

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

YO.US.T.A.R. Literature Review and Methodological Framework – Executive Summary



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YOUTH WORKERS USING THEATRE AUGMENTING CREATIVITY
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Introduction

The **YO.US.T.A.R.–Youth workers Using Theatre Augmenting cReativity**, is a project developed under the Erasmus+ programme by 7 EU organisations. The project aims to increase the social inclusion of young people through theatre and creativity, building on the European values of acceptance and tolerance, and to promote intercultural dialogue as represented by Antigone and Aeneas Greek myths. Furthermore, **YO.US.T.A.R** wishes to give young people a space to use theatre so as to foster self-esteem, self-consciousness and confidence. Finally, **YO.US.T.A.R** aims to offer staff –working with youth in theatres and NGOs –a Toolkit, which will enable deeper understanding of their audience and will increase their professional skills in the field of art and social inclusion.

All partner organisations will develop and share best practices from their countries and from their previous experience in order to produce the final results of the project (toolkit, recommendations, literature review and methodological framework) that can be used across Europe. The ongoing social instability triggered from the current health crisis due to Covid-19 has increased subsequently disparities and social exclusion of the weakest groups, including youngsters. Therefore, innovative and creative responses are required, such as **YO.US.T.A.R. theatre workshops** that could offer a simple yet effective tool to foster new opportunities and new competences for both trainers/facilitators working with young people and the youth itself. The project involves different theatre techniques and ensures high quality and highly relevant outputs, produced through the input of partner organisations, each contributing their own knowledge and experience related to theatre for the social inclusion of youth.

More specifically, the **objective of IO1**– presented in this report – is to develop a collective literature review and a useful methodological framework, focusing on the training potential of theatre and creativity for social inclusion purposes.

At a second stage, a **Toolkit** for those working with youth will be developed on the basis of **YO.US.T.A.R. methodology**, aiming to offer guidance to theatre educators /youth workers/ facilitators across Europe. Finally, recommendations for practitioners and a compared analysis will be produced to target a wider audience and disseminate the method on a larger scale, supporting the sustainability of project results.

This **report** provides an overview of the project’s first Intellectual Output, intended to develop a methodological approach which uses theatre and the **YO.US.T.A.R. method** as a tool for enhancing creativity and social inclusion tailored to the needs of youngsters. The innovative element of this **theatre methodological approach** is that it will be designed so as to enable young people and the theatre staff working with them, to develop their social and creative capacities that will allow them to explore and overcome personal obstacles thanks to **innovative theatre techniques**. It will also develop listening skills, self-esteem, self-consciousness and inter-cultural communication.

The **framework** will facilitate the clarification of the YO.US.T.A.R. methodology for developing the self-esteem and confidence of youngsters. The IO1 includes also a literature review that outlines the broader picture of theatre for social inclusion in all partner countries. The proposed methodological approach and framework will be easily **transferable** to other EU member states, since it is accompanied by a set of concrete instructions from different national contexts along with implementation guidelines.



Based on the outline of the project, output 1 is divided in 4 sub-parts:

IO1 – A1 Literature review of theatre as a tool for the social inclusion of youth;

IO1 – A2 Developing approaches to using theatre as a tool for social inclusion;

IO1 – A3 Research on the application areas of theatre techniques for youth issues;

IO1 – A4 Finalisation of literature review and methodological framework

The creation of a Methodological Framework, in which all these methods can be outlined is clearly innovative and it will provide new tools for all cultural institutions, actors and individuals that are interested in using **theatre** as a tool for **social inclusion**.

Research Analysis

With the aim to identify both the current use of theatre techniques as a tool for social cohesion and the associated needs of youngsters, theatre staff and youth workers, so as to develop a tailored-made methodological framework, a short-scale analysis was conducted in each partner country, namely in **Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Sweden, Spain, Serbia** and **Slovenia**.

An analysis protocol was, therefore, elaborated by MOSAIC with the relevant input of the rest of the partners. The protocol contained a set of rules and useful instructions for the proper implementation of the analysis, including definition of questions, methods, procedures and tools.

