WISH

YOUTH TAKING ACTIONS FOR OVERCOMING OPPRESSION

This articles have been written within the framework of the "WISH" project, funded by the Erasmus+ Program. The project intends to give young people new approaches, methods and tools for conflict management, bullying and racism in accordance with the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, so that they overcome conflicts and oppression and build common and shared solutions.

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"WISH" Project

WISH is a project funded by the Erasmus + program whose key stakeholders are young people between 14 and 26 years old. The project will be implemented at European level, in different national contexts characterised by the same youth difficulties.

In the changing society and value/social/economic crisis, young people experience daily several situations that are characterized by a kind of "oppression", linked to individualism, imposed authority, hierarchic models, lack of self-determination and self-management, lack of exchange and peer evaluation, regressive dynamics, contradictions, educational models promoting the acquisition of knowledge instead of competences and skills. The WISH project focuses on preventing such conflicts by ascribing value to the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

OBJECTIVES

The project intends to give young people new approaches, methodologies and tools for conflict management, in accordance with the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, so that they overcome conflicts and oppression and build common and shared solutions.

The project activities will see as main result the development of a proposal for the creation of a global education model that includes debate and the Theatre of the Oppressed approach and techniques for the acquisition of self-awareness, self-management and conflict management skills and competences.

The proposed training model will support and promote also the development of global citizenship skills in young people, by strengthening and putting into practice the UNESCO Recommendations (2015), and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Erasmus+

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Greece - From Oppression to Solution. The case of Youth Refugees.

Like most European countries, Greece is no stranger to conflict incidents such as bullying and racism. Unfortunately, such conflict incidents are often seen in Greek society and there has been an increasing tendency in the last decade.

Bullying mainly occurs in the school environment. According to the Greek Ministry of Education around 10% of all students have been verbally or physically abused by their peers (1) . Bullying can be expressed in various ways which all have one thing in common: the disastrous consequences as much for the victim as for the offender. Whether it is verbal (name calling, making fun etc), psychological (exclusion, disparagement, intimidation, threatening etc) or physical (anything that causes bodily harm), the practice of bullying causes harm and creates a dysfunctional environment at schools, at homes of those involved and in society in general. Due to the increased use of the internet, incidents of cyberbullying are also common in Greek society, since the anonymity of the internet creates a fertile ground for the bullies to express their hatred and rancour. School-bullying is often expressed via internet and the rates from surveys are actually disheartening, portraying the severity of the problem; on a survey carried out in 7 European countries in 2012, Greece holds the second place in cyberbullying in teenagers between 14 and 17 years old, with a rate of 26,8%. On the same survey it seems that the victims of verbal bullying and cyberbullying are more often girls, while physical bullying occurs more to boys. (2)

In one case in Greece the victim was a special-needs classmate, who was forced to carry out obscene acts in the school's toilet. The bullies filmed the whole incident and then uploaded the video on a social-media site. In several cases in Greece the violent incidents even reached the extreme expression of the loss of human lives. This was the case with the 17-year- old boy from Patras who was shot with a shotgun by a 15-year-old who, as he claimed, was defending his sister. In another case, 20- year-old student Vangelis Giakoumakis was found dead committing suicide after being bullied for a long time by his fellow students. (3)

After these severe incidents, in around 2015-2016, it was felt by society, the state and the media an urgency to address and try to resolve these problems. However, this public expression raised one serious issue regarding bullying and this is the mere definition of the term. For the Greek public it is not clear what it is meant with the term 'bullying'; it became easy for one part of society to accuse the other of exaggerating the problem. It also happened in some cases, accusations of bullying without that being the case. There is a confusion regarding the definition of bullying and if awareness can be raised, it will definitely help the society to address the issue more effectively.

1- https://nobullying.com/bullying-in- greece/ http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/03/02/bullying-in- greek-schools-spreading-like- an-epidemic/
2- http://www.tovima.gr/science/article/?aid=633399
3 https://nobullying.com/bullying-in- greece/

Important things have been done and measures have already been taken, and even though the issue of bullying has not been resolved, the fact that Greek society is willing to deal with it is quite optimistic. In 2015 the awareness raising project 'it could be me-it could be you' (4) begun to operate targeting the educational community. The project is organised by the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr) in association with UNHCR Greece and it uses theatre and drama techniques to address issues regarding refugees and human rights. (5) In addition, in 2015 students from 222 schools from 144 cities in Greece created 462 artistic projects raising awareness on violence and bullying under the title 'saying NO to school bullying' (6) .

