

# USING THEATRE TO MAKE POLITICS

Veroniki Krikoni

EU funded Projects Manager

# #Theatre2Politics

October 2018 – October 2020

European project under the European Youth Together, KA3  
Support for Policy Reform

Greece, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Norway

**Key words:** advocacy; capacities; youth organisations; civic participation; democratic and policy-making processes



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



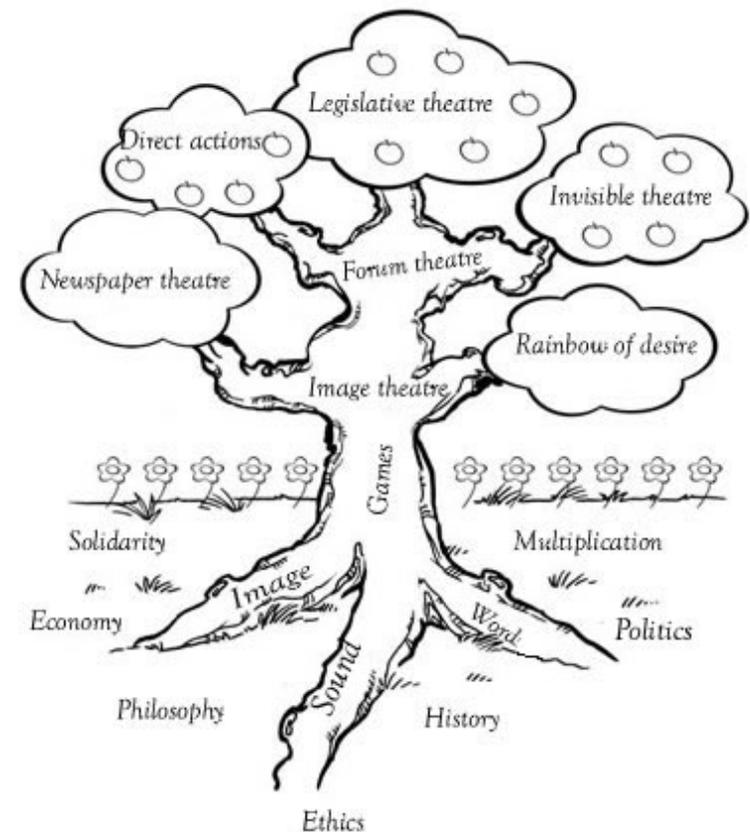
# Theatre of the Oppressed

It is a form of **popular community based education** that uses theater as a **tool for transformation**. Originally developed out of Boal's work with **peasant** and **worker** populations, it is now used all over the world for social and political activism, conflict resolution, community building, therapy, and government legislation.

Exiled from the Brazilian military junta, **Augusto Boal** founded the Oppressed Theater Center in Paris in 1978 and began developing his various techniques with the Forum Theater as its main focus.

At the **Forum Theatre**, the audience is invited to intervene and improvise different solutions for each scene of oppression and injustice. Who wishes to try is coming on the scene, taking the character of the "oppressed" and acting according to his/her own ideas, perceptions and suggestions.

**Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed**



# Legislative theatre

**1992 – Boal** is elected as a Law Councillor (**vereador**) in the City of Council of Rio de Janeiro.

**Legislative Theatre** is forum theatre performance about a particular social issue that ends in a crisis. This is followed by a discussion on policies or laws which could help solving some of the problems touched upon in the play.

The Citizens proposed legislative provisions to the City Council

13 provisions became Laws of Rio de Janeiro



# The basic idea behind the Legislative Theater

In a society where there are power relations that in the Theater of the Oppressed are described as oppressed and oppressor the one who ultimately legislates is the oppressor.

There is, therefore, a need to strengthen the voice of the oppressed and to give him a step, where in a safe environment he can present his views, to negotiate and finally to formulate a political proposal.

In this way, the Theater of the Oppressed contributes to a culture of "bottom-up" political processes





# The Scenario - 1<sup>st</sup> story

"I will get you a 10!"

At the University – Law School

4 people on the scene: the professor and 3 students

Oppressed: a student in wheelchair.

