



A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E.

ARTS AND THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDS

WORK PACKAGE 3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Elaborated by A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project partners

ALTER EGO (X)

Teatro alla Guilla

Kulturanova

Divadlo bez domova

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Arts aNd Theatre for YounG peOple NEeds – A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E., is a project developed under the Erasmus+ programme by 4 EU organisations in 2021-2023. The project aims to **increase the social inclusion of young people through theatre and creativity, building on the European values of acceptance and tolerance, and to promote intercultural dialogue as represented by Antigone and Aeneas Greek myths**. Furthermore, A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E wishes to give young people a space to use theatre so as to foster self-esteem, self-consciousness and confidence. Finally, the project aims to offer staff – working with youth in theatres, NGOs and more – **a Toolkit which aims to enable deeper understanding of their audience and to increase their professional skills in the field of art and social inclusion**.

Throughout the whole project, all partner organisations worked at developing and sharing best practices from their countries and from their previous experience in order to produce the final results of the project: a toolkit, recommendations, a literature review and methodological framework that aim at being re-used across Europe.

After elaborating and bringing the **WP1 – Literature Review and Methodological Framework** and **WP2 – A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. Toolkit**, the consortium of partners is coming with this Work Package 3 – Recommendations for practitioners and comparative analysis.

This publication presents each of the partner organisations, their main activities, objectives, target groups, ways of working and some of the important projects already implemented. Although the backgrounds and target groups of partners are different and diverse, some aspects of their activities are very common. They all work with disadvantaged and/or vulnerable people and focus on their social inclusion. As the main tools they use theatre, arts and creativity in their broadest understanding. Specific methods and techniques vary from partner to partner, but the non-formal education dimension is key in each organisation. Whether it is towards the target groups, the staff of the partner organisations or the general public.

The next part of the publication brings a closer look at how the project and the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method - better detailed in [WP2 - A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. Toolkit](#) - have influenced the work of the organisations involved. It presents some specific moments that have emerged during the adaptation and application of the method. Many of these cannot be predicted in advance. They stem from the timelessness and continuing relevance of the Greek drama *Antigone*. Perhaps most importantly, they are brought by the workshop participants themselves, based on their own experiences and life realities. This in turn enriches the theatrical and artistic work, the trainers and the work of the whole organisation. This is how the creative process, personal and professional development, cooperation and mutual lifelong learning, works.

All partners also stress the importance of international cooperation at European level, sharing and exchanging experiences and enriching each other. This enables us to continue to develop our work.

In the last part of the publication we offer partners' experiences with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method in the form of tips and recommendations for other professionals, theatre practitioners, educators, social workers or activists.

In our work we use different approaches, techniques and methods, our target groups are different, individual people in each group are diverse, as are the trainers. This starting point provided an opportunity for the partners to explore in a live laboratory whether and how adaptable the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method is. All of them used the method in the form of a one-off intensive workshop of several days, some of them introduced it into their long-term regular work with one stable theatre group. They all adapted the method to their needs and the needs and abilities of the groups they worked with, so they all bring on the table some specific recommendations. Before you come to reading about them, there is a basic one that is common to all partners: **feel free to experiment and play with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method, let the participants express themselves in their individually specific way. This is exactly how the live methodology works and how live non-formal education takes place.**

This is the final written outcome of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project. Regarding its structure, the document is divided into each partner organisation's background and recommendations: Divadlo bez domova (Slovakia), Kulturanova (Serbia), ALTER EGO (X) (France), and ending with Teatro alla Guilla (Italy), who initiated this methodology seven years ago. Each partner, after an introduction of their work and values, answers two questions:

- What has the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology brought to your work?
- What are your recommendations for practitioners who would like to experience it?

As a consortium, we strongly believe that further results are yet to come, whether in introducing this method and theme into other work steps, performances, non-formal education, other projects and trainings, or in inspiring others. We are also convinced that it can draw attention to many topical issues, empower particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged people, and thus promote cooperation in diversity across Europe.



D I V A D L O B E Z D O M O V A S L O V A K I A

Divadlo bez domova (*"Theatre with no Home"*) is a civic association that since 2006 (informally since 2004) has been working artistically with homeless people, people with physical handicaps, people with psychiatric diagnosis and otherwise marginalised people. These people are our actors and actresses. We are based in Piszatory palace in Bratislava, where we have created a theatre space on our own. Here we regularly rehearse and present our theatre performances for the public.

Our team of actors and actresses is made up of homeless people, people with psychiatric diagnosis, people with physical disabilities, Roma people, seniors, people after serving a prison sentence or other minorities. Together we meet regularly for theatre rehearsals and workshops. Through theatre arts we not only create non-traditional theatre productions, but especially integrate the disadvantaged people and **make visible social issues that are often overlooked in the commercial sphere**. Through our common long-term work, we have created a vibrant theatre community.

The basis of our activities are regular theatre rehearsals, where together with our actors and actresses we artistically create, collaborate, carry out various theatre and drama therapy exercises, play musical instruments, prepare ourselves for the performances of existing plays, create new theatre performances, improve our theatre space, discuss, share, support, inspire, motivate and non-formally educate each other.

Public theatre performances are a platform for presenting the results of our artistic work to the general public. Here, our actors and actresses move from the position of people who receive something from society to those who give something back to the audience - bringing them an artistic experience. An integral part of the performances is a short debate after the end - the audience can ask our actors and actresses what they are interested in. Entry to our performances is free (people can support our work with a voluntary exit fee), making arts and culture accessible to other socially disadvantaged people.



The main philosophy behind our theatre work is that theatre is also work. Our actors are financially rewarded for rehearsing and performing in plays. Through theatre, they non-formally educate themselves, learn new social skills, contribute to the creation of new experimental practices in theatre work, and sensitise the public to the problems of people who live on the edge of society.

We also bring theatrical performances to various non-traditional places such as prisons, psychiatric hospitals, government office, facilities for the seniors, etc. We also perform at various events or festivals.

In addition to theatre performances at home and abroad, for the 17th year (since 2007) we are organising the only festival for homeless theatres in Europe - the ***International Festival of Homeless Theatres*** *ERROR*. This event creates a space for theatre groups from all around world, in which homeless people and other socially excluded groups are the performers. These diverse theatre companies can regularly present their theatre plays, dance or musical performances to the general public in Bratislava.

We organise educational workshops for children and young people, other professionals and the general public. We use techniques and exercises that we have developed or got to know in our theatre work. Here, actors and actresses sometimes become co-leaders of the organising team. We also bring educational drama therapy workshops to prisons where the participants are prison inmates.

