TENACT

Theatre for Environmental Action

# DEVISING GUIDE

# CONTENT


| | |
|---|---|
| **Context** | 3 |
| **Introduction to Devising** | 10 |
| **How to Build and Maintain an Ensemble** | 16 |
| **The Devising Process** | 20 |
| **Ideas for Devising** | 28 |
| **Partners** | 31 |



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# CONTEXT

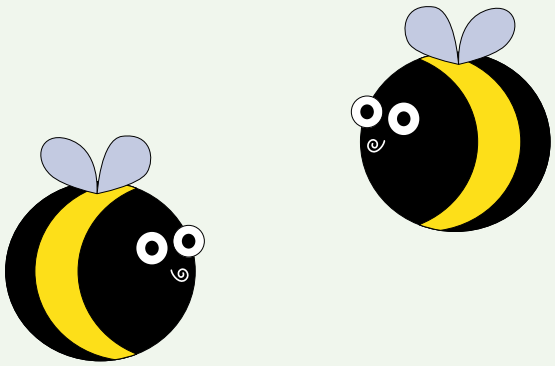
# INTRODUCTION

This guide to devising is part of the TENACT project. TENACT seeks to explore ways in which theatre can be used to help groups of young people find ways to take action in their communities on the issues of global warming, climate change, climate justice, environmental awareness, global development, and green living. Devising is one of the key strategies in drama work. It helps groups find out what they would like to explore; shows them ways that they can express what they want to say; and provides them with media to share what they want to say. So, it helps to discover, to express and to share their concerns, ideas, opinions and research.

Since their concerns and ideas in this project are to do with environmental action the role of devising here is to help groups of young people make theatre that can be performed for the communities in which the young people live. The devised theatre can provoke those communities into changing the way they live in order to mitigate against climate change.

This guide aims to lead the practitioner through various techniques which we have used and found effective in working with young people. We describe the process of devising and give examples of how we have used it to create theatre in our communities that stimulates people to reflect and act on pressing environmental issues. There are many complimentary resources and guides available online for practitioners to find and to use. Many are free, such as those provided by larger theatres and national theatres in several countries.

We hope you find this useful, and we wish you success in your theatrical journey.



# ERASMUS+ KA2 PROGRAMME

The Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ programme supports:

- Partnerships for Cooperation, including Cooperation Partnerships and Small-scale Partnerships;
- Partnerships for Excellence, including Centres for Vocational Excellence and Erasmus Mundus Action;
- Partnerships for Innovation, including Alliances and Forward-looking projects;
- Capacity Building projects in the fields of higher education, vocational education and training, youth and sport;
- Not-for-profit European sport events.

The Actions supported under this Key Action are expected to contribute significantly to the priorities of the programme, to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participating organisations, on the policy systems in which such Actions are framed as well as on the organisations and persons directly or indirectly involved in the organised activities.

This Key Action is expected to result in the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices at organisational, local, regional, national or European levels.

# THEATRE AND CLIMATE CRISIS

## AUSTRIA

In Austria, the population is very much divided concerning the political parties. In 2016 50% voted for the left-winged candidate for presidency, while the other 50% voted for the right-winged one. Usually, in the world of artists and ecologically aware people, they tend to vote left. The question opens up: What can artists do to convince people from different social bubbles to take steps toward environment-friendly choices? They can morph, digest, devise, swirl, reverse them into their art. Art has the power to be seen by a lot of people (social media enhancing this further), it has the power to create emotions and therefore plays a very important role in climate justice. As the Austrian partner, we can wholeheartedly agree with that. When we performed our play that was devised during this project, ten local politicians were in the audience. With the rather right-winged representatives, we had a chat afterwards how enlightening and interesting the topic was. They proudly stated that they made some small steps toward protection of the environment themselves. That provides the ground for their enhancing of the consciousness of the environment.

## SPAIN

In Galicia a great example of artists responding to the climate crisis can be found in the play „O mel non caduca“ (“honey does not expire”), presented by the Ibuprofeno Teatro, delves into a dystopian future where the Earth is ravaged, and two scientists/beekeepers engage in elaborate yet absurd experiments. Their mission is to synthetically recreate a bee using the last jar of honey left on the planet. Within their laboratory, they construct a tree in an attempt to restore the long-lost natural cycles. This play, created through a collective creative process, explores the relationship between humans and objects, ecological degradation, and the concept of planned obsolescence, both for products and people.

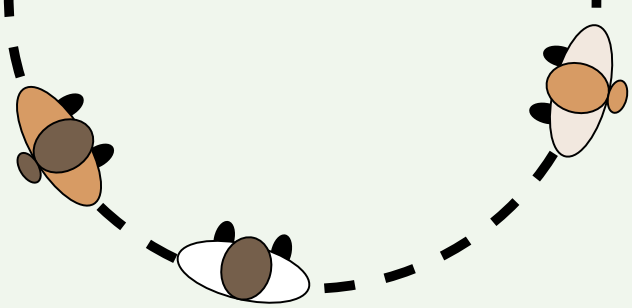
## IRELAND

In Ireland the Arts Council has developed policy on climate action and environmental awareness which should apply to all arts projects that it funds. The report, Climate Action Policy Consultation Summary November 2022 is available here.

Many artists in Ireland, particularly those making work for school groups and children, create work that specifically targets ideas like conservation, climate change, local action for the environment and climate justice.  Baboro theatre for children produce a lot of work dealing with this issue and tour it around the country. They also run a festival called the Baboro International Arts festival for Children which attracts artists and projects that have environmental themes.

Theatre is a very effective way to promote social change. Readers may be familiar with practitioners such as Bertold Brecht and Augusto Boal, theatre makers who developed specific methods of using theatre to provoke political, social and cultural change in audiences.

Today there are many projects and programmes, ranging from youth work to community development, that use theatre methods. there are many programmes and projects. Usually they are called ‘applied theatre’ projects. They often involve the audiences in making the performance (called ‘participatory theatre making’) and use the art form to help audiences tell their own stories or to share their concerns. Theatre works well because the act of performing is immediate and visceral. It can, if done well, have an aesthetic effect on the audience, encouraging them to relate to the subject matter using all of their senses. It can be a very mindful practice, where both audience and performer can be present to each other in an immediate way. In these situations, the themes (in our case, environmental issues of concern) can be powerfully presented to the audience and can have significant impact.



# PARTNERS

## BEYONDBÜHNE

BeyondBühne is a children and youth theatre based in Baden, Lower Austria. We offer courses in theatre, dance and film to children starting at the age of 3 to the age of 25. We use the methods of theatre and dance paedagogics. This means, that the plays are not rehearsed based on a text book, but rather topics of the play are decided upon by the whole ensemble in a group effort. Therefore, on stage we only show the audience, what the kids themselves are thinking about. Naturally, very often the topic of enviromental pollution comes up. We take whatever comes from the kids, dig deep and devise a play from this. It comes from the heart, the story lines and characters are build out of the creativity and fantasy of the children themselves, and the performances have a power because of this. Plays about the environment are particularily powerful. They are about their own future lives, and it leaves the audience with a lot of emotion. And from emotion, there comes action.

