolute "agree" to absolute "disagree". In the middle is the starting point, where we all stand to hear a statement. Various statements on social issues are read. For example: "the refugees should have stayed in their country to fight like we did in '21", "The influx of immigrants and refugees is changing our culture", "you can't give benefits to the refugees while not giving them to the Greeks", "Greeks are racists", "Religion is something you are born with". Participants stand in the space according to what they think their role believes. They are then asked to argue in role why they are standing at this point. If they hear something they hadn't thought of and change their mind, they'll have to shift in space. Accordingly, those who argue, try to influence the others and move them in space.

Warning: There is NO dialogue. We only listen to arguments without commenting on them. We are NOT standing still, we should "take a stand!". We try to use speech and arguments that will make others shift in the space (therefore inside them!), even if only slightly! We do NOT judge the statements made during the game, nor the opinions of others.

“ *One ventures from home on the thread of a tune. Along sonorous, gestural, motor lines that mark the customary path of a child and graft themselves onto or begin to bud "lines of drift" with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities.\** ”

## **V: “Composition: Live extension of installations”**

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** From the symbolic and the general to the specific, that is to connect with real life. The composition of a theatrical impression that highlights the generative causes of the 4 themes, the resulting conflicts, but also their consequences and results.

**Description:** They return to their groups and discuss with each other for 10 minutes what they have learned about their roles from the previous exercises, but also their individual research on the role they have structured. Based on this knowledge they can correct whatever is needed in the composition they have already made from the previous day. They are then instructed to think about what the cause of this composition is and what they think the result might be. And with this in mind they make two more images: one for the past and one for the future.

During the process of creating the images, they are successively given the following theatrical tools to communicate the meanings they want: the posture of the body, the expression of the face, the direction of the gaze, the positioning of the bodies spatially and in relation to the installation. Gradually each group can add to their work elements such as: soundscapes, music, movement patterns, rhythmic machines, stage objects, speech and sounds with the mouth or with the body.

## **VI: “Presentation of compositions – Theater of the Oppressed techniques and Educational Drama techniques”**

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** *Reflection of the compositions that have been created, the investigation of the dynamics and correlations that produce the 4 themes and an initial attempt to overturn and change the impasses that arise from them.*

**Description:** The groups successively present the dynamic images they have just created and using theater techniques of the Oppressed and Educational Drama we explore the resulting stories. We use techniques such as: interrogation chair – hot seating, thought detection, inner voices and cop in head, automatic writing, exploring oppressor – oppressed relationships and, where possible, substitutions to change the negative results and impasses these compositions produced.

Hot seat technique : <https://dramaresource.com/hot-seating/>

Cop in the head : <https://d2leuf3vilid4d.cloudfront.net/-/media/6C516528C6E44CBDB30F0174FD0A91D6.ashx?rev=05EA324BF748D93858E022428B6F947D>

## **VII: “Collective sculpture of hope and manifesto”**

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** *The strategies and solutions proposed by the public to each problem should be captured as knowledge, recorded as political institutional proposals and the groups should think about where they could direct them and what they expect from it.*

**Description:** Each group lists 4 ideas that emerged from the substitutions as possible solutions - proposals in the form of a manifesto.

The proposals are presented in pictures and where they are addressed (Parliament, EU, etc.) - Collective sculpture. They then create a final collective sculpture, which will capture the expectations after this address (“Hope sculpture”).

## Closing rituals

### I. “circular dance”

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Goal:** *Through a group ritual pattern we try to structure a collective “machine” that produces liberation and not oppression. Self-discharge.*

**Description:** We hold hands and walk into the space with a guide (the rest of the group are blindfolded) in a spiral. Then the spiral opens and we join hands in a circular dance.

### II: “The Collective Hope”

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Goal:** How would we like to be collectively? How can we envisioning the new (“The Ikarian concept of time”):

**Ikaria is a small island in the Aegean, where the inhabitants enjoy their everyday life and do not pay any attention to time.**

**Description: Discuss Utopia!** An utopia (ου - τόπος in Greek language, that means does not exist) typically describes an imaginary community or society that possesses highly desirable or near-perfect qualities for its members It was coined by Sir Thomas More for his 1516 book *Utopia*, which describes fictional island society in the New World.

See also: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia>

### III. "Ikariotic Dance"

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Goal:** Find a collective Rhythm

**Description:** We all hold the music and rhythm together and then move individually to the same music and rhythm in harmony with the group.

Video Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njFa7KZCYKA>

“ It is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat.\* ”

\*Deleuze, G. Guattari, F. (transl. Tomlison, H., & Burchell, Gr.) (1996), *What is philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press

## Workshop: „Searching for Identity – Everybody is somebody“ Focussing the attraction and threats of Extremism

### Workshop abstract

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We live in a time of multiple crises, be it wars, environmental destruction, climate change, social inequality, growing migration movements, etc. At the same time, everything is in motion: what was true yesterday is no longer relevant today. All of this has been discussed many times.

It is not easy to find your way in this time and not to lose courage and hope for a worthwhile future.

This is a particularly big challenge for young people, who are already searching for their identity: Who am I, who do I want to be and where am I going?

The desire for support, clarity and unambiguous messages is therefore understandable. This is where fundamentalists and extremists come in, who seem to offer exactly that. They know no grey areas, no uncertainty, no ambiguity, no not-knowing: there is only black or white, right or wrong.

The workshop 'Searching for Identity' gets to the bottom of two of these extremist forces, which are complementary but surprisingly similar in their basic assumptions.

Both pose a great danger to our democracy and social coexistence. On the one hand, right-wing populist and right-wing extremist forces in Europe (and the world) have been on the rise for a long time and are influencing social debates. In particular, the way they deal with refugees and people with a history of migration is at the centre of attention, but also their attitude towards dissidents, members of the LGBTQ community and other social groups that advocate for ecology, equality or alternative ways of life.

On the other side, there is radical Islamism, which fundamentally rejects the Western way of life and, in its most extreme form, jihadism, does not shy away from violence and terror. A possible door opener for these two extremist forces is the insecurity and fear of the future, not to mention the identity crisis described above, which is becoming increasingly widespread among young people.

This workshop aims to expose the fatal attraction and manipulative strategies of these groups. Young people are encouraged to question whether building one's identity on the devaluation and contempt of others can really lead to happiness and satisfaction.

At the same time, they are encouraged to recognise that ignorance, helplessness, ambiguity is something deeply human that can be dealt with, that empathy and understanding for others is desirable, and that it can be very beneficial to encounter the 'strange', the unknown, not per se with rejection, but with curiosity - and in this way to get a positive and open-minded attitude towards the diversity of our society.

If you are planning to organise this workshop with your group, we recommend that you read our article on 'Extremism and Identity' in the appendix of this handbook, which contains further fundamental thoughts to support your event.

## Aims of the workshop format

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- creating a good and playful atmosphere which invites the participants to play, let go, exchange their thoughts, try out new things without judgment
- Understanding the motives that make extremist movements so attractive to young people in particular
- understanding of the main characteristics and strategies of right extremism and islamic fundamentalism (esp. Salafism)
- soft skills: empowering to develop empathy for others, cooperative and social learning
- understanding and overcoming assumptions which create othering and dehumanization
- learn to handle situations with friends who are attracted to extreme or even extremist ideas
- supporting youngsters to develop a human, positive, inclusive and enlightened identity

## Target group(s)

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- youngsters from 15-20 years
- Group size: 6-15 (If there are more participants, we recommend a second facilitator).
- Also very helpful: an islamic scientist /teacher or other specialist for islamic religion, or just a facilitator with a muslim background to give more credibility to the unit about islamic fundamentalism, and, if possible, an expert for right populism/extremism as well.

## Materials required

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Post it notes, pens, a board (ideally a white board with markers), music affair and loud speaker, notebook, projector and screen (or white wall).

# Required room situation

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Safe space with a good atmosphere (description in the chapter “good conditions for the work”) not too small that participants can play and dance (70 square meters at least for 10 participants), ideally add a second and maybe third room or space for the work in small groups in between - which can be smaller.

## 1st workshop day: “Create a common space, questioning identity”

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### Introduction to the topic

- Introduction on the program of the day and the final objective:
- to open the topics, the mind spaces, to get to know each other, to create a theatrical proposal out of this experience
- Emphasis of the day: feeling powerful/ powerless

### Core topic

- (Morning session): Warm up, to get to know each other, becoming a group, theatrical exploring of the subject “power/powerless”
- Opening Warm-up exercise

## I. "Choose a camp"

**Time:** 15-20 min.

**Goal:** To react to the questions on the topic "groups and social relation to community".

**Description:** "Position on the Scale"

Participants engage in a physical activity that encourages reflection on their opinions, feelings, or beliefs about the given topic, and allows them to visualize the diversity of perspectives within the group.

Participants stand in a straight line, spaced evenly, at the center of the room. Each person stands directly behind the other, not side by side.

The facilitator explains that their position in the line represents a "neutral" stance. This means that where they stand initially doesn't reflect agreement or disagreement yet.

Responding to questions: The facilitator will pose a series of statements or questions to the group. Participants are asked to position themselves along a scale. Right side: represents complete agreement. Left side: represents total disagreement. Anywhere in between: reflects varying degrees of agreement or disagreement.

As each question is asked, participants move along the line to place themselves according to how they feel about the statement. This creates a visual representation of the range of opinions in the room.

After everyone has positioned themselves, the facilitator may invite one or two participants to share why they chose their specific position. Participants are encouraged to change their position after hearing others' perspectives, if they feel their opinion has shifted.

Questions to react on by taking position on the right-left "scale":

I know which group I belong to around me.



Being part of the 'coolest group' is defined by values.

Being part of the 'coolest group' is defined by music.

Being part of the 'coolest group' is defined by dress code.

It feels isolating to be outside of a group.

A community is a space where people share values and support each other.

The essence of a group lies in shared values.

After this exercise, open a circle of discussion for the group. Offer them to explore the questions below in the frame of being "member of a group".

Which group do you know around you?

What is to be part of the “coolest group” - symbols, values, music, dress code?



How is it to be outside of a group?

What is a community for you? A crew? A safe space for good feelings?

What is the essence of the group? The values?

## II. “Leading and Following”

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Goal:** To react to the questions on the topic Feeling powerful/powerless

**Description:** same exercise as in I, this time addressing the friends/enemies topic

"Position on the Scale" (same exercise as in I)

Questions to react on by taking position on the right-left “scale”:

A group has clear rules that everyone must follow.



Knowing what is okay for me and where my limits are is important in a group.

There are consequences to joining a group.

A group treats outsiders with respect and consideration.

After this exercise, open a second circle of discussion for the group. Offer them to explore the questions below in the frame of being “member of a group”.

What are the rules of a group?



What is ok for me, what are my limits?

What are the consequences if you join a group?

How does the group consider the others?

10' Break

**Back to work: the Zombie game** *description in the chapter [“Exercises and Games”](#)*

A little game to reconnect participants into a fun and collective mood.

**Description:** same exercise as in I, this time addressing the friends/enemies topic

**Goal:** To react to the questions on being part of a society.

Questions to react on by taking position on the right-left “scale”:

The context I live in significantly influences my perspective and actions.

My views on climate change are strongly formed by my personal experiences



My views on Wars are strongly formed by my personal experiences

My views on Religion are strongly formed by my personal experiences,

My views on Democracy are strongly formed by my personal experiences

My views on Gender are strongly formed by my personal experiences

I can tell the most important topics that have a big impact on my life.

After this exercise, open a third circle of discussion for the group. Offer them to explore the questions bellow in the frame of being “member of a society”.

How do you consider the context you live in?



What is your relation on topics like: climate change, wars, religion, democracy, gender?  
Others?

What 3 topics are the most important for you?

Create 3 balanced groups based on the 3 topics that raise most interest. Dispatch the 3 groups as a triangle. Its now time to create theatre!

### III. “The individual still image”

- Tell the group that they are entering a training game, to prepare them for the next step.
- The 3 groups stand with their backs turned to the facilitator.
- The facilitator calls a word (example: tomato, train, Australia, greed, violet, storm, stone...).
- Every member of the 3 groups turn to the other with individually mime / create a still image corresponding to the word. There is no “good” mime, it’s about having fun by miming a still image and watching the other doing it at the same time.
- Exercise “I’m a tree” . “I’m a pizza.” “I’m a grocery bag.” Exercice by group. Create a group still image where everyone comes after the other, anouncing it’s role and miming it. (example: I’m a tree, I’m the bird ontop of the tree, I’m the bush down the tree, I’m the mushroom next to the tree...) (see: *description in the chapter “image theatre”*).

#### Variation

Open a brainstorming/ discussion about: Do you know situations where people feel “lost”, not integrated, helpless? How do you feel about those personal issues? Collect examples on Post It Notes (you will use it later PM)

#### Creative Theatre exercise

### **Phase #1:**

- ask the 3 groups to create together 1 still image representing situations where people feel helpless or in a crisis.
- They have 1' to talk inside their groups to prepare a proposal. It has to be quickly made to preserve rhythm. The images are static and silent.
- Every group presents its still image to the other and stays in position. The other members I asked to imagine "who is who" in the still image, as a comment/contribution to the image.

### **Phase #2:**

- ask the 3 groups to propose 2 new images besides the one they already created, like 3 different steps.
- Give them 3 minutes to imagine and rehearse the 2 new visions combined to the first one.
- Then the 3 groups show their collection of images, one after the others.

### **Feedback session**

Ask the participants about their feelings and thoughts on the experience. What do people need if they feel lost, helpless, in a crisis? What is a good support, who can help them? How? What about you (the participants), do you know these kinds of situations? If yes, what has helped you? They may react on the topics, the theatre work, the personal feeling on performing...).

## **Closing ritual**

### **"Clapping and congrats"**

Ask the group to make a ritual before ending a session. At first, a clapping, then a shake hands congrats mix-up walk *detailed description in the chapter "endings"*.

## Core topic (Afternoon session)

### “Ambassadors”

- Ask the group to create 3 new subgroups randomly, ideally with people they have not worked with in the morning. Dispatch the 3 groups as a triangle. Ask every group to choose an ambassador.
- Every ambassador is invited to use its smartphone to launch the “go viral” game: [www.goviralgame.com/en](http://www.goviralgame.com/en)(choose your language). Announce that a competition will confront the groups. The winner is the one that gets the maximum number of points in 30’.
- Ambassador will read the questions to the members of their groups and collect the reactions and votes for the answers so the vote choose democratically how they behave together
- Feedback session. How was it to play the game? What did you learned? How was it to play a bad guy? Make a parallel with theatre that allows to play different roles.
- More thinking: this game has been created by a group of citizens willing to address a burning topic through a fun experience. They decided to offer their work for free to share their experience. What do you think about this approach?
- Do you think a similar approach could be adopted by the group to develop a theatre proposal exploring the topics discussed in the morning?

### Brainstorming

- Creating as a group a crime-wall of inspirations. Use a whiteboard (or a large table) with Post-It Notes, or any sheet of papers with tape. Use the Morning Post Its as a first set of “cards” to play and map on the board.
- Ask individually the participants to write on Post-It notes the keywords they would keep from the morning discussions regarding society, groups, individuals, then put it on the board. Ask the 3 ambassadors to stand next to the board, while the rest of the group suggests rearranging the position of the Post-It notes by sub topics (clouds of ideas), mapping the keywords, possibly connecting them (with markers on white board if you have one). Try to make the whole group identify 3 main subtopics (clouds of Post It notes) that could be explored afterwards by sub groups. Invite the participants to divide into 3 subgroups to dig deeper into the cloud of words they selected.

## **Creative Theatre exercise**

### **Phase #1:**

- ask the 3 groups to propose 3 images, like 3 different scenes of one story, based on the subtopic they selected. Give them 5 minutes to imagine the 3 images and rehearse the transition.
- Ask them to give each scene a name and write it on 3 Post It Notes.
- Then the 3 groups show their “stories” one after the others.

### **Phase #2:**

- ask the 3 groups to define precisely the characters they represent during the scene and to be ready to say it out loud on demand: name, age, position, mindset.
- Then the 3 groups show again their “stories” one after the others. But during their performance, ask the other to come on stage and touch the characters they want to know about. Once touched, the character says “name, age, position, mindset”.

(note: if one character is not touched by the participants, do it yourself so nobody is « forgotten »)

**Question:** Which event could completely change the perspective?

### **Phase #3:**

- ask the whole group to explore the possibility of connecting the 9 different scenes they created. Put the 9 titles on a board and ask the group if they see a possible timeline. Define together a pathway connecting the 9 scenes into one “story”.

### **Phase #4:**

- ask for volunteers to become the storytellers of the 9 scenes story.

### **Phase #5:**

- the whole group rehearses the story together, how the scenes connect. How the storytellers tell the different steps, how and when the participants tell moments of spoken words in relation to “name, age, position, mindset” they defined during phase #2. Let the individual and group inspiration express to bring new elements in the final result.

Story would be made of:

- Scenes of loneliness
- Event that creates new perspective
- Higher level of awareness

**Question:** is it really a change, a better life?

**Options:**

- the group performs the final result for itself,
- the group performs for a public in order to share their work,
- The result is filmed so the participants can see their work

**Feedback session**

What has been learned from this experience. (Description)

## Closing ritual

**“Clapping and congrats”**

Ask the group to make a ritual before ending a session. At first, a clapping, then a shake hands congrats mix-up walk *detailed description in the chapter “endings”*.

## 2nd workshop day: “Exploring otherness”

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### Introduction to the topic (morning session)

- Introduction on the program of the day and the final objective:
- Explore otherness, the rejection of the other/ the difference/ the foreigner - division “we/ the others”.
- Introduction to right-wing extremism.
- Emphasis of the day: Me and the others - Homeland/ Strangers.  
Germans/French/Greeks/Portuguese/Macedonians... against the foreigners.

### Core topic

- Exercise “choose a camp” to react to the statements on the topic “what is home/land for you?”.
- List of statements to react on:



- My home land is where I’m born.
- My home land is where I live now.
- My home land will be the country where I dream to go in the future.

- I feel like a foreigner when I travel to a place in my country that is far from my house.
- I feel like a foreigner when I go to a foreign country.
- I know people that live close to me and do not feel at home.
- I feel at home when I have a lunch in my flat/house
- I feel at home when I walk in a city of my country
- I feel at home if I'm in a friend's house and he/she says to me: "do as if you were at home".
- I know the experience of living in between two homes, two different worlds.
- Sometimes I feel more at home in another country/city than in my own.
- Sometimes I feel like a stranger in my own country/city

**Variation: Exploration of feeling home - description below**

**First round of group discussion:**

As member of a nation

- What is the difference between a local / a foreigner?
- What do you think about the division "we/the others".
- Are Germans / Macedonians / French / Greeks / Portuguese... against the foreigners?

**"Hate" (Creative Theatre exercise):**

Create an image based on the picture described in "Hate" by Carolin Emcke (Chap 1. Clausnitz p.47).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmTtCyLvGUg&t=1s>



The picture was taken in Döbeln / Germany during the 2015 refugee crisis.

Picture Description : A bus is stopped on the road by a group of protesters. Inside the bus are families of syrian refugees going to a shelter. Police officers are separating the bus from the protesters refusing the arrival of refugees. Around, people are watching without taking part.