We also organise educational and artistic workshops and trainings on an international level. Their participants are mainly people working in the helping professions (social workers, teachers, trainers etc.), who work, for example, with homeless people or other marginalised groups such as refugees or people with physical disabilities.

Another important part of our work are international projects, which are essential for the further development and enrichment of our work. Together with our partners from abroad, we mutually educate, inspire and exchange experiences, but we also try to enrich or inspire other professionals or activists working in the field of artistic and educational work with different disadvantaged groups. Most important international projects since 2010 are:

ARTERY (Art-Education-Therapy): <http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk/divadlobezdomova/ARTERY.html>

MEDART (Methods of Education for Disadvantaged Adults Rooted in Theatre): <http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk/divadlobezdomova/MEDART.html>

HIT – Heroes of Inclusion and Transformation: <http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk/divadlobezdomova/HIT.html>

Hero's Journey: http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk/divadlobezdomova/Cesta_hrdinu_23.html

In our artistic work in our theatre, we use, connect and combine different approaches, techniques and exercises. We build the characters directly for our actors and actresses, on their uniqueness, diversity, naturalness, possibilities, gifts and limits. Our theatre performances are very diverse, ranging from performances with original texts to movement performances with a human-sized puppet to an adaptation of a circus play by Daniil Charms, from a performance based on a book by our actress to staging real dreams of our actors and actresses to staged readings of our principal's books. In our theatre work we have also worked with Boal's **"Theatre of the Oppressed"**, for example. In our rehearsals we often experiment with playing musical instruments, physical movement, various theatrical improvisations or art therapy approaches. We also use a variety of group exercises and activities focused on self-discovery, getting to know each other better, sensitization, collaboration, personal development, expressing feelings and emotions, or non-formal learning.

For example, our actors and actresses have also become very familiar with the **"Living Library"** method, through which they can authentically share important parts of their real-life stories while sensitizing listeners / readers to different minorities, bringing them closer to challenging situations in their lives and the resources that helped them cope with those situations. This method worked also very well during the pandemic, where we created a virtual variation of it. Each "Living book", i.e. an actor or actress sharing their story, was in a separate sub-group and so subsequently the "readers" could swap and learn about multiple stories. Of course everyone prefers face-to-face contact, but in cases where this is difficult or impossible to organise for a variety of reasons, this form can be a useful tool for powerful sharing of life experiences.

More detailed information about the Living Library method can be found, for example, here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/living-library>.
Or here: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/project-living-library_en

We have also created various techniques and exercises to help us to work, create art and sustain the plays. For example, with the **"Soft joints"** technique, we are able to perform a play in the long run even if the actor(s) decide to quit working in our theatre for various reasons or simply don't come to perform. Thanks to this technique, we still have the theatre play *KUCA PACA*, which we created more than 12 years ago, in our repertoire. Its main principle is that the play can work even if anyone doesn't come. The structure of the play is created very simply but effectively. There is a mass scene at the beginning and end of the show that all the actors and actresses participate in. This is followed by a sequence of solos where if someone doesn't come his or her performance is simply skipped. It follows that both mass scenes must also be devised in such a way that they can be performed independently on the number of actors and actresses present. When the acting team is more played up, it is possible to enrich the principle of "Soft joints" with more complicated scenes where other actors perform alongside the main character. Here it is important that several actors and actresses are able to alternate all possible supporting characters. For more on the method, see the Divadlo bez domova website: <http://www.divadlobezdomova.sk/divadlobezdomova/MEDART.html>

Finally, we would like to stress that our priority is to create a safe space where people with different backgrounds, experiences and realities of life can have a voice. **For many, the traditional way of communicating or articulating needs is difficult. It is art, theatre, or movement and music that can help these people better articulate their attitudes, opinions, needs, or desires.** We try to maintain our theatre, a physical space - Piszatory palace - where we create and also maintain an invisible theatre space where people can meet or disagree, create, learn, feel safe, have lasting relationships. In Divadlo bez domova, we believe that art is for all of us, and its forms, including theatre, should also be accessible to all.

How has the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project affected the work of Divadlo bez domova?

Since we have been working at Divadlo bez domova for more than 17 years, it is natural that new approaches, theatrical techniques and themes emerge in our work. Some have been a part of our work for a long time, others enrich our work for one production or we only focus on them for a shorter period of time.

When we in the Divadlo bez domova team decided to cooperate in the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project, we were not sure how our actors and actresses would deal with the theme of Greek drama, since in general historical themes or antiquity are rather distant to homeless people, people with disabilities, and many times even to the general population. However, to our great surprise, Greek drama, the historical context, Greek mythology, as well as the origins of theatre in Europe, became a strong and interesting topic for our entire theatre collective.

A good contact with the theme "Greek drama" was the first workshop adaptation of the play *Antigone* in an international team (in the framework of the [Train-the-Trainers session in Palermo](#), October 2022), which we prepared as a performance for the ERROR theatre festival in November 2022. There, our actors were able to see a play that was obviously historical, but they felt that something important in it was contemporary, touching and even attractive to them. Several of the theatrical approaches we used in the production were interesting to them, for example the use of the language of *glossolalia* / from Gr. γλῶσσα glóssa - language, λαλῶ laló - I speak/, that is, a language that is fictional and the words as such carry no meaning (or only some, such as names) and the emphasis is on the manner of speech, emotion and other means of actorly expression, such as body work, gestures and so on. So when we brought the drama *Antigone* as a template for the performance, most of the actors and actresses were happy and interested in how we would approach the theatrical form. Of course, we had to look for our own approach and new ways of adapting it.

The very fact that we have begun to look at the historical contexts that are connected with the origins of theatre in Europe has brought a whole new dimension to our work. We talked about the birth of tragedy, comedy, monologue, dialogue and many other theatrical phenomena that owe their origins to the Greek theatre and everything that goes with it. We even invited an expert from the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Ms. Alexandra Rychtarčíková), who gave us an attractive lecture and mentioned many interesting facts, such as the authors of tragedies and comedies, theatrical machines, the architecture of theatrical buildings, clothing, musical instruments and many other things related to the cradle of theatre - Greek drama. We recommend inviting a person who can approach the subject of Greek theatre from a professional point of view and be inspired in this way in your future work.

A special part of the preparation for the production of the theatre play *Antigone* was the information and context regarding Greek mythology. This huge topic served us to talk about many everyday things, words, or concepts that we still use today and many times don't even realise that they come from Greek mythology or culture, or even directly from theatre or plays or texts. Several words and phrases such as *Pandora's box*, *labyrinth*, *mentor*, *muse*, *harmony*, *chaos* and many others are part of our language, even though they come from a culture that is several thousands years old. Many terms or names have become the source of long interesting conversations or searches for the meaning that this or that word has today.