More specifically, the analysis includes the following activities:

- Review of relevant published studies carried out at national or EU level on theatre for social inclusion with consequent literature review in all countries;
- Organisation of 1 focus group per country with maximum 10 participants (theatre staff and youth workers) to survey the training needs for working with youth.

The detailed data from the aforementioned activities are presented in Annexes, if requested.



YO.US.T.A.R.

YOUTH WORKERS USING THEATRE AUGMENTING CREATIVITY

A1. Literature Review

For the preparation and proper completion of seven distinctive short-scale literature review studies, which were implemented by all members of the YO.US.T.A.R. partnership, a research and case studies collection template was designed and distributed by the IO1 responsible partner, Mosaic. This template helped partners examine and present how theatre may be used as a tool for the social inclusion of youth, drafting their short-scale analysis in a cohesive way.

After internal agreement, the distribution of the workload was agreed, as follows:

- Partner countries should collect at least three articles, papers and research studies related to the topic of theatre for social inclusion, from their own countries or from an international level.
- Partner countries should collect at least two case studies and best practices related to the project topic, from their respective countries.

The final framework (IO1) will not only facilitate the clarification of the YO.US.T.A.R. methodology for developing the self-esteem and confidence of youngsters, but can also serve as basis for the validation of their experiences and so act as a therapeutic tool. Thus, given its importance, the IO1 could not be considered as completed without a literature review, which draws the broader picture of theatre for social inclusion in all partner countries.

Partners' research contribution was more than beneficial for the project objective, in this direction. All seven partner organizations showed their extensive experience in the field, such as their research skills by providing a rich variety of academic papers, publications, research projects, case studies and good practices.

Therefore, in an effort to sum up the extensive literature review - presented thoroughly in Annex 1 – some of the most notable conclusions are presented, as follows:

In terms of academic research, the main focal points of the selected literature are →

- ❖ Community theatre, aiming at inclusive theatre productions. A great example is “Odyssey Theatre” with a troupe of disabled and non-disabled actors working together.
- ❖ Devised theatre, as a technique to enhance human creativity on the basis of Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale.
- ❖ Theatrical improvisation, as an active methodology that is proven to reduce peer rejection.
- ❖ Theatre of the Oppressed, as a practice of political theatre from and for the people, proven to raise awareness.
- ❖ Theatre therapy, used in different settings and conditions, also for people with delinquent behaviour, e.g. prisoners.

In terms of good practices, the main focal points of the selected collection are →

- ❖ Theatre of Integration, in the form of multicultural theatre ensembles with an emphasis on youth immigrants. More and more productions of this kind take place in different countries, especially in those suffering the most from the migration crisis, e.g. Italy, Greece.
- ❖ Puppet theatre, and puppet creation used in adult education to enhance social inclusion programs.
- ❖ Improv theatre and Forum theatre techniques addressed to businesses, helping unemployed people and NEETS to better approach labour market and business needs.
- ❖ Contemporary theatre classes for active youth.

A2. Focus Group – Validation

At the second stage of the research activity, the project demanded the organisation of seven distinctive national Focus Groups (FGs) with drama educators, theatre staff, actors, academia members and youth facilitators. The purpose of the FGs was to discuss with the participants both about the project objectives, activities, estimated results, but mainly to collect feedback from them – based on their own professional experiences –that could be used to draft the methodological framework.

With regards to the methodology and the development of the interviews with the participants, the coordinating partner designed and introduced to the partners a set of detailed guidelines on how to run the FGs.

The next step to the development of FGs started with the identification of potential participants to be interviewed, based on each partner's business contacts, but also taking into consideration the expert's network and position and previous relevant experience.

The FGs were deliberately kept as small groups with up to 10 participants per country in order to have an open discussion guided by a Moderator and to generate rich debate with no participants left out. Although it would be better for the groups to meet in the same, physical place, in the case of YO.US.T.A.R. project, partners decided to organise their meetings online taking into consideration Covid-19 situation and the fact that the participants were residing in different locations.