As mentioned above, arts and especially theatre and drama techniques can be used to address social issues. One of the most effective techniques is the 'The Theatre of the Oppressed' (TO), a movement conceptualized and founded by the Brazilian writer and politician Augusto Boal in 1970. 'TO' is described as a theatrical workshop which is equal parts performance, activism practice, and educational forum. Within the performance, audience members are not passive but active, engaging with each other to tackle issues of oppression, economic inequality, sexism, racism, and other challenges. The workshop uses theatre, and specifically acting, to give people tolos to actively deal with these issues, not just see them resolved by characters on stage. Boal wanted to take the traditional "monologue" of theatre, and turn it into a "dialogue"In TO, racism and conflicts may be resolved within the workshop, but the story isn't supposed to end. Since the audience are now the actors, 'protagonists' and 'antagonists' of the story, there is no catharsis to be had within the theatre itself. They are no longer a passive audience but an active part of the drama, and they take the story with them once they leave. The only resolution comes from taking action. (7).

Theater of the Oppressed techniques in Greece has been rarely used in Theater Camps targeting educators, artists, social workers and therapists addressing issues on social intervention, and education (8). At schools, it is used a few times as part of longer projects about theater in education by educators and theater facilitators to address issues on racism, xenophobia, decision making and prevention under the accreditation of the Ministry of Education (9) . Besides the school environment, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques are used primarily by activists, NGOs and other groups in seminars, trainings and workshops. Most of these groups are mainly active in squats, which are places that are treated with suspicion by the majority of the society. (10) These actions could be more effective if they were addressed to the general public, that is, to take place in mass gatherings and public spaces.

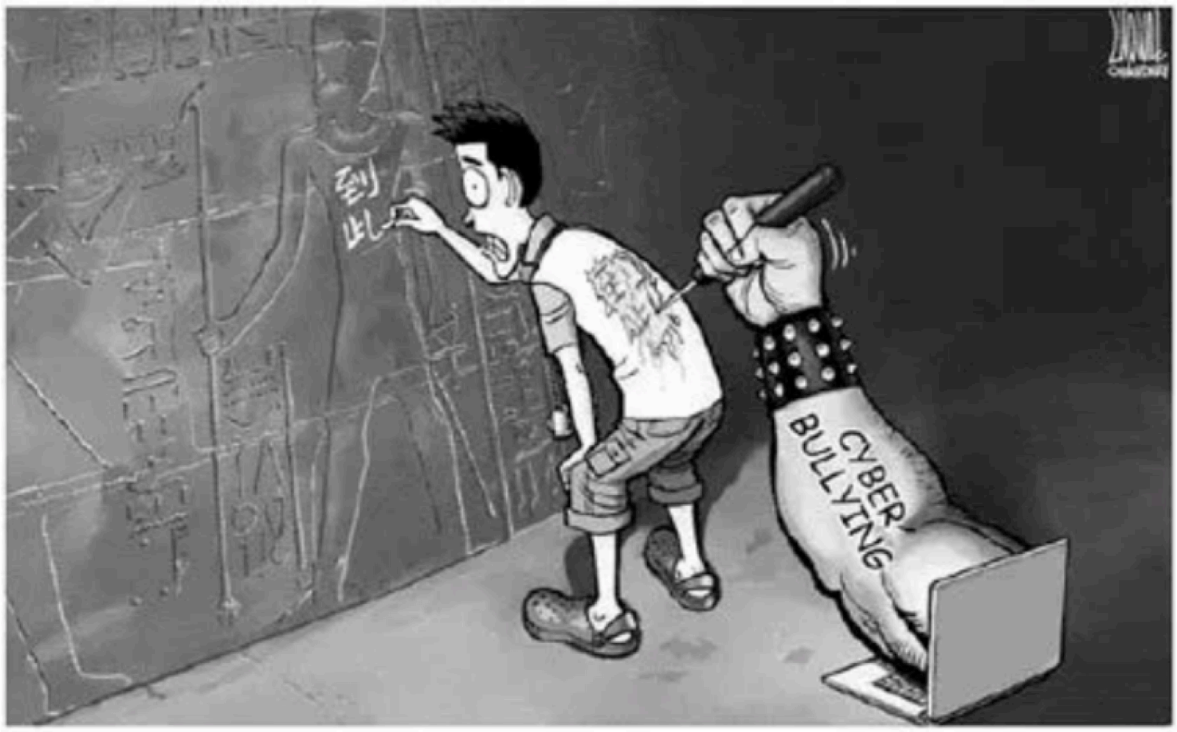
Also, Greece deals with another major issues such as refugees. In one case a Theatre of the Oppressed project has been used by NGOs as a way to engage unaccompanied youth refugees in order to provide an outlet for the boys to share their personal journeys with a wider audience, via a public performance on the last day (11) . This action helped the boys feel included, raised the feeling of belonging and helped them get mobilized and face their personal and social issues. However, this action took place in the narrow contexts of the camp and it engaged only Young boys. Refugees deal with their own cultural restrictions which often excludes women/girls from actions like these.