Use exercise "I'm a tree" (see chapter "image theatre"). And create a group still image where everyone comes after the other, announcing it's role and mime it.

- First step: create the bus and the group inside.
- Second step: add the protesters
- Third: add the police
- Fourth: add the neutral observers
- Then one read about the situation that took place while the participants move in slow motion, with no words.

Use this press article to describe the situation as a voice over, read by a volunteer during the slow motion.

— *The German media are calling it "the shame of Clausnitz", named after this small town in Saxony, Germany. It is 18 February 2016. A bus carrying refugees drives off into the night. In an unbearable video, we see a "welcoming committee" of around a hundred people shouting "We are the people!" and "Get out!" in front of terrorised women, a boy in tears, cornered men and passive police officers. One of the "demonstrators" mimed having his throat cut, a witness told the press. And when a teenage refugee gives the finger of honour to the "people" gathered there to spew their hatred at him, he is immediately dragged off the bus by a policeman. As if he were the criminal.*

Keep the participants in the position/still image they created and open a discussion: are people in this situation was made "invisible" - making them visible?

Instruction to all players: if you identify with your role, what could be your thoughts in this very moment? Asking the non-players/audience, looking from outside... what may be the thoughts of the different characters? Players or observers speak out whatever comes into their mind, being a refugee, spectator, policeman...

Then: facilitator chooses two or three of these characters from inside and outside the bus. Asking questions to the participants like in a theatrical role play, encouraging them to bring their imagination into play: What do you think, what kind of people are they, how old are they, how and with whom do they live together, what did they experience yesterday, for example? Or last week? What are they afraid of, what are their wishes and what do they dream of? What do they particularly like doing?

### **Debate with the participants:**

- What do you think about Emcke's comment: "the passengers in the bus were made invisible as individuals, but visible as Other" ? What has changed with the last "experiment" giving the people visibility?
- Do you know other situations when a group of people humiliates another?
- What do you think about the attitude of the Fourth group, the observers?
- Why are the protesters so aggressive, what is the reason?

Introduction to right-wing extremism. Broadcast of a video presenting right extremism in Europe.

<https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/117239-000-A/white-power/>

**Remark:** The bus situation described above is an example of how the dehumanisation of other groups, in this case refugees, works and what dynamics can be set in motion as a result. If this scene is acted out, even if only in the context of image theatre, strong feelings such as anger, fear, powerlessness and even despair may become visible.

Putting themselves in other roles and reliving such group dynamics, especially the change of perspective, can lead to great insights for the participants. However, it is also possible that the participants are shy and resist getting involved in this situation, as it is very tough and not taken from their everyday lives.

### **If this is the case, we recommend the following variation:**

- Play the video to the young people as described above and then read out the text by Carolin Emcke. Ask the group what feelings and thoughts the video and the text have triggered in them.
- Can the youngsters themselves think of situations in which other people were 'made invisible' or 'dehumanised' as individuals?
- Collect some of these situations and then decide with the group on one that you will re-enact using the means of image theatre. The rest of the procedure is identical to that described above: "Keep the participants in the position/still image they created and open a discussion..."

Mentimeter session to grab keywords from the group.

- What remains from the morning session?
- How to qualify the situations at stake in the Emcke comments, in the impros?

### **Variation - Possible session to deepen the subject of “feeling home”**

**Time:** quite open - from 45 to 120 Minutes (*depends on the group size and how many of the participants wish to present their place to the others*)

**Goal:** The above is more meditative and experiential, appealing less to opinions or thoughts than to emotions and personal memories.

**Description:** Instruction to all players: Remember a place, a location where you really feel or felt good, familiar, relaxed. Where you may have been a lot of times. Can be a current place or one in the past, even from childhood.

Try using a few props (tables, chairs, boxes, cloths, whatever is available) to create this place on the playing area - all players at the same time.

During this process the facilitator can play calm, relaxed music to create a cosy atmosphere. At the end the whole playing area may be transformed. If you are ready, just “be” at this place, spend 10-15 minutes there and remember, dream of this place and whatever happened there.

Ask the participants to take a sheet of paper, write down all kinds of thoughts connected to this place and remembrance. Duration: 5-8 minutes. Automatically, without strict thinking, can be sentences, words, repetitions... not paying attention to orthography and grammar. At the end, ask them to read again what they just wrote. Then they may underline 3 sentences.

#### **The moment of sharing arises:**

The first protagonist decides where the audience shall sit, stand or lay.

#### **Then he/she begins to present the place in four steps:**

- 1: Describe the place, so that the others can get a clear image. Have you been there alone, or have there been other people, or animals?
- 2: “Be” there, nothing more. The audience is there as well, not so much observing but sharing this moment with an open heart. Duration: 90 seconds
- 3: Stay in the place, and perform a typical action that you did there. Duration: 90 seconds.
- At the end, present one of the three sentences from your writings (a sentence you can present and is not too intimate).

Followed by feedback from the others, impressions, resonances a little talk (no judgement!) ...Then: the next protagonist presents his / her place in the same way. Remark; Can be done with all players, or just with 3 or 4 who want to share. In this case include a verbal (or presenting) sharing moment in groups of 3 or 4 participants before.

**Remark:** If everybody wants to share it may take a long time, be prepared, you can also do it in two or three parts with pauses in between.

## Introduction to the topic (afternoon session)

Reminder on the program of the afternoon and the final objective, explore otherness, the rejection of the other / the difference / the foreigner - division "we/the others".

Introduction to right-wing extremism.

## Core topic

### Exploring essential topics of right-wing populism

Ask the group to create 3 new subgroups randomly, as much as possible with people they were not together with in the morning. Dispatch the 3 groups as a triangle. Ask every group to choose an ambassador.

### Brainstorming:

Use the mentimeter results and display the keywords collected in the morning. Open a brainstorming session using the keyword in relation to possible theatrical situations:

- Conference on great replacement
- Conference on the benefit of law and order
- Conference against the corruption of the political system

Every conference team can be made of speakers, witnesses, experts, victims.

### Creative Theatre exercise:

Re-Create new groups, this time by affinity to the 3 theatrical situations. The groups create short fake conferences and present them. The mentimeter results and the keywords collected in the morning are involved into the lines from speakers, witnesses, experts, victims. The 3 groups show their conferences to the others. If you have time, you can ask them to build up one conference based on the 3 proposals.

# 3rd workshop day: “Questioning Authorities - focussing islamic fundamentalism”

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## Introduction to the topic (morning session)

Beginning with a circle, everybody speaks out one moment from yesterday, what is the very first moment that you immediately remember? (note: take spontaneously the first moment that comes into your mind, not the best, even if you don't know why *this* very moment arises first – sometimes it brings a great surprise) Are there any questions, comments, thoughts about yesterday?

**Remark:** After dealing with the roots, attraction and threats of far right extremism the day before, now we approach the 2nd extremist movement which is significant and popular in many European countries: Islamic fundamentalism / extremism, especially Salafism. One of the special characteristics of Salafism is the absolute and unquestionable meaning of Quran and Hadith. You may not reflect about the historical background, interpreting the writings metaphorical, a.s.o.. In their views the writings have to be taken literally and with an absolute authority. To question them or at least a part of them would mean to question God himself.

Especially In patriarchal families the father often has a similar position: What he says is true and may not be questioned, the sons and daughters have to obey - otherwise they risk being punished or ashamed. It can be an elder brother, an uncle, a teacher who holds a similar position. Sons and daughters who grow up in such circumstances may not used to criticise authorities, therefore they are particularly vulnerable to all kind of ideologies who tell them what is right and what is wrong.

This absolute obedience to authorities is the biggest hindrance for developing tolerance, accepting others, seeing their point of view, looking for empathy with people who live and think differently. As you may have a diverse group of youngsters in your group, they may have very different attitudes towards their fathers or other authorities.

## Core topic

### “Authorities”

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Question to the youngsters:** Which authorities come into your mind? Teachers, your father or mother, elder sister, an elder friend, policeman, the sports trainer, the priest or Imam...?! Why are they authorities for you?

Put their responses to a big paper / flipchart, white board etc.

**Next Question:** What is your relation to these authorities, do you “have” to obey, are you allowed to discuss with them, criticise them, or is that forbidden?

**Next step of brainstorming:** collect “typical conflicts” amongst you and your authorities... what comes into your mind?

**Intermezzo (activation after the talk, loosening game/ finding small groups at the end):**

... walking or running in the room. When the facilitator says “Stop” everybody moves into a definite “cube” constellation (1-6). Example: The group consists of 12 members. The leader says “STOP!” and then “two times six!”. The group has the task to create two groups of six in cube constellation - as fast as possible, in maybe 5 seconds. Next time the leader would say “STOP” and then “3 times 4” or “4 times 3”, “2 times five and one times two” and so on.

Finally the group is divided into subgroups of 3 or 4 people. Every group has the task to create little theatre scenes with the subject “conflict with an authority” inspired by the discussions before.

The first group presents the scene, followed by feedback from the other participants.

- Do you know this kind of conflict, was it realistic?
- If not, what should be changed in your perspective?
- With whom did you sympathise, with the authority or with the other person?
- Has the authority been fair?
- Is there no alternative to the actions of the authority? Or could/ should he/ she act differently?
- Variation 1: verbal exchange
- Variation 2: changing roles, try out different possibilities, find one that everyone can agree on (like in forum theatre, description in the appendix).

**Remark:** Take enough time for this session to exchange, try out, exchange again... a.s.o. Ideally until everybody is satisfied with the solution. Repeat this procedure with all groups.

- Variation 3: presentation of all groups with little feedback and reflection (needs less time than Variation 2), Forum Theatre work with the last group only.

At the end of this unit: open sharing and reflection. Discussion/Brainstorming: What is Islam, what is Islamism or islamic fundamentalism? What do you know about it?

## Video Inputs (with reflection)

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Video Input 1: Islam / Islamism:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEDSYgjfqI0>

**Remark:** find examples in your own language (arte, youtube...)

‘Islamism’ is a collective term for all political views and actions that strive to establish a social and state order legitimised solely by religion in the name of Islam. The ideological origins of the movement in question lie in internal Islamic reform efforts in the second half of the 19th century; the organizational roots can be found in the ‘Muslim Brotherhood’ founded in Egypt in 1928. All later movements were and are characterized by the intention to make Islam not only a binding guideline for individual life, but also for social life. **This means that religion and state should no longer be separate and Islam should be institutionalized.** This goes hand in hand with the rejection of the principles of individuality, human rights, pluralism, secularism and popular sovereignty. (source: German Center for Political Education).

Restrictive interpretations should be made generally binding as laws and monitored by the authorities.

Followed by a discussion. What are your questions, thoughts, remarks ..? (open talk)

**Video Input 2: Focussing Salafism,** a special, very popular and extreme form of radical islamic fundamentalism.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cYFbu3OdIE> (French) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cYFbu3OdIE> (German)

<https://www.bpb.de/mediathek/video/198345/was-ist-salafismus/> (German)

Find examples in your own language (arte, youtube...)

**Remark:** The reason why we decided to go for “**Salafism**”, is because it is the most significant Islamist movement in Europe in terms of numbers, widespread especially amongst young people, and ideologically one of the most radical. Followers should live like Mohammed or his earliest disciples, western life style is completely rejected. (“Salaf” means Predecessors, old ancestors’) Salafism does not automatically lead to violence or even to its acceptance.

“...Although almost all Islamist terrorists are also Salafists, the reverse is not true: by no means are all Salafists also terrorists. In this respect, an assessment of this movement from the perspective of democracy and extremism theory must not only refer to the chosen style of action. Even in the constitutive components of ideological self-understanding, one can already identify a tension with the minimum conditions of modern democracies and open societies: for example, the death penalty for apostasy, as demanded by Salafists, is in clear contradiction to the fundamental right to religious freedom. The dualistic view of ‘true believers’ and ‘rejectable unbelievers’ implies in practice the inequality of people. The fixation on an Islamic ‘theocracy’ means that Salafists reject the democratic and constitutional order as well as the principle of popular sovereignty.” (source: German Center for Political Education).

To deepen the subject “Islamic fundamentalism” or “Salafism” you find articles and book recommendations in the appendix.

Followed by a reflection:

What did you hear about salafism ...

- what are their main beliefs, values, strategies, and assumptions?
- who are (in their view) believers, who are disbelievers?
- are there aspects in their thinking you sympathize with?
- are there aspects in their thinking where you disagree?

### **Summarizing:**

Are their similarities between the values of the Salafists and the right extremists? Or not?

**Remark:** *It is more a common analysis of the material, accompanied or followed by a discussion, NOT a teaching.*

### **For example:**

Idealizing the past

- The 1930s, 40s, 50s - (right extremists)
- The time of Mohammeds life or his immediate followers, 600 AD (Salafists)

**Othering:** Dividing the society in two groups (and how do they do it?)

- Germans / French / ... and Foreigners (right extremists) - strategy: discrimination, hate speech.  
Extreme: violence against migrants and refugees, terrorist attacks , a.s.o.
- Believers ... and Disbelievers (Salafists), strategy: putting pressure on other / more liberal muslims.  
Extreme: jihadism, terrorist attacks a.s.o.

### **Dehumanization:**

- Right extremists: an inferior race (e.g. the jews) or just criminal and greedy (e.g. refugees) - wording: they are rats, insects... a.s.o.
- Islamic fundamentalists; Non believers belong to hell. wording: they are monkeys and pigs.

## Closing ritual

A short and wild energizer, coming back to the body, shaking, playing. Find examples in the appendix.

## Core topic “Intercultural issues” - Afternoon session

**Time:** 120-180 minutes

**Brainstorming:** Think about typical conflicts between groups or individuals, who are attracted by the values of one the two presented groups in everyday life - what comes into your mind (in families, school, on the streets, at the police station a.s.o). Note them on a a big paper sheet (e.g. flipchart paper), white board or blackboard.

**Remark:** Here we open a wide field of possible conflicts - **can be intercultural issues** in diverse and mixed groups (role conflicts between girls and boys, turkish/kurdish tensions, muslims who fast in Ramadan and others show no understanding, discrimination of a girl who wears a hijab, conflicts which deal with violating honour, boys and girls consuming alcohol and drugs at festivities...), **can be conflicts inside the groups** (youngsters with extremist or fundamentalist attitudes vs. more liberal ones) or situations of discrimination and exclusion because of belonging to one of the groups.

Create “Images” which show typical conflicts because of values or discrimination in three or four groups and present them, followed by reflection.

- Was it realistic? Do you know these kind of situations, are they familiar to you?
- How could these conflicts be solved? Can you try out different solutions?

**Variation:** Trie out different solutions with forum theater (description in the appendix)<sup>[LSEP]</sup>

Time: 45 minutes

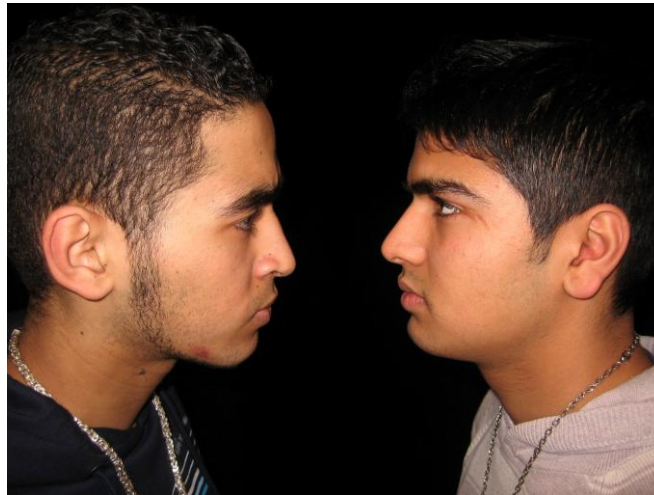
**Question/discussion:** What about you? Are there groups to whom you feel a sense of belonging? If yes, what are the characteristics and values of your group? And are there others who you really decline, maybe even “hate”? If yes, why, for what reason?

**Remark:** Perhaps none of the young people will identify completely with one of the groups - be it right-wing extremists, Salafists or other extremists. But they may share individual aspects, sympathising with some of the values or beliefs of one of the groups.

Divide the groups into three little groups. Give them the following task:

Create three scenes or images:

- a. a strong aversion between members of two groups is evident (find a situation that makes it clear)
- b. Something happens - one member of the enemies' group acts completely unexpected, e.g. is very helpful, lovely - and the idea of enemyship is shaken, deeply disturbed
- c. What happens one week or month later?



Followed by reflection and exchange. Was it realistic? Did you ever have similar experiences in your life that s.b. who should be your “enemy” or a person that you decline acts completely unexpectedly and positively? How was that? Did it change your opinion ... or not? Why (not)?

**Reflection:** Do you think a world would be possible and worth a try if there are no hostile groups, but just understanding and tolerance? Or is this too romantic, an illusion, what do you mean? Would you go for it?

## Closing ritual

### “Clapping and congrats”

Ask the group to make a ritual before ending a session. At first, a clapping, then a shake hands congrats mix-up walk *detailed description in the chapter “endings”*.

# 4th workshop day: “Who I want to be... or want to become?”

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## Introduction to the topic (morning session)

**Objective of the day:** create together answers’ tracks, explore complexity, evolution through time.

Who do I want to be?

**Emphasis:** Who am I? Identity, impure, mixed, contradictory hybrid. Open society, diversity, is it a danger or a chance? What is your position? What about ambiguity tolerance? Create a space where different point of views can be expressed. Express interest in opinions that are not yours. Listen without judging. Listen without judging. Put yourself in the shoes of the person you are listening to. How to be comfortable in uncertainty and complexity? How to be comfortable with the idea that everybody is somebody? How to handle the pressure of the group asking you to be someone different of who you want to be?

**Question at stake during the day:** How can we see people as individuals, unlike as muslims, germans, jews, refugees a.s.o.?

## Core topic: Everybody is somebody

### I. “choose a camp”

**Time:** 30-45 minutes, according to the group size

**Goal:** to react to the following quotes from philosophers, famous people...

**Description:** The group stands in the middle of the room. The quotes are read out. There is one side for agreement and one side for disagreement. Everyone chooses a side. Whoever remains in the middle is neither nor against the statement

We recommend not to tell the participants who are the authors. But to invite them to guess.

