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 5, "The advice that life gives us" ("O conselho que a vida nos dá")**

Place: Sede do Sport Lisboa e Évora, Évora, PT   **Date:** 15/05/2024 **Hour:** (14:00-16:00)

Group:

Members of the team present: 2 coordinators (Ana Moya e Isabel Bezelga) and 3 assistants (Diana Oliveira, Isabel Guedes, Daniela Salazar)
Participants: 4 students from U Évora (Performative Studies) and 6 Senior persons
Structure of participants: all women
(It is a homogeneous group all coming from Alentejo region)
Total number of participants: 10 persons
Total number of team members: 5 persons

Topics session and goals:
Share opinions on the concept of caring and its impact on their lives: caring for others and their family, caring for themselves, letting themselves be cared for, the abuse of caring, and caring too much.

Keywords: Caring, sharing, family, love, marriage

Methods, techniques and exercises:
Conversation aimed at themes and purposes to be discussed in the group. Improvisation with an initial base theme, where a member directs the improvisation, containing objects that helped in the performance, and they help to create a scenic environment. This improvisation led to spontaneous performative interactions that emerged from the conversation between the group members.

Summary of the artistic activities developed:
We started the session by summarizing the previous sessions in preparation for these last four sessions. We then discussed the concept of caring, which includes caring for others, letting oneself be cared for, taking care of oneself, and taking care of family memories.
Then we proposed that young people who have many doubts about loving and caring have the opportunity to ask them questions. It was through improvisation, simulating the wedding day and all the questions the bride asks at that moment, in the dressing room, before the

ceremony. The young woman was made up and styled while they responded and gave advice based on their experiences. When the bride was ready, she threw the bouquet and it was decided, impromptu, that the widows would catch it. This moment generated a conversation about the right to date and having a new partner at an advanced age. We talk about the prejudice against dating again and the right to be taken care of by a partner.

Afterwards, we had a moment of sharing, talking, and reading Tomásia's poems. Tomásia also spoke about a poem which addresses the power of words (a fun fact about life that she shared with us).

Report of the participants responses and evolution:

The participants were relaxed and at ease in the group. They were very interested in the topic of discussion without any prejudice or limitations in their personal sharing. This fact happened both in conversations and in improvisation.

Notably, the participants demonstrated a proactive approach within the group dynamics. They took the initiative to share their own creations, such as poems, jokes, stories, and even personal secrets. This active involvement added a dynamic and engaging element to the group interactions.

Team impressions, comments and observations:
We were surprised by their ability to address certain topics, in front of an audience (master's students in the theater course), such as intimate, sexual, and personal topics. Furthermore, they showed that the existence of an audience was not a problem for them. They were comfortable, calm, and at peace.

Sharing intergenerational and intercultural experiences:
There is a sharing of a lot of emotional values and life experiences, which impacts the young participants who are also going through these stages.

Unexpected results and challenges during the implementation:
As the session progressed, the participants addressed certain topics that surprised us, such as sexuality, difficult and memorable personal/family moments (the impact of sons' opinions; the burden of caring for others, both from a positive point of view, regarding giving too much love, and the negative side of abuse by giving too much), and their initiative in actions.

Results at the level of the self, the community, and the regional-cultural social context:
At the community level, they talked about their neighborhood and the importance of caring for each other, such as making food or bringing a cake or doing leisure activities with friends and neighbors to combat loneliness. However, there is also the fear of disturbing and being a burden to others or of abusing certain neighbors by asking for too much from them.
At the level of the self: "taking care of yourself is taking care of others", "I invent things to take care of myself" (creativity to take care of oneself). The injustice of the family, in making them give up what makes them or could make them happy, for example having a new boyfriend at a senior age. Their advice to the younger generations is to "Do not be afraid to experiment and say what you want".

Problems with the topics by participants:
Nothing to report in this session.

Dialogue among different topics (intersectoriality) and transversality in the themes:
Caring, cooking, travelling, sex, family relationships (mother with children, wife and husband), friendships in general.

Evaluation of the workshop by participants (statements):
They expressed their will to transmit their knowledge and experience to younger generations with joy and without constrains or fears.

Ideas for upgrading exercises or continuing next session:
The difference between caring as a mother and as a grandmother. Why is there this difference? Our own experience is better than any advice from others. We learn by being a mother, by being a wife, by being a daughter.
"How does it affect the role we play in the family regarding caring?"

Ideas for a dramaturgy:
Still to be discuss.