



ECOLOGICAL SOCIAL THEATER

TRAINING FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES
AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



GUIDE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
THROUGH THEATER PRACTICE FOR REFUGEES
AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

COFINANCIADO POR LA UNIÓN EUROPERA A TRAVÉS DEL SEPIE



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la Unión Europea**



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The present guide is the result and culmination of continuous study and practical research conducted over two years on the applicability and efficiency of theater as a tool for integration and inclusion among refugees and asylum seekers in various countries of the European Union (EU). The study, in turn, is part of and derives from the Social Ecological Theater (TSE) project, led by the Spanish social enterprise Naturgeis, and has received invaluable and always encouraging support from the Italian agricultural union CIA-Toscana and the Portuguese association Corane for its execution and development.

Both the project and the manual collected below would not have been possible without the significant financial contribution from the small-scale educational project grants of the Erasmus+ program of the European Union. But above all, the work that has been attempted to be documented and systematized here has been made possible by the users of the pilot workshops carried out in Portugal, Italy, and Spain, members of the refugee or asylum-seeking population in the early reception phase who, from the very beginning, understood the importance of the activity, trusted, and contributed their effort and observations to what has ultimately been shown as a collective and collaborative effort that has proven to be extremely rewarding. The participants in the project and the workshops are convinced that the work done and the manual presented below will be useful for the integration of these population groups in the near future in the geographical scope of the European Union.

We also want to express our gratitude in these lines to the Active Social Theater Project, organized annually since 2019 by the City Council of León, the association Juventudes Activas, and the aforementioned social enterprise Naturgeis, with the aim of using theater as a tool to combat social exclusion among vulnerable populations. The decision to include, from the first edition of their theater workshops, one exclusively for migrant and refugee populations was undoubtedly the germ from which the Social Ecological Theater project was born



and where the theatrical didactics that are much more systematically collected in this manual began to take shape, still in a very improvised way.

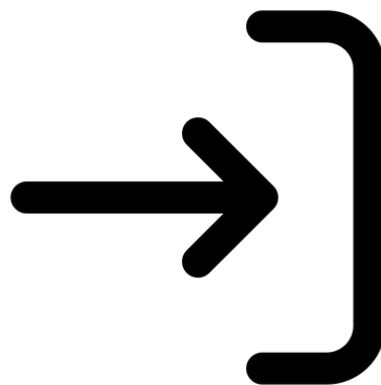
Finally, we also want to show our gratitude to the rest of the organizations, institutions, and individuals who, directly or indirectly, made possible and/or facilitated the set of actions and activities included in the TSE project and that have led to this manual. Among them, we want to give special mention to the NGOs DIACONIA-Spain, the Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (CEAR), the NGO Rescate, the Portuguese Red Cross, and the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Malaga, which have played a fundamental role in our direct contact and continuous work with the refugee and asylum-seeking population even before this project. Also to the company IRMA and, especially, its president Juan Antonio Sánchez Rodríguez, who helped and encouraged us from the beginning to embark on this type of project, and without whom none of this would have been possible; **TO ADD MORE.**

Finally, we can only hope that the result of this project serves for all of them to feel proud of our work and for the greatest number of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to benefit from the integrative and socio-labor insertion tool that we have created.



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INTRODUCCION

*"Theater cannot disappear because it is
the only art where humanity faces
itself."*

Arthur Miller



BACKGROUND

The **Guide for Socio-Labor Integration through Theater Practice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the European Union** is the result of continuous work carried out over two years within the framework of the Social Ecological Theater (TSE) project. The project included a series of activities aimed at creating and developing a systematic, standardized, and widely applicable theatrical didactic methodology. This methodology aimed to contribute, facilitate, and promote the integration of individuals belonging to these groups into the diverse social and labor realities of the European context, particularly in the field of agroecology and the primary sector as a whole.

The TSE project, along with this manual and its pedagogical strategies and didactic contents, originates from a dual observation. Firstly, from a critical perspective, there is a notable lack, or at least scarcity, of practical mechanisms and tools that efficiently and concretely foster direct connection and contact between refugees and asylum seekers during their early reception phase in various EU states and the everyday contextual realities they commonly face, particularly within the world and labor market. While considerable economic, material, and human efforts have been made by EU member states and the EU itself to facilitate their maintenance and integrative processes, these efforts often seem to focus on promoting educational and solidarity actions, valuable as they are, without culminating in a concrete and direct integration of these populations into their new life contexts, especially socio-labor contexts.

Secondly, the observation of previous projects by the Spanish social enterprise Naturgeis, the parent company of the project, revealed the significant capacity and potential of regulated and supervised theatrical practice as an integrating and insertion mechanism at the social, cultural, and even labor levels among members of refugee and asylum seeker groups. This observation played a crucial role in developing the work that the Social Ecological Theater (TSE) project, documented in this manual, aims to accomplish. Among other things, the project intends to contribute to addressing the aforementioned deficiency.



The actions within the TSE project include an initial research phase, conducted during the first eight months of the project, where efforts were made to locate, examine, and analyze all available material—which is, it's worth noting, not extensive—related to this type of integrative and insertion theater. This was supplemented with knowledge derived from direct previous experiences with this type of theater gained over three years of work in this field through other projects involving these communities and theater practices.

Following this, an initial action guide was developed, outlining a theatrical didactic approach tested in a pilot workshop with refugee and asylum seeker participants in the city of Malaga, Spain. This initial experience served to address some identified errors, delve into specific aspects, and refine the methodological proposal so that it could be transferred and adapted to other contexts and frameworks within the European Union.

To this end, a training course for trainers was designed and conducted to guide the application of this innovative didactic approach among refugees and asylum seekers in the Tuscany region, Italy, through the CIA-Tuscany union, and in the Northern Border region of Portugal, through the CORANE Association. Two additional pilot courses in these locations, with significantly different contextual realities from the place where the initial pilot workshop took place in Spain, allowed for further refinement of the didactic guide. This time, the focus was mainly on making it flexible and inclusive enough to be a useful transnational tool, not limited to overly specific workspaces or contexts, in other words, applicable continent-wide at the European level.

Finally, with these modifications and through intensive collective work among the different responsible parties in the didactic area of the project in the three countries where it was implemented, the pedagogical and theatrical methodological foundations were established for the development of this Manual for Socio-Labor Integration through Theater Practice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the European Union



OBJECTIVES AND PRETENTIONS

Among the aspirations of this manual, the main goal is to gather and present a structured pedagogical methodology based on innovative theatrical didactics, applicable in a standardized manner at the European transnational level. It is specifically oriented towards the socio-labor integration of adult asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, primarily in the agroecological sector.

Through a concrete yet flexible working proposal, the text aims to foster the establishment of theatrical training processes that promote the transmission of specific linguistic knowledge, European socio-cultural values and practices, and environmental sensitivity among the targeted population. This is intended to facilitate their socio-labor integration in alignment with their interests, previous experience, capabilities, and personal potential.

We are also convinced that the manual and the methodology it presents will serve to expedite the professionalization and social, cultural, and labor integration of adult asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in a rapidly expanding sector, such as agroecology. The goal is to align the interests and personal and professional potential of refugee participants with the growing interest and strategic-business potential of agroecology, a sector increasingly demanding interested and qualified workforce.

Furthermore, the proposed theatrical pedagogy aims to contribute to environmental protection and the fight against rural abandonment and depopulation. As it is prominently aimed at labor integration in the agroecological sector, which promotes sustainable agricultural practices and a strong commitment to environmental care and respect, theatrical didactics hope to contribute to collective environmental commitment in the fight against climate change and carbon footprint reduction. Additionally, it aims to address rural abandonment, depopulation, and demographic aging that severely affects many rural areas in the majority of EU member states.



Ultimately, this didactics emerges with the intention of being an effective contribution to social theater for integration and inclusion, specifically in the still nascent field of theatrical pedagogy and methodology among refugees, asylum seekers, and, more broadly, among migrant populations with cultural and social origins significantly different from those of their host country. In this regard, both the TSE project and the Manual for Socio-Labor Integration through Theater Practice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers aim to be pioneering reference works that allow, promote, and contribute to the subsequent continued development of projects and proposals focusing on integrative and inclusionary theatrical work with these populations.



CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY

Under the proven socio-integrative value of theater, the text and the theatrical didactic methodology contained within it intend to serve as a practical and efficient guide. This guide is aimed at professionals in social theater and the field of social inclusion through artistic practices who work—or intend to work—with refugee groups, asylum seekers, and, by extension, migrant populations. The goal is to provide them with a tool that directs their efforts toward promoting and facilitating the social and labor integration of members of these groups in different rural European contexts.

To achieve this, a specific didactic and methodological method is presented, applicable through sequentially developed workshops composed of a set of four phases: initial contact and pre-evaluation, relationship and contextualization, deepening cultural integration (conflict and resolution), and labor insertion in the agroecological sector. Each phase corresponds to the different procedural stages identified in the process of approaching socio-cultural contexts, often very different from those of their places of origin, which refugees and asylum seekers undergo.

For each phase, a series of methodological explanations accompanied by examples of theatrical exercises are provided to achieve the various objectives set for each. It is important to note that many of these exercises or games are derived from widely known theatrical methods and typologies. These include socially oriented methods such as the Theater of the Oppressed, strictly



pedagogical methods like Glottodrama, more playful ones like Invisible Theater or Clown, and purely artistic methods such as the Stanislavski Method, Poor Theater, or the methodological system of Scenic Points of View, among others.

In addition to these, and generally designed to coincide with sensitive or complex moments in the integration process for the user populations, a set of particular theatrical exercises and games have been included. These are specifically oriented toward socio-cultural integration and, very specifically, during the last phase of the project, towards labor insertion in the agroecological sector for these populations.

While the phases have been established as stable guiding standards in the integration process, given that both pilot workshops and past experiences with theatrical projects involving these groups confirm their general applicability, the same does not apply to the exercises. This highlights a significant challenge faced in developing this didactics: the notable differences between individual users, beyond their common status as refugees and asylum seekers.

While all workshop participants, as individuals benefiting from international protection, are inevitably compelled to undergo an adaptation and integration process into their new life reality, this process varies widely depending on factors such as their national, social, cultural, linguistic background, age, prior education, capabilities, knowledge, and status in their country of origin. The application of the proposed theatrical didactic methodology is subject to a high degree of variability, demanding a considerable capacity for adaptation from those responsible for its implementation, considering the diverse backgrounds of individuals and participating groups.

Given this difficulty, one of the fundamental goals during the development process—and one that we have attempted to make evident in this guide—has been to create a didactic methodology that is widely applicable and generally oriented towards the entire adult population belonging to these groups. To achieve this, flexible and adaptable implementation mechanisms have been included, allowing pedagogues and theater professionals to have different options and a high level of choice when establishing the path of integration through the various theatrical exercises and games. However, this is always within a guided and predefined framework. In this regard, one of the main efforts of those responsible for the manual's development has been to provide very clear and focused methodological explanations. These show the variety of possibilities and facilitate the correct decision-making by individuals accessing this didactic and pedagogical method.

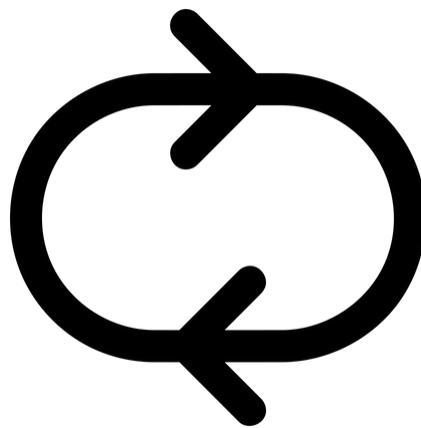


While the exposition and explanation of the didactic methodology represent the most relevant part of this manual, the initial part also includes a general theoretical reflection. This reflection is fundamentally aimed at highlighting the potential of theatrical artistic practice and teaching as tools for social and cultural integration. The main theories, currents, and theatrical methodologies that have directly addressed this aspect of theater use are briefly presented. This is followed by an exposition of the need for a "true" integrative and inclusive theater, including a focus on the immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker population.

To complement this initial reflective part, an argumentation is introduced and developed, supported by the enormous potential of theatrical activity for the labor insertion of individuals from these groups. In this sense, the effectiveness of theatrical practice in observing and determining the participants' labor capacities and preferences is highlighted. Additionally, an explanatory demonstration illustrates how the selection of specific theatrical exercises, specifically oriented and contextualized in previously determined work and activity fields, can act as a preparatory step. This step helps members/participants of these groups become familiar with the sectoral environment and a labor market that often substantially differs from what they are accustomed to in their countries of origin and/or origin.

Alongside this theoretical reflection and the methodological part, the manual also includes, in its final section, a series of mechanisms and parameters for objective assessment—always considering the complexity of this term. These mechanisms allow those who use the manual to retrospectively carry out a rigorous critical examination of the effectiveness and results of integrative theatrical processes and insertion among participants.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that, to provide perspective, enable comparisons, and guide users who use this manual to carry out or support an integrative process through theater with immigrant, refugee, or asylum seeker populations, observations, descriptions, and analyses are included. These include final conclusions and assessments related to theatrical processes carried out during the three pilot workshops conducted with the main objective of developing and testing the proposed theatrical didactic methodology.



THEATER AND SOCIETY: TOWARDS A TRUE INTEGRATIVE AND INSERTION THEATER

"Programming a theater is thinking. And you could also say that doing theater is getting involved in social life, getting involved in the struggles of that society".

Alfonso Sastre



THEATRE AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INTERVENTION

In the last decade, much has been written and studied about the potential of theatre and dramatic art as a tool for social intervention, the latter understood as the set of actions, proposals or policies aimed at making up for the deficiencies of a social system that generate a negative impact. In this sense, theatre, in addition to being an artistic discipline, is currently and increasingly frequently observed and used as an operational and functional instrument to try to respond to issues in which the whole or parts of society have shown problems or shortcomings, generally linked to socio-political questions and/or situations strongly linked to inequality and the risk of social exclusion between certain sectors and population groups.

The social character is inherent in theatrical practice and acts at various levels. Perhaps the most obvious is the organisational one, since its practice implies in most cases a group and collective work and, in the case that the purpose is representation, it also necessarily implies a direct contact between proponents and observers, between actors and public; in addition to regularly involving a number of technical and administrative staff.

On the other hand, it is also clear that both the dramaturgy and the selection of the theatrical performance imply a thematic choice that is generally – at least in the Western tradition – not made in isolation from the concerns, tastes and preferences of the surrounding reality. Thus, even in the case of the so-called independent works, understood as those that are not governed by strictly commercial purposes, there is no doubt that both their creation and their choice for preparation and rehearsal are not absolutely exempt from the influences, problems and socio-cultural conflicts typical of the geographical and temporal context in which they are conceived or, at least, of the affected anxieties – never entirely eremitical – of those who decide to carry them out.



Closely linked to the above, it also seems obvious that, both in their forms and in their content, theatrical works and their representations are never born in absolute emptiness. As a conscientious heir to classical models or in their apparently most revolutionary and countercultural forms, more or less consciously, theatrical practice is always indebted to a tradition whose inertia it follows even in its most successful attempts at opposition, revolution, transformation and/or rupturism. This inevitable diachrony, on the other hand, is a reflection of the socio-temporal connection that is the essence of theatre, which not only links collectives, but also, like the rest of cultural and artistic manifestations and practices, does so through that incomprehensible and elusive dimension that is time and its always more apprehensible evidences.

But it is undoubtedly at the educational and pedagogical level where the social character of theatre has undergone and is still undergoing a greater transformation from the last century to the present. This does not mean, by any means, that it is a new aspect. A cursory observation from the first representations of mythological events, through all the classical Greco-Roman theater, tragedies and comedies, and the rest of the theatrical currents throughout history until reaching the most innovative of the current contemporary works, born in the heart of the so-called postmodernity, is enough to realize that theater is always linked to a component of teaching. rituality, transmission of knowledge or, at least, it acts as a tool to evidence identity and "positional" realities in the complex social fabric.

It is true that the importance of this aspect as an ultimate intentional end, as opposed to the character of entertainment or emotional generator also associated with the theatre, has varied from one era to another, but it is no less true that in no case, not even among the works and currents that presume to tend more strongly to the exclusive stimulation of the senses or to pure entertainment. It has disappeared completely. Theatre always says something, and in that "saying something" there is always a certain pedagogy. This can have a teaching, reflective, ritualistic, propagandistic, critical, propositional, expository or



demonstrative character, but theatre is always essentially a teaching, the latter understood, as it cannot be otherwise, as an inevitably social transmission and communication.

However, as noted above, the way theatre is used has undergone a major transformation that has often not been sufficiently addressed. Although the didactic nature of theatre as an artistic discipline has been based – and still does – on the axis of the relationship between those who propose and those who receive (the public), there is no doubt that this has been changing in order to, within the framework of a profound process of democratisation adhered to the facilitation of access to practice, end up generating theatrical tools whose ultimate and/or priority purpose is not artistic representation in itself, but the practice itself, and whose objectives and purposes vary depending on the rest of the shortcomings related to the social aspects of theatre previously indicated.

Since Bertolt Brecht with his dialectical theatre began to establish in a systematic and intentional way the social purpose of theatre and began to break the hierarchical relationship between actors and audience, many advances have been made. Undoubtedly, Augusto Boal was responsible for taking this approach to the spectator and its participatory aspect a point further and with his Theatre of the Oppressed he generated a methodology and way of doing things that was introduced in a direct and concrete way into the problems, conflicts and challenges of the audience, as soon as it becomes part of the performance and in some way acts as a direct representative of the community and, by extension, of society as a whole or at least of a significant part of it. (Mumford 2009) (Boal 2014)

It is precisely from these currents that what has traditionally been called Social Theatre was erected, which in a very general way can be defined as the set of representations, exercises and dynamics that seek to generate creative processes linked to an awareness and active social transformation.



Greatly influenced by these first lines of work of Social Theatre and by their objective of "using dramatic techniques as instruments for understanding and searching for alternatives to social and interpersonal problems" (López, 2020), and often also using the principles, techniques and methodologies they established, it is from where other forms began to take shape and develop, Theatrical techniques and methodologies that have social intervention as their main focus.

It is from the understanding of theatre as an instrument of collective transformation that new theatrical forms have begun to be developed in recent decades, based on pedagogical practice and for the purposes of integration, insertion and/or the fight against social exclusion. Thus, theatre has begun to be used in a widespread and profound way as a tool for social intervention.

The proliferation of courses, workshops and theatrical dynamics whose main purpose is not so much public representation or exhibition or artistic-creative evolution, but aspects focused on the development of personal and/or collective skills and often also associated with social purposes that are generally considered as positive is the tangible and concrete demonstration of what we have been saying. Issues such as integration, insertion, the fight against exclusion, socialisation, the prevention of violence, the promotion of social values of different kinds, emotional management or the care of physical and mental health, among many others, have become the focus and guide of this new social theatre and give an idea of the important value that its practice has acquired today as a tool for intervention.

In this context, it should be noted that the creativity and social character inherent in theatre have ended up serving to turn its practice into a utilitarian and accessible mechanism that is generally and continuously demonstrating a high level of efficiency and effectiveness for the effective resolution of certain social shortcomings or problems and addressing some aspects that can be improved derived directly from the context of postmodern life and its associated problems.



In particular, this social usefulness of dramatic practice has often focused in recent years on intervention among very specific groups who, for various reasons, have been considered to be subject to a situation of real or potential inequality, at risk of exclusion or directly in a situation of marginalization. and among which an attempt has been made to promote their awareness and empowerment. On an individual level, in turn, these new lines of theatrical work are increasingly being linked to interventions of a markedly therapeutic and/or psychological (and sometimes even spiritual) nature, generally tending to solve, alleviate or soften problems/challenges typical of the current period derived from excessive individualism, stress, lack of self-esteem and/or personal management of emotions. among others.

THEATRE, INTEGRATION AND INSERTION

Grandiloquent phrases such as *integrative theatre* or *theatre for social integration*, among many other similar phrases, have been made and are becoming more and more frequent to refer to some activities and presentations of different kinds framed in the context of contemporary theatre for social purposes. However, it is striking to note that when it comes to making an approximation to the ultimate understanding of what exactly defines this type of integrative (or "for integration") theater, no unanimous, clear and well-defined answer is found.

With the exception of inclusive theatre, which in a general and well-established way does seem to have been linked in a fairly strict way to the insertion and/or active socialising participation of people with physical and/or intellectual disabilities (Estévez-González 2014) Seems that the idea of linking the notions of theatre and integration has become a huge catch-all in which there is room for practically all kinds of theatrical activities and projects that, with dramatic expression and practice as a guide, work or aspire to work for the insertion, adaptation and inclusion of social groups or collectives that, For different reasons, they consider themselves in some way to be separated, excluded or



partially different from a supposed – and largely fictitious – dominant social majority, which is used as a benchmark of normality and with respect to which, moreover, there is a real risk of marginalisation and isolation.

In the search for the elements that define what integrative theatre really is, it is precisely this markedly collective character that stands out and that seems, in some way, to give a certain sign of agglutination to this type of actions and projects associated with theatrical activity. In the aforementioned context of the use of theatre as a tool for social intervention, it is the collective receivers who stand as the first great frontier between what defines integrative theatre and other theatrical performances that, although they have social aims, do not focus specifically on specific delimited groups and, in general, do not focus specifically on specific delimited groups and, in general, do not focus on specific defined groups. They tend to offer general processes or actions intended to facilitate personal processes – usually of a therapeutic nature – among the participants, regardless of their group membership and without the need for there to be a real shared problem.

Linked to the previous one, the second element that is presented as *a matter* of course when determining what integrative theatre is is the attribution of a certain "vulnerability" to the groups for which the integrative or insertion action is intended. This is, without a doubt, the most controversial and difficult element to address and work on within the framework of projects of this type of theatre. Beyond the possible existence of evidence that can be considered objective or the presumed good faith of the majority of those who propose and execute this type of theatrical activities and actions, there is no doubt that both reaching the conclusion that there is a group in need of intervention and considering that they have the capabilities to provide it in an adequate way are extremely sensitive decisions that always present a number of significant challenges and risks.

The consideration that a particular human group or collective needs this "help" or intervention is very easy to derive from a reductionist simplism or directly from the most obscene prejudice, especially when the determination is made based



on values or considerations that are widespread and generalized at the social level, often not subject to a process of self-reflection and questioning by the proponents; and not from an objective, deep and continuous prior observation of the existence of a real problem/challenge that can be addressed from a theatrical proposal of social action among these groups.

In this sense, although it is evident and easily understandable that the vast majority of theatrical projects and interventions do not have the time and means necessary to carry out sociological and/or anthropological analytical fieldwork that allows them to have a direct knowledge that can be considered sufficient of the intrinsic and surrounding reality of the groups on which they want to act, It is no less true that it is strictly necessary to have an antecedent approach to it and, in most cases, to rely on experts and/or organizations that do have this knowledge and experience.

All this to try to avoid what is undoubtedly the greatest of the defects that afflicts many of the projects encompassed under the grandiloquent heading of integrative theatre and which is none other than that of acting as subsidiary tools at the service of pre-established ideas based on a more than questionable assessment of what "normality" is. generally associated with a cultural domination exercised by the social majority and devised by those who lead it. In other words, a true inclusive and inclusive theatre should be one that aspires to remedy specific deficiencies arising from the specific needs of those who participate in it; and not the one that seeks integration to become a process of "homogenizing" assimilation by the dominant larger society and its de facto and media powers.

At this point, once a problem affecting a specific group has been detected, it is estimated in the most objective way possible that it requires or can benefit from an exogenous intervention and it is determined that the instrumental use of theatre can contribute substantially to this line of action, There is an inexorable questioning of the way in which this intervention can be carried out through dramatic activity. The selection of a specific and defined praxis of action is the



third of the elements that, in our opinion, should determine any project or action encompassed under what we have come to call, still in a very diffuse way, as integrative theatre.

The absence of a homogeneous methodological basis and minimum shared objectives is another of the major problems when it comes to clearly defining what integrative theatre is. In classical Social Theatre, the common search to break with the traditionally unidirectional character of theatrical practice and representation in order to generate an awareness of the performance on the part of the audience was a tangible goal that, in turn, was the one that crossed in a transversal way and linked all the actions. projects and proposals encompassed within this type of theatre. This, in turn, found meaning in the contextual framework of democratization and the struggle against the oppression of the ruling classes, and was a response based on the interest of some artistic sectors in promoting participation, opinion, collective awareness and, ultimately, social empowerment. All this made it possible for the theatrical projects encompassed in this type of theatre to be closely linked by objectives, methodological forms and a marked intention and socio-political positioning.

In contrast to this uniqueness of classical Social Theatre, the projects and activities currently included under the heading of integrative theatre, observed as a whole, are often characterised by a remarkable intentional and methodological dispersion, which is what probably explains to a large extent the difficulties in defining and delimiting it. While there is no doubt that all these proposals are directly indebted to the chronologically recent democratisation of theatre – and of art and cultural activity as a whole – it is no less true that the new forms of collective theatre with social purposes seem to be characterised by a multiplicity of options, strategies, proposals, aims, goals, commitments and methodologies. This variability cannot be understood as negative or limiting per se, but in the specific case of theatre for integration/insertion it does seem to be manifesting itself as a clear sign of the lack of commitment or clairvoyance with respect to a shared strategy and goals to face social problems/challenges.