Choose maximum 10-20 Quotes - here are examples:

- *God is love. Jesus*
- *Peace cannot be obtained through violence. It can only be achieved through understanding. Albert Einstein*
- *The truth is that men are tired of liberty. Benito Mussolini*
- *One's own life has value as long as one ascribes value to the lives of others. Simone de Beauvoir*
- *There is a fundamental difference between religion based on authority and science based on observation and reason. Science will win because it works. Stephen Hawking*
- *You cannot shake hands with clenched fists. Indira Gandhi*
- *A people inspired by democracy, human rights and economic opportunity will turn their back decisively against extremism. Benazir Bhutto*
- *Hate paralyzes life; love liberates it. Hate confuses life; love balances it. Hate darkens life; love illuminates it." Martin Luther King*
- *You can change someone if you accept them. Lao Tzu*
- *Knowing your own darkness is the best way to deal with other people's darkneses. Carl Gustav Jung*
- *We all have the same God, we just serve Him differently. Muhammad Ali*
- *The people are everyone who lives in this country. Angela Merkel*
- *You can get much farther with a kind word and a gun than you can with a kind word alone. Al Capone*
- *The only way to end war is that we love our children more than we hate our enemies. Golda Meir*
- *An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. Mahatma Gandhi*
- *We are in Europe, and we want a Europe that does few things and does them well, one that recognizes people's identities, languages, etc. Matteo Salvini*
- *If you deny people their own voice, you'll have no idea of who they were. Alice Walker*
- *The masses are blind and stupid and do not know what they are doing. Adolf Hitler*
- *Violence finds its only refuge in lies, lies find their only support in violence. Alexander Solchenitsyn*
- *If anyone kills a man [...] it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and if anyone preserves the life of a man, it shall be as if he had preserved the life of all mankind. Holy Quran 5;33*

Each participant should select three quotes that they agree or disagree with. Everyone then presents their chosen quote and explains their choice and what the quote triggers in them.

**Intermezzo:** Movement let go.

## II. "What are our common values?"

### **Brainstorming - Time:** 20-30 minutes

As a group, create a mystery wall of inspirations. Use a whiteboard (or a large table) with Post-It notes or any piece of paper with sticky tape. Suggest values (honesty, freedom, awareness, etc.)

Discuss the values and remove the values that not everyone agrees with. Continue until there are only values on the mystery wall that everyone can agree with.

### **Creative theatre #1**

**Time:** 15-20 minutes, then presentation

- Divide the group into sub groups of 3-4 people. Create a theatre scene on the topic.
- *What can you do if a friend is attracted to very extreme ideas?*
- What do you do if this friend is not following your group? Do you make pressure on her/him? How to bring her/him back into the group? Is it possible to save her/him? Impro on this situation. How does the group try to influence the one attracted to a different direction?
- Every group shows its proposal. Feedback session to share on the proposals.

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

## Introduction the topic (afternoon session)

### **Creative theatre #2**

**Time:** 15-20 minutes, then presentation

Divide the group into sub groups of 3-4 people. Create a theatre scene on the topic.

*"Conflict within a group": What comes if you are not following your group of friends if the Majority turns extreme? Can I stay in the group or do I have to leave? Do I feel social pressure? How to be an individual? How to save yourself? Every group shows its proposal. Feedback session to share on the proposals.*

**Game of memory** - Basic tools for tv shows you find in the appendix

### **Creative Theatre #3 Final collective creation**

**Time:** 60 minutes

The participants create a large TV stage using the characters and elements they have collected during the first three days. Ask the group to choose their best characters on the creative wall.

Form sub-groups that will have different tasks for the TV show:

- The facilitators (a duo works better)
- The audience moderator (responsible for moderating questions/reflections from the audience)
- Panels of interviewees

While the sub-groups prepare their "performance", agree on the order with the facilitators. Emphasise audience participation so that everyone in the room is part of the final show.

End the TV Show with a big applause for everyone.

### **Feedback for the Workshop**

**Time:** 20 minutes

What do the participants take away?

Work with post-its. Divide the statements into three categories

- a. For my attitude
- b. For my view of other people
- c. For my behaviour in groups

### **Closing ritual**

**Time:** 10 minutes

Everyone shakes hands and congratulates each other on a job well done.

Saying Goodbye.

## Workshop: « Religious (christian) dogmatism and politics – and how it moves our lives »

### Workshop abstract

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The contemporary real world can appear unclear and chaotic, complex and diverse. The world presented by populism or extremism (both political and religious) provides simple answers to questions raised by the complexities of modern reality. Extremism reacts quickly to exploit the pace of modern information and when these simplifications are expressed through provocative soundbites and attention grabbing headlines they can have a serious impact on many confused citizens, however chaotic and meaningless they may seem to be to the rest of society. Populism can quickly grab the public mood. Reflection and thoughtfulness needs a longer time to react seriously to current events.

When Christian orthodoxies confront the modern world they do so carrying a contradiction that is over a thousand years old. The church has always asked its followers to look to the goodness of their hearts to find answers to the chaos and cruelty experienced and observed in the world around them. But in delivering this message to the people that it wanted to convert it has used an aggression, violence and exploitation. that is embodied in its history and the history of the western world. "Join us or be an enemy of ours" was a back up modus operandi when "listen to us please" was taking too long. This is a crude irrational basis underlying much religious extremism.

Using theatrical exercises our workshop aims to place 1. various social and human relationships playfully within the context of historical memory. 2. to create enough distance between reality and myth for participants to view the differences between extreme faith and the peaceful functioning of the world. ( a world that many Christians claim as their goal.)

Our core idea is to look back at historical events and draw parallels and contrasts with the events of our contemporary experience. For instance a research on the historical event of the Inquisition will uncover deep rooted points of disagreement within the Catholic church on traditional conservative values and our modern issues of gender rights, political rights, reproductive rights etc. Such research would highlight the struggle between institutional authority and individual freedom.

We can uncover a long history that rejects otherness, foreigners and cultures that are unable to accept any idea of difference between human beings. We can reveal the orthodox struggle to protect the power to judge and pronounce just who deserves dignity and who does not and we can display the churches' power of monopoly over the public imagination through the milestones of christian tradition.

The workshop should be in dialogue with other disciplines, such as History, Sociology, Citizenship, Philosophy. Etc.

The main topics are:

- i. Identity and cultural milestones of a religion.
- ii. Political exploitation of historical religious events.
- iii. Increase in extremism. Intolerance of today and yesterday.
- iv. Attitudes towards strangers in today's world and the future outlook.

We propose exercises that reflect on the relationship between populist and extremist influence and traditional and conservative values.

We will use techniques of drama in education, role play and performance in order to position our participants to reflect on their personal religious thoughts and feelings and to then measure these against how they are represented by extremists of populism and nationalism.

We will then explore the use of populism and nationalism in religion and how it affects the institutions of family, education and society in general. We will ask in which ways do these traditional and historical cultures affect our current everyday life and systems of living

## Aims of the workshop format

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- Understanding the motives that populism and extremism of ideas attracts many followers.
- creating a good and playful atmosphere which invites the participants to play, let go, exchange their thoughts, and reflect on ideas such as: dialogue, tolerance, understanding and respect the other, democracy, human rights.
- understanding of the main characteristics and strategies of a polarized society, based on populism, extreme ideas or propaganda, namely based on religious dogmatism.
- understanding situations that attract fake news and polarized ideas
- soft skills: empowering to develop empathy for others, cooperative and social learning, understanding and respect for each other.
- finding ways to develop a human, positive and inclusive attitude.
- collaborating with others and listening to the different opinions
- expressing the emotions about the affection of the religion nowadays
- sharing documents and updating on the current reality
- investigating of the difference between the philosophical background of the religion and the interpretations of the church
- creating a good and playful atmosphere which invites the participants to play, exchange their thoughts without judgment
- Understanding the motives that make christian extremism so attractive in USA to young people in particular

- understanding of the main characteristics and strategies of the christian fundamentalism in the USA
- soft skills: empowering to develop empathy for others, cooperative and social learning
- understanding and overcoming assumptions which create othering and dehumanization
- learn to handle situations with friends who are attracted to extremist ideas
- finding ways to develop a human, positive, inclusive and enlightened identity

## Target group(s)

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- Youngsters (15-20 years)
- Group size: 8-20 (if more than 10, we recommend a second group leader's/educator's).

## Materials required

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- Tool kit to print
- Post it notes, pens, a board (ideally a white board with markers)
- Music affair and loudspeaker
- Notebook, projector and screen (or white wall)

## Required room situation

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Safe, large and empty space with a good atmosphere (description in the chapter “good conditions for the work”). Not too small that participants can play, move and explore materials (70 square meters at least for 10 participants), ideally there should be access to other spaces when separating work into sub-groups, as well as outside access (where it is possible to work in safety and concentration).

*The concept described is designed for four days. Depending on the focus, target group and time resources, shorter versions can be put together from the individual modules suggested.'*

# 1st workshop day: “Who is the other one?”

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## Collaborating with others

### I. “Geopolcathy”

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Goal:** A brief knowledge of the history of religions, with a focus on the Catholic religion.

**Materials:** Panels displaying the graphics of historical facts and events relevant to our religious theme., the monk’s costume that can be taken on and off by our facilitator/ guide, , texts. The Monk’s text, text for debate, game questions and the panels will be available in the appendix also more questions for the game.

**Description:** our panels scattered around the room with a chronology of the history of Western religions. A brief introduction by the monk Mammet, a kind of “cicerone, guide

The Monk Announces (in a quirky voice with light interesting gestures):

Let's take a look at what has happened to monotheistic religion , following the crucifixion of Jesus by the Romans. Let's take a look at Jesus, who was a Jew, who after his death became an icon of a faith and a milestone in the history of the Western world, Let's look at how this religion was transformed into one of the three great faiths. These religions "of the book" were all based on the book that Jews first followed, The Bible. And so the law of Moses, Judaism, the law of Jesus Christ, Christianity, and the law of Mohammed, Islam, came to appear.

The facilitator creates sub groups as they pass around the room taking in the environment of information. The “Geopolcathy” test. The guide wearing the robe of the monk will ask each group questions and the winner will be the one with the most points. There is a set of questions (the answers will always be true/false or yes/no) The groups can talk to each other, look for information on the panels and when they have the correct answer they run to a bell or knock on a table. If the answer is incorrect, another group can try to answer. Here is an example of questions lead by the by the quiz hosting Monk.(the facilitator.)

Christians expelled the Jews from Palestine...The Romans expelled the Jews from Palestine.- ...Henry VIII broke ties with the Pope because he believed that women should also have access to the priesthood....Jesus was Jewish...In the Muslim religion, Jesus is a prophet....-...Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are considered prophets in the Quran, and their names in Arabic are Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa...Martin Luther was a Catholic priest.-see appendix for more.

The finalization is done by the monk in order to generate debate.

## II. “When the extremism hurt our hearts, Center is the new radical – about dialogue and compromise”

(Today's problems force us to re-evaluate old political positions and to think again when facing the global rise of racism and violent extremism that is both political and religious.)

**Time:** 30 Minutes

**Goal:** *Finding ways to develop a human, positive and inclusive attitude; collaborating with others and listening to different opinions.*

**Materials:** *Pieces of clean cloth to blindfold the eyes, paper, pen, chalk or disposable tape to create the lines on the floor, props or instruments that produce sounds, if desired.*

**Description:** The group is split into smaller groups. A square with a labyrinth is marked out in paper tape on the floor. A guide is chosen by the monk. Only the ‘guide’ will know the way. One of the participants will be blindfolded, and will have to get “to the end” of the secret route. The guide cannot cross the white lines. From outside the square, everyone will make their way around the square which naturally causes noise. Then one group will deliberately make its way out of the square on one side, while another group will make its way on the opposite side. The correct path will be in the middle. The blindfolded participant has to find a ‘friendly voice’ to follow the correct path. The exercise ends when the blindfolded participant completes the path. Repeat with another group.

## III. “Frontiers - the stranger”

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Goal:** *Expressing emotions of affection for religion today; to understand and talk to each other.*

**Materials:**

- A line is drawn across the floor, with a strip of tape representing a border
- *props and costumes if desired. environmental sound*

**Description:** The facilitator can remove the monks robes and now supervises the laying down and sticking of a long tape on the floor. A frontier is made. On one side of the line those who would cross. Eg a mother and her child a thief, a drug dealer with contacts, a persecuted activist etc. On the other side are those who wait. Eg an ethics officer, a journalist, a corrupt politician, an employee of a humanitarian organization an anti-immigration elderly woman a former emigrant who is now a successful businessman etc...these are examples of characters that can be chosen. The facilitator will guide this and will emphasise the playful nature of the workshop so far inviting the group to join in the first group role playing of the day

Various scenarios are possible, for instance the guard prevents the mother and child from crossing, the politician has a hidden agenda, businessman tries to help, the drug dealer makes contacts and manages to 'help' in exchange for some money. And so on., Then a debate about the feelings and dilemmas faced from the perspective of the roles that were played by the participants

#### **IV: "The Snitch"**

**Time:** 30 Minutes

**Goal:** *Understanding silent denunciation and intangible gestures.*

**Materials:** *The monk's text.*

The facilitator returns now as the monk to read his text out loud.

The Monk Reads:

"What drives the informer, what moral or futile reasons: self-protection reward , fear, a need to conform. Throughout history the informer has often been decisive in ensuring that dictatorships and other oppressive political systems such as religious persecutions succeed. Examples include: the dictatorships in Germany, Portugal, Spain, Greece; the religious persecutions that took place throughout Europe, in particular the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions; the purges of communist dictatorships in the countries of Eastern Europe. We can consider that even in today's so-called democratic, capitalist and liberal world, the phenomenon is still latent, both in companies and in social, political and local authority organizations. "The, snitch", continues to be an instrument used by authorities to dominate and control, The informer acts in most cases for his own advantage... it is ultimately a question of the individual's character."

**Practical Part** (In english this is a variation of the game "wink murder")

"A snitch" is selected secretly and unbeknown to the group operates among them. Nobody in the group knows who the snitch is. Everyone moves around looking eye to eye and when the snitch winks at someone they must leave the group. The snitch will be caught when somebody observes them at work and points them out. If the participant is correct in identifying the snitch the game is over. If not, the participant must leave the game. When a snitch is caught the person that caught them must say why they chose to inform the room. In the end, the participant that snitched on the snitch will have to formulate a reason for their accusation. The accused will have to state a possible reason for having been accused. Repeat.

#### **V: "Gateway to hell"**

**Time:** 30 Minutes

**Goal:** *Realize what it's like to denounce others, lose trust and put pressure on others to change their beliefs and habits.*

**Materials:** *Papers with the texts and pens.*

**Description:** Divided into three groups, the participants will read three descriptions relating to: Forced Conversion, Forced Confession.

**Forced conversion:**

With the edict of King Manuel, greatly encouraged by the Catholic kings of Spain (Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile), all Jews and Moors of the kingdom were obliged to receive baptism; those who refused were expelled from the country (this was the case with the Sephardic community, which mostly moved to Holland). The natives of the territories colonized by Portugal and Spain were also forced to be baptized and to practice Catholic confession; the alternative was to be decimated.

**Forced confession:**

Forced confession has been commonly used. Let's just say that no territory on the globe can say that no despot, religious dignitary or judge has ever used this practice throughout its history. In forced confessions, i.e. under physical or psychological torture, the individual (victim) was made to confess to things that he didn't actually do, or made to denounce somebody when in an unbearable situation caused by the pain of torture. In Portugal, the Inquisition used these methods as did the political police, PIDE, during the Estado Novo.

After reading, about this side of historical oppression each group will create a small scene to be shown to the rest of the participants; the others will have to try to guess or give their opinion on what they see. After each presentation and the respective 'attempt to understand' what is going on, the group that presented will read aloud the text they worked on. ( that inspired them)At the end of the three presentations, there will be a short debate on the themes.

## VI: "Silent moment"

**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Goal:** *Reflect and think again about the day's journey; focus on the problems; relax and create a moment of break, distancing and disconnection.*

**Materials:** *Sound speaker and calming music.*

**Description:** To ambient music, everyone is lying on the floor, to begin a "travel of reflection" with closed eyes (guided, smoothly by the facilitator). After that, the group sits in a circle to share thoughts, or for a "thank you" and a "see you tomorrow".

## 2nd workshop day: "Orthodox Church in everyday life"

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### My personal experiences with religious beliefs

#### I. "My personal experiences"

**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Goal:** *Familiarization. To realize through kinetic improvisation their personal experiences which are related to religious beliefs. Then they discuss them.*

**Description:** The participants walk in the space they hear individual words spoken by the facilitator : priest, cross, saint, bell tower, fast. They take a pose and try to show with their bodies what they are thinking by listening to each word. (Facilitator's indicative questions: What do you observe? What does this image remind you of?)

#### II: "Sculptor – Sculpture"

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Goal:** To express their bodies thoughts and senses- in contact with their partner's body.

**Description:** **The participants divide into sculptors and models**

The sculptors try to shape the body of their partners in a manner that shows the meaning of the word "religion". What do they think when they hear this word, what does it mean for them? They change roles and now the sculptors try to answer with their partner's body the questions: how do I feel when I go to the Church? What does Church mean to me?

Comments In the plenary group. They are also asked to remember a story that is related to the Church.

### **III. Church and family**

**Time:** 50 Minutes

**Goal:** *To realize how the families behave every time they participate in a church mystery and how this behavior has passed through many years to their children.*

#### **Description:**

##### 1. Sharing stories/ still images (15 Minutes)

The participants are divided into four groups and they share funny family stories which are related with church and have happened either in the house or in the space of a church. (Christmas, Easter, Name day of a Saint, attending the liturgy, attending a funeral, etc). Then they choose either one of the stories or they form a combination of the stories they have heard. Each group constructs one still image sharing the chosen story. They are asked to take discrete roles as members of a family (father, mother, grandmother...) or as liturgists of the church (priests, gravediggers...). They are also asked to focus on the ritual, the symbols and express their emotions.

##### 2. Presenting the stories (20 Minutes)

The groups then present the images to the plenary and the audience is asked to make comments about them: What are they seeing? Can they give a title? Can they guess who the characters are? And at last the facilitator asks the group to tell their story.

##### 3. Discussion (15 Minutes) and creating a panel (10 Minutes)

After the presentations they are discuss in the same groups how religion influences them and why They then write down their opinions on an A3 piece of paper. They compose a work with words, paintings, drawings and give it a title. Then every group chooses a special way to present this work. Each group is trying to express their relationship with the Church

### **IV. Church and society**

#### **“Religion attitudes in the school environment”**

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Goal:** *The purpose is for the youngsters to recall some scenes of school life where religious attitudes are obvious. How do they affect them? How do they feel?*

**Description:** They start with a sociometric exercise. They form a line behind each other and the facilitator is telling some statements. If they agree they have to do steps to the right side and if they disagree they have to do steps to the left. Then they argue for their selection.

The statements are:

- In the classrooms of the schools there are religious symbols
- Every morning at school we pray all together before the lessons begin
- On certain holidays we go to church with the school
- There are schools where principals are against the enrollment of non-religious students
- At the beginning of the school year, priests come and do a consecration
- Schools embrace / accept every student regardless of their religious faith
- The Religious Studies course is not compulsory
- In school we learn about all religions
- In school there is no discrimination related to the religious faith of the children

## V. Role on the wall

**“A covered wall where the workshop can draw to describe characters and characteristics”**

**Time:** 35 Minutes

**Goal:** *To reflect the school situation in religious contexts*

### **Description:**

#### 1. Discussion and role on the wall ( 20 Minutes)

They are divided again in the same four groups and they are given four cases, each for each group.

The cases are:

- a. The principal of the school refuses to enroll a Muslim refugee in the school because of his religion
- b. A schoolgirl is not allowed to enter the church because she wears a short skirt
- c. A student says the prayer every day because no one else wants to say it
- d. A student whose request for exemption from the religion course is not accepted

They discuss the given case and then they make the role on the wall. The participants are drawing the figure of the character of each case, who is facing a difficulty / difficulties. (Inside the drawing of the figure are the feelings of the character and outside is what the others tell about him / her).

