

## **Workshop: „Power forum”**

Date, Time: 01.10.2009, 10.00 – 13.00 and  
01.10.2009, 14.30 – 17.15 (workshop duration in both cases 2,5 hours)

**Trainer: Jelena Manic, Centre for Interactive Art "In Stage Organization" Serbia**

### **Workshop content/theme**

During the workshop participants got the opportunity to play and enjoy in diverse games from the arsenal of image theatre and some forum theatre (theatre of the oppressed) games. We used the interactive theatrical approach to offer different perspectives for observing power relations in the schools. Many questions may arise through spontaneous flow of involving theatre play. Moments for discussion and comments on the topic were given, so that participants could reflect better on their roles in the schools.

### **Aims**

- Introduction of the image theatre and forum theatre techniques
- Reviewing power relations in the schools by usage of theatrical approach
- Fostering discussion on different perspectives and viewpoints related to the power relation in schools

### **Method(s)/Approach**

During the workshop interactive methods of non-formal education are used. The workshop approach is based on Theatre of the Oppressed arsenal as developed by the Brazilian director Augusto Boal.

Steps during the workshops were:

- Getting to know each other and energizing games
- Team building games
- Columbian hypnoses - game for experiencing the power relations and the debriefing
- Image theatre: individual images (boy, girl, parent, teacher, student, principal, bully) and images in couples (kid-parent, teacher-student)
- Short theoretical intro into Forum theatre
- Break
- Energizer game
- Division into small groups (three or four groups) - to discuss, pick a story and create a group image
- Small groups frozen images presentations and short discussion
- Developing short performances and playing out improvised short forum performances and interventions 30 min

### **Further tips, sources, resource material or links**

Further materials on forum theatre can be found on:

<http://www.instageorganization.rs/int/instage01/whatdowedo/ourapproach/thetheatreoftheoppressed.html>

<http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index.php?nodeID=6>

Recommended reading:

Augusto Boal - Games for Actors and Non-Actors

### **Questions for workshop reflection**

Students: How can we use forum theatre for further reflexion on how students see their teachers? How do they see themselves in relation to the teachers?

Teachers: What can be seen and felt from the students' viewpoint? Are these two perspectives similar in a certain way or without connecting spots?

## Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

### First workshop

At the first workshop 20 participants were present, teachers as well as students (age from 13 onwards). After the introductory activities the group experienced the Columbian hypnosis in pairs and in groups of 4. After the exercise there was an interesting discussion between teachers and students. Everybody agreed that we all have roles in our lives that require from us to lead and to follow at the same time. Different opinions were given on the problem who actually "lead" the class in the school, teacher or students? Is it the lack of the teachers' authority if students direct the flow of the class, or the flexibility and openness for interactive approach? Is it better that students feel that they are not led, or the contrary? After the short break single, paired and group frozen images were used to reflect the way we see each other - teachers and students.

Furthermore, performances were made and improvised forum scenes were played. One chosen for the interventions showed the aggression of the group of the young girls toward their class mate, and the passiveness of the teacher. Different propositions were given, and a discussion on what should be the role of the teacher was raised. Evaluative conversation at the end showed that participants marked the workshop as interesting

On the second workshop app. 15 people were present. Workshop started with getting to know each other, warming up and team building games. After the introductory activities group was experiencing Columbian hypnosis in pairs and in groups of 4. After the exercise there was an interesting discussion between teachers and students. Different views on what characterizes our relations within society were given. Afterwards, single frozen images were presented on how we see each other. It was interesting that teachers see the students as not interested, bored, always using their cell phones, while the students see themselves as "students" with the book, sitting and listening. On the other side, students were showed the teachers with a pointing finger, giving orders and rules, while for the teachers, their role means giving knowledge and caring. The process led to the development of the performances in the small groups. Three scenes were set for the interventions within forum theatre: scene of the students that makes funny drawings of the teacher during the class, scene with the school principal who handles the problem of smoking in the school by transferring it to the parents, and the scene of the violence in school and the teachers' and parents' roles in it. Discussion was a bit difficult because of the language, but the participants were allowed to use their native language during the performances.