4- https://www.humanrights.theatroedu.gr/what-is- it-2017
5- http://www.theatroedu.gr/Portals/38/main/images/stories/files/IDEA/2017_1_15%20Letter%20from%20IDEA_.jpg
6- https://www.vice.com/gr/article/3d8xgw/oxi-sto- sxoliko-ekfovismo
7 https://study.com/academy/lesson/theatre-of- the-oppressed- definition-history- characteristics.html

In conclusion, It would be interesting for more refugees to be engaged and these actions to take place in spaces where refugees could get in touch with the local community. These actions are suggested to become the cause for a substantial social change sensitising the general public and creating bridges of communication. Personal testimonies of youth workers and trainers working with young refugees depict that the need for a long-term and well structured Non Formal Learning methodology based on Theater of the Oppressed can bridge the conflicts caused from cultural differences between young refugees and their peers in Greece (and/or other host countries) as it allows both groups to develop important skills in order to understand others' points of view and learn how to propose solutions for conflicto incidents.

○ **It could be me -It could be you 2015-2016**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NprgSSBIxI8&feature=youtu.be

○ **From a Forum Theater Performance on xenophobia and racism by the Hellenic Theatre/Drama and Education Network.**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ibvxicywgc&feature=youtu.be



8-http://www.theatroedu.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=3989&language=el-GR
9-http://www.theatroedu.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=3865&language=el-GR
10-http://novaramedia.com/2017/03/19/ahmad-and- the-theatre- life-in- the-refugee- squats-of- athens/
https://theatreoftheoppressedgreece.wordpress.com/
11-https://www.jweekly.com/2017/09/28/helpless-lesbos- small-victories- short-supplies- theater-oppressed/

Bullying in Spain and the theatre of the oppressed as a tool

As in most countries of the world, Spain is not new to the threat of such phenomenon as "bullying". In fact, according to the "No bullying" (1) , in 2017, 75% more cases of bullying were reported compared to previous years. Though the vocabulary range of the Spanish language doesn't yet offer a specific term that would describe bullying, more and more children nowadays do face this issue in schools. Such widespread problems have urged numerous NGOs to respond and develop educational tools in order to tackle the matter. In the following article we would like to bring up one such tool - the Theatre of the Oppressed, founded by Augusto Boal - which not only can be an effective instrument in the attempt to combat bullying in schools, but also can be beneficial when approaching other burning issues of the Spanish school education.

According to "The Local" (2) , every young person aged 11-18 has been involved in or has faced abusive actions either in school, on the phone or via Internet. While speaking about bullying, we often imagine acts that take place in the direct reality, sometimes forgetting its other possible forms, which can be even more harmful. One of these, taking place in the extremely fast developing virtual reality, is called "cyberbullying".

The Spanish NGO Cooperación Internacional has carried out research to explore the reasons of this rising issue in Spain.

One of the results that came out was the easy access to new technologies and Internet resources being provided by parents to their teenage offspring, who are more and more using these devices to grow and nourish their social life on-line. The research confirmed that every third Spanish child is equipped with more than one technological device. Moreover, according to "Daily mail" (3) , the 2014 studies confirmed that Spain has the highest rate of the Internet usage in the whole of Europe. Such easy Access to new technologies has directly led to the emergence of dozens of new ways to intrude the personal space of others, which consequently causes numerous widespread incidents of cyberbullying. It's crucial to note that because teenagers were not acquainted with such form of violence before, they didn't immediately look for or receive the necessary help and support to tackle the bullying.

What is more, the specificity of cyberbullying implies that the bullies don't engage in direct live contact with their victims, they cannot see them, so more likely they don't witness their victims' possible future actions of self-destructive behaviour, which makes it even easier to continue with the harm they cause to others.

In the search for the specific causes of bullying in Spain, a study by the University of Valencia (4) points out that bullying as such has always existed, but there is currently a greater social sensitivity to the issue.

1-https://nobullying.com/bullying-in- spain/
2 -https://www.thelocal.es/20140402/more-than- a-third- of-spanish- kids-bully- study
3-http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2696187/The- tech-addicted- country-SPAIN- Spanish-use- devices-9-hours-day- OUTSIDE-work.html
4-https://www.universidadviu.es/causas-de- acoso-escolar- y-como- abordarlas/

The main causes are common in European countries but factors such as the loss of authority of teachers and parents, as well as the high rate of immigration (5) , could explain the increase of cases in the Spanish education system, in addition to a poor pedagogy in regard to what bullying is and how it can be prevented by teachers and parents.