Once the participants were identified, invitations were mainly sent via e-mail in order to introduce:

- the YO.US.T.A.R. project, its partners, objectives, target groups, the forthcoming intellectual outputs, and other activities to be organised,
- the objective behind the organization of each of Focus Group, and the importance of their participation and contribution.

The IO coordinator provided a common reporting template, a set of guidelines and consent forms to be distributed to the FGs participants.

The consent form covered issues such as:

- Confidentiality: because of the fact that participants shared important and often sensitive personal information, only the researchers should have access to participant responses.
- Data protection: participants was assured that no information will be publicly reported that would identify them as a participant in the research.

- Right to withdraw: the partnership indicated that participants understand the nature and purpose of the research and that they may withdraw from the procedure at any time.
- Consent: people agreed to participate in the research of their own free will, by written consent or verbal consent that was recorded.

The partners prepared a predefined set of questions and used open-ended questions that avoid a “yes” or “no” response. The set of questions selected and the methodology behind the question plan were very useful during the final stage of the Focus Groups, Analysis and Reporting.

The questions that were used to generate the discussion were the following:

QUESTION 1: Have you worked or currently working with young people? If yes, do they belong to a specific category in need of inclusion (marginalised youth, NEETs, migrants/refugees etc.)?

QUESTION 2: What would you describe as the main challenges that youngsters face today?

QUESTION 3: To your opinion, what skills do you need (or other people working with youth), in order to be more effective and to help youngster to be included in society.

QUESTION 4: Have you used theatre-based methodologies and techniques up to now? If yes give us a brief description.

QUESTION 5: Are you aware of any success stories / good practices from your area or other places, regarding the use of theatre as a tool for inclusion or as a methodology to tackle social challenges? If yes, give a description and do you think it is transferable to your area?

QUESTION 6: You can proceed with any other question that might come up from the discussion in order to understand or record specific opinions regarding the training needs of our target group (youngsters and people working with youth)

QUESTION 7: Summary and comments from the interviewer?

A.3 Research on the application areas

MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Unstable and unpredictable future
- Professional orientation
- Discrimination in society/ labour market / human relations
- **Prejudices**
- **Financial struggle**
- Lack of independence (also financial)
- Not enough time with parents (especially for financially disadvantaged families)
- Technology “addiction”
- Social networks and social media impact
- Social marginalization
- **Low self-esteem**
- Precarious jobs
- Individualism
- **Anxiety, stress and mental diseases**
- Climate change
- **Existential fear and uncertainty**
- Economic migration
- Lack of social skills
- Lack of understanding by seniors
- Loneliness
- Visibility and recognition
- Sexuality
- Lack of empathy
- Not enough challenges and responsibilities
- Work opportunities and conditions during Covid-19
- Lack of communication between parents and youngsters
- Lack of substantial integration of young people from minority groups
- Too much pressure from the society
- Lack of confidence in themselves (in their personal and professional skills), low self-esteem, problems with their physical appearance

EDUCATIONAL SKILLS FOR BETTER YOUTH INCLUSION

- **Mental health awareness**
- **Support/motivation skills**
- Conflict resolution skills
- **Engagement skills**
- **Tolerance of cultural differences and clashes**
- Teaching of marketing abilities for youth professional development
- Skill of managing and finding resources
- Constant evolvement of educational skills (new disciplines / stay up to date)
- **Empathy**
- Diplomacy (on how to approach the youth)
- Patience
- **Building trust**
- **Cooperation and cocreation**
- **Respecting their opinion**, no overpowering
- Communicate the feelings
- Adjustment of working methods, tasks and goals to youths needs
- **Openness**
- **Group leading skills**
- Organisational skills
- Multidisciplinarity
- Fundraising needs for inclusive theatre productions
- Dialogue with experts (e.g. phycologists when needed)
- Familiarizing with the correct terminology for approaching youngsters
- Literacy on politically correct language for minorities
- Flexibility

A4. Finalisation of literature review & methodological framework

Summarizing up the qualitative results and findings of the abovementioned research activities, which took place in the context of IO1 needs analysis of the YO.US.T.A.R. project, the partnership came up with the following results regarding the most beneficial theatre-based approaches for youth social inclusion purposes.