For all of them we would like to select, also with regard to the needs of this publication, one term that has become particularly interesting and may be worth bringing as a topic to other creative collectives. It is the word **KALOKAGATHIA** / Gr. **καλοκαγαθία** / . Etymologically, the word comes from *καλός* - physically beautiful, *καί* - conjunction and, *ἀγαθός* - good. We thus denote by this word the harmony of body and soul. It is a kind of ideal of beauty where the outer and inner aspects of the human being are in harmony. This ideal, idea, or philosophical concept sounds clear at first glance and for many of us logical, or at least inspiring. However, it is quite another to bring this word, with its meanings, to a group of people that includes people with serious physical disabilities.

How to grasp the ideal of beauty, to contemplate it, or to lead a polemic with a woman who was born into a body that, from birth, does not allow her to walk or to move both arms functionally? She is wheelchair-bound and there is no way for her to fully break free from this severely limiting physical reality. So how to fulfill the ideal of beauty in such a case? How to harmonise the outer and inner parts of a person? What is beauty, anyway? We were very much inspired by this topic to find interesting attitudes and formulate opinions. It brought unexpected moments of realisation of the complexity of "generalization" or the search for universal truth.

We would also like to inspire others to search for the hidden meanings of the words we use, which many times come from Greek mythology, theatre, history, or simply from Greek language. In addition to *kalokagathia*, such words can also be, for example, *chorus*, *cosmos*, *Europe*, *catharsis* or *talent*.





Another direct inspiration for something new in our theatre work was the **making of masks**. Since Greek theatre used masks, we decided to take advantage of this potential and even decided to make masks ourselves. Again, we touched the intimacy of our colleagues through this experience, as not everyone is comfortable looking at a mask or having a mask on their face. Fears, insecurities, or phobias, to use the Greek word, often have no space when sharing or group work. Through making and working with masks, we have also touched on these areas and allowed ourselves to open up some areas that may have been closed for a long time. Making the masks was also for some of us an intervention into the comfort zone when you can't speak for a while, your breathing is restricted and someone is touching your face. Mostly, however, the experience was pleasant and the satisfaction with the result was surprising, especially for the authors themselves.

If we were to sum up in a few words what the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has changed in our theatrical life, we would probably agree that it is a bolder approach to ancient myths, themes and historical contexts that have a direct or indirect impact on the present. We don't just mean Greek myths, ancient history, the theme of justice, or human rights. It is a much wider range of possibilities in working with stories, socio-cultural themes and issues that, in their universality, have their place in the past, present and future. Such might include the equality of all people, including those with disabilities, homeless or serving a prison sentence. Bringing themes such as fear, insecurity or hatred, analysing them and then displaying them in space or staging them can contribute to their better emotional processing and intellectual understanding at the level of the individual, but also of society as a whole.

Divadlo bez domova's recommendations

Based on our own experience with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method, we would like to emphasize that the method is applicable in working with different target groups. Of course, the method can be adapted to the possibilities, abilities and specifics of the target group you are working with, as well as to the needs or impulses of the trainers or organisational teams. The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method simply invites to further experimentation, discovery and to bring more stimuli that can be very original.

If you work with your target group on a regular long-term basis, based on our experience we recommend enriching the method itself with broader contexts. Topics such as history, antiquity, ancient Greece, mythology or ancient drama can help you to both arouse the interest of your target group and further educate them and yourself in these areas.

If there is enough time, it is possible to alternate and combine the presentation of the overall context and specific aspects of the ancient period, various exercises (rhythmic, movement, voice, improvisation), the production of masks or costumes, the reading and analysis of the text and characters, the search and finding of parallels between the play *Antigone* itself and the contemporary reality, whether personal or social. This diversity can make the whole process more attractive for the participants, while opening up the space for everyone to get involved - for someone the reading may be more interesting, for another the theme of antiquity, another may be more interested in making masks. It thus provides space for creativity, self-expression, joy, but also for overcoming challenges.

You can work with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method in different ways. It is possible to organize an intensive one-time multi-day workshop for different target groups, which is focused on the creative process, experimentation, original grasping of still relevant current topics by the participants, while the culmination of such a process can be a final performance. Another possibility is to work with the method over a longer period of time, enriching it with wider historical, mythological or theatrical contexts and then linking these to the life situation and experiences of the participants. The method can thus be incorporated into long-term work with a specific target group.

The themes of Sophocles' *Antigone* explicitly invite to link the play to the actual social situation or life realities of the participants. The effect can thus be bidirectional - on the one hand, it encourages the participants to bring and share their own experiences or feelings, and on the other hand, it brings them closer to and helps them to better understand the play itself. If the method is embedded or enriched with other contexts, in our experience it is also beneficial to be open to bringing in and opening up other topics from the participants, to work with them and to be surprised or inspired by them. Not everything can be planned in advance, but it offers a space to learn from each other.



ПОРТАЛ



МЕРИЦА

Si...
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Association [Kulturanova](#), established in 2001 in Novi Sad, Serbia, has emerged as a dynamic force in the realms of arts, culture, and community engagement. Founded with the intention of providing young people with a platform to unleash their creative potential, Kulturanova has grown into a multifaceted organisation that nurtures artistic expression, fosters dialogue, and advocates for cultural and youth development.

A Catalyst for Creative Expression: Kulturanova was born from a pressing need within society—a yearning among young people to create, communicate, and confront challenges. The Founding Assembly, attended by over 200 young enthusiasts, vividly illustrated this need. Since its inception, Kulturanova has striven to be the umbrella organisation for these creative minds, providing them with the necessary support, resources, and platforms to realise their artistic ambitions.

Kulturanova operates through four program pillars, each dedicated to a distinct facet of creative expression and cultural exploration:

Teatarnova: Amplifying Voices Through Theater, is a program that empowers young individuals to address important topics through theater. Over the years, Kulturanova has developed a unique methodology, combining applied theater techniques with youth engagement. The program has also seen collaborations with renowned regional artists, leading to theater productions that have graced stages across Europe and beyond.

Muzikanova: Nurturing Young Music Creators, is Kulturanova's endeavor to support emerging music creators. The program provides a nurturing environment for budding musicians to develop their skills and craft.

Medianova: Exploring Audio-Visual and Media Content, focuses on the creation and exploration of audio-visual and media content. It serves as a platform for innovative storytelling and creative expression.

Futuranova: Forging Innovation in Cultural and Creative Industries. Futuranova represents Kulturanova's commitment to innovation within the cultural and creative industries. It seeks to push boundaries and explore new horizons in artistic and cultural endeavors.