## FOCO

FOCO is an association founded by people coming from different fields that aims at moving the non-formal education field forward through innovative projects and initiatives. The main aims of the organisation are:

- To cooperate with other organisations in Spain and Europe to promote social inclusion, creativity, arts, culture, active citizenship, respect towards diversity and other civic values.
- To provide training opportunities for competence development, civic engagement, promotion of social values and others.
- To promote activities and projects that follow the principles of quality, relevance, usefulness and dynamism.

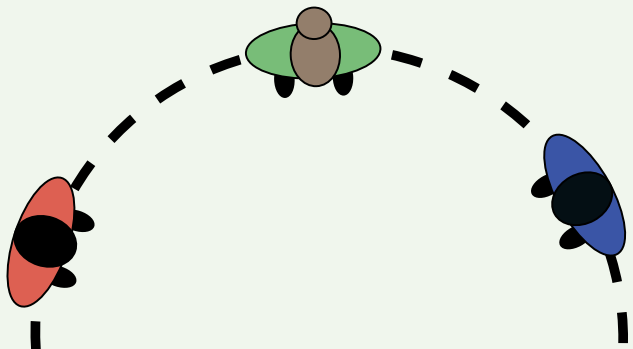
FOCO is a grassroots organisation working locally in the municipality of A Guarda (Spain), a town with 10.000 inhabitants located in the region of Galicia and in the border of Portugal.

The Actúa Verde Festival is an example of how we use theatre to promote environmental action. Actúa Verde was a European project that aimed to increase awareness about environmental issues among young people and encourage their active participation in their local communities. The project involved two organizations, FOCO from A Guarda, Spain, and Calypso from Pavia, Italy, and 22 young people between the ages of 13 and 19 who were interested in reflecting on environmental topics and exploring theatre as a learning experience.

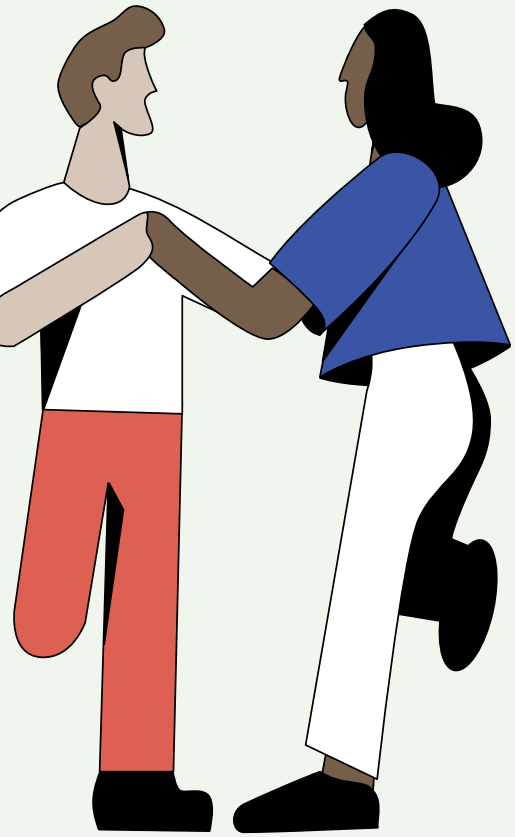
Performances on climate change were developed and presented in A Guarda during the European Youth and Environment Theatre Festival „Actúa Verde." The festival also included workshops for young people, children, and the public. All festival activities during the last two days of the youth mobility were aimed at the general population to increase their awareness of climate change.

## CROOKED HOUSE

Crooked House has developed plays, performances and projects that use theatre and film with young people to promote environmental issues of concern for more than 3 decades. We have always been interested in sharing our ideas and opinions about the most pressing matters relating to climate change. The young people with whom we make theatre rank dealing with climate change as their most important need, even more important than some of their own psychological needs. We have made short films and play texts about this theme, and created performances in parks, rivers, abandoned spaces and areas affected by changing climate. Most of this work can be seen on our website www.crookedhouse.ie



# INTRODUCTION TO DEVISING



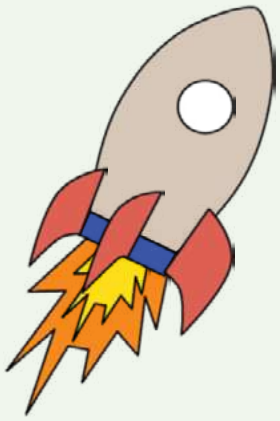
## WHAT IS DEVISING?

Devising is the business of creating performance material from anything except a play-text. Material most usually comes from the feelings, opinions and experiences of the participants who devise the work collaboratively. Devising offers participants a huge amount of control and ownership over the shape, content and structure of the performance. It also allows them to choose the extent to which they wish be to be involved in the finished product. Many people find devising difficult at first because there is no script with which to begin, there are usually no characters or situations, and sometimes there is no theme. Often it is a completely bank slate – rather like a white page facing a writer – simultaneously attractive in that it offers endless possibilities for creation, and repulsive in that it challenges the group to begin with nothing but themselves.

Working in the unknown and relishing the unexpected requires both learner and teacher to have developed a capacity to imagine. When working only with each other and starting there to create something that does not yet exist, participants must be able to see beyond the material into the possible.

*To call for imaginative capacity is to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise. To ask for intensified realisation is to see that each person's reality must be understood to be interpreted experience – and that the mode of interpretation depends on his or her situation and location in the world. It depends as well on the number of vantage points a person is able or enabled to take – the number of perspectives that will disclose multiple aspects of a contingent (not a self-existent) world. To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real. It is to see beyond what the imaginer has called normal or "common-sensible" and to carve out new orders in experience. Doing so, a person may become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet. And the same person may, at the same time, remain in touch with what presumably is. ("Releasing the Imagination" by Maxine Greene, 1995, p19).*

If this capacity is to be developed then certain conditions need to be in place. First among these is the establishment of a learning group who are comfortable enough with each other to share what they consider to be, as Greene puts it, 'what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real' (1995). In theatre-making this learning group is called an ensemble.



# DEVISING AND CULTURAL YOUTH WORK

In youth theatre work we use tried-and-tested creative group-work activities that explore personal confidence, active citizenship, body language and unconscious behaviour.

The process involves helping the members to critically reflect on their own motivations and behaviours, especially in the wider context of dealing with systems in their lives (like the social welfare system, the health-care system, the educational system, etc).

By exploring the history of their interaction with these systems we encourage members to see their actions in a social context and not just in a personal context. By that we mean that we encourage members, for example, not to internalise failure; not necessarily to blame themselves when outcomes with authority are negative; and not to engage in self-destructive behaviour when things go bad for them.

This is part of building up resilience. It requires long-term work of an educational kind, rather than short-term behaviour-fixing type work of a training kind.

For this type of work, discussion-based creative education of the type used in theatre-based learning is very useful because it allows greater ownership of the process to the learners. It is challenging, yes, but it is also rewarding. And while initially members may feel nervous about engaging in such explorations (for example they might be nervous about the prospect of doing role-plays), we ease them into the process over time so that ultimately the gains outweigh any possible trepidations.