A suicide committed by one of the victims of bullying in a school in Madrid (6) brought the topic into social media and spread the idea of sharing and discussing the phenomenon publicly, especially as the percentage of students affected by this form of abuse is constantly growing. In consequence, schools started to develop programs that aimed at improving communication inside the classrooms and involving professionals in the attempt to tackle the problem. This fact shows that the educational system itself is not always capable of solving the conflicts that arise between emotionally vulnerable youngsters of different ages, but there are still various methods that may prevent aggression in future, which are nowadays being developed on different educational levels.

5-https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5067466/
6-https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/01/21/inenglish/1453383982_326930.html
7-http://www.actingnow.co.uk/theatre-oppressed- training-madrid/
8-http://workingnarratives.org/article/theatre-of- the-oppressed/

After analysing numerous risks existing in schools that may result in bullying, it's crucial to make children and teenagers more involved in live conversations about their emotional state. This is one of the main goals of Theatre of the Oppressed - the methodology originally developed on the basis of Boal's revolutionary work with peasants and workers population in Latin America, and nowadays is used all over the world to help promote self awareness as a key to conflict resolution. Promoting community-centred problem solving, the methodology aims at involving all the sides of a conflict into a theatre performance, where each of the observers are also actors and vice versa. One of the important parts of its action is creating a democratic and participative way of interaction between all the participants of the conflicts arising within the school environment.

Described methodology is a rehearsal theatre designed for people who are eager to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives. Oppression itself is defined as a power dynamic based on monologue rather than dialogue, a relation of domination and command that prohibits the oppressed from being who they are and from exercising their basic human rights. Accordingly, the Theatre of the Oppressed is a participatory theatre that fosters democratic and cooperative forms of interaction among its participants. The theatre is emphasised not as a spectacle but rather as a language designed to analyse and discuss problems of oppression and power and to explore group solutions to these problems.

As its founder Boal, used to say, the Theatre of the Oppressed is a theatre in its most essential meaning. We all have theatre inside - we are actors because we all act at every moment of our life but at the same time, we are spectators of our actions. The key of this kind of theatre is participation between the actors and the spectators. The Theatre of the Oppressed refuses the concept of a passive spectator. In this sense the theatre is a metaphor of life.

One is not only watching the show. One participates - is able to stop the performance and suggest the actors different actions, is able to create the show together with the actors. This is the so-called spect-actor. The Theatre of the Oppressed is a dialogue instead of a monologue, since all human relationships should have a form of dialogue in nature. Its aim is to re-establish the dialogue.

The implementation of the methodology of the Theatre of Oppressed has already some history in Spain, with its target including not only school children, but anyone interested. To mention just a few example, various workshops have been organized in Madrid by the "Acting now" (7) organization and according to the "Working Narratives"(8), the same type of methodology has been used by working groups in Spain before. Currently this educational tool is being implemented by numerous organisations and NGOs' all over the world, including international youth exchanges, as it boosts not only the personal growth of individuals but also the social empathy in general.

From bullying and oppression to safety and social engagement in Latvian schools

According to OECD/PISA 2015 Report (1) "a large proportion of students report being victims of bullying at school. Latvia here is not an exception. Data shows that Latvia is the second top country where bullying prevails in school environment. 30,6% of students report that they were bullied at school at least a few times a month, meaning, every third student is facing emotional and physical violence. When OECD average in regards to bullying at schools is 18,7%, the numbers about Latvia makes us think that the problems is very serious, and new approaches and forms are needed to address and deal with this phenomenon.

School usually are a place where young people spend most of the time during the working day. It is an environment that influences development of their personality, supports them in developing socio-emotional skills and builds their understanding of society and ways of interaction with and within it. In order to feel safe, confident and part of the school environment, the young person should perceive the school as a safe and secure space, where they can be heard, accepted and understood. Unfortunately, school students facing bullying cannot see school as such a place, and rather feel oppressed and unsafe due to regular or sporadically exposed emotional or physical violence from their peers.

The Latvian Ombudsman's Office carried out the "Study on spread of violence among young people in Latvian schools" (2) data show that only 1% of pupils never faced a situation where they would be exposed to violence, but 54% of students mentioned that they faced violence towards themselves from other students. Emotional violence is most common form of bullying, e.g. leaving a person out of things on purpose, making fun, threatening and spreading of nasty rumours. At the same time teenagers mention that physical types of bullying are performed by other students taking away or destroying things that do not belong to them, by hitting and pushing them around.

Searching for detailed information about the situation with bullying in Latvian schools, another study of the Latvian Ombudsman's office "Violence or mobbing in Latvian schools" (3) represents very interesting statistics. 42% of respondents mentioned that they were bullied, and 36% mentioned that have seen others being bullied. Describing the cases of bullying they say that in 25% cases they were mocked, 24% - made fun of, 23% - labelled. 12% mentioned there were left out of the things and excluded, but 5% said they were either hit, belongings were take away or they were exposed to other forms of bullying. In 1% of cases - money was taken away.

