



Inclusion and Accessibility Pack

Theatre as an Inclusive Practice

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Inclusion and Accessibility pack is to provide information and general guidance on how to ensure inclusivity in the process of preparing for, developing and implementing theatre related practices. It is to be used by workshop leaders, theatre experts, support staff and the participants themselves. It does not present an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of potential risks and related preventive and mitigation measures.

The key areas of implementing this document are:

- During our work with the target groups (**ensuring accessibility and equal involvement in the workshops**)
- While approaching and dealing with topics related to exclusion (**guaranteeing that the work with the young people stays focused on matters of exclusion**)
- When creating the final visual presentations, delivering the project messages (**accessibility of project products**)

II. Process

II.a. Needs' Assessment

The first step that a theatre workshop leader should take is to conduct a NEEDS' ASSESSMENT. This assessment would depend on the specific group, location for rehearsal, performance, and theme. Its purpose is to evaluate the needs of the group, the types of risks of exclusion, as well as the equipment and material base they have available and/or need.

Here we provide an example of such an assessment tool, which can be modified, depending on the specific case.

N.B. Some of the risks of exclusion may not be apparent or disclosed at the start. They could be revealed during the work process, hence the assessment tool should remain open and be considered and if needed amended continuously.

Needs based on risks		
Category	YES	NO
Participants with special needs in the group		

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Cognitively challenged participants <i>(list relative categories. For example: Autism, Asperger)</i>		
Physical disabilities <i>(list relative categories. For example: visual impairments, hearing impairment, wheelchair)</i>		
Socio-economic challenges <i>(List relative categories. For example: health, lack of transportation, limited resources)</i>		
Migration <i>(list relative categories. For example: Language barriers, Risk of ethnical/cultural discrimination, Risk of racial discrimination, Risk of gender discrimination)</i>		
Behaviour challenges <i>(list relative categories. For example: aggression, anti-social behaviour)</i>		
Challenges related to identity, including but not limited to sexual orientation and gender identity		
Neurodiversity, High Sensory Sensitivity		

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Main challenge/s that the workshop leader should consider

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Facilities/equipment available		
Category	YES	NO
Room/hall with wheelchair access		
Light and light distribution in accordance with the needs of the participants		
Printing equipment, including availability for altering printed text depending on the participants needs		
Sound system if needed and sound distribution		
Signage and space indicators if needed		
Other		

II.b. Implementation

The workshop should be conducted in a calm and well-guided manner. The participants should be able to receive support throughout the activities and if questions or concerns arise, these should be addressed. Each of the included theatre practices is different and can provoke different emotional responses from the participants themselves. They should be able to remove themselves if they so choose. The workshops should be led with the risks of exclusion in mind, following the selected themes and in close collaboration and open communication with the group itself. The evaluation would help the workshop leader to make the necessary amendments for the next session.

II.c. Evaluation

It is important to conduct regular evaluations on the matters of inclusivity and accessibility. This could be done in a simple and straightforward manner through group discussions and when necessary private conversations. If the workshop leader deems it necessary, the questions can be given to the participants separately to fill in anonymously, if they so choose. The evaluation should be conducted in 3 stages: before the start of the session, after the end of a session, and upon completion of the entire training.



Before the session:

Question	YES	NO	How to improve/Comments
Is the venue easily accessible to you?			
Do you foresee any difficulty in participating fully in the workshop?			
Have all the necessary measures been taken to ensure accessibility?			
Have all the necessary measures been taken to ensure your full participation?			
Have you been provided with all the necessary materials?			
Were the materials and instructions you received appropriate, altered to your needs and sufficient?			
Any additional comments, concerns and suggestions			

After the session:

Question	YES	NO	How to improve/Comments
Did you find any difficulties in terms of accessibility during the workshop?			
Did you experience any difficulty in participating fully in the workshop?			
Were all the necessary measures been taken to ensure accessibility?			
Were all the necessary measures been taken to ensure your full participation?			
Did you feel included during the workshop?			
Were the materials and instructions you received appropriate, altered to your needs and sufficient?			
Any additional comments, concerns and suggestions			

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After the training:

Question	YES	NO	How to improve/Comments
Did you find any difficulties in terms of accessibility during the training?			
Did you experience any difficulty in participating fully in the training?			
Were all the necessary measures taken to ensure accessibility?			
Were all the necessary measures taken to ensure your full participation?			
Did you feel included during the workshop?			
Were the materials and instructions you received appropriate, altered to your needs and sufficient?			
Did the training have a positive impact on you in terms of inclusion?			
Do you have a better understanding of the themes of inclusion/exclusion after completing the training?			
Do you think that theatre is a good tool when addressing issues of exclusion?			
Would you participate again in a similar training?			
Did the workshop leader/s take all the necessary measures to make you feel included?			
Would you say that you feel more included after the completion of the training?			
Any additional comments and suggestions			