This, on the other hand, as was the case before, can only be understood within the framework of the context in which it develops: postmodernity, characterized by an expansive revolution in quantitative terms of options and positions and, paradoxically, also by the lack among these of any that has the potential to be a reference point for ideas and unifying praxis attractive and efficient enough to rise to the category of response to the demands of the Marxists. social issues/challenges.

In this sense, the dispersed and diffuse amalgamation that shapes the set of theatrical proposals and projects with social purposes is nothing but a reflection of a much larger process closely related to the lack of clear and univocal alternatives and positions when it comes to addressing the different social problems of the contemporary period. In our opinion, the high level of specialization of many of these projects and activities responds in the vast majority of cases to the general lack of clarity in the "what" they intend to achieve and "how" they intend to achieve it, in addition to demonstrating a frequent absence of a clear and intense commitment to essential "whys" and "whys" that adequately justify them and give them a sense of action and practice.

Faced with this dispersed multiplicity without a defined strategy or joint commitment, which acts as the fourth characteristic and determining element – in this case of a negative sign – of most of these dramatic activities and projects with the aim of integration or insertion, it seems to have begun to draw in recent times – mainly from the last decade onwards – a theatrical response to some of the most prominent social (and inevitably political) problems that it has achieved. To acquire a certain integrality and cohesion under the protection, fundamentally, of a series of specific themes that act as a core of centrality, acting as a binding nexus and positioning and guiding many of these projects and theatrical proposals with a specific sense and restricted to a series of very determined ideological perspectives in the unstable postmodern context.

The gender issue, feminism and its associated demands, the integration of migrants and refugees, the fight against drug abuse, the social reintegration of



populations at serious risk of social exclusion, tolerance of certain identity differences previously inconceivable and/or unacceptable at the collective level and the prevention of violence, Among others, although they are not a novelty in the framework of theatre with social purposes, they have emerged strongly in recent years as some of the thematic pillars and programmatic pillars around which what we have called integrative theatre is building its differentiated identity as a particular identifiable discipline in the context of social theatre.

The most remarkable thing about these thematic frameworks and the objectives they adhere to is that they have been necessarily associated with ideological involvement and political positioning. In this sense, the laxity of the initial integrative theatre proposals, which, as has been pointed out, were initially characterised by a certain pretension of neutrality, which in reality resulted in a series of well-intentioned projects with little long-term social impact, have begun to be replaced in the context of Western countries by others that are much more committed and connected to the environment and the surrounding daily life and that, ultimately, they are allowing the germination and emergence of a true theatre for integration and insertion that, although it seems clear that it is still in an embryonic moment and lacking in maturity, is beginning to glimpse an interesting potential path as a truly useful, efficient and profound instrument of social transformation.

Still with many and very notable shortcomings, still suffering from a certain and profound methodological dispersion, often adhering to certain reductionist dogmatisms, devoid of the revolutionary character of other periods, with more or less success in its practical execution, to a large extent still orphaned of a previous established work and theoretical corpus that serves as a starting reference and guide, This new type of integrative and insertive theatre, however, was born in the light of a change of sign in which theatre is no longer a single complement or punctual patch in the treatment of certain social problems, but, as happened during the rise of classical Social Theatre in a large part of the planet and to a large extent continuing this work, It has re-emerged as a social tool of



the first order that, closely linked to the new identity claims, the demands of respect and tolerance, political correctness and the new problems of risk of exclusion associated with the contemporary period, struggles to carve out for itself a disciplinary space of its own delimited and based on a real and practical utility adhering to the ontological and epistemological flexibility characteristic and demanded by the current period.

THEATRE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Within the framework of this new theatre, one of the most recent focuses and which clearly seems to have a wider scope is that of the adaptation, integration and insertion of immigrants in their socio-cultural contexts of reception. It is interesting to note, because it is obviously paradoxical, that the general application of theatre among these groups is still a very recent fact and in an emerging phase. It is only in the last decade that purely theatrical projects, programmes and didactic activities have begun to emerge in a systematic and generalised way aimed exclusively at the members of this group and, moreover, these are still really scarce in quantitative terms and, as we have already pointed out, it was common in the framework of this new social theatre. They lack an executive path and continuous praxis that has allowed them to establish a consolidated theoretical, methodological and epistemological basis that guides them in a clear and profound way.

Before continuing, it is appropriate to make a clarification regarding the inclusion of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers within the same work group. Although the univocity in terms of its legal consideration is not equally reflected in the different treatments offered by the national authorities, where there are still notable divergences in the overall framework, there is no doubt that an immense part of the difficulties, adaptive obstacles, risks of exclusion and problems of integration in the host societies/cultures are shared.



Adapting to a new society and culture that is often very different – and sometimes even exclusive in certain respects – to the original one, the difficulties of accessing the labour market and basic services such as health, housing and education, or learning a new language, among others, are some of these problems that can be extended to the immigrant population as well as to refugees and asylum seekers.

In this sense, there is no doubt that a good part of the techniques, methodologies and theatrical projects developed for integration and insertion are valid and it is easily understandable that it is often a work that can be extended and applicable to both population groups, both immigrants, on the one hand, as well as refugee beneficiaries and asylum seekers. on the other. However, it is worth noting that, as the different legal consideration of one and the other emphasizes, there are also a series of divergences and differences – or at least not similarities – that have an important weight when it comes to proposing the works of integrative theatre and insertion between them. In a very general way, these derive from the fact that while the immigrant population, a priori and beyond the fallibility of objective consideration by the legal system, is mostly composed of people who, regardless of the reasons, seek to make a life for themselves in another country; while people with refugee status and applicants for international protection are people who have been forced to seek asylum in a host country by a previous situation, usually traumatic. Although we could discuss – in depth and probably endlessly – the extent to which there are not also reasons of force majeure that explain the abandonment of their countries of origin among many of the immigrants who arrive in the European Union, it is not questionable that in the case of refugees this is a fact that is presupposed and that is intertwined with their very condition as beneficiaries of international protection.

Along with this, another very relevant difference, which explains why this manual, within the framework of the TSE project, is fundamentally aimed at refugees and asylum seekers and not at the general migrant population as a whole, is the fact that while the latter are generally forced to enter the labour market immediately



from their entry into the borders of the European Union, New refugees and asylum-seekers have a relatively long period of reception and integration during which, under the aid recognised and granted by each State associated with their status, they have extra time – compared to immigrants – which allows them to participate in targeted and guided integration and integration activities. Among them are those that, like this one, use art and culture as a fundamental tool to promote their social and labor insertion.

Although a large part of the methodology, techniques and theatrical exercises proposed in this manual are also applicable among the migrant population, we believe it is necessary to underline the fact that it has been prepared and elaborated specifically for the refugee and asylum-seeking population in view of our previous experience with this group and, specifically, taking into account factors that are very much taken into account, such as the complications of integration and insertion derived from their often traumatic past, and the also indicated availability of sufficient time to face a complex and continuous process such as the one proposed.

Returning to what concerns us, it is interesting to emphasize that this lack of integration and insertion theatre of significant dedication to the populations of migrants and refugees in the host countries is especially striking in our time, where the everlasting migratory phenomenon has acquired a quantitative and qualitative relevance of the first magnitude and has become a social challenge of the first order. Unlike what happened until the beginning of the 20th century, when migratory populations were often forced to renounce partially or totally their cultural origin in favor of integration into host societies – the case of the Irish and Italians in the United States, the Spaniards in Germany, the Spaniards in the United States, Portuguese in Switzerland or Arabs in France, under the cover of a supposed global multiculturalism, the new groups of immigrants tend to defend their original values and cultural principles even in their host countries. In this way, and embracing the idea of globalization, they are not willing to renounce their customs and values at any price—nor does it seem to be enforceable



logically with the prevailing idea of tolerance—solely under the cover of imperative integration.

This is undoubtedly partly explained more by an increase in cultural tolerance, mainly in large cities, where this is perceived as almost natural in recent years, than by the establishment of a real multiculturalism. Thus, in practice, what has tended to produce is a ghetto phenomenon, in which immigrants and refugees, in exchange for not losing their cultural essences, tend to seclude themselves or limit themselves in closed groups semi-tolerated by the dominant larger society, with which their ties and ties are generally limited to what is absolutely essential and with which a "tangible" and full daily coexistence of proximity is not generated.

"Immigrants who so attentively preserve all their customs, their dresses, their cuisine, their festivals, their religion and their language, will find it difficult to integrate into the receiving society, except in the strict labor needs that make their economic accommodation possible. For the rest of social life, they will tend to group together to form closed collectivities with nearby homes, meeting places, exclusively local shops and businesses, village relationships embedded in the industrial city in which they usually settle for work. However, this phenomenon is not the exclusive responsibility of immigrant groups. The host society tends to accept this closed life of outsiders, and reinforces, promotes or facilitates their confinement in special neighborhoods, trying to enshrine them in strongholds whose self-sufficiency makes them more or less hermetic (...) so that their disturbing exoticism, unfortunately inevitable, can be used as a means of restriction. remain confined to limited and precise areas. Peculiar social groups embedded in another society. Looked at with distrust and hostility (...)" (Campos, 2005:5).

It should be noted that, in addition to a lack of interest or a lack of awareness, perhaps what explains the lack of proposals aimed at a real and tangible insertion of refugees and immigrants within the framework of the new social theatre are some of the problems associated with theatrical work with the members of these



groups. Starting with the usual complication of the language and continuing with the mutual cultural incomprehension and all the associated difficulties, it seems evident that facing a theatrical process of insertion of this type requires a special predisposition, important means and an imperative prior knowledge that, as we have already pointed out, is not always easy to access among theatrical collectives and groups. often very limited materially and humanly, who carry out – or intend to do – social work through dramatic art. In other words, the execution of a project of this type seems to require a greater effort and a considerably greater potential to face the particular difficulties and complexities associated with these groups than other activities or proposals that we have encompassed within the framework of the current integrative and insertion theater. They are generally aimed at other groups of people who are culturally closer and who are also perceived to be at potential or real risk of exclusion.

Although it is not properly dedicated to the migrant or refugee population and is not even included in the framework of integrative theatre, among the projects referring to the theatrical level in language didactics it is essential to point out the project (and methodology) of *glottodrama*. As a result of a continuous collaboration between teachers of foreign languages and teachers of dramatic art, and also having important support in its development by the *Erasmus+* program of the European Union during the first two decades of this century, this new and widely recognized project/method is characterized by the use of theatrical techniques for the teaching of foreign languages to people who do not know it. Although this teaching can be extended to anyone and not exclusively to immigrants or refugees, there is no doubt that it has been a theatre initiative of global reference also for the still very few projects that have addressed the integration of these groups through dramatic art and specifically theatre.

It is worth mentioning as a place of reference in this type of project the city of Montreal, where for years a series of initiatives and theatrical actions have been developed exclusively aimed at the integration or denunciation of the situation of



the immigrant population and where, precisely, it has occupied and developed a very important role in many of the groups and dramatic projects of the city.

Explained to a large extent by the significant flow of people and labour linked to the great economic activity of the Canadian macro-city, which attracts people from practically all over the planet to settle there, and by the consequent and frequent integration needs that this entails, important theatrical initiatives have been appearing and developing in recent years in Montreal aimed at this end. This has led to an important tradition of "immigrant theatre" or "immigration theatre".

Within this line, one of the precursors is the programme of methodology theatre workshops *Playback*¹ made by the company *Ollín Transformation Theatre*, headed by the prestigious director Alejandro Morán, and who since 2001 have carried out an important and constant theatrical work aimed both at promoting integration through acting work and at giving visibility and promoting awareness of the problems suffered by many of the immigrants of Hispanic origin who move to live in Montreito the.(Barreto 2008)

Partially following the line set by this company, many other groups and collectives have worked on this issue in the Canadian city. With a methodological proposal very different from that of *Ollín Teatro*, the *Canaima Intercultural Group of Performing Arts* has also developed an important and outstanding work in terms of bringing together theater and the immigrant population in the Canadian city. In addition to being a mixed theatrical work group made up of both local people and immigrants from different parts, mainly Hispanics, Arabs and Europeans, several of its plays have exposed and reflected on the migratory process and the importance of roots. Among these, the 2017 play *Tramas*, written and directed by Máximo Chiaraluce and featuring a cast of actors from Argentina, France, Algeria and Canada, stands out. The play tells the stories, often

¹ Playback Theatre is a theatrical improvisation methodology that promotes interaction with audiences in order to develop and tell stories through a ritual structure and through empathic listening.



complicated, of a group of immigrants whose lives are intertwined. The presentation was developed with dialogues in Spanish, French, Arabic and Italian.

Also in Montreal, a year earlier, in 2016, the LatinArte Foundation produced the work *Somos ici*, through which they wanted to transmit "the immigrant experience of feeling part of Montreal". Directed by Margarita Herrera and written by Florence Bobier and Leticia Tórgo, the play uses the tragic fire of one of the city's most emblematic buildings as a backdrop to tell the story of the encounter of a series of immigrants of Latino origin who narrate their life experiences, reminisce and recount their memories and talk about their life dreams. With a multilingual text, based on French, but including dialogue parts and narrations in Spanish, Portuguese and English, the piece was well received in the capital of Quebec and, like the previous ones, also served to give visibility to the group of immigrants in the great Canadian city.

In line with the proposals carried out in Montreal, in recent years there has been a proliferation of works in a large part of the world aimed at showing the difficulties of integration of the migrant population. Some examples of this are *Migrantes, teatro para un espectador*, an Argentine-Chilean production from 2017 composed of three short plays in which, from different times and areas, the migratory phenomenon in the city of Buenos Aires is addressed.

In the theatrical play *Boza!*, from 2018, a group of immigrants tell and interpret life stories of people who were forced to leave their countries in search of a supposedly better future in Spain. The piece delves crudely into the drama of leaving their land of origin, the odyssey to get there and the problems they face in their day-to-day life in the European country, always from a prism and an identifying intention that sought to move the viewer, favor a change of vision of the migratory phenomenon and, ultimately, to promote tolerance and integration. This play was especially interesting because it was performed and staged by the company *Teatro Sin Papeles*, made up of a group of artists of six different



nationalities and who share the experience of being illegal immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers.

In addition to this "migrant theatre" in Montreal, some interesting projects have also appeared in recent years in other parts of the world that refer directly and concretely to the process of refuge and reception. These include the award-winning Phosphoros Theatre. Founded in 2015 in the United Kingdom, its main goal is to "amplify the voices of refugees and bring them to the stage". To this end, the company creates and produces socially committed theatrical plays, performed by and aimed at refugees and asylum seekers. In 2024, Phosphoros already had a total of five large-format works produced. The fourth, *All the beds I have slept in*, toured the UK in autumn 2022 and concluded in February 2023. The fifth, *Tender*, kicked off its tour in 2024.

Thanks to the enormous success that the company has been reaping since its creation, it currently has and maintains its own theatrical space dedicated to people with a history of forced migration so that they can express, reflect and respond to their lived experience, taking control of the narratives about the refuge from their own perspective. In addition to carrying out occasional and regular artistic work with refugees, the company has professional training programs for the theater sector, providing paid work opportunities to members, artists and technical staff, of this especially vulnerable group. Recently, two sub-groups have also been set up within Phosphoros: the Phosphoros Young Company, for young refugees and asylum-seekers aged 16 to 21; and Phosphoros Sisters, for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.

As part of its "Metavasis Project" Hellas Caritas, in Greece, created in 2017 a theatre group for refugees and asylum seekers at the Social Point of Caritas in Neos Kosmos. The group is made up of people mainly from Iran and Afghanistan and is still active to this day. Through it, a series of activities and representations have been proposed that seek to promote the integration and insertion of the



participants in Greek society and to make known the harsh reality of the refugee process.

But if, as can be seen in the examples given so far – and in many others – it is notorious that the problem of immigration and international reception has had an important and prominent thematic place within the organization and in the daily work of dramatic creation and acting preparation of many groups, it is no less true that this is the case. In a general way, it has led to a particular regulated methodology or a typology of theatre that allows us to speak properly of an integrating theatre of immigrants and refugees.

In this sense, this theatre, until now, seems to have had a fundamental link in the operational and social objective of making visible the problems of immigrants and reception, but not properly in having developed in a way that is linked to the above standard processes of learning and theatrical practice that have allowed an integral – nor partial – use of dramatic art as a tool for integration between the members of the immigrant and refugee collective. Thus, although it is certain that the groups that have worked with these groups have undoubtedly developed particular techniques and methodologies that have facilitated their learning and approach to the theatrical discipline and dramatic work, it is no less true that these have not only not been frequently recorded or standardized, but also have not been considered as a fundamental end or objective of the theatrical process. but more as a means or mechanism to generate works and proposals that would allow the social and integration problems that these groups often suffer from to expose and denounce.

In view of the above, and in view of this shortcoming, it has already been repeatedly pointed out throughout the introductory part of this guide that it was the continuous observation, during a previous project², of the benefits of the

² The Active Theatre project, organised annually in the Spanish city of León to offer theatre workshops aimed at preventing the risk of exclusion among young people in the city, had from its first edition a workshop aimed exclusively at the population in the early reception phase, refugees and asylum seekers.



practice of theatre among various groups of refugees and asylum seekers that made us consider the desirability – one could almost speak of the necessity – of generating a line of work that would be To be exclusively concerned with developing, or at least beginning to outline, a theatrical didactic methodology aimed exclusively at these groups. Taking into account this envisioned integrative value and, above all, the potential that we presumed that dramatic practice could achieve if it were possible to generate a specific and specialized methodology, it was decided to try to start creating and shaping a true integrative and real insertion theater intended for these populations, which is the one that we have tried to capture in the following parts of this manual.

THEATRE, REFUGEES AND AGROECOLOGY: THE TSE PROJECT

Prior to the TSE project, the first theatre workshops that we launched with refugees and asylum seekers, already in 2019, served to remarkably confirm the validity of theatre practice as a tool for intervention and early insertion between recent hosts and asylum seekers. We learned throughout these early works with these populations, still marked by a strong experimental character, that dramatic practice was an exceptional instrument and especially useful in several ways.

Among the first and most obvious positive and fruitful results was that of achieving in a relatively quick and simple way a disinhibition and loss of shame on the part of the participants, many of whom were initially partially or totally overcome – or at least frightened or inhibited – in the face of their new surrounding contextual reality.

Relying on the playful nature with which we enveloped and permeated the theatrical exercises and activities, in addition to the loss of shame and linked to it, it was not difficult to generate an atmosphere of trust that favored interpersonal relationships between the participants and between them and the workshop coordinators and those responsible for the project. In this sense, in a way, the



practice of theatre was presented as one of the first doors open to the new social and cultural world in which the participants, refugees and asylum seekers in the early phase of reception, were entering.

Also from the first sessions of the workshops it became clear that the workshops, consciously planned for this purpose, served to introduce the participants to a certain social and cultural understanding of the host place. Thus, in addition to being an efficient complement for those who did not speak Spanish in the formal language education they received in their reception centres³, many of the exercises served, in an extremely respectful and delicate way, to promote a social and cultural understanding of the host country and region, teaching customs, forms of behaviour and some salient aspects of reality that could be novel, complex and even shocking for the participants. It is precisely at this point where the theatrical workshops showed a special and early performance and where in the following editions it was deepened, applying new exercises and methodologies⁴ aimed at promoting cultural understanding and, through this, facilitating their social integration in the host place/country.

Along with this, the workshops were also planned and focused as a mechanism of cultural expression through which the participants, in addition to being introduced to the host culture, could show their own, making use of their skills, knowledge and particularities at a personal and collective level. Likewise, the classes were intended to be a space for discernment that would allow them to move away from their concerns, on some occasions, and to make visible and denounce the difficulties and injustices—generally substantial—linked to their process of migratory "flight" from their country of origin and reception in a foreign

³ In Spain, Italy and Portugal, as in the rest of the countries of the European Union, during the reception phase, reception centres for refugees and asylum-seekers offer courses to teach the language of the country in order to facilitate its learning and improvement for those who do not know it and, in this way, to improve the language of the country. facilitate their integration and social insertion.

⁴ It is worth highlighting the inclusion in the following editions of the workshops (2021 and 2022) of role-playing exercises and the invisible theatre methodology, through which we managed to manage and prepare in a supervised way how these were introduced into the activities that we presumed in advance would be part of their daily life in the short term, during their first integration into the host society.



country. In this sense, a therapeutic and sociological value was given to the activity, which was intended to serve as an outlet and mechanism of self-knowledge for the participants, as a form of exposition and reflection on their reality and vital interests to those responsible and, ultimately, through the representations with which the workshops were concluded. as a form of social denunciation and enhancer of awareness of their problems and some of the injustices of different kinds to which they were subjected among those attending them.

Although in general and broadly speaking, the assessment and interest in these first workshops on integrative theatre and insertion between the refugee and asylum-seeking population was more than positive both among the organisers and coordinators and among the participants themselves, it should be noted that they also served to observe and detect the limits and problems that the use of theatre presented as a tool for its insertion type of populations.

Among these, it is essential to highlight one that was constantly and prominently evident, and which refers to the inability of the theatrical workshops to retain many of the participants. This, in turn, as we were able to verify through direct observation and a process of open and continuous dialogue with the participants and those responsible for the reception center where most of them were staying, was explained because, although the workshops were highly appreciated and were considered a very useful tool at the level of integration and socio-cultural insertion, They could not compete with other activities focused on what we soon perceived as the main concern of most of the members of these groups: job placement.

In this way, if theatre workshops were perceived as useful, efficient and interesting to promote socio-cultural integration and insertion, they often soon became an abandoned or parked activity, totally or partially, when participants were presented with the opportunity to integrate into other types of activities that they understood that, although they were not linked to a process of integration, They could be more useful in order to obtain and develop a paid job in the short-



term future. This observation, far from demoralizing the organizers, opened a process of reflection and self-criticism that ended up leading to a fundamental change in the essence of the workshops and that was none other than to make them, if they wanted to be perceived and act as a really useful tool for these groups, also have a functionality in the field of labor insertion.

It is from this idea that these workshops, which, as we have said, had emerged with a high experimental component, began to take a more concrete and oriented form. The first thing that had to be asked was whether theatre could really be of any use in promoting this labour insertion and, if it were to be concluded – as it happened – that it could be, it was essential to study and test how this link between integrating theatre and labour insertion could be concretised.

Managing to include the labor aspect in the workshops was a leap forward for our project and, even more, it was what allowed us to delve into the integrative sense of our proposal. By directing them towards the main concern of our target population, we obtained not only a plus of added value, but also a sense of adhering to our objective of integration and insertion through theatre. However, in order to carry this out, the first thing that was done was to open an open process with the participants of the workshops to jointly observe, on the one hand, how they thought the theatre workshops could be useful to them at a work level and, on the other hand, to which we also gave great importance, how they would like and prefer to be helped in terms of insertion. In this way, the aim was not only to facilitate their entry into the world of work, but to do so in a way that would be attractive and interesting to the participants while at the same time drawing on their previous knowledge and skills.

As a result of this two-way dialogue process, a general idea was obtained of the potential job aspirations of most of the refugee and asylum-seeking population participating in the theatre workshops. Based on this and in a complementary way, we resorted to different studies, research and the advice of specialized organizations that allowed us to develop an overview of the possibilities of insertion of these groups, taking into account their personal skills,



their previous training and the demands of the labor market. It was from this work that we discovered the value of agriculture as an interest and potential labor niche among a large part of this population.

THE PILLAR OF AGROECOLOGY: LABOUR INSERTION, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL ENVIRONMENT

The interest of many of the participants in the workshops, linked to the fact that many of them had extensive previous experience in this type of work and agricultural activities in their countries of origin and the objective observation of their extensive knowledge in the field and their predisposition due to age and physical condition, were an incentive to consider the possibility of using theatre as a form of introduction to the labour market in the primary sector. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that most of the recent host population and asylum-seekers are young people under the age of 30 and many, especially those arriving from the African continent, come from rural areas in their countries of origin where the main economic and livelihood activity is agriculture⁵.

From the detection of this preference/inclination among many of the attendees of the courses, the next step was to see the place that it had in the labor market and if it was really capable of offering a dignified and adequate job opportunity for a large majority of the interested parties who participated in the workshops and, If so, to observe how theatre and dramatic activity could serve to convey this connection between their interest and labour potential and their insertion in the labour market. This was a relatively simple task, since among the organisers and those responsible for the first integrative theatre workshops between refugees and asylum seekers was Naturgeis, a specialised social enterprise with

⁵ Workshops organized with these groups prior to the project were dominated by refugees and asylum-seekers of sub-Saharan origin, mainly from rural Mali. Most of them worked in the fields of agriculture in their country before fleeing the armed conflict that is taking place in the country.



a long and recognised track record⁶ in the field of services and training in the organic agricultural, livestock and forestry sector and which has also been the main responsible for this project Ecological Social Theatre (TSE).

It was precisely the managers of the company who, in view of the interest in working in the primary sector of many of the participants, raised the possibility of trying to guide the workshops to promote their insertion in the field of agroecology, a sector in clear economic and social expansion that increasingly demands more people to work and that, In addition, as added values, it has the advantages of being strongly linked to and committed to the protection and care of the environment, while, due to its usual context of development, it tends to serve to promote repopulation and the fight against rural abandonment, a particularly serious problem in the region where these first workshops were held⁷.