1-http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/most-teenagers- happy-with- their-lives- but-schoolwork- anxiety-and- bullying-an iissue.htm?
TSPD_101_R0=a056bd73c24ddef94dbe42cf51473420n590000000000000000022c36d2effff000000000000000000000000000000005a8a90a100cda43ecd
2-http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/legacy/4239_TNS_Vardarbibas_pret_berniem_izplatiba_Latvija_2015.pdf
3-http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/legacy/2009_vardarbiba_jeb_mobings_latvijas_skolas_1500964813.pdf

When asked about requesting help and feeling safe, 41% of youngsters responded that after asking for help they did not always receive it and feel safe, 35% responded they received help, but 25% of respondents neither received help nor felt safe.

When youngsters face violence they either search for help from teacher or parents, or try to deal with situations themselves. Often dealing by themselves is not an easy task, as they lack communication and conflict management skills. Teachers, who have an important role in such cases to stop violence, do not know how to deal with the situation, sometime they are even afraid to react due to fear of being accused of misuse of their power position, search for help from the outside or other colleagues – psychologists and social educators. The main tool used by teachers in such cases is talking with both sides – the victim and perpetrator and explaining that such behavior is not acceptable. Informing other colleagues, administration, police, and parents are other steps taken, but reality shows that these do not always work.

The case in one of the Riga's school when a father of one girl who claimed she was bullied by class mates came to her school and in front of the teacher strapped a student who bullied his daughter, is a signal that something in our schools system is missing in dealing with violence.

Emotional states and relationships with peers at school are important preconditions for youngsters to feel safe, confident and happy in the school environment. Youth who face or observe violence on an everyday basis are far more likely to model their behavior and interaction with society based on violence patterns. But is there a way to help youngsters learn how to deal with situations of bullying and oppression in a non-violent way, to intervene when others are bullied, prevent violence, deal with conflicts peacefully and protect themselves?

Report of the study of the Ombudsmen from 2015 suggests there is a necessity to develop and implement out of school activities that would help students to have a sense of belonging to their class, school and feel responsibility for their actions and in this way decrease violence.

Forum theatre and its particular form - the Theatre of the Oppressed – is a tool that can help young people to be active and responsible members of the school environment, feel safe and contribute to safe and engaging environment.

Forum theatre is a method of social participation, that, using theatre language, engages society and its members in dialogue and discussion about different social problems. The method was developed by the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal in the 1970s, initially in Brazil and later in Europe. It is based on the concept of the Theatre of the Oppressed and is closely connected with the ideas of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by educational philosopher Paulo Freire. Both in theatre and education it means dialogue, interaction and collaboration between actors, educators and students.

Initially developed as a political theatre, as it was meant to deal with political issues, and later it was further developed and used to deal with social issues. Therefore, nowadays it is considered to be a social theatre as helps to deal with social issues. The methods developed by Boal are adaptable to different target groups, issues and environments where theatre can take place, and is open to anyone to be involved. The most beneficial elements of this theatre is to involve everyone in both the understanding of the issues and searching for solutions. It does not provide one correct answer to any situation, but rather show that many different solutions are possible and choose one that would be most appropriate in their particular environment and situation. Violence in this case is one of the social issues that youngsters can perform and find ways to deal with situations of oppression and violence.

Searching for practices in Latvia, Theatre of the Oppressed is more frequently used outside school environment than in schools, where young people spend most of the working day time. In the NGOs field there were several trainings organised on the use of this method in youth work with young people. Some of them were organised by Latvian National Agency of Youth in Action programme.

Several projects were implemented in Latvian prisons applying social theatre to address different social issues with young people in imprisonment, e.g. family and long-term relationship.

4-http://jaunatne.gov.lv/lv/pieredzes-stasti/dzive- ir-teatrix- socialais-teatris- ka-iespeja- parmainam
5-http://skelotvilnus.blogspot.com/2014/11/video-no- foruma-teatra- nodarbibam.html
6-https://atgriezties.wordpress.com/2014/11/14/preses-relize- projektam-jelgavas- cietuma/

The source of pictures used in the article a:
http://skelotvilnus.blogspot.com/2014/09/kas-notiek- jelgava.html
http://skelotvilnus.blogspot.com/2015/02/kristine-par- iniciativu-foruma- teatri.html
https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQlwu5LrWkfm8gqVfCMVrA2LRdiS9xEgvzG-hjr-1sdi6tazz0yXA

Bullying in Italy and theater of oppressed methodology

The WISH project involves the youth aged 14 to 26 and aims to develop a global educational model focused on preventing conflicts linked to bullying and racism by using Theater of Oppressed methodology.

The project was born from the need to provide youth with tools to prevent and manage conflicts. In particular, with reference to bullying, a form of social behavior characterized by aggressively domination of others, which are often repeated and habitual.