A Commitment to Dialogue and Change: Kulturanova's mission extends beyond artistic exploration. The organisation actively initiates intercultural and intersectoral dialogue, encourages creativity through art education, advocates for cultural policy development, and serves as a catalyst for positive change in society.

K U L T U R A N O V A S E R B I A

Advocacy for Inclusivity and Social Impact: Kulturanova's commitment to inclusivity and social impact is at the heart of their mission. The organisation works tirelessly to remove barriers to coexistence in Novi Sad and Vojvodina. Their initiatives foster dialogue among various marginalised subcultural groups, including migrants, newcomers, Roma, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities. This commitment is driven by **a vision of a society where diverse voices are not only heard but celebrated.**

Cultivating Cross-Border Collaboration: In addition to its local efforts, Kulturanova endeavors to develop a culture of dialogue between young people from Serbia and neighbouring countries. This collaboration extends to the joint production of cultural content, breaking down geographical and cultural boundaries to create meaningful connections.

Decentralising Culture for All: Kulturanova's dedication to decentralising culture is evident in their efforts to place cultural content in underserved areas of Novi Sad and Vojvodina. They strive to enrich regions that may not have a developed independent cultural scene. By doing so, they ensure that culture and creative expression are accessible to a wider audience.

A Safe Haven for All: Perhaps most importantly, Kulturanova aspires to be a sanctuary for those who feel marginalised or voiceless. Their belief in the power of theater as a means of pure expression and communication is a cornerstone of their work. This form of artistic expression transcends language barriers, allowing individuals who have suffered deeply to communicate their needs, hopes, and dreams. Kulturanova strives to create a space, both physical and mental, where all individuals can find their voice and sense of belonging.

How has the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project affected the work of Kulturanova?

The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has left an indelible mark on the trajectory of Association Kulturanova. This international endeavor has not only broadened their horizons but has also significantly reshaped their approach to cultural engagement and social impact. In this section, we will delve into the ways in which the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has transformed Kulturanova's work.

A Versatile Methodology: At the core of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project lies a methodology deeply rooted in the ancient Greek drama of Antigone. This methodology has proven to be a versatile tool that can be applied across various social settings. It equips Kulturanova to engage with diverse groups, even those considered extremely vulnerable, and address complex societal issues.

Breaking Down Language Barriers: One of the remarkable aspects of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology is its ability to transcend language barriers. As Kulturanova had already begun venturing into social work, mental health, and theater, the methodology provided a means to communicate and create internationally, even when linguistic differences posed challenges. The framework of Antigone, with its timeless conflicts, serves as a universal language through which participants can explore a multitude of complex themes.

Collaboration with Vulnerable Groups: Kulturanova's collaboration with various marginalised groups through the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has been a transformative experience. Working with organisations like the NGO Patrija, which supports individuals using psychiatric services, required a delicate approach. Building trust and introducing drama concepts to a group with an established dynamic were initial challenges. However, the process involved weekly visits, discussions on themes like power and freedom, listening to personal stories and songs, and encouraging deeper introspection.

Therapeutic Benefits and Empowerment: The culmination of these efforts resulted in fully improvised performances by participants. These performances incorporated participants' intimate feelings, relationships, and self-authored materials such as poetry and stories. Beyond their creative value, these workshops had profound **therapeutic implications**. They became platforms for participants to enhance their communication skills, gain a deeper understanding of society, discover new passions, and reignite their sense of purpose.

Forming a Permanent Troupe: The success of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project with marginalised groups has prompted Kulturanova to embark on forming a permanent troupe with these individuals. This development represents a significant step forward for their Teatarnova program. It not only offers a new direction but also provides ongoing opportunities to follow the development of a specific group of marginalised individuals, showcasing how creative work can be therapeutic for the mind and soul.





Transformative Learning and Growth: The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has been a transformative learning experience for Association Kulturanova. It has not only enriched their understanding of the power of theater and the arts but has also expanded their capacity to effect positive change within their community. This project served as a catalyst for personal and organizational growth.

Broadening Horizons: The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology, rooted in the timeless conflicts of Antigone, Creon, and the chorus, has broadened Kulturanova's horizons. It allowed them to delve into multifaceted themes such as power dynamics, freedom, oppression, war, equality, values, sanctuaries, religion, and gender identity. These themes, grounded in ancient drama, provided a rich tapestry through which Kulturanova could address contemporary and complex societal issues.

Diverse Collaborations: The project facilitated diverse collaborations, particularly with marginalised and vulnerable groups. Through partnerships with organizations like Patrija, Kulturanova ventured into previously uncharted territory, working with individuals using psychiatric services. This presented unique challenges related to building trust, understanding group dynamics, and introducing drama concepts. However, these challenges also opened doors to profound connections and moments of empowerment.

Documenting and Sharing Insights: Kulturanova's commitment to documenting their experiences with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology reflects their dedication to continued learning and growth. They recognise that this methodology has the potential to evolve and adapt with each practitioner's unique journey. Therefore, sharing insights and experiences is essential to contribute to the development of contemporary tools and independent practices in the fields of theater and social work.

In summary, the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has been a profound and transformative experience for Kulturanova. It has broadened their horizons, deepened their understanding of the therapeutic potential of the arts, and inspired them to form lasting connections with marginalised groups. This project has not only enriched their programs but has also expanded their capacity to effect positive change in society. Kulturanova's commitment to documenting and sharing their experiences ensures that the impact of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project will continue to resonate in the years to come.

Kulturanova's recommendations

Association Kulturanova's journey with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project has yielded valuable insights and experiences. These recommendations, born from their collaborative efforts and dedication to enhancing the intersection of art and social impact, serve as a guide for practitioners and organisations seeking to embark on similar endeavors:

1. Embrace Role Play as a Therapeutic Tool

One of the most accessible ways to apply the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology is through role play. Research has shown that role play has a wide range of therapeutic functions, from building communication skills to facilitating introspection and empathy. Organisations and practitioners should explore role play as a means to engage with diverse groups and promote healing and personal growth.

2. Foster Cross-Cultural Dialogues

Kulturanova's experience with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project highlights the potential for this methodology to open doors to cross-cultural dialogue. It serves as a universal language through which individuals from different backgrounds can explore complex themes and shared experiences. Practitioners should actively seek opportunities to facilitate cross-cultural dialogues, particularly in international social settings.

3. Encourage Personal Contributions

The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. methodology, rooted in improvisation, allows scenes to evolve organically. Practitioners should encourage participants to contribute their personal experiences, stories, and emotions to the creative process. Allowing scenes to unfold naturally opens space for surprising and profound moments of self-expression and connection.