This was how what has ultimately been the last of the fundamental pillars of the TSE project was included and, in a way, the one that has made it possible to give meaning and concreteness to the work of labour insertion of refugees and asylum seekers through a specific dramatic methodology and which, as has just been indicated, It was directly linked to the promotion, care and protection of the environment and the fight against rural abandonment.

Agroecology, in a very general way, can be defined as the applicable science that uses the implementation of "natural" ecological processes for agricultural, livestock and forestry production and, ultimately, to generate sustainable food. As a discipline, it is based on a series of fundamental principles/strategies such as maximizing efficiency, adaptability, natural recycling, preservation, diversification, technological rationality, generating synergies, solidarity and ecological restoration. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

⁶ In 2014, the prestigious "La Caixa" Foundation, through its **Social Entrepreneurship Programme**, awarded Naturgeis as one of the 20 social enterprise projects with the greatest positive impact in Spain.

⁷ The province of León, in particular, and the autonomous community of Castilla y León of which it is a part, is one of the regions with the greatest depopulation of rural areas at European level.



Nations The aim of this discipline, in its practical aspect, is to "optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment", but that "at the same time it addresses the need for socially equitable food systems in which people can choose what they eat, how and where it is produced". (FAO 2024)

Its recent popularity, largely explained by the increase in interest by a large part of the population in taking responsible care of their food and by an increasingly widespread social commitment to caring for the environment, has led to an exponential multiplication of agroecological farms of all kinds in most Western countries. Consequently, this new way of generating and producing agricultural, livestock and forestry products has become an important strategic subsector at the economic and social level, increasingly in need of labor and interested and trained people involved to work at its different levels of activity.

Once the participants' interest in work had been detected, according to their abilities and potential, and had located an economic sector where they could find accommodation and have room for development and development, the difficulty was to determine how theatrical practice could help to achieve this effect. To this end, it was essential to begin a meticulous process to design a well-developed strategy and methodology that would allow interested refugees and asylum seekers to be introduced not only into the labour market, but also into the agroecological labour sector.

To carry this out, we began by redesigning the workshops, maintaining during the first parts of the process all those exercises and theatrical activities that we had observed to be especially effective in the field of disinhibition and socio-cultural integration/insertion, but at the same time complementing them and, as far as possible, focusing them even more deeply towards a knowledge of the skills. capacities and inclinations of the participants related to or that could have a place in the field of agroecology.

Along with this, an intermediate part of the workshops was built that consisted of a process of labor dramatization, so that what was sought was to begin to



introduce the participants in a specific way in the context of agroecological work in various aspects such as language, gradually deepening in vocabulary and grammar according to the potential work they could do; professional behaviour, including exercises that showed behavioural and protocol forms, as well as widespread work habits in the European context that were often far from those of their countries of origin (respect for pre-established schedules, use of uniforms, safety measures, etc.); and the processes of approximation and insertion into the world of work. All of this was carried out mainly through simulation exercises in which, in a dramatized way, situations similar to those they could experience during their job placement process were reproduced.

Finally, during the final part of the workshops, it was decided to include a complete dramatization process in which the work in a subsector within the agroecological field was reproduced in the most realistic way possible, generally through a structurally complete narrative. The choice of the subsector was carried out according to the preferences of the participants – based on an overall vision, since we did not have sufficient means or the potential to carry out absolutely personalized training – and the knowledge and material and human resources that we had to be able to carry it out satisfactorily.

With a sense of self-criticism, it is convenient to make an important clarification that shows the main limitation of workshops as a tool for labor integration. The theatrical processes aimed at the insertion in the agroecological sector among refugees and asylum seekers were considered during their realization and in the end as very useful in a generalized way, but it is true that in many cases they did not allow direct access to the world of work in the agroecological sector, but rather were a first formative step that allowed the participants to enter specialized courses or workshops in different subjects and related activities that would allow them to access the labor market. Thus, although it is true that a very high percentage of the participants ended up accessing jobs in the agroecological field, it is no less true that the specialization of the sector often required very specific prior knowledge that required specific training in addition to what we could provide in theatrical work. This, in fact, we do not observe as a negative



fact, since in these cases the theatrical work fulfilled the mission of being a tool for introduction and formative insertion, but in the end it continued to function as a facilitating mechanism in the process of finding a job accommodation.

The small-scale implementation of this theatrical project yielded results that we value – both the organisers and coordinators as well as the participants⁸ – as very positive. In addition to achieving a much higher level of involvement, satisfaction and continuous commitment on the part of the vast majority of the participants than we had obtained when the workshops were not primarily aimed at their job placement, we managed to introduce them in a way that they themselves valued as very positive in an activity or job training for which they felt prepared and interested.

Based on the observation of these good results, in view of the above and with the objectives set throughout this introductory chapter, mainly that of contributing to the generation of a "true" theatre of insertion, which is efficient and utilitarian, is how the TSE project and the theatrical methodology aimed at the labour insertion of refugees and asylum seekers included in the next part of this manual were conceived. In reality, and as has already been pointed out, this has been directly based on the previous work and analysis carried out during and from these initial workshops, but having the financial support of the *Erasmus+* programme of the European Union and the joint work of Naturgeis, in Spain, CIA-Toscana, in Italy, and Corane, in Portugal, three organisations with a high level of commitment and an outstanding work history, An attempt has been made to perfect the methodology, to make it extensible and standardised, so that it is applicable on a large scale and can be a recognised reference tool in the integration and insertion of these populations into the European framework through theatre.

⁸ Knowledge of these evaluations was obtained through a series of detailed satisfaction surveys that participants filled out anonymously.



ECOLOGICAL SOCIAL THEATRE: METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR THE LABOUR INSERTION OF REFUGEES

*"When theatre is necessary, there is
nothing more necessary."*

Peter Brook



PRESENTATION

As a central and core part of this manual, this section sets out the didactic methodology proposed in order to carry out the cultural and labour insertion of the refugee and asylum-seeking population through the practice of theatre. In an executive way, as concrete, accessible and clear as possible, the following has been tried to expose and guide the reader in a simple way so that he can plan and implement a process of labor insertion between refugees and asylum seekers through theater. All of this is based on the fundamental idea that those who approach this text are mostly people with at least a basic knowledge of theatre education, both in its artistic and social-integrative aspects, and also have a previous interest in carrying out a practical process of this type.

Using a linear chronological exposition, this section of the manual has tried to propose step by step the development of an integration workshop aimed at refugees and asylum seekers in a comprehensive way. Thus, the first thing that is shown is its initial planning, considering what has been called given conditions/circumstances, understood as the series of human, spatial, temporal and observable material components that must guide the approach and evolution of the process so that it is satisfactory in accordance with the objectives indicated.

Although it is unfailingly an indicative part that has been approached by trying to present relatively flexible proposals, the observation of these preconditions and the initial planning proposal has tried to be complete, trying not to leave any aspect unanalysed and undertaken; and precise, wanting to give relatively rigorous guidelines with a certain pretension—undoubtedly idealistic—of suitability, although always accommodating, adaptable and combinable with the necessary malleability and variability of the potential application.

On the other hand, during this first part and in conjunction with the presentation and assessment of these given conditions/circumstances, a series of guidelines are also included to carry out an analysis as objective as possible of the needs



and particularities of each group. This is proposed so that, in a general way, the person who decides to start the process of theatrical insertion can start from an initial particularized observation of the problems, capacities and potentialities of the human group with which he intends or aspires to work. This, in turn, is essential in order to be able to carry out a methodological planning adjusted in forms and objectives to the reality of the participants and their vital context based on the mechanisms proposed in the next part of the methodological exposition.

In the second part, which we have called execution, the four phases in which, as previously indicated in the introduction to the manual, the process of insertion through theatre has been divided are included in an explanatory way. relationship and contextualization; socio-cultural deepening and insertion; and labor insertion in the agroecological sector.

In this part, a detailed explanation of the motives and objectives of each of them is carried out while, in a coherent and concordant way with the above, a list of exercises aimed at enabling the planning and practical execution of the workshop is offered. All of these, presented and explained in depth, will serve to offer a wide range of possibilities when designing a process adapted to the different personal and contextual peculiarities of each participating group, already assessed and determined previously during the first part of the process regarding the planning and assessment of the given conditions/circumstances.

The third part of this methodological explanation focuses on formulating and indicating the aspects and methods aimed at making the most objective assessment possible of the insertion process. To achieve this, we wanted to present a series of specific guidelines and recommendations —although adaptable— both of the main parameters to be analyzed and of the ways of measuring and evaluating them.

Likewise, also in this part, we wanted to incorporate a section dedicated exclusively to exposing mechanisms and guidelines that allow the theatrical process to be intertwined with an effective labor insertion, either through access



to other types of specialized courses in agroecological work or through direct labor inclusion in the sector.

In parallel to the above, during the three parts of this second chapter, in addition to the explanations and exercises, constant references have been included to the three pilot courses developed within the framework of the development of the TSE project in order to outline and refine the methodology. In this way, through the inclusion of passages, anecdotes, and observations derived from these previous experiences in Spain, Italy, and Portugal, the aim has been to exemplify, make more accessible, and expose the development of the different phases of the process, emphasizing the evolution, the main difficulties, and the most striking results of the process. These references to their own experiences have also made it possible to include a series of practical advice based on and explained through the on-site experience of the proponents of the didactic methodology.

Along with the above, some of these difficulties or more controversial points have also been the subject of special attention in the manual and, occasionally, explanations and observations have been devoted to them in separate sections. Especially complex aspects such as language, overcoming the initial fear/shame, the evaluation of potentialities and interests or the approach to socio-cultural shock, among others, have received special attention, knowing that they are elements that pose a special challenge that, if not handled, can generate significant problems or, even, failure due to collapse in the application of the insertion process through the active practice of theatre among refugees and asylum seekers.

Likewise, in order to comply with the highlighted need to present this methodology as a flexible and adaptable application tool and not only as a closed and strict proposal that could hardly cover and address the personal and circumstantial peculiarities of each process, the methodology has been tried to be presented as a multiple proposal that, Although it addresses certain common



and extensible aspects, it does not seek to generate a single and exclusive path of action, but rather to offer a limited amalgam of possibilities that allow each person who approaches and wants to make use of this guide to partially design their own process that is the one they consider most appropriate in view of the observation of the circumstances. particularities and contextual and personal conditions in which it is carried out. In this sense, the intention is that they are precisely the ones who can finish creating this methodology in view of the possibilities offered to them or even incorporating or varying part of the methodological proposal included in this manual.

The set of three parts included in this second section of the manual makes up and collects the totality of the methodological material of potential practical application and, therefore, stands as the soul of it. In this sense, compared to the theoretical reflection of the other two chapters of the manual and adjacent to it, it has a fundamentally didactic character and aims to guide, enable and facilitate the application of an open methodology that guides the learning/teaching process that serves the ultimate objective of using theatre as a mechanism for effective insertion in the work in the agroecological field of refugees and applicants who wish to do so.



THEATRICAL PLANNING

The first essential step in carrying out a process of social integration and insertion – and any other type of insertion – through theatre is planning. Vieites and Carides (2017: 7) make an interesting assessment when they point out and highlight that in the formative processes in dramatic art, "knowing how to do" is as important as "knowing how to do"; And it is precisely in this second point where planning plays an essential role.

In a very general way, planning can be defined as the selection and organization of all theatrical activities that will be carried out in a processual way in response to a wide variety of factors and circumstantial and essential elements. Much of the planning should be able to be carried out – and it is highly desirable to do so – even before the start of the training process (pre-planning), although the planning process should always remain open and adaptable to potential variations throughout the course, especially during the contact phase at the beginning of the course.

The first and most decisive of the elements to take into account when planning are, without a doubt, the objectives pursued. However, these, in turn, operate in a way that is inherently connected to other conditioning and often determining elements and factors, such as the availability of human, material and economic resources; the predisposition and interests of the participants; the development context and its particularities; or the time available, to name just a few of the most important.

The TSE project as a whole and the theatrical methodology in this manual include, as a constituent part and fundamental pillar of its very existence, a series of unavoidable objectives and circumstances of its own that inevitably determine the potential implementation of other derivative projects that include integration workshops for refugees and asylum seekers. In this sense, it is evident that both the planning and the rest of the actions and activities included in any of these



proposals based on this methodology or inspired by it are circumscribed and guided by its general objective: to favour and promote the socio-labour insertion of refugees and asylum seekers in the agro-ecological sector.

Along with this objective, the methodological proposal is nothing more than a way to guide how to carry this out. Although, as we have repeatedly pointed out, it has a flexible and to some extent variable applicability, it is still a delimiting element and, therefore, must be observed with a certain rigor – at least in its generality – both in its forms and in its contents when planning any process that intends to be included or adhered to the proposal derived from the TSE project.

Even if these two elements are necessarily taken into account, there is a wide margin of manageability and propositional character that, if not absolutely, must be at least outlined in a concrete way. This, without a doubt, must begin to be carried out through good planning, which in turn must be based on these elements and which will be the first – and fundamental – step to concretize the implementation of a theatrical process of insertion such as the one we propose.

To carry this out, it is essential to begin with a phase of observation and prior analysis of the factors, realities and variables that affect or are expected to affect the theatrical process. This, finally, will allow the planning phase to begin, which will begin to be developed even before the start-up of the workshops and will be developed mainly during this previous time and the first phase of the workshops. In it, based on a series of self-questions and their attempt to answer them, the foundations will be laid for, in the end, trying to bring to a successful conclusion the process of integration and social, cultural and labor insertion of people belonging to the groups of refugees and asylum seekers.



1. Pre-planning: observation of given circumstances and the 5 W's of the theatrical insertion process

The principle of the given circumstances is part of the well-known methodological proposal that the Russian director and theatre theorist Constantin Stanislavski put forward during the first part of the twentieth century. In a generalized way, this was adopted and is used in the theater world to refer to the set of environmental and situational conditions and determinants that affect and influence a character and that condition, circumscribe and explain his actions and attitudes. Specifically, the same Stanislavski pointed out that the given circumstances are the plot, the facts, the incidents, the period, the time and place of the action, and the way of life; and he repeatedly stressed their character as assumptions germinated directly from the imagination of the creator, actor or director. (Stanislavski 1989)

Directly following this idea and mechanism of work between actors for the preparation of characters, we have transferred the idea of using the given circumstances to the planning of the theatrical process and, specifically, to the previous phase of it, understood as the entire preparation and pre-production part of the theatrical workshops in which the TSE methodology is applied for the integration and insertion of refugees and asylum seekers.

Obviously, the observation and consideration tending to the objectivity of the given circumstances/conditions applied in the initiation and approach of a process of this type does not seek to generate or flourish in a particular acting work of character creation and, in the face of the imaginative assumptions on which it has been based as a principle of working with actors, It is based on a work of observation and contextual analysis of the real conditions, circumstances and particularities in which it is known, intuited or foreseen that the theatrical process of insertion with refugees or asylum seekers will develop. In this sense, this observation of the given circumstances is based and must be – at least –



methodical and as objective as possible; and be based mainly on obtaining specific and generally quantifiable data, which will be the ones that will allow the specific planning that will guide the theatrical insertion workshops in which the methodology set out in this manual is applied.

Generally linked to the world of journalism, the so-called 5 W's technique is based on the posing of a series of questions that must be answered to ensure the correct and complete transmission of information. These questions are: *What?* (What?), *Who?* (Who?), *Where?* (Where?), *When?* (When?) and *Why?* (Why?). To these, in addition to some possible variations, three others are commonly added: To whom? How? and for what? The possibility of answering these questions clearly, concisely and concretely is the key to the correct prior planning of the process and, in this way, to direct and convert the theoretical approach into praxis, into an executable practical proposal that is efficient and has a utilitarian value. As we will see below, most of these questions can – should and should – be answered before starting the implementation and execution of the insertion workshops.

In a general way and broadly speaking, we have already pointed out the "*What?*", the element that explains and gives meaning to this methodological proposal and should justify the process of theatrical insertion training and which is none other than to carry out a theatrical training that favours, facilitates and promotes the socio-labour insertion of people with refugee status or in a situation of asylum application, that is, the group of beneficiaries of international protection. Along with this, other adjacent and derived aspects such as the promotion of respect and care for the environment, the contribution to the reactivation of the rural world or the promotion of integrative theatrical pedagogy among these groups complement this "*What?*" This is a fundamental pillar that acts as a fundamental pillar of the implementation of this type of theatrical process.



These, however, are nothing more than a well-intentioned declaration of objectives which, although they play a fundamental role at the guideline level, are not yet sufficiently specific to be considered full. Along these lines, the first step when it comes to addressing the "*What?*" The main function of a theatrical process of this nature must be to convert the objectives set into tangible and quantifiable goals. In other words, it is necessary to transform the "*What?*" with which we propose a process of these characteristics in a "*What for?*" It is a well-defined and well-defined process that envelops it with meaning and turns the ideal into an event, so that the theatrical process of insertion, in addition to being a grain of sand in the search for a better world, is an evident endorsement that concretely and tangibly improves the lives of those who are directly affected by it and of society as a whole.

To do this, however, it is necessary to take into account the rest of the questions and the specific circumstances in which the process is known or expected to take place. Only a substantial observation, analysis and assessment adjusted to the intrinsic and surrounding realities of the theatrical process as a whole will allow us to transform the objectives into specific achievable goals and, even if we do this correctly, we will always be talking about a part of the estimative or foresight planning that, although it does not offer absolute guarantees, It will make it possible to establish an "achievable" milestone to pursue and around which the whole process is oriented.

In order to establish a process that is appropriate to a realistic goal, one of the first points that needs to be resolved during the pre-planning of the process is to clearly establish the "*who?*" or "*who?*" They will be responsible for it, fundamentally because it should be these people who, in a main and priority way, finish giving a glimpse of the objectives and guidelines that allow the planning of the project to be completed.

In order to establish an ideal profile and based on previous experience both in the courses carried out prior to the TSE project and during the pilot workshops



that were carried out to develop the refinement of this manual – which we explain in detail below – it is necessary to point out a series of recommendations.

The first thing to remember is that this manual and the didactics contained therein have been prepared with the primary intention of being a valuable tool mainly for individuals, associations and/or NGOs that work on a regular basis with groups or users who effectively receive or are likely to benefit from international protection: refugees or asylum-seekers. This, logically, does not exclude the possibility that other types of organizations or people, such as agricultural organizations of different types or groups specialized in integrative and insertion theater, can access and use the manual to carry out a process of socio-labor insertion among these groups if they deem it appropriate and/or advisable, but it is always preferable that people and organizations that have knowledge and knowledge of the project are placed at the head of the project. previous experience of this reality.

In addition to this, another fundamental piece of advice is that the coordination of the course should not be left in the hands of a single person and that, at least, there should be a division between those who are in charge of the didactic work and those who are in charge of the organizational, supervision and evaluation work within the framework of the workshops that support the theatrical process. This separation is explained and justified by several reasons. The first and most important is the workload, since the implementation of such a course requires such a high level of effort and commitment that it could hardly fall exclusively on a single person in charge. But, in addition, the existence of several managers and the division of tasks guarantees a greater degree of efficiency.

The figure of the didactic coordinator (or coordinators) is in charge of organising and carrying out the whole process of insertion through theatre in a positive way. It is responsible for the pre-planning (together with the organiser), planning and execution of the workshops, so that they end up fulfilling the stated



objective of promoting the cultural and socio-labour insertion of the participating users.

To occupy this position, it is advisable to opt for people who have, on the one hand, previous experience and training in the field of social theatre and integration/insertion and, on the other hand, who have attributes and knowledge that may be very necessary during a process of this type, such as empathy, tolerance, ease of communication – both verbally and non-verbally. open-mindedness, the ability to work in a team, commitment or eloquence.

Along with this figure, the person in charge (or managers) at the organizational level must act as a facilitator and supervisor of the process. Its mission is to, in a parallel and harmonized work with that of the coordinator of the theatrical didactic part, to carry out all the actions and activities that are not strictly didactic that allow the execution of the workshops, among which are mainly included the pre-planning (together with the didactic coordinator), the generation or obtaining of conditions and means necessary for the preparation and execution of the workshops (space, participation, dissemination and promotion, etc.), the elaboration of administrative and bureaucratic procedures and, in addition, the work of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the project⁹.

The idea of extracting this last task of oversight and assessment of the work of the didactic coordinator is explained by the observation during the pilot workshops that, as a party directly involved and involved in the workshops, he or she usually partially loses perspective on the process and develops an emotional empathy with the participants. For this reason, it is considered advisable that a third person, in this case the organiser or another external person, not so close

⁹ Ideally, it would be convenient to be able to divide the tasks of organization and supervision, so that there is a different person in charge for each of them. However, based on the observation that the means for the implementation of this type of project are generally very limited, we have decided to propose a single figure responsible for coordinating both activities.



to the theatrical work with the participants, be able to make a much more objective and impartial assessment of the theatrical insertion process.

To fill this position, it is advisable to go to people with experience in the coordination and execution of social projects and, preferably, in the field of work with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and/or people who have proven experience in the field of training in the agroecological sector.

Along with these two figures, and also with a view to the organization and planning prior to and then the efficient execution of the theatrical process of insertion, it is necessary to mention the possibility—generally very convenient—of establishing agreements with other associations or groups that work with groups of refugees and asylum seekers. These, from what has been verified in the pilot processes, can play a very important role in covering some of the most important aspects of the integration process in its previous phase. Among these, the work of rapprochement and approximation between the proposed process and the potential users, the previous knowledge of the latter, the dissemination of the workshops, the coordinated work with other didactic activities that the users carry out or the obtaining of spaces to develop the workshops stand out.

More relevant than the "*who?*" will plan and execute the workshops and perhaps the most important question to take into account in order to give concrete form to a theatrical proposal of this type is the "*To whom?*" addresses: The addressees of the proposal. In this sense, if we stick strictly to the didactic and methodological proposal, we know that the participants will always be people who, for different reasons, are in a refugee situation or in the process of applying for asylum and, therefore, are beneficiaries of international protection in any of its degrees or phases.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) notes that Beneficiaries of (or aspiring to) international protection and asylum are people who, for different reasons, are driven or strongly pressured to "flee conflict and persecution. Their status and protection are defined by international law, and



they should not be expelled or returned to situations where their lives and freedoms are at risk." In line with this, the European Union's Common European Asylum System (CEAS), although it has not yet succeeded in establishing a shared asylum procedure, sets common minimum criteria for the treatment of all refugees, asylum seekers and all asylum applications in the EU. (UNHCR, UNHCR 2023)

In this sense, it is evident that refugees and asylum-seekers share a series of characteristics and conditions that legally and humanly equate them and, in part, approximate their processes of development and personal and vital development. Among the latter, the flight from a generally traumatic and/or conflictive situation is absolutely decisive in that it gives the idea that, unlike the majority of immigrants who "voluntarily" seek to earn a living outside their place of origin, refugees and asylum seekers are particularly forced or greatly pressured to do so by circumstances that a priori appear to be strictly exogenous and not properly as the result of a free and voluntary choice¹⁰.

Beyond the similarities derived from their very condition as refugees or asylum seekers, however, it is necessary to emphasize that they present a series of differentiating elements that must be taken into account during the planning prior to addressing the integration process through theatrical practice and, even, during the first phase of it. when direct observation will make it possible to finish designing and defining the planning of the workshops and the insertion process.

These defining characteristics of the people who make up and participate in the workshops will be absolutely fundamental for their planning and subsequent execution. Among these, one of the most important in order to generate a user profile, more for its derivations than for its significance, is national origin.

¹⁰ We have already pointed out our doubts about the extent to which the immigration process can be considered "voluntary" in a large number of cases and situations. However, it is essential to emphasize the "extreme force" nature of this in the case of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Knowledge of the origin of the participants will allow the observation of a series of fundamental parameters in order to carry out a good planning and subsequent execution of the workshops and must be taken into account as a fundamental element when configuring the working groups or proposing subdivisions within them.

In this sense, it should be borne in mind that the origin of the participants is always a piece of information that is accessible a priori and that it will allow the coordinators and those responsible for the workshops to have an idea – even if initially provisional – about part of the advantages, opportunities and difficulties that the different groups may present, which, in turn, will be used to create a new information about the participants. will be instrumental in the pre-planning of the process.

Among the most important observable characteristics, which can often be known (or at least assumed) only from knowledge of the participants' country of origin, are the language, the conflict or problem that explains their refugee or asylum-seeker status, their religious faith, their socio-economic background, their level of education and their possible source of employment. as well as others that, as a whole, can be used to generate a general profile of the participants.

It is important to emphasize that, frequently, the knowledge of the origin of the participants is not linked to a direct knowledge of all these associated realities on the part of the managers and coordinators of the theatrical integration workshops. In this sense, and in order to complete this prior knowledge, it is essential to carry out, within the framework of prior planning, a study and research of the contextual realities that allow a prior approach to the participants.

To carry it out, in addition to all the enormous information that can be accessed by different documentary means, the easiest and most advisable thing to do is to go to associations or institutions that work directly with this type of population – even with the project participants themselves – and that have a direct and



generally in-depth knowledge of these characteristics that we point out are linked to the nationalities and particular origins of the participants.