#### 2. Passing and guessing (15 Minutes)

Everybody passes and sees the roles on the wall and try to guess the story. At the end the cases are revealed.

## VI. Church and Society – Politics

**Time:** 60-70 Minutes

**Goal:** *To investigate and realize how religion affects society and political life.*

### **Description:**

#### 1. Sharing documents and creating scenes (15 Minutes)

Sharing documents and statistics about the following topics: abortion (the position of women in modern society according to the church), the church's perception of homosexuals, new identity cards (conspiracy theories – the church's relation with science), religion and art (censorship of artists). Discussion and exchange of opinions. Then they create a scene according to the topic. They have to think of real characters and create a dynamic image exploring the motivations.

#### 2. Presenting scenes/ exploring characters (40 Minutes)

They present their dynamic images and explore the characters using the following techniques: the hot seat, the cops in the head, the inner voices and the corridor of consciousness.

#### 3. Discussion and Manifesto (20 Minutes)

Participants are asked to discuss in their groups what each person could do individually in these situations and then write down ideas and suggestions in the form of a Manifesto on how the state could deal with such issues / political solutions/proposals of law to help these people who face these situations / difficulties. Everybody gathers and observes the Manifestos.

## Closing ritual

### I. "Collective sculpture"

**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Goal:** *Reflection and creating hopeful ideas*

**Description:** Participants are asked to place in the space the work of the unit( **Church and family**) and the characters of the third unit (**Religion in the school Environment**)in order to remember the stressful everyday life of the characters.

#### "the ideal reality for me"

They make a collective sculpture with the technique one at a time on the theme of an ideal reality.

### II. "Circle"

**Time:** 10 Minutes

**Goal:** *Reflection with words*

**Description:** In the circle they say a word to express how they will leave the space today after their experience at the workshop

### **Documents for the Workshop (Second Day)**

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1192819/protesters-throw-paint-at-church-body-over-abortion-sermon/>

<https://www.keptalkinggreece.com/2020/01/13/anti-abortion-campaign-athens-metro-outcry/>

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1219377/church-repudiates-id-conspiracy-theories/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/07/greek-orthodox-church-calls-for-excommunication-of-mps-after-same-sex-marriage-vote>

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2023/09/04/thousands-protest-new-id-cards-in-thessaloniki-greece/>

# 3rd workshop day: “Capitol invasion as a Family business”

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**Materials required:** music affair and loudspeaker, notebook, at large TV screen connected to YouTube/Arte



source: [www.inclause.blogspot.com/](http://www.inclause.blogspot.com/)

## Introduction

Introduction on the program of the day and the final objective: to open the topics, the mind spaces, to get to know each other, to create a theatrical proposal out of this experience. Emphasis of the day: extremism vs democracy.

## Focussing on Christian Extremism: the capital attack as a role-playing game

### I. “Choose a camp”

**Time:** Up to images (1-10) 40 mins.

**Goal:** *To face and react to the questions on the topic the Capitol Invasion vs Christian extremism in USA*

### Description:

#### 1. Discussion

A First round of discussion: As an individual

- Do you know the topic “Invasion of the Capitol”?

- Have you seen any TV news/social media/reports on this story?
- To what extent do you think this event was historical?
- To what extent do you believe a religious dimension is at stake?

Screening of a documentary movie on the Invasion of the Capitol

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/103011-000-A/l-assaut-du-capitole/>

**Preparation: Two exercises based on still images:**

Create randomly 3 balanced groups. Dispatch the 3 groups as a triangle.

- Individual image: the 3 groups stand with their backs turned to the animator. The animator calls a word : pop corn, skyscraper, USA, eagle, surf, storm, stone...). Every member of the 3 groups turn to the other with individually mime / create a still image corresponding to the word. There is no “good” mime, it’s about having fun by miming a still image and watching the other doing it at the same time. It’s also about entering a United States of America mindset.
- Group: exercise “I’m a sequoia”, “I’m a pizza”, “I’m a grocery bag’! The 3 groups create one after the other still images. For the first group, one member comes after the other, announcing its role and miming it. Example: the first one says “I’m a sequoia trunk”, the second one “I’m the bird on top of the sequoia”, then “I’m the bush down the sequoia”, “I’m the mushroom next to the sequoia”, and so on). The exercise helps every group to make its first “creation”.

**See also the description in the chapter “image theatre”**

**2. Role-playing game**

You tell the 3 groups: “You play 3 Christian families that are very religious”.

- Choose the character you want to play in that family, in relation with the other group members: grand parents, parents, children, relatives,... find an agreement within your group.
- Then define your:
  - name, age, gender,
  - imagine the story of your character within the family.
  - Discuss with your team the relations between characters (good/bad, lovin/hating...).
- Give 5 minutes to every group to set-up this background.

### 3. Images

**Image #1/10.** Every family creates a living family picture (group portrait). This group portrait is presented to the 2 other groups (one after the other). Self presentation of every member of the family. So the whole participants had a vision of the “3 families”.

After the #1 round, groups work separately. They choose a space to imagine the second image and prepare it.

**Image #2/10.** The 3 groups create a second living image.

Situation: it's the day after the elections, the family is gathered in the living room, watching TV. The candidate that supports your strong belief of god and religion won but the opponent cheated and pretended to win. The authorities validated this cheat. Create a 30 seconds scene based on this.

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this second image. After 5', set a round presentation of the 3 scenes.

**Image #3/10.** The 3 groups create a third living image.

Situation: it's the day after the elections, the family is gathered in the living room, watching TV and eating their lunch. The family favourite's candidate makes a speech calling for action the very day when the election results will be confirmed by the National Assembly.

Create a 30 seconds scene based on this situation and the characters you created.

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this third image. After 5', set a round presentation of the 3 scenes.

**Image #4/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image together.

Situation: it's the day of the call for action, when the election results are confirmed by the National Assembly. The 3 families are part of the protest in the streets. How do your characters behave in the moment? What slogans? What songs?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the scene.

**Image #5/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image together.

Situation: The 3 families are in front of the capitol, protesting. How do your characters behave in the moment? One family member pushes the others to get in. Which one? What is to open the doors by force? What is to get in and realise you made it?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the scene.

**Image #6/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image group by group.

Situation: Your family is in the capitol, after the taking. Members respond to journalists (ask some participants to play journalists). How do your characters respond to the press?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the 3 scenes.

**Image #7/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image all together.

Situation: All the family members are arrested. They are in the Police bus taking them to the Police Center. How do your characters behave in the bus, what discussion topics, what feelings?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the scene.

**Image #8/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image group by group. Back home dinner, after the D-Day. Family members have an issue. One of them will be prosecuted for high treason. Family council. How do your characters behave, what feelings?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the 3 scenes.

**Image #9/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image altogether. The trial.

Trial day for the 3 family members prosecuted for high treason. The other participants play judge, attorneys, defenders, witnesses, jury members... Ask the participants to create a big court and some moments of the 3 trials.

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the scene.

**Image #10/10.** The 3 groups create a new living image group by group. One year later. The member of the family that was prosecuted is back home. A journalist interviewed the family. (ask a participant from another group to play the journalist). How do your characters behave, what feelings?

Give the 3 groups 5' to prepare this image. After 5', set a round presentation of the 3 scenes.

(Ideally, ask the participants to play all the 10 scenes in a row.)

#### **4. Feedback Session**

Ask the participants about their feelings on the experience. What do people are capable of doing because of their religion/political beliefs? What could make you behave like this, breaking the law? Have you ever met these kinds of situations? If yes, did you get any result? They may react also on the topics, the theatre work, the personal feeling on performing...).

## Closing ritual

### “Clapping and congrats”

Ask the group to make a ritual before ending a session. At first, a clapping, then a shake hands congrats mix-up walk *detailed description in the chapter “endings”*. Announce the program of the day after.

## 4th workshop day: “Inquietations Portfolio”

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### Winds of history

#### I. “Winds of History - Some examples”

**Time:** 15 min

**Goal:** Recognizing moments of social and political change; promoting concern and the need to confront problems.

**Materials:** Video projector/sound speaker, example video (see: [www.theatremakespolitics.eu](http://www.theatremakespolitics.eu))

#### **Description:**

Projection (5 minutes video projection, approximately) with some events, such as Estado Novo and Revolução 25 de Abril or Inquisition.

We ask promoters to think of other events that are closer to their socio-political reality, such as the Prague Spring, World War I or the French Revolution, for example. These videos can be created with freeware images from the web (or also look for other videos related to the themes) and should contain: title, brief summary of the event - where, who, when, how, photos and videos if applicable, development and social and political impact - what changes took place, how do we look at this event and what legacy did it leave?

After watching the film, we should discuss the historical moment and point out the reasons for the change, the social and political discomfort, as well as how the historical situation has affected each person's feelings and thinking.

## II. "Push the bottom"

**Time:** 30 min

**Goal:** *Recognizing moments of social and political change; introducing feelings about change, injustice, social relations and restlessness.*

**Materials:** Papers, pens, tape

Create groups of 4. Draw and write (on a large paper) events that might have interest for you and explain why. Example: Revolution of 25 April in Portugal or the Crimean War. Indicate how it was before that event, why it happened, indicate social and political derivations, how it's seen nowadays which common and key points you can connect with contemporary situations. Then, let's do some research - Choose a moment, based on the sharing ideas, from the previous exercise and try to look for more precise information (in the library, on the internet,...) and then exchange among the group. Try to imagine how it could be, if it happens now. Please indicate your personal views, thoughts and most important, feelings. Then, they can put the papers on the walls of the room.

## III: "Inquietation Portfolio"

### Portfolio Part 1

**Time:** 60 min

**Goal:** *Develop and deepen feelings related to recognize moments of social and political change; introduce feelings about change, injustice, social relations and restlessness.*

**Materials:** *Audio recorder or smartphone; smartphone for the videos, access to internet (can be in their own mobile phones), video projectors and sound speaker.*

### Description:

Divided into groups, develop the following objects:

- on creative writing: where it hurts the most. Based on the previous exercise, write a poem or a spoken word song that can address these concerns.
- on sound: where is the chaos? Walk around and try to capture or be influenced by sounds that might address the feelings dealt with.
- on body (or not) and pictures: what I could see (or not). Create an image with the body (some movement installation - and film it) that might join together all these inquietations.

60 min

## **Portfolio Part 2**

**Time:** 45 Minutes

**Goal:** *Create forms from the content above*

**Description:** In groups, create a form having all this information and materials, develop a short moment (2 to 4 minutes), based on text, sound, pictures.

## **Portfolio Part 3**

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Goal:** *Reflection of thoughts*

**Description:** Experiment and then present the forms to the others. After that, a creative debate based on: what did you touch the most? Why did you choose that? And now, how do you see it? And how do you feel ?

## **IV: "Coming back to the topics"**

**Time:** 40 Minutes

**Goal:** *Reflection of feelings*

**Materials:** Scissors, glue tape, pens and pencils, sheets, broadsheets

**Description:** Draw and cut pictures "what - and where - does it hurt the most, now?". Based on all this path of four days, please, create a flash installation (at walls, windows, floor, doors) with images, thoughts, inquietations. Have a short debate on that, afterwards.

## **V: “Final reflection”**

**Time:** *20 Minutes*

**Goal:** *Final reflection*

**Material:** Ambient music (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-cnex3Bfq8&t=833s>), Mic

**Description:** Arriving at the end of the workshop, we need to reflect over the topics; what did we think may be more useful; more topics?; The facilitator explains that in a mic. What shall we do with this? This experience we have shared. How and what do you see around you? Do you see or grasp something differently?. If the atmosphere is right, you can encourage musicality and movement (dancing, if you feel like it).

## **VI: “Walk in silence”**

**Time:** *10 Minutes*

**Goal:** *Find an end together*

**Description:** The group simply walks in silence looking in one another's eyes. They say goodbye to the others and to the room, without speaking. Make a circle, say goodbye and thank you.

# #theatre.makes.politics

## Workshop: „Truth or Lie“ – simple responses to a complex world.

Disinformation, Malinformation, Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories

heroesTheories

### Workshop abstract

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In a world increasingly shaped by social media and digital information flows, disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories are playing an ever greater role. They influence not only our view of the world, but also our coexistence, our confidence in the media, politics and society. Misinformation and conspiracy theories can be found in all political camps, particularly populist and extremist ones from left to right, as well as in religious fundamentalism.

As a rule, they are used to deliberately stir up feelings such as fear, anger or outrage in order to manipulate other people and draw them to the ‘right’ side. More than a few experts already claim that we now live in the post-factual age: whether things are right or not matters much less than whether they ‘feel’ right.

A less well-known but very mean form in this context is malinformation: malinformation is not misinformation – it is true but not intended for the public and is disseminated to deliberately harm others. These are often details from private life that do not belong in the public domain. We know this from politics, but it starts as early as adolescence, when intimate or embarrassing photos of fellow students are posted on social media.

The aim of this workshop is to explore the mechanisms and dynamics of various forms of disinformation, to recognize their dangers and to debunk them. Video examples, followed by discussions and analyses, help to understand and differentiate the phenomena described. In a playful and entertaining way, the workshop participants also learn to develop and present their own conspiracy theories. Dealing with these often abstruse stories in a humorous way, developing and acting them out and laughing at them creates the necessary distance and helps to debunk them in real life and thus take the wind out of their sails.

By the end of the program, participants should be able to learn how to check facts in order to distinguish between truth and lies.

## Aims of the workshop format

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- creating a good and playful atmosphere which invites the participants to play, let go, exchange their thoughts, try out new things without judgment
- understanding the characteristics of the different kinds of fake news and conspiracy theories as well as the strategies of boulevard media - and how they can undermine democracy.
- learn how to fact check and unmask fake news
- learn how to deal with friends and family members who are attracted by fake news a.s.o.
- soft skills: empowering to develop empathy for others, cooperative and social learning in the way to enlightened, good informed and responsible citizens

## Target group(s)

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- Youngsters (15-20 years)
- Group of 6-15

## Materials required

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- Music box
- Notebook, projector and screen (or white wall)
- Flip chart paper, paper cards and markers

## Required room situation

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- An empty room
- Chairs for the number of participants

*The concept described is designed for four days. Depending on the focus, target group and time resources, shorter versions can be put together from the individual modules suggested.*

# 1st workshop day: “Truth or Lie?”

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## Confidence games

### I. Ensemble mirrors

The group is divided into groups of 3 and they form a triangle. They all look in one direction and the person who is at the front and can't see anyone else is the leader. They rotate together until they are looking at another leader in their group. One more rotation, and each person has been in the leader position. Now put instrumental music on and have the current leader begin a movement that the others can mirror. Tell them that the leader should rotate to one direction or the other after a minute or so. When the leader can see another person in the group, that person becomes the new leader. When a person can no longer see another group member, s/he has become the leader. The music for this one can be slow.

### II. a) The tower of Pisa in a circle

Ask the group to form a circle an arm's length apart, with everybody standing facing the centre, holding their bodies absolutely upright. Then they must lean towards the centre without bending at the waist, or arching their backs, or lifting their heels off the ground – like the Tower of Pisa. Next, ask them to lean outwards in the same manner (without lifting their toes). Then repeat the whole sequence several times, towards the centre, towards the outside. Then they do the same thing towards the left and towards the right, still without bending in the middle, without lifting the feet.

II. b) Ask a volunteer to go into the centre of the circle. Everyone tightens the circle around her, so it is now made up of bodies touching shoulder to shoulder. The person in the middle must close her eyes and do the same leaning movements as before, but this time she is going to let herself fall. When she falls, everyone in the circle must support her with their hands (giving a little as her body meets their hands so that there is no abrupt impact) and then propel her gently back towards the centre, where she doesn't come to rest, because she starts to fall in another direction, and thus it goes on. It is very important that there are always at least three people at any given moment taking care of the person in the middle. a

### III. Close and open the circle

All the members of the group are forming a circle holding hands and closing their eyes. They start to slowly walk in the centre of the circle feeling where their “neighbors” are. When they are too close one to the other they open their eyes and see if they have formed a regular small circle. Then they close their eyes again and they walk back to the large circle.

## Confusion games

I. Two groups of participants, facing each other. Each group gives vent to a different sound, and tries to force the other group into submission. They then change roles.

II. **Follow two masters** – who metamorphose into each other.

Two participants start talking or arguing. Each has their own team of ‘followers’ who begin to imitate or create the masks of their respective master. After a few minutes, the two masters initiate their metamorphosis into each other: each master imitates the other, in such a way that the followers of one end up imitating the masks of the other.

III. **Imaginary balls**

Everyone in the group has an imaginary ball. Each ball has its own special movement pattern, and its own sound which the participant decides. The participants practice “throwing” or “bouncing” the invisible balls by themselves, while simultaneously making the sounds (“boi-oi-oing,” “zip-zap,” “wheeeee”). After everyone has the movements and sounds finalised, they start walking around the space. The leader calls out, “freeze,” and then instructs everyone to trade balls with someone. There is no talking allowed, only demonstrating the sounds and movements of the balls.

Once everyone has traded, everyone continues walking around the space again, this time with their new balls. The leader again calls out, “freeze” again, and instructs everyone to trade with another person. After four to six trades have been made (depending on the size of the group), the leader instructs everyone to find their original balls. Everyone must then move about, demonstrating the balls they are holding, while searching for the ball they originally created. If a participant finds their ball, they trade with the person who has it, and then takes their ball to the side out of the playing space

## I. "Bazaar"

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Objectives:** *Getting to know each other, playing and having fun.* The Objectives of the game is for participants to exchange letters with one another, similar to how people would trade goods in a traditional bazaar. This activity promotes interaction and helps participants get to know each other better. This game also encourages Team-Building since participants interact, communicate, and collaborate. By "trading" letters, they create connections and have a sense of teamwork. It's a fun and engaging way for everyone to learn each other's names and strengthen group dynamics.

**Description:** The game draws inspiration from the traditional concept of a "Bazaar", where people would exchange items like tools, food, and other things; Example: Cheese for Eggs, Milk for Bread, and so on. In this game, instead of items, participants exchange letters to "complete" their names. The colorful markers reflect the vibrant atmosphere of the Grand Bazaar, and the exchanges mimic the casual trading that takes place there.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Colored sharpies or markers (one per participant)
- Paper tape (one piece per participant)

### **Instructions:**

1. Each participant receives a piece of paper tape and a colored marker.
2. Participants write lines on their tape to represent the number of letters in their name. For example, if the name is "Besi," the participant would write four lines.
3. The tape is given to the youngster so then is placed on the chest or arm (depending on the group's comfort level and age).
4. The aim of the game is to "buy" or exchange letters with others in the group until each participant has all the letters needed to spell their own name.
  - Initially, participants are allowed to trade only one letter at a time to encourage more interaction.
  - If it's not possible to trade just one letter, participants can exchange more than one to complete their name
5. The game continues until everyone has exchanged letters and completed their names.

## Core topic

### “Truth or Lie?”

#### I. “Yes or no”

**Time:** 15 Min.

**Objectives:** Find out what are important and relevant topics for participants and how they stand on it. Participants are asked to choose and take a side and asked for their reasons.