III. Categories

III.a. Physical accessibility

- The venue where the groups meet, work and perform should be accessible for people of all abilities.
- Where the location lacks certain features that make it accessible, e.g. Braille information is missing, we should either place Braille guidance or if this is not possible due to reasons outside of our scope of influence, welcoming assistants or chaperons should be provided at least until the sight impaired participant is confident enough in navigating the space on their own. Should the location lack wheel-chair access

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however, which is not something we can intervene about, we should change the location.

- Partners can do an evaluation of venue accessibility according to the notes we already have from previous visual awareness activities for VI participants as well as from national wheelchair access requirements.
- The evaluation of every venue should be done together with the person or persons, whose access it aims to guarantee.

III.b. Information accessibility

- Where participants need to carry out certain preparations for their upcoming meeting, they need to receive instructions in advance, in a form, which is accessible for them. They should also always have a possibility to get in touch with a contact person for clarifying aspects that may have remained unclear. Having said that, the facilitator should be prepared to hand in paper copies of instructions for the follow-up session, in case that not all workshop participants have internet access at home.
- During the workshop, the facilitator should use a language and instructions, which are easy to understand by all. The facilitator and the participants in the workshops should be patient and flexible enough to explain certain instructions in different ways to group members who still fail to comprehend what is required of them.
- Participation accessibility – participants should be encouraged to join and contribute to all activities. Where one or more participants tend to keep in the periphery of activities, it will be the task of the facilitator/s to call them to action, to give them the word, to introduce additional confidence and team-building exercises.
- Where participants have certain disabilities, they should be given the time they need to perform their task or express themselves. They should never feel rushed or be interrupted mid-sentence.

Participation accessibility – the facilitator/s should be aware of the principles of Universal design for learning:

- PRINCIPLE I. PROVIDE MULTIPLE MEANS OF REPRESENTATION
- PRINCIPLE II. PROVIDE MULTIPLE MEANS OF ACTION AND EXPRESSION
- PRINCIPLE III. PROVIDE MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
- and use them if and when necessary (e.g., a participant with a speech impediment can be allowed to dance out or use pantomime in order to express what they want to share).



As the participants progress with the skills building, start introducing different issues related to inclusion/exclusion, encourage them to interweave personal or other people's stories of exclusion/inclusion in the performances and expressions they create.

- Introduce and when possible, attend or observe performances that tackle issues of exclusion.
- Expand the participants' access to expertise and knowhow from third parties, dealing with matters of exclusion/inclusion via theatre.

III.d. Accessibility of project products

- If you add animations and effects to your videos, use colours thoughtfully and with good contrast; ensure that the information is not conveyed with colours alone and when colours are used, they are sufficiently distinguishable. Apply this principle to any content that conveys information.
 - Use text that is easy to read: When displaying text on screen, ensure the font size is large enough and text is on the screen for long enough to read.
 - Avoid fast-flashing content and reduced motion animations: If such content is present and/or it goes beyond acceptable thresholds, this should be duly noted so that the person watching may decide to cancel if they have a condition (epilepsy, Chiari malformation, photophobia, vestibular disorders, etc.) with adverse reactions, which flashes or animations may provoke. When possible, if a video includes one or a couple of flashes, those should be announced at the beginning, their timings should be specified and there should be a SOUND signal introduced a short while before they go off, so that the person watching can still try to plan and actually watch the video, skipping the hurtful part.
 - Avoid auto-playing music or video content- giving users the option to play music, instead of giving users music and having them figure out how to turn it off.
 - Disabling auto-play for video and gif content on social media
 - Avoiding auto-play sidebar videos on websites
 - Choose a video format that can stream seamlessly.
1. MP4: Most digital platforms and devices support MP4. An MP4 format can store audio files, video files, still images, and text. Additionally, MP4 provides high quality video while maintaining relatively small file sizes.
 2. MOV: a popular video file format designed by Apple to support the QuickTime player. MOV files contain videos, audio, subtitles, timecodes and other media types. It is compatible across different versions of QuickTimePlayer, both for Mac and Windows. Since it is a very high-quality video format, MOV files take significantly more memory space on a computer.
 3. WMV: widely used in Windows media players, provides small file sizes with better compression than MP4. That is why it's popular for online video streaming. Although it is not

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compatible with Apple devices, users can download Windows Media Player for their iPhone or Mac.