4. Patience and Group Dynamics

Kulturanova's experience underscores the importance of patience and understanding group dynamics, especially when working with vulnerable or marginalised groups.

Building trust and creating a safe and inclusive environment is paramount. Practitioners should prioritise building strong relationships with participants to ensure a positive and productive experience.

5. Document and Share Progress

Kulturanova's commitment to documenting their work is a valuable lesson for all. By documenting the process and outcomes of their projects, organisations and individuals can contribute to the development of contemporary tools and practices in the fields of theater and social work. Sharing insights and lessons learnt is essential for the collective growth of the field.

6. Focus on the Journey, Not Just the Outcome

Incorporate a mindset that values the creative process as much as the final performance. The journey itself can be therapeutic and transformative. Practitioners should prioritise the well-being and personal growth of participants rather than solely focusing on the end product. The final performance should emerge naturally as a reflection of the participants' growth and self-expression.

7. Collaborate and Adapt

Embrace collaboration with diverse organisations and groups, as Kulturanova did with Patrija. Each collaboration brings unique challenges and opportunities. Be flexible and adaptive in your approach, recognising that the methodology may evolve differently in each context. Learn from each collaboration and apply those lessons to future projects.

In conclusion, Association Kulturanova's recommendations are a testament to their dedication to continuous learning and improvement. These insights, born from their transformative experience with the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project, offer valuable guidance for practitioners and organisations seeking to harness the power of the arts for therapeutic and social impact. By embracing these recommendations, individuals and groups can enhance their ability to create meaningful connections and facilitate positive change in their communities.



ALTER EGO (X) is a theatre company created in 2019. We work in France and Europe. In France, we are mainly active in the Auvergne Rhône Alpes and Ile-de-France regions.

The project was born out of a meeting between artists Julie Crantelle and Théo Majcher who, beyond sharing aesthetics and sensibilities, are committed to the visibility and transmission of theatre on multiple scales. Theatre is alive, moving, in perpetual evolution, construction, deconstruction and reconstruction.

To feel alive. That's what Julie and Théo wanted. To feel alive in their professional project, to feel stimulated, in constant invention and reinvention, thanks to the richness of their encounters. Carrying their voice!



The theatre is a place for discourse, encounters, dreams and struggles. And above all, a place for everyone. At ALTER EGO (X), we are convinced that theatre initiates dialogue. Whether on the stage or as an audience member, theatre makes people active, immersing a group of individuals in a shared experience in which each can find his or her own uniqueness. A group of spectators may see the same show, but each person will still have a unique experience linked to his or her imagination, perception and sensitivity. And that's what makes it profoundly active. And in another way, the actor, dancer or performer is sublimated by the presence of the spectator and all the forms of dialogue that ensue.

In our performance work, we seek to find and understand our bodies, to search for ourselves as beings, as matter. We draw a great deal of inspiration from the work of Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki and his methodology inspired by the physicality and traditions of Japanese theatre (*Nô theatre*).

We work with great physical rigour and intimate concentration with ourselves and the rest of the group. The concentrated body and mind are then ready and prepared to work on the stage. There, we explore our limits, our poetry and, above all, our imagination.

We talk about the world and current issues in our work. What matters most to us is transforming this truth to make it extraordinary and fantastic, to enchant reality.

As well as individual practice, we explore the power of the group and chorality, using the Viewpoints methodology developed by the *Saratoga International Theater Institute* in New York.

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Theatre is a way of expressing words and ideas, and we believe it should be accessible to everyone. That is the reason why we work with a very wide range of audiences, from secondary school pupils and students to so-called 'vulnerable' audiences such as LGBTQI+ refugees.

We make no distinction between amateur and professional audiences. Everything is artistic work, and we pass on the same rigour and the same way of doing things to all the participants we meet.

The two main thrusts of our work are therefore the search for the individual (1) sublimated by the collective (2). We follow a third and final axis, that of the artist's versatility. We defend the idea of a creative artist who imagines, thinks and engages itself in a variety of forms, beyond 'simple' theatrical creation.

This is why **we are involved in political work in conjunction with a number of European cultural networks, in order to put forward the views and needs of artists and cultural stakeholders in Europe.** We attach particular importance to projects on a European scale because we believe in intercultural dialogue and a common feeling shared by the inhabitants of this continent.

As part of our commitment to accessibility and sharing skills, we offer training courses for emerging cultural organisations to help them initiate European projects (public and private funding, residencies and international tours).

This versatility also encourages us to build bridges between different practices. Society is changing, and we believe that we need to know how to use the 'new' tools and practices available to us. So we have recently created a 4th department at ALTER EGO (X), the media department, where we are developing radio programme formats, podcasts and web TV.

Of course, we're always looking for links between our projects and our divisions, as in the case of the European *Live on!* project, a mobility/meeting between young people from Serbia, France and Italy. A week to create programmes and podcasts on the theme of living together better in Europe. For more information: <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/liveon>.

The 3 other departments are as follows:

Creation: producing theatre performances inspired by the European context through artistic residencies and tours in France and abroad;
Qui a peur du loup ? (2020) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/quiapeurduloup>
Lèche mon coeur (2021) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/lechemoncoeur>
Grandir (2024) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/grandir>

Laboratory: a way, through European cooperation, of exploring the power of the arts, and in particular the theatre, to tackle today's major social issues, in particular by leading/participating in projects at the crossroads of social, educational and cultural fields;
Across Sexualities (2021) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/acrosssexualities>
Ascension (2022) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/ascension>
Green Stories from Youth to Stage (2023/2024) <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/gresys>

Transmission: monthly theatre workshops with young people, interventions in schools and universities and training.
<https://www.alterego-x.eu/en/transmission>

How has the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project affected the work of ALTER EGO (X)?

Drawing inspiration from a range of techniques and methods is at the heart of our artistic approach. We are constantly on the lookout for new things, and then apply them in our own way. That's how theatre lives and is passed on.

When we implemented the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E project, we were particularly interested in meeting our more experienced peers. It seems very didactic for an emerging organisation made up of young artists to draw inspiration from an artist like Valerio Strati, who created this method some ten years ago and who continues to pass it on, never ceasing to adapt it to different contexts.

What also attracted us was the profound and total form of reconnection with art that we practise today. How many of Sophocles' tragedies have been performed in the Delphi theatre overlooking the sanctuary of Apollo? Ancient Greece is the cradle of the theatre. The tragedy of Antigone is one of the best known, and we were curious to see how this method could universalise Sophocles' words and make them even more accessible? And above all, to confront them with our current issues.

For us, there were two key moments in the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project.