**Description:** Regarding the topics climate crisis, migration, escape, future of society ... facts, but also political opinions (broad spectrum). First personally, then politically.

The task of all participants is to line up as quickly as possible according to the criteria set by the facilitator. They position themselves on a scale of 1-10. At the start of the game, the facilitator must clearly announce to the group which side is 1 or 10. 1 means ‘I disagree’ and 10 means ‘I fully agree’. In between, you have the opportunity to show a tendency. Important note: Everyone decides for themselves. The level of difficulty should be increased from round to round: at the beginning, simple and innocuous questions are good for understanding the rules of the game. Towards the end, the questions can become more political and difficult. Questions (Examples. They can be changed or replaced depending on the participants and the game master's taste):

I like to eat sweet things./I like going to school./I can enjoy being alone./I always have to have people around me./In a community it is important to me that all interests are heard./ Lying is fundamentally bad./There are also necessary or good lies./A lot of lies are told in politics./Someone has already told me about a conspiracy theory./Conspiracy theories are dangerous./I think the parliamentary democracy we live in is the right form of government.

#### II. “Truth or Lie? (Version I)”

**Time:** 50 Minutes

**Objectives:** *To experience in a playful way the transition/difference between truth and lies*

**Description:** Give the participants 10-15 minutes to think about weird situations in their lives - and to invent a fictional experience which could be true but it is not. Then come into a circle, or two rows across. Then Everyone tells one false and one true (but unbelievable) story about themselves. The others guess: Which one is true, which one is false?

### III. "Truth or Lie?" (Version II)

**Time:** 45 Minutes

**Objectives:** *To experience in a playful way the transition/difference between truth and lies*

**Description:** Every participant picks a paper tie (different shapes and colors) and writes 3 things about themselves (2 truths and 1 lie) Everyone is walking around and starting a conversation trying to guess which of the things are true and which one is a lie. 45 minutes



**Reflection:** How do you like lying? Is it fun? And do you like finding out the truth like a "detective"? Are there different kinds of lies like funny lies, white lies and harmful lies?

### IV: "Between the chairs"

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Objectives:** *Reflexion about the topic: Which situations come into your mind, where people completely feel "between the chairs"? You don't know what to believe, you don't know what is right/wrong, better or worse...? Can be an attitude or an action where you are completely lost how to handle or think a.s.o.*

**Description:** *Collect examples and write them down on flip chart papers. Keep it general, don't ask the participants for their own / personal experiences. If they want to share their own experiences that's fine, but they don't have to do that.*

### V: "Tableau: Creating statues" (Continuing "Between the chairs")

**Time:** 15 Minutes (plus 30 Minuten Presentation/Discussion)

**Objectives:** *Reflexion about the topic: Do you know situations like this? What can you do in these kind of situations, what can help you to decide? Do you know these kind of situations? How do you handle them?*

**Description:** Now we work with the Examples of "Between the chairs": small groups take one example (Situation) and create 4 pictures (Alternative: Developing scenes getting to the heart of the dilemma):

- platform / routine, everything is as usual
- something happens that brings up this question
- total confusion
- one day later

Presentation, Discussion and Reflexion.

## Closing ritual

Final circle and a verbal exchange.

# 2nd workshop day: “What is disinformation, malinformation, misinformation?”

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## Introduction to the topic

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Objectives:** *The second day will be focused on deeper understanding of the concepts of disinformation, malinformation, misinformation and fake news. For this reason we suggest that the chosen warm up activities slowly reveal the topic of the day.*

### I. “Character walking”

**Time:** 5 Minutes

**Description:** The participants are asked to walk around the room and change their speed from 1 to 10 with 1 being the slowest and 10 being the fastest. The facilitator is the one that changes the number and with that they change the speed of walking. The second level of this walking around activity is to introduce them with some characters. When the facilitator says “stop” they should stop and turn around and meet and talk to whoever is closer to them. After a minute, the facilitator says “keep walking” and the participants walk while staying in character and they meet somebody else once they hear “stop” (This part can be used as a “getting to know each other” round as the participants will stop and talk with at least 3 different people in the room). We suggest that the facilitator adds some characters:

- Walk around like a journalist. Think about who you are, where are you going, what are you wearing. When you are asked to stop and meet another journalist from the group, try to stay in character.
- Walk around like a police officer. Are you working on a task? Where are you going? Share your story with the person that you’ll meet.
- Walk around like an animal ( dog, cat, bear etc. ).

There are limitless possibilities of walking as some characters and the facilitator should choose the best options that will be fun, serve as a warm up, but also start exploring the topic.

## II: "TV channels"

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Objectives:** *Short improvisation activity*

**Description:** For this activity you need at least 5 volunteers and after you are done with the first 5, you can ask another group to do the same until everyone in the room has tried it. The participants stand in one line with their backs turned. They are all given a different number from 1 to 5. They are told that they are now TV channels, so whenever their number is called out they should turn around and start the "program". They need to improvise and present the TV program they choose in the moment (news, spots, art...) without stopping until they hear that the facilitator says a different number. In that case, they turn around again with their back facing the audience, at the same time the called out number turns around and immediately starts the program. This is a fun improvisation that can be linked with the upcoming activities and open the discussion of the role of media in the misinformation, desinformation and fake news spreading.

**Other Versions:** Please note that although TV may sound as an outdated media, we still recommend that this activity should be done with TV channels because it represents the power of the media in society in its biggest form. However, if you think that TV channels are not that exciting and interesting for your group of participants, you can do the same activity and the participants can be:

- Youtube channels of famous influencers
- Podcasts
- TikTok accounts

## Core Topic

### Distinguish and recognize different forms of false information

“What are these: Disinformation, Misinformation and Malinformation?”

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Objectives:** Find out together, what disinformation, malinformation, misinformation means?

**Description:** Try to identify and define together with the group and with their words, what Disinformation, Misinformation and Malinformation means. Watch Videos to get more Informations. Please dedicate at least 30-45 minutes of the program to watch the suggested videos, followed by and open a discussion for video analyses, clarifying the terms for everybody’s comprehension. This can be done very straightforward with the facilitator playing the videos for the entire group and opening a conversation afterwards asking them how they understood it, can they give examples and what their thoughts are. Another possibility is to divide the group into smaller groups and give them some time to watch the videos and prepare a presentation for everyone at the end. Their presentation should give a definition for the concept that they were given and they need to share at least 3 examples that they found online or know about. Dividing the group into smaller groups gives them freedom to explore the complicated topics on their own, and to be responsible for their learning process in a non formal environment rather than a formal straight-forward presentation from the facilitator. However, both options are possible, as they fulfill the aim of the day: recognizing and identifying disinformation, misinformation and malinformation and to see their potential (often harmful) effects.

**Group 1** can work on Disinformation.

**Group 2** can work on Misinformation.

**Group 3** can work on Malinformation.

At the end each group shares their presentation and examples and the facilitator leads the discussion.

## Definitions and background for the facilitator:

1. Disinformation is information that is false, but deliberately created to harm a person, a social group, an organization or a country.
2. Misinformation is information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm.
3. Malinformation is when accurate information (which was not intended to be published!) is shared to cause harm to others - shame, embarrassment etc., often by bringing private information into the public sphere.

## Video Examples and Reminder for the facilitator (Material for Explaining Misinformation/Fake News)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD5MmuLDeFE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPE6CkAW9QY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4leAlCgrNW4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7qlrWC7Vb8>

*Find appropriate and short videos in your own language: e.g. on youtube, arte, vimeo or [other sources](#).*

**Reminder:** The term “fake news” should be avoided or used with caution for several reasons:

1. **Generalization and misuse:** The term is often used to discredit media reports that contradict a particular political or ideological point of view, even if those reports are accurate. This undermines public discourse and fosters mistrust of established information sources.
2. **Vague definition:** “fake news” is often used to refer to a range of different phenomena – from deliberate disinformation to simple reporting errors and opinions with which one does not agree. This makes the term unclear.
3. **Polarization:** The term is often used as a political weapon to defame opponents. In this way, it contributes to the division of society and makes constructive discussion more difficult, as it tends to stir up emotions rather than rational arguments.
4. **Promoting cynicism:** If too much information is broadly labeled as “fake news,” it can lead to general skepticism towards all media. This can cause people to distrust all news or to underestimate the importance of reputable reporting.

Instead of saying “fake news”, we recommend to use more specific terms such as “disinformation” or “misinformation”. These terms more accurately capture the type of problematic information that is meant and thus promote a more differentiated discussion.

## Reflection

Short reflection and introduction to the following day. Ending Ritual if appropriate.

# 3rd workshop day: “The true story of the wolf” - mechanisms of boulevard media

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## Introduction to the topic

### “A Little game on dramatizing and exaggerating”

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Objectives:** *Practicing improvisation and storytelling together. Introduction to the topic. “Dramatisation” and “exaggeration” are an essential part of boulevard media strategies and fake news and at the same time a good introduction to the following chapters “Little Red Riding Hood” and “conspiracy theories”.*

**Description:** Groups of three sit on chairs, side by side. Player 1 tells a fictional story of a little conflict. Player 2 takes the story and exaggerates, player 3 brings it into a complete drama.

### Examples:

**Player 1:** “yesterday in the supermarket there was a youngster (a foreigner, refugee, fascist..) who pushed forward in the cue, whilst stepping on my foot by mistake”.

**Player 2:** “yesterday in the supermarket there was a youngster who pushed forward in the cue. When I complained, he hit me in the face and we got into a fight”

**Player 3:** “yesterday in the supermarket there was a youngster who pushed forward in the cue. When I complained, he hit me in the face and pulled out a gun. Then he took us all hostage and threatened to shoot us...”

**Presentation:** Groups decide for one of their three versions and present it, one after the other, possibly little feedback before changing

## Core topic: “Alternative Stories”

### I. The fairy tale: "Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf"

**Time:** 2-3 Hours

**Objectives:** *creating different perspectives of the same story, using means of the tabloid media*

**Description:** First, read out/Let the participants read "Little Red Riding Hood", set up tableaux (dynamic, possibly as a "slide show" like in improv theater), play or dynamize individual situations, experiments with sounds and movement, etc. (so we can be sure that all participants know the original fairy tale). Then an alternative story is told by the game master. The story of the wolf!



#### The “true” story of the wolf

*I lived all alone in the woods. The woods were my home and I tried to keep them clean and green. One sunny day, as I was once again clearing the woods of rubbish that people had left behind, I heard someone approaching. I saw a little girl coming towards me. She looked strange, dressed all in red, and I became suspicious. I know that you shouldn't judge people by their appearance and clothes, so I decided to ask her who she was and where she was going. She told me that she was on her way to her grandmother's and that she wanted to bring her something to eat. I had the impression that she wanted to show me that she was a sweet girl and so I told her that it wasn't good to walk through the forest alone because strangers could be dangerous for children like her. I was also worried about the many rare flowers and plants that would be trampled on if people left their paths. I followed her and arrived at her grandmother's house before she did. I spoke to the old woman and we decided to teach the child a little lesson. So together we came up with the funny plan that I should slip into her role.*

*When the girl arrived, I pretended to be the grandmother. When she came into the room, she immediately made the nasty remark that I had such huge ears. I was a bit hurt and I told her that I could hear her better that way. At the same time, she gave me another injury, saying that my eyes were too big. Although I was injured again, she told me that I could see her better that way. However, it turned out that this girl wasn't as nice as I had first thought. She didn't stop with her nasty remarks and said something that really hurt my feelings. She alluded to my big teeth and that really is a weak point with me. Never in my life had I ever felt comfortable with my teeth. So I overreacted and said in an impulsive and emotional way that I wanted to use them to eat her up.*



source: [www.owl.museum-digital.de](http://www.owl.museum-digital.de)

*But of course, everyone knows that wolves would never be angry with a child. Wolves would much rather take care of a poor child lost in the woods. Anyway, she screamed and ran away and when I tried to catch up with her to calm her down, the hunter finally arrived. You know the rest. So I ran away and the grandmother never said a word about my true story. Instead, they spread the rumor that you had killed me. That was really hard. Now I have finally filed a complaint because I want to be heard. I finally have the courage to raise my voice and demand the right to be heard. I want to tell my own story!*

### Creating Talk shows

Dividing the group into smaller groups of 4-6 people. The small groups think about the construction of 2-3 talk shows with different protagonists who tell their story:

- little red riding hood
- the wolf

And if there are more people

- the grandmother
- the hunter

**Questions to the groups:** Who are the appearing characters, roles, which furniture do you want to use, are there, special effects such as jokers, etc.



What is the name of the show?

Who will play the show master?

What is the order of the appearing guests?

**Create 2-3 talk shows.** The intention is to create talk shows with strong emotions, big entertainment, surprises etc. to increase audience share. You can include facts, exaggerations, complete lies or inventions - truth or lie doesn't matter, all that counts is entertainment (just how boulevard media works!). Possible extension for a big group: Fan community of Little Red Riding Hood/ or the wolf create slogans to support their hero, blame the other one - can be part of the shows.

### **Preparing the Presentation**

- a. Before the shows begin: Game Master trains the audience - loud clapping when the show master arrives, training how to expressively support their "hero" / putting down their "enemy".
- b. Finding a jingle to start the show(s) (see on youtube, you will find many of them):<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=talk+show+intro+jingle](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=talk+show+intro+jingle)
- c. If you decide to create an editorial meeting - start preparing: Which furniture do you need, what are the positions of the players... very important: Are the players loud enough to be understood? Do they speak at least partially to the public?

### **Presentation**

Start with the first show, maybe with the perspective of "Little red riding hood". Follow your plan and stay open for improvisations, intended and not intended changings - imagine this is a live situation which is always a little (or very) different from your plannings. At the end - find an ending, the jingle comes back, applause. The next show is prepared, maybe the perspective of "The wolf". First rearrange furniture, give the group 5-10 minutes to prepare - then begin. Do the same thing for the next show(s).

### **Further ideas for the TV Show**

- Depending on the size and knowledge of the group, there can be a third group added: perspective of the editorial meeting before the show
- Recording of Pro Wolf original voices from the street or: live scene (with street noises in the background)
- Recording of interviews: the following questions are asked to people on the street
- Impulse cards or module cards, for example:
  - invite an expert
  - invite those affected
  - invite witnesses
  - event cards: for example 2 people get into an argument

### **Break and Transition**

Little break, followed by an energizer to help the group in, letting go, coming back to their bodies, finding a transition to open to the next topic

## II. "The one and only truth - Conspiracy theories"

**Time:** 30 Minutes

**Objectives:** Introduction to the topic of conspiracy theories

**Description:** The workshop leader presents 2-3 known / popular conspiracy narratives, - and what impact they have and/or had (3 are enough, otherwise this unit gets boring and confusing). Examples (verbal or with videos): 5G, Covid, chemtrails, fake moon landing, 9/11, QAnon movement, Jewish world conspiracy ...

Examples (Find appropriate and short videos in your own language: e.g. on youtube, arte, vimeo or other sources):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_NRgdhrAEI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_NRgdhrAEI) (Collection)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0etxDEvSz-M> (Jewish world conspiracy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8Gd9MJsnnE> (QAnon)

**Closing:** Short reflection, the topic will be continued on day 4. Information and talk about the following day which is the last one of the project (are there wishes, desires?)

# 4th workshop day: “conspiracy narratives and the values of honesty - finalising the week”

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## I. “a blueprint for conspiracy narratives”

**Time:** 45 minutes working phase, presentation 30-45 minutes

**Objectives:** Understanding how conspiracy narratives are built. Inventing own conspiracy narratives and present them.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 3-5 participants each to invent own, preferably abstruse conspiracy narratives, using 4 main characteristics (see below) - and how to disseminate them (strategy?).

Tasks for the groups: Find a burning, complex issue that concerns everyone and is very multi-layered (in the past: corona/vaccination, refugees, war, rich and poor, climate change ...)

- Find a simple, amazing or weird explanation, which is supposedly hidden from the public
- define "who" is to blame for the misery of “us”, e.g. the politicians, (the dinosaurs, the elite, Bill Gates, George Soros...)
- Exaggerate and dramatize to stir up great emotions, essentially anger and fear
- Find ways to mobilize others, as many people as possible (e.g. in private environments, social networks, actions etc.)

**Visualize your results on a flipchart paper:**

- What is the title for your conspiracy narrative?
- What could be a good *slogan* for it, which could be shouted at a demonstration?

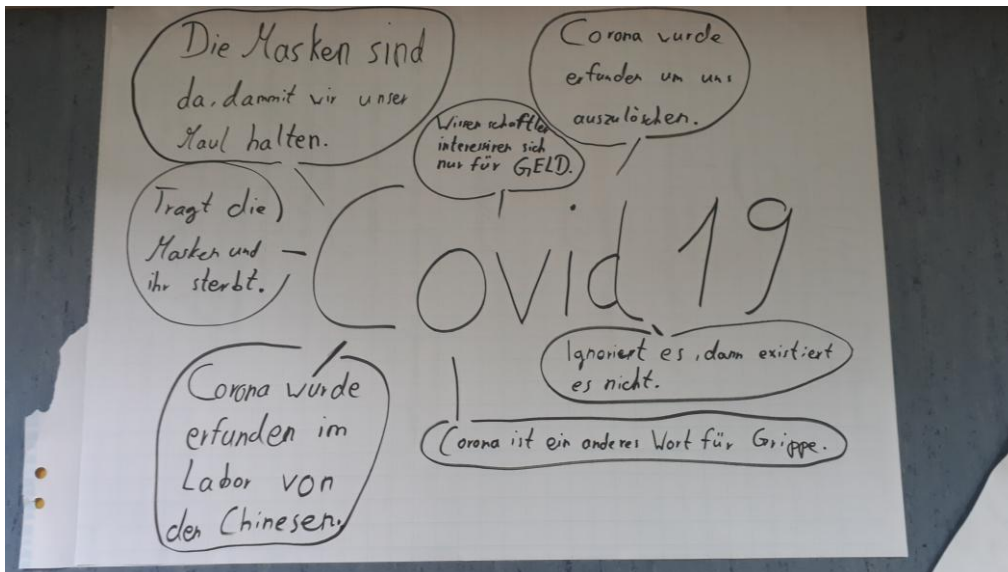


photo: Lutz Pickardt, taken at a workshop with pupils in Essen, Germany 2022

**Create three images**, which represent the development of the story if it became true (dystopia).

1. Image: platform, everything is “normal”
2. Image: s.th. changes, things are becoming worse
3. Image: total disaster, catastrophe (examples: people are poisoned by chemtrails and die or people are completely controlled and manipulated by the government because of vaccination)

**Presentation:** Every group presents their narrative to the others, using flipchart paper, calling slogans, showing the scene. After a short break (10 minutes) begin a sharing / discussion with the group: How was that, to create own conspiracy narratives? Did you have insights? Which questions came up?

## II. “Real friendship?”

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Objectives:** Get into the topic, Thematising confidence

## **Description:**

- “Brainstorming”

Open talk about the topic: “What is a real friendship for you? What makes it precious? What is important for you in friendships? Confidence, tolerance, mutual understanding, kindness? Which role has honesty / sincerity?”