The knowledge of the origin of the participants will give us, in turn, an initial general and group knowledge that will allow us to develop a general profile that serves as a guide for the prior planning of the process, taking into account characteristics and factors such as the cultural-religious, the language, the previous life context, the foreseeable work preferences or the conflict situation that forced their departure. However, it should be clarified that this approach to the reality of the workshops can only be completed when there is direct contact with the users of the workshops during the first phase of the workshops, corresponding to the disinhibition and contact. In this, it will be possible to convert this general profile into a much more personalized profile of the participants, which will be the one that, as we will see, we will ultimately use for the definitive didactic planning of the insertion workshops.

Also within this *"To whom?"* The composition and size of the groups that will be part of each of the workshops must be included. In view of previous experiences and the need to personalize the theatrical process, it is advisable that the size of the groups be limited. In this sense, after the pilot workshops that served to perfect the didactic methodology included in this manual, the recommendation is that they be groups that in no case exceed the number of ten participants.

In the foreseeable case of having a greater demand for participants, it is preferable to increase the number of workshops than to try to carry out processes with a number that exceeds this indicated ten and, even, if possible, it is best to have a group of between five and eight participants per workshop. This, as has been pointed out, will serve to carry out a process that is as individualized and particularized as possible that meets the specific needs and preferences of each group and, even more, the individual needs of each of its members within it.



Faced with this, the possibility of carrying out the process of theatrical insertion with large groups (more than ten participants) presents important and serious didactic and organizational problems that range from the difficulty of a particularized approach to the participants to others such as the lack of specialization, the difficulties of finding common interests in their path of labor insertion or the cultural divergences that cause a certain disintegration at the group level.

It is the latter that, to a large extent, allow us to address another aspect of the formation of groups that is more complex and difficult to address than their quantitative composition. When forming groups, in addition to their size, it is necessary to establish and attend to a series of criteria that allow and facilitate the correct and fluid development of the process. Among these, there is no doubt that the length of residence in the host country is paramount – and obvious; the national, cultural and religious origin of the participants; age; knowledge and use of the language; and the interest of the participants in employability. Although there are obviously many other aspects that can be taken into account when forming the working groups of each workshop, the work proposal included here makes these five prevail as unifying elements to be taken into account.

In this sense, and as we will also delve into when previous experiences with this methodology are shown, it is advisable to establish groups that are as homogeneous as possible. To a large extent, this is justified and explained by the fact that, in addition to facilitating integration and intergroup linkages, members of groups with specific shared characteristics often face very similar situations and processes of integration and insertion, generally being forced to deal with similar or very similar difficulties and problems in the host country and also presenting, In general, they have common preferences and interests or, at the very least, they are close to each other.

Following this idea and in the event that circumstances allow it, the general recommendation is to try to form the groups with members who have a common



national (or regional) and cultural origin, a close age and who have a similar length of stay in the host country. This, in turn, we have been able to verify that it tends in a general way to derive and crystallize in groups with similar interests in labor insertion. All this, in addition to encouraging those interested to be uninhibited and involved in the theatrical process, facilitates the realization of it aimed at socio-labor insertion in a joint and stable way.

Normally, and based on previous experience, it should be noted that the search for these common characteristics is not as complicated and complex as it may seem at first glance. In general, waves of refugees and asylum seekers, unlike migratory processes, are focused on their origin and restricted to very specific places, so it is not difficult to form groups with members of similar origin and culture or, at least, close to them.

It is common, however, that we are faced with groups of refugees and/or asylum seekers with origins from absolutely different geographical and cultural poles, in which case the recommendation is to establish this differentiating criterion to form the groups. This was what happened in most cases during the pilot workshops in which the methodology included in this manual was tested and refined, when there was a significant and massive influx of people from the conflict in Ukraine, who joined another important group of refugees and asylum-seekers from the conflicts in sub-Saharan African countries. mainly from Mali, a group of refugees from Arab countries, and another important group fleeing political and social instability in Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Peru, Cuba or Colombia, among others. It was precisely this situation that, after several tests, made it possible to establish the criterion of geographical and cultural origin as a priority in the establishment and formation of groups.

Something similar can be said of age. Although it is clear from the studies and what has happened in the workshops that in most cases refugees and asylum-



seekers are young people or in the first stage of adulthood¹¹, it is no less clear that there is also a considerable group of people in other phases of their lives, mainly mature and advanced maturity. who are part of the group of beneficiaries of international protection and who, as happened in the pilot workshops, can show a marked interest in insertion through theatre. In this sense, it should be clarified that the age difference is not an insurmountable aspect with a little will on the part of the coordinator and the participants.

On the other hand, other aspects such as the length of stay or the level of knowledge and use of the language, however, may present a greater margin of variability. Something that could be clearly seen in the pilot workshops is a notable difference in the use of the language between users with the same origin and a similar length of stay in the host country. In this sense, in view of the homogeneity established for the rest of the criteria indicated, it was observed that it was advisable to introduce people with different linguistic abilities into the language of the host country, since they favoured and supported the integration of people with less language ability and, in the theatrical process, often acted as mediators between the group as a whole and the coordinator. thus favoring the executiveness and efficiency of the theatrical process as a tool for social insertion.

As one of the potential shortcomings of this methodology, it is worth mentioning that the workshops were more than remarkably well received by people with a very limited time of stay in the host country. In this sense, the proposed theatrical process has only been tested with people in the process of applying for asylum or with a relatively short period of reception in the host countries, and it has happened that there has been no access and possibility of testing among refugees who have been in the host countries for a long time (more than three

¹¹ View UNHCR's Global Trends 2023 report (UNHCR, 2023).



years). This is easily explained by the loss of status as beneficiaries of international protection and by the fact that many of the people who entered with refugee status have already obtained their residency and have become part of the world of work.

In this regard, it is obvious that the insertion proposed in the TSE project found a greater place among newcomers or people with still very short stays in the host country. However, with regard to the possible application of the methodology, it is important to point out the fact that this homogeneity, in view of what we have just pointed out, may not even need to be sought when addressing the composition of the working groups, but in most cases it will be given per se in a circumstantial manner.

Finally, with regard to the users of the methodology, it is required that they have a prior predisposition to enter the agroecological sector. This, as we have seen, is not difficult among many of the groups of refugees and asylum seekers, such as populations of sub-Saharan and Latin American origin, where many of their members come from rural areas, have worked in agriculture in their countries and, therefore, tend to have a very broad predisposition to train and work in this expanding sector. On the other hand, there was much less interest in this type of activity by people with other geographical origins and, notably, when the cause of abandonment of their country of origin was an armed or political conflict that caused a sudden flight. Many of these types of beneficiaries of international protection do not have a direct relationship or knowledge of agricultural work and it is common for them to see it, at least initially, as an unacceptable loss of status in the host country. However, it is worth emphasizing that the insertion process is designed – and should be planned – in such a way that it is accessible to any type of user who shows interest, regardless of whether they have prior knowledge of working in the first sector.

Another fundamental element to take into account during the prior planning of the theatrical insertion process is the "*Where?*". It is obvious that this, in a very



general way, refers to a multiplicity of dimensions, ranging from the contextual, social and political, national, regional and local reality where the integration and insertion workshops will take place to the physical space where they are carried out or intended to be carried out.

The methodological content contained in this handbook is designed in a concrete and specific way with a view to its applicability in the context of the European Union as a whole and has taken deep account of the shared reality of most European countries. Thus, it is obvious that the proposal is specifically adapted and interdependent with respect to the reality and context of the EU that affects the process of reception and integration of refugees and some of its associated aspects, such as, for example, the circumstances of the reception processes, the international and European legislation¹² in force that guides the lines of general action around the issue of international protection or the actors involved.

In this sense, it is based on the idea that there is a sufficiently homogeneous European continental framework, context and awareness with regard to the problem of the social, cultural and labour integration and insertion of refugees and asylum seekers and their life contexts to propose a unified methodology. However, as we will analyse in depth when we look at the pre-planning of the pilot workshops that have served to develop and perfect the theatrical didactics proposed in this manual, this does not mean that there is, far from it, an absolute

¹² Currently, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) sets common minimum criteria and parameters for the treatment of all asylum seekers and applications across the European Union. However, as the European Commission itself acknowledges, "under existing rules, asylum seekers are not treated uniformly across the EU and the proportion of positive asylum decisions in different countries also varies considerably". In this regard, and in the context of a more general reform of EU asylum rules, in 2020 the European Commission proposed a **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, establishing a common European framework for asylum management. The main objectives of the programme are to provide a **comprehensive approach** to the management of asylum and migration, to increase the efficiency of the reception system, to promote the fight against abuses and to provide specific support to the **Member States most affected by this phenomenon**.



similarity that allows us to ignore some of the variations at the national, regional and local level, and that in some cases will be decisive or very influential when it comes to proposing and planning the theatrical didactic process.

In the face of this idea, however, there is no doubt that the planning and implementation of the process is largely subject to the particularities of national, regional and local contexts and, particularly significantly, to migration and refugee policies; the law and legislation in force; and integration programmes and mechanisms. But, in addition to this, it is also important to highlight the fact that, in a very influential way and linked to the above, the processes of integration and insertion of refugees and those in the process of applying for asylum are closely affected by a social attitude towards this type of population.

In this way, it is essential to highlight the need for those who organize and execute a theatrical process of socio-labor insertion in the agroecological space among this type of populations to observe and analyze beforehand the political, legal and social context and climate in which they will be carried out. This will allow, on the one hand, to adapt the process of labor insertion to the possibilities offered by the same spatial context, but also to adapt the integration and cultural insertion in the existing environment and general attitude regarding this type of populations, which can range from circumstances in which reception and reception are favored and benefited to others in which, Unfortunately, this is viewed with suspicion or even hostile or solely as a business opportunity.

Along these lines, it should not be forgotten that this is a project of insertion in a specific field such as work in the agroecological sector. In view of this fundamental fact, it is essential that, in addition to the general social, political and legal climate with respect to this type of population, the organizers of the workshops have a basic knowledge of the socio-labor context in the agroecological field of the areas where the insertion process is intended or planned to be carried out, so that, even before it begins, It is possible to know in



detail the potentialities and possibilities offered by the geo-economic context to welcome and provide work to this type of populations.

Although this is a decision that will be made definitively during the first phase of work with the users of the workshops according to their personal interests, it is highly recommended that even before starting the process itself, you have at least a general idea of the potential job offer in the sector in the geographical area where it is going to be developed. In addition, as will be seen when the methodology is addressed, this is essential to also plan and execute the last part of the theatrical training process of labor insertion, in which simulations of possible jobs to be carried out by users are carried out.

To access this knowledge, it is recommended to go to organizations or associations that operate in the agroecological sector so that they can work in a way that is linked to the projects within which the workshops are developed. At this point, it is essential to determine the degree of involvement of the companies, which can vary from simple advice to integration into the organization of the project.

In this regard, within the framework of the TSE project, a direct collaboration was carried out with agricultural organizations strongly involved in the work in the agroecological sector, which made possible, in addition to better programming and execution of the workshops, direct access to specialized training and the world of work for users, many of whom were able to enter the sector once they had completed their theatrical training.

Beyond this "*Where?*" Contextually and in pragmatic terms, it is also essential during the previous planning phase of the process to address the question of a physical space that allows the execution of the workshops to be carried out. In this regard, and in a very simple way, it can be said that any conditioned space can be used for the execution of insertion workshops, understood as one that has appropriate dimensions for the size of the groups, adequate accessibility and is minimally adapted for theatrical practice: clear space with the presence of padded



floors (possibility of placing them ad hoc for the activity), absence of dangerous objects, sufficient ventilation, access to toilets and, preferably, also changing rooms.

In addition to meeting these absolutely essential requirements, it is also necessary and very convenient to observe the location of the space. The selection of an appropriate place that also presents the ideal location will favor the participation of the users, as well as their perseverance in the theatrical process. To select a suitable location, it is interesting to resort mainly to a criterion of proximity to its space of vital development.

During the work prior to the TSE project and the pilot workshops within it, it was found that the locations far from their place of residence/host not only hindered participation, but also often prevented the establishment of a constancy in participation, which to a large extent vitiated or hindered the execution of the workshops and the achievement of the objectives set and planned.

In the frequent case that there is no suitable place of your own and in order to select the appropriate spaces, a general recommendation is again to go to the organizations or associations that work on a daily basis with this type of population. In general, they have spaces that they usually have no problem giving up or renting at a low cost and tend to show a high willingness to collaborate in this aspect of the project. As an alternative, it is also common to be able to access spaces ceded by public institutions such as city councils or local and regional governments, in which case it should always be taken into account, in addition to the aforementioned criterion of proximity, that often the achievement of the cession of these spaces usually requires a previous time to address application procedures. which necessarily implies doing it well in advance so that they are available when the theatrical workshop is scheduled to start.

Along with this base space to give the workshops and in response to the methodological proposal, it is also necessary to be able to go to appropriate spaces to carry out the invisible theatre exercises proposed during the third



methodological phase and, although not absolutely necessary, it is recommended to access, at least during one of the days of the workshop, to a specific space in which work is carried out in the agroecological sector that has been selected to be formed through theatre during the last phase.

Access to the former is not complicated in view of the fact that what is sought is to carry out exercises that favor the integration and insertion of users in everyday situations and spaces of the contextual reality of the host place, all of which are very accessible. On the contrary, access to a real workspace does require prior planning and, in many cases, this will be feasible depending directly on the possible agreements indicated with companies or organizations working in the sector. In any case, previous experience has shown that the vast majority of companies working in the agroecological sector tend to show a broad predisposition to participate and collaborate with workshops on this point. This first approach, moreover, also often serves as a hook to later promote a direct job or training insertion in the sector of the participants of the workshops.

In contextual terms, when it comes to carrying out the preliminary planning phase of the theatrical insertion process as important as the "*Where?*" it's the "*When?*" This, on the one hand, also refers to the particularities of the social, political and cultural contexts at the national, regional and local level that end up drawing a particular social climate and opinion around migration and the reception of refugees in the period in which it is decided to carry out the process of socio-labor insertion through the workshops.

In this regard, it is essential to emphasize that this type of process will be much easier to carry out in social contexts in which the migratory and refugee phenomenon are willingly accepted or even promoted in some way, although precisely for the same reason they will be processes that have less relevance for users. who will almost certainly find a wide variety of integration and insertion options. On the contrary, theatrical workshops of this type will be much more relevant at a social level in those spatial and temporal contexts in which an



attitude of suspicion or direct opposition to the presence of this type of group predominates. It is in these climates and social environments where a process of integration and insertion such as the one proposed becomes especially relevant both for users, who will have at their disposal an exclusive or almost exclusive tool, and for society as a whole, where projects and initiatives of this type become essential to favor and promote a change of perception and avoid an entrenchment of the situation —often unjustified or promoted selfishly by certain groups of power—of rejection.

Inside the *"When?"* And for practical purposes, another aspect that must be addressed and decided during the pre-planning is the exact time of realization and the duration of the workshops. In this sense, as we already pointed out in the first part of the manual, one of the great advantages of refugees and asylum seekers during their first period of stay compared to other groups, as users of theatre workshops, is that they usually have time and are partially freed from other obligations, which allows them to tackle a process of relatively long duration. This, however, should not be interpreted as an absolute free hand when it comes to proposing excessively long or intense processes that may alienate or intimidate potential users.

Although the ideal in didactic terms for an efficient execution is to propose a process sustained over time, it is essential to establish a deadline for the execution of the workshops that, in addition to observing the didactic interest, also attends to the possibilities of the users, so that it adapts and adapts as best as possible to their possibilities in terms of time and dedication. In this sense, it is essential to have a balanced approach that allows the establishment of a stable theatrical process that is sufficiently intense and long-lasting to be efficient in terms of integration and insertion, but at the same time realistic and adaptable to the time and disposition that users can and want to offer.

The didactic team has not wanted to establish a fixed deadline and to a large extent this will depend on other observations such as those exposed above



referring to the groups of potential participants, taking as a reference the four phases into which the process has been divided and the deadlines used during the pilot courses, it is considered that the process should have a duration of between 24 and 72 hours. distributed between two and four months; with a weekly periodicity of one or two sessions to ensure continuous work; and with a variable duration per session of between one and a half and three hours. These deadlines are established as a guideline according to what the teaching team considers appropriate to carry out the process, but it should always be taken into account that these must be adapted depending on the context and the users, factors such as, among others, their abilities and their predisposition.

Also within the time frame of the courses, another very relevant factor must be taken into account, which is their link to the agroecological sector. In order to provide a viability of labor insertion in the real and tangible sector, something that must be taken into account are the types of agroecological activities that are carried out in the area where the course is taught and, specifically, the periods in which these activities require more labor. In this way, it will be possible to try to schedule the workshops in previous periods and calculate their end before these periods begin and, in this way, favor the potential labor insertion of the participants. Likewise, this will also allow that, in the event that activities adjacent to the workshops are planned, such as talks/presentations related to the sector or visits to the workspaces, these can be carried out in periods of low workload, facilitating their execution and the attention of the staff and workers responsible.

In addition to the length and temporal organization of the course, it is also important to pay attention to its location in the calendar, so that it is also as adapted as possible to the interest of the users. To this end, it is especially advisable as far as possible to try to prevent the process from being interfered with by prolonged vacation periods that interrupt it, but it is possible that in certain places certain seasonal considerations may have to be observed punctually that prevent or hinder the correct execution of the process.



Along with all the above questions, others that are absolutely fundamental and necessary to consider and respond to when addressing a theatrical process of integration and labor insertion between refugees and asylum seekers such as the one proposed are *the "Why?"* and the *"What for?"* These, in addition to referring us to the already indicated objectives of the TSE project and the processes that derive from it, suppose an ontological and political questioning with respect to the role of promoters and organizers of this type of process.

It is obvious that the decision to face, plan and execute a theatrical process of this type must be supported by a social commitment partly associated with a partisan vision of the integration and insertion of these groups. Thus, it is difficult for a process of this nature to be sustained solely on utilitarian reasons — which is also the case — without these being linked to an ideological position based on the observation of international protection and human rights not only as unavoidable realities in view of events, but as desirable objectives in the framework of a general struggle for human dignity in universal terms. against injustice and in favour of values such as tolerance and fraternity among nations, peoples and individuals as a whole.

Thus, the TSE project, this theatrical methodology and any of the projects derived from it cannot be understood solely as a tool for circumstantial and/or exclusively contextual action, but must operate moved and motivated by a spirit – more tangible and achievable than ideal – of international justice, humanism and humanitarianism. This commitment, however, can and must address the contextual circumstantial circumstances in terms of the execution of theatrical projects and processes, so that these sustaining values are directly linked to praxis in an efficient way to contribute to what ultimately moves—or should move—all social projects: improving the life of the collective ensemble and of each of its members in isolation.

Along these lines, in addition to this general vision, the projects derived from the proposed methodology for the labour insertion of refugees and asylum



seekers must have a particular contextual framework (where and when) that, on many occasions, will be the one that ends up justifying or explaining both the execution of the project and many of its forms and constituent elements.

The answer to all the questions and questions raised above constitutes the first phase of the planning of a theatrical project for socio-labor insertion. This is an absolutely essential step to ensure the correct development of the process. This will take some time and, with the exception of part of the observation regarding the participants of the workshops (to whom), which must be completed during the first phase of the workshops, the rest of the questions can and should be answered clearly and concisely during a period prior to the start of the workshops, the duration of which may vary. but that in no case should it exceed the period of one quarter.

Once, taking into account the given circumstances and conditions, it is known precisely what the workshops are intended to achieve in a concrete way, who will be in charge of delivering and organizing them, in what spatial and temporal context they will be carried out, in what exact place and for what specific time and why and for what purpose a project of this type is necessary, It will be in a position to move on to the next phase of implementation. This is a direct reference to the "How?" of the workshops, that is, to the specific way in which the process will be proposed and the methodology that will be used to achieve our objective of insertion and integration. This is precisely what has been addressed in a concrete way in the next point of this manual and, as has been pointed out repeatedly, an attempt has been made to offer a flexible methodology that allows this how to be adapted to the specific characteristics of each integrating situation, which can be observed precisely and mainly in the questions already posed and answered.

But before going into the didactic methodology, in the next section and to conclude this point of the manual, a section has been included in which the theatrical experiences that those responsible for the TSE project had during the planning of the pilot workshops are collected and exposed, which to a large extent



have been a basis for the development and improvement of the methodology. In this way, it is intended to exemplify in a concrete and evident way this planning of several theatrical processes in different and differentiated circumstances so that this can serve as a guide to the reader or readers in the face of a potential implementation of the proposed methodology and, above all, in the face of the initial planning and prior to the execution of the workshops. It has been intended to highlight, above all other aspects, the initial problems and doubts, as well as their solutions, in these planning processes in view of the fact that these, it is understood, may be the same or very similar to those that those who decide to launch a project-process of these characteristics will encounter and will have to face.

An example: the pre-planning of the three pilot theatrical processes of the TSE project

In accordance with the relevance of the pre-planning process indicated, the first step that those responsible for the execution of the Social Ecological Theatre project took when launching our corresponding pilot workshops in Spain, Portugal and Italy was to address this process.

All the organizations opted for the planning and development of the workshops to follow the proposed division of functions, so that each of them had a marked separation between the coordinator responsible for the organization and at least one theater coordinator responsible for the didactic execution of the workshops¹³. Likewise, the tasks of evaluation and oversight of the processes were partially outsourced in the case of the processes in Portugal and Italy, since this work was carried out by the general didactic coordinator of the whole project, belonging to the Spanish part, the company Naturgeis.

¹³ In the case of the Italian organization CIA-Toscana, it chose to have two people in charge of the workshops. This was very interesting because it allowed for an even more complete theatrical work with greater perspective.



In addition, also during a phase prior to the implementation of the pilot workshops, a detailed observation was made (which ultimately proved to be quite accurate) of the potential groups of refugees and asylum-seekers who would participate in the process. In this sense, and in contrast to what had happened in other previous workshops with these groups in Spain, we found the difficulty that the origin of these groups would be much more varied and heterogeneous, in addition to observing that the armed conflict in Ukraine was very likely to determine to a large extent the origin of the participants. making us foresee a majority participation of people from the Eastern European country, a fact that subsequently did not materialize.

With a very general idea about the possible participants and under the expectation that we would have mostly groups with limited knowledge of the native language in each of the countries, the next step we took was to observe the format of the workshops. In this regard, it is important to note that, according to what was previously established in the project, the three organizations had some of the pre-established conditions. In this sense, and mainly with a view to the execution of pilot workshops that would ensure sufficient and valid measurement and testing processes, a minimum number of 20 participants per workshop had initially been established with a total of 48 hours of workshop per organization. In this sense, and in view of the observed difficulty of undertaking theatre workshops with such a large number of participants who are foreseeably unfamiliar with the native language in each of the countries, the three organisations agreed and opted, with the consent of the Erasmus+ programme that financed the project, to carry out two theatre workshops each, dividing the group of participants into groups of ten. The result was six pilot workshops with uniform groups of ten participants each.

Once this was done, the three organizations opted to reach out to organizations that could facilitate our access to refugee and asylum-seeking populations in our respective regions. In this sense, Naturgeis reached a collaboration agreement with the Spanish Agency for Refugee Aid (CEAR) and



with the NGOs Rescate and Diakonia-España so that they could publicize and promote participation in the workshops that were going to be held in the city of Malaga. In the same way, Corane reached an agreement for the same purposes with the Red Cross in Portugal and CIA Toscana attended Pane and Rose, a renowned social cooperative that works in early reception in Italy. These agreements were essential to be able to access the users and, ultimately, they were what made it possible to carry out the workshops effectively.

The results in terms of the participating users who signed up for the workshops offered very different results, so that in Spain a total of 20 participants were obtained from very different origins and levels of adaptation, but most of whom spoke Spanish and some had already lived in the country for some time. In Portugal there was also a wide diversity of origins, but unlike in the Spanish case, most of the participants did not speak Portuguese. In addition, most of the participants entered the workshop through the intermediary of the Portuguese Red Cross, which had reported that almost all of them were part of a labour insertion programme that the international organisation is carrying out in the area and, therefore, were already working, many of them in the agricultural sector. In Italy, most of the participants registered were young people of North African origin, from Bangladesh and India, most had a very short temporary stay in the country and practically none were Italian speakers.

In accordance with this, and in response to previous observations on the type of participants, three different plans were proposed. In Spain, the separation by groups was carried out according to the origin of the participants, one of the groups being mostly made up of people of Latin American origin, who had Spanish as their native language and who, in addition, were supposed to have a cultural proximity to the receiving country, Spain, high enough so that the processes could focus almost from the beginning on prioritizing labor insertion. The other group was made up of people of North African origin and Eastern Europe (Ukraine and Russia) and at first it was expected that they would present problems with the use of the language and with cultural adaptation, so a theatrical



process was planned more focused on language and social insertion, although later this had to be modified because most of the users spoke Spanish acceptably and did not present serious problems of adaptation.