The international training, a real example of intercultural dialogue. The meeting of the project's artists in Palermo, October 2022 (for more information, see our blog: <https://www.antygoneproject.com/post/train-the-trainers-session-in-palermo-italia-days-1-2>) enriched the company's work through the power of intercultural dialogue. Six days of exchanges, confrontation of ideas, sharing of practices by artists from very different countries, contexts and realities. There was also an intergenerational dimension. The group listened magnificently, allowing everyone to express their points of view. There was also a great deal of kindness, wisdom and, quite simply, humanity. A shared concentration that allowed the participating ALTER EGO (X) artists to explore their own artistic personalities.

We who advocate the need for intercultural dialogue to ensure that the citizens of Europe are aware of what is happening beyond their national borders have learned a valuable lesson here! What we retain from this experience in Palermo is the relationship with the body. The precision applied during the training, thanks in particular to the practice of the art of Feldenkrais as physical preparation, enriched our artistic approach. In particular, the way in which we communicate issues and plots essentially through the body and not through words.

The richness of the consortium and the target audiences with whom we all work has given us a precise vision of the many ways in which a classic text can be approached. Popularising it to make it more accessible, identifying the key themes and reading extracts likely to be of interest to the group in question.



The workshops held in France. As we are used to creating very distinct artistic content for each of our projects, we appreciated being able to re-use the same method, or at least the same basis, and then apply it to two very different groups (one made up of young, insecure artists and the other of young secondary school students).

It was rewarding to immerse ourselves in the method, to understand its versatility and semantics so that we could adapt it to the participants present.

There are two main principles that have emerged from our use of the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method. On the one hand, the search for a contemporary dramaturgy by following the narrative of a classic drama and, on the other, the way in which a classic play can be used to tell its own story (storytelling).

The two workshops also gave us the opportunity to engage in in-depth research into two major themes: contemporary heroes and feminism.

Today, the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method is still in the back of our minds, and we obviously continue to use parts of it or reformulate it in our day-to-day artistic work. What's more, we want to continue exploring it with the partners in this consortium, taking other tragedies (Oedipus, etc.) as our starting point.

The most beautiful and touching thing is to know that this method is being deployed in many European countries, and that there are many of us who are linked in some way by the energies of A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E.

Like a common identity, a European identity... who knows?

ALTER EGO (X)'s recommendations

1. Improvisations

Improvisation is the central point of the method. It leaves you a great deal of freedom, but we would still advise you to organise this time carefully, especially for prepared improvisations. Especially for prepared improvisations. 20 minutes of preparation in a group of 4 or 5 people is pretty good. This leaves plenty of time for reflection and imagination, without leading to overthinking. It's important that the protagonists stay with the feeling and don't fall into something too intellectual. After 20 minutes, ask everyone to show their improvisation to the others. Even if they don't feel ready. It's precisely when you take risks, when you leave your comfort zone, that valuable issues can arise. What's more, it forces the participants to let themselves be surprised.

2. Time for exchange and discussion

We strongly recommend that you allow plenty of time for discussion. If few people speak, leave some silence. Silence already tells a lot and will always lead to content. At this point, observe your group patiently, trying to understand everyone's personality. Try to pinpoint the issues raised. On the importance of this or that subject and above all on how you are going to support this or that participant in this process. After all, everyone is different and the way you address one person may not be appropriate for another. Don't hesitate to suggest a writing workshop so that the group can find a common narrative.

3. Pieces of advice for the workshop leader

Allow yourself freedom in the process. Let yourself be surprised by what happens and always be in the position of a learner. Always go further than the method itself, trust your sensitivity, and try to combine practices that you already use to link them to the ANTYGONE method.

We recommend that you work as a group at the start of each day to find a common quality focus. The **Viewpoints method** (Anne Bogard and Tina Landau) can be used as inspiration.

Generally speaking, treat this workshop as **a time for exploration! Try new things!** It doesn't matter whether it works or not. On the contrary, that's how art evolves. Every evening, take some time alone to reflect on the day's work and draw out the main points of support. Finally, during these intense moments of creation, ideas will come to you at any time. Even when you're not in the studio. So we recommend that you always have something to write with.



TEATRO ALLA GUILLA ITALY

The Teatro alla Guilla (the term 'Guilla' or 'Guidda', of Arabic derivation, indicates a river or source. Specifically, it refers to the place names attributable to the town district wet by the Papireto river) as association was legally founded in 2009 and is based in a small theatre in the historical centre of Palermo (Sicily). The district where the association carries out its activities is called 'Capo'.

The main objective of the association was to run (for about 10 years) theatre seasons, which included dance, drama and music performances. And for a few years also a film and documentary programme. Books were presented, exhibitions were set up and calls for proposals were made to support young theatre companies. Over time, educational courses were developed through private workshops and in schools. Theatre productions were realised that toured the region, Italy and abroad. The working team, which has changed over time, includes professional actors, directors, playwrights, project managers, journalists, designers, promoters, dancers and musicians. There are those who work constantly with the association, those who work according to the project possibilities of the moment and those who work occasionally.

The neighbourhood in which the theatre is located, despite being in the city centre, is characterised by a high percentage of educational poverty, low-income families and fringes of micro and macro crime. It is an area where mafia families coexist with less affluent or working-class or recently relocated families and, at the same time, with the largest community of Tamil Indians in the city. The district is also home to one of the city's largest markets and is a renowned area because Palermo's most characteristic religious festivals, linked to the churches of Sant'Anna and della Mercede, are held there.



This description of the neighbourhood is fundamental because our activity has always had to take the place into account. From the very beginning of the first theatre seasons, we realised that almost no spectators came from the area in question and we had to reflect and think about this aspect. We did not want, and still do not want, ours to be a place reserved for the 'intellectuals' of the city, but open to everyone, because we believe that the language of theatre and the performing arts can and must be universal. For these reasons, we started to think of our seasons with a unique collection of foodstuffs with a long shelf life. A formula that allowed the public to pay the ticket by bringing one or more shopping bags to the theatre and for us to donate the food collected to the Community of Sant'Egidio, so that it could then be distributed to those most in need.

Then we thought of allocating two seats to those who could not afford them, a sort of 'suspended', 'open' ticket, for those in the neighbourhood who wanted to come and see something without having the financial means.

For a few years now and for four editions, we have chosen to take part of our activity to areas outside the theatre. We decided, through a festival called "**Da Capo a Capo**", to go as far as possible into the neighbourhood, setting up workshops and performances in the streets, squares and corners near the street market. The festival involves spectators attending short artistic forays into the streets. Children take part in play-theatre workshops and neighbourhood residents approach our activity by providing us with the windows of their homes, electricity to connect any loudspeakers, toilets for the artists' needs, and whatever else they may need during the two-day event. In recent years, our activity has benefited from the collaboration of associations in the area such as scouts, social cooperatives, social promotion associations and non-profit organisations that, being complementary to us, have allowed us to imagine and implement socio-cultural educational projects for and in the neighbourhood in question.

