

## Intergenerational Community Theatre –Process Diary (03 april-30 june)

### Intergenerational Community Theatre -*Age Against The Machine*

European Network of Cities CERV, Funding ID: 101138625 (2024-26)

#### 1. SESSION 2, A HAPPY MEMORY OF YOUTH

**Place:** Sede do Sport Lisboa e Évora, Évora, PT **Date:** 17/04/2024 **Hour:** (14:00-16:00)

#### **Group:**

**Members of the team present:** 3 coordinators (Isabel Bezelga, Teresa Furtado, Ana Moya), 1 expert from CM Évora (Pedro Silva) and 2 assistants ([Diana Oliveira](#), Isabel Guedes)

**Participants:** 4 students from U Évora (Performative Studies), 7 Senior persons

**Structure of participants:** all women

(It is an homogeneous group all coming from Alentejo region)

**Total number of participants:** 11 persons

**Total number of team members:** 6 persons



### Topics session and goals:

We want to delve deeper and get to know each other better. Sharing and presenting who they are through their personal story. In which parts of Portugal and the region of Alentejo lived in their youth, their family context, their relationship with religion, family, nature, holidays, travel experiences, etc. They present themselves through their personal history and a happy memory of their youth. We can better understand their family structures and geographic, educational and cultural contexts. We activate their creativity and attention by sharing and listening to each other's stories and drawing while listening to their stories. To facilitate sharing, we work first in pairs, and later, we present the story to the rest of participants located in a semi-circle. We achieve the internalisation of the other's stories, empathy, and the interpretation and identification of the story through drawing.

**Keywords:** Life-stories, youth, sharing, empathic listening, active drawing, sensory memory



### Methods, techniques and exercises:

Exercises in emotional memory, active listening and empathy through conversations and drawing. The idea is to "put ourselves in each other's shoes". We work in the field of the emotional, memories and traditions, the sensorial-corporeal, and the contextual (geographic, historical and socio-cultural). Exercises: 1. Walking in an Imaginary Path (in pairs young and

senior); 2. Intimate Conversations (in pairs sharing a happy memory of youth); 3. Performative Presentation of Stories (in groups of four); 4. Singing and sharing personal poems and songs from Alentejo.

### **Summary of the artistic activities developed:**

We started with a warm-up and body stretching exercise in a circle, and then we got together in pairs to walk and imagine a path and route (what we saw, felt, how we reacted, if there were obstacles, if we were going fast or slow), with relaxing music. Then, we sat down with the same couples to discuss a memory from our happy youth. They could make notes about the other person's story. Once we had shared the stories in private, we all gathered in a semicircle, sitting in front of a panel hanging on the wall. The pair would go out to present the story, where one person would present the story of the other. Another couple drew images on the panel that referred to the story. At the end, a new participant (Beatriz) introduced herself and brought us examples of Alentejo songs, and we agreed that she would work with us on writing and singing a song, on Wednesday mornings, in the month of June.

### **Report of the participants responses and evolution:**

On a bodily level, it is still difficult for them to visualise and evoke an imaginary place, transport themselves to that space with their bodies and perform in it. Their bodies still do not move at ease. We saw how Theater students helped their partners because, by themselves, they were unable to embody an imaginary place and an imaginary experience. Telling stories in pairs went very well. They felt free to be intimate, and later, they felt it was easy to share their stories with everyone. They even added new elements to the story, and then everyone in the chorus also wished to share elements that were also common in their youth. They were not ashamed to draw, invent, improvise in the drawing and visualise the stories. The drawings were very literal. We also checked how they all identify generationally with music and traditional songs from Alentejo ("Canto Alentejano"). In this session, the group was smaller than in session 1, and participants were more willing to talk in front of the group. The poems by Dona Tomásia and Dona Beatriz were beautiful. They were a very personal creative sharing. We saw in the group how important it is to share literary creations. They sing and recite poems without shame.



#### **Team impressions, comments and observations:**

All the participants come from different locations in Alentejo and other regions of Portugal. This session provided an overview of a broad Portuguese geography. We also observed that the participants had travelled extensively across Portugal's geography, from the Algarve to Alentejo, and from Alentejo to Lisbon. They all share the same space now in Évora, in the same neighbourhood. Youth unites us all. It is a common point of encounter for young people and older people. We all go through remarkable moments in our youth.

#### **Sharing intergenerational and intercultural experiences:**

Younger generations are not keeping up with older generations. There is a generational gap. Many of the stories shared had elements in common (older participants and students), such as national trips in Portugal, Christmas holidays, close contact with Nature, the countryside and animals and the strong relationship with the family ties of grandparents, parents and siblings. Older generations had in common familiar stories talking about coal train transport and the difficulty of travelling in the 50s and 60s, as well as the rituals of engagement and wedding ceremonies.

#### **Unexpected results and challenges during the implementation:**

We did not expect that Tomásia e Beatriz had such spectacular talent in literary creation and poetry. Beatriz has a beautiful voice, and she offered to teach all the group to sing "Canto Alentejano". She can compose songs, and she agreed she could translate our stories into



poetry and song for the Flash Mob performance. In June, we will change the time of our meeting to the morning, in order to train and rehearse with her.

**Results at the level of the self, the community and the regional-cultural social context:**

At the level of the self it is important for youth and seniors the family relations and family festivities and the need for travelling, at the level of the community the singing as a cultural identity trait, at the socio-cultural level the connection with the countryside, the rural context and nature.

**Problems with the topics by participants:**

Nothing to report in this first session.



**Dialogue among different topics (intersectoriality) and transversality in the themes:**

Nothing to report in this first session.

**Evaluation of the workshop by participants (statements):**

Some participants approach at the end of the workshop to tell us that this type of exercises is useful to socialise. Nowadays, people live close to their homes and there is a lack of sociability in the neighbourhood. They feel lonely.

**Ideas for upgrading exercises or continuing next session:**

In the next session, facilitate with new exercises that the body interacts with the mind. Bring together feeling and movement, emotion and body. Go back to personal stories from youth to study locations, traditional cultural details and life experience commonalities in their stories.

**Ideas for a dramaturgy:**

Incorporate “Canto Alentejano” in the dramaturgy, theatre performance and in the Flash Mob. The Flash Mob can be a video clip with performing moments in different spaces of the city of Évora while interpreting the song (poetry), and singing the song..