

'Oppressed Theatre' performance (with specific focus on conflict between minority and majority cultures) – Czech Republic

The specific theatre format as a learning tool for fostering social change was developed by the Brazilian, Augusto Boal. The project was developed with a specific focus on cultural conflict between Roma and non-Roma Czechs. It can be used for various topics, which are neglected or even ignored in mainstream debate and need to be tackled in another way. Preparation of the performance is the first part of the process.

The participants (in this particular project, young people from Roma and non-Roma backgrounds) share stories related to the topic and develop some of chosen stories as scenarios. Production of the performance is the second step. The amateur actors act out simple and short stories to an audience, in which various kind of conflict escalate into a drama and the hero of the story becomes the victim in the end. Afterwards, the moderator discusses the story with the audience in order to involve them and encourage them to analyse the conflicts, the breaking points, and the possible motivations and behaviour of characters. The actors then act out the story again. When somebody feels that they can intervene in a particular situation in order to make it more positive, they can stop the performance and take the place of the main character. The other actors respond to the newcomer's contributions and a further group reflection takes place on the changes.

The project introduces a new method, which has a wide variety of target groups and beneficiaries, and is highly transferable to and usable by other educators in the formal and non-formal sectors.

The project gives participants the chance to encounter other cultures, to find out about their own attitudes to other (minority) cultures and critically face up to their stereotypes and prejudices.

More information is available on request from project coordinator Dana

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