

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 8, “Bread, wine and oil” (“Pão, vinho e azeite”)

Place: Sede do Sport Lisboa e Évora, Évora, PT **Date:** 05/06/2024 **Hour:** (14:00-16:00)

Group:

Members of the team present: 2 coordinators (Ana Moya, Isabel Bezelga), 1 expert from CM Évora and 3 assistants (Diana Oliveira, Isabel Guedes and Daniela Salazar)

Participants: 4 students from U Évora (Performative Studies), 11 Senior persons and 2 Pedro Silva interns

Structure of participants: all women

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

Total number of participants: 17 persons

Total number of team members: 6 persons



Topics session and goals:

Using our feet as an element of contact with the soil and with the memory of traditional rural Alentejo songs, we travelled to the fields to harvest. Through bodily memory (picking pomegranates and figs, planting rice, harvesting, and picking olives), we witnessed a transmission of patrimonial bodily knowledge from body to body (passing of a legacy that is both cultural, regional, and generational).

Keywords: harvest, bodily memory, rural traditions and knowledge, intangible heritage, legacy of care



Methods, techniques and exercises:

We work with recreation of bodily actions in the rural context and the rural work in the fields (movement mimesis). We began with the construction of group choreographies (harvesting, grape treading, olive picking), introducing rhythmic elements in the collective activities. We ended up sharing oral knowledge, through traditional songs, prayers, and protection and healing rituals.

Summary of the artistic activities developed:

We started with a warm-up with bare feet, focusing on their movement and the various sensations that can be felt. We continued holding hands, singing the song “Ponha aqui o seu pezinho” [Put your little foot here], and then we danced a “quadrilha” (movement and singing simultaneously). We worked on how the feet guide the direction of walking, as well as how

the way of stepping changes depending on whether the feet are on cold water, mud, dirt, the weight of the body, or the sliding sensation on the ground, among others. This last exercise was carried out simultaneously with an excerpt from a song by Manuel António Pina “Dois Pés sozinhos” [Two feet alone].

With the song “Fui colher uma Romã” [I went to pick a pomegranate], we performed an improvisation around pomegranate trees landscape. We did the same with fig trees. Later, we moved on to the wheat harvest with the song “Ceifeira” [Reaper] and we continued with the grape harvest with the song “Canção da vindima” [Song of grape harvest]. We followed with the grape treading, where we heard the stamping of feet on the ground. We continued with the olives harvest and the songs “Chapéu preto” [Black hat] and “Ciranda, cirandinha” [sifting screen, little sifting screen].

We concluded by sharing homemade recipes and home remedies to improve health: for fever, it is “salapismos”; for mumps-chicken, it is mush; for sores, it is flaxseed porridge; warm olive oil for baby's colic; breast milk for babies' ear-aches and we finished with rituals and prayers of protection and care.

Report of the participants responses and evolution:

They were proud to pass on this ancient knowledge to new generations. Cacilda - one of the participants, at the end of the session said: “I'm happy that this knowledge doesn't die with us”. Therefore, they felt an urgency to communicate both bodily and oral knowledge, thus, as a knowledge transmitted from woman to woman (knowledge enclosed within the feminine world).



Team impressions, comments and observations:

As a team, we realized we needed to reinforce an active listening attitude to the other's movements and oral sharing in the participants. We observed some impatience and urgency to speak and transmit their memories as they overlapped when talking. As an observation for the following sessions, we must insist on and question the reason for this urgency to speak. We also must insist on exercises of listening to silence, speaking slowly, letting what is said rest and concentrating on the words (warming up the mind).

Sharing intergenerational and intercultural experiences:

We felt that they were giving us a gift, which was their memories that we received. This sharing made the senior participants feel validated and important.

Unexpected results and challenges during the implementation:

Nothing to report.

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

At the level of self, we observed their pride in passing on a legacy. This process of transmitting a legacy is also one of caring for and preserving memory.

At the community level, the soil and the countryside united the collective in the past because the work was manual. The field needed the collective. Work became a social and enjoyable event. It was combined with music, songs and food. There was a difference between gender roles regarding women's and men's work in the rural fields. For example, at harvest, the woman harvested the wheat and tied it, and the man gathered it. We have observed that in the traditions of caring for physical and spiritual health, there was a sisterhood among women. We see through this that there is almost immediate availability when another woman is in a more fragile situation because the rest of the women show care and protection. We also found out how easy it is for them to share weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Problems with the topics by participants:

Nothing to report in this session.



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

Great connection with what nature gives us, through harvesting or curing with herbal and homemade natural remedies.

Evaluation of the workshop by participants (statements):

They are proud to pass on this ancient knowledge to new generations. Cacilda, one of the participants, at the end of the session, says “I'm happy that this knowledge doesn't die within us”.

Ideas for upgrading exercises or continuing next session:

Still discussing.

Ideas for a dramaturgy:

The harvest was one of the scenes that produced a choreographic image in two intersecting lines. This image had much power, as did the grapes harvesting and the power of the sound of the stamping of the feet. Another powerful image is the olives harvesting, when they are placed in a triangle and the image of offering the baby to the moon. It is also impactful the image of Leocádia being sewn into a cross due to a sprain, in a blessing/prayer repeated three times.