



ENG

Development of a toolbox for the support of refugees and refugee workers (RefuTools)

Project № 2016-1-DE02-KA204-003268

Intellectual Output 2

Educational theatre (RefuPlay) seminar

“Fremd ist das Fremde ...”

(“People are strange when you’re a stranger”)

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GEFÖRDERT VOM



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Preface

The manual below is the result of a workshop within the RefuTools project. The contents, procedures and examples have been specifically developed for work with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to allow them easier access to the social environment of the “host country”.

We would like to explicitly emphasize at this point that this has no psychotherapeutic function (e.g. for processing experiences of displacement) but may only serve as a written guide to support individuals who have a story to tell about their flight or migration.



Contents

Borders, flight, foreign, legal-illegal, facts, nothing to laugh about, culture, projects with asylum seekers, refugees

Procedure

A) Presentation round

Standing in a circle, two participants turn towards each other, look into each other’s eyes, establishing contact. An impulse appears, which is perceived, maintained as long as it lasts, then they separate and turn towards the next individual. An exercise for interaction, in order to get familiar with impulses.

Walk around the room (everybody walks around in the room together, each participant on his/her own, the others are perceived peripherally, they walk on different paths, filling the whole room) and impulses are found in encounters without words. You shall not look for them, but let them happen, find them, feel how long they last and how they are.

Walk around the room and greeting. All participants walk around in the room; when the organizer snaps his/her fingers they come to a halt and greet the nearest person: e.g. in a friendly or strange way, as if the hadn’t met for a long time, in Japanese...

B) Walk around the room with the group

All participants walk around in the room perceiving and focusing the whole group in the room. At a prompt, the whole group walks at the same pace, at another prompt the participants walk at as many different speeds within the group as possible. The whole group slowly speeds up its walking pace until it is very fast, coming to a halt together. Then everybody starts walking very fast again without any external prompt, slowing down together and coming to another halt. Standing still means standing calm and with energy, not freezing.

Stop and go. All participants walk around in the room. When one of them stops, everybody else stops, too. When one individual starts walking again, so does everybody else.

Variant 1: Only one participant is walking. When he/she stops, another one starts walking etc.

Variant 2: Only one participant is walking. When he/she stops, two start walking, then three, then four, then five, then all of them etc.

C) “Friend or foe” game

Without telling the others, i.e. keeping it as a secret, each participant chooses two players for the next game. He/she runs away from the first player chooses (foe) and keeps close to the other one (friend).

The goal is to find out who is trying to keep close to you. Sometimes you may be chosen by three participants or by no one at all.



D) Speed dating

Walk around in the room. At an external prompt, talk to someone about anything for two minutes straight. Then say goodbye. Do this for at least five times, it's fun. Variant: Do the same, but “playing” with linguistic problems, speech impediments, constraints in terms of expression, not smoothly. Include some kind of obstacle have both participants feeding the game.

E) Atoms, molecules

All participants walk around individually at a rather fast pace, well spread in the room. At a prompt consisting of a number, groups/molecules of that very number of participants join, linking together by any limb. (In most cases,) some people end up as single atoms. Play several rounds, ending with a prompt of two, so you end up with pairs for the next game.

F) Name and movement

All participants stand around in a circle. One by one, a participant says his/her name making a certain move. All others repeat it. On to the next participant... Mind the rhythm!

Variant 1: Connect them in a chain, i.e. starting from the first move again and again...



Variant 2: Have the participants introduce themselves with an adjective that starts with the letter as their name, e.g. sinister, sober-minded, suave, special, stupid... Sandra.

G) Chasing the chaser

The participants link arms with each other in pairs and spread around the room. Two individual participants move around the room freely. One of them is the chaser, the other one is the chased. Once the chased links arms with a standing pair, the roles are reversed: The chaser becomes the chased and the third member of the pair the chased linked arms with becomes the chaser. Start playing, not discussing, and you'll get it rather quickly.

Variant: Play roles such as teacher/pupil or police/fugitive...

H) Border/police scene

This is a task for three participants: tell an experience on the topic to the group, i.e. a total of three stories. Take your time, listen closely, just try to understand the story, don't start an ideological debate (the audience will have its own mind!).

Variant 1: Storytelling as a choir: The three participants stand side by side. The organizer prompts each of them to speak. All three stories are told in a staggered way in three or four rounds, with a varying sequence of speakers. In a final round, the three participants tell the end of their stories. Dramaturgy: Switch at "cliff hangers", i.e. points of the stories where something new is bound to happen.

Variant 2: Storytelling theatre. Switch between epic and dramatic presentation. A story is told, while at some points the play starts. The storyteller may change, leaps in time, changes of character and place are allowed.

I) Running hare

While the participants stand around in a circle, the organizer provides three impulses: once a hare's ears gesture and a "squeak" sound, once a handgun gesture and a "bang" sound, once an amazed tourist rubbing his/her eyes and making a "wow" sound. Try to keep all three movements alive...

J) Leaning on one another, feeling powers and gravity

Put your right feet together standing facing inwards and outwards alternately. Then lean inwards and you're your range of movement.

K) Dance and performance

Each participant on his/her own develops four different positions/movements for the topic of escape (e.g. laughing, running, crouching, hiding). Practice well, make them repeatable, create a sequence.

Variant 1: quick/slow. At different places within the room. All participants act at the same time.



Variant 2: Only one person “performs” in front of the audience or two participants perform in front of the audience simultaneously.

L) A ball with a name

While the participants stand around in a circle, one of them establishes contact with another one in front of him/her, throws the ball and says the other participant's name at the same time. The whole group remembers the sequence. Play several rounds without dropping the ball, minding the rhythm.

Variant 1: All participants walk around in the room. Throw the ball and say the name in the same sequence as above standing in the circle.

Variant 2: A second ball is thrown around in the same sequence with a certain lag (Attention: mind the exact sequence!)

M) Walking line

Make the participants stand in line on the long side of the room. The line moves slowly forward together. Individual participants briefly step ahead and introduce themselves with a movement, then step back into the slowly advancing line. Make no agreements on who is next.



N) Migration storytelling

Two participants join and tell each other the story of their migration; each of them speaks for exactly two minutes, without taking any breaks nor being interrupted by the listener's questions. Then they switch roles. My grandfather is from Egypt, we were 12 children...

O) Biographical theatre

The pairs tell each other their stories; the other participants simply listen and try to memorise details.

Variant: One individual joins in and performs the story told.

Summary

The intention behind all exercises is both that the participants get to know each other better and get an opportunity to present them their individual stories, values and patterns of behaviour.

Individual exercises combined may be shown to a larger interested audience as "short theatrical performances" with an explanation of the rules of the game or of the individual exercises.