LIA

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## OWNERSHIP

A group needs to feel that in the space where they are going to make theatre, they are permitted to share ideas freely. They also need to have a sense that they are in control of the process and of the material. This means that they should be able to include and exclude ideas that they consider appropriate to the piece. The facilitator, of course, contributes to the process as, after all, they are a number of the group too: so their ideas and experiences are important in the creation of the product.

## DIRECTING

The facilitator should also be a director, or at the very least, a dramaturg. This means that they should be able to put dramatic shape on the material being created. They should understand what will engage an audience and what will not. They need to consider the development of the performance, the clarity of the ideas expressed, the knowledge of the form already held by the audience, and ways to help the audience learn about the new form being used. For example, if a devised piece uses a non-traditional narrative using post dramatic forms then some time should be taken to consider what the audience needs to understand about way that the story is being told before the play proceeds too far. This might be as simple as checking that there is no confusion regarding the doubling-up of characters or checking that a character's motivation is logical throughout the play.

## FICTIONALISING

The work will often be based on sensitive issues that emerge from the groups' experience. Make sure therefore, that we do not provoke members into revealing material that they would rather keep private. In these instances, always give options and explain that they do not need to tell the truth, or that they can choose not to share anything if they do not have anything they wish to share.

If a member is sharing a story, the facilitator needs to check that it illuminates the theme, or that it can positively help an audience to hear it. In this case, we should ensure that the member is comfortable sharing this story in a performance space in front of an audience. The conditions of performance are emotionally different to the conditional of rehearsal, and sometimes the young person can be overwhelmed in front of an audience when they were quite comfortable in the rehearsal space.

- It is usually best to proceed with caution here. The following guidelines might help keep this person emotionally safe:

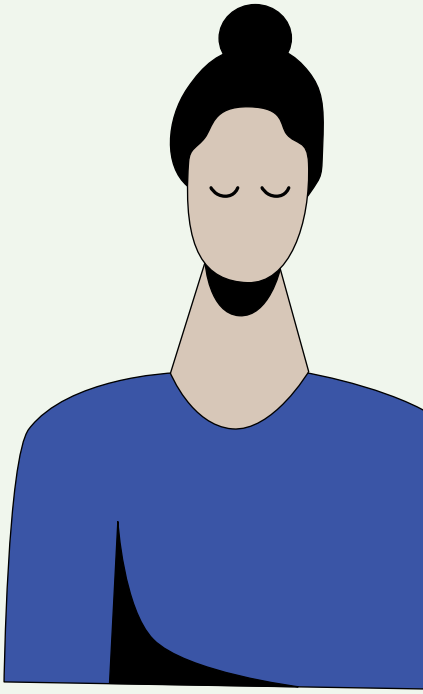
- Use stories that the member has told publicly before, and that they are now used to telling to other people. They will be in control of the narrative.

- Work with another young person to tell the member's story. One is the story giver (whose story it is) and the other is the performer. Two people could work together, with the story giver helping the new performer to perform the story. The performer should have license to change and adapt some of the elements of the original story.

- Disguise the key elements of the story that reveal the identity of the story giver. Change genders, ages, locations etc.

- Have a policy that any member of the group may come and go as they wish throughout the workshop. By this we mean that they may discreetly leave the room to get water, or go to the toilet, or get some air. That means they can remove themselves from the group briefly if they suspect there will be an issue that they are not able to deal with. We are trying to encourage young people – where possible - to look after and to manage their own health, states of mind, physicality, and development.

Explore other methods to fictionalise the members' experiences. Consider inviting the group to come up with ideas about how to perform sensitive material that does not hurt or harm the members of the group or those listening to it.



## AVOIDING THERAPY

The work of devising with young people, while it can have therapeutic results, should never be used as therapy. We are not drama therapists, and we have a responsibility to our young people to avoid harm. Therefore, we should always focus stories, material, ideas and experiences into the world of the social rather than the world of the personal. By this we mean that we explore how social systems, or cultural norms and traditions, or sociological forces, or political situations and ideologies, share and influence the experience of the individual. We do not spend our time exploring how trauma, abuse, damage, or intense emotional experiences have sha[ed and effected our young people. While these elements may arise as part of a story, they are not the primary focus of our work in devising. Similarly, we try not to show on stage any depiction of intense harm (like sexual assault, extreme self-harm, or suicide). We call this gratuitous depiction. It does not have a place in our work with young people. It can have a place in theatre work with professional actors, of course, but we advise that it does not belong in cultural youth work with vulnerable young adults unless the process is lead by a professional who is a drama therapist or art therapist.

## CELEBRATION

Where possible the devising should move in the direction of celebrating identity, achievement or personality. It can, of course, show struggle, hardship and challenges along the way. Often, we get caught up in showing problems only, or we are attracted to only share tragedy. We can also focus on joy, celebration, and success.

## THE NATURE OF THE GROUP IS IMPORTANT

Depending on the nature of the group, the process might involve six to eight two-hour sessions. A group of people that has very low self-esteem, or learning difficulties, would take longer to show results. While a group that is ready to reflect on their situation in a socially critical way would take less time. In general, this type of work is not suited to groups of people who are primarily occupied with coping (ie coping with mental illness, coping with extreme poverty, coping with addiction, etc) as they usually do not have the head-space to consider citizenship ideas. They are best-served by creative drama-therapy type work over a long period of time.

## TRAINING

Many groups, however, are composed of individuals who require training. In this context, training programmes that can provide tips and techniques for effective behaviour modification are useful in helping members develop and practice skills they need for various social activities (ranging from the personal - interviews for jobs - to the vocational - teaching a group).

Drama based methods can be useful here to demonstrate behaviours that can be both critiqued and modelled by the group. Such programmes are short-term and can be focused on specific behaviours that the members wish to improve, or on specific vocational skills that they wish to practise.

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statt
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NICHT zum
VERARBEITEN

# HOW TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN AN ENSEMBLE

# BEYONDBÜHNE

Building and nurturing a vibrant youth theatre ensemble within the confines of a school year, typically spanning about 10 months, requires a thoughtful approach that prioritizes community, growth, and artistic development.

## ASSEMBLING THE ENSEMBLE
**(MONTHS 1-2)**

Begin by gathering young talents interested in theatre. Organize informal meetings and workshops where students can explore their interests and discover their talents without the pressure of auditions. Create a welcoming environment that encourages participation.

## SHARED GOALS AND VISION
**(MONTHS 2-3)**

Bring the ensemble together to discuss their collective aspirations for the school year. Encourage them to express their ideas for upcoming productions. This collaborative approach helps foster a sense of unity and shared purpose.

## TEAM-ORIENTED REHEARSALS
**(MONTHS 3-6)**

During rehearsals, emphasize teamwork and mutual support. Encourage ensemble members to work collaboratively on character development, blocking, and stagecraft. Create an environment where creativity flourishes, and everyone's contributions are valued.

## MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT
**(MONTHS 6-8)**

Pair experienced members with newcomers to provide guidance and support. This mentorship not only helps with skill development but also fosters a sense of camaraderie. Encourage peer-to-peer learning and problem-solving.