In Portugal, on the other hand, the division of the groups was carried out with priority in mind the time availability of the participants. The result was two different groups and only in the second group were there a small part of the participants who spoke Portuguese. In view of this and the fact that practically all the participants did have an effective job placement or were studying, it was decided to prioritize the language issue and socio-cultural insertion over the labor one.

Once these agreements were established, the next step was to find the physical spaces for the execution of the workshops. In this sense, it was agreed to prioritize spaces that are easily accessible and that meet the minimum conditions for the execution of the workshops. Thus, Naturgeis established another agreement with the San Juan de Dios Hospital Center in the city of Malaga, which provided its facilities for the workshops. For its part, the Portuguese organization Corane made a collaboration agreement with the Municipal Theatre of Bragança to use its facilities, in the city centre, and with the city's Polytechnic Institute, the local university, to host the theatre workshops. In Italy, CIA-Toscana established an agreement to carry out the workshops at the headquarters of the *Pane e Rose social cooperative* in the city of Prato.

While these organizational activities were being carried out, the organizations also dedicated an important effort to making a contextual analysis at the political and social level to know the realities and challenges that potential participants in the process could face. In this sense, the case of Italy was very striking, where our study and analysis allowed us to conclude that the existence, linked to the advance of an ideological movement and a marked media disinformation, of a hostile attitude by a large part of the local population towards this type of population and the phenomenon as a whole was foreseeable. In Spain this situation, if not so marked, was also a fact that we believed could affect the



situation of the users of the workshops; while in Portugal the problem did not present itself a priori so much in a political and/or ideological aspect, but we did believe that there could be a certain cultural distrust linked to what we interpreted as a certain traditionalism and conservatism typical of the city where the workshops would take place, Bragança, a small place, deeply rooted in its own cultural forms and modes and less accustomed to contact with this type of population than Prato or Malaga. This heterogeneity of situations, on the other hand, and beyond the difficulties associated in each of the cases, seemed very interesting to us in view of the process of theatrical testing and experimentation with the workshops that we were about to start and which, it should be remembered, aspired to lead to a transnational methodology applicable in all the states of the European Union.

Another aspect that we had to address in practical terms was when to conduct the pilot workshops. Although it is true that the project marked a fairly closed date for completion, there was some margin in terms of the timing of the workshops. Thus, for example, the processes carried out in Spain were carried out, as planned, during the spring of 2023 and the two groups formed worked in parallel for two months on different days of the week with a periodicity of a class of three hours per session; and one weekly session per group. In Portugal and Italy, the workshops were scheduled, as planned, at the end of 2023. In the case of Portugal, two workshops were chosen in successive intensive processes, with a greater frequency than that established in Spain: four sessions a week. In Italy, a bi-weekly periodicity was chosen, one class during the week and another on weekends, over two workshops with a certain margin of time between them, which allowed for a more in-depth analysis process that, in turn, allowed improvements and refinements to be made between one workshop and the next.

Once we were clear and planned the above aspects, it was decided to launch the workshops. While it is true and it is important to emphasize that not everything pre-planned was adjusted to what would later happen during the execution of the workshops, it is less true that addressing these aspects at the beginning was



what allowed us to begin to make it a reality and served as a support to face the theatrical processes with guarantees. In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that, although prior planning does not need to be perfect, both its practical aspects and the previous analyses are essential to ensure the implementation of the workshops.

2. Methodological execution and structuring

In order to finish planning the theatrical process of socio-occupational insertion and then to be able to execute it in a correct and utilitarian way, it is essential to know the possibilities and the specific way in which it will be carried out. Answering this *question* is the most important point of this manual and the main focus of the TSE project. Thus, among the specific goals of the project during its development, the most important has been to be able to carry out the design and approach of a methodological proposal for theatrical training that would serve to guide and orient processes of socio-labor insertion in the agroecological sector of the refugee population and asylum seekers in the different contexts of the member states of the European Union.

As has already been pointed out, special effort has been made to ensure that the methodological proposal presented is not an absolutely closed and hermetic guide, but, on the contrary, is presented as an instrument of flexible and adaptable application, which allows those who make use of it to be the ones who complete the design of the methodological process in accordance with the observation of the given conditions. the contextual circumstances and the particular human and material components of each process.

This has been done in response to the obvious fact that each theatrical process is unique and different depending on the series of elements pointed out in detail in the previous part of this manual and, as such, each one also requires a differentiated treatment and application adapted in each particular case. In this sense, it has been sought and emphasized that the methodology is presented as



an open guiding tool that, on the one hand, offers a clear structural line, but at the same time presents and encompasses various work and execution alternatives.

It is important to underline that precisely this open methodological character implies that those who approach a theatrical process of insertion of these characteristics have prior knowledge of the methodological possibilities. This will be the one that will allow them to carry out an *ad hoc* adaptation for each working group in the theatre workshops.

Likewise, it should also be taken into account that, at least in a general way, the specific selection of the methodological line, the dynamics and the exercises to be carried out in the workshops is another part that must begin to be addressed from the previous planning of the process, in parallel or subsequent to the assessment of the rest of the component elements and given circumstances of the same. although it should always – and it is absolutely recommended and even mandatory – remain open and susceptible to possible variations, demands or alterations of different kinds during its development and execution.

There are a series of circumstances that, according to what was established during the previous planning of the process, will be absolutely decisive when it comes to establishing and proposing a didactic process of insertion in a concrete way. In the aforementioned margin of manoeuvre of the methodology, it will be essential to carefully observe these in order to carry out the workshops correctly. In addition to the duration of the process as a whole, it is essential to observe the profile of users who participate in it. As we have already pointed out, when planning the workshops in a concrete way according to the didactic possibilities offered at a methodological level, aspects such as their age, their national origin, their work interests or their command of the language must be taken into account, as well as all the others that directly or indirectly may affect the development of their theatrical learning and, within the framework of this, to their social, cultural and labour market insertion.



We have already pointed out that a general assessment of these aspects can be carried out during the planning phase prior to the start with the actual theatrical work in the workshops, however, it will not be until these are set in motion that a sufficiently specific and exhaustive individualized observation can be made to finish deciding. Plan and design the methodological variable to be used.

The planning of the design of the theatrical insertion workshops will be carried out on the basis of the proposal included in this manual. This includes a structural division into four phases of processual development that is applicable to the integral set of all workshops, although the time and effort dedicated to each of them, as will be shown, may and should vary and be accommodated according to the specific planning of each workshop.

As has been pointed out previously throughout this guide, the four phases established correspond to contact and pre-evaluation; relationship and contextualization; deepening of cultural integration and insertion (conflict and resolution); and labor insertion in the agroecological sector. This subdivision, in turn, registers what has been proven to be the connatural and habitual process of cultural integration and labor insertion of the users of these population groups.

During the pilot workshops and even before, with the processes and previous work of theatrical training with this type of population that subsequently gave rise to the TSE project, it was possible to verify that, when facing a theatrical learning process with the aim of achieving a job insertion, all refugee and asylum-seeking users, Almost inevitably, they went through four stages or periods. These, in an evolutionary and growing way, were reflecting an increasing involvement, adaptation and approximation to the marked objective of cultural, social and labor insertion.

Evidently, based on this observation and in parallel, what has been attempted in the proposed methodology is to program and plan the workshops in such a way that they are articulated and structured according to the observation of these four phases of theatrical learning. Thus, it has been intended to use the indicated



natural evolution of the users to, consciously and intentionally enhance it through theatrical planning, favor the efficiency and adaptability of the integration and insertion process and optimize the results to the maximum.

These four phases, it is evident, will play a fundamental role in the execution of the theatrical workshops. However, during the planning process it is important to take them into account in order to, on the one hand, know the evolutionary process of insertion through theatre among the participating users and, on the other hand, before the workshop, to be able to plan them at least minimally taking into account a series of circumstances in order to significantly squeeze and enhance their subsequent effectiveness.

1. Introductory phase: contact and initial assessment

The first of the phases, which we have generally called introductory, is the one in which the first direct contact takes place with the participants and, in addition, with the theatre coordinator and, very often, with the practice of theatre. It is a stage of utmost importance if the type of participants is taken into account, since in most cases it will act as the first of the (or one of the first) mechanisms and channels of opening and entry of the participating refugees and asylum seekers in their "new" context and will begin and/or contribute to generating and conveying their relationship with the country. the host society and culture.

In this sense, this stage will be essential for several reasons. In the first place, it will allow the coordinator to observe and analyze who the participants really are (initial evaluation), taking into account essential aspects for the execution of the theatrical process such as their aptitudes and abilities, their interests and preferences, their degree of commitment and the purpose with which they attend the workshop, among others. This, in turn, will serve to propose and structure the rest of the theatrical process in a comprehensive and conscious way and orient it as appropriate, always with the aim of labor insertion in the agroecological world.

Secondly, and in a more theatrical sense, this introductory part is essential to promote disinhibition and confidence on the part of the participants. In this sense, coordinators must have the ability to assess the needs of each group. Thus, for



example, during the pilot workshops there were groups that from the beginning showed a high degree of development and ease, and that hardly needed time to move on to a deeper and more elaborate theatrical practice. On the contrary, there were other groups that began their processes more self-conscious and fearful, requiring much more time to make contact and disinhibition than the previous ones.

During the methodological planning of this introductory phase, it is important to consider in depth who the participants are in order to design a process methodologically appropriate to their abilities and preferences. We have already pointed out on countless occasions that this should not lead to immobility and it is necessary to emphasize that the planning of this phase, as well as the rest, is only an initial orientation for the coordinator and must remain open to the potentialities and interests of the group.

However, it is obvious that an exhaustive knowledge of the type of participants will allow the process to be adapted to what is expected to be found. In this sense, the advance observation of aspects included in the previous planning such as the time spent in the host country, the country of origin, the use of the language or the age will be extremely useful to be able to make a methodological planning of this stage.

In a very general way and as we will see in more detail when addressing its execution, within this stage there are four aspects to be taken into account and that will determine as many sub-phases, which are the following:



Presentation.



Introduction to physical work and theater Warm-Up.



Basic linguistic notions for theatrical practice.



First contact and introduction to theatrical practice.

The presentation is the moment when the coordinator and participants meet in person for the first time, although it should be taken into account that it is not strange that some of the attendees already know each other because they



coincide during other insertion activities or that they even live together, generally in the same reception centers.

The presentation is a fundamental moment to start building trust and set a relaxed and comfortable working tone with users. Far from the formal presentations of other types of courses and workshops, the intention in this one should be, without losing the necessary image of seriousness to culminate a process of these characteristics, to generate comfort and confidence so that the participants integrate and engage as quickly as possible to the integrative and insertion theatrical process.

From what has been observed in the pilot workshops, it is recommended that these presentations be restricted to the participants and the coordinator. Although at times it was not possible to avoid the presence of representatives of the project's partner organizations, one of the conclusions is that formalism and the presence of people who will not participate later in the process does not contribute anything or help to promote the aforementioned trust and disinhibition on the part of the participants.

When planning these presentations, it should be borne in mind that they should take place no later than the first part of the first working session and should function as an initial contact between the coordinator and participants. Thus, in contrast to the exhibition and formal models, it is important that the presentations of these theatrical processes, in addition to clarifying the process and anticipating objectives in a general way, serve to promote from the outset a process of horizontal, open and sincere dialogue.

In this sense, it is recommended that the coordinator carry out a general explanation of what is intended to be done and achieved through the workshop, but that in no case should this be extensive or excessively detailed. On the contrary, it is highly recommended that the presentation includes an open *feedback* process, which will allow real tangible knowledge and begin to generate proximity and trust between the coordinator and the participants. In this way, in



addition to explaining what is intended with the course, the coordinator must ask and be interested in what the participants expect and intend from the course and what are the main and most important motivations and aspirations that have led them to participate in the theatrical process of insertion and integration.

This initial interaction is essential to demarcate the tone and climate that is intended and aspires to be generated continuously in all the classes of the workshop. It is recommended that its duration, although we have already said should not exceed the first of the sessions and possibly does not even occupy all of it, is not strictly delimited. By this we mean that it is positive to ensure that the participants, during this first contact, can express themselves freely and without restrictions. This, in addition to allowing the coordinator to have a general idea of the group's capabilities and pretensions, will also serve to have a first individualized perception of each of the participants. Likewise, they will begin the process having absolute freedom to express themselves and show themselves without any restrictions.

After the presentation, usually also during the first session, it is advisable to make a first contact with the theatrical work. The aim at this point is not to initiate a formal dramatic training, but rather to seek an attractive and liberating first contact with the practice of theatre. The intention with this first contact should not be so much to teach theatre as to get the participants to lose their inhibitions and feel attracted and seduced by the practice of the discipline, while at the same time allowing a greater knowledge of their aptitudes and preferences on the part of the coordinator. To do this, it is very convenient to start with very simple exercises that contribute to disinhibition, while being useful for the loss of fears, gaining confidence and promoting intergroup knowledge.

This first theatrical contact, if the coordinator deems it necessary and/or convenient, can be extended over several sessions, although beyond the first day it must always be accompanied and complemented by other types of exercises and practices. For its planning, it is interesting to have a varied range of simple



exercises and not only with a closed list, so that the person responsible for guiding the classes has options to vary and adapt the initial contact process according to what the participants are offering.

The intention is that these exercises work in a bidirectional way, so that on the one hand they serve to bring the participants closer to the practice, but also so that they end up favoring, through their performance, attitude and behavior during the performance, a propositional and open dynamic is generated that allows the coordinator to receive and perceive the necessary information to mold the participants. structuring and adapting the process in a particularized way as you go.

Another of the first steps during this introductory part is to introduce the participants to the warm-up and theatrical physical work. From the second session onwards, it is mandatory to introduce warm-up sessions and, as the process progresses, gradually and increasingly introduce exercises aimed at physical work, always within the possibilities and potentialities of the group of participants.

These types of exercises are maintained throughout the workshop, but they have been included in this first introductory part because it is in this that the explanation of them is carried out, which should allow them to be incorporated and established definitively in the theatrical work during the entire workshop, even if during the development they undergo variations or incorporations.

At the warm-up level, it is essential to introduce joint and muscle work, to which aerobic and static physical work must be gradually added. When planning this part of the process, it should be taken into account that it is always worn during the beginning of the classes and is complemented by stretching during the final part of the classes. This part of the process should be scheduled with the age and fitness of the participants in mind, both their strengths and limitations.



The amalgam of general and theatrical-specific warm-up exercises is very plentiful and easily accessible. Although some of them can be glimpsed in the methodological practice part of this manual, it is clear that many others can be used, always taking into account the convenience of the process and its participants.

However, in general, the proposal included here and that is recommended to be taken into account when planning the process is always to include a gentle aerobic exercise (walk with variations) that serves to connect the mind and body of the participants in the theatrical process and distance them from external concerns. This is accompanied, in this order, by basic joint stretching work, moderate muscle stretching work and, once the process progresses, simple strength, speed and dexterity exercises.

These exercises should be aimed at mentally and physically preparing the participant to face the purely theatrical practice, but the pilot workshops have also shown that they are very useful to strengthen collective work and, during the first phase of the process, contribute enormously to the disinhibition and confidence of the users.

In any case, and as a warning, it should be taken into account that these exercises are exclusively aimed at basic and necessary physical work. In no case should they be the main part of the lessons. Experience has also shown that the abuse of this part can have the opposite effect on the participants, alienating them or generating a loss of interest in the rest of the activities and the workshop as a whole. For this reason, the time spent on this type of activity must be measured with extreme care and, in no case, should it exceed more than a fifth of the total duration of the class.

In cases where the participants of the workshop are not speakers or have problems with the use of the language of the host country, it is important during this introductory phase to implement exercises that favor a minimum use of the language that makes it possible to carry out the workshops.



In this sense, there are two options. On the one hand, and if the situation requires it, it is interesting that the coordinator can incorporate specific exercises aimed at transmitting knowledge of basic notions of the language. These are exercises that do not pose significant challenges at other levels such as physical or theatrical, but they are useful to start incorporating and developing some basic notions of the language of the host country.

The other option is to use this language in a general way in the rest of the exercises included in this introductory phase, but emphasizing the management of its transmission, so that both the introductory exercises to theatrical practice and the physical and physical warm-up work also contribute to a transmission of knowledge of the language. This must be done with extreme delicacy on the part of the coordinator, who in no case can expect anything but slow, albeit progressive, progress.

It is important to note that theatre classes are not, and should not, be language classes. In this regard, it should be remembered that almost all reception centres and organisations in the countries of the European Union offer users native language classes with specialised teachers. However, the possibility that theatre contributes to strengthening this learning should not be overlooked. To do this, you can use any of the above options or even both in a coordinated manner.

During the pilot workshops, it was found that the majority of people who do not speak the language of the host country, in addition to substantially losing their fear of the open use of the language of the host country, registered a significant improvement in their management of aspects such as conversational or expressive thanks to the theatre classes.

Thus, when planning, it is recommended to make an objective assessment of the users and the potential of the theatre classes in order to improve the language skills and aptitudes of the participating refugees and asylum seekers, without forgetting their purposes of labour insertion.



Also during this initial phase, a basic introduction to what, in a strict sense, can already be considered theatrical practice should be included. This will be put into practice when the coordinator detects that the group already has the minimum confidence and fluency necessary. Beyond the initial "hooking" games, it will seek with more firmness and proximity to bring the participants in the workshops closer to a real practice of acting.

The recommendation is, once the group is considered suitable, to include this in the final part of the first sessions, never dedicating more than the last quarter of them. The exercises should not be particularly complex or demanding, but they should be properly theatrical. Among these, as specified later in the concrete methodological proposal, they include small works of basic interpretation without established text, mainly simple improvisations.

When planning, the coordinator should choose exercises that help to introduce participants to the culture or that address some of the initial problems that they are experiencing during their onboarding phase. In order to carry out these exercises, a given set of conditions must be stated as clearly as possible. In the case of refugees and asylum-seekers who have only been in the host country for a short time, the prior knowledge of the users should already be taken into account in the planning. In addition, theatrical work should be used to introduce situational components that favor their contact and cultural understanding of some of the many realities that these types of participants will face during their "new" daily lives.

The length of the introductory phase will depend on the needs, capacities and response from the group of participants detected by the theatre coordinator. Thus, for example, it is easy to understand, and should be planned with this fact in mind, that a group made up of refugees and asylum-seekers from a very different cultural world, with a short stay in the host country, with no previous theatrical experience and whose users come from particularly traumatic situations, will require a much larger introductory phase than another group made



up of people who come from a culture with links to the host country. that of reception, a stay already continued in the country, previous theatrical experience and that most of its members have not been exposed to situations as traumatic as a war or similar. This must be appreciated by the coordinator both prior to and continuously during the realization and development of the theatrical process.

It should be borne in mind that the introductory phase is absolutely fundamental at an organizational level so that the coordinator can carry out a correct methodological planning. Thus, it is mainly during this phase that the student can get a consistent and well-founded first idea of how far he can and should go throughout the rest of the process, always with the aim of cultural and labor insertion as a guide and fundamental objective of the process.

Experiences & Exercises

In relation to the experiences lived during the six pilot workshops developed within the framework of the Social Ecological Theatre project for the testing and development of a theatrical methodology aimed at the socio-cultural and labour insertion of refugees and asylum seekers in the agro-ecological sector, the first thing that should be highlighted is that the different introductory phases of contact and initial evaluation presented a relevant variability between some workshops and others. This variability is mainly explained by the differences between the groups, which are also largely linked to the different contexts of action.

Thus, for example, in the workshops held in the Tuscany region of Italy, the groups of participants were mainly made up of people from a cultural background very distant from European cultures, with a very short period of time spent in the host country; with a number of notable shortcomings in terms of knowledge of the local language and culture; with a very limited cultural background; and with hard life stories and processes of fleeing from their countries of origin and reception in Italy. The two working groups in Italy were initially characterized by a high degree of inhibition and little openness to addressing the processes of insertion through



the theater. This meant that the time dedicated to this introductory phase was high, over 20% of the total number of workshops, and that the theatre coordinators chose to dedicate a lot of time to carrying out basic exercises of disinhibition and cultural and idiomatic approach.

A very different situation was experienced in the workshops in Malaga, Spain, where the two groups of participants generally presented a medium-high knowledge of Spanish; most of them had already spent more than a year in the country and, therefore, had a moderately solid base of knowledge of the local culture and customs, in addition to the fact that a significant part of the participants were of Latin American origin, which favored the existence of cultural and social ties; and some participants even had prior theatrical knowledge. Faced with this situation, in Spain it was decided to establish relatively short introductory phases, less than 20% of the total duration of the workshops, and to dedicate more time to other phases that were more in line with and efficient with respect to the interest of the participants, mainly the one referring to job insertion.

Halfway between these two were the workshops held in Bragança, Portugal, where the group of participants, although they had generalized problems of ignorance of the language and culture, had the advantage that many of them already had a professional occupation or studies in the country, curiously most of them linked to work in the agricultural sector. Not having the pressure of labour insertion and with groups in which there was a solid base of previous academic training, these workshops were mainly dedicated to promoting socio-cultural insertion, dedicating a standard time to the introductory phases of approximately 20% of the total duration of the process, dedicated mostly to preparatory exercises to promote theatrical and idiomatic learning of Portuguese and to promote social and cultural insertion. of the participants.

The presentation of the workshops was similar in all the processes, always opting for open processes of dialogue and initial knowledge between the theater coordinators and the participants of each workshop. These processes served, as



noted above, to detect the general characteristics of the groups of participants, to begin to establish a relationship of trust between them and the coordinators and, finally, to consider the exact and detailed planning and structuring of the workshops.

The disinhibition and initial contact exercises showed more divergences between the different groups and workshops. Thus, and in view of the general characteristics of the groups that we have pointed out, in Spain they were very focused from the beginning on animating and promoting theatrical practice, while in Portugal and Italy at the beginning they focused prominently on generating basic cultural learning processes and enhancing language learning.

Regarding the warm-ups, it should be noted that all the workshops carried out similar standard theatre warm-ups, which included both the joint warm-up and some aerobic exercises, and gradually strength exercises were also introduced, always adapted to each group of participants. It is more interesting, however, to note how these warm-ups evolved in a similar way among the groups as a whole. In addition to an increase in difficulty, it happened that all of them went from being neutral warm-up exercises during the first sessions to evolve towards physical exercises that, in addition, in different ways were used to introduce elements that supported the groups in their most notable shortcomings, mainly in the cultural, disinhibition and language fields. In this way, there was evidence of a clear process of gradual fusion between the processes of physical warming and the processes of preparation and cultural insertion.

There was a greater disparity between the exercises aimed at language introduction. Thus, in the workshops held in Spain, due to the previous knowledge of the language of most of the participants, the coordinator was able to limit himself to introducing the idiomatic approach inserted into other types of exercises (warm-up, disinhibition and theatrical training), mainly aimed at contributing to the learning of the few participants who did not speak it and to reinforce that of those who still had shortcomings or difficulties. In this sense, the



feedback within groups made up mostly of people who spoke the Spanish language managed in a quite inherent way and without too much effort to push those who did not speak it to learn, with notable results in the advancement of the latter.

On the contrary, in the workshops in Portugal and Italy, the language problem was presented as one of the biggest battlehorses initially and the coordinators had to make special planning that included specific exercises to address the language issue through theatre among the participants. In the introductory phase, the language issue, through specific or overlapping exercises on other types of theatrical exercises, were the main issue to be addressed by those responsible, although it is worth noting that notable advances were made not only linked to the learning of the language itself, but also to disinhibition, loss of fear and generation of confidence at the beginning of its use.

With regard to theatrical practice during this first introductory phase, it is interesting to note that most of the coordinators chose to introduce very basic improvisation exercises that would serve to reinforce other processes addressed, such as disinhibition, engagement and language learning. In this sense, and despite the variety of groups, there was a tendency to opt for exercises that were accessible to people without previous theatrical training, usually through the approach of mechanical response games or through extremely simple improvisations linked and/or linked to the daily life of the participants. It is important to note that these exercises allowed us to begin to give some initiative to the participants and helped in a remarkable way to generate a feeling of belonging and collectivity that would ultimately be very useful during the rest of the process of the proposed theatrical workshops.

Below, we want to include some examples of exercises that were used in the realization of the pilot workshops during this introductory phase, addressing each of the aspects included in it. All of these are exercises that were shown to be particularly efficient. It is essential, however, to note that it is only intended to offer



general guidance to readers who come to this manual with the intention of addressing a theatrical process of insertion of refugees and asylum seekers, but that in no case is it a closed catalogue of exercises of necessary application. It should also be clarified that precisely for these indicative purposes, two basic exercises have been included for each part of this phase and that, in general, they can be adapted or varied depending on the potential arc that can be addressed in this phase depending on the type of group with which you work, the previous journey made and the experience that is accumulated throughout the process.

Integration, disinhibition, engagement and contact exercises

They are all kinds of exercises that facilitate the approach to the other by softening or weakening the barrier of inhibitions, fears, shame and resistance to the new and unknown. As Holowatuck and Astrosky (2009) point out, the first objective of any theatrical process should be "to know the names of the members, to associate names to faces, to add personal data, which in the work process will allow us to know, to trust and to produce". After this, the next step and towards which the set of disinhibition and integration exercises should move is towards the active participation of the members of the group.



The game of greeting each other.