The student in the wheelchair wants to attend the class, which is taking place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, but the elevator is broken. The lesson is about to start and she goes with a colleague and friend of her to the professor's office to ask for a solution so as to be able to attend the class. The professor is not helpful and she keeps saying that she is late for her class and that the broken elevator is not her fault. Instead, she proposes to the student not to attend the class, to do a homework and she assures the student that she will grade her with 10 (in Greek is the excellent). At the office there is also another student, very impatient and irritated that the lesson has delayed to start. She is trying all the time to tell the professor to move on and to leave behind the student with disability as she also feels unfair (both that the class is late and that she has to study and give exams instead of taking also 10, like the person with disabilities). Iliana (the person in the wheelchair) is very offended by this attitude and this specific proposal.



# The Scenario – 2<sup>nd</sup> story

“There are ramps...”

3 colleagues in an office discussing about the realization of a festiva

Oppressed: Katerina

The festival is funded by European and National Funds and they have the obligation to have it accessible to people with disabilities. The three colleagues discuss that despite many difficulties, one of them found a venue who is right for the needs and has anything a person in wheelchair needs in order to be there. One of the three of them (Katerina) is bringing up the issue of accessibility to the content, which means that they need to have interpreter in the sign language, to have special subtitles for people with hearing problems and to offer audio description for blind people. The other two are negative due to time and money facts. They look at the Grant guidelines where it is clearly stated that they only need to foresee for physical accessibility. So they ignore Katerina’s anxiety and they continue their works.



# The Scenario – 3<sup>rd</sup> story

“Behind the red line”

At the metro station.

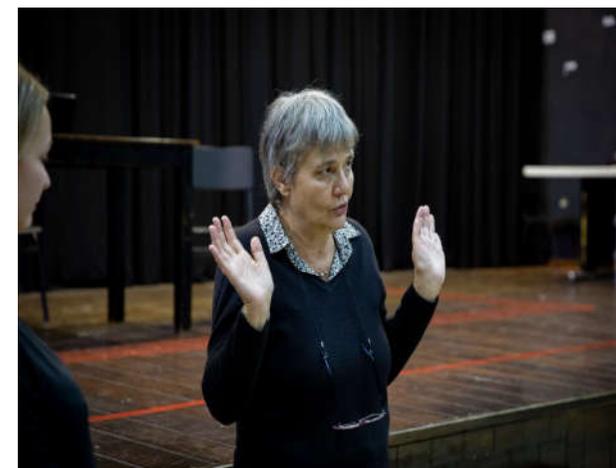
Oppressed: A blind person

Many passengers are waiting for the metro to come. One of them is blind. Most of the other passengers are standing, thus blocking, On the marking area for blind people. There are some clashes between the passengers who are ignorant or lack of empathy. The story ends with a monologue by the blind person:

*They see me! I walk with a cane, I walk with a dog, but when the other person has closed the passage, he has closed the corner, overthere there is a pillar or a trash can, how can I corss the streets? How can I get on the train? Will I fly? Will I do parcour? Will I go over the people? I wonder why there is not an announcement at the metro station also for not standing on the line for blind people?*



# Substitutions by the audience



# Some of the audiences' proposals

(In cases of emergency) Alternative ways to access the courses in all educational levels, for example, via e-learning platforms (but, what happens when someone cannot access the internet due to financial problems? - a very common problem for people with disabilities).

More announcements and signs related to accessibility issues and problems.

Establishing a committee for monitoring the accessibility of public and private spaces. People with disabilities should be members of this committee

Licensing businesses and renewing business licenses only if they comply with accessibility standards. *(The law exists but it is not always followed).*

To search if there is an Ombudsman for people with disabilities



# Some photos



Thank you!



Two more performances will take place on

- Tuesday, 3/12, 20:30 at ISON
- Thursday, 5/12, 20:30 at Myrtillo café

More details on fb page:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2266455773645479>

Stay tuned for what will come after the NYE!

For more information you can contact me at: [krikoni@interaliaproject.com](mailto:krikoni@interaliaproject.com)

[www.interaliaproject.com](http://www.interaliaproject.com)