## PUBLIC PERFORMANCES
**(MONTHS 8-9)**

As the school year progresses, focus on preparing for public performances. Rehearse intensively to ensure a polished and memorable show. Public performances offer a chance for the ensemble to showcase their hard work, boost their confidence, and create lasting memories.

## CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS
**(MONTH 10)**

As the school year comes to a close, celebrate the ensemble's progress and accomplishments. Recognize and reward individual and group achievements. This boosts morale and reinforces a sense of accomplishment.

## REFLECTION AND PLANNING
**(MONTH 10)**

After the final performance, gather the ensemble for a reflection session. Encourage them to share personal growth stories and lessons learned throughout the year. Use this reflection as a basis for setting new goals for the following school year.

## YEAR-ROUND CONNECTIONS
**(ONGOING)**

Maintain the ensemble's connections throughout the year, even during breaks. Host social events, workshops, and other activities that keep the sense of community and artistic enthusiasm alive.

Building and maintaining a school-year-based youth theatre ensemble isn't just about creating talented actors; it's about nurturing a supportive and creative community that thrives within the academic calendar. By focusing on teamwork, personal growth, and the exhilaration of public performances, you can ensure that the ensemble continues to flourish from one school year to the next.

## CROOKED HOUSE

The ensemble's first task is to spend some time learning about itself. This takes the form of developing an ethos, and a set of norms that are unique to this particular group of learners. There may be two ensembles working in the same youth theatre, for example, but each has a different way of working. One might like to discuss, reflect and process a lot; and the other might like to act, move and test a lot. The teacher here has the role of proposing ways of working that are tested by the group and accepted or rejected. The teacher also makes space for the group members to propose their own ways of working. Time is given in an ensemble to build relationships between the members and between the group and the teacher that will result in effective communication, open more possibilities for experimentation, and create conditions for trust, sharing and collaboration. Finally, the teacher develops the groups' skills to research, using whatever means they find most useful. This process might take only two or three sessions, or it could take months.

### THE MATERIAL

Once the ensemble is established the group focuses on what it wants to learn about. The teacher here proposes structures (or forms) and strategies that he or she has used in the past, and which the ensemble tests and rejects, applies or adapts to its own needs. For example, a teacher might show a method of creating a scene that uses rotating characters and asks the group to make a short piece using this method. The theme they choose to explore, the dialogue, the characters and the situation are all left up the group to devise.

In addition to being experienced in using many different structures, and being clear and supportive in explaining these structures to the group, the teacher or facilitator needs to be open to the possibility that these structures will change due to the way the ensemble uses them. In fact, this for me is one of the most enjoyable aspects of teaching. I am regularly surprised by what a group does to a tired old structure: this inspires me to re-create it for another group, which they in turn may adapt, and so the process continues.

In this pedagogical process the participants do not know what or how they will learn until they have embarked upon the activity and reflected on it. The curriculum emerges from the learning the ensemble does about itself.

In the context of devising a new performance the curriculum is the material the ensemble generates that will be shaped into the performance. A performance might be likened to an exam or assessment or end-of-programme display of what has been learned. All the participants and the facilitator must actively embrace this concept of learning unexpectedly otherwise there will be no performance. Not only should they discover the theme of the work as they develop, but also the tools of teaching, or the methods of facilitation, should be based on this principle.

### DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

In collaborative learning environments of this kind games, tasks and exercises are used to stimulate imagination, and reflection about the activity is used to stimulate critical thinking. The reflection follows the action immediately and it is the place where the surprise is processed and the learning generated. It is central to this method of teaching because without it a teacher is simply pandering to the desire for novelty and distraction by providing fun game after fun game until the fun runs empty. Moreover, the reflection about the activity must connect the unplanned, subjective experience of the student to the world outside of the activity. This is where the unexpected learning for both teacher and student really occurs.

### TYPES OF GROUPS OR ENSEMBLES

Depending on the nature of the group, the process might involve six to eight two-hour sessions. A group of people that has very low

self-esteem, or learning difficulties, would take longer to show results. While a group that is ready to reflect on their situation in a socially critical way would take less time. In general, this type of work is not suited to groups of people who are primarily occupied with coping (ie coping with mental illness, coping with extreme poverty, coping with addiction, etc) as they usually do not have the head-space to consider citizenship ideas. They are best-served by creative drama-therapy type work over a long period of time.

Many groups, however, are composed of individuals who come together simply for training. In this context, training programmes that can provide tips and techniques for effective behaviour modification are useful in helping members develop and practice skills they need for various social activities (ranging from the personal - interviews for jobs - to the vocational - teaching a group). Drama based methods can be useful here to demonstrate behaviours that can be both critiqued and modelled by the group. Such programmes are short-term and can be focused on specific behaviours that the members wish to improve, or on specific vocational skills that they wish to practise.

In groups who are gathered to create art, or to make theatre performances, the process of devising focuses on helping the group build and practice skills to do with collaborative creation. They need to be comfortable with each other and with the facilitator. They need to have something to share with an audience. And they need to figure out dramatic ways to share their expressions. In the context of this project, the material the group will focus on will be related to environmental action. The group will want to urge the audience to take part in measures for change; or they will want to share their concerns about climate change; or they will want to propose solutions to some of the problems they see around them. Using drama allows them to ‚have this conversation' with the audience in a creative, powerful, impactful, and engaging way. After each performance there should ideally be a facilitated discussion between the performers and the audience (anyone who wishes to remain). It is often during this discussion that solutions are suggested, offers are made, understanding sare reached, and plans for change are initiated.

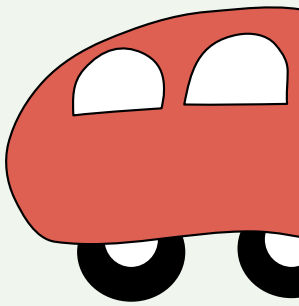
## FOCO

As an ensemble clearly has the goal to devise theatre, we need to propose a creative work that is engaging, challenging and interesting for young participants. While at the beginning of the work it is good to start with some integration work, I find it key that this work is related to the creative work being done afterwards. Therefore, before starting the devising process, the job of a director/facilitator is to bring a proposal. The proposal must not be a fixed result but rather on the process you want to follow.

Therefore, if you want to explore creating a movement piece, the integration workshops du- ring the first days can involve activities around Lecoq's work, dance, physical improvisations and so on.Use these first days to build a common language around the type of work you want to follow and introduce them to the basic instruments you want to use. For example, if I want to use Laban's qualities of movement, it would be good to dedicate time the first workshops so that later on the process, I can ask for a slash type of movement, they can come back to what they already learnt. It also makes them feel like the process is thought out and that the work they are putting in every activity will have a result in the long term. This avoids having to overexplain every activity or game and builds trust between the group and the facilitator.

Nonetheless, the key for maintaining an ensemble is to keep the work challenging for the group. If you work for longer than a year with a group, it can be engaging to decide on different approaches to the devised work on every process. While one piece can be realistic, another can be based on movement, or devise a surrealist scene. This will keep them engaged but also willing to continue in the long term since they will feel like they are evolving as artists as well.