One of the exercises we put into practice to enhance disinhibition and confidence building during the introductory phases of the workshops was the greetings. Beyond the formal presentation that takes place during the first session, the aim of this game is for participants to greet each other, introduce themselves and get to know each other. To do this, it starts with a very simple process in which participants are asked to roam the space freely, trying not to make regular tours. When a stable movement has been achieved by the group, everyone is invited to make eye contact when they pass someone. The next step



will be to stop and make a gesture of greeting and, when this is done fluently, it will move on to greeting using orality. It starts with simple greetings such as a simple hello, but as this is achieved, participants are asked to try to expand the dialogue by including a "how are you?", to expand this to a short presentation and finally try to establish a simple dialogue. It is interesting to note that in some workshops physical contact was included in the form of handshakes, hugs or even kisses on the cheek, but it should be noted that this should be done taking into account the cultural characteristics and the predisposition of the participants and taking care not to hurt sensitivities. This exercise can be carried out over several sessions and is especially interesting because, in addition to enhancing disinhibition and promoting intergroup knowledge, it is a good exercise to introduce refugees and asylum seekers who do not know the language of the host country to the basic use of it.

Orders

It is another very simple exercise that consists of the coordinator establishing a series of orders that the participants must comply with. These are agreed in advance. Again, the exercise begins with a theatrical movement through the workspace. While this is happening, the coordinator can give orders that the participants must comply with. Among these, the first and easiest to apply is the Stop, which indicates that everyone must stop. To this is usually added other classics such as jumping, crouching or running. Once these simple commands are mastered with ease and over the course of the sessions, the exercise allows you to incorporate more complex requests, which are usually very useful for the incorporation of basic vocabulary. For example, in some workshops colors were included, explaining beforehand that when naming any color, participants had to go to some object or element of that color and touch it. It is interesting that this exercise, as the sessions progress and the participants already have a moderately wide repertoire, allows the coordinator to hand over the power to give



orders to one of the performers or even to several at the same time. In this way, an active involvement of the participants begins to be generated and, in addition, it contributes to generating more dynamic and fun processes.

Warm-up exercises

They are essential not only to predispose the participants' bodies for theatrical activity, but also their minds. In this sense, it should be taken into account that among the group of refugees and asylum seekers it is common for the degree of stress resulting from their living condition and related problems. The lack of work, the distance from their families and their countries of origin, the uncertainty about aspects such as whether or not they will obtain residence permits, or the concern about the traumatic situation that explains their displacement (wars, persecutions, etc.), among others, are factors that tend to generate a high degree of stress and anguish among many of the participants. In this sense, the warm-up should also serve to connect them with the theatrical process. To achieve this, and in response to the observation of the participants' usually little taste for neutral warm-up exercises, in addition to the hardly variable and absolutely necessary joint warm-up, during the introductory phases of the project's workshops, warm-up exercises were applied that were linked to imaginative or playful processes that made them more attractive and seductive for the attendees.



Sun Salutations

It is a type of stretching and muscle warm-up exercise derived from yoga, although it is also common to find it in theatrical warm-ups because in addition to the physical contribution it is very useful to generate awareness and group coordination. It is an activity of relatively high complexity and difficulty, but it is very effective and open to adaptation and modification. The most common form of this exercise begins by asking participants to form a circle, with two arms separating each of them. Each of them has their feet with a shoulder-width spacing. The exercise begins with each participant having their palms joined in front of their chest. At the same time, (Bogart y Landau 2004) They all raise their palms, still touching, upwards until they reach a point where the hands can no longer stay together and separate. Everyone in the circle opens their hands at the same time. The arms continue to rise all the way up. Then, all together, they gently tilt their bodies backwards. The trunk of the body, with the back straight and the arms on either side of the ears, slowly descends in front of the body until both hands reach or get as close as possible to the ground on either side of the feet, bending the knees if necessary. Keeping your hands on the floor and with your head facing out, extend one leg back in a lunge position with your knee touching the floor. The heel of the foot forward remains in contact with the ground. Hands are removed from the floor and the body is tilted backwards, opening the chest. After a few moments, you place your hands back on the floor and the back leg is placed next to the other leg again. A lifts your buttocks up while extending your chest and heels of both feet down. Your knees begin to descend directly to the ground. The torso descends and rises to a reckoning cobra position. The head remains straight forward. Begin a slow lift until you are back on your feet in the circle and start again, this time changing the leg that is backed up at the beginning of the exercise. The activity can be repeated as many times as deemed necessary. The challenge is to try to flow through the positions without stopping, trying to move in unison as a group.



Following a Story

It is a very simple exercise, but at the same time extremely stimulating and efficient as it is a clear example of how to combine the basic theatrical warm-up with other relevant aspects in the theatrical integration of refugees and asylum seekers. The exercise is guided by the theatre coordinator, who is responsible for telling a simple story to the participants. Each of these, in turn, must behave as if they were the protagonist of the story and carry out the actions that the coordinator is narrating. The idea is that the coordinator uses this story to introduce, linked to the imaginative element, physical exercises that are usually unpleasant for the participants and, in a very special way, those related to physical preparation such as squats, push-ups, different types of sit-ups, jumps, runs, burpees, or any other that is deemed appropriate for the physical preparation of the participants. The secret of the exercise lies in dressing in an attractive way exercises that are usually not well received by the attendees of the workshops and, in addition, that this coating serves us to address other interesting aspects such as comprehension and idiomatic management, disinhibition, confidence, etc. For example, a basic story approach that we carried out in the workshops was to propose that the participants are walking in a forest, where as they advance they must overcome different tests such as, for example, taking an apple from a tree (stretching and jumping), picking (with a squat) a leaf from the ground, jumping over a stream, running away from a wolf chasing them (running), looking into a crevasse (bending), etc. The idea of the exercise is to generate similar stories that are increasingly complex. To do this, it is interesting to use imaginary locations that are part of their daily life such as a walk through the city, a visit to the doctor or any other that the coordinator deems appropriate. This will allow us to introduce vocabulary that can be useful in the short term in the regular life of the participants and, in addition, to transmit a certain cultural and social learning on how to behave in this type of situation in the host countries. Finally, it is necessary to point out that this exercise improves if it is applied over several sessions and can even be transferred to other phases of the theatrical



workshops after the introductory one, but that a growth in complexity should always be ensured, which, ideally, should culminate in a transfer of the responsibility of telling the story alternately to the same participants. so that the coordinator only initiates it and then successively asks them to continue it.

Specific language introduction exercises

They are regulated exercises in which the ultimate and almost exclusive purpose is that lay participants of the language of the host country can learn, reinforce what they already know or lose the fear of facing the language barrier. As has already been pointed out repeatedly, depending on the type of group, coordinators may choose to include these or choose to limit the approach to the overlapping language in exercises of other types. In the particular case of the pilot workshops, those held in Malaga, Spain, did not include exercises of this type because both groups of participants had a relatively high general command of Spanish. On the contrary, exercises of this type were applied in the workshops in Bragança, Portugal, and Prato, Italy, where most of the attendees presented very serious language difficulties. These types of exercises have the particularity that they are one of the few that may, at some point, require additional work outside the theatrical work classroom. Most of those that were applied were derived in a more or less direct way, usually with adaptations, of the well-known and award-winning European method of language learning through theatre *Glottodrama* (Nofri 2009).



Prepared Personal Interventions

This is the name given to a set of oral theatrical exercises in which participants attending the workshops are asked to prepare in advance an individualized intervention that is as correct as possible in the native language of the host country. The content of the interventions can vary and range from simple personal presentations to, as there is greater confidence, exercises in which more in-depth



presentations are requested, usually on topics in which the participants have a special interest or on aspects related to their life histories before or in relation to the process of forced displacement. The peculiarity of these exercises is that, in order to carry them out, participants have the opportunity to have a previous time in which they are allowed to use support means to prepare the presentation. Thus, for example, in most of the workshops that used this type of exercise, a part of the classes was used for prior preparation through the use of electronic devices (mobile phones and/or computers equipped with translation programs and dictionaries). During this time, participants were able to structure and prepare at the idiomatic level their subsequent oral intervention and even take notes to use during it. Regarding this type of exercises, it should be noted that the main objective at the beginning is not to obtain perfect presentations with a high level of language management, but for the participants to lose the fear of starting to speak the language while learning and reinforcing grammatical and vocabulary issues.



The Arena

This exercise is an adaptation of a game of the *Glottodrama* methodology called "The Soothsayer" (Al., 2016: 97 and 98). It consists of a role-play and debate in which the theatre coordinator explains in a general way a series of very general topics: love, family, health, money, etc., which can be written on a blackboard. The coordinator then gives each student three pieces of paper. On each piece of paper, participants must write a question to do in relation to the topics discussed. Then, in pairs, one participant is selected to act as a teacher and another to play the role of a student who must use one of his or her written papers to ask questions about a topic. Each pair has a limited time of three minutes in which the student will ask questions and the teacher will answer. The coordinator should encourage it to be done as extensively as possible. Then the pairs are swapped until all the students have gone through all the teachers. Finally, the coordinator will ask about what has been explained to them and ask: Who is the best teacher?



Students and teachers switch roles and the activity is repeated. As you can see, it is a game of much greater complexity than the previous one, but at the same time and from what we observe in the workshops it is interesting to try to put it into practice because it serves, on the one hand, to begin to introduce *role playing*, which will later play a fundamental part in the rest of the theatrical process and, On the other hand, and at the linguistic level, because by offering open topics that are common and understandable to all cultures, participants are forced to start developing ideas in the language of the foreign country. Obviously this requires a lot of patience on the part of the coordinator, but from the experience of the workshops we know that it is an exercise that after a while ends up offering very good results

Introductory Exercises to Theatre Practice

They are fundamentally games intended to complement the exercises of disinhibition and confidence-building, but unlike these, they already include an aspect of acting, understood as the moment when the participant/actor of the workshop goes on to play other characters that are not themselves. Obviously, in this introductory phase, only exercises and games that are still very simple will be applied, and these, in the workshops, were never applied on the first day of work, but were usually allowed to elapse a few sessions before they were introduced. Although there were notable variations in the initial proposals between the different workshops and due to the differences between the groups, they all coincided in being proposals for roles usually used in theatre workshops for beginners.



Animals

It is a classic theatrical exercise in which the coordinator asks the participants to mentally select an animal. Then they are asked to think carefully about how it moves and behaves. Then, in a group and simultaneously, each of the



participants is invited to emulate with their body the movement and behavior of the selected animal. In principle this is done individually, but the idea is to gradually give way to the relationship between the "animals". This is a very simple exercise that will greatly promote body awareness and the initial loss of embarrassment on the part of those involved. To promote its good performance, effort and perspective, the coordinator can ask the participants at the end of the exercise or even during its performance if they are able to know and/or deduce which animals are being interpreted by their peers.



The Elevator

It is a classic improvisational game in which the existence of an elevator is simulated. Gradually, each participant is assigned a very simple role and is given an objective that involves riding the elevator, so that each time the fictitious elevator has a greater number of participants inside. The coordinator must be attentive to, as far as possible, introduce elements of conflict between the characters inside the elevator, which can range from one wanting to go up and another going down, to one character falling madly in love with another or one having a sudden gas attack. It is important to note that in this introductory phase you should not worry so much about building a single solid plot as you should force the action and participation of all the characters. This type of exercise is very easily variant towards other forms such as the subway car, the bus, the doctor's waiting room, etc. Actually, any enclosed space that can't be easily escaped from will do. In general, this type of exercise in its first applications will lead to generalized chaos, but it is interesting to note that, almost naturally, from practice and with minimal intervention by the coordinators, the participants will tend to generate increasingly orderly and regulated structures and presentations.



II. Initiation Phase in Theatrical Practice: Relationship and Contextualization

Once the participants have acquired a minimum of confidence, they have become sufficiently uninhibited to start the theatrical practice of insertion and the theatrical coordinator has had the necessary time to make an initial assessment of the group's abilities and interests, it is time to move on to the theatrical practice. The objective of this phase is, in addition to deepening what has been done in the previous one, to provide the participants with the minimum notions and knowledge necessary at the interpretative level so that the participants can approach the rest of the process with guarantees. In a way, this is a proper training phase, in which the goal is to try to ensure that the refugees and asylum seekers who take part in the workshops can acquire the essential skills for the execution of the two subsequent phases.

A first aspect that we have been able to corroborate during the pilot workshops is that the vast majority of users do not usually have prior knowledge of the theatrical work as a whole or of the acting/interpretive work in particular¹⁴. In this sense, the general conclusion we reached and put into practice was to activate this part of the process as if they were common introductory workshops to theatrical interpretation, not very different from those that can be carried out in any center or school. Thus, to a large extent, we have chosen — we are convinced that it is right — to approach this part of the process without paying special attention to the particular status of the participants as beneficiaries of international protection or to the objectives of the process as a whole.

In psychological terms, this allowed, among other things, to begin to break with the role and self-conception of the victimized group that many of the participants

¹⁴ This is not a complete statement. During the workshops prior to the project in Spain, we found exceptions, among which a specific case stands out in which the participant was a renowned Lebanese playwright, who also had important knowledge of acting.



presented to a large extent as refugees and asylum seekers. Somehow, approaching this part of the process as an introductory course to theatrical practice similar to that of any group of beginners greatly favored and facilitated both theatrical learning and, on a deeper level, that the participants began to free themselves from many of their ties and fears to begin to enter the field of integration and social insertion.

Before continuing, it is worth making a note. Although we have just pointed out that in most cases there were no people with previous theatrical knowledge, at least not professional or of some relevance, it is no less common to find that many of the participants had certain skills or knowledge in other artistic branches such as singing, dancing, etc. etc. This must be taken into account by the coordinators of the processes, as they can substantially favor an interdisciplinary approach that favors an initiation to theatrical practice.

Returning to what concerns us, this phase also includes four fundamental lines of work. Several of them only extend and complement the work begun in the previous phase, while others are already entering the field of theatrical work itself.



Dialogue.



Warm-up and physical work.



Introduction to Theatrical Performance: Relationship and Reaction.



Initiation to collective creation.

It is very convenient to clarify that, in addition to the presentation and the first sessions, something that we discovered during the pilot workshops was the relevance of maintaining an open and continuous dialogue by the coordinator with all the participants throughout the theatrical process. Again, it is necessary to take into account the fact that for many refugees and asylum-seekers the activity is one of their first direct contacts with the host society, to which must



often be added the recent traumatic situations that many of them have experienced both in their countries of origin and on their way to the place of reception and the problems of adaptation. usually substantial, to the latter.

In this sense, the workshops acquire, and it is not a bad thing that this is the case, a certain therapeutic role for the participants, allowing them to express and bring to light their pains, frustrations, worries, etc. This, on the other hand, will also help us throughout the process to continuously assess and plan the methodology of the workshop, focusing on the main difficulties and complications exposed by the people involved in carrying out the workshops.

That is why we have just pointed out that one of the first aspects that we perceived during the pilot workshops was the need not to restrict this dialogue to the presentation or only the first sessions, but that, although it may seem a non-theatrical activity, in order to insert and promote really useful exercises it was essential to maintain this continuous dialogue with the participants of the workshops. This also served to generate a climate of collective trust and significantly increase commitment to the activity.

To carry out this dialogue-based interaction, a group interview system was established at the beginning of the sessions in which the coordinator, taking into account the interests and concerns detected among the participants, presented a series of group or individualized questions. In this way and in an absolutely free way, they told, related, exposed, reflected and gave their opinion on the different topics proposed by the coordinator or others that arose spontaneously, often giving rise to a collective debate in which many of the problems and concerns largely shared by the participants were evident.

The openness to this collective dialogue, which to a large extent and as we will see in more detail later is linked to some of the guiding precepts of the so-called Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre, ended up proving to be a fundamental element throughout the processes, since it allowed the theatre coordinators to detect and delimit the aspects and elements that presented the



most problems and complexities at the time during the reception period. which in turn was key to planning the subsequent phases of socio-cultural and labor insertion.

After this dialogue, to which the first part of the sessions during this phase and the following ones should be dedicated, it is necessary to include what is properly the introductory workshop to theatrical interpretative learning. To carry this out, it is advisable to maintain as a first step the warm-up already established in the introductory phase, but increasing the level of intensity and complexity of some of the exercises. In addition, it is advisable not to limit yourself to a general warm-up, but to adapt it specifically to each class that you plan to carry out.

In addition to warming up, during this stage of the work it is convenient and advisable to start including physical work, both general and particularized. On a general level, it is clear that physical work must be carried out gradually and taking into account the physical condition, abilities and previous preparation of the participants in the workshops. The main objective of this work is to generate and promote an adequate physical and mental state so that the participants can face the theatrical exercises in a satisfactory way. Specifically, this training should be aimed at reinforcing the aspects and body elements that are wanted, intended or planned to be used with more intensity or assiduity during each of the sessions.

Physical work, on the other hand, also plays a very important role in promoting intergroup relationships and knowledge and, in some way, helps to enhance self-confidence and a positive mood among the participants, which is also essential to carry out interpretive work with adequacy and, as with intergroup dialogue, It is advisable to introduce it at this stage, but still to maintain it until the end of the theatrical workshops.

During this second phase of the process, and this is the most relevant part of this stage, we will begin with a properly regulated theatrical work. To carry this out, before entering into the interpretation and dramatization itself, and based on the experience acquired during the pilot workshops, the most advisable option is



to start with relationship and reaction exercises, initially very simple and that increase in difficulty during the development of the workshop.

By relationship exercises we mean those that are prominently dedicated to the relationship of the participants with each other, with the workspace and with the context derived from the proposed conditions. In order to carry out this type of exercise satisfactorily, it is very important to pay attention to the characteristics and cultural belongings of the refugees and asylum seekers participating in the workshop and to be very respectful of the limits and restrictions derived directly from them.

In general, relationship exercises act on several levels. On the one hand, they favor the establishment of collective and individual interpersonal relationships between the participants, so that through simple dynamics and theatrical games, the generation of intergroup bonds at a collective and personal level can be promoted and/or accelerated. But in addition to promoting this trust and group awareness, the relationship exercises are useful for the participants to begin to observe carefully and act in a contextual way, that is, they promote an awareness of the real space in which the exercises take place and, even more, of the different fictitious spaces that are proposed for the performance of the exercise.

Along with these, and closely linked to them, are reaction exercises, by which we refer to the set of dynamics, games or activities that promote an active response to external stimuli, either derived from the context or space, or from other classmates. This active response, in addition to being fundamental for theatrical practice, is especially useful at the formative level among the members of a group that, often due to a shared feeling of orphanhood in a foreign country and the usual excessive paternalism of the organizations that are in charge of the reception processes, tend to have a passive and/or submissive attitude towards the events that surround them and directly affect them.

In accordance with this, the mission of the theatrical coordinator is to promote, provoke and even force the disinhibition and the passage to action of the



participants with the aim of their collective and personal empowerment. On a theatrical level, on the other hand, this ability to react will be fundamental when it comes to proposing more complex dramatic exercises aimed at tangible insertion during the following phases of the process.

The relationship and reaction exercises with which it is proposed to start the regulated theatrical training are an initial fundamental pillar around which to begin to build interpretative and dramatic works aimed at socio-cultural and labor insertion and integration. Likewise, these exercises are necessarily linked to other aspects/elements that we also see as very necessary during the continuation of the process. First of all, the use of imagination.

During these exercises, it will be the first moment in the theatrical training process in which the imagination is included and begins to be managed. Faced with the restrictions that will be later on, where this will be a key element, but it will be absolutely subject to insertion, during this stage of training the margin of use of creativity will be much wider. The use of this tool will be essential both to promote the "liberation" of the participants and for them to end up showing their interests and concerns. Along these lines, the main recommendation is that the coordinator, although he will be impelled to be the initial inducer of exercises that favor imaginative use, little by little, knows how to step aside to give room and margin to the participants so that they are the ones who propose and promote this use with their own, individual or collective proposals. These, in the final analysis, will serve to enhance both their active attitude not only as participants in the theatrical process but also, at least in part, as creators and creators of it.

Connected with this step of delegation by the coordinator, another aspect that begins to be drawn and that will be very important throughout the rest of the theatrical training, is the assumption of responsibilities by the participants. By deriving an important part of the propositional work to the participants, it is also intended that this favors the assumption of responsibility and commitment, two elements and values that are considered of special value both at the training level



in the field of theater and, beyond that, in its process of integration and insertion during the more or less extensive period of reception in the receiving country.

Based on these relationship and reaction exercises, and in accordance with what we have just pointed out, what is expected is that the process will lead to a work of collective creation between the coordinator and the participants. In this sense, what usually happens in a connatural way and should be promoted from the coordination is that the simple exercises of reaction and relationship gradually and staggered give rise to other more complex and elaborate ones that already involve interpretative work.

In addition, these initial creation exercises will generally serve to reflect personal problems and concerns, but also collective and linked to the condition of the participants, which will offer a valuable clue for the next phase: to address cultural integration and insertion taking these into account. Although it is convenient to see the following section in which some of these exercises are explained, in general they will tend to be related to different techniques such as improvisation and poor theater; and once again they will appear closely linked to methodologies such as the Theatre of the Oppressed and the Forum Theatre.

It is important to point out that this work may require a minimal, although fundamental, explanation by the coordinator regarding aspects of narrative construction and structuring. Thus, when these "creations" begin to appear and in parallel to their development, it is convenient to begin to address and explain at least above aspects such as the dramatic conflict and its potential resolution, the construction of characters, both physically and psychologically; and their objectives and super-objectives.

It is these more elaborate theatrical exercises that should culminate this second phase of work. In any case, the recommendation for theatrical coordinators is to try never to impose the execution of them, but rather to favor and induce them so that they arise and become complex spontaneously. In the



event that these have already reached an estimable level, it is interesting to start considering the use of marked arguments and, even, occasionally, small texts.

At the time of carrying out the methodological planning of the whole of this phase and unlike the previous one, it is highly recommended that the coordinators give free rein to the participants, but without forcing the search for concrete or specific themes, but rather focusing on the technical work and, already during the creation phase, betting on the spontaneity and natural evolution of the participants. Thus, on the one hand, this phase requires an important task of planning and selecting the reaction and relationship exercises, but also an effort to allow them to evolve towards spontaneous collective creation. This will help participants acquire the basic knowledge of interpretation for the following phases of the workshop while increasing their self-confidence, assuming responsibility and acquiring a propositional capacity that we consider essential for their social, cultural and labor integration and insertion process in the host country and particular context.

The extent of this second phase of initiation into theatrical work will depend on the coordinator's assessment of the group work, but in general it should extend for at least a quarter of the process. In this regard, it is important to emphasize the need to ensure that the group of participants has sufficient confidence, knowledge and initial skills to tackle the next phases, so the recommendation is not to skimp on the time dedicated to it. It is very important that participants approach the following parts of theatrical insertion with a solid foundation, which allows them to develop with ease and ease. In this regard, it should be clarified that it is preferable to dwell on this phase of theatrical initiation for as long as necessary to make sure of this rather than inconsistently rushing the rest of the process.

Finally, it is worth noting that during this phase the coordinator will finish seeing the potential and insertion capacities of the members of the group of participants. Thus, it is during this period that the remaining planning can be determined with



some consistency, referring to the subsequent phases of the process of integration and insertion of refugees through the theater.

Experiences & Exercises

It is important to begin by highlighting the great relevance that the second of the phases, initiation into theatrical practice: relationship and contextualization, had for the vast majority of the pilot workshops that were carried out during the Social Ecological Theatre (TSE) project, even regardless of the differences, capacities, potentialities and circumstances of the groups.

For the workshops held in Prato, Italy, this phase of implementation of the theatrical activity was fundamental in order to be able to break the strong socio-cultural and human barrier with participants who were highly alien and with little knowledge of the host country. In this sense, and in a somewhat paradoxical way, the artistic and recreational practice of theatre without yet applying its own purposes of integration and insertion during this phase proved to be the most useful tool to begin to break down cultural boundaries with participants who were a priori very unwilling, with little interest and a worrying and generalized lack of motivation. It was precisely with this part of the process, less pretentious than the others and which a priori was fundamentally oriented towards generating theatrical tools that would allow the following ones to be addressed, that served in a spontaneous way for the two working groups in Italy to begin to show an openness to tangible social and cultural integration and insertion. In view of this fact, the coordination team and Italy wisely chose to let this phase of initiation to theatrical practice be prolonged over time, occupying almost half of the whole process.

In Portugal and Spain, although these extremes were not reached, great progress was also observed among the groups of participants during this second phase. Thus, in Malaga, due to the high cultural adaptation that the vast majority of the participants in the workshops presented to the local culture at a social and



linguistic level, it was possible to start this phase of theatrical learning early. Overall, the participants showed a strong interest in theatrical practice as an artistic activity and some important advances were even made at the artistic level among some of the workshop attendees. Despite this, due to the significant challenge and problem of labour insertion among asylum seekers and refugees participating in Spain, the theatre coordinator of the workshops decided and opted not to prolong this phase longer than had been planned a priori: 25% of the total duration of the workshops.

In Bragança, this stage was successfully used to deepen language learning among the participants, combining theatrical learning with the usual handling of Portuguese, the main problem of insertion and cultural integration that affected most of the attendees. This combination of theatrical work and language reinforcement showed remarkable results in a short space of time, so that, linked to the fact that most of the refugees and asylum seekers in Portugal had a job and/or were studying, it was decided to extend this phase in the workshops, so that it covered approximately a third (33%) of the total duration of the two workshops that were held. developed in Bragança.