Since 2016, our activity in the educational field has started to expand significantly with European project activities and their implementation. **We have put our theatrical knowledge at the disposal of a large number of young people from all over Europe, in a purpose of dialogue and knowledge of the values expressed by classical Greek dramaturgy, put in relation to the current issues of immigration, racism, social integration, acceptance, respect for diversity and gender equality.** In about seven years, we have developed a working method that addresses young people from different cultures, geographical areas, education, language and social backgrounds. We have shaped it according to the needs of place and time and spread it to other artists, practitioners, social workers and trainers. It is something that has grown over time and has also enriched us as trainers and artists.

Our activity, as professionals in the artistic and theatrical sector, has always been characterised by continuous evolution, an artistic growth that has been greatly enriched thanks to our commitment in the field of non-formal education and thanks to the activity of conducting workshops linked to European projects.



How has the A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. project affected the work of Teatro alla Guilla?

The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method had its first application in Palermo in 2016 and subsequently spread to Portugal, Greece (four times), France and Norway. The activity was initially conducted solely by actor-director Valerio Strati, then over time the need was felt to lead the workshops, and thus the dissemination of the concept expressed by the Greek text, together with a dancer-trainer (Silvia Giuffre, Sara Afonso, Carlo Mauro Maggiore, Federica Marullo). The approach that has developed over time has not changed in terms of the techniques used but in relation to the participants and their characteristics.

The use of the method has been shaped and improved over time, becoming clearer and more structured. The practice of improvisation has always been used in our way of working since drama school and later along the career path to deal with character. Theatre productions did not always have the time to work on the character through improvisation, and it was rare to use this technique during the staging of performances, whether they were Guilla productions or external ones in which the actors were part of. This is why the use of the improvisational method is easily applied during workshops, masterclasses and any situation where we "teach" and/or address someone for theatre training.

That said, the method has not changed because it already existed in our working attitude. Rather, it was enriched by the encounters we had in the non-formal education course of European projects. Its strength was expressed in the elasticity of its application. It is not a rigid method but malleable according to the moment. Improvisation is the same, but those who do it have different training and backgrounds, so preparation is needed, which can be more intense, soft, direct or indirect, depending on the case and the participants.

What comes out during and at the end of the training is the result of how it was used with them. We did improvisations in Italian and English, but also in fourteen other languages (Spanish, Greek, Portuguese, Slovakian, Serbian, French, Norwegian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Polish, Macedonian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Turkish, Hungarian, Croatian). **One mixed sounds and movements, words from the text and new ones. One went in and out of the thoughts of the heroine Antigone, King Creon and the citizens of Thebes.** A training that serves to step into the shoes of others to think, perhaps, differently from our usual everyday thinking. This is one of the aims of this training. To move our minds to a new point of view. And if, for this, we need the body, voice, text, images, songs, multilingualism or any other input, so be it. We have to learn to think differently. Professionals in the performing arts probably do it better, but that is not to say that a passionate amateur cannot have creative thinking and use it for the purpose. It is not necessarily the case that a non-professional participant does not know how to spread his or her emotions for the cause in question.

Over time, what the method has made us realise even more is that improvisation should be carried out in two ways: from inside to outside and from outside to inside, i.e. starting from the characters' thoughts and arriving at the way they relate also physically, or starting from a physical attitude (of movement) and arriving at what the character thinks and says. Both ways of improvising must be used and mixed according to the situation.

With the development of the European projects, the method had its own structure thanks to the analysis and comparison made on it by fellow operators in other countries. The comparison was important to understand the different application by others, the weaknesses and strengths. It also had a written form thanks to the final products elaborated, so from a simple *modus operandi* it became something repeatable and usable depending on the situation.

Teatro alla Guilla's recommendations

The first thing we feel the need to emphasise is the **ability to listen to oneself before others. Those who lead a workshop must put themselves in a psycho-physical condition of complete openness to the other, in order to get the message across in the best possible way.**

Listening to oneself before conducting serves to perceive one's own state of mind: if we are nervous, stressed, if we are carrying around daily life problems or various thoughts, we are not free to conduct at our best because we *'perceive'* the other person less. We do not fully listen to the participant because we ourselves are not 'centred'.

So the first step is one's own optimal psychophysical state. Once we are sure that we are 'ready', we can dedicate ourselves to listening to the other, in the widest possible sense. By listening, we do not just mean the literal sense, i.e. the words spoken by the participants, but the emotional feeling of the individual and the group as a whole. It is necessary to understand whether day after day attention does not wane, whether there is harmony between everyone, whether curiosity has been aroused, whether participation has grown, and how. Once these parameters are understood, the trainer can modulate his activity more or less intensively, taking into account who he has in front of him. The sensitivity of each participant is different and the same method must be developed with different nuances. Not only because the participants are amateurs, but also with professionals the work must be modulated according to different sensitivities.



Some key elements are:

- understanding who the workshop participants are, where they come from, what their background and objective is;
- knowing how much time you have available and modulating the days and hours as needed;
- knowing and arranging the venue (theatre, hall, outdoor space) with everything that is useful for the conductor and everything that makes the participants and the teacher comfortable;

Our work has always been based on improvisation and techniques that put the actor in an optimal position to work on himself and then improvise on the character. It is not possible to have the latter without the former. It is necessary for the participant to be comfortable before improvisation, and this makes the difference in the work and approach between a professional and an amateur. Although we have known amateurs who can convey their emotions and acting on stage just as well as a professional. Often those who do it for a living can bring their own patterns and/or blocks just as much as an amateur. The difference is that the professional puts in his acquired technique, and sometimes the scene *comes out* despite his soul being full of shadows at that moment. Or perhaps he is able to channel his shadows according to the scene to be improvised.

Over time, we realised that improvisation 'tout court', done alone or in twos without prior preparation, but only entering the scene with a goal of beginning, climax and conclusion, does not always put participants at ease. It is demanding, strong work, a delicate moment, which can be achieved without difficulty, but for which one must prepare oneself. Those without previous experience in the performing arts may feel awkward, insecure, uncomfortable. Improvisation consists of expressing oneself in front of the group with the character's thoughts, but in one's own words; one is free to improvise, but there is the group in front observing. The participant may not feel adequate.