# THE DEVISING PROCESS



# A TYPICAL DEVISING PROCESS

After several weeks of working to create trust, security, and ownership in the group, we will introduce the methods of creating theatre that we use. We will usually begin with a brief that is focused on structure or form. The brief will challenge the group to make a short scenes, or a number of scenes, that adhere to a dramatic structure. The content, theme, characters, and situation will be left up to the group to decide. A typical brief that focuses on form might be:

Create a performance that is no more than 5 minutes long. It should begin with presenting us with something normal, everyday, identifiable to most of us, typical, routine, or quotidian. As the scene or piece develops there should be a gradual increase in the unusual, different, strange or odd. It should conclude with the surreal. So, the piece should be a movement from ordinary to extraordinary, or from real to surreal.

To help the group understand the requirements of the brief, we sometimes give examples:

- Someone you thought you knew well becomes someone you realise you did not know much about at all.
- A place you consider ordinary is slowly transformed into somewhere else.
- A scene that is set in a real-world location (a bus, school, a neighbourhood, a café etc) reveals a subtext that is not seen by everyone. This could be the lead character's daydream. It could be ghostly or otherworldly. It could be the manifestation of tension or anxiety.

We can play with several forms or structures over the course of several sessions, until the group decides which one(s) they really like and wish to use. The exploration of form is really just a vehicle to stimulate situation, characters, ideas and dialogue. Some forms can involve briefs about characters and place. For example:

Create a scene that lasts no more than 6 minutes between two characters that is set in a parked car and is at some stage in the future.

When the ensemble has chosen their form or forms, they move on to use the form in order to share what they want to express, explore and communicate. They begin to make drafts of the scenes or of the performance. The drafting process could take weeks or several sessions. A draft is a version of the full performance.

The facilitator gives feedback after each draft is presented. Your role here is often that of dramaturg and director, shaping the drafts into theatrical or dramatic form, considering what the audience will see and understand, examining how to make it challenging, clear and engaging. When drafting the director and group focuses on analysis and feedback regarding the following aspects:

- The draft should lead to an idea that is performable
- The feedback helps to develop the characters by exploring their needs and motivation
- The feedback examines the relationship of the draft to the real world, real people, and real situations
- The feedback develops the story or situation (dramaturgy).

When drafts become closer to the final performance material, the group will enter the rehearsal stage. A rehearsal is a process of repetition of drafts. Each draft considers the feedback that is given. This is often the stage where cuts are made, music is added, staging possibilities are reviewed and appraised.

Some tips for rehearsal are:

- Consider what will be clear for an audience and what elements will engage them. Drafts will need to be changed to incorporate these aspects.
- Consider the visual: physicality, gestures, movement, and spatial relationships. What will the audience see?
- Repeat the performance to identify arcs, key points, key movement and key lines. Experiment with pace, rhythm (pauses, silences, rants) and volume.

Once the performance is set, then you can transcribe the script as it stands at this stage. This is the working script, or the rehearsal script. At this point we work on monologues, dialogue, clarifying moments, refining comedy or drama, embedding dramatic moments on the page.

The cast works with the newly edited script. Rehearse it until ready for performance.

When it is performed, we film one of the last performances. Then we transcribe this performance as it becomes the official script. We can add this to our bank of scripts or share it with others or revive it in the future.

# PARTNER'S DEVISING PROCESS

## BEYONDBÜHNE

From September 2022 to June 2023, BeyondBühne embarked on an inspiring journey with a group of enthusiastic 13 to 15-year-olds, weaving together creativity, camaraderie, and captivating performances. This transformative experience was marked by remarkable milestones, including a memorable premiere at an international youth theatre festival in the Czech Republic in May and a heartwarming local performance in Baden in June. And while the curtains may have temporarily closed, this journey is far from over, as plans are already underway to showcase the production at several other occasions in the upcoming fall.

### BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

The journey began with auditions that felt more like collaborative gatherings, as BeyondBühne nurtured an environment where each participant's unique talents were celebrated. The selected ensemble members quickly formed a tight-knit community, bonding over shared passions and ambitions. Over the next months, weekly workshops ignited creativity, from improvisation games that unlocked new perspectives to voice training that unveiled hidden strengths.

### CRAFTING THE NARRATIVE

As winter turned to spring, the ensemble embarked on an exhilarating adventure of storytelling. Guided by dedicated mentors, they collectively shaped a narrative that seamlessly wove together their diverse ideas, allowing each individual's voice to shine. Rehearsals took on a collaborative spirit, where the young actors not only refined their lines and movements but also deepened their understanding of character motivations and emotions.

### RISING TO THE STAGE

With the arrival of spring, excitement reached its zenith as the ensemble prepared to bring their creation to life on stage. Intense rehearsals, marked by a mix of nerves and anticipation, were fueled by a shared determination to deliver an unforgettable performance. These final weeks were a testament to the power of teamwork, as cast and crew supported each other through late-night run-throughs and last-minute set adjustments.

### PREMIERE AT INTERNATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

May marked the pinnacle of their journey, as BeyondBühne's production took its bow on an international stage. The ensemble's hard work and dedication shone brightly as they graced the stage at a renowned youth theatre festival in the Czech Republic. Their performance captivated audiences, transcending language barriers and showcasing the universal language of storytelling. This moment was not only a celebration of their talent but also an affirmation of their growth as artists and individuals.

## LOCAL PERFORMANCE IN BADEN

As spring turned to summer, the ensemble brought their production back to their local community. The performance in Baden was a testament to the ensemble's commitment to their craft and their deep connection with their hometown audience. The energy and passion radiating from the stage resonated with those who had supported their journey from the beginning.

## CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

While the official performances for the school year had concluded, the journey was far from its final act. BeyondBühne had already laid the groundwork for the ensemble to shine once again. Plans were underway to showcase their production at various events in the upcoming fall, extending their impact and cementing their legacy as a truly exceptional group of young performers.

The BeyondBühne journey with this group of 13 to 15-year-olds had been one of growth, creativity, and community. From auditions that felt like homecomings to rehearsals that forged unbreakable bonds, the ensemble had cultivated a shared love for theatre that would stay with them for years to come. The premiere at an international festival and the local performance were just the beginning, with the upcoming fall promising more opportunities to inspire and captivate audiences. As the journey continued, BeyondBühne remained committed to nurturing young talent and fostering a lifelong passion for the arts, ensuring that the final curtain was only the start of an exciting new act.

# FOCO

In FOCO we do regular weekly theatre workshops with young people. Within this framework we started the devising of the piece. They were aged 13 to 17 years old and most of them had done at least one year of theatre workshops, though there were a couple of newcomers.

Many of them had also a high level of environmental awareness, and on how art can help them express their concerns and views. Around half of the group had taken part in a previous project, Actúa Verde (Acting Green) in which they organised a youth theatre and arts festival in A Guarda. The other half of the group had an average level of environmental understanding.

Since the group already knew each other, we only dedicated a first session to support the integration process. We did some group games and activities, such as the kerb, found in the TENACT toolkit.

During the next session we introduced the devising idea. We wanted to explore the space and the scenography as the trigger for the work. We created a structure with our wood screens and covered them with protection plastic used by painters to create some sort of cover. We used recycled material for this.

We used this as the background for the devised piece, but it was not the main focus. It is there but we wanted to devise regular life scenes, quotidian ones, but with this new context.