List of Theatre-based methodologies, techniques and definitions

- **Impro theatre:** theatre with improvisations where most of the activities are without script and are unplanned
- **Forum theatre:** also called theatre of the oppressed, where the audience can stop the performance and change it the way they want
- **Interactive puppet theatre:** puppetry play based on learning and using different materials where children and parents can take part and interact together
- **Psychodrama:** an action method, often used as a psychotherapy, in which people use spontaneous dramatization, role playing, and dramatic self-presentation¹
- **Clown technique:** clownery and humour exercises for people with down syndrome
- **Special use of costumes:** to impress and attract youth attention
- **Dance therapy and somatic dance:** use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration²
- **Dramatherapy:** using theatre techniques to facilitate personal growth and promote mental health
- **Communication exercises** through physical theatre
- **Imitation:** the act of copying
- **Environmental theatre:** create a stage with people and put on a show, but all the spectators and the young people (who will be the actors) will be able to go anywhere in this space and create – based on script – new dialogues, drawing inspiration from the audience
- **Maieutic method:** the ideas come from the people participating
- **Playing each in their mother tongue:** mixing actors, trainers and immigrants; mixing the sound of different languages
- **Participatory theatre:** mixing people from working class or from different neighbourhoods

¹<https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/psychodrama>

²<https://www.verywellmind.com/dance-therapy-and-eating-disorder-treatment-5094952>

- **DAS Theatre Feedback Method:** based on objective analysis and commentaries of the work itself, regardless of its likeability or appeal
- **Process drama:** a method of teaching and learning where both the students and teacher are working in and out of role³
- **Documentary theatre:** integrating pre-existing documentary material
- **Organization of feedback sessions:**(1) after the performance, through discussions with the audience, and (2) after the workshops, or even after a certain period of working together has passed, reflecting on the tasks, achievements and on what could be improved
- **Devised theatre approach:** a process in which the whole creative team develops a show collaboratively (definition by John Walton)⁴
- **Newspaper theatre:** a theatre of the oppressed practice in which a newspaper article (or articles) is dramatized into a theatrical performance⁵
- **Involvement of eye contact exercises:** an exercise that invites observation, which is the beginning of good listening
- **Storytelling:** the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics or embellishment

³<https://www.artsonthemove.co.uk/education/process-drama.php>

⁴<https://thetheatretimes.com/what-is-devised-theatre/>

⁵<https://imaginaction.org/media/our-methods/theatre-of-the-oppressed-2/newspaper-theatre>

Note: This is only an indicative list of theatre techniques and methodologies proposed by our group of experts (drama educators, actors, directors etc.) through their participation in the needs analysis activities. Each theatre method can be used and adapted according to the needs of some specific target groups.

As a result of experts' valuable feedback and literature's review contribution, the **10 educational skills** identified as the most significant ones for drama educators and youth workers, and the **8** most cited, proposed and referred **theatre-based methodologies** and techniques for the social inclusion of youngsters, in the context of the YOUSTAR Project – Methodology Framework are:

YOUSTAR Methodology Framework		
Educational Skills	1	Support and Motivation Skills
	2	Engagement Skills
	3	Empathy
	4	Tolerance of (cultural) differences
	5	Mental health awareness and sensitivity
	6	Group Leading Skills
	7	Respecting others' opinion
	8	Openness
	9	Cooperation and Co creation
	10	Building Trust
Theatre-based Methodologies & Techniques	1	Devised Theatre
	2	Improvisational Theatre
	3	Theatre of the Oppressed
	4	Dramatherapy
	5	Dance therapy

6	Psychodrama
7	Interactive Puppet Theatre
8	Community Theatre

Note: This is only a numerical list, and it does not represent the priority of some answers. The production of this framework was based on the frequency and the repetition of answers provided by experts or of literature citations, in the context of the research analysis of the YOUSTAR project.