- “Theatre improvisation”

**Question:** What do you do if a person of your group / clique is spreading lies, with or without bad intention? Are you brave enough to oppose, fighting for the truth?

**First step:** create short theatre scenes in the groups (3-4 participant, ) where just this happens: a mean lie is told about one of your friends, by a person who is very powerful / one of the leaders of the group. Imagine that nobody opposes / clarifies because of fear or a lack of lack of engagement, and your friend is really hurt and harmed.

**Second step:** The first group presents her scene to the big group, followed by an exploration:

**Variation 1:** Try out how the situation could be solved in a good way, that the lie is unmasked and your friend is supported - with the methods of forum theatre. Who in the group would support your friend, and how? Trial and error... make several tries until everybody is happy with the solution:

**Variation 2:** Verbal exchange: Do you know these kinds of situations? If yes, how did you or your friends manage them? What could you or one of the persons in the group do to change the situation in a good way?

## **“Fact checking for youngsters” - 30 minutes**

present some possibilities on how to distinguish lies from the truth in news. How to prove information with different sources

You may have a look at: <https://www.poynter.org/mediawise/programs/tfcn/>

Games: <https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/want-to-be-a-better-fact-checker-play-a-game/>

Try to find examples in your own language.

## Evaluation of the project

**Time:** 20-40 Minutes

**Objectives:** *To end the process together. Transfer.*

**Description:** Sitting in a circle. Possible questions:

- How do you feel after this week, did you like the project? What have been your favorite games / parts? What has been challenging/demanding?
- Did you learn s.th. new? Do you feel better prepared if you face fake news in the future, in your personal life or in media?
- Did you get impulses for actions if a friend is attracted to malinformation, misinformation or conspiracy narratives?
- What are your thoughts, your approach to "truth and lies" now, did s.th. change?

**Closing Ritual:** e.g. clapping and congrats or you repeat a game from the week that the youngsters really liked. Time: 10 minutes

# Deepening Thoughts

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## Extremism and identity

The workshop ‘Searching for Identity’ gets to the bottom of two extremist forces that seem to be opposed to each other and pose a great danger to our democracy and social coexistence. On the one hand, right-wing populist and right-wing extremist forces in Europe (and the world) have been on the rise for a long time and are exerting an increasing influence on social debates. In particular, the way they deal with refugees and migrants is at the centre of this, but so is their attitude towards dissidents, members of the LGBTQAI+ community and other groups in society who advocate for ecology, gender equality or alternative ways of life.

On the other side is radical Islamism, which fundamentally rejects the Western way of life and, in its most extreme form, jihadism, does not shy away from violence and terror.

We are aware that there are other forms of extremism in our societies as well (e.g. the left extreme), but in this workshop we focus on these two which belong to the most widespread and popular ones, and they have been the source of most of the violence in recent years.

A possible door opener for these two extremist forces is the insecurity and fear of the future, not to mention the identity crises that is increasingly widespread among young people. Despite the different political contexts, the basic ideological traits of both Islamism and right-wing extremism can be identified as: thinking in terms of friend/enemy categories, emphasizing inequality, rejecting the rule of law and democracy, vehement antisemitism and a tendency towards conspiracy myths. Both ideologies represent counter-models to an open and diverse society. They are attractive to their followers mainly because they appear to provide simple answers to complex problems and promise a strong identity that is superior to and disparages others.

For the right-wing extremists, it is exclusively the Germans, French, Greeks, etc. who belong to the society they desire – in contrast to a diverse, multicultural open society that also includes migrants, refugees or people with culturally hybrid identities. In particular, they are directed against Muslims or even just ‘people who are perceived as Muslim’ (e.g. because they have black hair and an Arabian or southern European appearance), who are claimed by them to be inferior, backward or simply foreign and supposedly do not ‘fit in with us’. This is described very clearly in the publications of the ‘Identitarian Movement’, which speaks of an allegedly planned ‘great exchange’ of population groups that must be countered.

On the other side are the radical Islamists who have declared war on all “unbelievers”. In their eyes, “unbelievers” are all those who do not share their rigid and literal interpretation of the Koran and

Hadith. In particular, Salafists reject any interpretation or historical classification of the scriptures; for them, only the word written down more than a thousand years ago counts. They reject atheists and those of other faiths just as much as they reject the overwhelming majority of Muslims who live less radically and hold more liberal or cosmopolitan views than they do. Most victims of Islamist attacks are Muslims.

The still widespread discrimination against migrants, foreigners and anyone perceived as foreign in our societies, in particular anti-Muslim racism is a fact. Even secular Muslims or those with little faith often experience devaluation simply because they have an Arabic-sounding name or look different from typical Germans, French, etc. But this situation plays into the hands of the extremists. Experiences of discrimination are generalized (all Germans, French, Americans are fighting against Muslims and want to oppress them) and used as a reason to fight those they see as “unbelievers”.

Islamists offer them a strong Muslim identity with which they can turn this experience of victimisation around so that they can feel strong and superior to the “unbelievers”.

We, the authors, do not claim to be knowledgeable about the Quran, the Hadith or Muslim religious communities, especially since we are actually not experts in this field. Likewise, the majority of people who apply or want to try our methods may not have an in-depth expertise in this area, and this is not required.

We do not address religion itself, but only the Islamists' view of humanity and their social ideas, which they promote.

We also do not want to comment or take a position on the decades-long conflict between Israel and Palestine, although it certainly touches on our topic and contributes to the radicalisation of social groups. If young people want to talk about this conflict and how it affects them, they can be given the space to do so. But we don't have the expertise to take a stance on it, especially as it is probably one of the oldest and most complex conflicts in the world.

Religious, cultural or socio-political discussions can and should be conducted elsewhere if possible. However, in the past they have repeatedly led to divisions and deepened the rifts rather than resolving anything.

For us, the ‘Searching for Identity’ is at the centre of our work.

In this workshop, we want to reach young people who are searching for a positive, powerful identity, for a feeling of belonging, which is very human. But on this search they may be attracted to the simple and abbreviated answers of extremists.

We want to make visible the rifts that arise when they join them, when their identity is essentially characterised by elevating themselves above others, devaluing them and in some cases even ‘dehumanising’ them.

Above all, we want to encourage young people to overcome these divisions, to open up to others and to develop tolerance for ambiguity. To make an effort to no longer perceive others exclusively as part of a group, but also as unique individuals who, in addition to everything that divides us, sometimes also have something in common with us, possibly more than we previously suspected.

And, as a by-product, to contribute to the creation of a society that does not exclude but includes others. That seeks reconciliation and understanding, overcoming alienation, not division.

We are aware that this is an ambitious goal, but we are convinced that it makes sense to stand up for it.

## The art of listening

Many conflicts, frustrations and aggressions arise because a culture of listening and open mindfulness is lacking. Other ways of living can be quickly judged and perceived as hostile, threatening, and treated as a danger that may have to be fought. But if we take a closer look at these 'potential enemies' and 'alien' ways of life it is not difficult to conclude that we actually share the same human basic needs and that human beings are, for the most part, the same in facing life's challenges. If we pay special attention and take the time to really listen to one another it is likely that we will have more in common with these 'others' and that there is more to unite us than divide us.

It can be very helpful to look at Marshall B. Rosenberg's concept of nonviolent communication to create an atmosphere of trust among workshop participants. Here are some thoughts:<sup>[17]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

“ *Most people don't listen to understand, they listen to respond*  
– Stephen R. Covey

”

- **How do I communicate my own needs and how do I recognize the needs of the other person?**

The first challenge is to recognize your own needs. We tend to focus on our interpretations of the other person's behaviour or of ourselves and this is where the second key distinction of feeling rather than thinking helps.

I am only capable of seeing this if I can shift my own focus away from the other person. Picture this as a flashlight beam that you point at your own emotional state instead of at the other person and this will allow you to access and perceive your own feelings and needs.

- **What are the typical unconscious verbal triggers of misunderstanding and aggression and how can we get rid of them?**

If someone shares something from their world with us or describes a problem we get caught up in strong resonances - sometimes just through individual words. We impose our own judgement on what the other person has actually said and are no longer able to really listen. For example when our partner says: "You spend far too much time with your girlfriend! The partner hears this as an accusation and immediately becomes defensive: "You're always busy with your work too! Besides, she needs me!!!" This is where a typical exchange or ping-pong effect begins. One word leads to another. Frustration and despair at not being heard or listened to, concerning what is going on in our lives, quickly arise and this in turn quickly leads to the tit for tat of louder voices and aggression.

- **What is the first verbal step in resolving entrenched positions in conflicts?**

The first step is to be able to acknowledge that the other person is taking a tougher stand. We do not need to try to appease them, but to acknowledge and respect them and take them seriously. It doesn't help to say: "Don't get so upset, it's just a little thing!" It is more supportive to let the anger stand in the form of: "Yes, I realise you're really upset right now!" This allows everyone in the conflict to be present emotionally just as they feel, without having to defend themselves. Anger usually goes away quite quickly if it is allowed to exist but is not perceived, or reacted to, as a threat. This means that in non-violent communication we get new food for thought and discover ways of dealing with emotions such as anger, resentment, guilt, shame and sadness.

## Ambiguity tolerance

**An important part of this work is fostering tolerance of ambiguity. But what does this term actually mean?**

Ambiguity tolerance refers to the ability to recognise and endure uncertainty, ambiguity and complex or contradictory situations without immediately seeking simple solutions or unambiguous answers. This ability is an important quality for dealing with the challenges of life, which are often unclear and unpredictable.

When working with young people, ambiguity tolerance is particularly important for several reasons:

**1. Developmental phase:** Adolescents are in a phase of life when they are developing their identities, values and beliefs. They are often confronted with conflicting information and perspectives. Tolerance of ambiguity helps them to accept this uncertainty and to form their own opinions and attitudes without being overwhelmed by external expectations or insecurities.

**2. Conflict resolution:** Young people must learn how to deal with conflict, both within their peer groups and in other social contexts. Often there are no easy solutions, and different opinions or interests can lead to tensions. A high tolerance of ambiguity supports the ability to recognise and constructively manage conflict without resorting to extreme reactions.

**3. Promoting critical thinking:** The ability to tolerate ambiguity promotes critical thinking and reflection. Young people are encouraged to consider different perspectives, recognize the complexity of issues and make independent decisions without getting lost in simple, often false dichotomies such as 'right or wrong'.

**4. Resilience:** The ability to accept ambiguity contributes to the development of resilience. Young people who are able to deal with uncertainty are better equipped to cope with life's challenges and adapt to change without panicking or giving up.

**5. Social change:** In an increasingly complex world, where global, social and technological changes constantly raise new questions and challenges, it is crucial that young people develop a high tolerance of ambiguity. They will live in an environment characterized by diversity, uncertainty and constant change.

**6. Above all, dealing with uncertainty** goes against the classic male understanding of their role. It is not traditionally part of the classic male role, because this is traditionally associated with qualities such as strength, self-confidence and assertiveness. Uncertainty could be perceived as weakness or inadequacy, which goes against these expectations. All young people need to be shown that experiencing insecurity is something completely normal that is unavoidable in life.

Particularly when working with young people, it is of central importance to promote tolerance of ambiguity in order to help them find their way in a complex and often contradictory world and to make healthy, considered decisions.

# Final Words

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We hope that this handbook will help all interested readers and practitioners in their work with young people in the context of political education. Please feel free to try out our methods, deepen those you like and discard others that do not suit you. If you want to develop our methods further, relate them to your own methods and approaches, or invent entirely new ones, we would be delighted.

This book is not intended as 'the' theatre pedagogic response to anti-democratic forces in our societies, but as an open-ended contribution to the discourse. We counter the widespread concern, anger and indignation with our playfulness, our spirit of research and the means of art. Let us stand up for a society that does not want to deepen the rifts between social groups, but to overcome them. A society that sees diversity as an asset, that is interested in and listens to others, including 'strangers', that recognizes and resolves conflicts as they arise, and that approaches the problems of our time with empathy and reason.

Are you planning a project, would you like to organize further training, are you looking for inspiration for your symposium? Please do not hesitate to contact us, ask questions or share your experiences. We look forward to hearing from you!

Lutz Pickardt, project manager of #theatre.makes.politics

Kassel, 31.03.2025



*Photo: Yana Klisovska, taken at the pilot workshop in Lesvos 2023.*

# Appendix

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## Exercises and Games

### Warm Up Games

#### I. "Swimming in the pool of meanings"

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Goal:** The aim is to warm up and explore physical capabilities and limits, but also the potential of body movement to express meaning by connecting the inner self to the present space and time.

**Description:** This exercise is a kinetic warm-up that also activates the mind, connecting non-descriptive and abstract movement with exact ideas and thoughts - it stimulates free kinetic and performative interaction with installations. We start at the beginning by exploring movement individually, each and every one by himself/herself. The Facilitator gives instructions, moving through levels of space, levels of rhythm, adding verbs associated with motor actions (e.g. flow, grow, fold, twist, slide, jump, crawl, zoom in, shrink) and then the instructions and then the instructions become the words, which were heard first in the commentary of the installations.

#### II. "Colombian hypnosis"

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Goal:** The experience of feeling led and being the leader.

**Description:** In pairs, one leads the action with the palm of the hand and the other follows, constantly looking at the palm at various levels. Then they change roles. Discussion: how does it feel to lead / dominate, how does it feel to be led / dominated.

### III. „Storytelling“

**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Goal:** *Get in contact, develop together stories*

**Description:** Chain storytelling and making up stories: The group stands in a circle. One person starts a story and ends with “because”. Next person gives the reason and end with “because” and so on: (1) *“yesterday my cat was jumping out of the window, because... -”* (2) *“because she saw an NLO in the sky, because... -”* and so on.

### IV: “The Zombie Game”

**Preparation:** For this game, you will need as many chairs as there are participants. Follow these steps to set up the space. This game encourages teamwork, quick thinking, and adaptability while adding a fun and suspenseful dynamic!

1. Spread the chairs randomly around the room—avoid arranging them in a circle or a line.
2. Ensure there are corridors between chairs so players can easily move around.
3. Position chairs far enough from obstacles to allow players to stand up safely.

#### **Instructions:**

1. All players take a seat.
2. Ask one volunteer to stand up and become the zombie (the moderator can be the zombie as a start).

#### **Roles and Objectives:**

- The Zombie's Goal: Sit in the empty chair left behind when they stood up. If the zombie manages to sit, they win.
- The Players' Goal: Keep the zombie from sitting down for as long as possible. Players achieve this by occupying the empty chair themselves.

#### **Rules for the Zombie:**

1. Starts from the chair farthest from the empty one.
2. Cannot push, hold, or pull other players.
3. Must move super slowly at all times toward the empty chair. When a player moves to this chair, he adjusts and moves to the new empty chair, and so on.

### Rules for the Players:

1. Can only stand up to sit in another chair (no returning to a previously vacated seat). Assume your move!
2. Must ensure there is always just one empty chair.
3. Cannot push, hold, or pull the zombie.
4. Must remain silent throughout the game (no verbal instruction. no signs)
5. Move quickly but no running is allowed.

**Strategic Pause:** After the first round, if the zombie sits (and succeeds), allow the group 2 minutes to discuss and develop a strategy. The zombie must not listen during this discussion.

### Tips and Variations:

- If the group's strategy is ineffective, offer an additional 2-minute planning session to refine their approach.
- Repeat the game until the team can keep the zombie standing for at least 1 minute and 30 seconds, or after 4-5 rounds.
- Consider joining the team as a participant. For added challenge, act as the final zombie and make monster-like sounds to increase difficulty, distract players, and add humor.

### V: "Toaster - Mixer - Elephant"

All players line up in a circle, with one person standing in the middle. This person points to another person and names one of the previously determined figures. (**Toaster, Elephant, Mixer etc.**) The player and their two neighbors (!) must then pantomime the figure. Of course, this must be done as quickly and accurately as possible. Anyone who slips up, takes too long to perform the figure or makes a wrong move has to go to the middle and replace the person there.

Got it? It's not that complicated. But it will be as soon as more and more pantomime figures are incorporated into the game.

Here is a selection of possible figures:

**Toaster:** The two outer players hold hands to form the toaster. The middle player jumps up between their arms to symbolize the toast.

**Elephant:** The middle player forms a trunk in front of his face with his hands; the two outer players each form the elephant's ears with their arms.

**Mixer:** The middle player stretches his arms over the heads of the two outer players. They rotate in a circle.

**Washing machine:** The two outer players hold hands; the middle player sticks his head between them and turns it quickly in a circle.

**The three monkeys:** The right-hand player covers his ears, the middle player covers his eyes and the left-hand player covers his mouth.

**Rooster:** The middle player shouts "Kikiriki" loudly, the two outer players flap their arms wildly to the side to form the wings of the rooster .

Source: <https://www.jugendleiter-blog.de/>

## Sociometry

### What is Sociometry?

*Sociometry is a set of methods created by Jacob Levi Moreno (1934) to study the interpersonal connections of individuals and groups of all sizes. Sociometry in its most basic sense can be best characterized as a collection of methods to investigate and evaluate networks of existing and preferred relationships. Specifically, sociometry is the study of interpersonal choices regarding criteria of interest to the investigator.*

In non-formal education, sociometric exercises allow for a clear overview of where people position themselves in respect to specific questions.

*\*The word sociometry comes from the Latin "socius," meaning social and the Latin "metrum," meaning measure.*

### Goals of Sociometry

- *Facilitate constructive change in individuals and groups.*
- *Increase awareness, empathy, reciprocity and social interactions.*
- *Explore social choice patterns and reduce conflicts.*
- *Clarify roles, interpersonal relations, and values.*
- *Reveal overt and covert group dynamics.*
- *Increase group cohesion and productivity.*


### Sociometric activities that can be used in the context of the workshops in this handbook:

#### 1. Lining up

Walk around the space and line-up according to:

- number of siblings
- your birthday by year and date
- number of glasses of water (or cups of caffeine) you drink per day
- introversion / extraversion
- how tired / energetic you feel
- number of different countries you've visited

## 2. People Map

In this 5-minute activity, the room you are in becomes a metaphorical map and participants move to the place on the map following the questions that the facilitators are asking. 

The room represents a map of (the city, state, region, country or world). Decide the scope of the room map based on the people on your team and what you want to

- If your group/team is international – the room map would be the world.
- If your group/team is from different areas of the same county – the room map would be that country. (suggestion: the room map can still be the world)
- If your group is all from the same city – the room map can be the city.

### 3. Instruct them to move to the place in the room that represents:

1. Where do you live?
2. Where were you born?
3. Where have you always wanted to travel?
4. Where do you want to live?
5. A place where a memorable event took place for you
6. What is your favorite part of the world/your city?
7. What is the part of the world/city you don't like/want to live in?




Choose the questions based on the needs and the goals of your workshop.

Once they position themselves on the map, let them look around and see where they are in relation to others.



You can ask follow -up questions about their choices. Why don't you like this part of the city? Why would you love to live in that country?...

## 4. Privilege Walk: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

This activity is designed to help participants identify and reflect on experiences of feeling empowered or disempowered. The activity can also help them to identify their position in relation with others and understand the position of the others in relation to themselves. 