The idea is to use this as the background for the devised piece, but not to have it turn around this topic. It is there but we wanted to devise regular life scenes, quotidian ones, but with this new context.

During this session, participants discovered the space, and we started doing some improvisation work and seeing how the scenography played a part with it. We discovered that it was hard to see what was happening, so we started exploring with lights and shadows.

The next sessions were dedicated to devising the scenes. Divided in couples and groups of three participants devised the scenes, showed them and kept improving them. Once the scenes were on a complete first draft version, they wrote them. Then we delved into them and made some dramaturgic arrangements and sent them back to the participants so that they could study them.

Then we proceeded to the rehearsals phase, first on the scenes, focusing on the acting aspects of it, and then in the theatre we were showcasing them, to fix them to the scenography and lights. It was very useful to be able to use the theatre space for rehearsals with plenty of time.

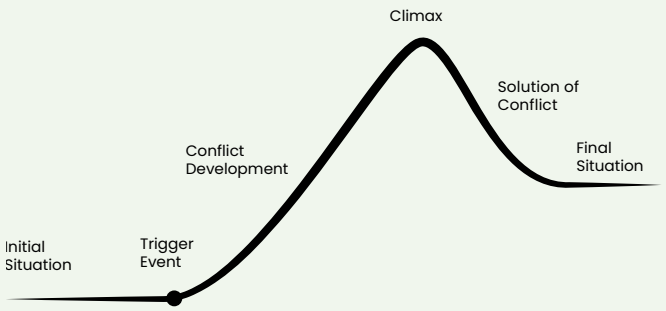
We presented them in the local theatre in A Guarda on the 24th of October, the international day against climate change.

During this process we also dedicated a workshop towards creating the promotional materials for the play. We wanted to use the recycling of materiales also in the promotion, so we created a poster out of used plastic with the information for the play. We prepared a mock-up poster with a plastic bag and participants had the task of finding plastic materials and replicating it.

The first problem we found had to do with the rehearsal room. Since we could not replicate the conditions found in a theatre, and could not black out the room, some of the work that involved lights and shadows had to be postponed to the end. Having the theatre available for rehearsing was a good solution for us.

Also, since the devising work was done in pairs or groups of three, when a group member could not attend a rehearsal, that meant the other member of the couple could not work on their own piece. When this happened, the people that were left alone acted as assistant directors, supporting other groups, and helping them out to rehearse their pieces.

When devising the scenes, we asked participants to follow a traditional structure. We based the work on *Story* by Robert McKee (1998). The had to follow the following structure The following structure they had to follow.




McKee's STORY

We based the work on the stage on Anne Bogart's Viewpoints. We did some exercises based on this, and then we gave participants a set of requirements based on viewpoints that they had to incorporate to their scenes. These were the checklist that we asked them to fulfil:

- First only, one character enters, who starts to do a visible and understandable activity for the audience.
- Then, the other characters enter and present their relationship.
- Characters must swap places at least once
- At least once they must put distance between them.
- At least one character must activate a light device.
- A movement must be in slow motion.
- There must be a moment of hurry.
- There must be a kinesthetic (bodily) response to something another character says.
- An external sound must trigger a reaction on stage.

When devising with a group of young people I find it important to walk them through the process from the beginning, explaining what the steps we are going to take are. This is especially important when you are working against the time. Knowing that there is a plan to arrive to the opening night on time and with a fully created piece can ease their nervousness.

This does not mean that you should have everything sorted out from the beginning, or have a lack of flexibility, but rather you should present your working plan to the group with clear objectives and within the schedule. For that, we presented to the group of young people we were working with the following milestones and the time we would achieve them:

**Milestone 1:** Research the space.

**Milestone 2:** Create a draft of the scene.

**Milestone 3:** Participants write the scenes and the facilitator makes some dramaturgical changes.

**Milestone 4:** RRehearse the scenes.

**Milestone 5:** Rehearse with the lights, sound and other production elements.

**Milestone 6:** Present the piece.

If you are reaching these milestones on time, the group will trust that you have a plan to arrive to the opening night and will not feel an added pressure on them. They will work more freely and creatively. When you are setting these milestones, make sure that you will achieve them, give yourself plenty of time, as it is better to get to them faster than expected and have extra time than to give the group the feeling that you are in a hurry.

## CROOKED HOUSE

Our project in Crooked House Theatre Company was a series of devised performances in parked cars. The performances were devised by 10 young people working with Peter Hussey. The young people came together as a result of a project called Here and There, which used dance and creativity to raise awareness about the environment. After the project finished, they wished to continue their work. And so, they embarked on a TENACT project. They had already a deep understanding of issues to do with environmental and climate action. Their ability to make theatre was already very high.

They were interested in staging scenes set in the future that drew attention to the failure of the present generation to do anything significant about climate change. They made 5 different, short plays which we then filmed and uploaded to YouTube. They can be seen on the You Tube channel of Crooked House Theatre Company.

The process involved Peter working with the group as an ensemble for 5 sessions to create a space for them to express their concerns in a creative way. They played games, staged short improvisations, and discussed issues that were of particular interest to them. Then we worked for another 5 sessions on making material. The programme focused on how to make science fiction material that was set in a future time and place. The group was divided into pairs. We created the following brief for the group and set them off devising:

### GUIDELINES FOR DEVISING

1. There will be 5 short plays each performed in a parked car simultaneously.

2. Each play should be between 5 and 10 minutes long.

3. The audience sits in the back seat. There are 3 people per performance.

4. The cast use the front seats.
(They can also use the boot and outside – but not the back seat).

5. No car can actually be driven (for insurance and other reasons).

6. When an audience sees the play in car 1 they move to car 2 and so on through to the final car. They may start their journey in any car (and move upwards through the sequence).

7. We aim to have all plays more-or-less equal length so that no audience group is waiting for very long between cars.

8. Each play can have 1 or 2 characters. A solo performer, for example, may be on the phone for her/his play, or listening to the radio.

9. The characters act as if the audience is not there.

10. Actors play their own age and gender.

11. The starting point for many of you might be trying to figure out why a young person is in the driver's seat of a car; or why there are two teens in a car. That implies that there doesn't always need to be an actual character who drives (they may have come out to the car for privacy, for example).

12. The plays do not need to relate to each other. Each one can be in a different place in a different time.

13. All performances will have to take into account that the audience will be watching from behind you. Be clever with use of mirrors, laptops, phones, snapchat, and turning to each other so the audience will see.

The process of devising went smoothly. After we staged them, we made a film of each one for our record.

# IDEAS FOR DEVISING

# SUGGESTIONS

## TIPS

Consider rehearsing scenes in chronological order. This unique approach helps newcomers understand the storyline and character development while fostering team bonding. It allows actors to track their character's growth and reduces the overwhelming feeling of learning an entire script at once. Rehearsing chronologically enables real-time problem-solving, mimicking live performance challenges, and enhancing the overall cohesion and engagement of the ensemble.

Encourage newcomers to maintain character journals throughout the rehearsal process. In these journals, they can jot down thoughts, emotions, and experiences from their character's perspective. This helps them deepen their understanding of the role, fostering a more immersive and authentic performance. It also provides a creative outlet for newcomers to explore and express their character's inner world outside of rehearsals. Additionally, sharing and discussing these journals with fellow cast members can lead to insightful discussions, enriching the overall character development process and building connections within the ensemble.