The same can be said about racism which is a phenomenon linked to increased immigration and also strongly connected to the failure of migrants' social integration.

Several studies have showed that at school bullying occurs not only in the classroom but in all the environments where there are peer relationships; moreover, in the last years, cyber bullying has increased.

Furthermore, several studies observe that these behaviors involve all students, and not only those who take part actively in bullying; in fact, students can take on several roles such helper, supporter, spectator and obviously bully and victim.

And also, we can identify different forms of bullying, more or less explicit and observable.

Finally, the most worrying fact is that students aren't able to react to these behaviors both to protect oneself and others; often, youth aren't able to ask for help becausethey think that the situation could get worse.

Bullying and racist behaviors have increased because of our changing society and of the value/social/economic crisis, which facilitated the development of several oppression situations for youth. These behaviors often cause victims damage to their self-determination that in some cases leads them to a progressive social isolation and also to early school leaving. (1)

So, to stop bullying it is important to develop awareness among youth about the importance of respect and legality, to promote dialogue, to encourage acceptance of differences, to prevent and combat violent behaviors and the indifference towards violence itself.

In Italy, several actions are pursued to combat these issues as bullying and racist events are increasing; the data showed that 59% of students, aged 11 to 17, had suffered aggressive and discriminatory behaviors. Moreover, other data showed that in the face of the hate speech, the most widespread sentiment is sadness (52%), followed by anger (36%), contempt (35%), shame (20%). But in 58% of the cases the interviewees admit they have done nothing to defend the victims. (2)

1 https://www.informagiovani-italia.com/cosa- puo-fare- la-scuola- contro-bullismo.htm
2 Source: Report ISTAT "BULLYING IN ITALY: BEHAVIOR OFFENSIVE AND VIOLENT BETWEEN THE YOUNG MEN", 2014.

In 2017 the Ministry of Education, University and Research within the "National plan for prevention of bullying and cyber bullying at school" developed several projects to counteract this wide phenomenon, such as establishing a national day against bullying at school, realising numerous dissemination and training events, activating training courses for teachers and other actions. Another important national step was the approval of the first law dedicated to these issues (L. n. 71/2017), which attributes to a plurality of subjects precise tasks and responsibilities, reiterating the central role of schools. (3)

In the national context, bullying is perceived as an emergency, where schools have to play a fundamental role both to prevent and reduce these phenomenons. In fact, part of the role of schools is for students to develop cognitive, social and emotional skills aimed at building self-determination and self-management skills and the ability to regulate their behaviors and their emotions. Furthermore, life in the classroom and the need for building numerous relationships with peers and adults is essential, especially to be part of a group and be appreciated. When these skills become difficult to develop, students can have negative experiences or feel they are a failure to which schools, teachers and traditional educational methods usually can't give answer.

Subsequently these personal and relational difficulties can lead to bullying dynamics. According to the highlighted needs, the WISH project aims to provide youth with tools to manage and prevent conflicts by valorizing Theater of the Oppressed methodology.

The Theater of the Oppressed is a methodology which uses theater as a language, as a tool for knowing and transforming both interior and social reality; to date it's use is widespread all over the world. The methodology includes different techniques (Forum Theater, Image Theater, Invisible Theater, Theater-Journal and Legislative Theater). The aim of these techniques is for the person to become the protagonist within the dramatic action with the aim to educate/train them to be the protagonist of their life "together" with their fellows. The common characteristic of these techniques is the participation of the public in first person, both through direct intervention on stage and through comments, suggestions and questions ("spect-actors").

The methodology of Boal is founded on the exercises and games which focus on refinement of the senses, on the development of spontaneity and on empathy. In fact, the laboratories are carried out through activities that include body, sound and movement.

Generally during the workshops, short performances are created from participants' stories so that everyone is given the opportunity to explore their expressive abilities and their talents. Within the group a nonjudgmental atmosphere is built.

So this method helps people to become aware of themselves and to awaken the spirit of struggle of the oppressed.

3 Fedeli: "Il 6 febbraio al via al MIUR il Tavolo tecnico su bullismo e cyberbullismo: 1 mln per interventi di contrasto", Article by Education Ministry 2018. https://www.orizzontescuola.it/fedeli-6- febbraio-al- via-al- miur-tavolo- tecnico-bullismo-cyberbullismo- 1-mln- interventi-contrasto/

4-http://www.giollicoop.it/index.php/it/il-metodo/45- il-tdo- metodo-o- tecnica/68-cose- il-teatro- delloppresso

In fact, in this methodology the "oppressed" fight and challenge their role as the victim and want to change their status of social marginalization; for these reasons the "oppressed" develop desires, motivations and willingness which change also their real life. (4)