Have participants line up in a straight line across the middle of the room with plenty of space to move forward and backward as the exercise proceeds.

Begin reading statements aloud in a clear voice, pausing slightly after each one. The pause can be as long or as short as desired as appropriate.

- When you have finished the statements, ask participants to take note of where they are in the room in relation to others.
- Have everyone gather into a circle for debriefing and discussion.

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**Possible statements. Please choose the statements, edit them or write new ones based on the needs and the topic of the workshop you are developing. The following statements are just suggestions and examples.**

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If you speak only one language at home, take one step forward.

If you are male, take one step forward.

If you are right-handed, take one step forward.

If you miss school to celebrate your holidays (religious or cultural), take one step back.

If you were born in this country, take one step forward.

If your parents were born in this country, take one step forward.

If your grandparents were born in this country, take one step forward.

If you were born in a different country, take one step back.

If your parents were born in a different country, take one step back.

If you are a citizen of this country, take one step forward.

If you have taken a family vacation, take one step forward.

If you have never been teased about your race/nationality, take one step forward.

If you have been teased because of your gender, take one step back.

If you've ever been bullied or teased for something you can't control, take one step back.

If you have your own computer, take one step forward.

If you always assumed you'd go to school and then college/university, take one step forward.

If you had a maid, gardener or nanny, take one step forward

If you had to learn English as a second language at school, take one step back.

If most of your teachers look like you, take one step forward.

If one of your parents is a teacher, doctor, lawyer or other professional, take one step forward.

If you were embarrassed by your clothes or house, take one step back.

If you are female, take one step back.

If your family owns a car, take one step forward.

If you feel good about how your culture is identified by the media, take one step forward.

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***During the circle of discussion, you can ask these questions:***

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·What did you notice during this activity?

How did this activity make you feel?

Were you surprised at where you/your friends were?

What did you think of the questions? Did you think things like this mattered?

Are you in control of what made you step forward or backwards?

What do you wish others could know about something that made you step backwards?

Do you think these questions and your movements are fair?

Remember when I said this lesson was about privilege? How would you define privilege? (A privilege is a special right or advantage awarded to only a certain group of people)

What's one thing that you learned today?

How can you raise awareness about privilege?

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## 5. Barometer: Taking a Stand on Controversial Issues

Identify a space in the workroom where participants can stand in a line according to how strongly they agree or disagree with the statements you are about to read. They can take any place in between as well.

Place "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree" signs at opposite ends of a continuum in your room.

**Important note:** This activity deals with participants literally putting themselves and their opinions on the line, it has the potential to promote outbursts that result from some individuals not understanding how others can hold whatever opinion they hold. Reiterate your group rules about respect for the opinions and voices of others and call for participants to be honest but not insulting. Re-address ways to constructively disagree with one another.

Once you read a statement and the participants take a stand, you can start a discussion about it.

Please write statements according to your workshop's subject.

### Examples:

If something was said on a national TV station, I consider it as true.

If a famous person that I admire does or says something online that offends others, I will still defend them and support him/her/them because they are great.

People should not move to other countries and stay where they are.

If somebody moves to my country, they need to adapt to our culture and forget their ways of doing things.

## The «Augusto Boal Games Pool»

*Source: „Theater der Unterdrückten als Format für die Seminararbeit im Globalen Lernen“, Jugendbildungsstätte Kaubstraße, Berlin – translated by Lutz Pickardt. The most of the games are taken from the book: Augusto Boal: "Exercises and Games for Actors and Non-Actors", 3rd Edition, Routledge 2021.*

### I. Badu

**Objectives:** Enable the group, create and support connections between the participants, promote concentration, arrive together in one room.

**Duration:** 10-15 minutes

**Group size:** from 6 people

**Procedure:** The method is a metaphor for heart palpitations. The speed of the exercise can be controlled by the facilitator. The rhythm is very important here and creates a strong sense of cohesion and synchronisation for the group.

The group stands in a circle, the facilitator starts the rhythm, the group should "just look" at first and not join in. The index and middle fingers of the right hand hit the palm of the left hand twice in succession. The right hand then hits the chest twice lightly below the collarbones. Then the index and middle fingers hit the hand again, then the chest and so on.

Participants are invited to join in and create the rhythm with their own bodies. Groups often have a tendency to speed up. Here it is important that the facilitator makes sure that the tempo remains constant.

When the group is producing the same rhythm, the facilitator explains how to continue: you can only speak when your fingers hit your hand. The facilitator now invites the participants to say their name when their fingers hit their hand. The group then repeats the person's name. This is often difficult for the participants and they often have to be reminded that only is spoken when "fingers are on hand". This goes round the circle until everyone has introduced themselves by name.

The rhythm is extended in the next step: After tapping the chest with the hand, the feet are stomped. As soon as everyone can join in the rhythm, this stomping is used to move around the room. Furthermore, the facilitator only speaks when the fingers are tapping on the hand.

Afterwards, some rhythm elements are omitted and only thought along silently. Start with the chest. The fingers tap on the hand, then two beats on the chest are silently thought along, then the feet are stomped twice while moving through the room. Then the tapping on the chest is loud again and the feet are left out, followed by the tapping on the hands. When all three rhythm elements sound loud again, the participants are invited to move slowly into the circle (when the feet are stamping). The rhythm continues. As soon as everyone is standing in the circle, the group moves together to the right

and then to the left while stamping their feet. Everyone then moves inwards to the rhythm, then outwards again. The rhythm then stops.

**Variation:** If the group already knows the exercise, the first part (fingers on hand / hand on chest) is suitable as an introduction after a break.

**Evaluation:** Exchange - how did you feel about the exercise? How did it feel in your body?

## **II. Room walk**

**Aims:** Establish contact, get to know each other, become aware of your own body, the space and the other participants.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Group size:** from 4 people

**Procedure:** The group stands in a circle. The facilitator invites the participants to move freely around the room. It is important to make sure that the participants do not start walking in a circle, but move around the room in a criss-cross pattern.

At the beginning, the focus is on the perception of your own body. Questions can be: How do I feel? Is my body awake, tired, energized, relaxed? How do I move through the room? How do I step, with which part of my foot, etc.

### **Then there are various instructions:**

- The participants should greet each other when they meet. They can use their voice and body to do this. Different types of greeting can be used: Elbow to elbow, foot to foot, shaking hands, bowing, shaking fists.
- The participants are invited to move through the room at different speeds. At first they walk at a leisurely pace, then at the signal from the facilitator they speed up and speed up, then slow down again until they are moving in slow motion.
- The facilitator sets the emotions that determine how the players walk through the room: Joy, anger, sadness, relief, etc.
- The facilitator explains to the participants that they should always be evenly distributed around the room so that there is no empty space when walking. Every now and then, the facilitator says "Stop" and everyone stops. Then the game continues. The room should now be evenly filled. As soon as a participant sees an empty space that is larger than the other spaces, they move there.
- The facilitator names certain colours and items of clothing. The participants then form groups if the named colour and item of clothing apply to them.

- The participants should walk on tiptoe, then on their heels, then on the inner side of the foot and on the outer side of the foot.

**Evaluation:** Again, briefly discuss how the participants felt during the exercise and how they perceived the space and the presence of the other participants.

### **III. Sound forest**

**Goals:** Building trust, getting to know each other, paying attention to listening.

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes

**Group size:** even number of participants, working in groups of 2.

**Procedure:** Participants are invited to get together in groups of 2. One person makes a pleasant and distinctive sound with their voice. The other person closes their eyes. The person is now guided through the room with the sound. When the sound stops, the person with their eyes closed remains standing. The person with their eyes open is responsible for their partner, so it is important that everyone feels comfortable in the pair constellations they have found. If the person with their eyes closed finds it easy to follow the sound, the distance can be increased or the volume changed. After 5 minutes, the roles change. The person with their eyes open closes their eyes. The person who had their eyes closed now leads their partner around the room. Afterwards, the pairs discuss their experience of the exercise.

**Evaluation:** After an exchange in the groups of 2, the following questions are asked to the group:

How did you feel during the exercise? Did you find it easy to follow the sound? How did it feel to lead?  
How did it feel to be led?

### **IV. How many "A" are there in an A?**

**Aims:** Warm-up exercise for voice and body, getting into the body, empathising with other people, training observation skills.

**Duration:** 30 minutes or more, depending on group size

**Group size:** from 3 people

**Procedure:** The group stands in a circle and is asked what ways there are to say "A". One person takes a step forward and expresses an emotion or feeling, using all the ways and means available.

Instruct the person to say the letter "A" (pitch, movement, gestures, etc.). The group imitates exactly what the person has done and tries to trace the idea or feeling. The same is then done (one person

steps forward, says a letter with movement and the others repeat this) with the remaining vowels E, I, O and U.

The group is then asked what ways there are to say "yes" and "no". And these are tried out. The exercise is then carried out using short sentences from everyday life. One person says a sentence that occurs frequently in their everyday life. They then try out at least three very different ways of saying the sentence, with which emotions and meanings. In addition, the facilitator can suggest improvising "typical" sentences from teachers, parents, pupils and other social groups and thus receive feedback on the topics that are present in the group.

Finally, sentences from the forum theatre scenes (if the group has already developed scenes) or sentences from their own lives that are experienced as oppressive and powerful can be included in the exercise.

**Evaluation:** Participants are invited to discuss the different sentences and emotions. What effects did the exercise have on the sentences they use in everyday life? That they encounter in everyday life? What ideas and thoughts did this generate? What role does movement and emphasis play in the meaning of what is said?

## **V. Three Irish Duels**

**Objectives:** This exercise gives you the opportunity to try out attacking and defending yourself in a playful way.

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Group size:** from four people, groups of 2

### **Procedure:**

1. **Duel:** Two participants stand opposite each other. They place their own hands on their knees. As soon as the duel begins, the hands must always be in motion: on the one hand on their own knees, on the other hand they must try to touch the knees of the other person. At the same time, they must protect their own knees.
2. **Duel:** The two participants stand opposite each other. Both hop from one foot to the other so that only one foot touches the floor at a time. With the foot that is in the air, they should touch the foot of the other person that is on the ground (but not step on it!!). At the same time, they should make sure that their own foot is not touched. This duel is best played barefoot or with similarly equipped shoes.
3. **Duel:** The two participants face each other. The right arm is held out in front with the index finger extended, the left hand is behind the back. Now the two participants must try to touch the other person's left hand with their right index finger. The arms are like swords with which the duel is fought.

In each duel, the pair constellation is swapped, if possible. Each duel is played for about 2-3 minutes.

**Evaluation:** How did you feel during the exercise? What did you notice? Were there any differences between the duels? What did you find easier: attacking or defending yourself? What does this exercise have to do with oppression for you?

## **VI. Push away from each other**

**Goals:** Getting to know each other, measuring strength, showing solidarity with each other without overstepping the boundaries of the other person, maintaining balance.

The aim is not to win, but to work together and make common cause. Both people should organise the exercise and cooperate with each other; they should use as much strength as possible and keep moving.

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes

Group size: from four people. There must be an even number of groups, as we work in teams of two.

**Procedure:** The participants get together in teams of 2. The pairs stand opposite each other and hold on to each other's shoulders. There is an imaginary line between them on the floor. The instructor asks the participants not to cross this line. Then the participants begin to push the other person away with all their strength. If one person senses that the other person is using less force, they also reduce their effort in order to remain in balance with the other person. The pairs are swapped several times and a different way of pushing away is tried out.

**Attention:** It is not about winning or losing, the leader should make sure that the participants do not start fighting with each other.

**Variation:** The exercise can also be performed the other way round, with the pairs positioned back to back and then bum to bum.

Another variation is the dance of the backs. The couples stand back to back and start to move without music. The movements of one person should be understood and imitated by the other person. It is important that the two backs remain in contact with each other the whole time.

Further possible use of the method:

The exercise also serves to practise with the players how they react to the audience's suggestions in the forum: the aim is not to win against the intervention, but to build up enough pressure as an antagonist so that the audience's new suggestion can unfold as well as possible in an argumentative way, so that the possible strategy used becomes clear and can be analysed well with the audience.

**Evaluation:** How did you feel about the exercise? How did you deal with the physical closeness? Did you reach your own limits? Did you reach the other person's limits? Did you want to fight the other person? If so, what does this say about how we live together, about our society? In which everyday situations do you encounter competition? When and where do you experience co-operation?

## **VII. Glass Cobra**

**Objectives:** To deepen the trust built up in the group. Learning to use senses other than the eyes.

**Duration:** 30-60 minutes depending on group size

**Group size:** from 8 people

**Procedure:** The group stands in a row, then everyone places their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Now the facilitator invites all participants to close their eyes. They should now feel how the shoulders, neck and back of the head of the person in front of them feel. The facilitator tells the group that they are now a glass cobra. After a few minutes, the leader gives a signal, whereupon the glass cobra breaks into small pieces, i.e. the participants break contact with the person in front of them and move around the room with their eyes closed.

The participants move slowly around the room with their eyes closed while the leader tells the story of the glass cobra. (See text below). The facilitator then asks the participants to try to find the person who was standing in front of them. Their eyes remain closed and they are not allowed to speak. The participants should use their hands to find the person's neck, the back of their head and their shoulders. This can take some time. The leader can support the group and help the participants to find the other person. It can be asked "Person A, are you sure you're with the right person? Check again if you're in the right place". When the snake is back in its original shape, the participants are told that they can open their eyes.

**Please note:** The group should already have built up trust in each other for this exercise. It should be clarified beforehand who feels comfortable with physical contact and who may take on an observing role instead of participating.

The text: "According to an indigenous legend from Arauco in southern Chile, the glass cobra broke into thousands of small pieces when its land was colonized and violently conquered by the Spanish.

Separated of each other, the fragments of this glass cobra are harmless. But one day, so the legend goes, they will come together again and form a cobra of steel that will drive away the invaders."

**Evaluation:** How did you feel about the exercise? What did you notice? What do you think about the legend? How does the legend fit in with situations from your everyday life? Do you know any similar

moments? Moments when you were alone and didn't feel strong? Do you also recognise that moment of strength when the pieces come together again?

### **VIII. Hopes Rhythm**

**Aim:** This exercise strengthens different ways of learning and connecting with each other. It focuses on observing and then trying things out. It creates a space to experience a rhythm with the body and at the same time to be in harmony with the group. It also strengthens the group feeling.

**Duration:** 15-30 minutes

**Group size:** from six people

**Procedure:** The group stands in a circle. The facilitator tells the participants that they should only watch for the time being and not join in. Then they demonstrate the first part of the rhythm, which consists of clapping their thighs with both hands, clapping their hands together and pausing to nod their heads. You can find the rhythm in the video on the Kaubstraße youth education centre website (link on the next page). The leader demonstrates the rhythm two or three times and then invites the group to join in. The group joins in once, then the leader demonstrates it again and says "Just watch - don't join in".

When the group is confident in the first part of the rhythm, the second part is demonstrated, again using the same principle of the group first watching and then doing it together. As soon as the group has internalised the second part, the first and second parts are joined together. The third part is then practiced, which is identical to the first part. Finally, all parts are put together.

**Variation:** In a seminar lasting several days, this exercise can be extended to include other elements. When clapping their hands, the group jumps up at the same time and shouts "Hey".

## **IX. Four March**

**Objectives:** The exercise shows how dominant power structures work and how these structures oppress people who are different. It makes it possible to practise dealing with these structures as a person and resisting them. The exercise shows how interventions in forum theatre can work.

The role of allies and the question of what solidarity can look like in practice will also be addressed.

**Group size:** from 7 people

**Duration:** 30-60 minutes

**Procedure:** The facilitator asks the group for four people who would like to come on stage. The remaining participants are the audience. Three people are instructed to march side by side across the stage from left to right as if they were running on rails or swimming lanes. They make a rhythm that is accompanied by the voice with "Pam-pa-ram-pram-pam".

At the same time, they move their arms up and down as if they were marching in an army. The director demonstrates the movement once. Then the three march across the stage a few times so that the atmosphere of the scene can unfold. Now the fourth person joins in. This person is given the task of moving behind the marching people. They are allowed to move freely and easily behind the marchers and can also dance and sing. After the change of direction, the dancing person encounters the marchers, who now play the antagonists. During the first and second encounters, the marchers have the task of rhythmically and symbolically pushing the dancing person down with their arms. They then have to step over the former dancer and continue marching, thereby demonstrating that individual dancing is not tolerated in their world of uniform marching. However, the dancing person (re)stands twice by dancing behind the marchers again. At the third encounter, they adapt to the pressure and join the march. Other participants from the audience can now take on the role of the person dancing and try out different strategies. (The person could, for example, make one of the marchers dance and thus divide the group, or they could avoid the march or just pretend to conform and continue dancing "secretly" as soon as they are no longer in sight). The facilitator does not make any suggestions themselves, but encourages the participants to look for alternatives and then lets the group analyse

the suggestions. The players in the scene can also be replaced by other participants in their fixed antagonist roles and try out alternatives in the role of the protagonist themselves.

**Evaluation:** What did you see? How did you feel about it? How was the relationship between the dancing person and the marchers?

Do you know such structures or situations from your everyday life? How did you feel when you saw the person being suppressed by the others (pushed to the ground)? What attempts did you see the dancing person make to resist the marchers? Why was that?

What everyday situations do you know that demonstrate a similar dynamic?

## II. Image and Statue Theatre

Statue theatre is a basic form of performing arts that contains many elements that can be used for educational theatre work:

- The players learn to concentrate
- They increase their presence
- Feelings can be expressed
- It is lower-threshold and easier to implement than scenic improvisations
- Conflicting situations can be condensed into a picture and examined by the group
- It's great fun

The following is a possible sequence of events to enable even unfocused players or groups to concentrate and express themselves theatrically:

### **1st Step: Stop dance.**

All players go onto the dance floor. The facilitator then starts the music (e.g. by pressing a button on the radio). The young people dance or move fast to the music. If the facilitator suddenly stops the music, all participants must stop immediately and "freeze" in their movements.

Anyone who reacts too late or moves again is eliminated. The winner of the stop dance is the one who is still alone on the dance floor at the end.

### **Game variants of stop dance**

There are an infinite number of modified versions of the game. When the music runs out, for example, all players have to play:

- Imitate a specific animal (elephant, bird, dog, kangaroo ...)
- Represent something predetermined (tree, different professions ...)
- Represent a certain feeling (sadness, anger, fear, happiness...)

## 2nd Step - "Hold" the statue

The facilitator asks the players whether they have ever seen an actor on the street or at the market standing around like a statue made of stone. Some are painted gold and sometimes make slow-motion gestures

If someone comes forward, they are encouraged to show such a statue on the playing area. Question; How long can you stand "frozen" without moving, grimacing or laughing? 10 seconds, 30 seconds, one minute?

Now the facilitator asks: Who of you thinks that you can do this particularly well? Who can stand still for, let's say, one minute?

Usually several young people come forward. It's a kind of competition: who can hold the statue for a while without getting rattled? Several players try it out one after the other.

**Variation:** the other players can try to lure him out of his shell by shouting, laughing and gesturing. But: physical contact is prohibited, the group should keep a safe distance of at least one meter.

If this goes well, the challenge can be increased: the time span is increased, or the player must look forwards - closing eyes or looking down is then not allowed.