4. WebM: an open-source video format that was developed with the current and future state of the Internet in mind. WebM is intended for use with HTML5. The video codecs of WebM require very little computer power to compress and unzip the files. The aim of this design is to enable online video streaming on almost any device, such as tablets, desktop, smartphones or devices like smart TV.

N.B. For online videos choose a file format that most web browsers support. MP4 and WEBM are browser compatible video formats.

- Choose an accessible video player.
- Ensure the video player supports captions, transcripts, and audio descriptions.
- Ensure all controls, like volume, play, and pause, can be operated with a keyboard and have accessible labels for assistive technology such as screen readers.
- <https://www.accessibilityoz.com/ozplayer/>
- YouTube player
- Add captions to the videos.
- Captions should be:
 - Synchronised - the text content should appear at approximately the same time that audio would be available.
 - Equivalent - content provided in captions should be equivalent to that of the spoken word.
 - Accessible - caption content should be readily accessible and available to those who need it.
 - Captioning has additional benefits to those that immediately come to mind.
 - Captions help you increase your viewer base. Multilingual captions are a great way to make videos accessible to a wider audience, speaking a language different from the language the video is created in. In T.I.P. we will be providing captions in all partner languages.
 - Captions help when watching videos in loud environments.
 - Captions improve the search engine optimization (SEO) of your video as content in text form is better indexed by search engines.
 - Captions can be closed or open. Closed captions can be turned on or off. Open captions are always visible. Most websites provide closed captions for video content.
- Add transcripts to the videos. These can be helpful to: A person who is blind, has other disabilities, or otherwise cannot or prefers not to watch the video will still be able to get all the information in text form. A person using assistive technology such as a screen reader to access a transcript may be able to get the same content in less time than listening to the actual audio content. This is because experienced screen reader



users may increase their reading speed to a pace much faster than we speak. Including transcripts can be helpful to everyone at different times — for example, when people don't want to spend the time to watch the video but will scan a transcript to get the information they want quickly. Including a transcript makes your video more searchable as content in text form is better indexed by search engines.

- Transcripts can be thought of as text versions of our videos. A transcript should include not only what is spoken in the video, but also descriptions of actions or important information on-screen.
- A fully accessible video should include both captions and a transcript.
- Creating a transcript – formatting and reusing the already created captions or manually typing up the content (suitable only if videos are being created rarely). Using speech recognition software – also possible, but it needs training to be able to transform the spoken words into text.
- Add audio descriptions to the videos. A complete audio description guides as provided by UCAN Productions team member Alastair Sill is available as an annex to this IO.

N.B. The free YouDescribe platform can be used for adding audio descriptions to our videos. YouDescribe can be used with or without an account for viewing videos, but connecting to a Google account is required for requesting videos and creating descriptions.

IV. Suggestions on how to manage some of the included risks.

➤ Disability and special needs

- Wheelchair access, lighting, braille, different floor patterns/colours, sound distribution
- Make everyone present themselves in an orderly manner, indicating their position, and with good articulation.
- Ask for suggestions from the group about alterations in the activity- all activities can be adapted.
- Think about the language that you use. At the start, a discussion can be held where everyone states what terms they prefer being used during the sessions.
- Asking the participants what they need in order to take part.
- Visual awareness (contrast, size of font, possibility to send material advance)
- Asking the group and the individuals within the group what their access requirements are
- Choose an accessible venue.
- Universal design for learning- when needed, present the information and instructions in different ways.

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- Assistants can be present and support when/if necessary.
- Peer leaders can be assigned in sessions, providing support. Two people running a session - this would allow one of them to provide support to whoever needs such. It is recommended that this is done on rotation basis to ensure full participation and indicate that all participants have a responsibility towards one another.
- Online BSL and palantypists required for hearing impaired participants.
- Have a designated location, where if needed a person can go to, relax, remove herself/himself from an intense situation.