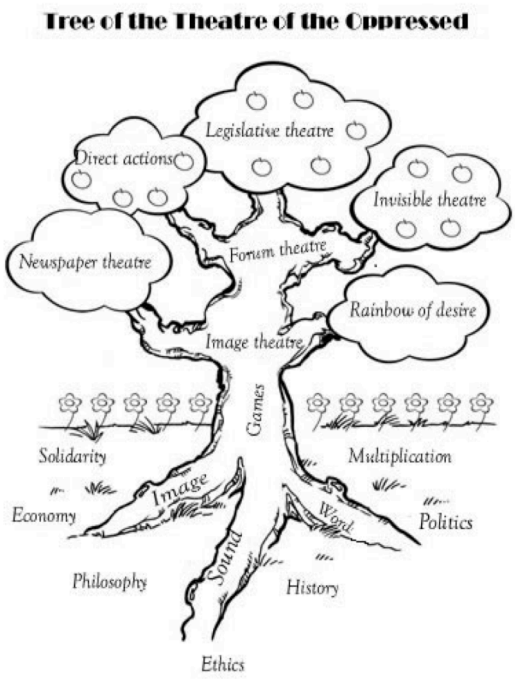
The theater of the oppressed moves among politics, theater and society with the aim of producing a change in inequality situations; the participants acquire awareness of social conflicts and of the responsibility that each of them has within society.

It's interesting to see that Theater of the Oppressed never appears as therapy, but as a means of collective "liberation" which bases precisely on the autonomous awareness of people. It appears evident that Theater of the Oppressed shares with education some theoretical pilasters like ethical-political commitment and the goal of activating consciences in a critical and creative way. So this methodology can be useful to youth for managing conflicts linked to bullying and racism because it can help the oppressed to become the protagonist of their life by providing self-determination and self-management.

Students can aquire global citizenship skills and emotive competence thanks to an innovative educational methodology that aims to fill a gap in the traditional educational methods. In fact, Theater of the Oppressed methodology provide the opportunity of working in groups and understanding how to manage group dynamics, and this doesn't happen in "usual" trainings.

And also, it gives to young people the possibility to bring out conflicts and oppression and to overcome them by dialogue, investigation and systematization of experiences, allowing them to find solutions together.

In the picture, the tree includes all methodologies and tools that Theatre of the Oppressed offers for achieving these objectives.



Research Title

MAKE MINORITY A PRIORITY
NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND RESEARCH REPORT

In this research the voices of 50 minority ethnic young people present powerful insights into their experiences of growing up in Ireland. This article summarises the findings of the report to highlight the concerns of one of the target groups chosen by Eolas Soileir to participate in the WISH project.

The report documents the perspectives of minority ethnic young people growing up in Ireland and the current and potential role of youth work and teachers in their lives. It is based on an exploratory, qualitative research design whose principal aims were:

• to identify some of the issues facing young people from minority ethnic communities and to explore how youth work can support them;
• to identify a range of different youth work approaches which engage with minority ethnic youth groups across Ireland;
• to analyse the lessons that might be learnt from minority ethnic young people's experiences of youth projects across Ireland.

Qualitative data from six semi-structured interviews exploring minority ethnic young people's experiences growing up in Ireland were gathered. Interviews were held in Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Dublin, with 50 young people from 20 different ethnic backgrounds.

One of the standout issues presenting through the interviews is the manifest and everyday experiences of racism experienced by the young people interviewed. Verbal abuse is part of a daily lived experience for our young people, presenting us with a red flag to an enduring Irish cultural story of welcome. It offers a stark contrast to the perceived notion of Ireland as the land of a hundred thousand welcomes. (Cead mile failte).

This research clearly demonstrates the need for safe and supported spaces where young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can share their experiences with others with dual or multiple identities to support them in their exploration and negotiation of a sense of identity and belonging.

Eolas Soileir would suggest that using a methodology such as Theatre of the Oppressed would support such explorations and conversations. The activities developed by Brazilian teacher, actor, and activist Augusto Boal are an effective methodology in helping participants think and act critically and devise theatre creatively regarding social issues or political issues by using a fun-and-games theatrical approach.

Theatre of the Oppressed encourages participants to describe forms of social reality and oppression in their own words as they are related to their experiences and thoughts of oppression in relation to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, heteronormativity, social class, and so forth. This happens through the interactive theatre games, use of Image theatre & Forum theatre. The participants explore ways that resistance to bullying and racism can be addressed through playing, devising, writing and forum theatre. The WISH project believes that Theatre of Oppressed Methodology could be applied concretely to this specific target group thus enabling a platform for understanding and resistance.