It is important to note that it was in this phase that a fluid and continuous dialogue with the participants was initiated, which in the case of most of the workshops would be extended in an integral way throughout all of them, also including it in the following phases. This process of initial dialogue, as has been pointed out repeatedly and although it is not properly a teratral activity, was fundamental to promote processes of emotional openness among the participants, confirming the previous foresight of the enormous relevance of these open dialogues in order to break down cultural and human barriers in the processes of integration and insertion. It is worth saying, as a self-criticism, that in the reports made by the coordinators once the workshops were over, it was repeated the convenience and even the need to incorporate personnel specialized in psychology into the processes to complement these processes of dialogue with participants who, as we have already indicated, often drag very



hard life stories linked to their processes of flight and forced transfer from their countries of origin and in the processes of arrival. reception and adaptation of host States.

In addition to this dialogue activity, this phase of the process is also when you begin to practice really theatrical exercises and games. In this sense, something that we were able to observe in the workshops is that the way of approaching these processes and choosing the exercises and games underwent some relevant variations closely linked to the previous training and methodological specialization of the coordinators. Thus, there were some important differences in the realization of these phases of the workshops that were not only justified by the divergences between the groups, but also and above all by the different theatrical schools of origin of those who planned and coordinated them.

After the dialogues, in each of the classes of this phase, a warm-up and basic physical work continued through the exercises already established in the introductory phase, but increasing as much as possible their intensity and complexity. In addition, in this phase we began not to limit the warm-up to a general one, but began to adapt them specifically to each planned class.

In general, the main objective of these theatrical introductions is to provide participants with the basic notions and knowledge necessary for interpretation, so that they can approach the rest of the process with confidence. In a way, this phase is properly a training phase, where the objective is to train the refugee and asylum-seeking participants participating in the workshops to acquire the essential skills necessary for the execution of the two subsequent phases.

It is important to note that the different workshops were planned using a combination of working methodologies such as Viewpoints, the Lecoq method, the Theatre of Cruelty or the method of emotional memories by Constantin Stanislavski. In any case, it should be clarified that this plurality of methodological proposals in this phase of the pilot workshops, far from being presented as a



problem and precisely because of the nature of experimentation and testing of the same, had a positive influence that allowed to contrast and test different ways of doing things and even to observe that there were several valid lines of work that produced positive results among the participants. (Bogart and Landau 2004) (Lecoq 2003) (Artaud 1938) (Stanislavski 1989)

These methodological variations were especially evident in the relationship and reaction exercises with which the theatrical work of the workshops was proposed. This type of exercise was chosen based on the previous idea, later confirmed, that the vast majority of the participants did not have any previous theatrical experience. In this sense, these types of exercises were used to facilitate initiation into theatrical practice.

Relationship exercises are all those that, with a greater or lesser level of difficulty and complexity, seek to begin to establish a significant theatrical contact between the participants and between them and the space. Reaction stimuli, on the other hand, are the set of dynamics, games or activities that promote an active response to external stimuli, whether derived from the context or space, or from other participants.

These types of exercises should begin to be proposed and applied once the participants already have a minimum of confidence and have managed to lose their inhibitions and initial embarrassment. In addition, by this point in the process, the workshop coordinator has already had enough time to get a general idea of the capabilities of the group and each of its participants. From this, the reaction and relationship exercises should have the objective of taking the participants out of themselves and starting to create theatrical works with roles and characters. The relationship and reaction exercises with which structured theatre training begins are an essential initial pillar around which to begin to build the interpretative and dramatic work aimed at socio-cultural and professional integration. In addition, these exercises are necessarily linked to other aspects/elements that we also consider essential throughout the development of



the process, such as the creation of a group consciousness and the use of imagination.

After these exercises, during this phase it is also proposed to start with the creation of roles and characters and, finally, their sharing in small works or collective exercises. On how to carry this out there was also a wide variety among the different coordinators, workshops and groups, although in a general way they began by proposing individual exercises to generate roles and characters and, once this was achieved, they went on to try to unite them in common proposals that ranged from improvisations with given conditions to more regulated work of regulated situations and role *playing*.

Dialogue Exercises

Although these are not theatrical exercises per se and it is not difficult to get an idea of what they are referring to, we wanted to include in this part examples of the type of mechanics and dynamics that we develop in the pilot theatrical workshops between refugees and asylum seekers. In general, the following are the two fundamental ways in which the debates were conducted throughout the theatrical process, so it is presented below that it is valid to carry out in an integral way in all and during most of the workshops, without forgetting that these dialogue processes do vary in terms of content, that will become, as confidence is gained, deepening and becoming more intense. According to this stage, the dialogue aspires above all to be an absolutely open "icebreaker" that allows the implementation of a tool of expression, usually very necessary among the participants, and that helps to begin to generate personal trust between them and between them and the respective coordinator of each proposed workshop. The dialogue also proved to be a very useful tool to start promoting oral expression in the language of the host country among participants who did not speak it and/or were in the learning phase. In general, the two mechanisms for establishing dialogue processes were:



Open One-to-One Conversation System

In which the coordinator establishes a particularized and individualized dialogue, although generally open to the rest of the class, with each of the participants. In terms of content, if in the presentation and the first conversations a little was inquired about the often traumatic situations of refuge, in this phase of the theatrical process it was agreed to address the most everyday and common problems and challenges in the process of adaptation to the new reality and vital context. The questions should try not to be closed on the part of the coordinator, but rather to be open and to facilitate and promote free and unrestricted expression on the part of the participants. It is common for this system to drift naturally and spontaneously into the next one.



Collective dialogue system: group interviews, debates and open forums

Through the combination of formats such as semi-structured group interviews, round tables or discussion forums, as well as others that were deemed appropriate from time to time, the coordinators established processes of collective dialogue with all the participants of each class. The most common way to do this was, taking into account the personal and everyday interests and concerns detected among the participants, by presenting a series of group or individual questions. In this way, and in a completely free way, the participants shared, narrated, exposed, reflected and gave their opinions on the different topics proposed by the coordinator or those that arose spontaneously, often leading to a collective debate where many of the shared problems and concerns of the participants were revealed.



Introductory Exercises to Theatrical Performance: Relationship and Reaction.

After the corresponding warm-up, which during this phase already had established routines known to the participants, they moved on to the introductory exercises to theatrical practice and, in particular, the exercises of body control, reaction and relationship both with each other and with the environment were given prominence. To a large extent, the aim of these exercises is to generate an active attitude on the part of the participants. Accordingly, these exercises are essential for two reasons. On the one hand, they predispose participants to theatrical practice and, on the other, they serve to transmit some basic knowledge of theatre that is absolutely necessary to later enter and develop interpretive practices and exercises. It is at this point when important variations were detected between the workshops derived from the different theatrical methodologies applied by each coordinator, however, the exercises as a whole shared this spirit of predisposing to theatrical action. Among the types of exercises included in this phase of the workshops repeatedly, some that were especially applied were kinesthesia, mirror games or emulation practices. Here are two examples.



The sensory lever

It's a classic kinesthesia exercise. Previously distributed the participants on a regular basis occupying the entire workspace, they are asked to remain immobile. When this has been accomplished, the activity coordinator asks one of them to make some kind of gesture or movement. Then another is asked to make another one based on what this gesture or movement suggests to him in an unmediated way. This is applied successively until all participants have made a move. At this time, there is already an order of participation, each one knowing who is his source of encouragement. From this, the coordinator asks for another move from any of the participants and the process is repeated. Once fluids are achieved, new sensory stimuli are incorporated, so that now not only visually perceived



movements are performed, but at some point it is requested that, instead of a gesture or movement, a sound is emitted, to which the next participant must react with another sound and so on. When this has been achieved, another sense is introduced: touch, so that someone is asked to touch the participant who is immediately behind him, and the participant who follows him, depending on what this contact has transmitted. In the end, we will have a group of participants who react to visual, auditory and contact stimuli. It is at this moment that the order is broken and free reactions begin to be allowed, so that, moving around the room, the participants can react to what others suggest with the bodily responses that arise spontaneously, feeding back into the process. A variant of this exercise is to eliminate the visual part by leaving the practice room totally dark and only letting the participants react to what they feel and hear.



Musical Miscellany

It is a relatively complex exercise consisting of using music to generate different reactions from the participants. The idea is that, from a continuous movement through the rehearsal room, the coordinator puts a succession of songs on a music player that makes it jump and vary in a chaotic way. Before that, participants are asked to react to the music in the way it suggests. In this way, when faced with a continuous variation of different songs and music, participants are forced to carry out continuous variations in their reactions and ways of acting. Once this dynamic has been established, the next step of the exercise is to ask them to form in a very general way the character that the music and the reaction suggests in their heads, trying to interpret it individually in a simple way. When this has already been done fluently, the coordinator goes on to request that relationships be established between the different characters that are being created, so that the theatrical workspace ends up accommodating an endless number of differentiated characters that relate to each other in a differentiated way depending on the music that accompanies them. As this is achieved, the coordinator can increase the difficulty of the exercise by increasing the speed at



which he changes the songs and music in the player, forcing participants to accelerate their ability to react and create. This exercise is interesting because, in addition to significantly enhancing the reaction and relationship, it is a fundamental step in the introduction to theatrical practice of the participants as it begins to promote the creation of characters and their consequent interpretation, which could already be called "making theater".



Collective Creation Exercises

They are basic to give way to theatrical interpretation. These are exercises in which, together, the coordinator and participants establish the bases of stories that will later serve as a framework to generate collective interpretations. At this point, it should be taken into account that the integrative theatrical process has not yet begun to address processes of socio-cultural or labor insertion, so the objective is not yet to focus the objective of these stories on generating situations that favor this, but rather to present easy situations that allow the participants to begin to act and interpret. In general, the type of exercises included in this part during the workshops were of the type of improvisations based on given conditions or *role playing*. In both cases, the games or exercises included two lines of work: first, one that consisted of generating isolated characters and beginning to interpret them and, on the other hand, the pooling of these characters in a joint plot. The exercises presented below are of this type and do not try so much to present themselves in a specific way as to give some general and structural indications on how to carry out these types of exercises than to present some specific ones.



The Given Conditions and the Conflict

In the beginning, and taking into account the multicultural origin of the participants, the coordinator presents given conditions and frames a story with a simple and clear conflict. Once this is done, he distributes a series of roles to be played in the framework of the conflict between the participants. They are usually given a few minutes so that they can think and prepare these characters minimally, although sometimes direct improvisation is used. Once this is done, the plot is generated, occasionally relying on props and scenery if deemed necessary and/or convenient, and the participants are left free to interpret. The coordinator must be attentive and teach the participants so that these plots do not get stuck or are resolved in an excessively simple way: the narrative importance of the conflict must be conveyed to them. Generally, these exercises



will initially produce many problems for participants with no previous knowledge of theatre or narrative, but over time it will be seen how spontaneously the participants themselves begin to order and culminate the proposed plots together. When this is achieved, it is time for the coordinator to hand over the baton to the participants so that they can begin to propose and interpret jointly created plots. It is important to note that the established roles and roles are usually changed to prevent any of the participants from becoming more accommodating. The proposals of this type are potentially infinite and in the pilot workshops some very interesting ones were included such as a bank robbery, endless arguments between couples, beauty contests or falling in love at first sight, among many others.



The Scenic Spots

It is a character-building exercise designed ad hoc for the workshops and consists of asking each of the participants to draw ten dots on a blank piece of paper. They are then asked to join them randomly through a continuous line that cannot pass more than twice over the same point. They are then asked to put an emotion on each of the points, and finally, they are asked to put a particularly strong memory of their lives and that matches the emotion pointed out for each point. Once all this is done, they are informed that what they have just done is the journey of a character on stage and the work is transferred to the stage. First, they are asked to locate and memorize the points marked and the routes traced on the paper along the lines. Once this has been achieved, they are asked to include the emotion in each point, relying on the emotional memory placed and also relying on some notions about breathing taught by the coordinator. After several passes on these points with the emotions incorporated, the participants are asked to think about who is the character who could make a journey like the one they are already playing, trying to find answers that are as concrete as possible. Once each of the participants has a character derived from their points, their set-up is reinforced by incorporating a physical and mental/emotional characterization and finally



these characters are used to carry out improvisation exercises and given conditions with them. This, as is evident, is an exercise that extends over several sessions and involves extra effort on the part of the participants. However, it should be noted that the result of this exercise in all the workshops in which it was carried out was spectacular, not only in terms of the theatrical products achieved, but fundamentally in a didactic sense so that the participants became aware of what interpretation and the creation of characters mean.

III. Phase of integration and cultural insertion through theatre

When the participants have already acquired the basic theatrical knowledge, it is necessary to give way to a new phase in which, unlike the previous one, the focus will be placed on opening a process of integration and socio-cultural insertion. The aim of this will be to address, through theatre, in a clear and direct way, the problems and difficulties linked to the period of reception and cultural introduction in a country that is a priori foreign to refugees and asylum seekers.

At this point, in order to detect and deal with these difficulties, it is essential to take into account both what was glimpsed and found during the previous planning and the problems exposed by the participants themselves during the open dialogue during the two previous phases of the process and even in the present one. Based on this prior knowledge, coordinators will have the ability to know which are the aspects and elements that can be addressed with greater significance when proposing specific theatrical exercises that contribute efficiently and effectively to fostering and promoting cultural integration and insertion.

Although each process is variable and depends directly on the composition of the groups and the vital and cultural context in which the participants develop their "new" lives, through the pilot workshops, and especially during the processes of shared dialogue, it has been possible to detect the existence of a



series of factors and themes that are almost invariably repeated among the majority of refugees and asylum seekers. asylum.

The constant and pronounced concern about the reception process itself and the incursion into the world of work (whether or not refugee status is granted, obtaining a work permit and the possibility of regularisation), bureaucratic aspects linked to their status (such as the recognition and validation of educational and training qualifications, the validation of driving licences or the application for social assistance, among others) or issues related to behavioural differences between their culture of origin and that of the host country/space (in aspects such as love and sexuality, gastronomy, forms of speech and expression, language, social behaviour, religious beliefs, political positions, etc.) are regularly repeated during the workshops. It is precisely in these types of aspects and themes that emphasis should be placed when proposing exercises aimed at integration and labour insertion through theatre that allows participants to approach the host culture in a friendly and respectful way, while not losing their own essences, perspectives and particularities both personally and collectively.

As in the previous two, this phase is made up of four fundamental lines of work that should be the ones that articulate and structure the classes during this stage of the process. Some of them are a continuation and extension of the previous work proposed during the previous phases. Those relating to direct cultural insertion, however, are novel and are the ones that characterise this part and its fundamental part.



In-depth dialogue.



Warm-up and intensive, adapted physical work.



Theatrical exercises of cultural insertion and integration.



Collective creation for the purpose of cultural insertion.



It is very interesting to gradually open up the possibility for them to take a propositional role, so that they can start by suggesting some of their aspects initially so that, as far as possible, they are able to lead and propose their own proposals.

Once the participants show significant ease with this type of exercise, it is interesting to consider the possibility of moving on to more risky proposals. Among these, one that was decided to be included in some of the pilot workshops was to carry out theatrical immersion works. Immersive theatre is a very particular form of contemporary performance characterized by emphasizing both the space of performance and the participation of the audience.

During the pilot workshops in Spain, we had the opportunity to have a professional theatre group that was asked to recreate as realistically as possible a job interview in several different stages. In it, the actors were asked to play a series of very different characters that would put the participating audience in "trouble", which were none other than the refugees and asylum seekers who participated in the courses and who were given the premise that they were going to a job interview. Despite the initial fear and embarrassment shown by many of them, they all finally managed to face the situation and get out of the complications satisfactorily. The experience, in addition to being surprising and rewarding, was especially useful to demonstrate and put into practice the learning carried out so far.

Another type of exercise that can be included at this stage are those of the invisible theatre technique. Originating from the Theatre of the Oppressed, this theatrical technique consists of representing a theatrical performance outside the usual stage, usually going to open public spaces such as the street, bars, shopping centres, means of transport, etc., and without the audience being aware that it is a theatrical work. To apply this form of theatre, in the workshops we discovered that it is convenient to start by placing the participants in everyday situations, without the need for the intervention to be specifically theatrical. So,



for example, you would go with them for a coffee and ask one to order at the bar or you would urge another to ask a bus driver for a route. These initial situations significantly favored the disinhibition and confidence of the participating refugees and asylum seekers, and in a very notable way among those who had difficulties with the use of the language.

Once this type of action had been carried out without complications, the next step was to introduce theatre. To this end, the interaction in everyday situations was maintained, but premises and objectives began to be included that necessarily implied an interpretation by the participants-actors. Although this type of exercise did generate many difficulties at first, the insistence and previous preparation ended up paying off and culminated in some very interesting practices.

It is from the initiative of the participants that the process of collective creation begins, framed in the objective of cultural integration and insertion. To this end, and following the line established during the exercises, the intention is to pass the baton to the users of the workshop, so that they can develop a process of their own creation linked to their cultural insertion and integration. This part is interesting because, in addition to the body work of interpretation, it is certain that it will be the first that necessarily involves a series of small coordinated table work prior to proposing the performances. It should be clarified that the intention of this part is not to generate large theatrical presentations, but to facilitate that through small sequences thought out and developed in advance, the participants can propose, address and expose through the theater fictitious situations that can be extrapolated and easily assimilated to others of their daily life or that, for some reason, represent a special challenge in their processes of integration and insertion in a society and cultures different from their own of origin.

Regarding this third phase of theatrical initiation aimed at socio-cultural integration and insertion, it only remains to point out that it is one of the most important and complex parts of the process, in addition to the fact that it will be in



this one that a deeper and more intense theatrical work will surely be developed. In accordance with this, the temporal extension of this phase must be planned and developed with a duration of between a minimum of a quarter of the process and a maximum of half, being very likely the one to which the most sessions will be dedicated.

The objective of this phase, linked to integration and insertion, is that the participants not only acquire confidence, but also develop a proactive and creative attitude towards these processes that will mark their vital development in the short and medium term. In this sense, the task of coordinating the workshops is to know how to propose at the beginning and then set aside so that it is the participants who are forced to develop their own leadership and the ability to address the problems that affect them.

Experiences & Exercises

All the pilot workshops carried out within the framework of the Social Ecological Theatre (TSE) project served to ratify the enormous potential of theatre as a tool for insertion and socio-cultural integration among groups of refugees and asylum seekers. In this sense, this phase is presented as fundamental and, punctually, it was even the main one in the process of insertion of these human groups.

In the workshops of Bragança, in Portugal, with groups of members of this group who already had mostly work accommodation or were studying, socio-cultural insertion became the main objective of the insertion workshops. In this way, the Corane organization, responsible for these processes, opted for this phase to be the priority, dedicating more than a third of the working time to it and downplaying the relevance of the last one dedicated to labor insertion.

Something similar happened in Prato, Italy, where the language and cultural adaptation difficulties of a large part of the attendees made clear the need to prioritize socio-cultural integration as a previous step before addressing labor



insertion. In this sense, the coordinators of the workshops in Italy agreed on the urgent need of the participants, mostly people from a cultural and social background very different from the European, to understand some of the ways of acting, behaviour and customs of the host country, prominently all those referring to the treatment of women and the attitude towards the local populations as a whole. In this sense, emphasis was placed on this integration and cultural transmission, although unlike Portugal and in response to the needs and abilities of the attendees of the workshops, the process of labor insertion was not reduced so much, adjusting this phase to the parameter established as a guideline of 25% of the total duration of the course.

In contrast to the previous cases, the workshops are located in Malaga, Spain, where the abundant presence of Latin American origin and people from North Africa and Eastern Europe with a notable early adaptation to the cultural context of the city did not require so much effort to be dedicated to socio-cultural integration and insertion, being able to reduce the time to only 10-15% of the total duration of the workshops and reserving more classes for the participants. Labor integration processes.

Something that did happen in a similar way in all the workshops during this phase is that the sessions began with dialogue processes that, unlike what had been done previously, deepened in a more concrete and oriented way in the approach of themes and aspects that would allow the coordinators to detect the daily problems strictly related to the problems of cultural and social adaptation in the countries of the region. welcome. Thus, an attempt began to be made in the workshops and in a collaborative way what were the great difficulties that refugees and asylum seekers encountered in their daily lives, both due to the clash with their cultures of origin and in relation to the problems and situations of defenselessness and difficulty that they encountered in their daily lives in the receiving country. and even cases of exclusion and xenophobia which, if not widespread, were often unjustifiably suffered by some sectors of the local populations in the host countries.



These dialogue processes, in addition to their therapeutic value, began to gain fundamental weight in the workshops as they became fundamental elements of orientation so that the theater coordinators could address how to approach cultural insertion and the specific type of dynamics and exercises to be carried out during this phase.

Also in this part of the process, the warm-ups began to undergo variations, which no longer aspired to be only a form of preparation for the theatrical activity, but began to be carried out also focused specifically on preparing the participants for the exercises and the work proposals to be carried out during each of the sessions of this phase.

Once the participants have acquired and developed in the previous phases the necessary and sufficient skills and knowledge to develop simple simulation, *role playing* and improvisation exercises, the intention in this third phase of the process is to use this to propose exercises, games and dynamics focused in a premeditated and utilitarian way on socio-cultural insertion and integration. These are the fundamental part of this phase because they will serve to confront, through theatre, in a clear and direct way, the specific problems and difficulties linked to the period of reception and socio-cultural introduction in countries and communities that, a priori, are strangers to refugees and asylum seekers.

In general, the intention of these exercises is to encourage the use of theatre to reproduce situations that are part of or could become part of the usual life context of the participants during their early reception process in Europe. Especially, those situations that may be especially problematic or challenging during their period of settlement and adaptation, detected through observations in the dialogue process. To achieve this, different theatrical techniques and methodologies were proposed during the workshops, but all of them with the aim of generating exercises and dynamics that would allow the recreation of common situations that, due to their special difficulty, conflict, or potential usefulness and



benefits, can contribute significantly and notably to the process of integration and social insertion of the participants.

Among the techniques that were used in the workshops in a specific way, it is worth pointing out Forum Theatre exercises, derived from the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed, exercises derived from the methodology of the Theatre (Boal 2014) *Role Playing* and the *Psychodrama*, interactive theatre and immersive theatre exercises and the Invisible Theatre format. (Biggin 2017)

Dialogue-forum exercises

As indicated in the previous point, these are not strictly speaking theatrical exercises, but they are absolutely fundamental types of performances. Unlike the guided interviews previously used, from this phase onwards there was a tendency to implement and use a forum dynamic. Following the fundamentals of the Forum Theatre/Theatre of the Oppressed, what was sought with the dialogue in this phase was to open conversations and debates that would make it possible to shed light on the most common concerns of the participants in their processes of adaptation to their new contextual reality of life and, prominently, of those that had to do with their integration and socio-cultural insertion. To accomplish this, the most common mechanism was for the coordinators to bring to the fore an issue that was believed to be conflictive or difficult for the participants in their adaptation process. These themes varied quite a bit depending on the groups, although there were always some that were repeated. From the collective and open reflection on this topic, other relevant issues or aspects usually emerged. When the processes were advanced in this phase, there was a tendency to leave



it to the participants themselves to propose topics or aspects to be addressed. This work was very productive in terms of detecting shared challenges and problems and helped the coordinators enormously to plan and develop the theatrical exercises of socio-cultural insertion with each of the groups of the workshops.

Socio-cultural insertion exercises

Using the knowledge previously acquired and also after a specific warm-up, these were mainly based on role-playing exercises in which those situations that the participants had shown to be particularly complex or conflictive in their adaptation during the previous dialogue process were reproduced. The general idea was not only to end up reproducing complicated or unfair situations, but also that the participants could come to understand and even empathize in many cases with the people belonging to the host societies who are behind or support these situations. In this way, they wanted to strip them of their usual role as victims and put them in situations that would make them understand how complex and difficult it is to face some of the cultural shocks also for members of the local populations. In a utilitarian sense, we also tried to carry out exercises that would serve to prepare them for situations that they were going to face during their early reception phase.

Along with these exercises, it is interesting to note that, in some workshops, when it was perceived that the group was ready, invisible tetro exercises were also proposed, in which real scenarios and people were used to force refugees and asylum-seekers to, through the request of the coordinator to achieve a simple goal, begin to relate to the host society. In general, this type of exercise, always with its risks and limits well measured in advance, was a success.



Cultural Emulation: Being a Native

This is a seemingly simple role-playing and character-building exercise, but one that requires a high degree of observation and detail on the part of the participants. It is about asking each of the refugees and asylum-seekers to think of a person from their environment who is originally from the receiving country and to try to emulate them. The coordinator should clarify that it is preferable that they are not workers in the reception centres and request that people who are part of the population who do not have a usual direct relationship with them (a neighbour who is seen passing by, the baker, the shop assistant, etc.) be used. From this selection, you are asked to think deeply about what you see and know about this person. Once that's done, the next step is to emulate it. Obviously, and as we are dealing with people who are not known in depth, the most common thing is to start with the physical aspects: way of walking, gestures, features... Once this is done, the coordinator requests that they incorporate this person's mental and emotional traits that the participants can deduce. From this character strongly inspired by reality, the next step is to incorporate through imagination the behaviors and attitudes of these characters and ask the participants to introduce him to the rest of their classmates. This exercise, moreover, is easy to drift towards a collective work if several of these characters are put in the same space, with given conditions, and a conflict is offered. This can happen spontaneously or promoted by the coordinator. The ultimate goal is that through this exercise, participants begin to glimpse from a humanly empathetic perspective what characterizes members of local communities and, in this way, begin to understand their perspective and behaviors.