## 3rd Step - Statues and emotions

The group is asked to name all the feelings and emotions that come to mind (see above). - The facilitator can help to add more ideas: in love, panic, envy and jealousy, exuberant happiness...

**Variation 1:** The group moves around the room, at Stop! a certain emotion should be shown, all at the same time. Repeat several times and include sounds - crying, laughing, sighing, etc.

**Variation 2:** The group is divided into several small groups (ideally no more than 5-6 per group). Each group meets in a corner of the room and agrees on one emotion to be shown later - without presenting it now.

When everyone has finished, group 1 begins to line up with their backs to the group. Everyone counts: 5,4,3,2,1 - NOW. At this moment, all the players in group 1 find their individual expression of feeling in their statue. Everyone stands, sits or lies in their sculpture and holds the image for a few minutes.

Question for the others: What feeling is shown here?

**Variation** to deepen the game: The facilitator picks one of the characters at random. Instructions to the group: Imagine you see a person from a movie from a play (it's not Paul. Annika, Lena - but a fictitious(!) character).

**Possible questions:** What has just happened to the person? Or: What is about to happen? Where is this person (in their room, in the schoolyard...)? Who else is there? Or are they all alone? Who are they looking at? What are they thinking? What would they most like to do? ... etc. Many questions are conceivable here in order to invent a short story together with the group. At the beginning, there are often many different ideas about "what" happened to the person. The facilitator picks out the one that contains the most "drama" to develop it further with the group. But: the selection is relatively random; it is not about selecting the "best" or "strongest" - this should be communicated to the group in order to get away from judgment and competitive thinking.

The same is now repeated with the other groups.

**Note:** The instruction to pick only one(!) character is due to the time, it could theoretically be any other - but it would take too long to invent a story for each character.

#### **4th Step: Creating images with several players**

Person A walks into the space with an idea (an emotion and a statue). Person B builds themselves into the picture, like a second figure in a photo. Then person C joins in and completes the picture. And so on... at the end there is a group sculpture. Question to the audience: what is the title, what is it about, what do you think?

Many other variations of the Statue Theatre are possible. Detailed descriptions can be found, for example, in the book "Augusto Boal - Exercises and games for actors and non-actors".

## **Another Image Theatre Exercise: "I am a tree." ("first experience with statues")**

### **Objective:**

This exercise invites participants to explore the concept of collective creation and the dynamics of group collaboration, while stimulating creativity and imagination. It also helps to strengthen the sense of connection between each individual and emphasizes how each person contributes to the creation of a shared image.

### **Duration**

Approximately 10 minutes (adjustable depending on the number of participants).

**Materials needed:** A spacious area where participants can move and position themselves freely.

### **Preparation:**

The group stands in a circle. The facilitator or teacher explains the exercise and prepares the group to actively participate.

### **Steps of the Exercise:**

#### **1. Introduction and Demonstration**

The facilitator begins by stepping into the center of the circle. They demonstrate the exercise by stating

**"I AM THE TREE!"**

While saying this, the facilitator adopts a fixed, expressive posture that represents a tree.

This could be a wide stance symbolizing the tree's roots, arms spread to represent branches, or a simpler but effective movement.

The goal is to give the group a clear example of what the "fixed image" of the tree looks like

#### **2. First Participant's Turn**

A volunteer is invited to jump into the center of the circle and say:

**"I AM THE TREE!"**

The volunteer then adopts a static pose that reflects their interpretation of the tree. This moment can last a few seconds to allow the others to observe the pose

### 3. Adding Elements to the Tree

The facilitator then invites other group members to take turns jumping into the center and adding new parts to the tree's image. For example, participants might say:

- "I am the bird on the tree branch!"
- "I am the flower next to the tree!"
- "I am the wind moving the tree!"

and many more.

**4.** Each participant must make sure their addition is integrated into the collective image of the tree. The tree remains at the center, and each new part should relate to the other elements already formed.

### 5. Reminding the Rule

To maintain coherence in the image, it's important for each participant to end their sentence with **« ... of the tree »**

This ensures the image of the tree stays at the center and reinforces the idea of unity within the group. The facilitator can encourage participants to be creative in their way of adding parts while making sure the tree remains the central focus.

### 6. Conclusion of the Exercise

When all participants have had the chance to add a part to the tree, or when the collective image starts to solidify, the facilitator may invite the group to take a moment to observe the created image together. The tree now represents the contributions of each participant, showing how a group can come together around a shared idea.

### 7. Debriefing (optional)

After the exercise, the facilitator can invite participants to reflect on their experience. Some debriefing questions could be posed:

- How did you feel when adding your element to the tree?
- Did you feel a connection with the other members of the group?
- What makes this tree image stronger, in your opinion?
- What does it mean to contribute to a collective image?

### **Exercise Variations:**

Besides the tree, you can propose to create together a pizza where every participants represent an elements (tomato sauce, mozza, sausage, etc.)

You can also propose to represent a grocery bag, in which participant represent the groceries like a bottle of milk, vegetables or fruits, biscuits, etc.)

### **Variations with the tree; Dynamic Additions**

To expand the tree exercise, each participant can be invited to add not just a part of the tree, but also a **movement** or a **sound** that corresponds to their addition. For example, the roots could be accompanied by a light movement of the arms reaching downward, or the leaves could be represented by quick, fluttering movements. This enriches the exercise and allows for a more physical exploration of the collective image

### **A Living Tree**

After the tree is "complete," the facilitator can propose bringing the tree to life by turning the exercise into a short theatrical scene where each participant embodies the tree in a specific context (for example, a storm, a change of seasons, etc.). This allows for group improvisation and interaction with the collective image

### **Benefits of the Exercise:**

**Collective Creativity:** This exercise encourages individual creativity while strengthening the concept of collaboration in creating a shared image.

**Concentration and Presence:** It fosters focused attention on the present moment and physical interaction in space.

**Group Cohesion:** Every addition reinforces the idea that the tree's image is a collective creation, with each member contributing something essential.

**Exploration of Movement:** The exercise provides space for physical expression and encourages participants to explore various stances and gestures connected to a shared concept.

*This exercise is an excellent way to develop cooperation, creativity, and the awareness of each individual's role within a group, while also offering a physical and sensory exploration of the theme. It can be adapted for different group dynamics and creative goals.*

### III. Forum Theatre

#### Method sheet “Forum theater” (after Augusto Boal)

*The method was presented as part of a workshop at the 2018 Nah-Dran conference in Potsdam. We have the kindly permission to print this Method Sheet from: Anne Frank Center Berlin, c/o Christine Wehner, Rosenthaler Str. 39, 10178 Berlin - A program of the: Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat*

Practicing options for action in situations of oppression

**Number of participants:** max. 20 persons

**Target group/s:** Age group from 14 years

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Equipment/technology/materials:** sufficiently large room, flipcharts, eddings, pens, optional: props, costumes

#### **Goal/s:**

- Get to know and try out options for action in discriminatory or oppressive situations
- Learning to understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
- Differentiated role work and analysis of individual situations
- Understanding the social structures that give rise to injustice

**Preparations:** For the forum theater, you need a large, open space with a clearly marked stage, which you can mask off on the floor with masking tape, for example. You will also need another small room for the small groups to work on their scenes. Ideally, the group will already be familiar with role work and have warmed up using theater methods (see recommendations and tips).

#### **Procedure:**

##### **1. Explanation of the method (10 minutes)**

Explain to the participants that a small group is to develop and act out a discriminatory or oppressive situation. The situation should deliberately fail. This means that the discriminated/oppressed person is still in a powerless position at the end of the scene. This scene is then analyzed and performed again. From the second run-through, however, the audience can replace people in their roles on stage and change the scene with new options for action. More details about the process can be found in the sub-items.

##### **2. Situation briefing (15 minutes)**

Now ask the participants to get together in small groups or divide them up (creatively). The aim of the small group work is to find a situation together that the participants would like to analyze and act out.

The previously completed sheet on individual points of contact with discrimination (see ZIM for the workshop "Discrimination in everyday life and in the workplace") can be used to help select the situations, but the participants can also select a purely hypothetical situation.

Ask the groups to discuss the situations within 10 minutes. Each small group should now agree on a situation that they will briefly present to the plenary.

### 3. Work on the scene (15 minutes)

Bring the participants back to the plenary and ask the small groups to briefly describe their respective situations to the others. From the situations presented, a scene should now be determined using the following key questions, which should be acted out:



- Which of these situations happen particularly often?
- Which situation seems particularly relevant to you?
- Which scene do we want to play?

After a scene has been selected, ask the participants who would like to play this scene so that all roles are filled. The players do not have to come from the group that suggested the situation. The players then work on their scene for 10 minutes and rehearse it. Here, too, there are a few aspects to consider:

- Every scene needs at least one main character (the person being discriminated against) and at least one antagonist (the person being discriminated against).
- The scenes should not begin with the conflict, but rather lead up to it with a short prequel.
- The situation should fail, which means that the main character is still powerless or in the oppressed position at the end of the scene.
- Each scene has a clear beginning and a clear end. The end is an agreed cue at which the entire group remains motionless on stage in a freeze, thus ending the scene.
- If necessary, point out to the participants that the situation should not lead to physical aggression or physical violence - this form of oppression cannot be resolved.
- Ask the participants never to play themselves or to work with real names in the scenes.
- Every performer plays a role!

While the small group discusses and rehearses their scene, the other participants are also given a task: they should find at least 30 options for action and write them on moderation cards. These will later form the basis for intervening in the scene.

#### 4. Performance and intervention (25 minutes):

The small group now performs their scene once in full. At the end of the scene, thank the performers and applaud the group. Now analyze the scene together with the audience using the following questions:



- What happened?
- What is the history of the situation?
- Which people were involved?
- What were their roles?
- How did they act?
- What was the specific trigger for the conflict?

Now ask the audience to consider which of the 30 options for action (or which new option) could be tried out. After agreeing on an alternative option, this should be introduced in the next round and the situation changed. Encourage participants to implement their ideas themselves and not delegate them to others.

Now the scene is played again. From now on, the person from the audience can freeze the scene at any time by clapping, step on stage and replace a person from the scene. The person on stage is tapped to make the change. As soon as the person from the audience has taken the place of the role, the scene continues and the substituted person has the opportunity to change the scene with their action option.

The important thing here is that the person who is substituted does not change the role, the social setting or the topic of the conflict (a sexist attack by a lawyer in a subway cannot suddenly become a homophobic comment by a CEO in a bar.)

In the same way, the antagonist in the scene cannot suddenly want a friendship with the main character after a substitution). Analyze the changes together with the audience as soon as the scene with the substituted character has been played out:

- What has changed?
- What strategy did the person who was replaced pursue?
- Is this option realistic? Why (not)?

Also ask the performers to comment on how they felt about the changes in the scene. Encourage the participants to try out different options for action and to use the forum theater as a training ground. All options for action are initially permitted, as long as they could be realistically implemented. If "magical solutions" (a dragon is summoned and eats the opponent in the subway) are thrown in from the audience, address these immediately. Ask the audience whether these options could actually be implemented in reality. As a facilitator, you therefore move between encouraging action and constructively questioning its feasibility. However, you are not the director of the situation: the

participants are the experts of their own reality and take center stage. To restart the scene, ask the small group to return to their initial constellation.

At the end of the game phase, ask the participants to shake off their role.

## 5. Overall evaluation (approx. 25 minutes):

Ask the participants to form a circle for an overall evaluation of the method. Thank all participants for their creativity and for sharing these situations with each other. Evaluate the method together with everyone. It is advisable to start by discussing the scenes played:

- What was it like for you to play the situations?
- What was it like for you, as an audience, to experience these situations from the outside?
- Which options for action have stuck with you the most?
- Do you experience situations like this in your environment/neighborhood?

You then expand the framework by asking about options for action:

- What is important to bear in mind when we want to act in difficult and/or dangerous situations?
- What might be preventing us from doing something?
- Where can we find support, allies?

## Recommendations and notes:

Don't forget to have fun: Forum theatre is theatre!

1. Give the participants the freedom to work creatively and in detail on their scenes and roles. A motivated group that enjoys theater work is much more likely to come up with plot options and thus achieve the learning objective than an unmotivated group that never laughs. The point is not to make fun of others and their experiences, but to maintain motivation to work.

## 2. Warm-Up

With this in mind, it is advisable to warm up the group using theater pedagogical methods. You can find a wide range of exercises and games online at Improwiki: <http://improwiki.com/de>. Boal's "Arsenal of the Theater of the Oppressed" also offers thematic exercises consisting of exercises and games for actors and non-actors (see bibliography).

### **3. Process orientation and focus on analysis**

Forum theater is a training ground for reality, but forum theater is never THE reality. Rather, it is about analyzing the manifestations of oppression and discrimination, making them recognizable and understandable in order to better counter them. All options for action must therefore be critically scrutinized. Nevertheless, the aim is to activate the participants to remain capable of acting in oppressive situations and to expand their range of actions.

### **4. encounter reproductions**

Forum theater thrives on reproducing the reality of oppressive and discriminatory situations and the actors involved in them in as much detail as possible - this is the only way it can be comprehensively analyzed, understood and made changeable on stage. This is why people may feel very uncomfortable or even triggered by the content presented during the method, i.e. they may emotionally re-live a discriminatory situation they have already experienced. Encourage the participants to engage with the content, but also respect them when they reach their limits and communicate them. It is important to emphasize here that forum theater is not drama therapy - rather than looking back and processing, forum theater focuses on the future and how future situations can be influenced.

## **IV. The TMP TV Show Game**

### **A Creative Theatre Experience**

This activity is designed as a creative and engaging theatrical exercise. It works particularly well as a concluding activity following smaller theatrical experiences. The purpose is to reflect on and tie together previous work while providing participants with a structured improvisational experience.

### **Objective**

Participants collaborate to create a long-form improvisation, simulating a TV talk-show format.

### **Preparation**

Characters and topics should be collected throughout the TMP workshop sessions leading up to this activity. Ideally, participants document their created characters and descriptions on a "Creative Wall," similar to a detective's investigation board.

### **Instructions:**

1. Begin by inviting participants to volunteer as journalists or presenters for the show. Select two volunteers, as a duo tends to work better for this role.
2. Ask the remaining participants to select characters from the Creative Wall.

3. The journalists, along with the group, design thematic panels that will structure the talk-show discussion.

#### **Example Setup:**

For a group of 10 participants, divide the talk-show into three segments:

- **Panel 1** - Testimonies (2 participants share personal stories).
- **Panel 2** - Expert Observations (participants act as specialists providing insights).
- **Panel 3** - Stakeholders Debate (participants represent diverse opinions).

If the group is larger, assign an additional role of an "Audience Moderator" to facilitate questions and reflections from the audience.

#### **Structure of the Talk-Show:**

- **Opening Presentation** - Journalists introduce the topic, key questions, and invited guests.
- **Panel 1:** Testimonies - Witnesses step onto the stage to share their experiences and answer questions.
- **Panel 2:** Expert Observations - Experts provide analysis, statistics, or broader perspectives, such as European-level insights.
- **Panel 3:** Stakeholders Debate - Characters collected during the workshop engage in a debate, showcasing diverse viewpoints from the citizens.
- **Conclusion** - Journalists summarize the key learnings and insights from the discussion.

#### **Adjustments:**

Adapt the format based on the size and dynamics of the group. You may add or remove segments as needed to ensure all participants are engaged.

## Ending Games/Rituals



### The Clapping Exercise

This engaging group short activity promotes good vibes, unity and synchronization among participants.

#### Setup:

1. Participants form a circle, standing comfortably with enough space between each person.
2. Each individual raises their hands to shoulder height, palms facing inward towards the circle.

#### Instructions:

1. The facilitator stands within or just outside the circle, clearly visible to all participants.
2. Participants are instructed to keep their eyes on the facilitator's hands throughout the exercise.
3. The group is told to clap simultaneously when the facilitator claps, mimicking the exact moment as closely as possible.

**Execution:**

- The facilitator begins by clapping at random intervals, allowing the group to sync their responses.
- As the exercise progresses, the facilitator can vary the rhythm, speed, and intensity of the claps to challenge the group's focus and coordination.
- The facilitator may also introduce false starts or feints to test the group's attention and reactivity.

**Variations:**

- After establishing a rhythm, the facilitator can designate a participant to lead the clapping, rotating this role throughout the group.
- Introduce sound cues in addition to visual ones, such as a verbal "Now!" to accompany the clap.
- Experiment with eyes closed, relying solely on auditory cues for an added challenge.

**Objectives:**

- Enhance group synchronization and collective awareness
- Improve reaction times and non-verbal communication skills
- Foster a sense of unity and shared focus within the group

This exercise serves as an excellent conclusive activity to give participant a last collective moment of fun.

# Ressources

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## deepening literature (German)

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[https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/2020-08/200825\\_E-Paper3\\_DE.pdf](https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/2020-08/200825_E-Paper3_DE.pdf)

### Videos, entstanden bei Veranstaltungen des Bundesverband Theaterpädagogik

<https://vimeo.com/1041329540> - Dipl.Soz.wiss. Alexander Häusler, FH Düsseldorf<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
Rechte Jugendkulturen

<https://vimeo.com/1024801538> - Prof. Melanie Hinz, UDK Berlin<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
Theaterpädagogik gegen Rechts?!

<https://vimeo.com/1024794469> - Prof. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Uni Bielefeld<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTBihyrsS3I> - Ahmad Mansour  
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### Weblinks - Artikel und Adressen

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<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/zwe/ikg/institut/> Institut für -Interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und -Gewaltforschung, Bielefeld

<https://www.lutz-pickardt.de> Projektleiter von #theatre.makes.politics - Theaterprojekte und Fachkonferenzen zu Theaterpädagogik im Kontext der politischen Bildung

# Credits - who has designed this book?

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## **Workshop: Far right extremism and populism. Racism and anti - refugees' rhetoric**

Christina Krithari, Vasilis Klisiaris, Katerina Alexiadi and Besart Shabani

## **Workshop: Searching for Identity - "Everybody is somebody"**

Bruno Freyssinet, Lutz Pickardt, Andreas Gruhn

## **Workshop: Religious dogmatism and politics**

Hugo Miguel Coelho, Vicente de Sá, Bruno Freyssinet, Vasilis Klisiaris, Katerina Alexiadi

## **Workshop: "Truth or Lie" - simple responses to a complex world**

Lutz Pickardt, Aleksandra Mihajlovska, Matthias Damberg, Katerina Alexiadi, Nadja Smoll, Besart Shabani, Anne Tysiak

## **Texts**

- Forewords: Anne Tysiak and Lutz Pickardt
- TMP project description: Bruno Freyssinet
- Article "The Art of Listening": Andreas Gruhn
- Proof reading, collection of games and short abstracts of the workshops: Harald Volker Sommer
- Further Games contributed by Bruno Freyssidnet, Aleksandra Mihajlovska and Lutz Pickardt
- English proof reading: Lee Beagley
- Layout: Julia Kaboth
- How to use this book, ideal working conditions, graphic "TMP Timeline", articles "extremism and identity" and "ambiguity tolerance", final words, resources (German): Lutz Pickardt

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