Supporting such conversations is key to delivering a youth work service and one from which we can all learn. In fact, the struggle identified in the voices here offers an essential catalyst in Ireland's growth and development as a multi-ethnic country. If we are open to it, our young people can guide us in shaping a national conversation about identity by listening to who they say they are. In turn, this will help us to develop a new language to describe who we all are as a people, and to find ways to acknowledge and celebrate dual and multiple identities as a way of being Irish. Among the key findings were that the young people felt the need to have safe and supported places in which they could discuss these issues, where they could share, deliberate and debate with others who had similar experiences.

Another key finding was the impact on children who are growing up in Ireland and adopting Irish cultural norms but whose parents promote and expect different behaviour in line with their cultural heritage.

The findings demonstrate the importance of supporting family relationships which can sometimes come under significant pressure as the young people negotiate a home culture and outside culture which are significantly different. Equally important to note is that in migrant-only youth groups or spaces the young people are quick to support each other around intergenerational conflict through sharing their common experiences.

The report highlighted concerns for youth workers and teachers to be aware of, on parental and community relationships, which included the following:

1. Young people have to negotiate being accepted by both their minority ethnic peers and their majority ethnic peers who all make differing demands and judgements on them and.

2. Intergenerational issues that include the following:

a. Managing complex and often competing expectations.
b. The nature of acculturation and the fear for parents of their children losing their cultural and religious traditions.
c. Understanding different child rearing practices.
d. Managing differing value systems.

A key issue to emerge was the degree to which racism had become a 'normal' feature of young people's lives. In the report it was remarkable that the young people presented stories which spoke of considerable resilience. In deflecting the impact of racism they diminished it largely by shrugging it off. Nevertheless, the young people also expressed eagerness to find ways to challenge the endemic societal nature and tolerance of racism.

Of primary concern for youth workers and teachers to be aware of in relation to racism and exclusion included the following:

a. Young people need their experiences of racism to be acknowledged and they need the tools to process, understand and challenge it safely.
b. The impact of racism and comments on young people can result in them excluding themselves from opportunities due to lack of confidence in whether they are welcome to attend events or groups.

Minority ethnic young people want to make a difference, to be leaders, but often miss out on opportunities to learn leadership skills, especially those that are self-organising youth groups.

A key theme on integration was the need to build cultural awareness and understanding within the wider Irish community. Critical was the call for an environment in which young people could be themselves and not be expected to assimilate. The value of trusted and culturally competent adults, who support the young people as they negotiate and balance different aspects of their identity and where they belong was also clear.

In relation to conflict resolution the report noted several main issues for youth workers to be aware of on integration which are:

1. Understand how the concept of acting or being black, or white, manifests for young people.
2. Understand the loss, pain, isolation and confusion that minority ethnic young people can face.
3. Young people may feel uncomfortable being singled out on the basis of their migrant/minority ethnic status or which require them to be 'representative' of a particular country or culture while at the same time they need their cultural identity to be valued – it's a balance that must be negotiated with the young person and managed.

The report recommends that the current approach to intercultural youth work needs to be adapted to include more diverse ways of including young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Relevant to the WISH project target group for Eolas Soileirare the following:

1. Ensure that the specific needs and contributions of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are taken into account in the development of organisational strategies, work plans and actions.

2. More flexible or alternate approaches are required to take account of the numerous demands that young people aged 18+ face. Spaces may need to serve as drop-in or fluid spaces where project work can evolve based on the young people's interests. They will need to promote exploration and dialogue, where youth work methodologies and training are grounding principles. Ensure appropriate training and education is delivered.

3. Anti-racism and intercultural training should be included as core competencies of youth workers in order to ensure that organisations are better equipped to support minority ethnic young people.

4. Find opportunities to build understanding of minority faiths and beliefs with young people with the aim of reducing Islamophobia and other religious intolerances. Support honest and open debate, and room for disagreement while grounding the work in the often difficult balance where everyone's rights are respected.

5. Cultural competency should form part of the education of all young people:
   a. To promote acceptance and embracing of cultural diversity as the norm.
   b. To deal with difficult or unfamiliar situations and differing values and beliefs. Support advocacy and leadership with and for minority ethnic young people.

6. Young people and adults from minority ethnic backgrounds need opportunities and mentoring to move into leadership roles within mainstream youth work.

7. Where minority ethnic people have significant advocacy and support needs in relation to visas/migration status, access to college, and isolation from members, it is important that youth workers engage in advocacy to address these issues. Carry out research and mapping to address gaps in existing knowledge and practice.

8. Further research should be undertaken to explore the gaps within current youth work provision in addressing any of the key issues raised by young people in this report:

a. Is integrated youth work provision sufficiently supporting young people to explore aspects of their identity and belonging?

b. Are minority ethnic young people attending mainstream youth work supported to address issues such as racism, intergenerational conflict, etc. in their lives?

Full report available from**: http://www.youth.ie/nyci/policy-reports-and-submissions**

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