**TIP CARDIFF EVENT**

Over four days in Cardiff in August 2022, the young workshop leaders, supported by theatre professionals, worked with young people from the different partner countries who face exclusion to create an original piece of theatre based on their experiences. Workshop leaders worked in pairs, providing a supportive team, giving each of them the opportunity to connect and creatively collaborate with a workshop leader from another partner organisation. This allowed them to feel supported and empowered them to share leadership and lead in a collaborative way.

Shared leadership is key to this model of inclusive practice and has been a key and important element of the whole project.

The workshop leaders were given clear artistic guidelines regarding the length of the piece and a limited number of lighting and sound cues. This was to avoid an over complicated technical piece as well as ensuring the focus was on the participants as performers and theatre makers.

Three young people also volunteered to work on opening, ending and transitions of the final piece and on the technical/production aspects.

**THE PROCESS**

**Whole group ensemble building**

Young workshop leaders from different countries who have experienced exclusion were trained by theatre professionals online over a year in a diverse range of inclusive theatre practices. They built confidence and workshop leader skills, bringing together the different practices to develop their own individual approach to inclusive theatre practice.

The culminating event began with selection of inclusive ensemble building activities designed for the young people to get to know each other, to connect and to build a sense of community. Activities involved pairs work, to allow each young person to individually connect with someone they didn’t know, as well as small group activities made up of young people from the different partner organisations.

The theatre experts led these activities in order to give the workshop leaders the opportunity to stand back and get a sense of the energy of the group.

Activities were playful, physical and energising to establish the celebratory nature of coming together.

The purpose of the event was also explained so that the participants had an idea of:

1. The final outcome which involved a sharing to a public audience
2. The process
3. The theme and purpose of the event and overall project

**Small ensembles: Experiencing the different theatre forms**

All participants and workshop leaders experienced intensive workshops with each of the theatre experts from the different countries. This was on rotation to allow everyone to start from a common foundation. Each workshop focussed on Devised theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre of the Senses and Verbatim Theatre. This gave the young participants the chance to work with each of the inclusive theatre practices in depth. The theatre experts were supported by the workshop leaders giving them the opportunity to work collaboratively with the groups they were leading.

The workshops focussed on particular theatre-making techniques from the different practice.

**Small ensembles: Building ensemble and exploring exclusion**

The participants were divided into mixed groups and each group worked with two of the newly trained workshop leaders from two different organisations.

Each group explored the themes of exclusion and inclusion, sharing stories and experiences through activities and games. The groups were guided by the workshop leaders who used techniques from the different theatre practices to explore real life stories while also developing a sense of ensemble in the small groups. Each group used elements of the different theatre practices in different ways, creating their own unique and personal workshop leading style.

Each group developed a short piece of theatre on a particular aspect of exclusion and inclusion.

These were shared with the whole group giving all participants the opportunity to see each other’s work as the workshop leaders the chance to begin to consider how the final piece would be structured.

Sharing work with other groups is key to maintaining a sense of all the young people as one ensemble and is another inclusive strategy to make sure everyone consistently is aware of how the work is being shaped. This allows them to have input on the final piece and also understand where their piece sits within the whole.

**Whole group- putting together the individual pieces.**

The workshop leaders decided on the final structure and the two young people dedicated to the development of opening, ending and transitions now lead whole group sessions.

Ensembles went back into their ensemble groups and focussed on refining their pieces for performance to an audience. At this point the workshop leaders switched mode from theatre-making to directing. The ensembles rehearsed the pieces.

The whole group then worked on opening, ending, transitions and the technical elements fo light and sound. This was led by a young person working with a professional venue technician.

**Sharing**

The final piece, though of a high artistic standard and well-rehearsed was positioned as a sharing. This was designed to:

* reduce performance anxiety for the young people
* communicate an equal relationship between audience, performers and theatre-makers
* position the final performance as a gift, providing insight into exclusion and inclusion
* acknowledge the short amount of time the piece was created
* recognise that the purpose was greater than performance and production