➤ **Economic obstacles**

- Cover whatever costs emerge, related to the activities implemented in the initiative.
- Select a venue for activities that is accessible, or arrange transportation- weather is carpooling, organised, etc.
- Providing food and refreshments for longer sessions. IMPORTANT: consult about dietary requirements and allergies prior to making any food arrangements
- In case of online sessions, make sure that the participants have access to the internet/computer/device. Otherwise provide the content in another form.
- Host people physically in a venue from where they can access online activities. Cover mobile data when possible.
- Work in partnership with cultural venues for free or reduced-price tickets
- Ask paying audience to sponsor anonymous ticket donations for those that can't afford it.
- "Pay what you can" type of ticketing.
- Providing childcare alongside project (when possible/applicable)

➤ **Migration**

- Avoid working with people whose refugee experience is too fresh.
- Use a lot of laughing games.
- Try to create experiences with reflection that put people in the shoes of people with a refugee experience.
- If a person with strong refugee experience is involved, the meetings need to be regular over a prolonged period of time so that there is enough time to build trust and connect on a human level. Or if it is within a compressed period of time having the opportunity to do everything together - eat, discuss, share, play.
- All economic obstacles are similar and so the same access needs required.
- Translation if needed.
- Try to use inclusive language as much as possible: people with refugee experience instead of refugees, or people with migrant experience instead of migrants.
- Providing childcare alongside project (if you have female participants)



- <http://riserefugee.org/10-things-you-need-to-consider-if-you-are-an-artist-not-of-the-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-community-looking-to-work-with-our-community/>

➤ **Cultural differences**

- Take into consideration religious holidays/practices/restrictions/values/gestures and be respectful.
- When possible, a mixed group with such activities that raise awareness and can learn from each other.
- Indicate in the beginning that the workshop is a safe space.
- Indicate in the beginning that it is important to share their stories.

➤ **LGBTQI+**

- Check and respect names and pronouns, preferably at the start of each session.
- Taking care not to 'out' people
- Make no assumptions.
- Making sure that language is open, not discriminating, avoid the use of derogatory words even when we speak of innocent jokes.

➤ **Neurodiversity, High Sensory Sensitivity**

- if anyone expresses themselves that they are neurodivergent, ask them what they need to be able to engage.
- create psychologically safe space: establish belief and trust within the group that no one will be humiliated or teased for the ideas they offer, for asking questions and admitting to one's mistakes,
- each on their own time, in their own way
- open, direct, clear and not in metaphors unless mentioned communication, adaptive expectations, and respect for self-advocacy and self-regulation,
- daily schedule visible and in routines
- create enough breaks for holding the focus and having time to drink, eat, toilette.

Physical touching:

- try to plan the physical touching exercises once everyone feels safe and relaxed in the group
- at the beginning of the workshop explain that theatre exercises can also get physical, but that we will do it after we feel safe with each other, and we will ask and tell what we will do, if necessary, before each such exercise
- before each physical exercise mention that there will be touching and what is the point of getting physical
- before you touch the person, you ask them and tell what you are going to do

To create sensory kind space to work and engage:

- choose not over stimulating space with colours, posters, smells etc.

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- Instead of clapping or making noise/screams, agree on hand signals and gestures/symbols or establish before the exercise, that there will be noise,
- make sure the workshop space is big enough, with not overcrowded group.
- in the space there shouldn't be too strong lights
- make sure there is as least as possible background noise (or others talking when someone gets the space to speak),
- mind the fresh air and temperature of space where you are facilitating the workshop.

V. Trauma informed activities

Trauma informed is an approach in the human service field that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. Trauma-informed care shifts the focus from *"What's wrong with you?"* to *"What happened to you?"*. The core principles of trauma-informed care and activities according to the Trauma-informed Care Implementation Resource Centre (available at <https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma-informed-care/>) are:

What are the core principles of trauma-informed care and activities?

Safety

- Throughout the organisation of event/workshop, participants need to feel physically and psychologically safe.

Trustworthiness + Transparency

- All the decisions are made with transparency, and with the goal of building and maintaining trust.

Peer Support

- Individuals with shared experiences are integrated into the organisation and viewed as integral to service delivery.

Collaboration and Mutuality

- Power differences — between staff and clients and among organisational staff — are levelled to support shared decision-making.

Empowerment: Voice and choice

- Everyone's strengths are recognized, built on, and validated — this includes a belief in resilience and the ability to heal from trauma.

Humility + Responsiveness: The importance of cultural, historical and gender issues

- Biases and stereotypes (e.g., based on skin of colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography) and historical trauma are recognized and addressed.
- Trauma-Informed Care activities recognize the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledge the role trauma may play in an individual's life - including service staff. Trauma

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is often closely tied to substance use, mental illness, stigma, health care access barriers, and other challenges. Trauma-informed practice means recognizing this link, making sure that people feel safe and are not re-traumatized by their care.