Another way of working is with scenes edited and imagined by a small group of participants who are given the task by the trainer to create one or more mini scenes. In this case, having divided the group into several small groups, the work is smoother and, in general, the participants feel more comfortable. Even those who are not well prepared have the opportunity to be guided by those in their mini-group who are more likely to act theatrically. The trainer has to mediate between these two modes of improvisation-creation.

The task of the trainer and his team is to allow everyone to improvise freely. The techniques, games, exercises that stimulate creativity and imagination and those that relax and put people at ease are the variables that change as situations and participants vary. These are the variables that we have understood how to modify in these seven years of spreading the method.

We can define part of this method with the word maieutics, because it allows the participant to explore himself through the text, to draw out possible creations from himself. It directs and guides him, without imposing a path. What one can express best can be useful to the cause: playing an instrument, dancing, singing, acting. Any personal aptitude well directed and supported serves the expression of oneself, of the character and thus of the path we pursue.

A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method is based about improvisation and can be useful working about all the script or text we work with. The main thing is put the focus in the current meaning and find "your personal meaning".



Theatre, which originated in Greece, is the greatest legacy left to us by Ancient Greece. It was born in the agora, the centre of daily life in the polis. Everything that happens in the agora is the representation of a mythical heritage shared by the polis.

Classical theatre, born from the theatre of the agora, is political. Eugenio Barba asserts that the tragedy of Oedipus Rex stages the nefarious consequences of the tyranny of Thebes, which was inferior to Athenian democracy.

In the modern world, in search of democracy

Before the 20th century, that of Greece is the only case in which theatre and democracy coincide. However, the absence of forms of government based on democracy does not mean that theatre and society do not aspire to the values that refer to it. A democratic tension in theatre can be identified in those moments in history when society's participation in the spectacular event is broad and widespread. For instance, Renaissance theatre stages the piazza by idealising, enclosing and regulating it, while the town square hosts the charlatans and wanderers. The contested theatricality between the closed buildings reserved for a certain audience and the squares exposed to popular participation determined every spectacular event until the birth of modern democracies. Progressive openness to the most pressing topical issues, the ambition to involve a wide audience and to influence the cultural, political and social debate of its time are some of the characteristics of 20th century theatre. For example: Antonine Artaud, with the theatre of cruelty to awaken consciences; Brecht: epic theatre, the spectator must take a critical stance towards what he is witnessing; Living theatre criticises American democracy and all forms of government which are forms of exercising power, and power only means abuse, oppression, war and death, therefore anarchy, the rejection of all forms of power, is necessary.

In the Western world, where the democratic system becomes the political system of reference in the 20th century, theatre will revive its most important demands, starting with the principle of equality. The theatre company will increasingly position itself as a community. The role of the spectators will be increasingly based on participatory dynamics, the dramatic text and the author will give way to a creative process, shared and collective, of which the performance-event will be the fullest expression.

If, as Giorgio Gaber sang, *freedom is participation*, then 20th century theatre, whose audience is never passive, but always involved, is theatre of freedom. In an era dominated by technology, by the annihilation of the corporeal and emotional dimension, the only possible theatre is that which has introjected democratic principles and is a crossroads for encounters between different cultures.¹

¹ di V. Costantino, Teatro e democrazia: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teatro-e-democrazia/>



Since the times of Ancient Rome, Europe has been synonymous with tolerance and respect for other cultures. Peoples conquered by Roman armies and subjugated by them were enslaved and raped, but never forced to give up their cultures. Their identity was not annihilated by the victors. Since its inception, the EU has constitutionally guaranteed the respect and development of the cultures and arts that inhabit European soil:

"The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas: [...] artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector."²

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 aimed to strengthen the sense of belonging to a common European cultural and political space. One of the objectives is participation and access for all. In other words, social inclusion.³ One of the actions presented in the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage aiming to achieve the above-mentioned goal is to foster synergies between cultural heritage and contemporary creation, through a call under Creative Europe, and cultural initiatives such as Pearl, European Theatre Convention at Opera Europa, entitled On Stage 2018.⁴

Cultural heritage has the potential to contribute positively to people's lives and to European societies as a whole, either by improving psychological and social well-being or by enhancing social inclusion.⁵ The greater the sense of belonging to one Europe (same culture, same politics, exercising the same rights and duties), the greater the social inclusion and thus the democracies, which implies inclusion, and providing more opportunities to those who have less. In our society, in the age of technology, theatre must be democratic. The theatre reclaims a 'public space' to offer itself, as in Ancient Greece, both as a place of social aggregation, an expression of human creativity and the beauty of art, and as a permanent workshop of pedagogical and political training.⁶

² Official Journal of the European Union, *CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION*, art. 167: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016E/TXT&from=EN#d1e5970-1-1>

³ *European framework for action on cultural heritage*, p. 10.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 17

⁵ *Idem*, p. 10

⁶ di V. Costantino, *Teatro e democrazia*: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teatro-e-democrazia/>

The A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E. method, or more simply this way of working, initially used with young people from different social and cultural backgrounds, was piloted for the first time in 2016 in Palermo. About 60 boys and girls received and applied the exercises and *modus operandi* described. Today, after seven years, it has spread among many associative realities in Europe and about 800 people have received it. This has been, for Teatro alla Guilla, an achievement as unexpected as it is appreciated. An achievement that came after years of study and work on improvisation, and on the values, always relevant, expressed by Greek theater.

The careful analysis of each experience carried out by the working groups (Divadlo Bez Domova, Kulturanova and Alter Ego X) happily shows how a simple, practical and modelable method, such as that of A.N.T.Y.G.O.N.E., has been received and used with excellent results in different contexts and situations.

The diversity of target groups (people with motor disabilities, homeless people, youth with social and/or economic hardship, teenagers, young people from a variety of European countries), the different backgrounds of fellow trainers (actors, directors, social workers) as well as the use of the method in different latitudes and contexts has enriched the way of working, made it flexible, alive, constantly evolving and being applied. Like any "theatrical method," it is difficult to explain it in writing; it is something that has to be appreciated live, received and used concretely, in order to best understand it and then transfer it to others. From the experiences of the consortium partners, it is clear that the way how the method was "transferred" to colleagues of the associations turns out to be efficient. Moreover, the positive and articulate feedback helps to complement the method and to understand that its application, although using the same starting point, can and should be enriched by the experiences of others. A theatre method cannot be "static" otherwise it would die over time.

The sensitivity of the partners, their creativity and flexibility allowed the roots of the method to go even deeper, making it strong and stable. Comparison between theatre companies and performing arts workers from different backgrounds is always enriching and, with the right open-mindedness, has found fertile soil to grow a plant that has given and will surely still give fertile fruits.

Websites and blog articles

ALTER EGO (X): <https://www.alterego-x.eu/en>

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