The Glass of Water

This is an exercise in the theatre of the invisible that was also especially rewarding for its results in many of the workshops in which it was put into practice. Following the instructions of the coordinator, during one of the classes you leave



the classroom and go to carry out some daily activity with the participants, in this case going for a coffee in a cafeteria. At one point in the process, the coordinator chooses one of the participants to get up from the table and, pretending to be very thirsty and urgent, ask the waiter to give him a glass of water. This exercise caused a lot of initial reluctance among the participants, however it is striking to point out that, once performed by one of them and lost the fear of initial contact with the unknown local population, this type of exercise became one of the favorites among the participants and many variants were carried out, always very simple and respectful exercises. but they contributed enormously to losing the fear of the cultural and human border between the participants and the local populations.

Collective creation exercises for socio-cultural insertion

Using the cultural and social problems derived from group dialogues, these types of exercises focus on promoting collective creation to reproduce situations that are usually complex or difficult for participants to address. In this sense, these exercises are closely linked to the process of detecting the main elements of culture shock and the adaptive complexities of the participants. Based on these interpretive practices, the aim is to develop through theatre mechanisms that serve to solve problems and cultural conflicts and promote understanding.



Eating Pork

This is an improvisational exercise that was applied in some workshops in which there were participants of the Muslim religion and who, due to cultural impediments, could not consume pork. The proposal consisted of generating a conflict between a person who invited one of these participants to eat pork and the latter's refusal to do so for religious reasons. The idea was to see how through a theatrical simulation an emotionally tense and complex situation such as the one presented could be handled, with the aim that neither of the two parties would



feel offended by the other. However, in order to make the theatrical exercise more difficult, the participants/actors who played the hosts were asked to adopt different attitudes in order to embarrass the person who had to say that they could not eat pork. Thus, it was possible to experiment in the emotional management of a culture shock not only in openly conflictive situations, but also in situations in which the hosts were extremely kind or affectionate people. It is important to emphasize that the experience of the Muslim participants in this situation was used to carry out the exercise, which had been detected to be relatively common in their daily lives, but the role of the Muslim person prevented from eating pork was not limited to these participants, but made them all interpret it. In this way, and with this type of exercise, empathy was also achieved within the groups with respect to cultural differences also within the group of refugees and asylum seekers.



The Police Interview

This is an exercise that was initially developed in the workshops in Spain on the initiative of one of the participating women and that, in the end, was successfully transferred to the other workshops in Portugal and Italy. It is an exercise that addresses one of the issues that was perceived to be the most problematic for refugees and asylum seekers, which was the excessive amount of bureaucratic procedures to normalize their situation. In this regard, the woman in question stressed during the dialogue process that, as an asylum seeker, she had recently had to attend an interview with members of the Spanish national police to defend her application for asylum, justify the reasons that motivated her, and give her the status of political refugee. After explaining what the process consisted of and under the protection of the interest shown by many of his classmates, it was decided to reproduce this situation in class. Thus, taking into account the woman's previous explanations about the process and the type of questions asked by the police officers who interviewed her, a room like the one she had described was reproduced and the roles of police officers and asylum seekers



were distributed on a rotating basis among the participants. The exercise was considered especially useful among these participants because, in addition to all the advantages of theater, observing the process of the interviews that many of them were going to have to face in the near future served to prepare them both in the transmission of knowledge regarding what these consisted of exactly, so that they would begin to manage their nerves and fears beforehand, learn how to behave appropriately in a type of situation like that and, finally, so that non-Spanish speakers would be compelled to use Spanish and would be encouraged to do so. Along with this exercise, many workshops were held during this phase on the issue of dealing with bureaucratic procedures, an aspect that has already been pointed out is particularly complex and problematic for this population group at the European level.

IV. Phase of job placement in the agroecological sector.

Since the participants have already shown signs of the management of minimum capacities that allow their integration and socio-cultural insertion, as a final part and in accordance with the main objective of the project to ensure their labor insertion in the agroecological sector, the last part of the process focuses on the planning and execution of a series of study and dramatization exercises.

Taking into account in detail the interests and potentialities of the refugees and asylum seekers who make up the participating groups, it is absolutely necessary to carry out prior methodological planning of this part of the process. It should serve to select a general series of exercises through which participants will be introduced to work in the agroecological sector that best suits their characteristics and preferences. In order to observe, detect and know these preferences, it is essential to pay attention to both the dialogue processes and the performance of exercises during the previous phases of the process. It should be noted that these can be highly variable depending on factors such as national origin, age, status in their place of origin, etc.



It is also worth emphasizing that, although during the pilot workshops it was observed that agroecological work was well received by most participants, there were cases in which it was observed with a certain contempt or disinterest by some participants, who understood that it did not correspond naturally to their previous training. or that in some specific cases it was even observed as a serious decline in status or even as a humiliating job. Faced with these cases, the recommendation for theatre coordinators is not to try to force a change of attitude but to promote a change of perspective through involvement and empathic induction.

This phase of social and labour insertion through the theatre, although directly indebted, presents important differences with respect to the previous ones. Perhaps the most interesting is that some of the activities carried out in the previous stages are partially replaced or relegated to the background and a previous phase of analysis and study is included through which it is intended to finish delimiting the type of activities related to or belonging to the agroecological sector that can best suit the participants. In general, this phase includes the following parts:



Focused dialogue.



Warm-up and basic physical work.



Approach to agroecological work.



Theatrical exercises of labor insertion in the agroecological sector.

As has already been pointed out repeatedly, open and continuous intergroup dialogue, including the theatre coordinator and the participants, is a fundamental element throughout the theatre process in order to have a vision of both the problems and realities faced by refugees and asylum seekers during their reception period, but also in order to be able to appreciate and assess the



evolution of the theatrical process. In the last part of this, intergroup, collective and open dialogue will continue to be a fundamental instrument, although in this case it is the responsibility of the coordinator to link it and guide it towards the world of work.

If this linkage is carried out correctly, it should result in the central theme of the dialogued interactions focusing on job possibilities and, specifically, on those that refer to the agroecological sector in its different aspects. This, as is logical and evident, does not absolutely exclude the possibility of continuing to deal with or address other aspects or topics of interest to the participants, but as far as possible we should try to orient and/or approach them to labor insertion.

Along with dialogue, warm-ups and physical work will also continue to be fundamental parts of the planning and execution of the classes. However, in view of the greater complexity and specificity of this part of the process, they will be subjected to a certain relaxation and will be limited to what is strictly necessary to be able to perform the exercises proposed during the sessions safely and to maintain an acceptable state of physical condition.

More important than the previous activities in this phase is the approach to the knowledge of agroecological work. This is essential for participants to be aware of the type of activities and jobs that are included in this sector, as well as the philosophy of respect and care for the environment and the environment that characterizes them. In this sense, it is worth emphasizing that there are many users of the workshops who do not have prior knowledge of what the agroecological sector is and that, even among those who do have previous experience and/or knowledge in the first sector and agriculture, it is not uncommon for them to lack a clear notion of what agroecological activity is and what it entails.

The way to approach this knowledge of the activity can be done in different ways, but in a general way and taking into account the experience in the pilot



workshops, the recommendation is to try to carry out an approach that is as practical as possible. Thus, in the workshops, the proposal consisted of a double aspect of work consisting of a visit with practice included to an agroecological farm in the areas where the courses were developed; From this visit and taking into account the interests and capacities shown by the participants during it, a series of methodological study works of agroecological activities were also included. This, in addition to serving as an introduction to the work in the sector for both the participants and the theatrical coordinators, will be fundamental as it will later allow to plan, develop and execute a series of theatrical exercises specifically oriented to the activities included within the field of agroecology that due to the interest and skills of the participants, as well as because of the observed potentialities for subsequent insertion, are considered more interesting and appropriate to favor the process of entry into the market or specific job training.

The proposal of a visit or, failing that, of a talk, presentation or other activity that serves to effectively bring the participants closer to agroecological work, if not obligatory, is extremely recommended because it will serve, in addition to measuring capacities and interests, to give a realistic and "tangible" perspective of what this type of work implies and entails to the users of the workshops and will be a first form of cutting for the participants in the work. To analyse the real interest in this type of activity as a form of labour insertion in the host country.

Whether or not this activity is carried out, it is the mission of the theatre coordinator to analyse and observe how the preliminary study of the agroecological sector can and should be carried out, which, as we have just pointed out, can be added to the potential visit to an agroecological farm. However, the main options proposed include comprehensive and/or specific documentation work, for which it is preferable to use audiovisual resources that allow direct and easy access, but the use of written documentary material or on-site explanations cannot be ruled out either.



Once the participants have a basic notion of what agroecological activity is and, if possible, an initial idea of which specific branch or jobs within it are of their preference or they believe may be especially valid for their labor insertion, the theater coordinator must propose a program of exercises that respond to these observations and expectations. As in the previous phase, the use of dramatizations is proposed to carry out these exercises, but in this case they will refer exclusively to potential tasks related to obtaining and carrying out work included in or related to the agroecological sector.

In a similar way to how it was proposed in the phase of cultural insertion and integration, these dramatizations will start or should be concrete proposals initially proposed by the theater coordinators, but as the process progresses and the participants acquire fluency and confidence, the responsibility for the planning and execution of them will fall directly on them. This will only further reinforce the study and prior knowledge of the activity of interest; and its execution, within the constraints of a theatrical process and recreation, must tend to be as realistic as possible.

The main objective of the role-playing and role-playing exercises is for the participants to become aware of and naturally approach the process of achieving and executing various jobs in the agroecological sector. Thus, with the evolution of the exercises, it is intended that there is a naturalization and a cognitive preparation at a physical and mental level with respect to this type of work.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that these dramatizations and *role-playing* exercises are especially interesting because in them the participants not only occupy the positions of "fictitious workers", but for their assembly and representation it is necessary that many of them also occupy other roles or play characters outside the position that they can potentially occupy in the recreation of an agroecological workspace. This, as is evident, will encourage the participants not only to become aware of the potential job and the work to be



done, but also to be able to access or at least consider the way of thinking of the rest of the people involved, which will give them an intuitive knowledge about the psychology and performance not only of the workers, but also of the workers. but also of the rest of the people who can potentially participate in the processes of achieving and developing various specific agroecological works.

This phase is a fundamental part of the culmination of the process of insertion and socio-occupational integration from the theatre. Regarding its duration, the recommendation is that it be stipulated according to the interest and potential to develop a variety of "insertive" exercises in the agroecological field. However, based on the experience gained in the workshops, we believe that the ideal should in no case should this phase last more than a quarter of the total duration of the process.

Experiences & Exercises

The phase of job placement is the one that, in general, was presented as the most interesting and utilitarian for both the coordinators and the participants of the pilot workshops of the Ecological Social Theatre (TSE) project. In this regard, it is important to re-emphasize the importance of obtaining a job for the majority of members of the group of refugees and asylum-seekers in the early reception phase.

In the workshops held in Malaga, the labor insertion phase was the main one of the processes, occupying approximately a third of them. In this regard, it was found that Spain had very serious problems in terms of labour insertion and that it was common for refugees and asylum seekers to access the labour market irregularly in extremely precarious jobs that were often subjected to deplorable treatment and conditions.

A fundamental fact that should not be overlooked about the groups of the workshops is that, although, as expected, many of the participants had previous



experience that predisposed them to work in the agroecological field, it is no less true that there were cases in which this interest did not exist. This was especially noticeable among people of Eastern European origin in the Malaga workshops, many of whom were people from urban areas who had fled the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, who had a high level of education (usually university) and who aspired to jobs that had nothing to do with the agricultural sector.

In Prato, Italy, workshop participants were mostly experienced and interested in working in the primary sector. In addition, they had a good predisposition and the need to find work. However, their lack of knowledge of the language and their still very little integration at the socio-cultural level meant that the steps in this direction were still in the beginning. Thus, a good part of the workshops were dedicated to job placement, but still in very early stages.

The workshops in Bragança, Portugal, were the exception in this regard. Due to the fact that most of the participants in the workshops came from a labour insertion programme implemented by the Portuguese Red Cross, obtaining a job did not present for them the urgency that was observed in Italy and Spain, and the coordinators of the workshops considered it appropriate to devote less time to this phase of the process. In any case, it is interesting to note that many of the participants already integrated and inserted in the world of work in Portugal were already in the field of agriculture and agroecology.

Prior to insertion into the specific field of agroecology and taking into account the situations indicated, this phase of work was used to include the preparation for a general insertion into the world of work. Thus, before properly addressing the entry into the field of agroecology, an effort was made in the workshops to present the functioning of the different labor markets and the mechanisms and mods of access to them

Having noted the above, it is important to note that the workshops were divided into two parts: the first dedicated to labor insertion in general; and a second dedicated specifically to insertion in the agroecological field.



Thus, through the dialogue processes with which the classes continued to begin, both lines of work were presented: general labor insertion and specific labor insertion in the agroecology sector. This dialogue, although it maintained the open nature of the previous phases, focused above all on debating and advising on the possibilities, interests and potentialities of the participants in the theatrical processes with respect to the different labour markets. The last classes of the workshops were used for the coordinators to make a specific approach to the agroecological world of work and to observe the interest of the participants in it.

A warm-up and basic physical work were maintained, although their intensity was reduced to favor having more time to focus on the approach to labor insertion during the workshops. This, in a general way, was carried out through:

Exercises to approach the world of work.

Role playing and theatrical immersion *exercises were mainly used* , in which situations that are part of the process of searching for and starting a job were basically simulated. Thus, in most of the workshops, what was done was to simulate a comprehensive job search process that included the creation of a resume and the sending of it, the preparation of a personal presentation for work purposes, the simulation of a job interview and the first day in a new job. On the one hand, this helped the participants to become aware of what these processes are like in Europe, often very different from how they are in their countries of origin; and on the other hand, for all of them to learn the ways, customs and forms that must be observed in the different phases of a job search. It is also interesting to note that these exercises, which included some written expression in the writing of the resumes, were especially useful and instructive for the workshop participants who had difficulties with the language of the host country.



The Resume and Presentation

Fundamentally, this activity consists of two phases. On the one hand, the preparation of a detailed CV adapted to the fictitious job position for which you are applying; and, more interesting in theatrical terms, the preparation of a personal presentation around this CV with which to sell oneself to those in charge of personnel recruitment. To apply this, some of the techniques included in the *Glottodrama* methodology referring to the preparation and handling of texts as a language learning mechanism were used to a large extent, asking the participants to use all the means at their disposal outside the classes to prepare a curriculum that was as appropriate and realistic as possible in order to obtain a job indicated by the coordinator of the text. according to the general interests and potentialities of the group observed during the dialogue phase. Based on this curriculum, during the classes we tried to prepare a personal presentation including aspects already worked on during the workshops, such as oral expression, body expression, movements or gestures. This presentation is the one that would also allow us to tackle the next exercise.



The Job Interview

This is an exercise that was carried out in all the workshops with two methodological variants: immersive theatre and role playing. In the workshops in Malaga, a professional group of actors was involved in organising an immersive exercise that consisted of making participants go through a series of interviews and tests to get or not get a job. In this way, it was possible to use immersive theatre to put the participants in a situation that reflected with a high degree of plausibility what a job interview is like in Spain. In Italy and Portugal, on the other hand, similar exercises were proposed, but instead of using "immersion" role plays were used, although the participation of the coordinators was included in this phase as part of the works. In this case, the most common thing was for the coordinators to act as interviewers and play the role of devil's advocates, putting



the interviewed participants in a strong bind. Over time and after repeating this exercise in several sessions, the participants were also encouraged to act as interviewers.

Theatrical exercises of labor insertion in the agroecological sector.

These types of exercises were carried out in an adapted way in each workshop according to the previously researched and observed potentialities offered by each differentiated geographical and economic context for the labor insertion of refugees and asylum seekers. In other words, these exercises consisted mainly of simulations in which some type of particularly significant work activity was reproduced in each of the areas where the workshops were carried out and often supported by previous visits that allowed the coordinators and participants to have a general idea of what the activity entails. Thus, for example, in Bragança, theatrical exercises were carried out that reproduced situations related to the collection and marketing of chestnuts; while in Prato they resorted to the cultivation, care and harvesting of olive trees; and in Malaga they went to the daily work of an agroecological garden. The proposed exercises did not seek so much to generate specific knowledge among the participants as to generate through theatre work dynamics that would allow them to observe and have an initial idea about the possibilities of inserting themselves in this type of work. In addition, these exercises were usually completed with videos and explanations that supported them for their subsequent realization and that helped many of the participants to elucidate their capacity and interest in working in the agricultural sector in general and in the agroecological sector in particular.



ECOLOGICAL SOCIAL THEATRE: EVALUATION OF RESULTS, FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

"The great attraction of the theater, for the actor, especially for the actor who is aware that he is an actor, is this kind of humanistic game that is to be himself and at the same time many others."

Hugo Gutierrez Vega



It is not at all easy to establish the methods, techniques and mechanisms that allow us to evaluate, evaluate and, ultimately, judge a theatrical didactic process. Much less so when it is done on a methodology as complex as those that have been proposed in this manual and that refer to human groups as sensitive, vulnerable and often hermetic as refugees and asylum seekers who arrive in Europe. However, it is clear that it would make little sense to apply a methodological proposal such as the one presented without resorting, subsequently, to some type of measurement that allows its usefulness and efficiency to be assessed in a general and specific way.

In reality, it cannot be said that there is a program for measuring results associated with the theatrical didactic methodology exposed in this manual, but based on the experience obtained throughout the pilot workshops that served for its development and testing, it is possible to make some notes on the previous experience and to give some clues about mechanisms that were useful and valid during these first methodological developments.

Two are especially relevant. First, the observation that no process can be measured in a vacuum, and that in order to do so it is necessary to take some kind of realistic and adequate reference to serve as a measure. Second, a process of insertion and integration of human collectives cannot be measured exclusively in objective and quantifiable terms, since its results go far beyond these and are prolonged over time in the form of subjective learning and growth that exceeds and exceeds the initial accounting results.

In this sense, the proponents of the methodology believe that there should be two fields of measurement of theatrical processes that use it. On the one hand, a table of specific objectives that must inevitably be associated with the realization of workshops that use this methodology prior to or during their initial phases of execution. These objectives will obviously vary depending on factors outside the



methodological proposal, such as the type of workshop, the group of participants and the context of delivery.

In any case, the proponents believe that these objectives should not only refer to data on the early and direct integration and integration of refugees and asylum seekers. In this regard, and based on what has been observed, we believe that a theatrical process such as the one proposed, applied appropriately, can in no case fail to give positive and evidenceable results in the field of integration and socio-cultural insertion of the participants, although many of these results are difficult to measure in objective and short-term terms.

We believe that the other term for measuring the usefulness of the methodology should be in the subjective evaluations of the users who, as organizers, coordinators and participants, are part of the theatrical processes that apply the methodology. Its observation and appraisal is certainly more worthwhile and can be much deeper than any purely analytical objective test can measure.

In accordance with this, and in view of what we have already done in the theatre workshops through which the methodology was tested, it is convenient to point out that our recommendation is to use mixed systems for evaluating results that include both quantitative and qualitative measurements and assessments. On how to carry this out, we opted for the establishment of a series of parameters, objectives and measurable mechanisms in figures that we combined with others that could only be approached from a deeper analytical perspective.

Regarding the former, and if it serves as an indicative example, it is worth mentioning that the set of pilot processes included a series of objective percentage measurements/observations on issues such as the early socio-labor insertion of the participants, the degree of improvement in the language management of each of them, the evaluation of skills or data referring to attendance and participation in classes.



To these, however, and as we have already indicated, we thought it appropriate to add other measurement tools of a qualitative and subjective nature referring to the assessments and observations of participants and coordinators regarding the different processes carried out. It is precisely these two types of results and measurements that helped us to carry out the final considerations and conclusions with which we want to close this manual.

Among the results derived from the measurements, it should be noted that the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms showed that, although it was not a priority objective of the methodology, all refugees and asylum-seekers who followed the process regularly and did not speak the language of the receiving country recorded a marked improvement in their capacities at all levels: Oral expression, written expression, vocabulary, comprehension and grammatical management. In addition to contributing to losing their fears and embarrassments, all of them acquired basic theatrical knowledge, being able to easily perform in the exercises, even in some that presented a high degree of difficulty.

The methodology was also useful in improving general relationship skills, favoring intergroup and participant relationships with people from their usual living environments. Likewise, as many of them acknowledged in a satisfaction survey that was carried out at the end of the theatrical processes, the theatrical method applied had had a high therapeutic value, helping them to begin to face many of the problems and traumas dragged and linked to the situation that explained their forced transfer from their countries of origin.

Unanimously, and in accordance with these surveys and the coordinators' reports, the workshops with the insertion and integration methodology presented a high degree of efficiency and effectiveness as tools for social intervention among refugee and asylum-seeking populations in the early reception phase in the European Union. Almost all of the participants valued very positively its usefulness and ability to promote and promote both basic theatrical learning and,



specifically, to promote processes of socio-cultural and labor insertion in the host contexts.

In accordance with this, it is not difficult to conclude in a general and broad way that the proposed theatrical methodology works. Although it is true that some of the theatrical coordinators expressed the need to expand the application processes in order to exploit their full potential or that some of the participants did not show a special interest in specific labor insertion in the agroecological sector, it is no less true that despite these criticisms and points for improvement, the didactic method created seemed to bear fruit and good results in the vast majority of the participants. Cases.

In this sense, it is pleasing to observe how, in the face of a particularly complex and difficult problem that traditionally and especially in recent years has brought the political authorities of the countries of the European Union to their knees, art in general and theatre in particular have once again shown their social potential to show that there is no problem that cannot be addressed with the infallible combination of humanism and humanism. creativity.

But if there is one thing we must recognize that is especially gratifying about the proven usefulness of the methodology, it is that it seems to be able to emerge in the short term as a tangible and efficient tool to fight against intolerance, demonization, prejudice and injustice that, often in a self-interested way, from many sectors of power, political and ideological movements, the media and some social currents at a global level and also within the European Union, are taking hold of groups as vulnerable and socially sensitive as refugees and asylum seekers.

In this sense, we hope that the usefulness of this methodology will serve, on the one hand and in a concrete way, to improve the living conditions of the people who have the opportunity to use it; and on the other, in a more ideal way, to help curb intolerance, intransigent nationalism, racism and unjustified discrimination.



Thus, this theatrical methodology does not aspire to be just a one-off instrument, but underneath its development and application it has the pretension of becoming a tool of struggle that serves, from the most absolute humility and aware of its limitations, to help make a better world.

Although we are convinced that this manual and the theatrical methodology of insertion included in it are still the first steps in a process that undoubtedly only lays its first foundations, we believe that this particular one is a fundamental step from which to begin to build more complex processes and projects for the integration and insertion of refugee and asylum-seeking populations in the European Union. The proposed methodology, although it is still susceptible to improvement and expansion, constitutes a fundamental pillar around which to orbit and settle in the short term to begin to build a true integrative social theatre dedicated exclusively to these groups.

In a similar order of things, without similar, similar and/or comparable precedents, this methodology aims to be an effective contribution to also face the current crisis in the theatre industry, considerably increased since the COVID-19 pandemic and the advance of other forms of entertainment, and the lack of a real connection between the majority of European citizens and some of the most important and serious social problems that affect the whole of Europe. European Union.

In addition, in a more general and broad sense, this methodological and didactic development is also expected to be an important contribution to the process of regeneration, reinvention and convergence of European theatre and, specifically, with regard to the current social theatre of the continent. Moreover, we hope that this methodology will serve to show the need for a daring and courageous social theatre, which is willing and daring to face again the great problems faced by all European states and citizens, resorting to theatrical artistic



practice through useful experimentation, social and political commitment, pragmatism, etc. shared responsibility and innovative proposals.

Thus, among its general objectives, the methodology aims to be an effective catalyst in the integration and linking of European social theatre in its social aspect as a didactic mechanism of shared integration. By offering a unified and innovative typology and methodology that addresses one of the most important shared problems and that is promoted and disseminated through instruments such as this guide, the methodology intends to be a significant and relevant step in the process of European theatrical integration.

On the other hand, we believe that proposals such as this should always serve to denounce, to highlight and to show the shortcomings that we suffer from as Europeans. In accordance with this, the methodology aims to generate processes of vindication on the part of vulnerable groups such as the one we work with, favouring that these groups have the capacity to show themselves, raise their voices and complain before the often conceited and excessively well-off European societies and political classes. In this sense, this methodology does not aspire or intend to be or to be erected as an opportunity for these population groups, but is simply part of the fulfillment of a mandate that refers to the effective social, cultural and labor integration and insertion in accordance with international and European legislation that protects these human groups.



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