Flip the script, quite literally, by having newcomers and experienced ensemble members temporarily swap roles during rehearsals. This exercise promotes empathy and a deeper understanding of characters, as newcomers get to experience the challenges and motivations of different roles. It also encourages collaboration as ensemble members work closely to help each other grasp their temporarily assigned characters. This unique approach can lead to unexpected insights, improve ensemble dynamics, and enhance newcomers' versatility and appreciation for the theatrical craft.

## IDEAS

Create a movement-based piece that explores the destruction of a habitat. Get inspired by animals but do not play them out.

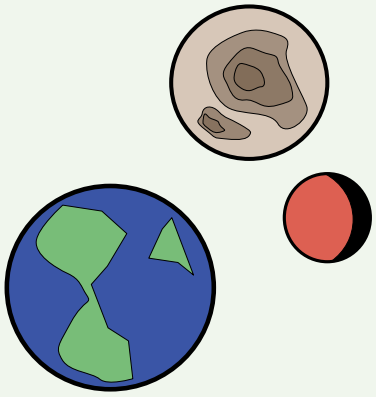
Choose a nearby space that has suffered a climate catastrophe and create a site-specific scene. For instance, in Galicia we would choose a forest that had been burnt. This will force the audience to visit these spaces and see what local consequences climate change has.

Make a half hour play that shows the decay of a habitat. Make a sub-plot that charts the decline of a relationship, or the growth of a human system, etc. Propose styles of theatre-making for this (e.g., combine chorus work, pair dialogue, group scenes, projections etc).

Create scenes for isolated environments like an iceberg floating in the sea; a marooned island in a rising sea; a wasted forest after a wildfire.

Create a short play based on recorded interviews. The interviews should be taken from people in your locality that answer the same question. Sample questions are 'What would you give up, if anything, to reverse the rising temperatures in the world?' or 'Is Climate Change the result of human action?' or 'How concerned are you about climate change?'

Perform a series of short monologues as the voices of several creatures who became extinct in the last year, as researched by your group.



# RESOURCES


**Acting out Solutions to Enviromental Conflicts**
– Alison Ormsby

**Games for Actors and Non-Actors**
(2nd edition; Routledge; London; 2002).
by Augusto Boal

**House of Games: making Theatre from Everyday Life** (Second Edition | Nick Hern Books | London | 2005)
by Chris Johnston

**Enacting Participatory Development: Theatre-based techniques**
(James & James ltd; London; 2004)
by Julie Mc Carthy with Karla Galvão

**Making a Leap - Theatre of Empowerment: a practical handbook for creative drama work with young people**
(Jessica Kingsley Publishers; 1999)
by Sara Clifford and Anna Herrmann

# PARTNERS

FOCO is an association founded by people coming from different fields that aims at moving the non-formal education field forward through innovative projects and initiatives. The main aims of the organisation are:

- To cooperate with other organisations in Spain and Europe to promote social inclusion, creativity, arts, culture, active citizenship, respect towards diversity and other civic values.
- To provide training opportunities for competence development, civic engagement, promotion of social values and others.
- To promote activities and projects that follow the principles of quality, relevance, usefulness and dynamism.

In order to achieve these goals, FOCO promotes different activities and projects using non-formal methodologies with a broad range of target groups, including participants with fewer opportunities.

FOCO provides training opportunities tailored to the needs of the target group, and these activities are implemented both for trainers, facilitator, educators or youth workers (training the trainers) as well as directly with the beneficiaries.

Additionally, FOCO supports other organisations that wish to upscale their projects l by providing consulting and training services. In that sense, FOCO is already working at an international level by accompanying other grassroots organisations to carry out their projects, bringing the experience of the members of FOCO with regards to project coordination, non-formal training and facilitation.

Currently there are 4 members working for the organisation and around 5 volunteers as well as different people willing to contribute from time to time. We try to involve the youth of our region as much as possible in order to improve their personal and professional circumstances, as well as the internationalization of our semi-rural region.

www.focoeuropa.com

## JUAN ESCALONA CORRAL

Juan is a theatrical facilitator with an extensive career, having facilitated a wide range of diverse groups, over 30 international theatre projects and developed several facilitation resources. He began in 2012 by facilitating theatre workshops. During these years, he worked with young people, taking on new challenges each year. In 2015, he joined the youth and theatre association ON&OFF as a trainer and coordinator of European projects, collaborating with schools and associations throughout Europe.

Subsequently, in 2019, he completed a volunteer project in Ireland and returned to Spain to work as a coordinator of European projects at DEFOIN S.L., managing educational innovation projects in collaboration with institutions throughout Europe. In 2021, he founded FOCO and began studying a degree in Performing Arts. Throughout his career, Juan received training in theatrical facilitation, non-formal education, and various theatrical techniques, and conducted numerous workshops and training sessions. He also contributed to the creation of educational manuals related to theatre and education.

## GONZALO MARTÍNEZ RAMIRO

Gonzalo studied a BA in History at Rey Juan Carlos University. During his years of study, he worked in the private sector, undertook an internship at the Youth Theatre Association ON&OFF, where he later organized the First European Seminar of New Theatre (ESYT), and trained in various theatrical techniques such as Layton, Chekhov, or Meisner.

After moving to Ireland in 2019 as part of a volunteer project funded by the European Union, Gonzalo trained in theatrical facilitation, participated in theatre productions, conducted workshops in secondary schools, and managed the financial administration of the organization. Upon his return to Spain, he became involved in the founding and presidency of the FOCO association, where he continues as a project coordinator. Gonzalo is currently pursuing a master's degree in "Research in Cultural Law" jointly offered by Carlos III University and UNED.

## CROOKED HOUSE

Crooked House is a theatre-making organisation established in 1993 in Newbridgein County Kildare, Ireland by Peter Hussey. We make theatre with, for and by young people from the ages of 11 to 24. Participation in all our activities is free and open to anyone. Our work is inspired by tolerance, equality, social justice, compassion, and empathy. We aim to create theatre that is ambitious, challenging, aesthetically engaging, and relevant to our audiences.

Our activities include weekly drama workshops, rehearsals and performances of plays; devising and making new performances; actor-training; research into theatre and young people; and international youth theatre projects. We run a small space in Newbridge where we work with over 100 young people weekly. We also travel to schools and youth projects in County Kildare every week to run free theatre programmes with young people. Our youth theatre is the largest in Ireland and the oldest in Kildare.

We have been very successful in placing young people who want to be actors into third level actor training courses in the UK and Ireland. We select the top 5 programmes in the world (mostly in London) and work with young people who do not have many opportunities to get them a place. We have collaborated with European theatres since 2002 to develop educational and performance projects with groups of multicultural young people. We train young drama facilitators and leaders to work with youth groups on themes of social justice, equality, and human rights, wellbeing, and democratic processes. These themes are expressed through theatre workshops, devised performances, and plays. This work aims to promote positive mental health; increase citizenship abilities; promote equality and develop critical thinking. We bring young people from all of the socioeconomic classes and backgrounds together in one place.

Crooked House is centred on the needs of the young people it serves. Many of our participants are marginalized young people and early school-leavers. We also aim to integrate young people with special needs into mainstream workshops. There is a Members' Committee which meets monthly to reflect on and advise about the work of the organisation.

Crooked House is a registered charity with a board of trustees. We operate comprehensive Child Protection policies, have Garda Clearance for all our volunteers, and have a Welfare Officer in place to guide the company's work with the young people.

It is funded by project-specific funding from the European Union (for European Solidarity Corps volunteering projects), The Arts Council (for theatre-making with young ensembles), and Kildare County Council (annual funding to support workshop delivery). The HSE fund drama based mental health initiatives, and Kildare Wicklow ETB fund our leadership training work.

crookedhouse.ie

## PETER HUSSEY

Peter Hussey is Artistic Director of Crooked House Theatre Company Ireland which he founded in 1993 and which established Kildare Youth Theatre in 1996. He is a writer, director, lecturer, researcher, and drama facilitator. He has been a contributor to academic programmes at Maynooth University since 1989. These have been about theatre, embodied learning, and applied drama in youth-work with Department of Adult and Community Education, and the Department of Applied Social Studies. He is a trainer in education and youth arts with experience for over 25 years. Peter has developed and delivered training programmes in theatre-based methods of education and of development to a wide range of organisations and groups, and is responsible for the Ireland's first undergraduate programme in Directing for Theatre. Peter recently directed work with student actors in Drama Studio (London, UK), the National Theatre of Greece Acting School, and in Suleyman Demirel University, Turkey. He has directed work with many collaborators in Europe, notably with Theatre Le Grand Bleu (Lille, France), Teatro della Limonaia (Florence, Italy), National Theatre (London, UK), Rogaland Teater (Stavanger, Norway) and with Erasmus+ programmes in most EU countries. Peter researches the impact of collaborative theatre-making on young people.

## OĞUZHAN ŞAHIN

Oğuzhan Şahin graduated from the Acting Department of Süleyman Demirel University's Performing Arts Department in 2019. One year after completing his education, he was selected for the European Solidarity Corps project within the framework of Crooked House Theatre Company in Ireland, where he provided drama workshops for young people for one year. In his first year in Ireland, he played the role of Shylock in Kildare Youth Theatre's Shakespeare production of "The Merchant of Venice."

After completing the volunteer project in Ireland, Oğuzhan continued to work with Crooked House Theatre and managed in-house and outreach workshops. In 2022, as part of the National Theatre London Connections festival, he directed the play "Like There's No Tomorrow" for Kildare Youth Theatre, which also went on a tour to Belfast. He also directed Kildare Youth Theatre's National Theatre Connections 2023 production, "The Heights". Currently, Oğuzhan serves as the director of Kildare Youth Theatre's production for the National Theatre London Connections 2024. As of September 2023, Oğuzhan continues his role as the Company Manager at Crooked House Theatre. His responsibilities include managing, overseeing, and mentoring international volunteers who join the organization each year.

## BEYONDBÜHNE

BeyondBühne is a place where all young people can develop artistically. You are taken seriously here. You can come as you are. Run free! Since our founding in 2003, we've been a stage for the curious.

We developed rapidly: The starting 60 members soon turned to several hundred children and youths that create their own personal art through means of theatre, dance and film.

Soon we left the Austrian borders behind us: Our network covers over 70 youth theatres in more than 30 countries. Our members regularly travel afar, to work on art projects with others, and we invite youth groups to stay with us.

In 2017, our long-standing engagement was rewarded with the Kulturpreis des Landes NÖ.

Now, we have 6 people employed, around 20 more to support us in their free time and we reach around 400 children and teenagers each year with our courses.

The creative work in our groups is led by academically trained art pedagoges. Many voluntary workers lend their hand in different fields behind the stage: make-up, costumes, marketing, catering and many more.
In addition, we work together with a professional light and sound team. All of them are in it with their whole hearts: Passionately curious!

BeyondBühne recognised the principles of cultural education as the best way to holistically nurture young people. Our focus lies in the fields of theatre, dance and film, that oftentimes meld together in practice. Through the means of the performing arts, our members discover both their interests and potential.

Within a yearly course, the plays are developed in small groups and in the end performed on stage. The children and youths are encouraged to come up with themes that are important to them or they interpret predetermined ideas themselves. Aesthetically pleasing forms of expression are found through playful improvisation and workshop-like experimentation, leading to an artistic outcome that's selfmade and unique.

Another important aspect of our work lies in the mediation of autonomy, as the young people take initiative in their creative work and their experimentation. The group situation mobilises the ability to be creative and it often leads to innovative solutions. The help and feedback of our pedagoges makes our members feel safe and raises their appetite for risk in their art. The youngsters can show their potential in this safe environment and learn to acknowledge their boundaries.

The children and youths learn to creatively utilise insecurities and complexities, to work cooperatively in heterogeneous groups as well as experience their self-efficacy. It is those abilities that help them to stand out and persist in a time where knowledge is easily accessible online.

beyondbuehne.at

## GREGOR RUTTNER-VICHT

Gregor Ruttner-Vicht's passion for youth theatre has been a lifelong commitment that traces back to his own childhood. Joining BeyondBühne's board in 2012 marked a pivotal moment in his journey, solidifying his dedication to the realm of dramatic arts. Holding a Master of Arts in Drama in Education/Theatre Pedagogy from Vienna, Gregor has been instrumental in leading classes at BeyondBühne for over a decade. Diving into the international arena, Gregor embarked on his Erasmus+ and Youth in Action projects in 2011, becoming a driving force behind numerous initiatives each year. His contributions were officially recognized in 2023 when he received the title of Erasmus+ Youth Ambassador of Austria from the National Agency and the government. In addition to his practical involvement, Gregor shares his wealth of knowledge as a lecturer at the University College of Teacher Education in Lower Austria, specializing in arts education and drama. He initiated the "Theatre Pedagogy as a tool for social learning" course of studies in 2023, further enriching the academic landscape. Gregor's influence extends beyond the classroom, as he consistently contributes to the academic discourse in German journals and books, focusing on the dynamic and evolving field of youth theatre.

## FABIENNE MÜHLBACHER

Fabienne Mühlbacher was born in Mödling in 1996 and turned to arts from an early age on. Painting, playing the piano, acting and writing has always been part of her life. After graduating from high school with distinction in 2014, she finished her Master of Science and Engineering in architecture at the Technical University of Vienna in minimum duration. She took part in architectural study visits to Ghana, Iran, Cyprus and London to get a better understanding of different cultures through analyzing their habitats. During her studies, she also was part of many theatre projects, resulting in her performing every other weekend before the pandemic.

After that, she took the managing position in the local theatre of Baden, BeyondBühne as well as a side job in architecture. Since then, she founded two more organizations concerning arts. She founded the first in 2019, Pointe, which is a network for young, local artists and for events in that context. The second one is Failstunde (translating to fail hour) since 2022, the mission there is to strengthen the exposure to failure through arts. With this concept, she already won three prizes in the Austrian start up scene.

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